

The Advocate of Truth

The Lord's
Supper
and Malice

Be Ye
Separate

Truth
Stands
Above

The Book
of Jonah

"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (I Corinthians 10:4).



The Advocate of Truth is the official organ of The Church of God (7th Day) with headquarters at Salem, West Virginia.

It is published once a month on the fourth Monday of each month by The Advocate of Truth Press, Inc. PO Box 328, Salem, West Virginia 26426. Entered as Second Class Matter on January 22, 1990 (now periodicals) at the Post Office in Salem, West Virginia under the Postal Act of March 3, 1879. The magazine is mailed under the periodicals rate.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Your subscription is free. It is paid for by people who are concerned about the truth.

Your contributions are sincerely appreciated. You may request this periodical by sending your mailing address to this address.

POSTMASTER:

Please send address changes to:

**THE CHURCH OF GOD
PUBLISHING HOUSE
P.O. Box 328
Salem, WV 26426-0328**

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**Volume LV III Number 10
April 27, 2009
The Advocate of Truth
USPS 542-940**

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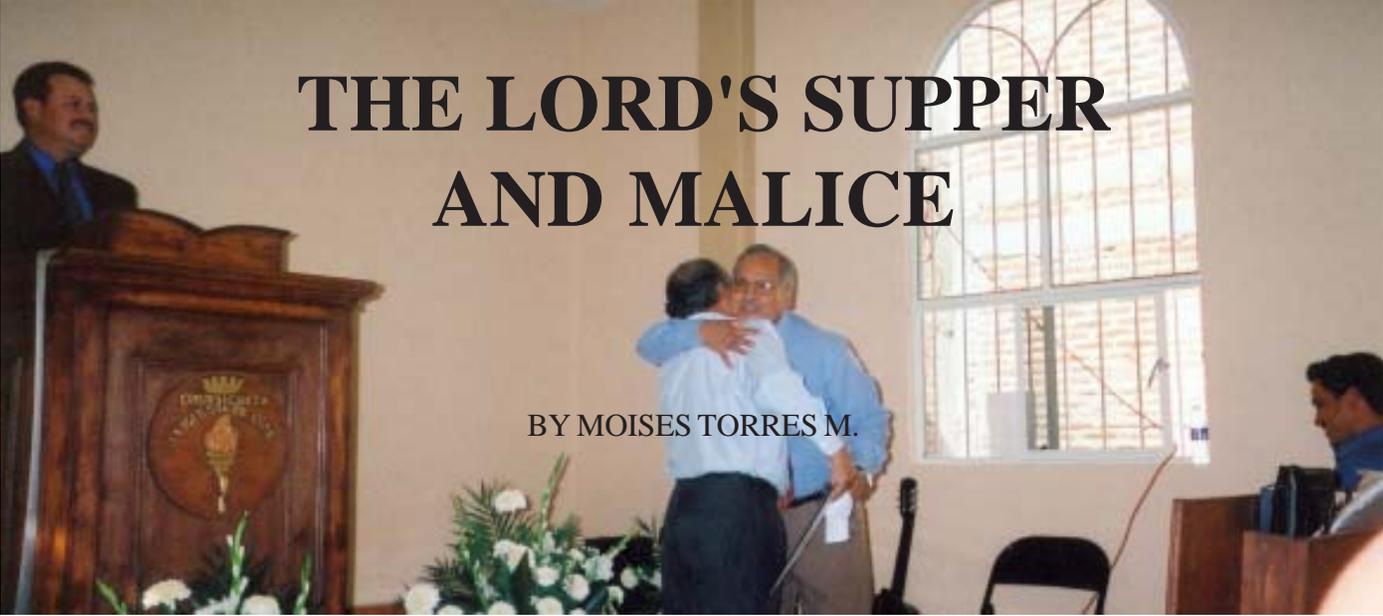
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THE LORD'S SUPPER AND MALICE

BY MOISES TORRES M.

One of the great statements made by the Apostle Paul in relationship to the observing of the Lord's Supper is against malice. Malice is a diabolical feeling working in the heart of human beings to destroy innocent people. In the Bible, we find many examples of people who acted in this way.

Cain manifested his malice by lifting up his hand against his brother. "But unto Cain and to his offering he (God) had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell... And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him" (Genesis 4:5,8).

Malice entered into the heart of Esau, and he swore to kill his brother, Jacob. "And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob" (Genesis 27:41). The malice of Edom, or Esau, was so great that he even pursued his brother, Israel, by the force of the sword in the time of his calamity. God will destroy him for that. Please see Ezekiel 35.

Also the brothers of Joseph, the dreamer, tried to kill him because they were jealous of him. Finally they sold him to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt. "And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some

pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams... And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content" (Genesis 37:18-20, 25-27).

Saul was jealous of David because he was chosen by God. So Saul wanted to kill David. "And Saul eyed David from that day and forward. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul's hand. And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice" (I Samuel 18:9-11).

The presidents of various provinces of Babylon wanted to kill Daniel because they envied him, and they made the king to cast him into the lion's den. "Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for

thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree" (Daniel 6:6-9).

Herod thought about killing John the Baptist because the prophet told Herod that it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife. "For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not" (Mark 6:18-19).

The scribes, the chief priests, and the Jews wanted to kill Jesus, an innocent man. "And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine" (Mark 11:18).

In all of these biblical examples, we see that malice is caused by jealousy and envy. There will always be those who harbor malice in their hearts.

In the Third Epistle of John, verses 9-11, the Apostle John mentions a certain man named Diotrefes who loved to have the preeminence. He caused many problems for

the church by talking with malice against the children of God. The lust for power produces malice in wicked men which causes them to want to destroy those who are righteous.

The Apostle Paul made it clear to the church that the Lord does not want malice in the heart of any of His children and before His TABLE OF SACRIFICE on the day of the Lord's Supper. He commanded us, saying: "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Corinthians 5:8). The church must observe the Lord's Supper in a condition of sincerity and truth. If there is malice in the heart of anyone, then it will not be a Lord's feast for him.

The Apostle Peter also advised us, "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:1-2).

The desire of the apostles for the church will always be the same as the Apostle Paul's: "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men" (I Corinthians 14:20).

May the Spirit of God triumph in your heart. Amen.



Most people are gregarious beings. They generally enjoy socializing and fellowshiping with others. This is actually the way that God created the human race, and it was meant to be a blessing. Concerning Adam, God said, "...It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). Then He cre-

ated Eve to be Adam's wife.

In fact, as our heavenly Father, God is, Himself, a family Person. We read in Psalm 68:6, "God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains..." Furthermore, the Apostle Paul wrote, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord

Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Ephesians 3:14-16).

