

The Advocate of Truth

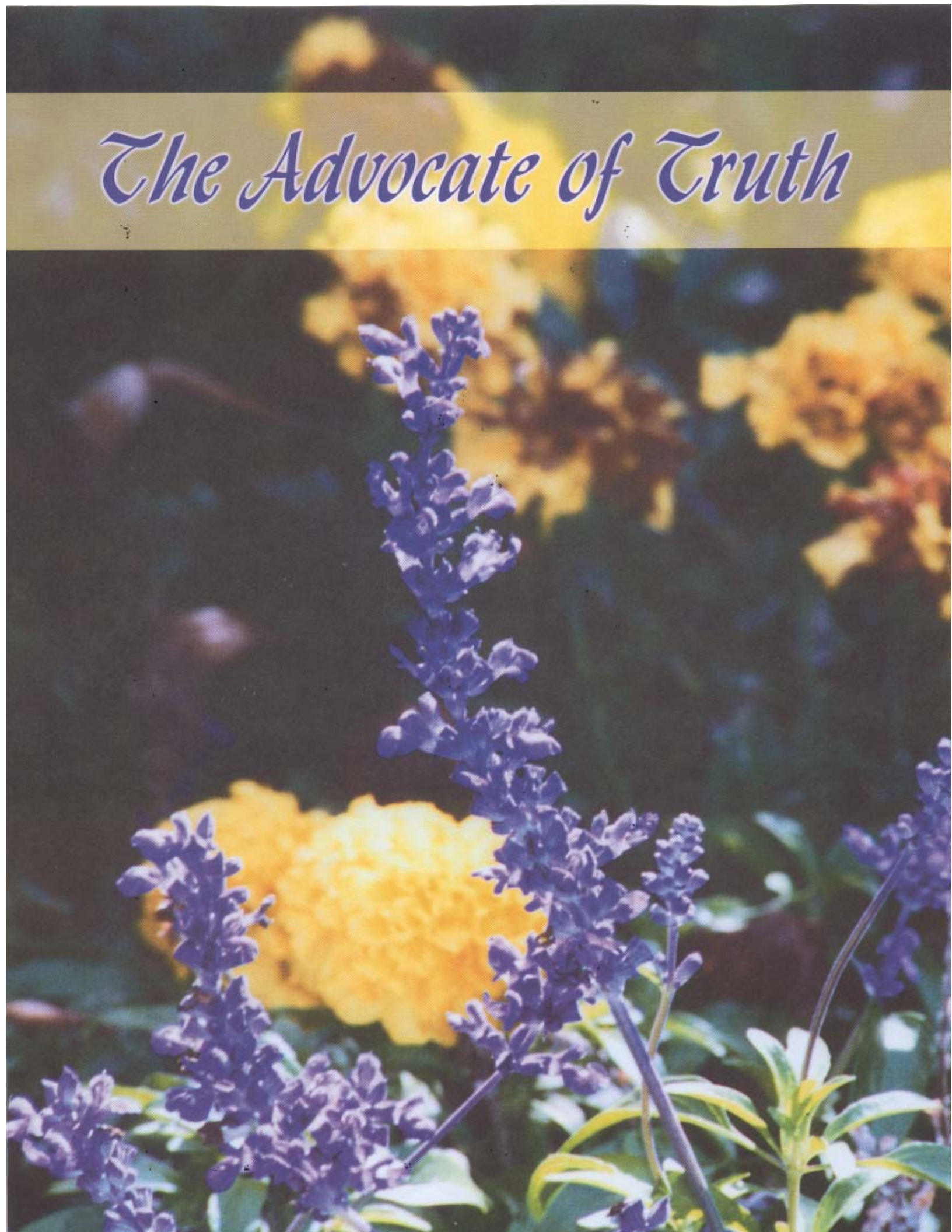




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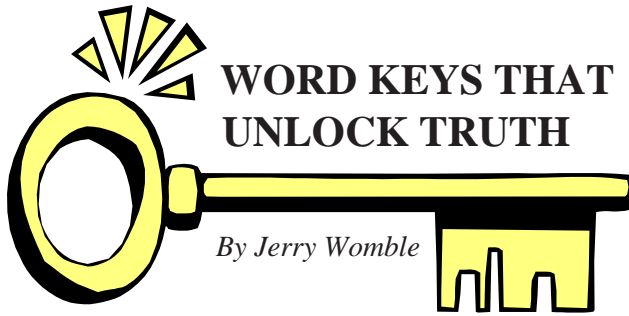
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We wish all our fathers a "Happy Father's Day".



