

# *The Advocate of Truth*





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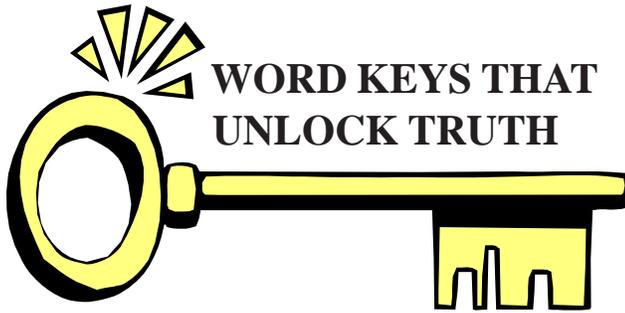
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## MAMMON

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

Some believe that Jesus, when He used the word mammon, was referring to a Canaanite god. However there is no evidence that a Canaanite god, called Mammon, ever existed. Mammon simply means wealth or riches.

Man serves that which he loves. The serving of wealth and riches is of the world. We are admonished, "Love not the world, neither things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15).

The Bible shows very plainly that worldly riches are not the only ones to be desired, and that in fact those that are not of the world are to be wished for in preference. Love of riches is set down as one of the sins to be avoided,

since it leads to many kinds of wrongdoing and offenses against our fellowman!

Let us consider a few scriptures:

"Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fled away as an eagle toward heaven" (Proverbs 23:4-5).

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (I Timothy 6:17).

"A faithful man shall abound with blessings; but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent" (Proverbs 28:20).

"A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked" (Psalm 37:16).

"Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death" (Proverbs 11:4).

"The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death" (Proverbs 21:6).

The Scriptures tell us of true riches. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth the field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant, man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Matthew 13:44-46).

## HAVE WE BEEN MISSING SOMETHING?

By George Buechner



The children of Israel were given a promise, if they would serve the Lord. "And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee" (Exodus 23:25). Just as the Israelites were promised that sickness

would be taken away from them, so will our sickness be taken from us. James 5:14-15 says: "Is any sick among you? 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. And the PRAYER OF FAITH SHALL SAVE THE

SICK, AND THE LORD SHALL RAISE HIM UP; AND IF HE HAVE COMMITTED SINS, THEY SHALL BE FORGIVEN HIM." Every person who is sick is told to call for the elders of the church to pray for them and the prayer of faith will cause healing to occur.

But in order to be healed, you must have faith and believe it will happen. When God said, "I am the Lord who heals you" (Exodus 15:26), the Israelites, a few million strong (who were leaving Egypt for Canaan), went out of Egypt with God's blessing - "there was not one feeble person among their tribes" (Psalm 105:37). This is absolutely mind-boggling. Not one in a few million was disabled! God had a plan for them, and He gave them the strength and health to travel to the promised land.

Jesus took our infirmities and bore our sickness (see Matthew 8:17). Isaiah 53:5 states: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and WITH HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED." Are the days of miraculous healing of the sick gone? Should they be? If we still preach water baptism and salvation by faith in Jesus, then we also believe that God will still heal His people in Jesus's name.

Why is there so much sickness in the world today? Many have turned away from God and do not strive to do His will. Sin caused disease to enter this world. At the time of the Garden of Eden, there was no sickness, but after Adam and Eve were cast out, many problems came to them, and one of those problems was sickness. We know that Satan causes much suffering in this world. One instance we see is in Job's life. "So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown" (Job 2:7). In this life, we will suffer from sickness. When we do, we must turn to the Lord and ask for healing. "Is any sick among you? 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: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (Verses 14-15). Believe and pray in the name of Jesus.

We sometimes are not healed because of lack of faith, but sometimes we are not healed because it is God's will. One instance of this is Paul. He asked God to heal the infirmity that he had three times, but God would not. He told him that His grace was sufficient for him. It is impor-

tant that we make sure we always ask that God's will be done in our lives. We are not given eternal life in this body, but in a spiritual body that we will receive when Jesus returns if we love and obey Him. This is when we will receive a complete and everlasting healing. His stripes will truly heal us at this resurrection.

"(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation)" (II Corinthians 6:2). We must make our calling and election sure today. We can't wait if we are not right with the Lord. We do not know when He will return, so we must be ready for Him at any time. Confess that "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1)

Jesus sacrificed himself for us. He died for our sins. "The Lord Jesus the same night which he was betrayed took bread: 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, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me" (I Corinthians 11:23-25). Jesus died for our sins, and he commanded us to partake of His body and blood. Jesus's blood was shed when He bore our sins, so that we would not have to bear them, but could be saved from them and be delivered from the power of sin in our lives. The emblems of the Lord's Supper, the bread and the fruit of the vine, are brought to us in commemoration of our Lord's death. He died for us, so that thereafter our sins would be forgiven and eternal life could be given to His children.

Prior to partaking of these emblems, we must examine ourselves and be ready to partake of the body and blood of Jesus. He told us we must partake, or we will have no life in us. We know why Jesus Christ suffered and died, and we must eat the bread and drink the cup worthily as Paul instructed, and we will then be able to discern properly the Lord's body.

We look for the time when there will be no more pain, sickness or fear. What a wonderful time that will be when Jesus returns for His saints.

Have you been missing something? Are you ready? Think and study God's word for the answers because they are ALL there!

# GOD'S BUSINESS

By Daniel Cruz



What is God's business? How do we associate ourselves with His plans? Many times we have tendencies to interfere with God's plans and lose patience or focus on how we must act. Why do we do these things? Is our faith a word or do we allow God to do what He knows is best for us? This is His business, and we must know our place and not put our foot in it. Let's examine a few things with regard to this.

We know David gives us a psalm to apply in our lives Psalms 25:5. "Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day. We see David asks God to teach Him. His knowledge of God did not mean he fully would be able to endure, but He says "I wait." David's wait is on God's response, he does not find ways or make a decision without God's permission. Patience is exemplified at this point, and David also knows not to interfere with God's plan. How do we apply this in our lives? When problems come, how do we react?

Our immediate response is. "I've gotta do something? "These problems are mine, and I've gotta fix them."

When we say or think these things we begin to get caught in Satan's snare. We read in Isaiah 8:15, "And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken." This is happening because we put our foot in God's business. There is never anything that God will put before us that we can not handle. I wish I could express this and help others understand this statement the way I've learned it. We've seen in the church that Isaiah's prophecies take place today. Why? Because we allow problems and trials to defeat us. Satan's snare is always upon us, and when we give in, our thought and love for God becomes secondary. But, there is a solution.

In Philippians 4:7, we read, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." This verse sums up all that we need to know when God works in our lives. We serve a God that has a purpose and plan for us. We could

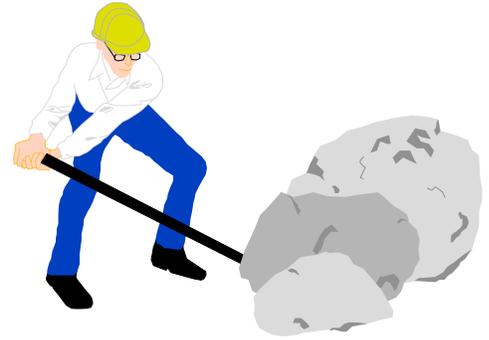
say that He is always with us and therefore, we need not worry when things go south. Just apply His peace in our lives and continue steadfast in His work, remembering to ask all things in Christ Jesus. Amen.

