

# SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" — John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" — Acts 17:11

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

VOLUME XXVII

OCTOBER, 1986

Number 10

## THINK ON THESE THINGS

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### KEEPING THE HEART WITH DILIGENCE

The Holy Spirit said, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). This is a vital charge to every man and woman of responsibility who walks the path of life, and who must come before the judgment bar of God. No greater charge has been given to humanity.

The heart is that part of man from which flows his convictions, affections and will, and it determines his course of life. W. E. Vine describes the use of this word in the Bible as meaning man's entire mental and moral activity, "both the rational and the emotional elements." The heart includes the intellect, emotion and volition of man. The functions of the heart, as described by the word of God, include: the understanding, the perceptions, the determinations, the reasoning, the desires, joys, sorrows, and griefs, the thoughts, the intentions and purposes, and the conscience.

The "issues of life" indicate all elements of life: the thoughts, words and deeds. The heart is the center of man's life, and his life will show the state of his heart. Jesus said, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matthew 12:35).

Jesus gave a parable, recorded in Matthew 13 and Luke 8, that presented the state of the heart as the soils into which the seed, which is the word of God, was sown. Jesus depicted these soils as different conditions of the heart to which the word of God was preached. The only

soil that produced the acceptable harvest in the sight of the Master was that "honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15). But who makes that heart honest and good? The word of God produces acceptable obedience only in the honest and good heart. The person himself makes the heart honest and good, or deceitful and evil. Jesus taught that when he said: "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man" (Matt. 15:18-20).

The gospel of Christ is addressed to the heart of man, not to his belly or social needs. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). Man is changed from the inside—from his heart. That is why the social gospel has failed to convert man to serve the Lord; it appeals to the appetites and not to the heart of man.

Salvation from sins does not occur until man turns from his sins and to the Lord. This is accomplished by repentance, which necessitates faith. Faith comes by hearing the word of God, and from no other source (Romans 10:17). Genuine faith produces repentance which results in the cessation from sin and the reformation of life. All this comes from the heart. If the heart is not honest and good, faith and repentance will not follow. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9, 10).

The gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16), is addressed to the heart to produce faith (10:17), and obedience comes from the heart (6:17). Unless the heart is honest and good, it will not receive the gospel by which that person can be saved. This makes the man responsible for the integrity of his heart.

This thought is further emphasized by the teaching of Jesus regarding an evil heart. He said one commits adultery in his heart by looking on a woman to lust after

her (Matthew 5:28). That is sin, yet it is only in the heart. Jesus describes the heart condition of the scribes and Pharisees and many who followed them as "This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matthew 13:15). By refusing to hear and see and understand with their heart, they could not be converted that Jesus might heal them. These were responsible for the condition of their hearts, and their salvation depended upon how their hearts received the truth which Jesus taught. This same lesson is taught in Acts 28:27).

Simon the sorcerer was a deceiver and bewitched many people in Samaria. But when he heard the gospel preached by Philip he believed also and was baptized. He continued with Philip, observing the miracles which he did, but when Peter and John came down and imparted spiritual gifts unto them, Simon saw this and offered them money for this gift. Peter said to Simon: "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:20-23). Simon asked Peter to pray for him that "none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me" (vs. 24). Even if one's heart is right to receive the word to be saved, he must guard his heart lest it become "not right in the sight of God." The Holy Spirit said, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12).

When the heart will allow it, Satan will enter and lead one into all kinds of evil, in thought, word and deed. Satan entered the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus (John 13:2). Ananias with his wife Sapphira lied about his gift to the work of the Lord. Peter asked, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back a part of the price?" (Acts 5:3). Satan enters the heart and fills it to do evil. The question by Peter to Ananias indicated that he could know why Satan filled his heart. He had to give consent. Satan can not get into the heart unless that person allows it. That makes him responsible for the condition of his heart in the area of honesty and goodness.

But the Lord "opens" the heart with the power of the gospel. Those on Pentecost were "pricked" in their heart by the gospel which Peter and the other apostles preached. They were convicted by the gospel which they allowed to enter their hearts. Others on that same occasion rejected the gospel because they did not allow the truth to enter their hearts. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia by the things which were spoken by Paul, and she was baptized and her household (Acts 16:14, 15). Without hearing the gospel, the Lord would not have opened her heart. This simply means that as Satan "entered" and "filled" the heart by temptations to be-

## Searching The Scriptures

Volume 27      OCTOBER, 1986      NUMBER 10

*Published Monthly at*  
**BROOKS, KENTUCKY**

Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky  
and at an Additional Mailing Office  
USPS-487-440

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Office of Publication  
52 Yearling Drive  
Brooks, Kentucky 40109  
Phone (502) 957-2257

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tray Christ and lie to the Holy Ghost, so the Lord "opened" the heart of Lydia by the leading of the Spirit through the gospel which was preached to her. The hearts had to be ready to receive what was proclaimed to them.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

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# Editorial

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## "WHAT SHALL A MAN GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL?"

Jesus raised questions which got to the very heart of things. "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" "The baptism of John, was it of heaven, or of men?" "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" In Matthew 16:24-26, he dealt with the crux of discipleship in a few words and then raised the penetrating question which heads this article. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" This has proved to be a "hard saying" to many. The first rule of discipleship is self-denial. Contrary to humanistic philosophy, you are not first! If you think you are first, you cannot serve the Lord. Self-fulfillment comes only in a life of complete surrender to the majestic authority of Jesus Christ. That is what it means to accept him as "Lord." "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness . . ." (Mt. 6:33). In fact, we cannot even be second and serve the Lord. "But in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:3-4). The Lord must be first, others come next and we come in third! That is a far cry from the petty selfishness of the "me" generation.

The next rule of discipleship is "take up his cross." Luke's account adds "daily" indicating this to be a continual acceptance of the responsibilities associated with serving the Lord. "And follow me" indicates a daily continuance in all that phrase includes. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me."

One who seeks to secure the interests of life to the neglect of his soul, "shall lose it." That is, he loses the only life that really matters. One who loses his life, not just in martyrdom, but in total surrender in service, making his body "a living sacrifice" shall find it. That is, he secures the only life that counts.

In verse 26, Jesus raised the profound question about the profit of gaining all the world and losing one's soul. That would be "saving his life" while losing it. What would really be a fair exchange for the soul? These questions raise at least three fundamental considerations.

## We Have Souls

Man is composed of "spirit, soul and body" (1 Thes. 5:23). "Body" (SOMA) is the house in which we dwell. "Soul (PSUCHE) has to do with the animate part of our existence. We have a life principle, breath. We hold this in common with the animal creation and some passages mean nothing more than this when using this word. The context determines this. "Spirit" (PNEUMA) is the rational part of our existence. It is man's spirit which is fashioned in the image of God. It is to this "spirit" that God addressed his revelation. Through this "spirit" we understand the things of God and hold our communion with him. "Spirit" is the vital link between God and man. But sometimes the word "soul" is used to mean the same thing as "spirit." In Mt. 16:24, the context shows clearly that Jesus has in mind the soul-life. Losing one's life here is not just equated with shortness of breath.

There is a part of us that will never die. In Mt. 17:3, Jesus, on the mount of Transfiguration, met and talked with Moses and Elijah, both of whom had left earthly existence hundreds of years before that time. They had not been annihilated. They had form, consciousness and rationality. In Mt. 22:32, Jesus rebuked the Sadducees, who did not believe in a resurrection or after-life, by quoting Exodus 3:6 where God said "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Jesus clinched it when he said "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." When God first made that statement in Exodus 3:6, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had all been dead a long time. Yet, God was the God of the living, not the dead. The conclusion was inescapable: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were yet alive. Something about them did not die.

Jesus emphasized the **great value of a soul** when he placed the whole world and its contents in contrast to just one soul. If you owned every piece of real estate on every continent on earth, if all the jewels and precious substances of earth were heaped together until they constituted a mountain range of glittering wealth, and if every imposing structure erected through the ingenuity of man were yours, and you then died and went to Hell, the Lord's question stands. What did it profit you? You would have died a pauper.