WORD KEYS THAT UNLOCK TRUTH

By Jerry Womble

TEMPT

One of the definitions that Webster's New World Dictionary gives for Tempt is "to try to persuade: induce or entice, esp. to something immoral or sensually pleasurable." Many of us at one time or another may have been tempted to do something immoral or to gratify our own pleasures. We must understand that God does not tempt anyone in this manner. God may try His children which is another definition of tempt. Abraham is a good example of this form of temptation. "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, take now thy son, thine only one Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Genesis 22:1-2). But God will not persuade anyone to do something that He condemns in His Word. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (James 1:13).

If God does not tempt one to do evil, it has to be Satan that does so. The Apostle Paul speaks of the "tempter." "For this cause, when I could no longer for-

bear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain" (I Thessalonians 3:5).

Jesus was tempted by the tempter. "And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him" (Mark 1:13). "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil...And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matthew 4:1,3). Reading verses 4 through 10 of the same chapter, we find that Jesus overcame Satan, the tempter. Jesus never did yield to the temptations of Satan to sin. "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29). "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (I Peter 2:22). "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin" (I John 3:5). "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" (Hebrews 4:15).

We can overcome the temptations of Satan by faith and repeating God's Word. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (I Peter 5:8-9). When Jesus was tempted by Satan, He said, "...It is written..." (Matthew 4:4,7,10).

Above all, God will not let His children succumb to Satan's temptation. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).



COMMENTS ON COLOSSIANS 2:14 - 23

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of

the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, tri-

umphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh" (Colossians 2:14-23).

In the fourteenth verse, we are told of the "handwriting of ordinances" that was against us, which was contrary to us that He took out of the way, and nailed it to his cross. "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (verse 15). In verses sixteen and seventeen, we are told what these ordinances were. They were meat and drink offerings, feasts, new moons, and holy days upon which sacrifices were offered.

The Interlinear Literal Translation of the Greek says, "Not therefore anyone you let judge in meat or in drink, or in respect of feast or new moons, or sabbaths which are a shadow of things to come; but the body (is) of the Christ."

Therefore the one conclusion we can come to is that the above ordinances, as well as meat and drink offerings that are a shadow of things to come, were blotted out at the crucifixion.

The seventh day Sabbath was not included in the above list because it is a memorial of creation and points back to that event and does not point forward to Christ. Read Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-12; 31:16-17; Hebrews 4:3-11. It, being a memorial and part of the Law that gave a knowledge of sin, must be forever separated from the law of types and shadows which pointed forward to Christ. The Lord tells us to rightly divide the Word of truth so we will seek to identify the things that were done away which are mentioned in verses 16 and 17.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts, Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings" (Leviticus 23:1-3).

This shows that the seventh day Sabbath is not included in the feasts because beginning with verse 4, the Lord tells us of the feasts to be kept in their seasons. Beginning with verse 5, we have the feast of the Passover. Verse 6, mentions the feast of unleavened bread with two sabbaths. In verse 15, we have the feast of Pentecost. Verse 24 mentions the sabbath of the new moon always coming on the first day of the seventh month. Verse 27 mentions the sabbath of the tenth day of the seventh month which was the day of Atonement. Verse 34 records the feast of Tabernacles with two sabbaths.

Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord and told what these feasts and sabbaths were for in verse 37. "These are the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations to offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon his day." Verse 38 shows that the seventh day Sabbath was not included with the other sabbaths mentioned in this chapter.

"Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My offering, and my bread for my sacrifices made by fire, for a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me within due season" (Numbers 28:2). "After this manner ye shall offer daily, throughout the seven days, the meat of the sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord: it shall be offered beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink-offering" (verse 24).

Let us go to Numbers, chapters 28 and 29, to see how and why these feasts and holy days (or sabbaths) were kept. We do not have space to copy these two chapters, but read them, and see in Numbers 29:39 it says, "These things ye shall do unto the Lord in your set feasts, I." It is easy to see that the above mentioned feasts and sabbaths were connected with the law of atonement and ceased to be sabbaths when their purpose for which they were set apart was fulfilled at the cross. Only the Passover was given a new significance, and the fourteenth

day of the first month became the memorial of our deliverance from sin and a memorial of the death and suffering of the Lamb of God.

From the days of Paul on down to the present date, there have been men who troubled churches, trying to bind all these things which were done away on the people of God, beguiling people of their reward saying that we must be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses. Even today some are teaching people to stop their work on the eight sabbaths of the law of atonement and eat unleavened bread seven days. Some say just to eat the bread seven days, but others say to eat the animals and bitter herbs also for seven days.

Going back to Colossians 2:18, Paul begins his message of warning against those who would be vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind (Proverbs 12:15; 26:12) and beguile men of their reward by getting them to go back and build again the things that Christ destroyed, seeking to be justified by keeping ordinances that were done away rather than hold the Head which is Christ.

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (verses 18-19).

In verse 20, Paul asks a question and completes the warning. "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" These ordinances were shadows. (Read verses 14,16,17.) Speaking of the same ordinances, he says in verses 21 and 22, "(Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?"