God’s family, as the above verse implies, goes beyond mere natural ties and is based upon eternal spiritual relationships that are centered in Him and Christ. The Psalmist exults, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1). It truly is a wonderful thing to witness God’s people uniting together in the truth of His Word. So important is this unity of the brethren that they are charged in Hebrews 10:24,25: “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

And yet, as close and united as believers are to be toward the Lord and His family, they are to be as separate from the world and its ways. A great problem arises when believers try to justify their fellowshiping with others by making compromises with the truth of God’s Word. This can happen even in so-called “christian circles.” Let us now look at some situations that the Bible explicitly states is “off limits” to a child of God as pertaining to fellowship.

The Apostle Paul had to address a situation in the Corinthian church regarding a brother who was in sin. We find the situation in I Corinthians 5:1 and 2. “It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.”

Not only was this person living in sin, but the rest of the church seemed to be rather nonchalant about it. Paul made it plain that the congregation was not to have fellowship with the practicing sinner, and wrote to them that he might “be taken away from among you.” So serious was Paul about this sinful condition that he even exhorted, “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (vs. 4), to have him delivered “...unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (vs.5).

The reason for this discipline was at least two-fold.

Paul wanted the man to eventually repent of his sin and be saved. But more than that, he wanted to spare the rest of the church from the evil influence of the man’s sin which could spread like a leavening agent through the whole congregation (see vss. 6-8). By necessity, he must be removed from them.

Just what is meant by being delivered “unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh” is a matter of debate. However, it involved the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and, through Him, the authority of the church as well. Very probably it involved the man’s being disfellowshipped from the church, which would take him out from under the protection of the Lord’s hand, too. A disciple must always be under God’s appointed authority structure, whether it be the church, family, government, or job situation to be fully under His protection. Rebellion or disfellowship can remove the Lord’s hedge of protection from the disciple, and thus give Satan an opportunity to harrass him or her.

Furthermore, Paul addressed the fornication issue again, and then went beyond it to inform the Corinthian church that they should not fellowship with a so-called brother who is involved in other sinful practices as well. He exhorted: “I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat” (vss. 9-11).

Perhaps just as insidious as the above sins are to the church is the “leaven” which Jesus cautioned against to His disciples. This conversation is recorded in Matthew, chapter 16. In verses 1-4, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees for seeking a sign from Him. Then, after Jesus and His disciples had left this hypocritical group, we find in verses 6-8,11,12: “Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?...How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware

of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.”

The word “doctrine” means teaching, and the Pharisees and the Sadducees were full of leavened (false) doctrine, or teaching. In the case of the Pharisees, the false doctrine partly consisted of traditions which they considered as important, or perhaps even more important, than Scripture itself. Notice, for instance, their emphasis on tradition in Matthew chapter 15, verses 1-6. “Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.”

In Matthew 23, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for a lengthy list of sins, including: teaching Scripture to others but not doing it themselves; binding heavy burdens upon others; doing works to be seen of men; not allowing people to enter into the kingdom of heaven; injuring widows; finding ways to not keep their oaths; keeping parts of the law, but not keeping other parts; and pretending to be righteous.

Concerning the Sadducees, we find from the book of Acts chapter 23, a dispute between them and the Pharisees. Verse 8 gives us partial insight into some of the false beliefs of the Sadducees. We read, “For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit...”

The leaven, therefore, of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees that Jesus warned His disciples about, includes at least three points: traditions of men which are held equal to, or above, Scripture; pretending to follow God’s Word, but actually not doing it; and believing heretical doctrines contrary to the plain teachings of the Word of God. Doesn’t all this sound very similar to conditions that we see around us today?

Now, let’s consider a situation concerning false doctrine that the Apostle John wrote about. We find this situation recorded in his second epistle. First, let us read the warning that John gave in regard to this evil doctrine that

was circulating by some teachers in his day. “Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (vss. 8-11).

What was the pernicious doctrine that was being taught by the “deceivers”? We find out what it was in verse 7. “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.” We will come back to this passage later and look at it in more detail.

According to the Scripture in verses 8-11, the person who “transgresseth” is also the one who “abideth not in the doctrine of Christ.” That person, the Bible tells us, “hath not God.” But, just what does *abiding* in the doctrine of Christ consist of? There are two parts to this abiding. John 15, verse 7 informs us, “If ye abide in me (Christ), and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

We must abide in the Lord Jesus Christ by receiving Him as our Lord and Savior. But also, His words must abide in us. That is, the teachings of Jesus must be our guide to live by. If we separate these two principles, we are actually not abiding in the doctrine of Christ. Receiving the *words* of Jesus is emphasized as well in John 12:48. “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”

Now, let us return to the book of II John, verse 7, which tells us about those “...who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh...” In the Apostle John’s day, there were some groups of people who claimed to be Christians who also believed in the false doctrines of Hellenism (Greek thought). At least some of these groups could be classified as Gnostics (from *gnosis*--“knowledge”), or those who claimed to have received further insight, or knowledge, beyond what the Bible teaches. We will not use the space in this article to go into a lengthy discussion of their beliefs. Rather, we will try to clarify verse 7 in the light of the false teachings of these apparent infiltrators.

Some Gnostics believed that there were two manifes-

tations to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. They thought that one of these manifestations was the man Jesus, Who lived in the flesh, when He was upon the earth. The other manifestation, they believed, was Christ, Who was in a spiritual form after His resurrection. Their belief led them to the conclusion that Jesus was an inferior manifestation, and that His teachings, as a man, were inferior as well. They taught that Christians should reject the “inferior” teachings of Jesus, and look rather to His “spiritual” teachings, as Christ, in the later New Testament (and in their writings as well). Therefore, they did not confess “that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.”

This, as we can see, was a great heresy, and it even has an influence on “Christian” thought today. Many denominations teach that Jesus’ doctrines (or example) on such subjects as the Sabbath, clean and unclean meats, etc., were only Jewish, and that the later writings of the New Testament were meant to clarify His true “spiritual” doctrines. They use such Scriptures as Acts 20:7 to try to prove that Sabbath worship was changed to Sunday worship, and Acts 10 to try to prove that it is now all right to eat all meats. This, however, is just another way of not confessing “that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,” and it is a form of modern-day Gnosticism.

The Apostle John warned his people that, concerning fellowship, they were not to have anything to do with such a deceiver, neither by receiving him into their houses, nor bidding him “God speed”. This may sound harsh to some, but like the Apostle Paul, John did not want the leaven of error to spread throughout the church, which it will do if it is not stopped. Therefore, believers are not to fellowship with the brother (or sister) who is a practicing sinner, nor with the one who doesn’t abide “in the doctrine of Christ”.

Notice what Paul had to say about a heretic (a person who believes or teaches Scriptural error): “A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself” (Titus 3:10,11). That these heretics shall come is emphasized by the Apostle Peter. “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words

make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not” (II Peter 2:1-3).