The true value of a soul can best be understood when we contemplate what God and Christ did to save a soul from eternal punishment. God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us, manifested his amazing grace in emptying Heaven of Him who thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Jesus, emptied himself of the exalted rank he held in Heaven to take upon himself the form of a servant, to be spit upon, denied, and rejected by the very nation whose greatest nobility was in providing the lineage for the Messiah. He was betrayed by a friend, mocked in a trial, made the object of ridicule by crude soldiers, and finally delivered to be crucified after the Roman procurator three times proclaimed him innocent of any charge worthy of death. He was nailed to a cross and died between two thieves. His agony was intense. Even nature rebelled for it turned dark at midday and there was an earthquake. If

you ever wonder how precious your soul really is, then please think of these events. All of that happened because we have souls for which God cared. The salvation of your soul is the most important issue with which you have to deal.

### Exchanging Souls for Unworthy Objects

How foolish to see so many exchanging their souls for wealth. Money takes on the character of its owner. It is neither right nor wrong within itself. But the quest for it at the expense of the needs of the soul has destroyed many. The love of it is the root of all kinds of evil, Paul said.

Some are trading their souls for what is called a "living." We must eat, sleep, be clothed and housed. We have been made with the capacity for work so that we might provide for ourselves and our own families. It is sad that so many have confused a "living" with true life. That is a foolish trade-off.

Some are trading their souls for pleasure. All pleasure is not wrong, although there is pleasure in sin (Heb. 11:25). Much pleasure may be derived from family and social ties and from recreational activities. But none of these should displace the interests of the soul. "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). Some of the brethren do not believe this to be true. They teach their I children that athletic activities are of greater value than 'worshipping the Lord. If that is not true, how do you account for the fact that when there is a choice to be made and a time conflict, the worship of God comes in second? Is this the meaning of self-denial? Is a family reunion, a ball-game, a fishing trip to an area where it is too far to meet with saints on the Lord's day, better than being at the table of the Lord at the appointed time? Are boats, campers, fishing gear, golfing and tennis gear, TV's, VCR's and the popular magazines of the day, important items for the family budget, while support for the Lord's work, and useful books and supplies to help develop our spiritual needs of only questionable value?

I have known several in my lifetime who have traded their souls for **fame**. Young people with great musical talent, are sometimes bitten by this bug. It is extremely difficult to maintain one's balance in the heady world of entertainment without giving in to the temptations and pressures associated with "paying your dues." The call to political office has led some good people to compro-mise values. I have seen some lives wrecked by this. To be idolized as a star athlete is pretty heady stuff. Some have lost their way while climbing the corporate ladder. It is not wrong to be well-known for whatever you do. If you do it very well, the chances are good that others will find out about it. Just don't wind up trading your soul for fame. Preachers are not immune to this disease. We are servants and we ought to be that whether anyone notices or not.

We have souls which are precious in the sight of God and nothing in all the world is of greater value than saving them. What would you give in exchange for yours?

## The Search for the Ancient Order

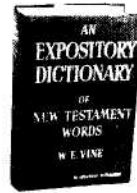
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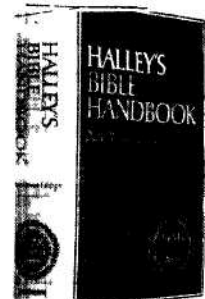
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Using the

## SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

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### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

I've been involved in Bible call—in radio and T.V. programs for over sixteen years now. I am constantly amazed at the variety and nature of the questions we receive.

I have found it preferable to not deal with questions which are written in, unless there are no calls on the line. This rule encourages people to call, and live calls are one of the primary attention getters of this type of format.

Sometimes I make exceptions to this rule, and such an exception was made recently when I received the following letter from a concerned mother: Dear Brother Green,

My husband and I are members of the church and watch your program as often as possible. We are impressed by your knowledge of the scriptures and your quick replies to callers. I have a question that I hope and pray that you can answer on your next program. It is hard for me to call in at that time so I hope you can answer this on your program or write an answer back to me.

I need to give you a little detail concerning this question, please bear with me while I explain.

About a year and a half ago my husband made some unfatherly advances to our daughter (she had just turned 12). To make a long story short—he says that he later realized what he was doing was sin, prayed, asked forgiveness and "poured his heart out" to her and asked her to keep it "our little secret." He said that she promised to do so. Having all of this on her conscience and feeling confused and guilty, she told me (her mother) about it. Well, when I confronted him, he became angry at her, said she lied to him, and therefore, according to the Bible, said he should treat her as an erring Christian (she is a member of the church, too) until she truly repents and apologizes to him for lying.

Since then he has treated her badly, gives favors to our other two children, and practically refuses to have much to do with her because she will not repent and apologize. Brother Green, this has broken her heart and torn our family apart also. She feels that he hates her and he says it would be giving in to "situation ethics" to forgive her when she hasn't repented of her sin of lying. We have talked with counselors (not necessarily Christians) about this and they believe he is wrong and doing great emotional harm to her. I would like to know what your view is on this and what the Bible says he should do. Could you please answer this on your program? My

husband watches your program every week and he suggested that I call in and ask about this, but I felt the need to give you the background (which would have been hard to do over the phone). My husband really respects your knowledge of God's Word and he said that if it could be shown to him that he was wrong, he would change his treatment of her. Or should she really repent of telling me about this situation? Please answer this as soon as possible as I love both of them and I feel very crushed between them. Thank you.

How would you have answered?

I'm not at all sure that I answered as I should have, but here is essentially my reply:

1. The father is the sinner and guilty party in this matter. He has sinned against the child. He has not been the kind of father or this could never have occurred. As a father of four children, three of them daughters, I just cannot imagine such unnatural feelings and lusts arising. I'm convinced that such is impossible when one is living a decent life and being a loving and dedicated daddy. His sin, therefore, goes beyond this specific deed. That such a thing could happen demonstrates that he has not established and developed a proper relationship with this child.

Furthermore, his present disposition demonstrates this very fact. His attitude and demands are not indicative of the proper love and concern for the child.

2. He is an adult and she is a child. Becoming a Christian does not change a child into an adult. He is an adult who is refusing to accept the responsibilities of adulthood and fatherhood while expecting his little daughter to act like an adult. As a result, he is disobeying Eph. 6:4: "Fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

3. This father asked his daughter to do something that he had no right to ask. He had no valid basis upon which to expect her to keep such a secret. And if she, in her confusion and fear, promised to do so, it was a promise she ought not to have kept. Some promises should not be kept. Herod's promise to his step daughter (Matt. 14:7) should not have been kept.

The wife and mother in this family had every right to know what had happened. The daughter needed to tell for her own emotional well-being.

This father needs to repent and start trying to be a father, though he has likely lost his chance with this child.

4. This wife, I believe, has Scriptural grounds for divorce (Matt. 19:9). Fornication is sexual immorality, and there is certainly evidence of such in his life.

If this wife is willing to give him another chance, then he should count himself fortunate and clean up his act.

If I were this mother, I would keep a close eye on this situation and try to be as certain as possible that my children were not subjected to any further pain and trauma because of this kind of problem. (End of comments.)

I have not heard again from this family. I have prayed and continue to pray for this child and others who are victims of such abuse.

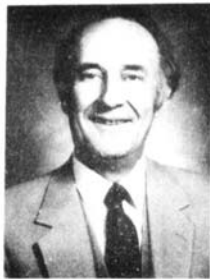
## WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

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### ENGAGED OR MARRIED TO CHRIST?

