

The Advocate of Truth

*God Controls The
Doors*

Chastening

The Book of Books

Facts About Death

Can You Survive?

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The Seven Churches



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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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Fax: 304-782-2248**

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Volume LX I

Number 6

December 26 , 2011

The Advocate of Truth

USPS 542-940

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About the cover: This photo was taken by Brooke DeLong when we stopped at a rest area in Utah.

GOD CONTROLS THE DOORS

By Sister Nesta John
Grenada, West Indies



God controls when a door opens and when it closes. A door that is opened by God cannot be shut by any man, and also when it is closed cannot be opened by any man. Closed doors are often God's way to refine us and prepare us for the door He will eventually open. A closed door by God can allow us to pray some more. There are times when we might ask God to open the windows of heaven and bless us, and when we do receive His blessing, we forget Him completely, and communication with God fails. Remember God can close the same door He had opened for you. He is in control. When the door is now closed, we will remember to be on our knees, because God is the only one that can assist in such a situation.

A closed door can lead us to a different track which is much easier to travel. God sees ahead and knows what's best for each of His children. We may feel where we are is the best, but in the eyes of God, it's dangerous.

It may be painful at times to hit a different road, but trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. Patience comes along also with a closed door. God deals with times and seasons, and He can be four days late, but He will still be on time (see John 11:1-44). A door that is closed helps us to develop plenty of faith and trust in the Lord. He knows our weaknesses and strengths.

Tribulation may come your way with that door being closed, but the heavenly Father is making you a better Christian. Never fret when the door is closed, because it is always for the better, and we just have to wait to see. Behind every dark cloud there lies a silver lining: the thicker the cloud, the bigger the rainbow. Let us give God thanks and praise whenever a door is opened and whenever a door is closed. Remember, every disappointment for us is an appointment for God.

SOMETIMES

By Sister Amie Benjamin

Sometimes it's easy to forget Jesus cares and is near,
Sometimes it's hard to remember Satan is also near and is a snare.
Sometimes it's hard to pray and ask for forgiveness,
But it's easier to do it on my benefit's behalf.
Sometimes it's difficult to say when we are sorry,
But it's easy to sit and tell another's life story.
Sometimes we forget to tell our heavenly Father thank

You for all You're doing.
Sometimes it's even harder to tell Satan to get going.
Sometimes we feel like dropping out of the race,
But we forget it's His saving grace, and we need to do it.
Sometimes it's very trying just to be me, so there's always a sometimes.
But let us at all times just stick to being who God wants us to be, so we don't, or hardly, feel the sometimes, some-times.



Chastening

By Bibi Shimon Allicock
Guyana, South America

God loved David, the patriarch, so much that He said of his seed, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee" (II Samuel 7:14-15).

Indeed, as God said that He would chasten David's seed, He also chastened David, himself. We all know that God means what He says. "And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the

Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun" (II Samuel 12:1-12).

We see that although David fasted seven days, the child which Bathsheba bare unto him died. "David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead? But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead" (verses 16-19).

Later, incest was committed between his son, Amnon, and his daughter, Tamar. "And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her" (II Samuel 13:1-2).

“So Amnon lay down, and made himself sick: and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come, and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand” (verse 6). “So Tamar went to her brother Amnon’s house; and he was laid down. And she took flour, and kneaded it, and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes” (verse 8). “And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother. And when she had brought them unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister. And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this folly. And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee. Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her” (verses 10-14).

Thus, after this evil was committed, “...Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon’s heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not...” (verse 28, first part). “And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded” (verse 29, first part).

We saw that the Lord told David through the Prophet Nathan, “For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun” (II Samuel 12:12). Here is an example of a very great patriarch who was deemed as a man after God’s own heart. Nevertheless, since God is no respecter of persons, we saw His recompense towards that great individual. Thus, no matter who we are, we also will be recompensed according to the fruit of our doings.

As parents, we are instructed to “Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying” (Proverbs 19:18). “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes” (Proverbs 13:24). “Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell” (Proverbs 23:13-14). “Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee” (Deuteronomy 8:5).

“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:5-14).

In conclusion, let us consider the following words carefully. “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears” (verses 15-17). “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire” (verses 25-29).

Amen.

The Book Of Books

The Bible is called the Book of books for several reasons. It is the Book that never grows old. Today after all these years it is the best seller among books. It is a book so full of knowledge that we can never learn it all. The more we study it, the more there is for us to learn. It is like a beautiful flower. When we first look at a flower, we see beauty in it. Then we look at it again through a magnifying glass, and we see more beauty. Then we tear the flower to pieces and look at each part through the magnifying glass, and each part becomes a beautiful flower in itself. So it is with the Bible. The more we tear it apart, as it were, and dig into its teachings, the more knowledge we receive.

In our study of the Bible, we need to pray for the Holy Spirit to be our guide. Many times we read a passage of Scripture and do not get all of its meaning, and then sometime the Holy Spirit will bring out a greater meaning as we think of that very verse. Jesus said the Spirit would lead us into all truth, and that it would bring to our remembrance the things He had told us.

There are many who say they cannot understand the Bible when they read it. Yet it is written in simple language. But we find so many preachers who try to

make a mystery out of the Word of God, and they tell the people that they must come to them, the preachers, to have it explained. But Timothy knew the Scriptures from a little child. Yes, a little child can understand the Bible when he reads it if he takes it for what it says. At least he can understand enough to know the will of God. As we stated, we never learn all there is to learn about the Bible.