## THINGS YOU SHOULD DO

1. Give people more than they expect, and do it cheerfully.
2. Marry a man or woman you love to talk to. As you get older, your conversational skills will be as important as any other.
3. Don't believe all you hear, spend all you have, or sleep all you want.
4. When you say, "I love you," mean it.
5. When you say, "I'm sorry," look the person in the eye.
6. Be engaged at least six months before you get married.
7. Never laugh at anyone's dreams. People who don't have dreams don't have much.
8. Love deeply and passionately. You might get hurt, but it's the only way to live completely.
9. When disagreements arise, do not engage in name calling.
10. Don't judge people by their relatives.
11. Talk slowly, but think quickly.
12. When someone asks you a question you don't want to answer, smile and ask, "Why do you want to know?"
13. Remember that great love and great achievements involve great risk.
14. When you lose, don't lose the lesson.
15. Remember the three R's, respect for self, respect for others, and responsibility for all your actions.
16. Don't let a little dispute injure a great friendship.
17. When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.
18. Smile when picking up the phone. The caller will hear it in your voice.
19. Spend some time alone.

# WHADAYA EXPECT FROM A MIRACULOUS BOOK?

## NOW THE STONES WILL SPEAK



For those who hate Israel, one of the most dangerous things a Jew can do in Jerusalem is to start digging. Because the more you dig there, the worse it gets for those who would like to pretend that Israel is an alien colonist imposing their rule on the so-called indigenous people of the region.

You might think arguments claiming that the Jews were alien to the place are limited to the nonsensical propaganda that emanates from the less enlightened portion of the Islamic world. Claims from the Muslim group that administers the Temple Mount in Jerusalem that the place has been a mosque since the days of Adam and Eve are, we hope, laughed off by those who read the mainstream press.

But though few in this country outside of academia have noticed, the notion of Israel being the historical homeland of the Jewish people has been under attack from far more reputable sources. In recent decades, a new front in the war on Israel was opened in intellectual journal and classrooms. Its goal? To trash the notion that the Bible's accounts of the history of ancient Israel have the slightest value and to debunk the idea that the United Kingdom of David ever existed.

As professor Jonathan Reosenbaum, president of Gratz College here in Philadelphia and himself a leading authority on Ancient Near East studies, said: "If you can spend the idea that king David was a historic figure and that ancient Israel was real, then you can deligitimize modern Israel."

And in the spirit of the post-Zionist fashion that has swept over Israel in the last decade, these ideas have been embraced by a number of influential Israel archaeologists, too. Most prominently, Israel Finkelstein of Tel Aviv University has written that the idea of the Davidic kingdom is not based on fact, and that David's Jerusalem was nothing but a "poor village."

But last week, the debunkers of Jewish history got

some bad news. And all it took was for a dedicated archaeologist to start digging.

Dr. Eilat Mazar, senior fellow of the Jerusalem based Shalom Center's Institute for the Archaeology of the Jewish People, made public the results of the dig she had been conducting since February in an area south of the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem, where scholars believe the city of David existed. What she produced ought to help quiet those who think Jewish history is bunk.

Amid the rubble and rocks of the place that is now the village of Silwan, Mazar uncovered the ruins of the building she's sure was the palace of David itself - the very same structure that was built, according to the Bible, by King Hiram of Tyre for Israel's greatest king, around 1,000 BC.

Directly underneath the structure that was involved were "masses of pottery" all dating to the 11th and 12th centuries BC, the era that archaeologists call Age 1, which predates the year of David. By its position in the site, this pottery, which is a unique find in of itself, makes it clear that "Iron I was over or almost over by the time the building was started," said Mazar.

"Once I started to excavate," says Mazar, "it was as if I had written nothing. Now the stones will speak, not me."

And speak they do.

For those who contend that what she found was more likely the Jebusite fort David conquered or something else that predates his kingdom, Mazar said that the placement of the Iron 1 pottery right underneath it makes such a conclusion "problematic."

"How come I didn't find any remains of any construction underneath it? It doesn't make any sense. If this is the fortress, it was erected a day before King David captured the city.

Just as telling was an artifact only 1 centimeter long, uncovered from a slightly late period. It was an impres-

sion of an ancient seal, or "bullah," which bore the name of Jerucal, son of Shelemiah, son of Shevi.

Who was he? Nothing less than a minister of the kingdom of Judah in its last days before the Babylonian destruction of the city in 586 BC. We know of him only because he is mentioned in the book of Jeremiah. But the

bullah proves his existence isn't a literary flight of fancy.

"Layer by layer, we must take the Bible much, much more seriously than is ever thought, and treat it as a most important historic document that contains a lot of realistic descriptions," declares Mazar (Tobi, Jewish world Review, August 11, 2005).

From the Berean Call



## "HE GAVE THEM THEIR REQUEST"

### Psalm 106:15

By Carol Buechner

A request is an act of asking or expressing a desire for something. You may often go before God in prayer with requests, petitions and supplications. Have you really considered what you are asking God for and what your attitude might be when you are requesting and petitioning God? The following discussion may make you reconsider the kinds of things that you are asking of God.

Read the whole verse from Psalm 106:15: "And he gave them their request; BUT SENT LEANNESS INTO THEIR SOUL." This appears to be a matter that needs clarification. God gave them their requests, but He also gave them leanness in their souls. This does not sound like a very good combination. The word lean implies a lack of or a deficiency. Something is incomplete or something essential is not there. This verse implies that in the inner most being things just do not seem right or feel right. There is coldness or a lack of satisfaction. Perhaps you are thinking that you may not want God to give you what you want if you are going to have something missing in your spiritual life.

Psalm 106:15 is referring to a particular incident in the Bible which goes back to the time of the people of Israel, God's chosen people. While still in Egypt, the Israelites had witnessed plague after plague come upon the Egyptians, but God protected them from the ravages of the plagues. Moses led them from Egypt being guided by a cloud during the day and fire by night. God's presence

was right there with them all the time. Into the wilderness the Israelites journeyed and while there God instructed Moses in the laws that all of the people are to follow. It did not take long for the people to start complaining, moaning and groaning Think about it, more than a million people have departed from Egypt and are moving from place to place under Moses' direction. They are in a wilderness or an unsettled area where there is no provision for their needs. They have God though and have no reason to worry. But, this does not satisfy them. God has provided food for them every day in the form of manna. Every night, "when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat" (Exodus 16:14-15). "And the manna was as coriander seed, the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium. And the people went about and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil" (Numbers 11:7-8). Every day the Israelites could depend on God furnishing this for them to eat. Maybe you could consider this as the forerunner of fast food. Today, all you need to do is hop in your vehicle, go through the drive through and very quickly you have your food.

God had not failed in any way to take care of the

needs of the Israelites, but they found reason to murmur, complain and be unhappy. "And the mixet multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat: We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes" (Numbers 11:4-6). The people are thinking about what they had in Egypt and wanting something different to eat. What does Moses do about this situation? "Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of this tent: and the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased. And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant: and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? For they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness" (Numbers 11:10-15). Moses heard the weeping of the people and was quite upset, so he took the matter to God. God is quite angry over the situation. Moses explains to God that he can not handle the situation, and if God will not take care of it, He can just kill him.