Not only will heresies be taught in the Body of Christ, but they *must be exposed* as such. In writing to the Corinthian church, Paul exhorted, “Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies (factions) among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you” (I Corinthians 11:17-19).

In another example, given in the Bible of withholding fellowship, Jesus taught in Matthew 18:15-17 that if a brother in the church sins against you, you must go to him personally. If he won’t listen to you for reconciliation, then you must take one or two more to help settle the dispute. If he won’t hear them, then you must bring the situation before the congregation. If the offender will not hear the church, then fellowship with him is to be broken off.

The Bible also makes it plain that a disciple of Jesus is to worship God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23,24). There is much false, though perhaps sincere, worship in the world today. When we go back to ancient Israel’s day, in the book of Jeremiah, we see that the situation was similar. Chapter 10:2-5 reads: “Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.”

(This passage sounds very similar to the pagan custom of cutting down a Christmas tree, trimming it, and fastening it upright so that it won’t fall over.) In any event, the Israelites in Jeremiah’s day were learning to imitate heathen customs of worship. They were dismayed “at the signs of heaven”, which probably included such things as comets. These cosmic sightings were thought, by some, to portend an important, though perhaps evil, event. The heathen, and even a number of the Israelites, were ap-

parently making idols to worship, possibly in an attempt to placate the pagan “gods” that these idols would represent.

The Lord, on a number of occasions, commanded the Israelites to be separate from the pagan nations and from their forms of worship (for example, see Deuteronomy 7:1-6). The Apostle Paul warned God’s people to have nothing to do with false displays of spirituality. These would include forms of worship that are not done “in spirit and in truth”. For instance, in II Timothy 3:1 we find, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.” After Paul mentions quite a few of the reasons for these “perilous times”, he adds in verse 5 about those: “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”

The tendency in the world is for religious groups to unite in an ever increasing ecumenical movement. The temptation may even be present for some of God’s people to join in with this compromising unity. But the child of God must look to the example of Jesus and to the faithful saints for the wisdom and courage to remain separate from the ways of the world.

When we look at the lives of the righteous prophets and others in the Bible, we see, over and over again, a pattern of separation from those not living in accordance with the will of God. This even included the disobedient children of Israel, to whom the prophets preached a message of repentance. One only needs to read the “hall of faith” list in the book of Hebrews, chapter 11, to sense the sacrifices that these faithful ones paid so as not to

compromise with error. The Scriptures tell us of Samuel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Rahab, and many others.

Our Lord Jesus never compromised with the truth, and He never fellowshiped with those who practiced sin nor with those who put tradition above the Word of God. In fact, he strongly rebuked those people who did such things. (Please see Matthew 23). Of our Lord we read, “For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Hebrews 7:26). In mercy, however, He did mingle with those who wanted to give up their sinful ways, and He taught those who were willing to learn the truth. Using Jesus as our example, we may do the same.

Let us *take* the opportunity to fellowship heartily with those with whom we can. Yet, let us not *make* the opportunity to fellowship with those with whom we may not. Sometimes the life of a disciple is a lonely one. But let us remember that it is the Lord Who gives us our primary fellowship. He can fill us to overflowing, and He will if we let Him.

Children of God are called to be a separate people. Of spiritual Babylon, the Lord commands, “...Come out of her, my people...” This would include removing one’s self from wrong doctrines, wrong traditions, wrong lifestyles, and wrong habits (even to the wrong things watched on T.V.). “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (II Corinthians 6:17,18).



Analyze the average political speech, and you will discover an artful combination of words designed to please. The purpose is obvious. Every candidate wants to win

the election. To win an election, every candidate must be popular. Therefore, winning the election is about using the words that have the right emotional appeal. A new branch

of political science has developed. May we call this new branch political psychology? These professionals say that we respond with our emotions much more than our minds; that only twenty percent of our life is intellect; eighty percent is emotional. The professionals send out pollsters to discover the words that trigger the emotions. Then they advise politicians which words to use or avoid.

Are the selected words always the truth, i.e., the facts? Can you imagine what the campaign would be like if the candidates were limited to telling always and only the exact truth with all the opinion, assumption and pretense stripped away?

Contrast the plain straightforward, often rebuking, words of our Lord. Was His message always consistent? Absolutely! Did He massage His message to obscure the truth in order to please his audience? Never! Did His words always evoke a positive response from His audience? Definitely not! There is a vast difference in that Jesus lived and died for truth. Today that truth still stands above all opinion, assumption, and pretense.

Truth Stands Above Opinion

The religious leaders whom Jesus called "scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites" were not all bad. No doubt many of them thought they had a high regard for truth. Their standards of conduct often earned them the respect of their peers, though not of Jesus. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). By resisting the influence of the Roman and Greek culture, they probably thought they were on God's side. But in Jesus' view, they were only defending an opinion. Holding meticulously to their Jewish customs, they liked to appear righteous in public to please the people.

They would have been less popular had they proclaimed loudly as God's prophet of old, "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:16-17).

Truth Stands Above Assumption

The human mind can be very creative. Given the right atmosphere and the right emotional twist, people can be led to assume something is true even when there is little or no evidence to support it. Building on assumption is one of the secrets of winning the support of people. Let the

audience assume that the speaker is well informed on a subject; or assume that speaker supports his side of an issue. Let the audience assume that the speaker's character is above reproach; or assume that he or she is self-sacrificing and honest; or assume that the speaker can come through with what sounds good or like balancing the budget. Let them assume that he or she is selfless and has the people's interests at heart.

And so the people are pleased. But it is all based on assumption, not truth (facts). But can we live by assumption? Try writing a check on a bank account that one assumes has enough money to cover it. Will the bank pay the bad check on assumption?

Truth Stands Above Pretense

Pretense has often been useful in covering a deficiency. Why admit that you are uninformed on an issue if by using the right words people will think that you know? Better to pretend than acknowledge our lack. Did someone uncover an unpleasant or embarrassing fact that you would like to deny? Just pretend that you know nothing about it. Pretending is a form of denial. We can pretend that our spending habits do not matter. We can pretend that what we eat does not affect our health. We can pretend that everyone is our friend. We can pretend that it does not matter what we believe, or how we believe. But the facts do not change! Not at all! Truth stands above pretense.

In God's view, pretense is acting a lie. When we pretend, we are not true to what we believe. The Bible tells us that all liars will not enter the New Jerusalem. God has no place in His kingdom for those who lie. Let us avoid pretense. Let the Psalmist prayer be ours. "Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name" (Psalm 86:11). To walk in truth means being loyal to God and His laws, whether or not people are pleased. We cannot walk in truth and slant our words just to be agreed with. We cannot walk in truth and compromise our standards just enough to tell someone what we think will make them feel good if it is not totally true.

God demands integrity--integrity in what we do, what we say, what we believe. This integrity requires a full commitment to live by and defend truth as God defines it. Truth stands above opinion, assumption, and pretense. If we would stand on the side of truth, we must not compromise for any short-term gain. Let us take this position to win!