**QUESTION:** *Brother \_\_\_\_\_ teaches that the second coming of Christ will marry the church. He said the church and Christ are not yet married and that is why we are waiting on the second coming of Christ in order for Christ to marry the church. What can you say about this statement of bro. \_\_\_\_\_?*

**ANSWER:** Several entertain the position of the above brother. E. M. Zerr, commenting on 2 Cor. 11:2, said: "Paul had led the Corinthians in obedience to Christ, which was the time they became engaged to Him, the marriage to be celebrated when the bridegroom comes for that purpose" (*Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 63). Macknight wrote: "The betrothing of persons to Christ is accomplished in the present life; but their marriage is to happen in the life to come; when they shall be brought home to their husband's house, to live with him for ever" (*Apostolical Epistles*, p. 241). Others of like persuasion could be cited but to quote them would be redundant and space is limited.

The notion that the church is not married to Christ is based on the metaphorical figure of the church being espoused or betrothed to Christ. Paul said to the Corinthians: ". . . for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2). The argument is made that "espousal" was comparable to "engagement" today, and since Paul said, "I have espoused you to one husband," he was simply stating that "I have engaged you to Christ."

The basic fallacy in the preceding reasoning is that "espoused" is not the same as "marital engagement." The word, "espoused," in 2 Cor. 11:2 denotes a much stronger and a more sacred bond than "engagement" does in our vernacular as the following statements and declarations show. We read:

"From the time of espousal, however, the woman was considered as the lawful wife of the man to whom she was betrothed: the engagement could not be ended by the man without a bill of divorcement; nor could she be unfaithful without being considered an adulteress" (McClintock & Strong, Vol. 1, p. 792).

"Betrothal with the ancient Hebrews was of a more formal and far more binding nature than the 'engagement' is with us. Indeed, it was esteemed a part of the transaction of marriage, and that the most binding part . . . The betrothed parties were legally in the position of a married couple, and unfaithfulness was 'adultery' (Dt. 22:23; Mt. 1:19)" (I.S.B.E., Vol. 3, pp. 1997-98).

"*Espoused* does not mean necessarily *married*; but when joined with the word *husband*, it means *married*. The church certainly has as close a union with God as did the Jews. Then the church is bearing and nurturing children to God. Certainly the church is not bearing children before she is married. I know of no single passage of scripture that intimates that anything like a marriage is to take place at the resurrection" (*Questions Answered*, Lipscomb & Sewell, p. 431).

"As here (2 Cor. 11:2, WEW), of betrothing, or taking to wife" (*Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vincent, Vol. 3, p. 345).

"The word here used (*harmozo*) means properly to adapt, to fit, to join together. Hence to join in wedlock, to marry. Here it means to marry to another" (2 *Corinthians-Galatians*, Barnes, p. 222).

Finally, we read: "to join, unite in marriage, espouse, betroth, 2 Cor. 11:2" (*The Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p. 51). And, "to betroth, to give one in marriage to any one" (Thayer, p. 74).

From the preceding definitions and quotations, I think we can confidently say that the church is married to Christ, now. There is nothing else to finalize, legitimize or consummate. The redeemed are now members of Jesus' body, of his flesh, and of his bones (Eph. 5:30), and they sustain, spiritually, the same relationship as a husband-wife sustain, physically (cf. Eph. 5:22-33). Paul also wrote: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:4). The word, "married," in the text is from the Greek word, *ginomai*, and it means, "to become a man's wife" (Thayer, p. 116). The NASB translates the verse, "that ye might be joined to another." Hence, the church is married to Christ.

Some use the Parable of the Ten Virgins in Matt. 25:1-13 as a proof-text that the church is not now the bride of Christ. But in that story Jesus was simply using an ancient marriage custom to teach preparation for His second coming. The five wise virgins would be the faithful, prepared members of the church, and they went to the marriage in the parable as assistants and guests of the bridegroom, not as the bride. To make this parable represent the church's marriage to Christ has the church left out of the marriage, altogether.

Used in conjunction with Matt. 20:1-13 is Rev. 19:7-9. Here we are told the "marriage supper of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready... Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." The thinking is that the passage shows the church at home with God where the marriage to Christ is finalized, with the marriage feast and festivities accompanying it.

Foy E. Wallace, commenting on Rev. 19:7-9, stated: "The symbolism expressed in *the marriage of the Lamb of verse seven*, signified the blessed union of the church with Christ, the Head . . . This marriage occurs every time one is baptized into Christ, and it is therefore always in process and is continuous . . . As the marriage itself is continuous, so must be the marriage supper,

and it symbolized the continuous fellowship of all who are united to Christ, and it is as continuous as the baptism of believers and of the church itself" *Book of Revelation*, p. 388). Hence, we conclude that marriage to Christ is now going on and the marriage supper, figuratively speaking is now being eaten.

One final observation on 2 Cor. 11:2. Some contend that Paul engaged the church at Corinth to Christ through conversion, and he desired to present the church to Christ at the judgment for marriage as a chaste virgin. But this is reading into the text what is not there.

The word, "present," is a translation of *paristemi* which means, "to present or show, *tina* or *ti* with the ace. of the quality which the person or thing exhibits" (Thayer, p. 489). I understand Paul to mean he wanted to show the moral and spiritual qualities of the church then; not necessarily at the judgment. Paul wanted the church of Corinth to be as a chaste virgin and not corrupted by false teaching from the simplicity (singleness of mind) that is in Christ (2 Cor. 11:3). We are to show (*paristemi*) ourselves approved to God now (2 Tim. 2:15) and yield (*paristemi*), present our members servants to righteousness now (Rom. 6:13,16, 19).

The church, the bride of Christ, lives in a world of evil allurements. She is to be holy, unblemished and undefiled (Eph. 5:27). She is to abstain from spiritual adultery (Jas. 4:4). This was Paul's main concern in 2 Cor. 11:2.

## Daily Family Bible Reader

by Don Bassett

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## RIDING FOR THE BRAND

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Louis L'Amour is a western novelist, and a very talented one. About a year ago, I got hooked on his stories and now I read probably two per week. They are adventurous and sometimes humorous and always educational. With every new story I gain some little bit of information which helps me to be a better hunter or outdoorsman or camper, or even a better Christian. The stories always address the fallacies of some people and the dignity of others.

In one of his collections of short stories, entitled "Riding for the Brand", Mr. L'Amour makes the following statement, "The term 'riding for the brand' was an expression of loyalty to a man's employer or the particular outfit he rode for. It was considered a compliment of the highest order in an almost feudal society. If a man did not like a ranch or the way they conducted their affairs he was free to quit, and many did, but if he stayed on he gave loyalty and expected it."

Loyalty is a trait long admired, respected, and expected in the relationships into which a man enters. It is another way of describing faithfulness to commitments or obligations. It speaks of adherence to a sovereign, a government, or a cause. It is the bond of friendships, marriages, and families, patriots, employees, and citizens. Moreover, in its purest form, it is Christianity itself.

Upon the mount of temptation, Satan offered the Christ all of the kingdoms of the world upon the condition that Jesus deny His loyalties to God, to which he responded, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." While that statement was made some 2000 years ago, the sentiment has not lost its significance. God demands loyalty of His people. Jesus quoted from Deu. 6:13 wherein God instructs His people to fear and serve only him. Of course, man is free to serve and worship whomever he chooses, and most folks are quick to emphasize our free moral agency. What they overlook is that God rewards the loyal and obedient and punishes those whose freedom leads them into false self-sufficiency and sin.

Men committed to self-service are a pitiful sight. They become atheists, agnostics, hedonists, humanists, and materialists. They are lovers of their own selves, and manifest the characteristics which Paul describes in 11 Tim. 3:2-5. Accordingly, they are referred to as reprobates and men of corrupt minds (v. 8). However, one can at least see where their loyalties lie. I am sorry that I cannot say that about some of my brethren.