Paul also says, "Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh" (verse 23). Some say that Paul kept these feasts and holy days, but it is evident that Paul did not keep them, and because he was bold to speak the truth, he was in peril over these very things. The ones zealous for the law of ordinances went about to kill him.

"Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that

gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek was compelled to be circumcised. And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Galatians 2:1-5).

By reading the second chapter of Galatians, you will find that the Jews that were zealous of the law dissembled when Paul and his company came together with them, all because Paul and his company did not keep the law of ordinances.

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Galatians 2:16-21).

Paul brings out two important points. One is, they made themselves transgressors by building again the things which Christ destroyed, and the other is, if justification or righteousness is to come by the law of ordinances, Christ is dead in vain. It is evident that the ordinances of meats and drinks, new moon feasts, and sabbaths mentioned in Colossians did not belong to the law which gave a knowledge of sin, but to the law of atonement of the old age. Since salvation is by faith in the blood of Christ in this age, what benefit is there in building up again the things that were shadows of Christ which He destroyed?

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the

law in the sight of God, it is evident; for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:10-14).

"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (verse 19).

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (verses 24-27).

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect

unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased" (Galatians 5:1-11).

In these verses, Paul comes to the same conclusion reached in Colossians 2:14-23. If justification is through Christ, and the things mentioned in Colossians 2:14-21 were blotted out and we build them again, beguiling everybody with them that we can, we had just as well keep Sunday and the other commandments of men for we will come in the same class with those who teach for doctrines the commandments of men.

You may draw near the Lord with your mouth, honor Him with your lips, and worship Him, but it will all be in vain if there is something wrong with the heart.

- From an old tract



The Inner Circle

By David DeLong

When referring to the relationships that the Lord has with people, a question comes to mind. Does He respect some persons more than He does others? In other words, does the Lord have favorites? At first, the answer may seem to be a resounding "No!" However, as we discuss this subject further, the answer may surprise you.

In Acts chapter 10, verses 34 and 35, we read, "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." And in I Peter 1:17 we read, "And if ye

call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." We can see from these verses that in one sense, God is no respecter of persons. Anyone, from any race, gender, or social status may come to Him and be saved. As the song says, "Whosoever will, may come." Also, we can see that He will judge everyone without partiality.

But in another sense, The Lord is very much a respecter of persons. We can see this from the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis chapter 4. In verses 3 through

5 we read, “And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.” What made the difference between the Lord’s respect for Abel and his offering and His lack of respect for Cain and his offering? Part of the answer, I believe, is found in their hearts’ attitude. Abel had a closer walk with the Lord than did his brother. Jesus mentions “righteous Abel” in Matthew 23:35. Jude, by contrast, speaks of the “way of Cain” in a negative sense in Jude 11.

The Father in Heaven dealt in a similar manner with the Children of Israel. In Leviticus 26:1,2, we read about them being commanded by the Lord to do certain things. First, they are told not to make idols to worship, and second, they are told to keep His Sabbaths, and reverence His sanctuary. Verses 3-8 tell us that if they will obey the Lord, a number of blessings will be given to them. Because of this obedience, the Lord assures them in verse 9, “For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you.” We can glean from the above verses, then, that the Lord respects those who respect Him, but does not respect those who disrespect Him. The Scriptures also put it this way: “Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.”

It is clear that the Lord has closer relationships with some people than with others. Even among Christ’s Apostles we can see an apparent “inner circle” that is portrayed with The Twelve. Peter, James, and John are given privileges with the Lord that the other nine do not seem to have. Let us look at a couple of examples from the Bible.

In Matthew chapter 17, verses 1-9, we are given the account of Jesus taking these three disciples up into a “high mountain” where they see a vision of Jesus transfigured, Moses and Elijah talking with Him, and they hear the voice of God from out of a cloud. What an awe-inspiring event this must have been! Why, though, did the Lord bring them up “apart” into this mountain? I would like to consider an answer to this question shortly. But first, let’s look at a second example from the Bible.

Jesus has just recently partaken of the bread and the

cup emblems with His disciples. (See Matthew 26:26-29.) Then, in verses 36 and 37 we read: “Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.” Here, again, we see Jesus singling out Peter, James, and John to be with Him at a very special point in time. As we have seen, during the first time they were given the privilege of seeing Jesus in His glory. Now they are given the privilege of sharing with Him in His sufferings. But, why?

We know that Jesus is not arbitrary in His relationships with people. There is always a good reason for the actions He takes with them. Why then, were Peter, James, and John apparently given special privileges that the other disciples were not given? The answer may involve a number of reasons, including the possibility that they were being prepared for special ministries within the Body of Christ. But, it’s just possible, too, that the Lord was responding to a special relationship that these three Apostles seem to have had with Him.

