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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

"The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called

Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James" (Acts 1:1-14).

We place great emphasis on the first advent of Christ, His deity, His resurrection and His return. However, His ascension is generally overlooked. Let us consider four aspects of Christ's ascension that will inspire us as to why this truth is vitally important.

THE TRUTH OF THE ASCENSION

Let us accept the truth of Christ's ascension as found in Acts 1:1-14. Let us stress the fact that to His disciples, and therefore to us, His ascension was a real event.

Luke's account of this event is not a product of his imagination. It is simply not an attempt on Luke's part to try to explain the uniqueness of Jesus. II Peter 1:16 may be adapted and related to the event of Christ's ascension: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty."

Let us investigate Luke's account by asking three questions. First, did Luke write to deceive? Second, did Luke write carelessly, without regard to the facts of the case? Third, did Luke write simply on his own initiative, without the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit?

Regarding the first question, did Luke write to deceive? We can answer this question by considering the integrity of Luke the man. By reading his two literary writings in the New Testament, his Gospel and his Acts of the Apostles, we form a portrait of a man who is seeking with pure motives to present a genuine account of the life of our Lord and activities of the apostle after Pentecost.

Regarding the second question, did Luke write with regard to the facts of the case? This may be answered in his own words found in the prologue of his Gospel: "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (Luke 1:3-4). There is no reason to suppose that when he came to write the Acts of the Apostles, Luke departed from the method of painstaking investigation in order to provide an authentic account. It used to be in style to criticize Luke's references to places, events, and customs. However, it has been demonstrated that his references to those things are absolutely accurate and trustworthy.

Regarding the third question, did Luke write simply on his own initiative without the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit? This may be answered both in examination of the content of his writing and by a consideration of the fact that his Gospel has been included in the canon of the New Testament and accepted as part of the inspired Word of God. The logical conclusion is that Luke composed his account of Christ's ascension through the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth.

THE TIMING OF THE ASCENSION

The timing of the ascension of Christ is impressive. Christ ascended forty days after His resurrection and ten days before Pentecost. He did not ascend until all of the divine purposes for His being on earth had been accomplished.

The ascension of Jesus took place first, after a period of extensive demonstration of His victory over death. We read in Acts 1:3 that He showed Himself alive to His chosen disciples after His passion, and that He did this "by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

We know from the gospel records of His post-resur-

rection appearances that this forty-day demonstration of His victory was necessary for various reasons. It was necessary that the Lord Jesus renew contact with His own; that He regather His scattered flock; that He reveal Himself to them in His resurrection body; that He remove their doubts and establish their faith. It was necessary that He should instruct them in the meaning of the Old Testament prophecies that pointed to Him. It was necessary that He prepare them for His absence and for the advent of the Holy Spirit. These things our Lord Jesus did before He ascended!

We note that the ascension of Christ came after a period of intense instruction. That must have been a wonderful forty-day Bible School with Christ. His teaching was both general and specific. He spoke of the things "...pertaining to the kingdom of God..." (Acts 1:3), and He spoke of their immediate duty to wait at Jerusalem for the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4,8).

THE TRIUMPH OF THE ASCENSION

Let us now consider the triumph of Christ's ascension. The ascension of Christ may not be conceived of as a tragedy. One minister reminds us that the ascension was not a sunset, but a sunrise. The disciples themselves did not interpret His departure as a loss, but as a gain.

First, we can conclude this on the basis of the disciples' adoration of Christ. In his Gospel, Luke writes, "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God..." (Luke 24:51-53).

That the ascension of Christ is to be viewed as a triumph is clear also from the disciples' apprehension as found in Mark 16:19, "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." The disciples rightly concluded that the ascension of Jesus could be explained only in terms of God's approval of His Son, made manifest in that He appointed Him a place at His own right hand.

Finally, we can conclude that the ascension of Christ can be viewed as a triumph in the light of the disciples' activity. We read in Mark 16:20, "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following..." The dis-

ciples ministered with the assurance of an ascended, triumphant Lord, glorified at God's right hand.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE ASCENSION

To what great truths does the ascension of Christ bear witness? Let us consider four great facts to which His ascension points.

First, Christ's ascension points to the fact that He had finished His work on earth. The ascension was the culmination and climax of His earthly ministry. Luke writes concerning "...all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up..." (Acts 1:1-2). After those forty days of special ministry to His disciples, it was expedient for them that He ascend to His Father's throne.

The day in which He ascended brought to an end the period during which He appeared, and disappeared, in His resurrection body, a body which quite evidently had supernatural powers and properties.

Second, the ascension marked the commencement of a new phase of Christ's ministry on our behalf. It is essential to grasp that upon His ascension Jesus entered into a far greater ministry on our behalf than He would have been able to accomplish had He remained on earth. That ministry is one of representation and intercession on our behalf. He is the Mediator between God and men. He is the Head of the church, directing the body in its ministry on earth. He is the One whose Spirit fills and equips the church.

Third, the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ was the confirmation of His claims. Repeatedly to various people He had announced His ascension. He had revealed it to the unbelieving Jews: "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" (John 6:62). He revealed it to His despondent disciples: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1-2). He revealed it to the weeping Mary: "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17). They needed no further instruction. This great sign was full confirmation of all His

claims. He was no blinded zealot, no fanatical extremist, no deluded prophet. He was the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, the Lord of the church.

Fourth, Christ's ascension was for the purpose of His coronation at God's right hand. On the account of His unwavering death, the Apostle Paul writes in Philippians 2:9-11: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The Apostle Peter records the following words: "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (I Peter 3:22).

These are rich truths of the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every true child of God must not forget or overlook them!

Contributed

BIBLICAL PARENTING WORKS, AUTHOR SAYS

Because it is the most character-building two-letter word in the English language, children have the right to hear their parents say "no" at least three times a day.

That's the first of 10 "rights" listed in John Rosemond's "Bill of Rights for Children."

Rosemond is a psychologist and bestselling author who specializes in family issues.

His newest book is *Parenting by the Book*, as in the Good Book.

"The solution," said Rosemond, "lies in raising children according to biblical principles, the same principles that guided parents successfully for hundreds of years.

"They worked then," he contends, "and they still work now."

-The *Houston Chronicle*

THE REALITY OF THE BLESSED HOPE

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11-14).