Truly, it is the Book of books. A high school superintendent once made the statement that the Bible was a library of books. He went on to say that we could study many different things from the Bible. This is true. It is the best history that has ever been written, going back to the very beginning of the earth. We can study natural history also from its pages. It is a book of laws, the best laws ever written. If we want to know something about astronomy, we can find it in the Bible. There is science, and there are studies on health. It gives us the will of God and tells us of His love for us. It tells us of the future before it comes to pass.

It is the way by which God has revealed to us what He expects us to do, and it is also the Book by which we are going to be judged when Christ comes. Therefore, we should take warning and study it more and more.

Facts Regarding Death

Bond Tennant

WE ALL KNOW WE MUST DIE. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). This is one appointment that must be met by the old, the young, the rich, the poor, the educated,

and the illiterate. People of all colors and all races must die. Both Christians and sinners die.

WE KNOW THAT LIFE IS SHORT. One hundred years are as nothing when we consider eternity.

Methuselah lived 969 years, yet his life was as a passing in the night. Job declared, “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not” (Job 14:1-2).

“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (James 4:14). We know without question that we must die and that life is short. The question which arises is, Is there another life after this one?

Job asked the question, “If a man die, shall he live again” (Job 14:14, first part). Job answered his own question in the latter part of the verse, “... all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.”

Job also said, “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me” (Job 19:25-27).

Others also answered Job’s question. The following are a few references:

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to

shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2).

The Apostle Paul declared, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (I Corinthians 15:19).

In John 11:25, Jesus said, “...I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”

Jesus also said, “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29).

The Apostle Paul shows us a mystery in I Corinthians 15:51-52, “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

Let us remember that in Revelation 1:18 our Lord Jesus Christ declared, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell (the grave) and of death.”

We have considered some facts regarding death. May every child of God make his calling and election sure in order to come forth unto the resurrection of life – not unto the resurrection of damnation.



Can You Survive?

By Daniel Cruz

As we look at the manmade and natural disasters, we see that it is evident that the times of which Christ spoke and the destruction that is to befall man is coming to be. We also see that many seek the Lord and try to discover the right to eternal life. Is their seeking of God with true intentions? Is the idea of seeking the Lord a survival tactic to avoid the destruction that is to come? “Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour

of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Revelation 14:7). This is a destruction that is being heralded to man, and some may hear and see these things coming and use their natural survival skills to avoid being caught off guard. So, what things do we need to prepare for this destruction?

We look at the parable of the ten virgins which is

found in Matthew, chapter 25:1-4: “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.” Looking at these verses, we see a distinction between those who were aware of the bridegroom’s coming, and they watched and prepared for the arrival of the bridegroom. However, why were the other five virgins caught unprepared? Webster’s defines “foolish” as a lack of sense, judgment or discretion. So, we see that they did not take heed to themselves or to the signs that were given them and were left behind. The call was made for the virgins to meet the bridegroom, but five of them lacked the necessary preparation to attend this meeting. This is a parable indeed, but with great significance in our lives today. Verse 13 gives us warning on the outcome of their foolishness, “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” God has love for all men, and He wants all to have part in the promises that He has for His creation. How can we take heed of the

warning signs that are for the saints? We can through studying and meditating on God’s Word.

“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars” (Revelation 2:2). Jesus explains that He understands the situations that we face in these latter times. Another warning can be found in II Peter 3:3, “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.” Can we agree, brethren, that this is the time in which we live today? So, how do we survive such deceptions that the enemy has planted in man? “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness: but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (verse 9). These are comforting and assuring words that the Lord has provided for us to endure and survive the enemy’s attacks on the saints. We must be prepared and watch for our Lord and Savior and remain vigilant until His promises for His children be fulfilled. Using our spiritual survival skills of praying, fasting and meditating on God’s Word will see us through.



THE CAUSES OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

by Dell Stout

After the death of Solomon, ten of the tribes of Israel rebelled because of the treatment Rehoboam gave them. Rehoboam, a son of Solomon, was the king and ruled all twelve tribes from Jerusalem. The ten tribes that rebelled were called Israel and had Jeroboam as their ruler. Apparently Samaria was their capital. The southern tribes were Judah with Benjamin and Levi as the priestly tribe. They were called Judah and later on were referred to as Jews. They were referred to as Jews the first time in the

Bible in II Kings 16:6. Jeroboam was afraid, that with the Israelites going to Jerusalem for the feast days and high Sabbaths, that he would lose control over them. Therefore he made two golden calves and placed one in Bethel and the other in Dan (see I Kings 12:25-33). He said these were the gods that brought them up out of Egypt. It is thought that he, Jeroboam, changed the worship on the Sabbath to worship on Sunday, as the Babylonians worshipped the sun on the first day of the week, Sunday.

These two things, the bowing down to idols and profaning the Sabbath, were in direct contradiction to the two basic requirements God gave for Israel's continued prosperity. They are listed in Leviticus 26:1-2, no bowing down before idols and keeping God's holy Sabbath.