In His anger, what will God do about this situation? He told Moses to get seventy men of the elders of Israel and bring them to the tabernacle for a support group for him. God is then going to come down and take of the spirit that is on Moses and put it upon the seventy elders so Moses does not have to bear this alone. God instructs Moses "And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of the Lord, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt: therefore the Lord will give you flesh, and ye shall eat. Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; But even a whole month, until it to come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the Lord which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?" (Numbers 11:18-20). But, Moses is concerned about where he is going to get all of this meat

to feed the people. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lord's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not" (verse 23). God is saying, "You just watch and see what will happen." The miracles these Israelites have seen before should be a clue to them that God can do whatever needs to be done regardless of what is needed to carry it out.

Now, read what God did. "And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers (about 60 bushels): and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp. And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague" (Numbers 11:31-33). God provided more than enough of the flesh they thought they so desperately needed. And they paid dearly for their satisfaction.

You may be thinking that this is an interesting happening from the Bible, but what does it have to do with today? The key is found in verse four of Numbers chapter eleven: "**And the mixet multitude that was among them fell a LUSTING...**" This is reinforced in I Corinthians 10:5-6,11: "But with many of them (children of Israel) God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent **WE SHOULD NOT LUST** after evil things, **AS THEY ALSO LUSTED**. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." Paul plainly states that this example is given for a better understanding of lusting and its results.

Are you beginning to really consider what the word lust really means? Study the following meanings and other words that are a part of the concept of lusting. You might be surprised at the extensive nature of this simple four-letter word. A study of the word LUST in various dictionaries forms the meaning as: **A DESIRE TO GRATIFY THE SENSES (SIGHT, TOUCH, TASTE, SMELL, HEARING), SEEKING UNRESTRAINED GRATIFICATION OF THE FLESH, TO FEEL INTENSE DE-**

SIRE FOR SATISFACTION, PLEASURE, ETC., A BODILY APPETITE, EXCITEMENT OF THE MIND, A LONGING AFTER, **INORDINATE AFFECTION, GREED, SENSUAL, CARNAL, COVET, CONCUPIENCE**. This has provided a good picture of what lust is but to further enhance your understanding of the word, study some of the meaning of words listed in the definition of lust which should expand your thought base even more. The word **DESIRE** means to long for, have a strong wish for, crave, sexual appetite, lust, hunger for and passion. The word **GRATIFY** means to give in to, give pleasure or satisfaction, and to indulge (give into one's own desires and to give ones self up to cravings). **UNRESTRAINED** means not able to hold back or keep from action and to suppress or unable to keep under control. **INORDINATE** is not regulated, lacking restraint, too great or excessive. **AFFECTION** is the mental or emotional state of a person, and fond or tender feeling. **GREED** is getting or having more than one needs or an excessive desire for having or getting things, earth, etc. **SENSUAL** is having to do with the body and sense, being distinguished from the intellect of spirit, being pre-occupied with bodily or sexual pleasures, lewd or carnal. **CARNAL** is in or of the flesh, worldly, materialism, not of spiritual and have not do with basic physical needs. **COVET** is to want passionately, especially something that someone else has and to long for something with envy (feelings of discontent or ill will because of what someone else has, jealousy and lack of Christian charity). **CONCUPIENCE** is a strong desire, especially a sexual desire and to eagerly seek for. It can be concluded that lusting is not a desirable characteristic to display in your life. It is being overly concerned with having things for one's life that are in excess, unnecessary, fleshly, that belong to someone else and consuming one's focus on the things of the world rather than on things of the Spirit.

The Israelites allowed lusting to overcome them and their need turned into grumbling complaining and moaning. As a result, God gave them more than enough to satisfy their lust. He gave it to them in such quantities that it became loathsome to them and it caused many deaths. This leads to consideration of what happens when one begins to lust. It starts out as a tiny seed of desire for something. If that seed is not killed, it grows and grows and eventually becomes an obsession which leads to covetousness and then to idolatry. This can happen in every

area of your life. For example, a person may have a strong need to have money. This grows into an obsession to have a certain job that will help obtain the money desired. As a person pursues this endeavor they become so involved in their pursuit of their desire that they do not realize that they have drifted away from God and have allowed what used to be wrong in their life to become right. They begin to compromise their Christian values and may even do things they know God wouldn't approve of. God has taken a back seat.

Another example would have much to do with all that the world has to offer in this day and age. Things abound that can take a person's attention. How easy it is to be swayed by the media with so many possessions put before a person to tempt them to want more and more credit cards make it easy to buy and buy and to tempt them to want more and more. Credit cards make it easy to buy and buy and before one knows it they have over spent and have so much stuff that they do not know what to do with it. A person may become like the Israelites in that they accumulated so much in their homes that they do not have room for it. Their closets are full and every part of their home is overrun with things that it is difficult to keep the home clean. Other things can become obsessions such as automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, vacation homes, sports attractions, out doing the neighbors and it goes on and on.

Take a trip to a local mall or sit on a bench on a busy street and take a look at the number of obese people that you see. The number of obese or extremely overweight people may be startling as you observe people passing by. Obesity has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. This means that there are an alarming number of people who are more than just a little overweight. This has caused an increase in the cost of medical care because the health risks of other people are much higher than for normal weight people. This is not only a problem with adults but also affects children immensely. What is the cause of most of this obesity? The answer is simple: LUST! There is a proliferation of food that is easily available to Americans, and much of it is packed with sugar and other unhealthy things. People can easily become hooked on eating these items and many such items are quick and easy to fix. The serving portions have increased over the years, and this adds to an increase in the amount of intake of food, and one can quickly eat more

than the body needs. In addition, the life-style of Americans has become more sedentary, and this lack of exercise aids the overweight problem. Food can control a person rather than the person controlling their intake of food. This is lust. It comes down to the fact that a person is abusing their body, the temple of God.

In this age of technology, lusts can even extend to this area. Cell phones have almost become a necessity for some people and they spend hours on them. The expense can be quite high. Computers have also become an object of lust. Surfing the internet for all types of things can become addictive while family, work and other areas of life suffer. Television, too, can become an object of lust. People get into series of programs that they just cannot miss seeing. Television offers so many different things and it is easy to become "hooked" on so many kinds of programs. Not only can you watch television when you are at home, but you can record multiple programs while you are away from home to be attached later. There are many games that can be played on the television and on hand held games. These games can become quite addictive. This is only a small sample of the many kinds of technological items that are available today. Just think of the new items that will become available in the future that will take more of people's time. The important thing to remember is that all of these things greatly affect your life. Your time is absorbed with these items and often family members are neglected, but of greater importance is the fact that these take the place of God in your life.

The questions to consider is: Is it sinful to lust? The Bible is the place to find the answer. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry: For which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience" (Colossians 3:5-6). "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Ephesians 5:5). "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Roman 7:7). "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and

sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in time past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Ephesians 2:1-3). Is lust a sin? The answer is an absolute YES! Lust leads to covetousness and that leads to idolatry (excessive devotion to or reverence to). The results of lust are not pleasant to think about so stated in the above verses. The WRATH OF GOD will come, leaving such a person with no inheritance in the coming kingdom of God!

What do you do about lust when it comes in to your life? The answer is in Colossians 3:5-6: "MORTIFY therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which thing's sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." This is reinforced in Romans 8:13: "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Mortify means to kill, deaden, subdue, bring under authority, discipline and to bring under control. What is it that you need to control or deaden? The answer is in the verse above, the FLESH.