Eternal life and immortality are conditional and depend on our being patient, continuing in well doing, and believing in Jesus, the Son of God. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" (Romans 2:7). "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:14-16). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (verse 36).

"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may

know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:9-13).

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

The ones who transgress against God are abiding in death and do not have eternal life. (Please read again John 3:14-16). The question arises, how can we have eternal life abiding in us while we are mortal and subject to death? We get the answer from God's Word.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (I Corinthians 3:16-17).

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in

you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 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. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:5-14).

It was that life-giving power from God that brought again from the dead to immortality and eternal life.

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 20-21).

"Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10:28-30).

Life is sweet here in this world, and we like to live and have the pleasures of life here. If we get sick, we will give all our substance to doctors and hospitals to regain our health and extend our days a few more months in this world. Then how willing we should be to serve God night and day, that we might live eternally and have fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore.

Adapted from an old tract

HUMILITY BEFORE GOD

A STUDY LESSON

Memory Verse: "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:11).

Please read Luke 14:7-11.

The lesson of humility before God is clearly set forth in our memory verse. The same thought is also expressed by the Apostle Peter who wrote, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God

resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (I Peter 5:5-6).

The parable of the two men at the marriage feast--one taking a seat in the "highest room" and later being humiliated by being asked to step down; and the other taking a seat in the "lowest room" and then being asked to move up to a more honorable position--well illustrates the principle outlined in the memory verse. We have an outstanding example of this in the case of Lucifer (the Devil) who exalted himself and eventually will be humbled and destroyed, in contrast with Jesus, who humbled Himself and was highly exalted to the divine nature and to the throne of God.

The Prophet Isaiah wrote concerning Lucifer, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:12-14).

In contrast with the spirit of self-exaltation, how beautiful is the humility of Jesus as described by the Apostle Paul: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:5-11).

Please read Luke 18:9-14.

In this parable, the lesson of humility before God is forcefully set forth by the contrasting attitudes of the Pharisee and the publican. The Pharisees were religious leaders in Israel, and the publicans were looked upon as outside God's favor. Many of them collected taxes for the Roman government, and to the Israelites this made them traitors to God's people.

The parable states that the Pharisee "prayed thus with himself." He assured himself of his own righteousness, and his superiority over the publican who also had gone up to the temple to pray. There has always been much of this type of praying, but we can be sure that God pays little or no attention.

The publican had the right attitude--the attitude of humility before God. He stood "afar off" and "...would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner" (verse 13). He knew that the only basis upon which he could be blessed by God was that mercy would be shown him. This publican was the type to whom the ministry of John the Baptist appealed, who, when the way was pointed out to them, repented.

In the parable, Jesus said, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (verse 14). The word "justified" as used here with respect to the publican does not have the same connotation as when it describes the life-justification of children of God who follow their Master. This life-justification is made possible only through the merit of the shed blood of Christ. It is simply telling us that the man's humility and repentance was pleasing to God.

ATHEISM, SCIENCE CANNOT ANSWER MOST BASIC QUESTION

BILL O'REILLY

Atheism is chic, it's cool, it's the latest craze. The bookstores are chock full of authors declaring that "God Is Not Great," that God is a "Delusion," that you are a moron if you believe in the deity.

The press, of course, loves these books, and the reviews are largely admirable. Some of the books are also selling very nicely, as it's been a long time since atheists had much to cheer about.

Polls show that about 90 percent of Americans believe in God, but that leaves 30 million folks who just say no to a higher power. If only 1 percent of that group buys

a certain anti-God book, you have a best seller.

But the atheist chic trend is not just on the page. Hollywood is involved as well. According to the book "Celebrities in Hell," a number of big stars might be aligned with the universe, but not with the force that some believe created it.

The book quotes the following:

George Clooney: "I don't believe in heaven or hell. I don't know if I believe in God."

Angelina Jolie: "There doesn't need to be a god for me."

Carrie Fisher: "I love the idea of God, but it's not stylistically in keeping with the way I function."

Indeed. Believing in God is not very stylish in mainstream media circles these days.

The question then becomes, is there anything wrong with that? After all, we have freedom from religion in America-- the Constitution makes it clear that no power in this country has the right to impose religion.

So the atheists have clear sailing, and I say: Thank God.

That's because people of faith should be challenged and think about their beliefs. Critical thinking in all areas makes the mind sharper and your philosophy stronger.

Thus, I was looking forward to debating the most successful of the atheist authors, Richard Dawkins, who wrote the best seller "The God Delusion." Dawkins basically says science can explain everything on earth, and no one has any direct evidence there is a God.

But I stopped him in the fourth round with this right hook: "(the earth) had to come from somewhere. And that is the leap of faith you guys (atheists) make that it just somehow happened."

Dawkins replied: "You're the one who needs a leap of faith, the onus is on you to say why you believe in something...you believe in, presumably, the Christian God, Jesus."

"Jesus is a real guy," I said. "I know what He did. I'm not positive that Jesus is God, but I'm throwing in with you guys, because you guys can't tell me how it all got here."

"We're working on it," Dawkins said.

"When you get it," I shot back, "Maybe I'll listen."

But the atheists never will get it. The universe and the earth are so complex, so incredibly detailed, that to believe an accidental evolutionary occurrence could have

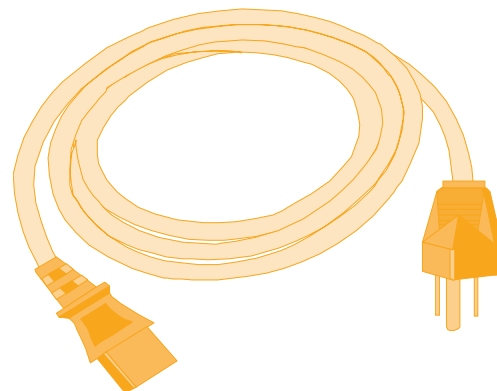
exclusively led to the nature / mankind situation we have now, is some stretch of the imagination. I mean, call me crazy, but the sun always comes up, while man oversleeps all the time. So bless you, Richard Dawkins, and all the other nonbelievers. As long as they don't attack people

of faith, I have no problem with them. As my eighth-grade teacher, Sister Martin, once said: "Faith is a gift."
But not everybody gets to open the box.

Bill O'Reilly is a nationally syndicated columnist.
Contact him through his Web site, www.billoreilly.com.