Israel (the ten northern tribes) continued doing these things through nine dynasties and nineteen kings for approximately two hundred and sixteen years. Then they were uprooted and taken to Syria. These ten tribes became known as the "Lost Tribes" of Israel in accordance with Deuteronomy 32:16-26, "...make the remembrance of them to cease from among men." Israel was carried to Syria around 722 B.C. Rehoboam continued in the manner of Jeroboam in profaning the Sabbath and worshiping the gods of the Canaanites. This continued on to around 587 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and took all of the upper class of people off to Babylon. Thus Judah lasted around 135 years after the Israelites of the north were carried away. These captures and deportations occurred mainly as the result of profaning the Sab-

bath (see Nehemiah 13:17-18).

We, the U.S.A., as a nation since our beginning have been profaning the Sabbath by worshipping on the first day of the week, Sunday, as the Sabbath. For 235 years we also, instead of bowing down to physical idols, separate ourselves from God by doing things contrary to God's will. We can let a thing like obtaining money become our idol or, for example, the way we reverence a new car in the way we take care of it, shutting out God. How much longer will God forbear? (See II Peter 3:9). Could it be that the current storms, financial upheavals, high heat, drought, floods and calamities are the beginning of His judgments? Only through much repenting, prayer, fasting and soul searching, together with seeking the kingdom of God can these judgments be averted. Are the people to the point they are like the Laodiceans and say they "...have need of nothing..." (Revelation 3:17) and will not repent? Probably. We should remember that in Proverbs 28:9 it says, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."

The Seven Churches-- (Part Two)

By David DeLong



Grenada

"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I

will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Revelation 3:1-6).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the One here who is ad-

dressing the Church in Sardis, just as He is the One who addresses all of the seven churches. The "seven Spirits of God" is apparently another way of designating the Holy Spirit (see also Revelation 4:5; 5:6; Zechariah 4:2,6,10; Isaiah 11:1-2). We know that the seven stars which Jesus has represents "the angels of the seven churches" (see Revelation 1:20).

The Church in Sardis had a name that they lived; however, they were "dead". This condition seems to indicate hypocrisy in the church. Their reputation was apparently more important to the people than doing what was right. Perhaps they dressed in the latest fashions or drove the most expensive "chariots" to church. In any case their spiritual influence was gone. Perhaps the Lord was about to remove their candlestick out of its place (see Revelation 2:5). And yet there was still hope for these brethren for Jesus told them to be "watchful", and to "strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die".

Some of the most vulnerable of people in a church are the children. They can detect hypocrisy, strife, or compromise in the church members, and this has a tremendous negative impact on them. These little ones need good examples, or role models, of what being true disciples of Jesus really means, or else they may be ones "ready to die".

Christ exhorts the Sardis church to "hold fast, and repent." If they will not watch, then He "will come on (them) as a thief" when they are not expecting Him. However, even in this dead church there are some who have remained faithful to the Lord and "have not defiled their garments". Jesus will clothe the overcomer "in white raiment; and...will not blot out his name out of the book of life". He will also confess the overcomer's name before God and the angels.

The above text (verse 5) gives absolute proof that the doctrine of "once saved, always saved" is false. The Bible makes it abundantly clear that one is only saved *if* his or her name is written in the book of life (see Revelation 20:12,15; 21:27). Christ promises the overcomer that He will not blot out his name out of the book of life. Therefore, having one's name written in the book of life equates to having eternal life. Having one's name blotted out of the book of life equates to losing eternal life (see also Luke 10:20; Philippians 4:3; Exodus 32:32-33; Psalm 69:28; Revelation 22:19).

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write;

These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Revelation 3:7-13).

The reference to Jesus having the "key of David" is from Isaiah 22:22. Here, God's servant, Eliakim, was to replace the faithless treasurer, Shebna. Eliakim would possess "the key of the house of David". He would have the authority to open and shut. But what did this refer to? Possibly the authority that Eliakim had to open and shut referred to the power of appointing others to positions of service, or to appropriating money to various functions since he replaced Shebna the treasurer.

Jesus, however, is over the Davidic Covenant, and as such He has the authority (possibly over Israel) to open or shut this covenant to those who are deemed worthy or unworthy. That this "key of David" may be referring to the Davidic Covenant with Israel could be suggested in verse nine, where the Lord rebukes some for saying "they are Jews, and are not, but do lie". Those who make this false claim will "come and worship before thy feet".

The Lord promises to keep the faithful ones in the Philadelphia church "from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." This promise of the Lord seems to encompass much more than just those members of the church in Philadelphia. The "temptation" ("testing"--NASB) will "try" people living "upon all the world". This thought brings to

mind the "great tribulation" recorded in Matthew 24:21-22. However, they may not be the same event. We read: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Notice what verses 29-31 informs us: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (compare with Revelation 6:12-17).

The verses in Matthew 24 tell us that a great time of tribulation will be upon the earth and continue to the time just before the Lord makes His second coming. It will be the greatest time of tribulation that the world has ever known, or will know. If this is the same as the "hour of temptation" given in Revelation 3:10, then all of God's people may be kept from it since He is no respecter of persons. It is most interesting that Jesus says in the very next verse after the "hour of temptation": "Behold, I come quickly..." This sounds similar to the Matthew account that, "Immediately after the tribulation" Jesus makes His appearance.

To the overcomer Jesus promises to "make a pillar in the temple of my God". John records in Revelation 21:22, "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." We see here that Christ, along with the Father, make up the temple of the New Jerusalem. If we are in Christ, then we are a part of His body. Notice what I Corinthians 3:16 reads: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" See also II Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21). These verses may be implying that the overcomer will be a pillar in the body of Christ. Jesus will write His new name upon him or her.