The fact of the matter is, I have more respect for those reprobates than for so-called Christians who claim loyalty to God yet worship Satan. If we want to

receive our reward, we must be loyal to our God. Paul says, in Gal. 3:27, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." We have taken upon us the name of God's anointed, and are thus described, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people" (1 Pet. 2:9). We hired on all by ourselves, folks. Now its time to ride for the brand. We have made a commitment in our obedience to God, and He demands our devotion and loyalty. So why then, do we think that we can follow our own desires and still be accepted by God? "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mt. 16:24).

What we need today is more loyalty. If the church is to survive in this world, its members are going to have to take a stand against sin and that stand must begin in ourselves. Self-sacrifice is the foundation of godliness. It began with God's love manifested in the sacrifice of His son, was personified in the life and death of Christ, and is become our spiritual heritage. We must live it, brethren, regardless of the sacrifice or opposition. We have responsibilities which must be fulfilled if we are to be loyal, even though we may not like the job. Riding for the brand may require us to clean out the stables at times, but it is our job and must be done. Similarly, loving your enemies is hard, but loyalty demands it. Teaching the gospel is not easy, but loyalty demands it. Withdrawing from the disorderly, warning the unruly, comforting the feeble-minded, and supporting the weak are not done without a certain amount of difficulty, but loyalty demands it. And even more difficult are the admonitions concerning immodesty, drinking, chastity, temperance, attendance, etc. But, loyalty demands it.

In Joshua 24:15, Joshua asks the children of Israel to make a choice of servitude. To whom, he asks, will you be loyal? The question is ours to consider also. "The first of all commandments is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment" (Mark 12:29-30). And that, my friends, is riding for the brand!

## HAILEY'S COMMENTS

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## ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

*Donnie V. Rader*

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### WHAT A PRIVILEGE TO PRAY

When we realize what a privilege prayer is, we like the disciples of old will plead, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). I am afraid that many of us take prayer for granted. We are not as prayerful as we ought to be simply because we have forgotten what a grand liberty it is.

#### What is Prayer?

Prayer is not merely wishing for something. Nor is it simply thinking about something or reciting some lines. Prayer is our means of speaking to God (Luke 18:10-14). It is the act of communicating the thoughts of man to the infinite mind of God. From Rom. 10:1 we learn that it is the heart's desire expressed to God. It is making our request and thanksgiving known unto God.

Consider the following quotes that I have gathered from various sources that help us better understand and appreciate prayer. "Prayer is the avenue through which one approaches the Almighty." It is "making personal contact with power that transcends time, space and matter", and the "reach of man after the Absolute Reality." "Prayer is the voice of faith" (Thomas Home). "Prayer is a correspondence fixed in heaven" (Robert Burns). And then my favorite, "Prayer is so simple; It is like quietly opening a door and slipping into the very presence of God."

May I say what a privilege that is? What a privilege to have access to our God (cf. 1 John 3:1). Can you imagine what it would be like to be invited into the oval office for a private discussion with the president? If I could tell you that I could go in and talk with the president at any time, you would think that was a special favor unlike any other. You might even ask how I got such a privilege. Yet, we are invited to open up our hearts to the Creator and Ruler of the universe! Oh, what a privilege that is.

#### The Need For Praying

We can better appreciate the privilege of prayer when we consider its necessity. Yes, we need to pray. It is not just a liberty. Several reasons can be given for this need.

1. **It is a command** (1 Thess. 5:17; 1 Tim. 2:8; Luke 18:1; Matt. 6:9-13).

2. **Children want to talk with their Father;** a natural desire. Can you imagine never talking to your father? Can you imagine your children never or very seldom talking to you?



3. **God is concerned with our wants and needs** (Matt. 7:9-11; Luke 12:7).

4. **We need to find grace to help** (Heb. 4:16). Because we as humans are weak and frail we are dependent upon the assistance of Divine power. I realize more and more every day my need for the help of God. I continually stand in need of God's care and protection. We simply cannot make it without God's help (John 15:5; Phil. 4:13).

5. **God is the Almighty** (Matt. 19:26; Eph. 3:20-21; Rev. 4:8). He has the power to grant and do something about matters. He is in control. The reason I pray for world problems, peace and rulers is that God is able to do something about those things. The reason I pray for those with cancer, heart problems and other diseases is that God is in control.

6. **God is willing to grant us good things** (Matt. 7:7-8). God gives us what is best for us, even when his answer is "no".

7. **We need to express our love and adoration** (Matt. 6:9; 1 Tim. 2:1). Prayer is an opportunity to express our appreciation to God. It is an act of worship, a time to praise God.

8. **We need forgiveness** (Acts 8:22:24). What a privilege to be able to turn to God and start your life over. What if you couldn't do that?

9. **We must pray to follow the example of Christ** (1 Pet. 2:21).

10. **Prayer does good** (Jas. 5:16). It is effective.

We pray because we need to pray, not because that is our routine or it satisfies our conscience.

### Who Should Pray?

Not everyone has that grand privilege to approach the Almighty, for God does not hear the prayer of sinners. When the man whom Jesus had healed of his blindness was questioned he replied, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John 9:31). Though this man was not inspired, he stated a truth. Note that he did not say "I think" or "we think" or even "I know", rather he said "we know". It wasn't denied. His statement was based upon some Old Testament passages (cf. Isa. 59:1-2; Psa. 34:15-16; 66:18; Prov. 28:9).

The children of God have that privilege. Notice again John 9:31. God hears one that is "a worshipper of God, and doeth his will". This is descriptive of a Christian. Prayer must be offered in faith (Jas. 1:16) and addressed to "our Father" (Matt. 6:9-13) by a righteous man (Jas. 5:16). We are assured that God hears our prayers when we "keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22). Peter said, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (1 Pet. 3:12, emphasis mine DVR). Consider other passages such as Prov. 15:29; Rom. 8:14-15 and 1 Tim. 2:8.

### What About Cornelius and Saul and Other Alien Sinners?

Did not God hear and answer the prayers of Cornelius

and Saul (Acts 10:31; 9:11)? The argument is sometimes made from John 9:31 that this text is not dealing with alien sinners. It is true that it deals with rebellious covenant people (as it is based upon Old Testament passages). However, why would this principle not also apply to the alien? Would you say that God will not hear a covenant sinner, but will hear an alien sinner?

God may "hear" the prayer. That we wouldn't argue. I'm sure that God is aware of what the alien says. God may even respond somehow as he did in the case of Cornelius and Saul. But that is not answering the prayer. His ears are not open unto their prayers (1 Pet. 3:12). If a sinner (alien or otherwise) has the privilege to pray, it seems that all of the passages mentioned earlier are meaningless.

Certainly the alien could not pray for salvation and obtain it by prayer (e.g. at the mourner's bench). In the case of Saul he was told to quit praying and arise and be baptised (Acts 9:11; 22:16). Cornelius was to hear words that instructed him in things he must do to be saved (Acts 10:6; 11:14).

There is not a passage telling the alien sinner to pray. For what could he pray? Who ever heard of a convicted sinner praying for anything but pardon anyway?

Indeed, as we sing, "what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer."

## INDIVIDUALISM VS. ELDERS Part Four

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### What the Bible Teaches

Romans 12:3-8 reads:

For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted each a measure of faith. For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly; if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness (emphasis mine, jhj). This passage plainly teaches that there are many func-

tions which Christians can perform. One of those functions is that of leading. The word "lead" comes from the Greek word "proistemi," and means, "to put before, or set over, to rule"<sup>1</sup> According to this passage, there is a place among Christians for those who lead.

1 Corinthians 12:14, and 27-30 are very similar to Romans 12:3-8. Paul again compares the church to the human body. He argues that each member is as necessary to the church as each part of the human body is for its proper functioning. One function he lists in 1 Corinthians 12 is that of "administrations." This word comes from the Greek work "kubernesis." It means: "(to steer); a steersman." Obviously it is a naval term, and refers to the pilot of a ship. According to this passage, there is a need for "pilots" among God's people.