TOP FIVE SIGNS YOU NEED TO PULL THE PLUG ON TECHNOLOGY

BY ANISSA ORR
MENNINGER CLINIC



Living in an age of advanced technology has its advantages--chief among them the ability to communicate with almost anyone, anywhere, right now. But how much technology is too much?

"We live in a world with wonderful technological advances," says John O'Neill, director of social work at The Menninger Clinic, a speciality psychiatric center affiliated with Baylor College of Medicine and The Methodist Hospital. "However, when the technology designed to make life easier becomes so powerful that it affects our relationships with people, our ability to take a break and causes us to feel lost without it, we may question how advanced it really is."

O'Neill has seen the effect of technology overload on patients in the Professionals in Crisis Program at Menninger--patients who may have spent hours each day on their computers, cell phones or Black Berry devices, at the expense of family and friends.

So when should we pull the plug? In moderation, technology offers many benefits. But step away from the computer, turn off the cell phone and have a face-to-face, human conversation if you have any of the following warnings signs, O'Neill said.

YOU NEED YOUR CONNECTION, NOW!

You panic or become irritable when you can't get cell phone service, your Internet connection is down or your cable or satellite feed is not working.

YOU LOSE TRACK OF TIME.

"You may have a problem if you consistently get lost in the Internet world, intending to spend an hour, and looking up, you discover it has been four hours," O'Neill said. "Or you use your BlackBerry so much, the term crackberry has meaning for you."

YOU LOSE TRACK OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

You spend less and less time participating in personal activities or limit your time with friends and family to attend to your e-mail or return phone calls. You frequently miss appointments or are late because you got caught up on the Internet, checking e-mail or talking on your cell phone.

YOUR LIFE REVOLVES AROUND TECHNOLOGY AND NOT ACTUAL REAL RELATIONSHIPS.

"When you start or end your day on the Internet checking e-mails or chatting, that's a sign that technology is taking over your life," O'Neill said.

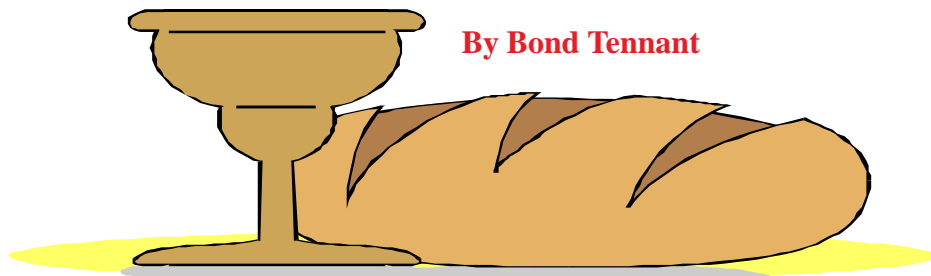
YOU CAN'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT.

You can't take a vacation without bringing four different charging devices for all your gadgets and gizmos. Your car needs extra batteries to power all of your devices. "When your cell phone earpiece becomes a permanent part of your wardrobe, that's a problem," O'Neill said.

-From The Texas Medical Center News

THE INSTRUCTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

THE MEMORIAL OF OUR LORD'S DEATH



By **Bond Tennant**

Because of disobedience to God's law, mankind remains under the penalty of death since the time sin was introduced by our first parents, Adam and Eve. Jesus' sacrificial death provided the ransom price for sin at His first advent. He will accomplish the removal of all sin during His future kingdom. God's Word assures us that this is the will of our loving Heavenly Father and His plan of reconciliation to take away the sin of the world. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:22).

When Jesus celebrated the Passover supper with His disciples the last night of His earthly ministry and life on earth, the typical lamb represented His own sacrificed life which would shortly be consumed on the cross. It was given on behalf of the sins of His people, as well as the whole world, to be testified in due time. Eating the lamb also suggested the strength of His life as given to His faithful followers during this age of sacrifice.

The symbolic Memorial of Jesus' death that He instituted in the upper room that night related to the Jewish Passover, although not directly a part of it. The instructions to His apostles were given, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body" (Matthew 26:26). He was thus teaching his followers that the bread represented Himself as the antitypical lamb, and His own flesh which they were to partake of in remembrance of Him. "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it" (verse 27). The cup represented His shed blood given on behalf of the world. Blood was necessary to seal the New Covenant, as He further explained, "...this is my blood of the new testament {Covenant}, which is shed for many

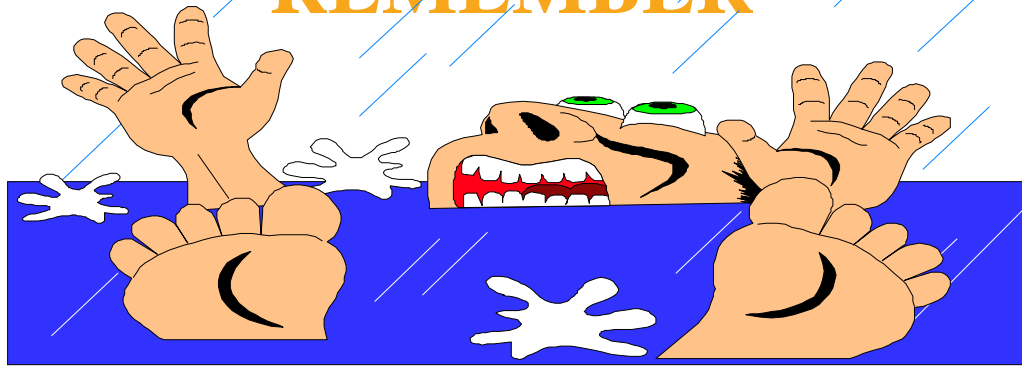
for the remission of sins" (verse 28).

The provisions of the New Covenant offers life to all mankind who obey God and His commandments. The Apostle Paul gives further significant information concerning the followers of Jesus who partake of these emblems, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (I Corinthians 10:16-17). By partaking of the emblems, we share with our Lord Jesus in communion, or participation, in His sacrificial death. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (Romans 6:3-8).

It would not have been proper, or lawful, to annually observe the Passover at any other time than that which was appointed by God. Likewise, it is not appropriate to observe the Memorial of our Lord's death at any other time than its anniversary.

May we partake of these emblems once again this year in remembrance of Him with a deep sense of reverence and appreciation.