Paul continues in Colossians 3 not leaving you without instructions on what to do to mortify your body. First he tells you what you need to get rid of in your life. "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy filthy communication out of our mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds" (verses 8-9). Instructions continue with what you are to do to come out of the life of living in the flesh. "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. PUT ON therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, BOWELS OF MERCIES, KINDNESS, HUMBLINESS OF MIND, MEEKNESS, LONGSUFFERING; FORBEARING ONE ANOTHER, AND FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, IF ANY MAN HAVE A QUARREL AGAINST ANY: EVEN AS CHRIST FORGAVE YOU, SO ALSO DO YE. **AND ABOVE ALL**

**THESE THINGS PUT ON CHARITY, WHICH IS THE BOND OF PERFECTNESS. AND LET THE PEACE OF GOD RULE IN YOUR HEARTS, TO THE WHICH ALSO YE ARE CALLED IN ONES BODY AND BE YE THANKFUL"** (verses 12-15). This seems like a tall order to perform, but Paul tells you how to do it. **"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him"** (verses 16-17). Paul says that in order to overcome the flesh, dwell (live in, inhabit, reside) in the word of God, the Bible. Make it the way you think, how you react, and what you say. As you study the Bible, you will find the inspiration you need that will lead you into being able to display mercy, kindness, humbleness, meekness, patience, forgiving everything (not just what you want to forgive) and exhibiting how showing forth love in all situations. Wisdom will come to help you make right decisions and peace will fill your spirit as a result of your relationship with God and the Lord Jesus. The things of the flesh will be overcome because you are no longer focused on them. You will be walking in the Spirit. Life will be the result. "For as many as are lead by the Spirit of God, they are the son of God. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:14, 16-17).

Recall once again what happened to the Israelites when their flesh got the best of them, and God gave them their request. Their requests made them miserable and many died. God will allow you to have your request, too. Now you must consider your own requests. Are they fleshy requests or are they based on spiritual needs? In what manner are your requests manifesting themselves in your lives? Are you reaping the world of the flesh or the fruit of the Spirit? What do other people see being brought forth in your life? How much better it will be to live the spiritual life that leads to eternal life than the fleshy life that leads to eternal destruction!



You know, time has a way of moving quickly and catching you unaware of the passing years! It seems just yesterday that I was a young girl, just married and embarking on my new life with my husband.

And yet in a way, it seems like eons ago, and I wonder where all the years went. I know that I lived them all, and I have glimpses of how it was back then and of all my hopes and dreams. But, here it is, the winter of my life and it catches me by surprise. How did I get here so fast? Where did the years go, and where did my babies go? Where did my youth go?

I remember well seeing older people through the years and thinking that those older people were years away from me and that winter was so far off that I could not fathom it or imagine fully what it would be like.

But here it is! My husband retired yesterday, and he is really getting gray. He moves slower, and I see an older man now. He's in much better shape than I am, but I see the great change. He's not the one I married who was dark and young and strong. But, like me, his age is beginning to show, and we are now those older folks that we used to see and never thought we'd be.

Each day now, I find that just getting a shower is a real target for the day! And taking a nap is not a treat anymore. It's mandatory because if I don't on my own free will, I just fall asleep where I sit.

And so, now I enter this new season of my life unprepared for all the aches and pains and the loss of strength and ability to go and do things.

But, at least I know that winter has come, and I'm not sure how long it will last. This I know, that when it is over, I will sleep for awhile and awake in the kingdom of God.

So, if you're not in your winter yet, let me remind you that it will be here faster than you think. So, whatever you would like to accomplish in your life, do it quickly!

Our life is but a vapor. It vanishes away. So, do what you can today because you can never be sure whether this is your winter or not.

You have no promise that you will see all the seasons of your life. Live for the Lord today, and say all the things that you want your loved ones to remember.

Adapted from the Internet



# EXCUSES, EXCUSES, EXCUSES... OR GOD UNDERSTANDS

By Laura Tennant



Nearly everyone - young or old, has been guilty of making an excuse at one time or another. We have excuses for being late, for failing to complete assignments, for making poor choices, for bad behavior, for any number of situations. The word "excuse" originally meant "to give a defense or reason for something." Today, it suggests, "an unjustified or false reason - a pretext given to cover up the true motive." When we give an "excuse" for our actions, we are not taking responsibility for them. We want to blame someone else or something else. How often have we heard these phrases... "If you were in my situation you would do the same thing." "You don't understand." "I have no other choice." "Everyone is doing it." We are only deceiving ourselves when we try to defend our action, or lack of them, with an "excuse". The enemy of commitment is "excuse". Excuses are so dangerous. We often do not succeed because we "have an excuse." When we let an "excuse" rule our lives, we are not in control. For this reason, it is necessary for us to put the responsibility where it belongs - with ourselves.

Excuse making has existed since the beginning of creation. There are no new excuses. Many are recorded in the Bible. People often give excuses for not doing the will of God. Let us examine just a few found in Scripture.

**It's not my fault.** In Genesis 3:9-13 we read, "And the Lord God called unto Adam and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou art naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman. What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Here we see both Adam and Eve were not willing to take responsibility for their actions. Scripture, however, tells us that each person is responsible for his deeds. II Corinthians 5:10 states,

"For we must all appear before the judgments of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

**I was afraid.** "Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crows, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly" (Matthew 26:69-75). There are many reasons people use this excuse. These might include being afraid to stand up for the truth for fear we will lose the love of our family, or suffer the loss of our job, or lose our friends. Jesus said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell": (Matthew 10:28).

**I don't have any talents.** "And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither here to fore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Exodus 4:10). God gives all men certain abilities. Some are inherent and some we must develop on our own. Failing to utilize and develop our talents can result in a missed opportunity to bring in others to Christ.

**I don't have time.** "And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their

dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." And another also said Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house And Jesus said unto him No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:59-62). Many use the excuse that they are just too busy. It is important to put God first in our lives, and then everything else will fall into place. In Matthew 6:33 Jesus says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." There is never a moment God is too busy to listen to us and to hear our needs. We should never be too busy that there is no time in our lives for God or others. There is no better time to obey the Gospel than today The Bible says, "behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2).

How often do we make excuses? How often have we heard another make excuses? We as children of God are called to serve the Lord. God is not going to accept excuses for not answering His call. Are you going to go before the judgment seat of Christ with nothing but excuses to offer him? We all must go forth and be the best that we can be for the Lord. Whatever circumstances we find ourselves in, we must try to refrain from giving excuses. God expects us to be doers "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). In Matthew 7:21, we read, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Jesus gave a parable to rebuke excuse making. A certain man made a great supper and invited many to come and enjoy the feast. The parable is found in Luke 14:16-24. In verse 18, the first part, we read, "And they all with one consent began to make excuse," God sees right through our excuses and finds them unacceptable. In verse 24 we read, "For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." Those invited to this banquet were too occupied with other people and activities to see the importance of the invitation. Their priorities involved the cares of this world. They were too busy and satisfied with their current way of life to listen to the invitation. They preferred to miss the banquet rather than have their way of life disrupted.

Let us take a closer look at this parable and the excuses offered. Verse 18, the second part states, "The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused."