Ephesians 4:7-12 reveals that along with "apostles, prophets, evangelist, and teachers," Jesus gave "pastors." The word "pastor" comes from the Greek word "poimen," and means, "a shepherd"<sup>1</sup> Just as sheep need a shepherd, Christians need spiritual shepherds to guide, feed, and protect them. According to this passage, Jesus made provisions for "shepherds" to be among His people.

The New Testament uses several terms to describe pastors. In James 5:14 the text uses the word "elder": Is anyone among you sick? Let him call **for the elders of the church**, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." This word comes from the Greek word "presbuteros." While it sometimes merely has reference to an older man, it is often used to describe those who function as leaders among Christians.

Another word used to describe pastors is the word "overseer." In Philippians 1:1 Paul stated he was writing to the saints in Philippi "including the overseers and deacons." This word comes from the Greek word "episkopos." Thayer says it refers to "a man charged with the duty of seeing that things are done rightly, any curator, guardian, or superintendent."<sup>2</sup>

Pastors have authority. This is seen by making the following observations:

1. Terms used to designate them (like "shepherd" and "overseer"—see the references above) inherently carry the idea of authority.
2. The terms used to describe their work (leaders, administrators, pastors—see the references above) indicate they have authority.
3. Christians are commanded to "obey" and "submit" to them (Hebrews 13:17).
4. Funds designated for the relief of needy Christians were given over into their hands, and they oversaw the distribution of them (Acts 11:27-30).
5. The Bible expressly teaches it: "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor" (emphasis mine, jhj, 1 Timothy 5:17).

The authority of pastors is limited. It is limited, first of all, "to the flock of God among them" (1 Peter 5:2).

"The flock," is a term which has a reference to a local church (Acts 20:17, 28). Pastors only have authority within the local church over which they have been appointed (Acts 14:21-23). Second, pastors' authority is limited to options under generic authority.

It is outside of the scope of this series of articles to go into a detailed study of types of authority. But briefly, there are two types of Bible authority: specific and generic. Specific authority limits practice to that which is specified in the Bible. In matters of specific authority, elders can only lead (set an example). They must not become guilty of "lording it over those allotted" to their charge by attempting to add to, set aside, or otherwise tamper with matters of specific authority (1 Peter 5:2). Generic authority allows options (expedients) in carrying out the duty authorized. For example, Christians are commanded to assemble (Hebrews 10:25), but the place is an option under generic authority. They may rent, buy, or simply meet in someone's home, but they must have a place to assemble if they are to carry out the command.

The Bible teaches that scripturally organized churches depend upon pastors to make decisions relating to options of generic authority, just as the family depends upon the head of the house (the husband, father) to lead it (1 Timothy 3:5). Therefore, in Acts 11:27-30, when Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem carrying the gift from the saints in Antioch, they gave those funds to the pastors of the church who oversaw their distribution.

Pastors must not be guilty of "lording it over those allotted" to their charge in making these kinds of decisions. They are to set a good example, showing themselves to be considerate, understanding leaders, just as husbands/fathers are to do in the home (1 Peter 3:7; 5:2; 1 Timothy 3:5).

Finally, we need to understand that pastors are appointed (Titus 1:5) as a result of having a desire for the work (1 Timothy 3:1), and as a result of meeting certain Bible qualification (1 Timothy 3:1-7).

### What the Individualist Teaches

(1) Individualists hold that Matthew 20:25-28 teaches that no disciple has authority of any kind. We have amply shown above that pastors do have a certain kind of authority. Matthew 20:25-28 condemns overruling ("not lording it over those allotted to your charge," 1 Peter 5:2), not ruling over ("Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor," 1 Timothy 5:17).

(2) During the debate brother Holt quibbled, "Brother Smith teaches that elders have the authority of Christ, and that when members obey elders they are obeying Christ." Brother Smith responded by referring to Romans 13:1-7, and making the point that the civil government has the authority of God behind it, and that by obeying it we are obeying God. This completely took the matter away from brother Holt.

(3) Another point brother Holt made often during the debate was, "The scriptures teach that elders watch souls, not buildings, treasuries, or a corporate body." Elders do watch for souls, but they are also concerned with things such as the church treasury (Acts 11:30).

(4) In order to prove something scriptural, one must use scriptures. To simply question another's position will not prove one's own position to be true. Yet, most of brother Holt's efforts when debating the eldership centered around questions which he asked, and which he felt posed problems for brother Smith's position. The reader needs to be aware of some of these questions:

(a) How are pastors appointed? In the debate, brother Holt wanted to know what kind of "ceremony" it took to make a man a pastor. The Bible teaches that pastors are selected by the church they are to serve according to certain qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7). They are then "appointed" to the office by an evangelist (Titus 1:5). Hence, the Bible specifies (1) the qualifications, (2) who is to select, and (3) who is to appoint pastors, and leaves the rest as options of generic authority. We have an example of the apostle Paul appointing elders with prayers and fasting (Acts 14:23). I believe this example falls under generic authority ("appoint," Titus 1:5), and therefore it illustrates one way that this can be done.

(b) Can the local church put the pastors out? The Bible does not make specific provisions for removing pastors from service. The Bible does, however, charge the evangelist with publicly rebuking pastors who continue in sin (1 Timothy 5:19, 20). Pastors who continue in sin after a public rebuke should be treated like any other Christian who is living in sin; they should be withdrawn from (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15).

(c) Are pastors authorized to hire and fire preachers at will? When a church needs servants (elders, deacons, preachers, teachers, etc.), the general rule is that it should select its own. In Acts 6 the apostles (who were overseeing the church in Jerusalem at this time) pointed to the need for servants, set forth their qualifications, allowed the members to select the servants, and then they (the apostles) appointed them to the task. The church and the apostles worked together to put its servants in place, and, in the matter of preachers, I believe this ought to be true of churches and pastors as well. Those who select and appoint servants have the power to remove them. If a church selects a man to teach and preach on a full-time basis (i.e., he is supported by the church), it has the power to remove him.

Under unusual circumstances pastors might act without the consent or knowledge of the church to remove a teacher or preacher. They have this power because they are charged with guarding and overseeing the flock (Acts 20:28), and the flock is charged with obeying them (Hebrews 13:17). The members may not be mature enough to know the danger that is facing them, or it simply may be that the members are divided, some wanting to remove a teacher whom they believe is teaching wrongly, and others, not seeing the danger, not wanting to.

Elders must exercise authority with care, realizing that they will be called to account for every decision made (Hebrews 13:17).

<sup>1</sup> *Holman's Exhaustive Concordance of the New American Standard Version.*

<sup>2</sup> *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, page 243.

## EXEGESIS, HERMENEUTICS, AND CATHOLICISM

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When we use exegesis and hermeneutics properly, we can come to a correct understanding of God's will in the Bible. The word, 'exegesis', means, "explanation, critical analysis, or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. of the Bible." (Webster's New World Dictionary, Second College Edition.) The word, 'hermeneutics', means, "The science of interpretation; esp. the study of the principles of Biblical exegesis." (Ibid.)

God expects people to understand "what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17). So, the Bible is understandable. It is not a mystery which mere mortals can not decipher. We do recognize, that there are some things which are "hard to be understood" (2 Peter 3:16), but we will need to study harder on these things before we fully understand them. As D. R. Dungan has written:

"There is no essential difference between the study of the scriptures and the study of any other subjects, respecting the mental outlay necessary to success. An occasional hour or lesson may accomplish something toward learning, but not much. With all the advantages given Timothy through the early instruction received from his mother and grandmother, and the assistance of the apostle Paul, still it was necessary for him to 'study to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed: rightly setting forth the word of truth.' So we find in the efforts essential to a knowledge of the word of God, that, like obtaining knowledge of other things, the mind must be employed intently and continuously. There can be no substitute for mental industry. We must apply the mind and heart, or not know the things of God."