WHEN THINGS GET TOUGH, REMEMBER



Let us say that your bills are all paid, and your family is well. You have a great job, and you are getting along well with your spouse. Do you recognize these circumstances? Let us call it the comfort zone. But when you are in it, do not get too attached to it. It can go quicker than it came!

This was the case with our Lord's disciples. Miracles were taking place, and people were coming in droves. Jesus was feeding them, teaching them, and healing them. But then a storm came unexpectedly, and they were shaken. Several of these men were veteran seamen and knew this lake. But this storm took them all by surprise. Storms, like that one, can originate while the sun is shining. The wind picks up, the clouds roll in, and then the storm hits. Yes, it can be devastating!

We can handle the sunshine, but we struggle with the wind and storms. Let us dwell on some suggestions on how to handle the storms in our lives.

First, let us remember who is on board in our lives. Jesus was on board the boat, living through the storm with them. May we remember He is with us in our storms. However, many times, during our storms we forget Who is on board the boat with us. Oh, if we could only remember He is on board with us!

He is omnipotent! That means that He is all powerful. Even though we know this, we sometimes lose sight of that fact. His power is greater than all the storms we will ever have to face. When we understand how powerful He is and that He is working in our behalf, we can rest our anxiety about the outside circumstances of our storms.

He is omniscient! That means that He is all-knowing. He knows everything that is taking place around us. Nothing

occurs in our lives that surprises Him. He knows all! No event of our lives escapes His knowledge. He is always aware of us. He is intricately involved with who we are and what happens to us. His omniscience gives us confidence that we are not alone with our fears. He is always aware of all our feelings. This confidence moved the disciples to say, "Now we are sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God" (John 16:30).

He is omnipresent. That means that He is present everywhere. There is no place where He is not. No moment of our lives can be spent away from His presence. No storm or difficulty can separate us from Him. We can count on it! He reminded His disciples, "...lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world..." (Matthew 28:20).

Hebrews 13:5-6 speaks of this confidence: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

Second, let us remember what He has done. Many times we are prone to focus on the present and fail to remember the things God has done for us in the past. One of God's great attributes is His immutability, or unchangeableness.

Remembering what God has done generates great faith for the present. Many of the prayers in the Old Testament were the remembrances of God's people for His goodness in their lives. They often began by reminding God of what He had done for their forefathers. This re-

membrance was obviously, a faith-building experience for them. They remembered how God had delivered, provided for, and kept them. They were confident that He would be faithful to His promises and would do it again.

When the storms gather in our lives, we have a tendency to forget God's provision of yesterday. Instead, we worry about today and our present dilemmas. Our fear is increased when we fail to remember who God is and how faithful He has been to us, and fear destroys our confidence in God's provision for the present.

The disciples had seen Jesus do many mighty acts of power and deliverance, yet they panicked and wondered if He was even aware of their dilemma. Of course, Jesus was. Not only was He aware, but He was also able to handle the situation. If the disciples had only remembered His recent miracles, they would have been better equipped to trust. Likewise, we must remind ourselves of God's faithfulness to take care of us.

"Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Psalm 103:1-5). Remember, He has been good to us, and He has not changed! "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8).

When Nehemiah was attempting to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, he and his workers had much to overcome, not the least of which was the constant threat of attack from the outside. Please read Nehemiah 4:1-10. Nehemiah's reminder to the workers, in verse fourteen, involved three great principles: (1) Don't be afraid of the enemy. (2) Don't forget the greatness of the God you serve. (3) Fight for survival of your family. It is significant that Nehemiah wanted the workers to be reminded of the greatness of the God they served. The God who had brought them this far would not forsake them now.

We also should remember how God has kept us in His power and that He will not let us down now. Just think of the many times we have depended on God to help us in difficult times. Has He ever failed us?

When the storm has done all it can, it is Jesus who always has the last word. We can count on Him to bring conclusion to the struggles in our lives. He has given His

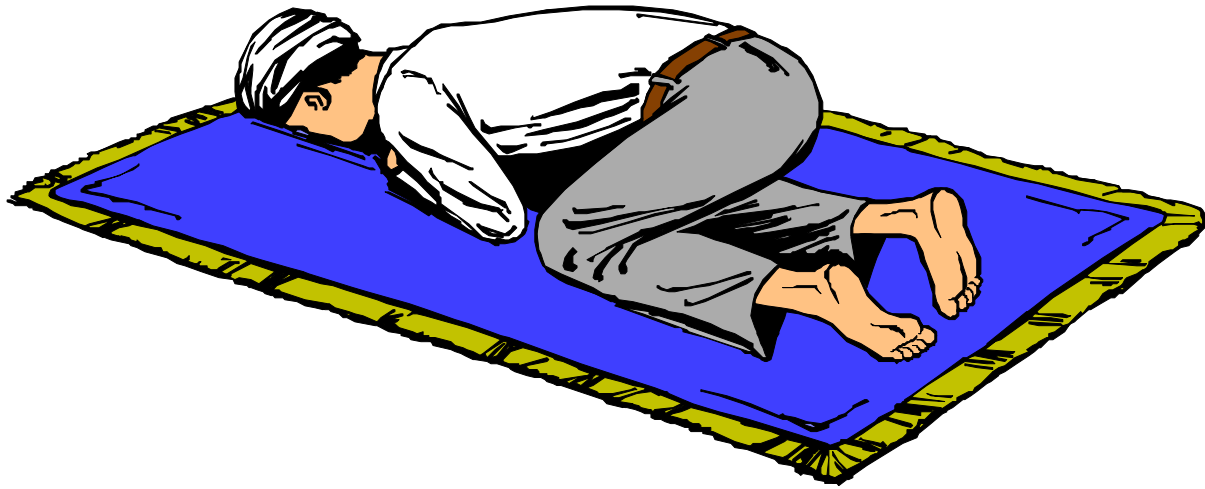
word to us. While we may not be able to count on many things in this world, we can always count on the word of our Lord! What He has spoken, He will bring to pass. When Israel began their journey from Egypt's slave pits toward the land promised to Abraham and his descendants, they had only their families, their faith, and the promise of their God. No pictures, no video footage or reports--only God's promise to bring them there! It was a giant step of faith. When the resettlement of the Jews in this Land of Promise had occurred, the report card on their God read, "There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass" (Joshua 21:45).