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy

works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Revelation 3:14-22).

In this passage Jesus is called "the beginning of the creation of God". We know that Jesus was created to be the Son of God. He now addresses the last of the seven churches, "the church of the Laodiceans". This church is neither cold nor hot but, rather, it is "lukewarm". Because this is so, the Lord says that He will spit them out. He would, therefore, prefer that they were cold or hot. Is Jesus saying that He would have the Laodiceans to be either cold (no relationship to Him) or hot (very zealous for Him) instead of them being lukewarm (half and half)?

Perhaps there is another way to view this dilemma in the church of the Laodiceans. It has been reported from history that there was near this city two sources of water: cold and hot springs. Both of these springs could be used for beneficial purposes. The cold spring, of course, could be used for drinking water, while the hot spring could be used for bathing and healing purposes. But if the waters became mixed then they wouldn't be very effective either way. It appears by this analogy that Christ is indicating that He wants all of us, not part of us.

According to Halley's Bible Handbook, Laodicea was a center for banking. It had temples and theatres, and it manufactured garments made of black wool. It also had a school of medicine which made a powder to treat ailments of the eye. All of these material things may have been the reason for the counsel that Christ gave to the

church of Laodicea. The church was a rich one, being "increased with goods". However, Christ said that they were actually poor. We may recall that the Lord said to the impoverished church in Smyrna that they were rich. True riches are the spiritual riches of living a godly life, not the amount of goods or money that a person or church may amass.

Because this church was not only poor, but wretched, miserable, blind, and naked, the Lord said to them: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (verse 18). The banking center, the black woolen garments, and the eye powder which made Laodicea prosperous could do nothing for the church spiritually. They needed Christ's gold, white raiment, and eyesalve to be acceptable to Him.

It is notable that the proof of the Lord's acceptance of a person, or church, is not only the blessings that He shows upon them, but also His chastening. Jesus said in Matthew 5:45: "...for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the un-

just." A proof that one is a child of God is when one receives chastening from the Lord for committing sin, and then enduring the chastening. We read of this in Hebrews 12:5-7: "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" Therefore, we find Jesus speaking to the members of the Laodicean church: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19).

The Lord then pictures Himself being at the door of a person's life. He very much desires admittance, but He will never force Himself upon anyone. Therefore He stands outside, patiently knocking, waiting for that person to open the door of his heart to receive Christ and to have fellowship with Him. To the overcomer, Christ promises that he or she will reign with Him, seated "in my throne". What a glorious promise is given to the one who will remain faithful to the end. What a wonderful reward is waiting for the overcomer. Brethren, let us follow the admonition of the Lord to the seven churches.

Reasons I Do Not Keep Christmas

By David DeLong

Reason number one: I am not a Catholic. The very name "Christmas" (Christ's mass or Mass of Christ) points to the source in christendom where this holiday came

about. This season also venerates Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus), another apparent carry-over from Catholicism. In this article, however, I am not advocating the keeping

of Christmas by any religious group.

Reason number two: I am not a pagan. The date December 25 was the birthday of Tammuz who was worshiped as "the son of the sun". It has been recorded that, "The 25th of December, the day that was observed at Rome as the day when the victorious god reappeared on earth, was held at the 'Natalis invicti solis', 'The birthday of the unconquered sun.'" (*Baptized Paganism; The Two Babylons, by Alexander Hislop, pg. 98*). Later, this date (December 25) was used to "honor" the birth of Jesus. Pagan customs such as decorating evergreen trees were also incorporated into the Christmas season. The Lord specifically warns His people not to learn heathen ways. Jeremiah 10:2-4 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 ax. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not."

Reason number three: December 25th was not the day on which Christ was born. This date first enters as Christ's birthday "in the 4th century, in the West" (*Halley's Bible Handbook, pg. 491*). Luke 2:8 informs us: "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night." This was at the time of Jesus' birth. It has been recognized that December 25th, in Israel, is a cold time of the year. These shepherds, therefore, would very unlikely have been out with their flock, "keeping watch...by night" on December 25th. As we have seen above, December 25th was the birthday of Tammuz and then it began to be observed (incorrectly) as the birthday of Jesus.

Reason number four: Christmas celebration does not honor the Lord. The Christmas season is filled with commercialism, a time of year in which a tremendous emphasis is placed upon buying, buying, buying! Multitudes of people go into great debt purchasing things that they cannot afford because they believe it is expected of them. Myriads of parties are celebrated with alcohol, and many lives are lost from drunk drivers smashing into vehicles

and people. Some might make the case that they keep this holiday by "putting Christ back into Christmas". But the problem here is that Christ was *never* in Christmas to begin with. Much of the world celebrates some form of Christmas, and this is what one could infer from Bible texts such as Revelation 12:9 where we find that Satan, "...deceiveth the whole world..."