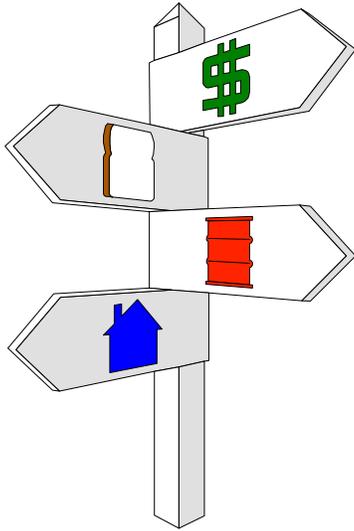
This person's possessions were more important to him than either the banquet or the host. Do you strive to achieve earthly possessions and neglect the heavenly gifts? In Luke 12:16-21 we read of the rich fool." And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do; I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required to thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." "But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Luke 12:31). "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:34).

The second man said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused." He was too occupied with his way of making a living to give any attention to other matters. Does our job to carry keep us from enjoying God's blessings? Do we find ourselves spending more time on making money and getting ahead in this world than spending time with God in His Word and sharing it with others of like faith?

A third excuse was given by a man who had just gotten married, "I have married a wife and therefore I can not come." Why not bring his wife to the banquet? Was this man so preoccupied with his relationship that he couldn't enjoy the host and his banquet? Do you become so preoccupied with a relationship that you lose sight of the most important of all relationships?

All these excuses were not wrong in themselves. Buying property, making a living and getting married are God approved activities but good things can become excuses if we put them above God's Word. Let us not lose out on those of the greatest blessings because of selfish priorities and unjustified excuses.

What is your excuse for failing to obey God? The next time you have a controllable situation in which you make excuses for, examine your motive. Are you sacrificing for Jesus or sacrificing Jesus? Excuses are used, sometimes, to avoid doing God's will. Will God really understand when you make excuses? "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12).



# 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.*

*Excerpts taken from Houston Chronicle.*

## IDENTITY CRISIS

### Controversy at Hollywood church highlights division in Protestantism

by Gillian Flaccus  
Associated Press

Los Angeles - When the Rev. Alan Meenan took over as senior pastor at the nationally prominent Hollywood Presbyterian Church it had been losing members for 20 years.

Now, hundreds of new worshippers are flocking to an alternative service staged by the church at a near by nightclub that offers live rock music and a casual atmosphere that doesn't frown on flip-flops and nose piercings.

The service, called Contemporary Urban Experience, has bolstered membership at one of the most storied Presbyterian congregations in the country. But it has also created a deep rift between old and new members that threatens to tear the conservative church apart.

Responding to numerous complaints about Meenan, regional church officials, in a rare step, took control of "Hollywood Pres" last week and put Meenan and his executive pastor on paid administrative leave in order to restore the peace.

The turmoil within the 2,700 member congregation reflects what experts call the "worship war," an identity crisis that has beset many mainline Protestant denomina-

tions as they struggle to survive in a culture that puts less importance on the tradition of organized religion.

Membership among Presbyterian churches has declined by as many as 40,000 people a year since the mid 1960s, said Jerry Van Marter, news director at Presbyterian Church USA.

Similar declines have been seen in nearly all mainline Protestants denominations, as clashes have developed not only over worship style but also issues such as the ordination of woman and the role of gays and lesbians in the church.

The decline has been especially painful at "Hollywood Pres," as its Web site refers to the church. First, where the congregation helped launch evangelists Billy Graham and Lloyd Ogilvie, who's now U.S. Senate chaplain. It was home to Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, and Henrietta Mears, author of the popular Dunsay school curriculum Gospel Light.

"Hollywood Presbyterian is the elite," said congregant Teena Smith, who until recently attended a nondenominational megachurch in Atlanta. "People against Meenan say, "That's great to move to alternative. But not in our back yard."

The rift over worship is something that William Mckinney, president of the Pacific School of Religion at University of California, Berkeley, has seen before.

"You try to identify the kernel of the gospel - and that, you don't mess with. But your presentation needs to be sensitive to cultural change," he said. "This is a question that mainline folk wrestle with: Has the sacredness of the organ been elevated to a point where Jesus gets lost?"

At "Hollywood Pres", the trouble began when Meenan launched the Contemporary Urban Experience, or CUE, service more than two years ago. The weekly Sunday services has attracted some three hundred fifty 20-and 30--somethings, some with tattoos and piercing. Many work in the entertainment industry.

"I could go into any coffee shop in Los Angeles and go up to any artsy, crazy guy and feel totally comfortable inviting him to this service," said J.C. Cornwell, 34, a church member who volunteers to produce CUE each week. "It's just a really cool scene - but it's still the truth."

Some traditionalists have embraced the new service as a way to save their beloved church. For others, however, it represents a threat to the faith and a fall from grace.

"I would be very sad if it became demographically oriented or age-oriented, where there would come a day when the sanctuary was abandoned and all worship moved down to the warehouse," said Spaky Jamison, a 20-year member of "Hollywood Pres" and a church elder. "I come from a tradition of loving to sing and perform classical music."

The building tension over worship style exploded this spring when members discovered an \$856,000 budget shortfall that Meenan had not disclosed. The pastor has not been accused of fraud - simply poor management.

Presbytery of the Pacific, a regional governing body for the denomination's churches in Southern California and Hawaii, received more than 100 letters and calls from disgruntled members. They complained about Meenan's dictatorial management style, his disregard for Presbyterian tradition and his decision to put money into overseas missionary trips and youth outreach while criticizing the cost of the traditional services.

On May 3, about 500 parishioners attended a five-hour meeting during which dozens of parishioners both for and against Meenan addressed the presbytery.

Meenan acknowledged he hadn't been a perfect pastor but blamed dissension on traditionalists who were unwilling to embrace his new direction. He said the church gained 728 new members under his eight-year leadership, including 350 at the alternative service and between 300 and 500 at the weekly Bible study.

"There are those who sense a loss of involvement in their church and target me as a result," said Meenan, who has been a pastor for 32 years. "Change is essential to our future, and change is working for good in Hollywood."

The presbytery voted to seize control of "Hollywood Pres" and appointed an administrative commission, which immediately placed Meenan and his executive pastor, David Manock, on indefinite paid leave.

Many members worry that the congregation won't be able to bridge the generational gap even with outside intervention.

"I would like to see our church learn how to embrace these separate styles for worship," said Jamison, the church elder. "How can we do that and merge together and remain merged together as a congregation?"

### **Comment**

Nowhere in scripture are we instructed to use worldly entertainment to bring people to Christ. We are told not to love the world or the things that are in the world. Why would we want to use the entertainment of the world that just causes an emotional high in the cause of Christ?

The following article appeared in the Casper Star Tribune which is published in Casper, Wyoming.

### **ARABS REJECT ASSERTION**

**by the Washington Post**

RABAT, Morocco - Senior Arab official attending a U.S. - sponsored conference to promote democracy in the Middle East emphatically rejected on Saturday the Bush administration's assertion that greater democracy in the region would help end terrorism. They argued that the administration's strong support of Israel made it difficult to undertake political reform or to stop extremists driven by hatred of U.S. policies.