The Book of Jonah

The book of Jonah is largely a narrative. The Lord asked Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and "cry against it," for "their wickedness is come before me." Jonah's prophecy was therefore to be one of doom against this wicked city. However, the prophet did not want to obey the Lord's command, and instead of starting on the journey to Nineveh, he boarded a ship which was sailing in another direction.

A storm arose. The explanation is that "...the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken." (Jonah 1:4). The sailors became very much alarmed. They were evidently superstitious, and suspected that someone aboard the ship was responsible for the storm. They cast lots in an effort to determine who it might be, and the lot fell to Jonah. He had told them previously that the purpose of his taking this journey with them was to escape from his God and to avoid obeying the command to curse Nineveh (chapter 1:12).

The sailors quickly decided that Jonah's God had caused the storm, which, of course, was true. They concluded that their safety depended on casting Jonah overboard, which they did. But Jonah did not drown. Instead, God had prepared a "great fish"--not a whale as is commonly understood--to swallow Jonah. After being in the stomach of the "great fish" for three days, Jonah was cast up on the shore close to the city of Nineveh. After such an experience, in which he saw the providence of God clearly manifested, he was ready to obey God's command to curse the city.

When he did, the Ninevites repented of their sins, so the Lord did not destroy the city. To the critics of the Bible, two things in this story seem incredible. One is that a man could be swallowed by a great fish and remain alive in its stomach for three days. Part of this objection is that a whale's throat is not large enough to swallow a man. But, as we have already noted, the record tells us that God prepared a "great fish" for the purpose. We see that God's hand was manifested in this experience of Jonah. When this is true, miraculous things often occur. The Bible

mentions many miracles, not the least which is the resurrection of the dead.

Some have difficulty in understanding why the inhabitants of a large city such as Nineveh should suddenly repent of their sins simply because Jonah, a preacher of righteousness, appeared and warned them of coming destruction, especially since they did not worship the God whom this prophet served. An obvious explanation of this has been found by archaeologists. In digging up the ruins of ancient Nineveh, they have found that the people were worshipers of a fish god.

Perhaps the Ninevites probably knew how Jonah arrived on their shore, that a great fish had brought him there. This could have meant to them that their god had brought Jonah to warn them. It also could have meant that Jonah thwarted the efforts of their god to destroy him and prevent his coming. Whichever view they took would certainly cause them to respect the prophet. This would explain why they so quickly gave favorable heed to his message.

Jonah described his experience in the stomach of the great fish. "Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly. And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice" (chapter 2:1-2). Here, we have the Hebrew word sheol translated "hell." It is the condition of death. Symbolically speaking, Jonah was in the death state. He was practically dead, and would have died had not the Lord delivered him.

Jonah was quite disturbed because the Lord had compassion on the Ninevites because they repented, and He did not destroy them. As is so often the case, he was not as sympathetic and loving as the Lord whom he served. It is a human failing to make God's love too narrow by placing limits on our own. Answering Jonah's complaint, the Lord said, "And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixcore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" (chapter 4:11).

BELIEVE

What Does It Mean?



Some who say that they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and wish to do nothing else quickly seize on the apparent simple command to "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ..." (Acts 16:30-31). Is this vocalized acknowledgment of "personal acceptance" all that is needed for salvation? Let the Bible speak for itself!

This command to "believe" has meaning far deeper than outward confession. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me" (Philippians 1:29-30). If unqualified belief for acknowledgment is all that is required for salvation, why did the Apostle Paul speak of "suffering" and "conflict," of "dying" to sin, of "pressing" and "fighting"? And why did he express his own serious concern that he could, after preaching to others, become a castaway? "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:26-27).

If you say, "I believe in Jesus," what do you mean? Do you believe simply that a man named Jesus once lived on earth, that He died, was resurrected and ascended to heaven? If you say, "I believe in George Washington," don't you mean that you believe in the ideas he promoted? If a person professes to believe in a certain political party, don't we expect him to support the party's platform? Now when it comes to believing in Jesus, what do we understand?

Before we can intelligently believe in Jesus, we must acquire a knowledge of His life and His teachings. "He that is of God heareth God's words..." (John 8:47). This

is the rule Jesus laid down. If we are His, if we believe in Him, we must hear His words. Again Jesus said, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45).

Knowledge, then, is the first step toward belief in Jesus. However, knowledge alone is ineffective! But when applied, it can transform us from "servants of sin" to "servants of God." See Romans 6:17-22. Not only must we know the will of God, but we must do it and delight in it if we are going to receive the promise (Hebrews 10:36). The Apostle John adds, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:4). If we say we know God, if we say we believe in Jesus, and do not "keep the commandments" of God, the apostle says we are "liars." We are professing what we do not possess. We are saying we believe in what we do not support.

Let us now further consider the Apostle Paul's analogy of the runner. The man who diligently studied the rules and learned the qualification of a runner and knew how to run and what to run for, could never win a race until he practiced and applied what he had learned. He must develop his own muscles and use his strength to run. Likewise, the child of God must apply the rules and run.

The same principle may be applied to the driver on the highway. Just reading the signs does not assure his safety. He must read and "believe them." The driver is not safe when he reads the signs but when he obeys them.

Rules without obedience, knowledge without doing, and belief without practice is like a tree without fruit. Knowledge makes doing possible; believing makes practice possible, but only doing and practice bring results.



On the evening that Jesus was betrayed and on the same day in which He died, He sat in the upper room with His disciples eating the lamb, which represented Himself and His sacrifice. He knew that He was about to die as the "...Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He was the "...true bread from heaven," the bread of God which came down to give life to the world (John 6:31-33).

In a few hours, Jesus would be crucified on the cross to die for the sins of the world, and to fulfill His Father's mission which He had come to do. His Father had determined the exact time for His sacrifice to be offered. Previously, when the Jews had come to lay hands upon Him and put Him to death, they could not because His hour was not yet come. Then He told His disciples, "...Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples" (Matthew 26:18).

When our Lord instituted His supper, it was the beginning of a new symbol. It was built upon and related to the old Passover celebration observed by the Jewish people, although not a part of it. It was intended to be a commemoration, or memorial, of His death. Jesus wanted to demonstrate to His disciples the benefits of that sacrifice to them, and to all believers during this present age!

Jesus took bread from the Passover supper and instituted a memorial of His own death as a substitute for the Passover lamb. It was a simple ceremony which would remind His followers of what He had done for them. It also showed them that they would have the privilege of

participating with Him in the program of salvation. As they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to His disciples. This bread represented His flesh, His humanity which was sacrificed for us. Because He sacrificed Himself for us, we have the hope of a future resurrection. "And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (I Corinthians 11:24-26). Jesus was telling His disciples that this memorial to his death should continue until the last member of His spiritual body, the church, is called. Therefore, "...let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (verse 28).