Reason number five: the Bible nowhere commands us to observe Christmas. Some might say that this is a flimsy argument since many believers observe other days without Bible sanction such as birthdays, anniversaries, etc. There is a big difference, however, between keeping personal days and a holiday such as Christmas. Many people, even non-christians, keep Christmas because they believe they must. They feel they have no choice. It is as binding upon them as if it was an edict from heaven. Christmas has become so entrenched in many peoples' thinking that to not observe it would be sacrilege. It would be the same as denying Christ to them. Families have become broken up over a spouse who decides that he or she does not want to keep Christmas. Those of us who do not celebrate this holiday may reflect back to time when we told someone about our convictions. The shocked look they may have given us indicates the complete lack of understanding on their part. "You don't keep Christmas?" they may have blurted out. "Aren't you a christian?" God doesn't expect us to keep Christmas, but man does.

This type of expectation, that a person must fulfill a traditional, man-made observance is of course, not biblical. Therefore, I wish to be free to concentrate my efforts upon Scriptural "have to's". Observing the Ten Commandments, the law of the clean and unclean, and the annual Lord's Supper service are included in this list. And just for the record, the Lord wants us to remember His death, rather than His birth. Speaking about partaking of the Lord's Supper, the Apostle Paul wrote, "...ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (I Corinthians 11:26). Ecclesiastes 7:1 reads: "A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth."



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.

The following is a list of thirteen events which precede the end of the world (age).

1. *Wars and rumors of wars:* “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet” (Matthew 24:6).

“And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet” (Mark 13:7).

2. *Great earthquakes in different places:* “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places” (Matthew 24:7).

“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginning of sorrows” (Mark 13:8).

“And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven” (Luke 21:11).

3. *Famines:* “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places” (Matthew 24:7).

“And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven” (Luke 21:11).

4. *Plagues:* “And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights

and great signs shall there be from heaven” (Luke 21:11).

5. *Terrors and great signs from heaven:* “And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven” (Luke 21:11).

6. *Signs in the sun, moon, and stars:* “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken” (Mark 13:24-25).

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring” (Luke 21:25).

7. *Dismay among nations:* “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring” (Luke 21:25).

8. *Tremendous fear of the future:* “Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken” (Luke 21:26).

9. *A great falling away of Christians:* “And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another” (Matthew 24:10).

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition” (II Thessalonians 2:3).

10. *Many false messiahs and false prophets:* “For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (Matthew 24:5).

“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive

many” (verse 11).

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (verse 24).

“For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (Mark 13:6).

“And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them” (Luke 21:8).

11. *A rise in the occult:* “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (I Timothy 4:1).

12. *An increase in lawlessness causing many people to grow cold:* “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:12).

13. *The gospel being preached to the whole world:* “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

“And the gospel must first be published among all nations” (Mark 13:10).

Jesus spoke to the Pharisees and Sadducees about discerning the signs of the times. “The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” (Matthew 16:1-3) There are some biblical scholars who say that the part about discerning the face of the sky is an interpolation which is to say that it is not in the original manuscripts. However, have you noticed that it is usually true? My daddy repeated a saying often. It went like this: “Red skies at night, sailors' delight. Red skies in the morning, sailors take warning.”

We remember that Jesus said that although these things do occur, the end is not yet. They only point out that the end is coming. It may be tomorrow or many years later. God does not consider time as man does. He has His own time clock!

Let all children of God be ever mindful of these signs which point to the coming of the end of the world (age). “Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch” (Mark 13:33-37).

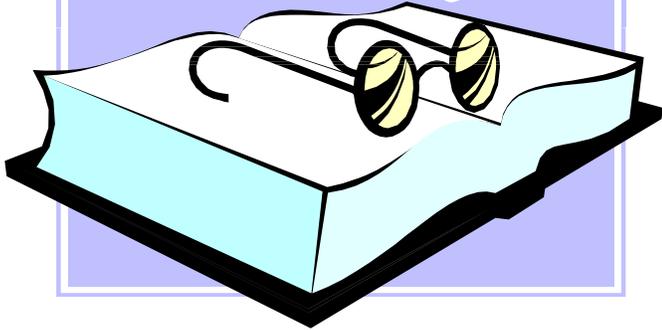
Of course, there are and have always been those who tell us that the signs mean nothing. They say that there have always been droughts, earthquakes, pestilences, etc. Have you noticed that as time goes by, there seems to be an increase in the number and intensity of these signs?

II Peter 3:3-7 tells us, “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” **The point is that the overflowing of the world did occur just as sure as the return of our Lord Jesus Christ will occur!**

Let us close with a few words from our tract, *The Signs Of Our Times-Our Lord's Return*. “Truly, all signs throughout the world today are omens of the coming of this prophet, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. When Jesus left this world by ascending to his Father in heaven, he said he would come again. But many events would transpire as foretold by the prophets, also war and rumors of war would continue until he returned.” After the fullness of time was accomplished, he said he would come “...with clouds; and every eye shall see him...” (Revelation 1:7; Luke 21:25-31).

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Do sins that are done through thoughtlessness or weakness always need to be confessed?

ANSWER: Yes, they do! All coming short of the glory of God is sin whether in thought, or word, or deed. They must be confessed whether we are conscious of them or not. In the Levitical economy, there were offerings for sins done unwillingly or in ignorance. Presumptuous sins were punished. Compare Leviticus 4:1-2, 13 with Leviticus 10:1-2. Also see Job 1:5.

QUESTION: I thought that we are saved by the death of Christ, but I read in Romans 5:10, “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” What does this verse mean?

ANSWER: We are saved by His death in the sense that we were reconciled (brought into favor with His Father). But in order to keep saved, we must pattern our lives after the way Christ lived.