When the storms challenge our faith and our tranquility, our capable Saviour steps to the front of our boat and says, "Peace, be still!" When He speaks the word, the winds stop and the waves quit rolling because He is in control.

Herod had put Peter in jail for preaching Jesus. Please read Acts 12. The Bible indicates Peter was fast asleep on the night before Herod intended to take off his head. How could Peter sleep? He could sleep because he had confidence that God had everything under control.

When Paul was facing the chopping block of Nero, he wrote in Philippians 4:4-8: "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16).



MUSLIMS FUME AT DISCOVERY OF 1ST TEMPLE REMAINS

(EXCERPTS)

"Palestinian" spokesmen have denounced as lies and deception Israel claims that remains had been uncovered on Jerusalem's Temple Mount dating back to the period of Solomon's Temple.

According to the Associated Press, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced it had discovered fragments of ceramic table wares and animal bones dating back to the first Jewish temple--from the 6th to the 10th centuries BC. The finds also included fragments of bowl rims, bases and body sherds, the base and handle of a small jug, and the rim of a strange jar.

But the Islamic Trust denied that any discovery was made, AP said.

AP got it right when it stated that "the site [Temple Mount] represents the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

For Muslims everywhere, and especially for the Arab nationalists out to appropriate part of the 3000-year-old City of David and turn it into the capital of a Palestinian

state, denying any Jewish link to the most coveted sites has long been a central component of their strategy.

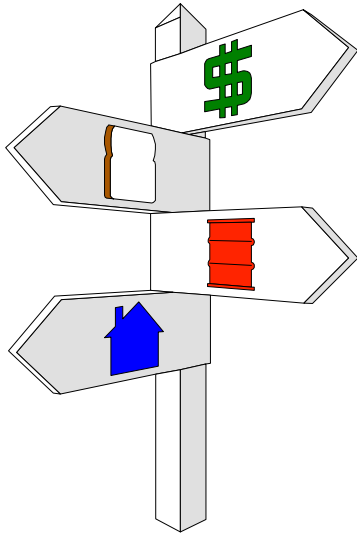
During the decades since 1967, Palestinian Arab academics, archeological "experts" and popular television and radio talk-show hosts have all collaborated to "prove" that there is no physical evidence to support the Jews' claim to having had a homeland in "Palestine" two millennia ago.

At Camp David in 2001, while participating in negotiations with Prime Minister Ehud Barak under the auspices of US President Bill Clinton, Arafat shamelessly stated as "fact" that the Jews had never had a temple in Jerusalem, and that King Solomon had built his house of worship not far in Jericho.

Arafat in fact sought to be buried on the Temple Mount--a site the Islamic world calls its "third holiest"--and to which Muslims turn their backs when praying towards Mecca and Medina five times a day.

The mass-murderer of Jews and others believed that interring his corpse at the site would help strengthen the Arab claim to sovereignty over it.

**THE BEREAN CALL
FROM THE INTERNET**



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.

AN AFRICAN FAITH BLENDS BIBLICAL, CULTURAL BELIEFS

**Despite modern influences, "spirit churches"
popular in South Africa**

**BY TERRY LEONARD
Associated Press**

Johannesburg, South Africa- On a rocky hilltop in Johannesburg a priest leads his congregation in an all-night prayer vigil. His is not a religion for the fainthearted: at the core of his faith is the unshakable conviction that the Bible is a simple, straightforward road map to the hereafter.

"The Bible is the way it is. It doesn't change. It needs no explanation. You just have to follow it," said Molefa Mojela, the priest of the Edumisweni Apostolic Church of Christ.

Yet the congregation also holds beliefs many consider outside the bounds of mainstream Christianity.

Members of Mojela's church venerate and fear ancestors who they believe can help or harm them. They are convinced witches and evil spirits walk among them. They look to prophets to heal the sick, and trust in the

power of magic and the benefits of animal sacrifice.

The Edumisweni congregation is one of the thousands of African initiated churches, sometimes called "spirit churches," which first appeared near the start of the last century in reaction to the hegemony of white mission churches.

The congregation shares much with Pentecostal Christianity, emphasizing the Holy Spirit, healing through prayer and speaking in tongues. But they also freely adopt what they consider important in African culture--veneration of ancestors, belief in witchcraft, faith in the power of magic, called muti, and the ability of prophets or sangomas to harness that power.

"Africans want their own religion," Mojela said. "They want to pray and worship in their own language."

Once a predominant form of Christianity throughout the continent, the churches are losing their popularity in most of Africa. A younger generation is seeking out the more modern congregations that emerged starting in the 1970s that are still uniquely African in worship style but closer theologically to Pentecostals or mainline Protestant groups in the West.

However, in South Africa, where suspicion of white culture remains strong, the old-style churches are still growing, according to Allan Anderson, professor of global Pentecostal studies at the University of Birmingham in England.

"The memories of apartheid are still fresh," said Ander-

son, who earned his doctorate in South Africa and has done extensive research here.

The vibrance of the congregations can be seen in the Edumisweni church's worship.

Late on a Saturday night with just the light of the African moon, Mojela's faithful gather in the Melville Koppies, a wild and sometimes dangerous greenbelt almost in the shadow of the city center. They wear homemade robes emblazoned with a cross to help repel evil spirits, and they build small fires to ward off the chill. They face east and pray together while they await the rising sun, the symbol of the beginning of all things in life.

During the all-night vigil a new initiate, preparing for her baptism later at a dam below the hills, is doused with milk.

"It is part of a ritual cleansing of the spirit," Mojela said. "We believe in the power of prophets to use some substances to drive away evil spirits and change a person's luck."

Belief in faith healing is common because it offers hope where health care either is not available or has failed. Many join the church seeking help for a medical problem, Anderson said.

Traditionally, Africans believe that ancestors look after their descendants, revealing themselves in dreams or through a sangoma, or prophet.

In Mojela's church, the faithful believe animal sacrifice such as the ritual killing of a cow or the slaughter of a goat, chicken or sheep can appease an angry ancestor and in other cases help promote healing or drive away evil spirits.

Some congregates are polygamous, saying the practice, which is part of traditional African belief, also can be found in the Old Testament.

They believe condemnation of polygamy by Christian missionaries was an attempt to impose European culture—not spread Christianity. Some believe missionaries went as far as hiding Old Testament references to plural marriage, Anderson said.