We believe that this new institution took the place of the former typical sacrifices that became obsolete when they were fulfilled. We are to examine our hearts and motives, for none are worthy. This observance with His disciples on the 14th day of Nisan had a new meaning, the loaf representing His flesh and the cup His blood.

Let us trust in Him and appreciate His sacrifice. Let us remember the great cost that He paid for our redemption from sin and death. Let us also consider God's great love in giving His only begotten Son to suffer and to die. Let us remember the great compassion that our Lord demonstrated during His earthly ministry.

GETHSEMANE

PLEASE READ MATTHEW 26:36-46.

Gethsemane is where the greatest battle of all time was fought and won. Gethsemane is located just a little way out of Jerusalem across the Brook Kidron, near the foot of the Mount of Olives. Gethsemane means "olive press."

In a garden, the first man fell through yielding to the wicked one. In a garden, the second Adam conquered by yielding to the Holy One.

The place called Gethsemane was to Jesus...

A Place of Heaviness

He "began to be sorrowful and very heavy." Who can tell the weight of the burden that was laid upon Jesus?

"...The LORD...laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). What a burden it was! All the sins of the world were laid on Him.

When we think our burdens are heavy, let us think of Gethsemane.

A Place of Intense Suffering

He said, "...My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death..." (Mark 14:34).

As our substitute, He stood between God and man. "...Christ...once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might..." (I Peter 3:18).

Jesus was in agreement with the holiness of God, and the helplessness of man. May we today consider His suffering, and when we think we are suffering, let us think of Gethsemane.

A Place of Solemn Loneliness

He told His disciples to watch: "...What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Matthew 26:40). The tender heart of the man of sorrows yearned for fellowship, but they "could not." They slept during His agony while His "...sweat was as it were great drops of blood..." (Luke 22:44).

He looked, but there was none to help. "...I looked for some to take pity...and for comforters, but I found

none" (Psalm 69:20).

When you feel forsaken, lonely, and sad, remember Gethsemane.

A Place of Agonizing Prayer

He "...fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me..." He "prayed the third time, saying the same words" (Matthew 26:39-44).

He "...offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears..." (Hebrews 5:7).

This awful cup contained desertion and death.

A Place of Entire Resignation

"...nevertheless not as I will, but as thy wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

My will, not thine, opened the floodgate of sin in the first garden, and turned man out of paradise.

The second Adam's, "...not my will, but thine.." opened a flood of righteousness upon the world.

Into the garden and in the wilderness, while being tempted of Satan, Jesus was as firm and solid as a mountain.

It is true that the "spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." But Christ never yielded to the flesh.

We will be as strong to resist evil, in proportion as we are willing to resign to the complete will of God.

In every crisis, trial, or experience, let us remember Gethsemane and say, "not my will, but thine, be done."

A Place of Heartless Betrayal

Jesus was betrayed by one He chose to follow Him. (Kissed Him while the sweat was still on His brow.)

Christ had just taken man's place. All the thanks He got was hypocritical salutation and condemnation.

Do we appreciate the sacrifice our Lord made for us? In the hour of heaviness, suffering, loneliness, agony of prayer, betrayal and resisting evil, let us remember Gethsemane!



THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

If you have any items of interest that you would like to submit to this segment, please send them to The Church of God Publishing House, PO Box 328, Salem, WV 26426-0328.

PREACHER BRINGS HIS FEEL-GOOD ISLAM TO U.S.

Egyptian tries to bridge the gap of conflicted loyalties
By Robin Wright
Washington Post

Washington--The rhythmic clapping began the minute Amr Khaled stepped into the packed ballroom.

Surrounded by security guards, the Egyptian preacher had to weave his way through the crowd--men both clean-shaved and bearded, women both fashionably coifed and dressed in conservative Islamic dress--that had come from up and down the East Coast to hear him.

"My goal is that you leave happy," Khaled began softly, once he got to the lectern. "My goal is to fulfill the hadith of the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, that says, 'Whosoever puts joy in the hearts of the believers, his reward is not less than Paradise.'"

The rock-star preacher in the designer suit, often called "the anti-bin Laden," had arrived in America with his new brand of upbeat, feel-good Islam.

For American Muslims beset by the tensions of the post- 9/11 world, Khaled tried to bridge the gap between conflicting allegiances, notably their U.S. citizenship and their fury at U.S. policy in Iraq and other Muslim countries.

"I feel what 9/11 has done to you. You are all crying aloud: 'This is not Islam. We reject this,'" he said at the appearance in Arlington, Va., sponsored by the Council on American-Islamic Society of North America. "At the

same time, we don't agree with what is happening in Iraq. We feel confusion, pain."

In speeches and appearances throughout his first trip to the United States, in May, Khaled spoke consistently of compromise and coexistence.

The message resonates. Over the past decade, Khaled has emerged as the top-ranked televangelist in the Arab world, likened to tele-megastars Joel Osteen and Dr. Phil. His appearances are uploaded on YouTube. His Web site, in 18 languages, gets tens of millions of hits. This year, he ranked 62nd on Time magazine's list of the world's 100 most influential people.

In programs broadcast worldwide on four satellite stations, Khaled has also revolutionized the way Islam is ministered and the focus of the faith's message. He tells folksy tales of the prophet adapted to modern life. Wearing a mustache but no beard, sometimes dressed in jeans instead of the trademark robe of Islam's clerics, he reaches out to the young and encourages women.

"His spirituality is very raw. It's fresh. You don't feel like it's artificial or old. When he prays, he gets emotional and his voice changes," said Hadia Mubarak, former president of the national Muslim Students' Association in the United States. "He even attracts females who wear jeans, tank tops, don't cover their hair--and don't normally go to mosque. The content of his talks is geared to day-to-day practical advice....He'll say go to your closet and see what things you haven't used and send them to this address, or create a food bank in your community."

In his 50- episode *LifeMakers* series of television lectures, Khaled presses for proactive good deeds and

self-help in the Arab world, from teaching the illiterate to fixing potholes. He has been quick to publicly condemn terrorism, including the 2001 attacks on the world Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the 2005 bombings of the London Underground.

His appearances in Egypt were monitored by government security officials; as even secular parts of society began showing up to hear him, he came under pressure not to speak publicly at all. Khaled fled first to Lebanon, then to London. Even then, his appeal did not diminish.

"His popularity in the Arab world is unrivaled," Akbar Ahmed, chairman of Islamic Studies at American University, wrote in his recent book *Journey Into Islam*, based on polls he took in the Islamic world. "He is able to instill pride and happiness in people for being Muslim and has helped strengthen faith in Islam at a time when it is thought to be under assault by Westernization, secularism and nationalism."