QUESTION: Will you please give me some pointers on how we may nurture our children?

ANSWER: The responsibility of properly rearing children has never been one of ease. Since the beginning

of time, there is that same challenge facing every parent. It is only natural that some parents will do, to the best of their knowledge, their utmost to rear their child or children properly. Sometimes it is a lacking in that very knowledge that will hinder a nurturing experience for the child. The following are some ideas to consider as the parents move forward in the rearing of their youngsters;

Be A Booster: Help the young ones to build their confidence. This begins early, and even earlier, as when they take their first steps. And success achieved by the toddler should be praised with honest and sincere comments. If there arises the need for any criticism, it should be coupled with some praise and instruction. Be certain that the good is always pointed out, and make the suggestion of more practice to improve results.

Let Them Explore: Let youngsters learn about the things around them. True, they may become a little soiled a time or two. However, a little dirt can be washed away. Hard feelings expressed do not leave the mind as easily, and if a continued barrage of negative thoughts persist, a lot of damage will result. A brief example will help to show the difference. Two very skilled readers entered into the first grade at school. The teacher, recognizing their potentials, asked if the two would rather move ahead. One student was very interested to go as far as possible, while the other preferred to remain in the regular class. It is easy to see which student will excel in later life. Through a parent’s encouragement to explore to his utmost, and

praise for doing so, the child can enjoy a life of continued fulfillment in his endeavors.

Focus On Success: There was once a young athlete who came to the coach for some help. This young person seemed to never fully live up to his full potential. The coach gave the student four darts and asked him to toss them at a target across the room. “What if I miss?” asked the young man. The young person’s initial reaction gave away a possible reason for his disappointing athletic career. Focusing on succeeding in a situation, rather than the possibility of failure, is good advice to instill in any young person. Those who gain in this respect are those who will try – then fall short – get up and correct the error and try again.

Listen To Their Dreams: When your youngster comes home saying he would like to be in some profession which may fall short of your expectations for him, remember that he is mostly dreaming and reacting to something he may have seen that day before and was impressed with it. This is usually the case. This is the time to politely express either the dangers involved in such a profession, if that be the case, however the comment should remain in a positive vein of thought. Consider for a moment what you may have wanted to be at his age as opposed to how it really turned out in your own life.

Encourage Problem Solving: A young boy ran to his mother when he realized his legs were too short to climb the first step to the slide. “How could you reach that step?” was his mother’s words, instead of boosting him onto the step. The child thought for a moment, then suggested using his wagon which he brought along to stand on first. Once that was done, the rest was easy. The ability to think of the possibilities is very important in a child’s mind.

Give Them A Chance: The old saying that “practice makes perfect” still holds true. The sharpening of any skill, or talent, only comes from practice and more practice. Giving the young one plenty of opportunities and encouragement to practice is a vital necessity. The encouragement to “keep it up” – even when a mistake is made helps to erase that disappointing feeling which may arise. Giving them a chance will result in blessings later.

Encourage them to partake in a club or organization of their interest, one which is in line with God’s will in their lives. Some young people operate best in a classroom,

while others perform best on the playground. Being active in an area where one feels at home helps to build confidence.

By practicing the above principles, and instilling in your children a deep respect for God’s Word and His commandments, you will nurture your children in a way which is most pleasing to Him.

QUESTION: Why did Jesus say, “...my Father is greater than I” in the last part of John 14:28?

ANSWER: Jesus wanted to emphasize that He and His Father were two different beings. He also emphasized that although God had given all power in heaven and earth unto Him, yet God would still be excepted, as the Apostle Paul states in I Corinthians 15:27-28, that God will eventually be all in all.

QUESTION: Why did God create the earth?

ANSWER: God did not create the earth in vain, or to be a waste. He created it to be inhabited by man. “For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:18).

God says that heaven is His throne, and the earth is His footstool. See Isaiah 66:1.

QUESTION: Will the earth be destroyed sometime in the future?

ANSWER: No. “One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever” (Ecclesiastes 1:4).

QUESTION: You have heard the expression, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” What is its origin in the Bible?

ANSWER: Cain originally made the statement when asked where Abel was after he had slain him. It is often applied to one who is unwilling to accept proper responsibility. See Genesis 4:9.



Grenada





LESSON I

THE PUNISHMENT OF KORAH

Scripture Reading: Numbers 16:23-35.

Golden Text: Numbers 16:32 (first part).

“And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up...”

NOTE: We last learned that Korah and some others were rebelling against God and Moses. Moses asked the Lord not to destroy everyone for the sins of one man. We will now learn what happens to Korah and his followers.

1. What did the Lord have Moses to do concerning Korah? Numbers 16:23-26.
2. Did the congregation leave the tabernacle of Korah? Numbers 16:27.
3. What did Moses tell the people? Numbers 16:28-30.
4. What happened to Korah and his followers? Numbers 16:31-33.
5. Were the children of Israel afraid when they saw this? Numbers 16:34-35.

NOTE: Korah was one of Moses' own tribe, but he was jealous of Moses and sought to make himself the leader. Moses took this trouble to God as he did everything, and God settled the matter in no time. The earth opened and swallowed the rebels.

LESSON II

THE SIN OF MOSES

Scripture Reading: Numbers 20:1-13.

Golden Text: Numbers 20:11 (first part).