And, like many independent churches in the United States, there is no special training for clergy.

"We don't have to teach anyone religion," Mojela said. "We just read the Bible together and discuss what it says."

Anderson estimates the number of African-originated churches ranges from 50,000 to 10,000 throughout the continent. Total membership in the churches amounts to

at least one-third of the more than 400 million Christians in Africa, researchers say.

It is unclear whether the old style churches in South Africa will go the route of those in other parts of the continent, losing members to more modern groups. Anderson says the older congregations are indeed threatened by the newer Pentecostal churches.

But Mojela insists that's not his concern.

"We are not fighting against anybody," he said. "We just want people to come worship."

COMMENT

Blending biblical beliefs (or Bible doctrine) with cultural beliefs is a contradiction of terms unless the culture does not practice and believe anything that the Bible condemns.

One cannot have it both ways! The African culture, described in the above article, contains certain beliefs and practices which cannot be reconciled with the Bible, although Molefa Mojela follows it. Mojela also said, "We don't have to teach anyone religion. We just read the Bible together." If that be so, they should know what to believe and do. But, from reading the article, they do not.

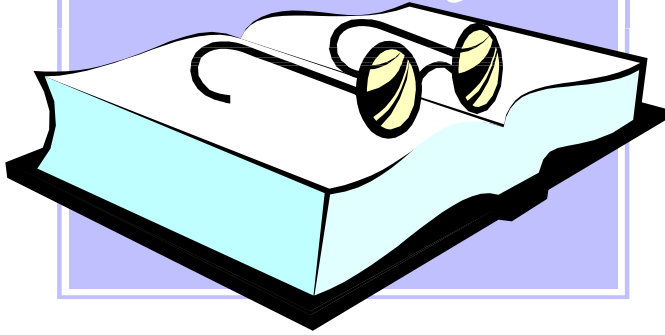
Just two of the things that are condemned by God in His written Word are the venerating and fearing of ancestors and belief in witchcraft. Animal sacrifices cannot appease any angry ancestor because their ancestors are sleeping in their graves and know nothing. The speaking in tongues is also a deception used by Satan to deceive many worldwide. Polygamy also is not of God when one rightly divides the Word of truth, although it is a part of the African culture.

Mojela said, "Africans want their own religion. They want to pray and worship in their own language." As far as wanting their own religion is concerned, they are really no different than many in the world who want to do their own thing in the name of worshipping God. He is correct about one thing—it makes no difference which language one uses when praying to and worshipping God as long as the praying and worshipping is based upon God's Word.

When worshipping God, it is best for one to forget about his or her culture and just do and believe what is recorded in the Bible.

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

Question: Did the Apostle Paul go to heaven? I have some friends who say he did. They quote some verses to me to try to prove their point.

Answer: The Apostle Paul did not go to heaven! It is true that the majority of people believe that a person who believes in Christ will go to heaven when he dies.

What about this teaching of a heavenly paradise reserved for God's people upon their death? Is there a place "over Jordan" or "beyond Jordan" as a popular gospel song expresses?

There are some Bible verses which allude to such a thought, and if we only accept those verses, we could be led to believe that we do go to heaven when we die.

However a true Bible student will want to examine all the scriptures before coming to a conclusion about this subject. If we should only accept some scriptures and omit others, we would make a serious mistake.

One of the stumbling blocks upon which some fall when reading is found in the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians. Paul wrote, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Philippians 1:23-24).

In taking these words by themselves, one could certainly feel that Paul looked forward to heaven at his death.

Is this what Paul was really saying? Let us look further to see what other scripture reveals.

The Apostle Paul wrote that, "...brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Peter 3:15-16). Peter does not discredit Paul's letters but rather informs us that his writings may contain certain parts which are a little more difficult to understand. A person who is unstable or not well-versed in Scripture could receive an incorrect thought from Paul's letters. Paul did not intend it that way. It was just his way in writing.

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul said, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (II Timothy 4:6). Both the Apostle Paul and Timothy knew well that they would not be taken to heaven to be with Jesus when they died. We may confirm this from Paul's other writings when he states, "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" (I Corinthians 15:51-52). The apostle further states, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them

which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:13-17). Paul was not one to contradict his own words. He knew well that he would be in the grave until Jesus came again, and he would be resurrected to be "incorruptible."

Did Paul think that something unseen or supernatural (such as his thoughts or soul as some think) would leave his body and go to heaven? Paul did not think such thoughts because he knew well the scriptures which were only the Old Testament in his time. "For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" (Psalm 6:5) "The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence" (Psalm 115:17). "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psalm 146:3-4). "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6). These scriptures were available to Paul and the early church! The Spirit of God does not say one thing, then later say the opposite.

The Apostle Paul only confirmed the words of Isaiah when we wrote, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isaiah 26:19). This takes place when Jesus comes again for His saints because verses 20 and 21 of Isaiah 26 reveals the catching away of God's saints from the earth into "thy chambers" which is the New Jerusalem. The indignation is God's wrath, the seven last plagues. This fits well with Paul's thoughts about the resurrection in his Corinthians and Thessalonians let-

ters which we recorded earlier.

So we answer the question whether Paul went to heaven or not by the words Paul knew so well in the book of Job, "If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come" (Job 14:14). Also, we read in the Book of Hebrews, "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:39-40).

Question: What are your thoughts on the meaning of the passage "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found..."? (Isaiah 55:6).

Answer: It is a warning that a probable contingency may arise when the seeker, who postpones his search, may lose his power or disposition to seek. There are many instances of men who have put off seeking until they have made a fortune, or done something else, and then the time they set, having arrived, discerns that business habits and longtime associations absorb them. They are out of touch with God. Even in church their thoughts are running on worldly concerns.

It is very rare for an old man who has been indifferent, or careless, or wicked, to turn to God. God is not unwilling to be found, but the man has become incapable of seeking Him. None who really seek ever fail to find.

Question: Why did Jesus give an evasive answer to the question: "who art thou"?

Answer: When this question was prompted by mere curiosity, or when it was asked with the object of getting evidence from His own lips for the purpose of prosecuting Him, it would have been unwise to satisfy the one who asked the question. When, however, He was speaking to the woman of Samaria, there was no ambiguity, "...I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:26). Under the adjuration of the High Priest, He also answered plainly. "...Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:61-62).