COMMENT

It seems like every religion and every philosophy of religion have their characters that make people feel good about themselves and satisfy their emotions. We have Amr Khaled, which is mentioned in the article, for Islam. There was Pope Paul for Catholicism. The present Pope Benedict is making headway in influencing the masses. The Dalai Lama is causing many Christians to have a view that there might be some merit in Buddhism.

People must put their emotions aside and become serious in what they really believe.

AN AWKWARD ATTEMPT TO REACH OUT

Clergyperson's efforts at explaining faith seemed a little patronizing

By The Rev. Matt Tittle

What makes life eternal?

I attended a funeral recently in a tradition other than my own. I will not reveal the location or faith out of respect for the grieving family and the faith community where the funeral was held. I always learn a great deal when I attend worship or rites/rituals at other faith communities, but was a bit taken aback at something that happened at this one.

The officiating clergy person, apparently knowing that

many present were not adherents to his community's particular faith and belief, provided some explanation regarding certain beliefs, symbols and rituals (after asking those of us who were not to raise our hands.) This was a bit unusual for a funeral. It's not something I would do at a funeral that I was officiating. It felt a little patronizing to me, but I know that this was not his point. I believe he was truly trying to reach out and bridge a gap, even if awkwardly.

The real issue for me arose when he chose to speak for "nonbelievers." He said something like, "When we die, nonbelievers think it is lights out. Believers look to a new life." He was trying to explain the symbolism of baptism and resurrection.

My congregation has many so-called "nonbelievers." We Unitarian Universalists do not require a specific theology or deity as a prerequisite to participation and membership in religious community.

I have many parishioners who identify as atheists and agnostics, among many other beliefs, but that does not stop them from a "free and responsible search for truth and meaning" (one of the seven UU principles), or from looking to the "transcending mystery and wonder...which moves us to a renewal of the spirit... and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life" (from one of our expressed sources of the living tradition). It does not stop them being devoted people of faith.

Indeed, even many nonbelievers believe that life is eternal. Not in the sense of an eternal afterlife of heaven, but in the sense that we leave a legacy behind. We live on in the memories and deeds of those whose lives we affected while here. We leave behind our own deeds. Those who follow us leave theirs, and so on. We can create heaven or hell here on earth. We can leave behind either positive, negative or irrelevant memories and legacies for eternity to deal with. Nonbelievers do not all think that it is lights out when they die. All of our lights shine on forever for better or worse.

COMMENT

The principles expressed by the above minister is a cause for modern Babylon (confusion). Amos 3:3 asks the question, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Without a set standard of belief, the church becomes nothing but a social club and does not meet the definition of a church.



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Of what spiritual ingredients or qualities must genuine faith consist?

ANSWER: Faith in God through Jesus Christ is the primal virtue of the believer. It is not only the initial factor in obtaining life for the soul, but it is the mightiest lever of power for service. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). It is the key that unlocks God's treasures and granaries and the spiritual guide which leads us into God's "green pastures and still waters". It is God's spiritual tonic for character. It puts iron into the blood and steels the soul for battle. It enabled Moses to laugh at the Pharaohs and at the barriers of the sea and desert. For Joshua, it bridged the swollen Jordan, demolished Jericho, and held back the setting of the sun that victory might crown his day while fighting God's battles. It takes the rage out of the lion's dens and makes them a safe place for Daniel, it takes the destroying elements out of fire for the Hebrew children. It makes heroes like John the Baptist, Paul, Luther, Knox, and thousands of others. With faith, weaklings are conquerors, and without it giants are dwarfs. But if our faith is genuine, it must possess certain spiritual ingredients or qualities. Let us list them.

1. Genuine faith must be reliant. "Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5). If we would possess genuine faith, we must depend with a holy and trustful reliance on God's strength. The stronghold of the Apostle Paul was, "...for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Timothy 1:12).

2. Genuine faith must be unstagging. Scripture tells us this of Abraham, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God" (Romans 4:20). The words "without doubt" are the key to the inner secret of God's promises.

3. Genuine faith persists in the face of God's denials and delays. The Gentile mother pressed her case and won her daughter's deliverance from the devil by persistent faith. Christ and His disciples rebuked her, but she pressed her suit until Christ said, "...O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour" (Matthew 15:28).

4. Genuine faith looks above difficulties to God. Faith knows that God is greater than difficulties of any number, size or combination. Moses did this at the Red Sea. Elijah did it at Mount Carmel. Paul did it wherever he went. And you and I must do it if we would win.

5. Genuine faith remembers God's resources and counts His promises and valuation of them. God has manna never yet distributed, quails never yet sent out from His poultry yard, and fountains never yet opened to His thirsty people. God has recruits for all His armies. Elisha showed God's other army to his servant at Dothan, His squadron of angel-airplanes at the orders of faith. He never broke a promise, and there is no record where one ever failed in its fulfillment if faith gripped it. They are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus.

6. Genuine faith must remember its true and only source of supply. "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2). Peter walked on the water while his eyes were on Jesus. He failed when he took his eyes off Jesus. We will fail if we take our eyes off Jesus. He is the source of our supply. Faith unites us to Christ. He has all power in heaven and in earth. If we are united to Christ, we can surmount every obstacle, solve any problem, defeat every foe, remove mountains of difficulty and go down the highway of life conquering and to conquer.

QUESTION: Will you please explain Romans 13:8?

ANSWER: The verse reads, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."

This verse is part of our submission as children of God to the higher powers of state. We must render to God the things that are God's and to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Read Matthew 22:15-21. We must obey Caesar, or those that have authority over us as long as their orders do not conflict with the commandments of God. This is the thought behind owing a person anything. It is hard to refuse a politician his request if you are indebted to him either by favor or by money, or by gifts. Satan will try to use this debt to get you to break the commandments of God.

This Scripture can also be used to warn children of God against contracting debts that they know they cannot repay. Unscrupulous Israelites, knowing they could not repay a debt, borrowed and then hoped to have the

debt cancelled in the seventh year. Read Deuteronomy 24:10-15 and Exodus 21:2. Also read Psalm 37:21; Luke 14 and Matthew 18:22-28. The child of God should render to all their due, and not owe anything, except love, which we owe to our neighbors always.

QUESTION: What Jewish laws pertaining to court procedures were violated in regard to the six trials of Jesus?

ANSWER: Among them were the following (1) capital crimes were never to be tried at night: (2) witnesses were to prove their accusations: (3) the court was to protect the interests of the prisoner: and (4) the court was to come to a just impartial verdict.

Jesus' trials were all mockeries of Jewish and civil law. He was tried at night for a capital crime. Witnesses got away with making groundless accusations. For example, they accused Him of "misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar." Read Luke 23:2. The courts allowed Him to be unjustly flogged and persecuted, then handed down a death sentence despite a "not guilty" verdict.