“And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice.”

NOTE: Many years of wanderings have passed between our lesson today and the rebellion of Korah.

1. As our lesson begins, one of the leaders has died. Which one was it? Numbers 20:1.

NOTE: Miriam was about 130 years old when she died.

2. Why did the congregation murmur at this time? Numbers 20:2.
3. What things did they say to Moses and Aaron? Numbers 20:3-5.
4. What did Moses and Aaron do? Number 20:6.
5. What did the Lord tell them to do? Numbers 20:7-8.
6. Did Moses do just as the Lord had said? Numbers 20:9-11.

NOTE: Remember the Lord said “speak” to the rock. But Moses smote the rock twice, saying “must we”. This was not giving God the glory.

7. Because Moses had done this thing, what did the Lord tell him? Numbers 20:12.

NOTE: It was just as the Lord said. Moses and Aaron did not get to lead the children of Israel into the promised land. Aaron and Moses both died that same year as they were nearing the land for which they longed.

LESSON III

THE LAND OF EDOM AND THE DEATH OF AARON

Scripture Reading: Numbers 20:14-29.

Golden Text: Numbers 20:29.

“And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel.”

NOTE: The children of Israel are now at the city of Kadesh and want to travel through the land of Edom. Let us study to see what now happens.

1. Who did Moses send messengers to see, and what was the message he sent? Numbers 20:14-16.
2. What did Moses ask of the king? Numbers 20:17.
3. What reply did the King of Edom give? Numbers 20:18.

NOTE: The children of Israel ask again if they can walk through Edom by the highway and offered to pay for any water they would use. The king still refuses to let them go through his land. See verses 19-20.

4. Where did the children of Israel then go? Numbers 20:22.
5. Now that they are at Mount Hor, what did the Lord tell Moses and Aaron to do? Numbers 20:23-26.
6. Did Moses do as the Lord asked? Numbers 20:27.
7. Where did Aaron die? Numbers 20:28.
8. How long did the children of Israel mourn Aaron's death? Numbers 20:29.

NOTE: Aaron was about 123 years old at the time of his death.

LESSON IV

REVIEWING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 5:6-22.

Golden Text: Deuteronomy 5:10.

“And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.”

NOTE: The word “Deuteronomy” means “Repetition of the Law.” In this chapter, Moses is repeating the Ten

Commandment law to the children of Israel that they might remember and obey it. Let us see how well we remembered the Ten Commandments from when we studied a few months ago (Exodus 20).

1. What is the first commandment? Deuteronomy 5:7.

NOTE: There are other ways of breaking this commandment than just bowing down to idols. If we think more of anything than we do of God, we are putting other gods first.

2. What does the second commandment tell us not to do? Deuteronomy 5:8-10.
3. What will the Lord do to those who take His name in vain? Deuteronomy 5:11.
4. The fourth commandment is the one that almost the whole world has forgotten. What is it? Deuteronomy 5:12-13.
5. Which day of the week is the Sabbath? Deuteronomy 5:14.
6. The fifth commandment has a promise with it. What is that promise? Deuteronomy 5:16.
7. What are the 6th, 7th and 8th commandments? Deuteronomy 5:17-19.
8. How are we to treat our neighbor? Deuteronomy 5:20-21.

WHAT BIBLE LADY IS THIS?

My first letter is in white, but it isn't in black.

My second's in bag, and it's also in sack.

My third is in end, but isn't in start.

My fourth is in hand, but it isn't in heart.

My fifth is in fast, but not in quick.

My last is in thin, and it's also in thick.

My whole is the name of a woman who prayed,

And God granted her the petition she made.



THIN ICE

As Larry trudged up Beacon Hill, he met Evan Hughes, the big boy who lived next door. Larry wanted to be exactly like Evan when he grew up. Evan was tall with a friendly grin. He played on the football team, and he never teased the younger boys.

"That is a fine looking pair of new skates you have got there," said Evan as he stopped for a moment. "I thought you were not going to get any until your birthday."

"My others were so small that I could not get them on, so Dad said I could have my new ones now," replied Larry happily.

"Just so long as you do not try them out on Miller's Pond," said Evan as he turned to go. "Everyone has been warned about skating there. The ice is too thin."

"Um-m-" muttered Larry under his breath, and he kept on climbing Beacon Hill.

He waited until Evan was out of sight, and then he turned into the path that led to the pond. He had been going to skate there, and it certainly wouldn't do any harm

just to take a look at the ice.

Miller's Pond looked perfect for skating. Larry walked around the edge, and thought, I am sure it is perfectly safe, even though he saw a sign that said, "No skating. Thin ice."

Larry sat down in the snow and started putting on his skates. There would be no harm in skating just around the edges. Then he would go home.

As he skated swiftly, Larry felt more sure of himself. He tried to skate backwards, and before he knew it, he found himself right in the middle of the pond.

He had not meant to skate out so far, and he started skating back. Under his feet the ice went "Crack!" And before he could see himself, he plunged into the icy water: He tried to hold himself up with ice but it broke under his weight.

"Help! Help!" he screamed, and his heart gave a bound as he heard a voice reply, "Hold on, I am coming, Larry. Try to keep still." It was Evan Hughes, putting one foot carefully after the other as he crawled across the icy pond. Larry's teeth were chattering, but he kept as still as he could. Evan laid down on the ice and began crawling toward him, his arm outstretched.