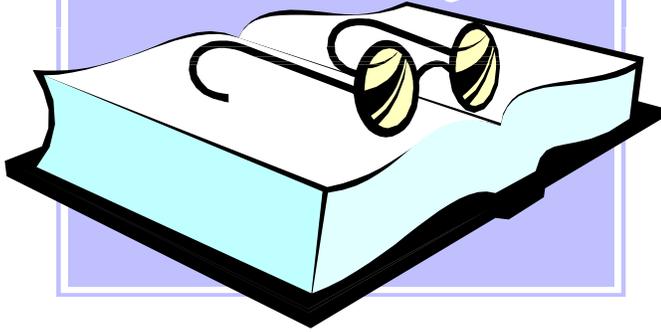
"Let us face it," said the Saudi foreign minister, Prince Suad Faisal. "...we perceive on clashes of civilization or competing value systems. The real bone of contention is the longest conflict in modern history."

### **Comment**

This short newspaper article confirms that there is just one thing on the Arab mind, the elimination of Israel.

# BIBLE

## Study



**Question:** What is righteousness by faith?

**Answer:** A little boy was once impressed to ask his father the question: "Daddy, if I have done wrong for eleven years, will Jesus forgive me?" "Of course, son, Jesus will freely forgive all your sins," the understanding parent replied.

"But don't I have to be good for Jesus to forgive me? I thought that I would have to be good for the next eleven years before God would forgive all my sins," the little fellow said.

The father proceeded to tell his son that he certainly should do good and be good the rest of his life, but forgiveness was a gift that he received from God. Jesus freely forgave him for his eleven years of "sin".

Yes, forgiveness is a gift. Human merit can never earn God's forgiveness. When Christ remits our transgressions, He does so "without money and without price." Our sins are forgiven without charge.

The idea that we must work to obtain forgiveness for our sins is as old as the world itself, but there is nothing more fatal to spiritual life than to cherish the idea that we are forgiven because of our good works. Forgiveness of sin is freely bestowed upon every repentant sinner who comes to God for cleansing. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

It is a pleasant experience to enter by faith into God's act of forgiveness and receive His full pardon for our acts

# Questions and Answers

of sinning. But the salvation which Christ freely provides is more than forgiveness of sin. It goes beyond forgiveness for our transgressions. Those whom God forgives He justifies. That is, He makes them righteous by a special provision of His grace. He imputes to them His own righteous character. God's forgiveness does not change man's character. But our Heavenly Father is able to make His people righteous and holy if they will receive His gift of righteousness by faith.

God's law requires that man shall stand before Him with an unstained record, but man can only stand in the presence of God's law uncondemned so long as he is obedient to that law. Hence, all his efforts to supply righteousness would be in vain. The only one who ever lived on earth and obeyed that law without as much as one infraction was Jesus Christ. The righteousness of Christ is His perfect earthly life of triumph over sin. It is the total victory of the Saviour in His conquest over the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is the righteousness of God which He worked into His Son during His earthly life and Christ worked out by a life of faith and obedience.

This blessed righteousness may be had by all who will exercise repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. At the moment we are forgiven for our sins, we may come into possession of the garment of Christ's righteousness as a free gift to cover our sinful past. We have no righteousness for our past, no record of obedience to the law, but Christ had a life of obedience to the law which He worked out for us. This life He gives to us. We accept it by faith exactly as we receive forgiveness. It is a gift of God. This righteousness the Apostle Paul calls "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (Ro-

mans 3:22). God's over us with this robe of righteousness so that we may have something to present to Him in place of our own sin and nakedness. Thus, we are enabled to stand in His presence holy and righteous, and we are "accepted as the beloved."

To put it another way, our moral deposits in the bank of God were nil, but Jesus deposits the precious wealth of His own moral character to our account in the bank. And this is more than a theological nicety. It is an actual fact as real as the forgiveness that God freely bestows.

It is a blessed thought to the believer to know that the righteousness of Christ covers him. It is a big relief to be able to approach God with self surrender and out of sight beneath the garment of Christ's righteousness, assured that God looks at the justified sinner through Christ. He sees not the sinner himself defiled with his own selfish ways, but the pure and holy character of the Son of God.

What is it that God has done for us to make this blessed transaction possible? What acts of His mercy and justice have made these provisions of grace accessible to all who repent and believe? II Corinthians 5:21 tells us, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," Christ took our sin which He had no part in order that we might receive His righteousness in which we had no part. Those sins which we had wrought Christ took with all their guilt in order that His righteousness which He had wrought might be ours with all the life and joy that it brings. This merciful exchange, which justifies the believer in God's sight, is made possible through Christ's life and His substitutionary death for sin.

The exceeding sinfulness of sin and its awful magnitude were felt by the Saviour when He died upon the cross. His sorrow and anguish were in proportion to the malignancy of sin. So great was the sense of the sins He bore and so terrible the guilt and condemnation that He was forced to exclaim, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This bitter cry was forced from His lips because of our sins.

Too often it is forgotten that Christ's life of righteousness was as good and blessed as the sins that He bore were evil and malignant. This righteousness we are to bear as He bore our sins. This righteousness He offers to us in exchange for our sins that we may feel its blessedness and exclaim, as did Paul and David, "Saying, blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are

covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Romans 4:7-8).

As we receive His righteousness by faith, we may cry out in holy joy: "My God, my God, how blessed is thy righteousness with which thou hast covered me. My sin caused by Savior to cry out in anguish, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' But His righteousness causes me to exclaim with amazement, "Thank God, thank God, He has not forsaken me, but He has covered me with the spotless robe of His own moral character!"

This describes to some extent at least what it means to receive by faith the gift of Christ's righteousness as a covering of our sins that are past. Our own great purpose as individuals and as a church should be to enter more fully into the blessed experience of receiving the precious gift of Christ's righteousness by faith.

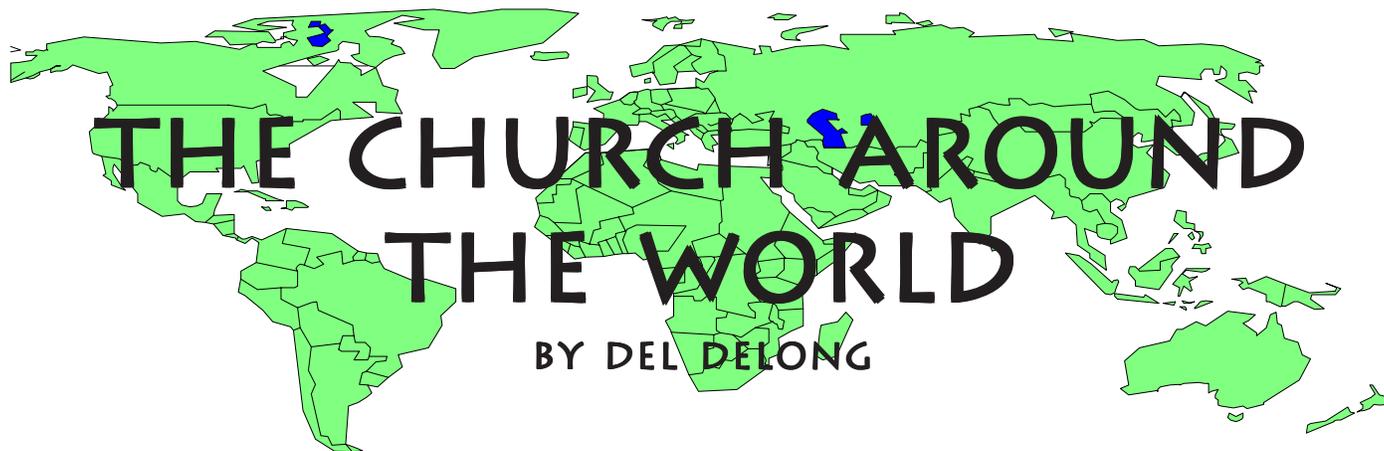
**Question:** Why did Solomon have so many wives?