QUESTION: Is there any definite promise in the New Testament that God will prosper His children in this world's goods, any more than He would the unsaved?

ANSWER: Our appointed portion in this world is not worldly prosperity, but rather world-hatred, world-persecution and affliction. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" (I John 3:1).

These Scriptures, which might be multiplied, are not threats, but promises. It is as true now as when they were written that "...all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12).



Myanmar



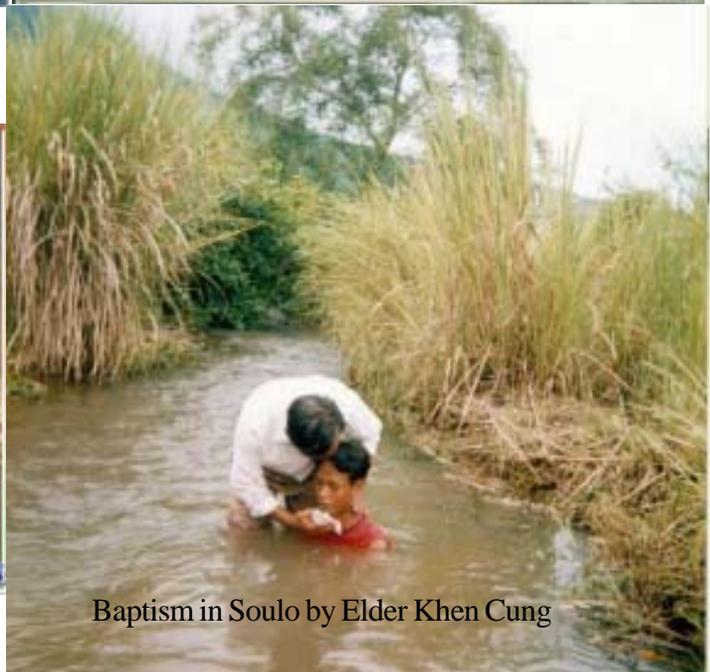
Youth retreat in Hakha, Chin State



Kaylaymyo



Elders in Hakha



Baptism in Soulo by Elder Khen Cung



Dedication in Tahan by Brother Kawl

PHOTO PANGUN



Brother Kawl on his way to Chin Hill

PHOTO PANGUN



Kaylaymyo

PHOTO PANGUN



A former Buddhist woman is being baptized by Elder Kawl Lian Thang at Kaylaymyo.

PHOTO PANGUN



Fellowship meal held after a meeting in Kaylaymyo.

LESSON I**LESSON II****PAUL SENT TO FELIX (PART I)****PAUL SENT TO FELIX (PART II)**

Scripture Reading: Acts 23:23-35; 24:1-9.

Golden Text: Acts 23:31.

"Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris."

NOTE: We last studied that the Jews planned to kill Paul. Paul's nephew warned the chief captain of this plan. We will now continue to find what happens to Paul.

1. Where was Paul to be taken, and who would he see there? Acts 23:23-24.
2. The chief captain, Claudius Lysias, writes a letter to be sent to Felix with Paul. Why did Claudius rescue Paul? Acts 23:25-27.
3. Why did Claudius send Paul to Felix? Acts 23:28-30.
4. What happened to Paul when he reached Caesarea? Acts 23:33-35.
5. Who arrived in five days to accuse Paul? Acts 24:1.
6. What did Tertullus say to Felix in Acts 24:2-4?

NOTE: Tertullus was the appointed speaker for Ananias and the other elders.

7. Paul was called "pestilent fellow," a "mover of sedition" and "ringleader of the...Nazarenes" in Acts 24:5. What is meant by each of these labels which were put upon Paul?
8. What else was said to Felix about Paul in Acts 24:6-8?

Scripture Reading: Acts 24:10-27.

Golden Text: Acts 24:14 (last part).

"So worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets."

NOTE: We were studying about Paul being brought before Felix, and his accusers have told that Paul is disruptive of the Jewish people. We will now continue the story.

1. What did Paul say to Felix when he was allowed to speak in Acts 24:10-13?
2. Of what did Paul confess? Acts 24:14-16. Are you guilty of those things to which Paul confessed?
3. What does the word resurrection mean? What did Paul mean by the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust? Revelation 20:4-5; John 5:28-29.
4. As Paul continues to speak to defend himself, what does he say about certain Jews? Acts 24:18-21.
5. Did Felix pass judgment on Paul immediately? Acts 24:22.
6. What did Felix command the centurion to do with Paul? Acts 24:23.
7. Of what did Paul speak to Felix? What was the reaction of Felix to Paul's words? Acts 24:24-25.
8. Did Felix want to hear more from Paul and become a follower of Jesus? Acts 24:26.
9. How long had it been since Paul had come to Caesarea? Acts 24:27.

LESSON III

LESSON IV

PAUL APPEALS TO CAESAR

PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE AGRIPPA

Scripture Reading: Acts 25:1-27.

Golden Text: Acts 25:12.

"Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go."

NOTE: In our last lesson we learned that Paul was kept as a prisoner by the governor, Felix, for two years. Felix is now being replaced by a new governor, Porcius Festus, and we will learn what happens to Paul now.

1. After the first three days, where did Festus go? Acts 25:1.
2. Had the high priest and Jews forgotten their bitterness towards Paul? Acts 25:2-3.
3. What did Festus tell the Jews that they should do about Paul? Acts 25:4-5.
4. How long did Festus stay in Jerusalem before returning to Caesarea, and what did he do when he returned? Acts 25:6-7.
5. After Paul defends himself, what did Festus ask him? Acts 25:8-9.
6. Where did Paul say he should go for his judgment? Why? Acts 25:10-11.

NOTE: Caesar was in Rome. Read Acts 23:11 to remind us what the Lord said to Paul.

7. Who came to see Festus, and were they told about Paul? Acts 25:13-21.
8. Was King Agrippa interested in Paul's case? Acts 25:22-23.
9. Did Festus want to see Paul killed? Why? Acts 25:24-27.

Scripture Reading: Acts 26:1-32.

Golden Text: Acts 26:28.

"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

1. Why was Paul happy? Acts 26:2-3.
2. What accounts did Paul mention in Acts 26:4-18?

NOTE: Again Paul took the opportunity to tell of his conversion.

3. What did Paul say he was not disobedient unto? Acts 26:19.
4. What did Paul say was necessary in Acts 26:20? What do you think "works meet for repentance" refers to?
5. List three things of which Paul witnessed. Acts 26:22-23.
6. What did Festus say about Paul's great knowledge, and what was his reply to Festus' comments? Acts 26:24-27.
7. What did King Agrippa say about Paul's words? Acts 26:28.
8. Tell in your own words what Paul was trying to say in Acts 26:29.
9. What was Agrippa's opinion of Paul's alleged crime? Acts 26:31-32.