### Hermeneutics, page 16.

But, problems arise when exegesis and hermeneutics are not used or are misused. An example of this error is seen in the way the Roman Catholic Church uses God's word. I quote from the Jerome Biblical Commentary, *Imprimatur* by Lawrence Cardinal Shehan, Archbishop of Baltimore, page 627:

"... The encyclical [*Providentissimus Deus*] teaches that a biblical text cannot be interpreted against a sense determined by the Church or supported by the unanimous consent of the Fathers... In his interpretation of difficult passages, the exegete must follow the analogy of faith, i.e., he cannot come to an

interpretation of the inspired author's meaning that would be a direct and formal contradiction of a dogma taught by the Church... He must remember that the supreme law is Catholic doctrine as authoritatively proposed by the Church...".

From this, we can see why Catholics think Peter was a pope. Even though Paul clearly states, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11), the Catholic exegete must insist that the church was built on Peter. And even though we can read in the scriptures that we 'are built upon the foundation of the apostles (not one of them but all and that means their inspired teaching M.G.) and prophets Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone . . ." (Eph. 2:20), yet, the Catholic must reject this Truth of God because it does not align with the Roman Catholic Church's interpretation.

But, when we use exegesis and hermeneutics unfettered by Catholic dogmas and interpretation, we can understand that what Jesus said in Matthew 16:18 was not that Peter was the foundation of the church, but that what Peter confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God", was the foundation. And this agrees with the rest of Holy Writ. So simple, isn't it? Another example of Catholic interpretation standing in the way of a correct understanding of God's Truth is baptism. Catholic doctrine is:

"Christ commanded Baptism by water. He did not prescribe the manner of applying water but left its administration to the prudent judgment of the Church. The present law for Catholics makes Baptism by pouring obligatory. Immersion and sprinkling, though valid, are forbidden".

**The Question Box,**  
by Bertrand L. Conway, page 153.)

So, the Catholic exegete's hands are tied—"he cannot come to an interpretation of the inspired author's meaning that would be a direct and formal contradiction of dogma taught by the church . . . He must remember that the supreme law is Catholic doctrine as authoritatively proposed by the church . . .". So, when he reads, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism . . ." (Romans 6:4) and "Buried with him in baptism..." (Col. 2:12) the Catholic exegete cannot teach this Truth! How sad!

If we will use proper exegesis and hermeneutics, and even plain common sense, we can clearly see what God commands for us, today.

There are numerous other examples of Catholic lack of proper scriptural exegesis that could be given, but these will suffice to show some of their problems. The problem is not theirs alone and we need to be always on the alert that we do not decide beforehand what is right or wrong until we really study God's Holy Will, then rightly divide or handle it as we should, (see 2 Timothy 2:15).

## THE TELEVISION EVANGELISTS

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A lull in my meeting schedule for a few weeks has given me time to do a little "television watching." Naturally I was attracted to the "Evangelists" who ply their trade and thus prey upon the people from day to day. There is Oral Roberts, Richard Roberts, Bob Tilton, Jim Baaker, Jimmy Swaggart, Billy Graham, Jim Whittington, and James Robison, to name several, who may be seen regularly on television. To say it is a shame what these men say and do on these programs is to put it mildly. Some of the most unreasonable, and thus ungodly, tales are told. You talk about a bunch of con men, these and others like them take the cake.

I grant that some good comes to some people with these "begging campaigns." Many people are fed when they would otherwise go hungry. But there is no way to estimate the harm that is done daily by these men who pose as preachers of the gospel. Think of the millions of people who have "prayed the sinners prayer" whatever that means, and think they are saved when the BIBLE says, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners" (John 9:31). Jesus said go preach the gospel, "he that believeth **and is baptized shall be saved**" (Mark 16:16). But none of these men EVER tell anybody what the Lord said. Peter said "repent and be baptized EVERY ONE of you... **for the remission of sins** (Acts 2:38). But none of these men EVER tell anybody what Peter said. Paul said we are "**baptized into Christ**" (Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27). But none of these men EVER tell anybody what Paul said.

Now, since "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and since baptism is "for the remission of sins," and since one is baptized "into Christ," it follows that if one is not baptized he is not saved, he does not have his sins remitted, and he is not in Christ. But, since none of the evangelists named ever tell anybody these things it follows that the efforts of all of them put together **never led a soul to Christ in their lives.**

I wrote a piece like this some time ago for one of the papers and as a result received a letter from a lady who said she was a member of the church and that what I said was the truth. But she said we ought to love these people. I suppose she meant that we should never let them know they were lost. But that is not the way I love them. I love them enough that I want them to be saved. The only way they will ever try to learn what to do to be saved is first to know that they are lost.

So, let's consider the matter again. Is it necessary to do what the Lord said to? If it is, since he said be

baptized, it follows that unless and until we are baptized we have not done what he said. Again, is it necessary to have our sins remitted? If it is, since the Bible says be baptized for the remission of sins, it follows that the sins are not remitted unless and until we are baptized. Once more, is it necessary to get into Christ to be saved? If it is, since the Bible says we are baptized into Christ (there is no other way to get into Christ), it follows that unless and until we are baptized we are not in Christ.

I love the souls of men and women and boys and girls. And, as the Bible says, "I hate every false way" (Psalms 119:128). I cannot sit idly by and see these Television Evangelists exploit the situation and get filthy rich themselves and NEVER TELL ANYBODY what the Bible says to do to be saved. I hope I do not become your enemy by telling you the truth. I hope you will "search the scriptures" to "see if these things are so" (Acts 17:11). I hope you will just be as honest as I am in this matter. These men are false teachers and they are NOT leading people to Christ. They are actually fixing people so they will never even try to learn what to do to be saved. I cannot afford to let them pass without at least making an effort to help the people.

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## REAPING ADAM'S WHIRLWIND

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As I sit writing this, Hurricane Elena is stationary, building up power only two hours away. We own a mobile home, so mandatory evacuation sent us a dozen miles away to our local high school, praying, wondering if we had seen our home for the last time, asking God, "Why me? Haven't we been faithful, sacrificing much for the gospel and for others' sakes?" Lately, it seemed one calamity followed another, and good things happened only to give us something to lose. We did not want a lot, just a little peace to serve our God. But we found ourselves laughing at most peoples' "disasters," for to us they would appear a blessing. Perhaps, then, it was providential that last night as I sat at a high school desk with our sleeping bags unrolled in the corner, I opened my Bible to begin reading where I had left off, and found myself in the book of Lamentations. If you have ever felt, justly or not, that everything was against you, that God had quit listening to you, that the future held only bad for you, then the answers I found in Chapter 3 may help you, too. Oh, I learned little that was new, but Chapter 3 concentrated many things I had believed, and clarified others about BIBLE teaching on why bad things happen to good people.

## Jeremiah

"I am the man that hath seen affliction" (3:1). Most of his lamentations are for Jerusalem being carried away to Babylonian captivity, but in this passage, Jeremiah focuses on his personal disasters as a part of that greater one. Seeking answers, he names God the cause of his troubles because service to God has occasioned them. Jeremiah stood out in his day because he would not, could not, tone down the voice of God's reproof (Jer 19:19). Having never read Dale Carnegie, he drew bolts of affliction from the people of God he loved and tried to save: "I am become a derision to all my people" (3:14; 2 Tim 4:1-4). They tried to kill him; they imprisoned him, dumped him in a pit of mud, and burned his writings. And, of all, his greatest calamity was to be right, to be able to say, "I told you so," when the Babylonians came. Never once in his life did anything good happen to Jeremiah. His only blessings were the removal of some curse—being lifted from the miry pit, being spared when King Jehoiakim killed other prophets, etc. Now, as he observes the worst—Jerusalem and God's temple destroyed—as his life nears its end, he cries in despair, "Yea when I cry and call for help, He shutteth out my prayer," and "My strength is perished, and mine expectations from Jehovah" (3:8:18). No answer; no help; no hope; Jeremiah weeps in their ashes.