**Answer:** I Kings 11:1-3 indicates that King Solomon had hundreds of wives and hundreds of concubines. Many were from lands with which God had previously instructed the Israelites to avoid intermarrying. God knew that such intermarrying would lead to the worship of false gods. Why did Solomon do this?

History reveals that Solomon was very aggressive in his foreign policy. In sealing treaties in ancient days, it was customary for a lesser king to give his daughter in marriage to the greater king (in this case, Solomon). Every time a new treaty was sealed, Solomon ended up with yet another wife. These wives were considered tokens of friendship and "sealed" the relationship between the two kings. Perhaps Solomon was not personally acquainted with some of these wives, even though he was married to them.

In the process of doing all of this, Solomon was utterly disobedient to God. He was apparently so obsessed with power and wealth that it overshadowed his spiritual life, and he ended up falling into apostasy.

In marrying more than one woman, Solomon was going against God's revealed will regarding monogamy. From the very beginning God created one woman for one man. Please read Genesis 1:27; 2:21-24. Deuteronomy 17:17 explicitly instructs the king not to "take many wives." Solomon sinned in two ways: (1) he engaged in polygamy, and (2) he violated God's commandment against marrying pagans. These two violations led to his own apostasy.



## *The Philippines*

*These photographs were taken during our conference at Cebu in June 2005.*





LESSON I

THE ARK OF GOD BROUGHT TO  
JERUSALEM (PART 1)

**Scripture Reading: II Samuel 6:1-11.**

**Golden Text: II Samuel 6:3 (first part).**

**"And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah:..."**

**NOTE:** With the Lord's help, David was able to defeat the Philistines. Let us study now about how the ark of God will be brought to Jerusalem and what happens before it arrives.

1. How many men did David gather in II Samuel 6:1?
2. What was the purpose of this gathering? II Samuel 6:2.
3. Upon what did they set the ark, and who went before the ark? II Samuel 6:3-4.
4. What did David and all the house of Israel do in II Samuel 6:5?
5. What happened to Uzzah in II Samuel 6:6-7?
6. Was David pleased with the death of Uzzah? What was the name of the place where Uzzah died after that? II Samuel 6:8.
7. Where did they take the ark in II Samuel 6:10?
8. How long was the ark at the house of Obbedom? II Samuel 6:11.

LESSON II

THE ARK OF GOD BROUGHT TO  
JERUSALEM (PART 11)

**Scripture Reading: II Samuel 6:12-25.**

**Golden Text: II Samuel 6:15.**

**"So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet."**

**NOTE:** We last learned that David and the men retrieved the ark of God, but Uzzah touched it and died. David was frightened by this and left it with Obbedom. We will now study about how the ark of God is brought to Jerusalem and the rejoicing that is made over it by the Israelites.

1. What did David hear concerning the house of Obbedom where the ark of God was at, and what did he do? II Samuel 6:12.
2. What did David do after the ark of God was moved six paces? II Samuel 6:13-14.
3. What did David and the house of Israel do when the ark's brought into the city of David? II Samuel 6:15.
4. Who was Michal, and how did she feel towards David? II Samuel 6:16.
5. When the ark of the Lord was set in its place, what did David do? II Samuel 6:17-19.
6. What did Michal say to David in II Samuel 6:20?
7. What was David's response to Michal? II Samuel 6:21-22.
8. As a result of this conversation what happened to Michal? II Samuel 6:23.

LESSON III

DAVID'S VICTORIES OVER HIS ENEMIES

**Scripture Reading: II Samuel 8:1-18.**

**Golden Text: II Samuel 8:1 (first part).**

**"And after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them:..."**

**NOTE:** In chapter 7 you may read how David was not allowed to build a temple here on earth as he had planned. God forbid it because David was a man of war and had shed much blood. He does however promise David an eternal throne. We shall study now how he completely subdues his enemies and extends his kingdom from Egypt to the Euphrates.

1. Who did David subdue in II Samuel 8:1-2?
2. What did David take from Hadadezer? II Samuel 8:3-4.
3. How many Syrians did David slay, and what did he take from the servants? II Samuel 8:5-7.
4. What did he take for Bethah and Berothai? II Samuel 8:8.
5. Who was Toi, and what did he send his son to do unto David? II Samuel 8:9-10.
6. What did King David dedicate unto the Lord? II Samuel 8:11-12.
7. How many Syrians in the valley of salt did David slay? II Samuel 8:13.
8. Did the Lord preserve David withersoever he went? Was David just to his people? II Samuel 8:14-15.
9. Who were the chief rulers over the people? II Samuel 8:16-18.

#### **LESSON IV**

#### **DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH**

**Scripture Reading:** II Samuel 9:1-13.

**Golden Text:** II Samuel 9:3 (first part).

**"And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him?"**

**NOTE:** In chapter 8 we studied how David completely subdues the enemy nations, and extended his kingdom from Egypt to the Euphrates. David's name is now known in all nations. We shall study in chapter 9 about the kindness he extends to Mephibosheth because of his great love for Jonathan.

1. What question did David ask in II Samuel 9:1?
2. Who was then called unto David? II Samuel 9:2.
3. What did king David ask Ziba, and what was Ziba's reply? II Samuel 9:3.
4. Where did Jonathan's son now live? II Samuel 9:4.
5. David sent for Jonathan's son. What was the son's name, and what did he do when brought before king David? II Samuel 9:5-6.
6. David told Mephibosheth not to fear him. What did he promise to do for him, and what was Mephibosheth's reply to David? II Samuel 9:7-8.
7. The king then called to Ziba. What orders were given him? II Samuel 9:9-10.
8. What did Ziba reply to the king in II Samuel 9:11?
9. Who were servants unto Mephibosheth and his young son? II Samuel 9:12-13.

#### **FRIENDSHIP FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN**

Jesus said, "Let the children come unto me." He always loved the children, and often He would lay His hands on their heads and bless them. The little children loved Jesus, too, for He was always so good and kind to them. All children of every color and country in the world are Jesus's friends, and Jesus wants us to love them all. The Bible tells us that God made us all alike and that no one is any better than another. God judges His children by how they act and not by what country we have for our home or what color we are.

## GOD ALWAYS UNDERSTANDS

One day Phyllis came home from school quite sad and looking lonely.

"What's the trouble, Phyllis?" her mother asked.

It was too much for her to bear any longer. She burst into tears. When she had wept for a time, her mother succeeded in quieting her.

"Now tell me, Phyllis, what is it that has made your heart heavy?" she begged.

"Oh, Mother," said Phyllis, "I suppose I am a baby, but some of the girls have been horrid to me today. I did nothing to make them feel so. I only worked at my lesson during recess in order to finish it. They were scolded because they did not get it done, and now they blame me because I stayed at it to get it finished. Mother, do you think I did wrong?"