Larry's heart pounded as Evan came nearer and nearer. At last he was able to clasp Evan's hand, and very, very slowly, Evan pulled him out of the chilly water.

He was safe! Larry could hardly believe it. How foolish he had been to skate on Miller's Pond. He knew it was wrong, but he had gone ahead anyway. Standing shivering in his wet clothes, he looked at Evan and thought if Evan had not saved me, I would never have been able to save myself. He might even have drowned, and it would have been all his fault.

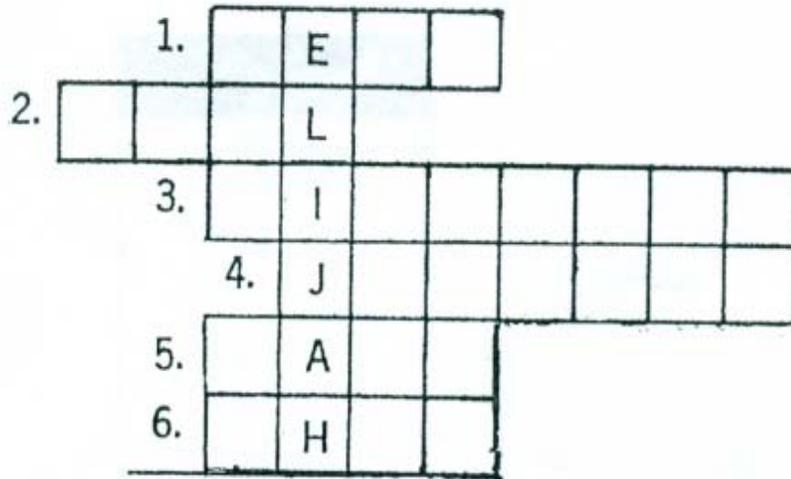
"Thank you, Evan," he gasped. "I am sorry I did it. How did you know where I was?"

Evan smiled.

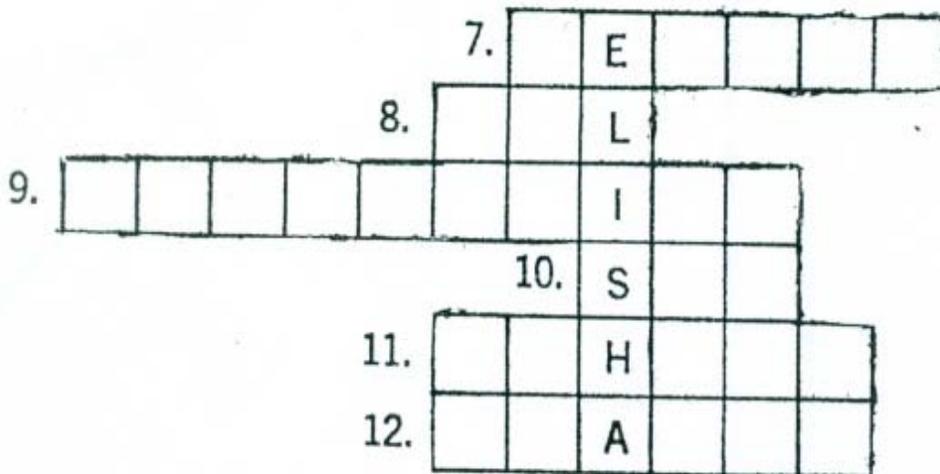
"Even though you said you were not going to the pond, I could not be sure, so I thought I would just check up on you. Let us run home before you catch cold." As they sped home, Larry remembered someone else who had given His life to save others--Jesus. And he was glad his friend, Evan, had not to suffer for Larry's wrongdoing also.

--By Janet Craig James

ELIJAH AND ELISHA



AND



2. Jezebel and her 450 prophets worshipped _____ (I Kings 18:19)
3. Naboth owned a _____ which Ahab wanted (I Kings 21:1-2)
4. _____ was Ahab's wife (I Kings 21:5)
5. Elijah said there would be no dew nor _____ until he spake the word (I Kings 17:1)
6. God sent Elijah to speak His message to _____ (I Kings 17:1)
7. Elijah was taken to _____ in a whirlwind (II Kings 2:11)
8. God increased the _____ until all of the vessels were filled (II Kings 4:2-6)
9. The great woman at Shunem was called the _____ (II Kings 4:12)
10. Elisha said God would give the great woman a _____ (II Kings 4:16)
11. Elisha's servant was called _____ (II Kings 5:20)
12. _____ was a captain of Syria, but he was a leper (II Kings 5:1)

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JESUS IS THE ANSWER,
HAPPINESS FOR ETERNITY

by Gloria Degamo Ygay

The bright, shining sun during the day,
The trees and beautiful flowers I see;
The blowing of winds, their leaves sway,
Sounds seem like they have something to
say.

I see the birds flying in a large group,
Showing me the symbol, there's always a
hope.
To every individual seeking peace and unity,
Jesus is the answer, happiness for eternity.

The moonlight of nights shining up high,
The twinkling stars add the beauty in the sky;
The great arts of God, power of His majesty,
What profits me? He loves me so tenderly.

What profits me? We'll praise Him in all
ways,
I feel my heart, I appreciate Him everyday.
'Twas yesterday I was seeking peace and
unity,
Jesus is the answer, happiness for eternity.