Colombia

The following photographs show some of our brethren in Colombia. They suffered from flooding in their area.





LESSON I

MARY ANOINTS JESUS' FEET

Scripture Reading: John 12:1-11.

Golden Text: John 12:3 (first part).

"Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spike-nard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair..."

1. When did Jesus come to Bethany, and who was there? John 12:1.
2. Jesus is invited to supper. What did Martha and Lazarus do? John 12:2.
3. What did Mary do to Jesus? Was this ointment expensive? John 12:3.
4. What did Judas Iscariot say about the oil that Mary used? John 12:4-6.
5. What was Jesus' reply to Judas? John 12:7-8.
6. Why did many of the Jews know that Jesus was there? John 12:9.
7. What did the chief priests plan to do and why? John 12:10-11.

LESSON II

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Scripture Reading: John 10:1-21.

Golden Text: John 10:14.

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine."

1. What did Jesus say to anyone who tried to enter the sheepfold by any other way than the door? John 10:1.
2. Who is the shepherd of the sheep? John 10:2.

3. Discuss verses 3-6 of John 10.
4. Who did Jesus say was the door of the sheep? John 10:7-10.
5. Who did He say is the good shepherd? John 10:11.
6. What did He say about the hired shepherds? John 10:12-13.
7. What does the good shepherd do for His sheep? John 10:14-16.
8. What did He say of His power to lay down and take up His life again? John 10:17-18.
9. What did the above sayings cause among the Jews? John 10:19-21.

LESSON III

JESUS LOVES THE LITTLE CHILDREN

Scripture Reading: Matthew 18:1-10.

Golden Text: Matthew 18:3.

"And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

1. What question did the disciples ask of Jesus? Matthew 18:1.
2. What did Jesus say they must do before they could even enter the kingdom? Matthew 18:3.
3. Who then did He say would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Matthew 18:4.
4. What did Jesus say of those who caused one of these little ones to stumble? Matthew 18:6.

NOTE: Jesus did not only mean children young in age but all those who are young in Christ. When we are bap-

tized, the old self dies and we become "new babes in Christ."

5. What does Jesus say about offenses? Matthew 18:7.

NOTE: We must try to never offend anyone.

6. Why should we not despise any child? Matthew 18:10.

7. What two types of children do we read of in the Scriptures? Colossians 3:6; Ephesians 5:6; Romans 8:16; Galatians 3:26.

8. Jesus wants us to continue to be humble as a child, but He also wants us to grow in His Word. I Peter 2:2,3.

LESSON IV

HEALING THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN'S DAUGHTER

Scripture Reading: Mark 7:24-30.

Golden Text: Mark 7:25.

"For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet."

1. Where did Jesus now go, and what did He try to do? Mark 7:24.
2. Who heard of Him, and what was her trouble? Mark 7:25.
3. What was the woman's nationality? Mark 7:26 (first part).
4. What did she ask Jesus to do? Mark 7:26 (last part).
5. How did Jesus answer her? Mark 7:27.
6. How did she answer Jesus? Mark 7:28.
7. What did her saying cause Jesus to do? Mark 7:29.
8. What did she find upon her return home? Mark 7:30.



THERE IS ONE THING I WANT TO BE

First child -

There is one thing I want to be,
A good Samaritan you see,
And help all those who need it most,
Then never of it try to boast.

Second child -

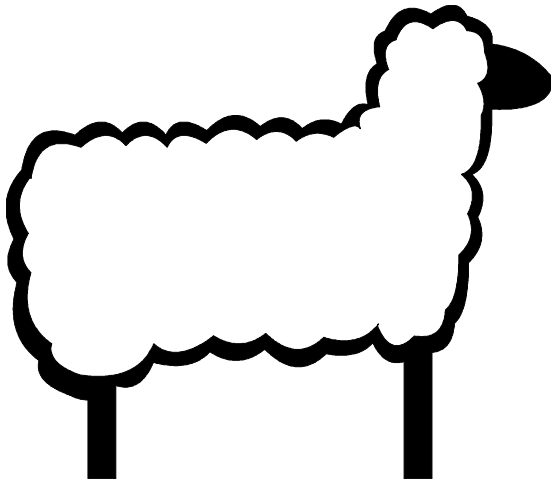
There is one thing I want to be,
A seed for Jesus is my plea,
And help the other plants around
While growing in His garden ground.

Third Child -

There is one thing I want to be,
To faithful life a little key,
And help all those who often knock,
They'll find me at the lock.

Fourth Child -

There is one thing I want to be,
A child a sitting on His knee,
And help the ones who have not known
The love to me that Christ has shown.



A KIND UNCLE

Lot was a man who had many sheep and goats and many servants to take care of all his animals. He lived near his uncle, who also had many sheep and goats and many servants to take care of them. You have already heard about his kind uncle whose name was Abraham. Abraham and Lot needed many fields of green grass to feed all their animals.

One day their servants began to quarrel. "Take your sheep to another field," one servant would growl. "We came to this place first."

"I will not," said the other servant. "This land is as much ours as it is yours."

The quarreling grew worse and worse, because, you see, there really wasn't enough grass for all the animals of both men in that same place.

Finally Abraham heard how the servants were fighting among themselves. "This is not right," he said. He went to talk to Lot. "We do not want our servants quarreling," he said in his kind way. "And we do not want to get to quarreling over the land for we belong to the same family. We should love each other."

"You are right," said Lot. "But what can we do about it?"

The two men walked to the top of a nearby hill. They could see far, far in that direction, and far, far in this direction. That way they could see a river with green, thick

grass growing all around it. The other way they could see hills where the grass was not so green nor so thick. "See," said Abraham, "here is the whole land before us. We must move farther apart. If you want to go one way, then I will go the other. You may choose."

Lot did not say, "Oh, no, Uncle, you are older. God said this land was to be yours. You choose first." Lot did not think what was the kind thing to do. He looked back at the hills. The grass there did not look so green nor so thick. He looked down at the river where the thick green grass was growing all around. "I will take all the land by the river," said selfish Lot.

Some of us would have said, "Oh, Lot, that is all the best for yourself! Let me have some of the good land." But Abraham did not say that. He was willing to let Lot have the best land. He wanted to be as kind as he could be. So he took his animals and his servants and his tents and lived among the hills, while Lot went down to live by the river. With which man do you think God was more pleased? Which man do you think was happier? Gen. 13:2-13.