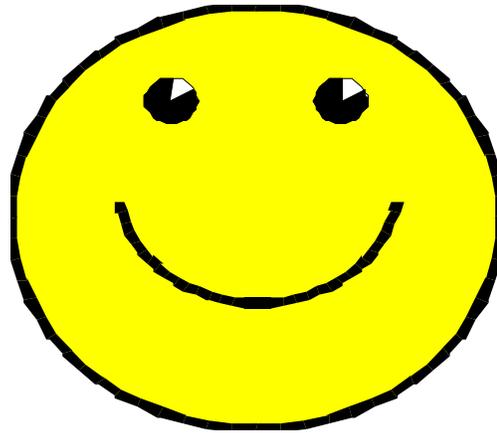
"Why, no, my child. I don't think so. I'm sorry that the girls misunderstood you. Perhaps the fault was in part the long assignment. You were more faithful to duty, and they were more demanding of justice. But I hardly think they should have felt angry at you," Mother offered.

"Well, it makes me feel better to think that you understand, Mother, and I'm glad that God always understands us. He knows our reasons for doing things, and if we are anxious to do right, He helps us."

"That's a beautiful thought, Phyllis," said Mother. "I'm sure it will help you to forgive the girls for their unkind spirit."

Jesus was often misunderstood by friends. He, too, had a sympathizing mother, but it meant much to Him to be able to take His problems to God, His Heavenly Father, who alone understood perfectly His way of living. It always takes time and patience to understand people who act differently, for one must inquire into their motives or reasons and put the best meaning to their actions.

*"Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever." -Psalms 106:1.*



## JUST A SMILE

How often have you felt discouraged and downhearted and then you met someone who gave you a friendly smile? That little smile seemed to do away with all your troubles. You went on your way light hearted and happy. In the same manner, you can spread a smile around. We, as Christians, have something special to be happy about. Our precious Saviour died on the cross that through Him we might have life eternal. This is truly something to rejoice about. We have many trials in this life, but we also have someone who is willing to carry our burdens for us if we will only let Him. In John 16:33 Christ said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Cheerfulness is like the sun, it dispels mental fogs, warms the chilled heart, makes a dull way bright; and as we journey toward it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us.

The next time you see someone who does not have a smile, give him one of yours. It will warm your heart as well as his.

Evelyn Harrelson

## Answers to Few and Many

1. life, Matthew 7:14
2. called, Matthew 20:16
3. laboreres, Matthew 9:37
4. fish, Matthew 15:34
5. saved, Luke 13:23
6. sparrows, Matthew 10:31
7. parables, Matthew 13:3
8. rooms, John 14:2
9. Legion, Mark 5:9
10. ransom, Matthew 20:28

**FEW AND MANY**

It may be few, or it may be many. The Bible speaks of both. So our quiz is divided between them - five questions about each. Can you supply the missing word in the verses or description given below?

1. Few find the narrow way to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. "Many be \_\_\_\_\_, but few chosen." KJV
3. "The harvest is plentiful, but the \_\_\_\_\_ are few."
4. They had seven loaves and a few small \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Someone said, ":Lord, will those who are \_\_\_\_\_ be few?"
6. "Fear not...you are of more value than many \_\_\_\_\_."
7. "And he (Jesus) told them many things in \_\_\_\_\_."
8. "In my Father's house are many \_\_\_\_\_."
9. He told Jesus, "My name is \_\_\_\_\_; for we are many."
10. "The Son of man came ...to give his life a \_\_\_\_\_ for many."

**"HOW TO FORGIVE"**

If you were busy being kind,  
 Before you knew it you would find  
 You'd soon forget to think it was true  
 That someone was unkind to you.

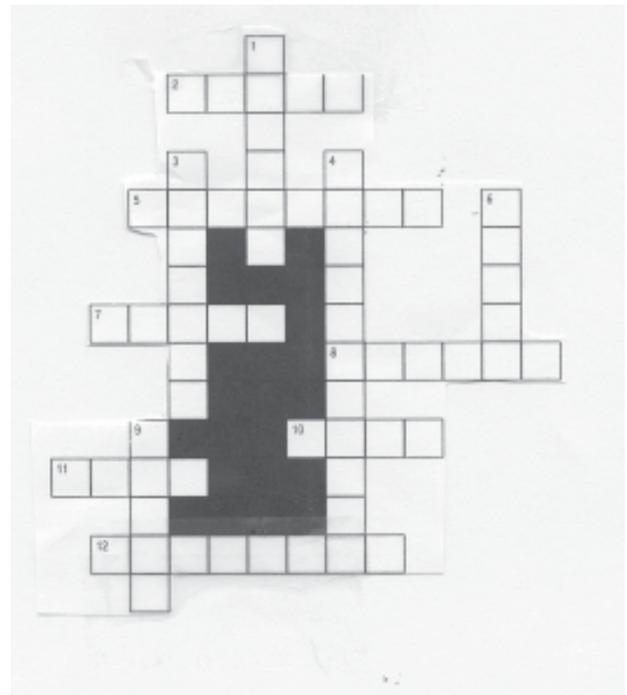
If you were busy being glad  
 And cheering people who are sad,  
 Although your heart might ache a bit,  
 You'd soon forget to notice it.

If you were busy being good  
 And doing just the best you could,  
 You'd not have time to blame some man  
 Who's doing just the best he can.

If you were busy being true  
 To what you know you ought to do,  
 You'd be so busy you'd forget  
 The blunders of the folks you've met.

If you were busy being right,  
 You'd find yourself too busy quite  
 To criticize your neighbor long  
 Because he's busy being wrong

**YOUNG DAVID**



**ACROSS**

2. David killed the giant with this weapon. (I Samuel 17:50)
5. David's best friend. (I Samuel 19;2)
7. Goliath's armor was made from this metal. (I Samuel 17:5-6)
8. This man of God anointed David king. (I Samuel 16:13)
10. Number of stones David took to fight the giant with. (I Samuel 17:40)
11. Saul had David play this soothing instrument. (Judges 16:23)
12. David's rank among his brothers. (I Samuel 17:14)

**DOWN**

1. David married this daughter of Saul. (I Samuel 18:27)
3. Tall man from Gath who was champion for the Philistines. (I Samuel 17:4)
4. Group Israel was at war with. (I Samuel 17:3)
6. David's father. (I Samuel 17:12)
9. Saul offered this for David's protection. (I Samuel 17:38)

# THE FERTILE GARDEN

By Carol Buechner

Picture a beautiful garden so green and lush  
With no sign of weeds or dried out brush.  
Tall plants sway in a gentle and refreshing wind  
Warmed by the sun that God continually sends.

The roots of the plants grow deep in the ground  
Keeping them nestled safely in soil so brown.  
The plants produce fruit so large and so grand  
With a harvest so bountiful it's in great demand.

Picture your heart as a garden of God's word  
Growing with no thorns or thistles that disturb.  
Your heart is stirred with a loving breeze  
That brings out God's love with great ease.

In your mind the word of God is rooted and secure  
Watching over all thoughts to be righteous and pure.  
The fruit of the Holy Spirit has taken over your life  
So you live in a continual harvest of doing what's right.

Watch over all that is growing in your garden so fair  
Pull out weeds, thorns and thistles with great care  
Water it daily to keep it fresh and revived  
And fertilize it with the very best you can provide.

You won't be disappointed with what you reap  
For God's blessings will be yours to keep.  
So continue to sow and sow every day  
With bountiful harvest coming your way.