NOTE: King Agrippa said Paul had almost persuaded him to be a Christian. Yet King Agrippa was not willing to turn his life over to Christ. The decision was his and his alone. The same is true today. No one can prevent us from becoming a child of God except ourselves. What will be YOUR choice?



I like the story I once read of a man who had planted a lawn and cultivated and watered it with great care. Finally he was rewarded for all his effort, not by beautiful green grass such as he had expected, but a big crop of dandelions. He tried to remove them, but every place he tried to remove them, two seemed to blossom where one had been before.

Finally, in desperation he wrote to the Government experiment station and asked what he could do about the dandelion pests. The answer came back "Learn to love them!"

In this life, there are crosses we must bear, and they come like dandelions and weeds in our garden, or even as the thorns that grow with the beautiful roses. It is hard to learn to love them, but if we learn to accept and bear them, we will be rewarded with a little glimpse of Heaven and of Calvary.

There is a great secret to be learned if we walk in our beloved garden or woods in the early morning. We can commune with our Creator there, and God will reveal many things to us.

When the Lord planted a garden in Eden, He made every tree to grow there that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food. He also planted the "Tree of Life" in the center of the garden.

God walked in the garden He planted in Eden, and in the morning cool of the day, He talked to Adam and Eve.

What a wonderful privilege to walk and talk with God. Boys and Girls, regardless of where you live, you have

the same privilege of walking and talking with God that Adam and Eve had. You can kneel down and talk to Him, and wherever you may be, you will find that you are in the Garden with Him.

Always seek the Lord in the morning and while you are young.

Remember these "Golden Words" and keep them locked in your heart: "...those that seek me early shall find me" (Proverbs 8:17).

MIRACLE OF 1877

In the early spring of 1877, Minnesota farmers anxiously surveyed their lands, dreading the first hordes of locusts that had caused such widespread destruction the summer before. Another such plague threatened to destroy Minnesota's rich wheatlands, spelling ruin for thousands of families.

Suddenly, Governor John S. Pillsbury proclaimed April 26th as a day of fasting and prayer, urging that every man, woman and child ask Divine help against the terrible "pestilence that walketh in darkness and the destruction that was at noonday."

On the appointed day, shops, offices and schools were closed, and a strange hush fell over that land as Minnesotans solemnly assembled to pray.

Next morning the sun rose in cloudless skies. Overnight, temperatures had soared to midsummer heat. Everywhere, the people looked up at the skies in wonder. This was no natural April sun! And, to their horror, the warm earth began to stir the awakening larva of billions of the dreaded insects. This was a strange answer to their prayers!

Three days passed, and the unseasonable heat hatched out a vast army of locusts that threatened to engulf not only the crops of Minnesota but of the entire Northwest! Then, on the fourth day, the sun went down in a cooled sky. That night, frost gripped the earth. When the sun rose again, it shone on quiet frozen fields. Most of the creeping locusts had been destroyed as surely as if fire had swept them from the earth!

When summer came, the wheat waved tall and green in Minnesota. And for the grateful farmers, April 26th went down in history as the day on which a people's prayer had been answered.

NAMES OF JESUS

In the Bible, Jesus is given many beautiful names and titles. Let us see how many we can find.

Here are the places in the Bible where the names may be found:

1. What two names did the angels give Jesus in speaking to the shepherds on the night of His birth? Luke 2:11.
2. What did God call Jesus at His baptism? Matthew 3:17.
3. What did Jesus often call Himself? Matthew 8:20.
4. What name did the two blind men give Him? Matthew 9:27.
5. What names did the Prophet Isaiah give Him? Isaiah 9:6.
6. What names did Jesus give Himself in John 14:6?
7. To what did Jesus liken Himself in John 6:35? In John 10:11?
8. To what two flowers is He likened sometimes in hymns? Song of Solomon 2:1.
9. To what heavenly bodies is He likened in Malachi 4:2 and Revelation 22:16?
10. What title of Jesus is made up of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet? Revelation 22:13.

Here is a good rule for everyday.
The Bible says we should be:

- S wift to _____
- S low to _____
- S low to _____

WHAT WOULD JESUS DO

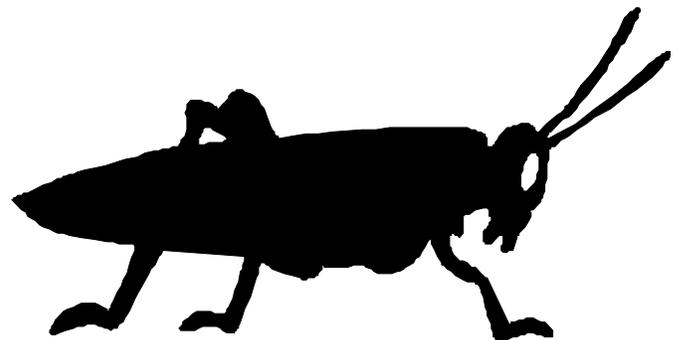
By Maryan B. Wilkinson

We know that Jesus always went to church on Sabbath. It was what He liked to do. When He was big, He read the Bible in church. But if He were little like you, right now, what do you think He would do? Answer the question Yes or No.

1. Would Jesus walk into church in a noisy way?
2. Would He ever wiggle and whisper?
3. Would Jesus need a toy to play with in church?
4. Would He try to listen to the sermon?
5. Would He always sit with His father and mother?
6. Would He look around during prayer?
7. Would He be quiet and reverent?
8. Would He be happy in God's house?
9. Does Jesus want you to love God's house, too?
10. Will He help you to be quiet and good?

ANSWERS TO NAMES OF JESUS

1. A Savior, Christ the Lord.
2. Son.
3. Son of man.
4. Son of David.
5. Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
6. I am the way, the truth, and the life.
7. I am the bread of life. I am the good shepherd.
8. I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley.
9. The Sun of righteousness. I am the bright and morning star.
10. Alpha and Omega.



The Price

By David DeLong

It was night, but the moon was full,
The Savior's soul was sorrow-filled;
The Lord from heaven, free from leaven,
Prayed He would not be self-willed.

His sweat was as great drops of blood,
"Father...let this cup pass from me";
Yet, said the Son, "thy will be done",
He prayed in His great agony.

"...tarry ye here, and watch with me",
The Shepherd said unto His sheep;
But when He came, unto the same,
He found His friends all fast asleep.

Then, Judas, lo, that evil-man,
Came with all the multitude;
With swords and staves, these nether-knaves,
Swarmed Him like a viper brood.

When morning came, they took Him to
Pilate, the Roman governor;
And like a lamb, through all this sham,
Christ never made a selfish stir.

Jesus, the just, was then crucified,
They parted His garments by lots;
Pierced by the nails, and mocking rails,
His blood will cleanse all our sin-spots.

What love within the Savior's heart
To offer His life's sacrifice;
But, what a shame, if like a game,
My friend, you reject the price!