A PRAYER

I need Jesus in the morning
 So I'll start the day aright;
 I need Jesus as my Helper,
 Till I go to bed at night.
 Helping me, helping me
 Not to do wrong:
 Jesus is helping me
 All the day long.

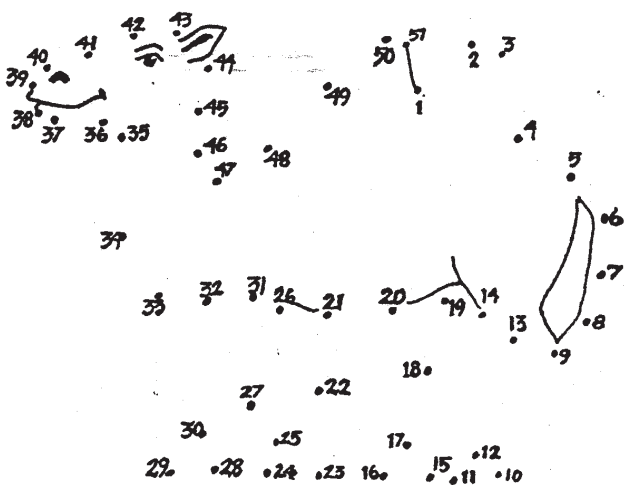
MOUNTAINS

BIBLE SHOES

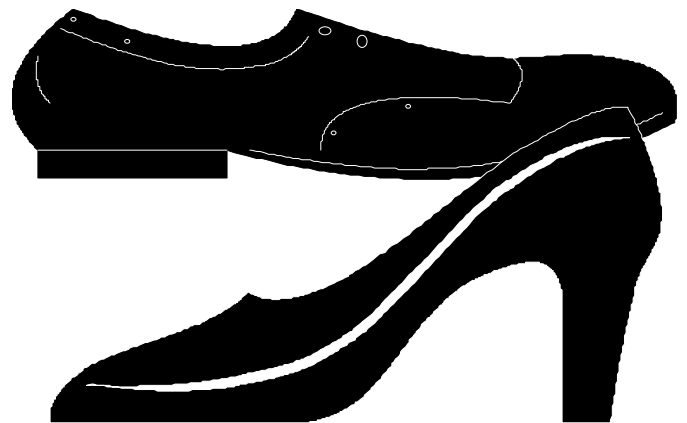
Use the name of a mountain to complete each sentence below. Look up the Bible verses for help.

1. Noah's ark came to rest on the mountains of _____ (Genesis 8:4).
2. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments on Mount _____ (Exodus 31:18).
3. Joshua was buried on Mount _____ (Joshua 24:30).
4. God proved that He is the true God on Mount _____ (I Kings 18:20, 39).
5. God spoke with Elijah on Mount _____ (I Kings 19:8-9).
6. Jesus taught His disciples on the Mount of _____ (Matthew 24:3).

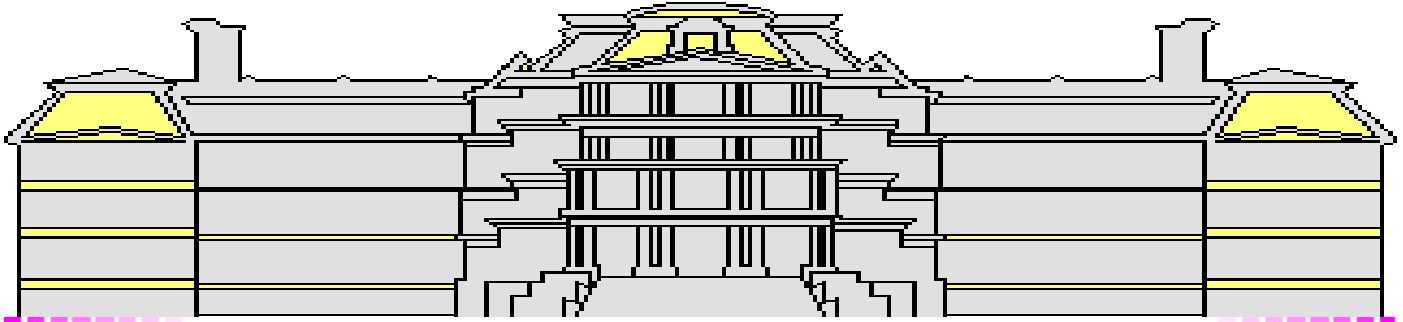
Follow the dots beginning with number 1. Draw a line from number 1 to number 2, and so on. The animal which you will draw is mentioned in the Bible many times. Would you like to look up a few of the verses? Genesis 24:10-20; Job 1:3; Matthew 3:4; Matthew 19:24.



1. Who was told to take off his shoes, because the place on which he stood was holy ground? Exodus 3:4-5.
2. Who said he was not worthy to bear the shoes of Jesus? Matthew 3:1,11.
3. Who drew off his shoe as a sign of buying a piece of land as his inheritance? Ruth 4:8.
4. Whom did Jesus command to be shod with sandals? Mark 6:7-9.
5. What other Old Testament leader was told to loose his shoes from his feet, for the place on which he stood was holy? Joshua 5:15.
6. Who took off his shoes when he went up Mount Olivet? II Samuel 15:30.
7. Who was told by an angel to bind on his sandals? Acts 12:7.
8. With what is the Christian to have his feet shod? Ephesians 6:15.



Answers -
 1.Moses 2.John the Baptist 3.Boaz 4.The twelve disciples 5. Joshua 6.David 7.Peter 8.The preparation of the gospel of peace



The Sea of Glass

By David DeLong

John saw a city bright as brass,
All mingled in with fire;
As it were a sea of glass,
It held the saved up higher.

This city has great size and mass,
Twelve thousand furlongs laid foursquare;
Transparent gold -- a "sea of glass,"
(While linen did the Lamb's wife wear.)

The saved were from the righteous class,
Serving God from great to least;
They stood upon the sea of glass,
Having overcome the beast.

Each man and woman, lad and lass,
Who now had gained the victory;
Had harps upon the sea of glass,
And sang a song in jubilee.

Someday hence all tears shall pass...
And soon are poured the seven plagues;
While saints are on the sea of glass,
The sinners hide in mountain crags.

--Thoughts from the Book of Revelation...