### Has Grace Fled?

When we confront a sensitive atheist with evidence that God exists, he may well reply, "I refuse to believe in a God so cruel He will allow innocent children to die of starvation and disease." Indeed, many of the most faithful cannot deal with apparently unjust suffering. The wicked prosper in health. The righteous starve and die of agonizing illnesses. The whirlwind of sickness, suffering and death that result from sin touches all men. In this life trouble and trials, bounty and blessings often come without regard for the recipient's morality. That pain, sickness, and dying occur without moral discrimination is a necessary corollary to God "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and the unjust" (Mt 5:45). We praise God for the blessings. Does it follow that we ought to curse him when evil befalls us?

### No Variation

When things seem as bad as they can get, remember Jeremiah. Standing amidst the rubble of the holy city, watching vultures feed on thousands of God's chosen, seeing looting, raping, and the carrying away, Jeremiah wrote, "This I recall to my mind; therefore have I hope. It is of Jehovah's loving kindness that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not" (3:21-22). God made the world and "saw that it was good." No evil, sickness, pain, cancer, malnutrition existed in the world God made. MAN sinned. MAN rebelled. Were justice strictly served, there would be no good, no beauty, no hope in the world at all. Were justice meted, every day would bring only despair, pain, ugliness. But, because God is merciful, there remains a bird's song to cheer the lonely heart, a bee's industry to sweeten our lives, and hope for eternal life to make tolerable our burdens and

lighten our way. Blame not God for suffering and evil, for man authored it through sin. Man, not god, kills the babies who starve; MAN, not God, brought cancer, muscular dystrophy, Alzheimer's, and death to being; MAN, not God, created a world where nature rampages and destroys by hurricane, by drought, by hail and lightning and flood. And who is the man who has not sinned? "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins" (3:39). Succinctly, the worst that can happen is too good for the best of us, so stop whining!

God is good (Lk 18:19). Only "good and perfect gifts" come from our Father (Jas 1:17). We ought not to condemn our God as so many do: "Why did God let this happen?" or "God took my mother (or wife or child)." God is without variation in blessing us with good. Sin is the killer. Sin brings sorrow and sickness.

Most of us need only to stop dwelling on the negative and count our many blessings to overcome the depression brought by some disaster. But even when blessings are few, and especially when sin's curse lies heavy upon us because we are standing for the right, we have Jesus and eternal life. "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice" (Phil 4:4). How can I count the bad things and clutch them to my heart with constant questionings when "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim 1:12)? The problem with our worries, fears, and whinings in the face of trouble and trials is the same one the apostles had when Jesus slept on their ship during the storm. "Master, we perish!" they cried. "Where is your faith?" Jesus replied. (Lk 8:24, 25). More confidence in God's unchanging goodness, more faith in the armor of God that we may overcome sin, more surety of hope in the resurrection, more wrestling in study and prayer and we could find our faith, even in life's severest storm.

Elena has passed; the master has said, "Peace, be still." When another storm comes, whether temporal or spiritual, will we set our anchor with confidence "within the veil," or will we again go whining in faithless fear, "Master, we perish?"

### A NEW CLASS WORKBOOK

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### "THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND"

**M. F. Manchester**  
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The apostle Peter with great urgency wrote the following to the early Christians in these words: "But the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer" (1 Pet. 4:7).

His admonition: "Be sober and watch unto prayer" implies that something of great magnitude was about to happen by his use of the term, "the end of all things is at hand". Question: Does "the end of all things" include the coming of Christ and the end of time? Our answer is no when we consider the meaning of at "hand". John the Baptist used the term in announcing the kingdom of Christ. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat. 3:1, 2). Jesus also when he began his personal ministry preached the same. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat. 4:17). The Phrase "at hand" is explained by Luke in these words: "And say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Lk. 10:9).

It follows therefore as it must, that Peter's "The end of all things is at hand" meant that whatever was included in the "all things" would soon come to pass. As to the second coming of Christ at the end of this earth we know from what Paul wrote to the Thessalonians that the day (Coming of Christ) was not at hand. "Now we beseech you, brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2 Thess. 2:1-3).

Now I believe that Peter's, The end of all things is at hand" included a coming of Christ but not the time when the judgment day will be set and all the dead be raised. In connection with 1 Pet. 4:7 let us notice some scriptures of like import to his: "The end of all things". To the Philippians Paul wrote: "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5). Does this mean the personal coming of the Lord at the last day? The answer is no, because as already noted he said the coming of the Lord was not at hand. I think that all will agree that "at hand" means impending. Another Scripture that ties in with these two is Paul's advice when he wrote the Corinthians that it would be better not to marry in view of what was about to happen. "But this I say brethren, the time is short: it re-

maineth (The time, that is) that both they that have wives be as though they had none" (1 Cor. 7:29). Also we have recorded Paul's admonition to the Hebrews: "Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as you see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25) It was not the first day of the week upon which they assembled. They knew that every week had a first day. It was a day of upheaval including persecution of the worst sort which was plainly implied by the scriptures as cited above.

### The End of all Things

Question: Just what did the Holy Spirit have in mind when He caused Peter to write: "The end of all things is at hand"? In answer to this question let us call Jesus Christ, our Lord and master to the stand. In Matthew 23:33-38 he was speaking to the unbelieving Jews and said to them: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall you scourge in your synagogues and persecute them from city to city" (Vs. 33:34). Now listen to him in verses 35-36. "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall be required of this generation". Now verses 37 to 38. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate".

Christ in these verses is announcing the end of the Jewish State, including the temple and all that it stood for. Peter by inspiration of the Spirit wrote of it as being "the end of all things" which brought an end to the Jewish persecutions. Keep in mind that until A.D. 70 the temple was still standing and the Jewish persecutions continued unabated until it was destroyed by the Romans.

The overthrow of the Jewish State was the "day" that the Hebrew Christians could "see approaching" in Heb. 10:25, When Jesus made his statement to his disciples in Matthew 24:2, that not one stone of the temple would be left standing, they thought such a great event as this would indicate the end of this mundane system. In Matthew 24:3 they asked him: "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world?" He told them plainly that there would be no signs to indicate his coming in the end of the world (Matt. 24:36). "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only". Now read verses 37 through 39. "But as the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and

took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of man be". He make it plain that there will be no signs that will precede his coming. As to his coming in the destruction of Jerusalem he taught his disciples that there would be signs which would **warn them** of the coming destruction. When the Christians saw these signs, they knew it was time for them to flee the city. They would know that "the end of all things" concerning the old Jewish system and state was at hand.

One of the signs would be the "abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel the prophet. Hear the Lord speak on the subject of signs: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (Whose readeth let him understand:) Then let them (Christians) which be in Judea flee into the mountains" (Matt. 24:15-16). There is no question that the "abomination of desolation" was the encirclement of Jerusalem by the Roman Army.

Now let us drop back to verses 13 and 14. "But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come". The end of time and this earth? No—the end of the Jewish State, when Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by the Roman Army, in A.D. 70.

Was the gospel preached to all nations before A.D. 70? Let Paul answer in Col. 1:23. To them he wrote. "If you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister". Colossians was written around A.D. 64, and the end of which Jesus spoke was not the end of time, but **the end of the power** of the unbelieving Jews over the Christians. Yes, Matthew 24 up to and including verse 34 was all fulfilled upon that generation. Jesus said: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled".

In the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish power, God bruised Satan. Of such Paul wrote to the Roman Christians. "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20). The use of the phrase "end of all things" as employed by the Holy Spirit in Peter means the same as "shortly," as used by Paul. The "end of all things" and "shortly" did not mean five hundred or two thousand years in the future.

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## MARY SLOAN DEPARTS THIS LIFE

We are saddened to report that Mary Sloan, beloved wife of faithful gospel preacher L.E. Sloan of Brandon, Mississippi, passed from this life in the evening of September 15 following open heart surgery in Houston, Texas. They were in Houston visiting with their son, Jamie L. Sloan who preaches at Kleinwood in Houston, when she had to be hospitalized and where she remained in intensive care for three weeks before surgery was done. Funeral services were conducted in Goodlettsville, Tennessee on Sept. 17. You may write brother Sloan at 90 Woodgate Dr., Brandon, MS 39042.

## THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

"... They rehearsed all that God had done with them ..."—Acts 14:27

*Send all News Items to: Connie W. Adams, P.O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109*

**GEORGE W. LAMBROFF**, 629 Ordway Avenue, Bowling Green, OH 43402—If you have a son or daughter attending Bowling Green University, Bowling Green, Ohio, we would appreciate hearing from you. We will make contact with all who are referred to us and attend to their needs while attending the university. Write: Central Church of Christ, P.O. Box 82, Bowling Green, Ohio 43402.

**ROBERT T. CREWS**, Box 451, Clarksville, TN 37040—The University church of Christ is temporarily meeting in the International Machinist Union Hall off US 79 in the St. Bethlehem area. We have purchased property and are moving forward toward a permanent meeting place on Warfield Blvd. (State Highway 374) just off US 79, also in the St. Bethlehem area. Projected completion date for the building is November or December, 1986. Beginning October 1, 1986, Alan Yeater, previously of Greenwood, Indiana, will begin working with the congregation. Christians traveling through this area, students attending Austin Peay State University, or military personnel assigned to Fort Campbell are urged to make contact and worship with us. For information, interested persons should call: (615) 385-2657; 358-3192; or 358-2085.

**RALPH C. SMART, SR.**, P.O. Box 822, Portland, Maine 04104—Sometime ago the church in Scarborough, Maine disbanded. The preacher and his family went to the liberal church in South Portland. One family moved to Texas. Some are drifting around in the area. I am in touch with them. Two are worshipping with us. We had hoped to have the use of the old building owned by the premillennial brethren, but for the time being we are meeting at the Howard Johnson Motor Lodge, Exit 8, I-95, in the Cove Room. My phone number is (207) 799-0720. Contact me if we can help.

### BONNY MELTON IN BRIGHTON, ENGLAND

**FRED MELTON**, 19511 Tomball Parkway, Houston, TX 77070—Bonny Melton is now working with the Oxford Street church of Christ in Brighton, England. Bonny and his family, Angela, Zantea and Zane, would be happy to welcome any brethren who happen to be visiting in that part of the world. His address is: 6, Portsmouth Wood Close, Lindfield, West Sussex RH16 2dQ, ENGLAND, Phone: (0444) 456689.

### MAINE NEWS

**RALPH C. SMART, SR.** Work has started on the new building for the church at Milbridge. Three were baptized there last month ... Bruce Hudson and I held a gospel meeting in Riverview, New Brunswick, Canada in May. We knocked doors and gave out 1,000 invitations. We had four visitors. The church here is small but determined to grow ... Two were baptized at Bangor recently as a result of home studies taught by Earl Metcalf. James P. Needham was in a meeting there in August. ... Jeff Kingry was in a meeting at Dexter in August ...

Harry Pickup, Jr. was at Pittsfield in June.

**JOHN W. PITMAN**, Rt. 1, Box 73, Springfield, TN 38256—The work with the Kentucky Lake Road congregation continues to go well. In July one was baptized and one restored. Three new members have moved into the area. Attendance is in the 30's on Sunday and at times the lower 40's. Denver Neimier was with us in a meeting in June. Eugene Crawley was here in September in a meeting. Two churches are trying to stand in a county where there are 17 liberal churches. Call me if we can be of help. (901) 644-9107 or 642-8619.

**ROBERTO TONDELLI**, Via Roscioni, 69 00129 Rome, Italy—At Pomezia, near Rome, the church where I work had a special preaching effort in April with Stefano Corazza of Udine, Italy preaching. In three lessons he contrasted Catholic doctrines with the New Testament and in one lesson he dealt with the Watchtower falsities in the light of Christ's law. Brethren distributed 10,000 invitation cards and used 200 small posters in shops and public places to advertise the meeting. While we did not have as many visitors as hoped, we did have some and believe much good was done.

April 25-27, Francesco Fosci of Latina and I were with the brethren at Poggiomarino, between Salerno and Naples. We were guests in the home of Vincenzo Ruggiero who preaches there. The church there has several youngsters. Non-members attended the public services and we used extra time answering questions. The meeting place is in the center of the small town. They have enlarged their facilities for Bible classes.

### PREACHERS NEEDED

**DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA**—The church meeting at 1234 Flomich Avenue, Holly Hill, Florida (Daytona Beach subd.) needs a new preacher. Luke Flynn is leaving soon to go to a new work in South Carolina. We want a man who is a worker and dedicated to preaching and teaching the word of God. We are a small congregation of 35 with no elders yet. We can only provide \$275 per week, but do have the promise of support from several larger congregations. There are three liberal churches in the greater Daytona Beach area. The nearest faithful churches are in Deland and New Smyrna, about 25 miles away. Those interested may contact O. Kim Vandagriff, 11 Autumnwood Trail, Ormond, FL 32074. Call (904) 673-5394.

**MONCTON, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA**—A small group of Christians are meeting near Moncton, New Brunswick. The greater Moncton area has a population of about 130,000 people. We are looking for a man to work full time with us. He would have to secure support elsewhere. We need much individual teaching here. This is a challenging work for a dedicated man. Those interested please contact: Bob Rubel, R.R. 3, Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada E1C 8J7. Phone (506) 386-1523.



**PREACHER AVAILABLE**

**JAMES H. SHEWMAKER**, 1029 Ellsworth Ave., Columbus, OH 43206-1711—I am seeking a congregation with which to work. I am 28 years old, married and have no children I have 3 1/2 years experience as a full time evangelist. If interested, please write to me at the above address.

\* \* \* \* \*

**EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS**

**SONG IMPEDERS**

To "impede" something means to hinder its progress. The practice of congregational singing is authorized in the New Testament. A song leader is expedient in pitching, starting and keeping the congregation together while the song flows. Anyone who purports to be a song leader, but who hinders the progress of the singing is therefore a song impeder rather than a song leader. Here are some simple rules for being a song impeder. (1) Sing so slowly that the congregation is exhausted and out of breath. (2) Lead so quietly that very few can get the pitch and so that you have very little control over keeping the congregation together. If you are going to lead, then please lead. (3) Pitch the song so low or so high than only a very few can reach the notes. (4) If you lead with our hand, make motions that are confusing and which do not synchronize with your voice. Or, you could hide your hand direction altogether by obscuring your hand behind the speakers stand so nobody can see it. (5) In a gospel meeting, be sure to select songs which only you know. That way, others cannot worship in song. (6) In a gospel meeting, NEVER ask the preacher if there are songs which would blend well with a sermon, or which might be fitting for an invitation. (7) NEVER prepare your song selection ahead of time so you can give careful thought to your selection. Always wait until three minutes before starting time and do it on the front row. (8) In leading

an invitation song, be sure to sit near the back, take your own good time about getting to the front, kill more time in getting the pitch, and be sure that a full two minutes has passed between the time the congregation stands to sing and the time you start the song. This will destroy the most urgent moment one may have to respond to the gospel and is guaranteed to make you a successful song impeder. If you will follow these simple rules, they will make you a good song impeder and you will be doing your part to hinder scriptural worship of others.

\* \* \* \* \*

**DOLLAR DEVALUATION**

Some of the brethren being supported in foreign lands are now in a serious financial crunch because of the devaluation of the dollar in their country. The problem may vary from country to country, but has reached serious dimensions in some places. For instance, brethren in Italy supported from the States have lost 25% of their income due to this problem. This is a sizeable cut. What would it do to YOUR family budget? If you support men in other countries, it might be good to inquire about this matter and help these folks who are already giving so much of themselves in order to preach the gospel throughout the world.

**IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH**

BAPTISMS	204
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