The key to what I have been writing about is found in James 4 verse 8, the first part. This reads: “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.” This is perhaps a portion of Scripture that we are very familiar with. But have we ever meditated upon the implications of these sacred words? As we become closer to God, He will become closer to us, until there is nothing--no sin, no wrong attitude, no earthly care--to cause Him to be distanced from us.

Now, as Peter, James, and John were drawing nigh to God, they were also drawing nigh to Jesus. In fact, it was only through Jesus that they could draw nigh to God. Do we see in the lives of these three disciples any evidence of a special relationship that they had with the Lord? I believe that as we study the Gospels we do see such a relationship. Let’s begin with Peter.

In Matthew 16, verses 13-16, we get a glimpse into an intimate conversation that Jesus had with the Twelve. This passage reads: “When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living

God.” Verse 17 tells us that this was a revelation which was given to Peter by the Father in heaven. This passage suggests that Peter was especially open to receiving spiritual teaching from the Lord, though in itself it doesn’t prove that he had a special walk with Him. But studying some of the facets, such as these, of Peter’s life experience gives us a good view of his diamond-like character--though it be, at this point, a diamond in the rough.

We get, perhaps, a clearer look at Peter’s character in Matthew 26: 33-35. Here we see an intense loyalty on the part of Peter for his Master. We read: “Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.” We know that through weakness on his part, Peter did deny his Lord. But we can see straight into his heart’s intent that he never meant to do so. He wanted to love Jesus more than his very own life. And while it is true that the other disciples made the same statement as Peter, it appears that Peter was the first to make this heart-felt declaration, and thus he may even have influenced the others to say it.

Next we will examine an incident in the life of James that hints at his relationship to Jesus. This incident is found in the book of Acts, chapter 12, verses 1-3. It reads: “Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)” Not much detail is related to us in this incident; yet I feel the passage may be loaded with certain implications. What caused Herod to kill James--the first of the Apostles to be martyred? We do not know. But the death of James caused the Jews to be “pleased”; possibly as much as if Peter had been killed. So, Herod tried to have Peter killed as well. If one “reads” between the lines here, he or she may come to the conclusion that James, (as well as Peter), was so involved in ministry for Christ that he became “public enemy number one,” and thus had to be eliminated. This, of course, is only conjecture, but it does give us food for thought.

Now we come to the Apostle John’s relationship to Jesus. We are specifically told in the book of John that

Jesus was very close to this disciple. In chapter 21, verse 20 we read: “Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?” Jesus, of course, loved all of His disciples, just as He loves all of them today. But there seems to be a special closeness that He had for John. And John is not shy about his love for Jesus, even having leaned on His breast at the Last Supper. See John 13: 23-25. It was this same John who was banished to the Isle of Patmos and who was given special visions which he wrote in the book of Revelation.

The evidence of Scripture, then, does lean in favor of Peter, James, and John having a special relationship with Jesus, and thus being in His “inner circle.” Now, one might be thinking that this is all well and good for the Apostles, since they had (and have) leadership roles in the church. But what about the rest of the disciples? Can they have such an intimate relationship with the Lord as well? I believe the answer is a definite “yes!”

If we observe the lives of three other disciples of Jesus, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, we can also sense a special relationship that at least two of them had with Jesus. Let’s read from Luke, chapter 10, verses 38-42. “Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

One can sense the deep longing that Mary had for a closer relationship with the Lord by her desire to be in His presence and hear His Word. Mary loved Jesus so intensely that we can see in John 12:3 where she took a pound of ointment of spikenard, anointed His feet, and then with her hair wiped His feet. What devotion!

We can also sense a special closeness that Lazarus had with Jesus. If we go to John, chapter 11, we can read about the episode of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. Just before Lazarus is raised, we are told that Jesus “groaned in the spirit” (vs. 33), and also that He “wept”

(vs. 35). Then, in verse 36, we read: “Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!” This seems to be a special love that Jesus had for Lazarus, similar to the love He had for John, who was known as the disciple whom Jesus loved. I believe that we can add at least Mary and Lazarus to Jesus’ list of special relationships.

To this writer, the evidence seems clear. Anyone can be within Christ’s “inner circle” of relationships with Him. But, as we have seen, this only comes with a price. Each one must have an intense longing to come closer to the Lord. Each one must cultivate his or her relationship with Him. Each one must be willing to pay that price.

One might be thinking at this point that the cost is just too great to be within that “inner circle.” He or she is content to be a “D,” “C,” or “B” Christian, rather than an “A” Christian, to use school-grade terms. The reasoning might be, “Well, at least I’m not an ‘F’ Christian, which means I’m not failing.” The problem with this thinking is that “B” always slips to “C;” “C” always slips to “D;” and “D” always slips to “F.” In other words, if we’re not striving for the closest possible relationship that we can have with the Lord, then we will end up having no relationship at all. This can be clearly seen in Christ’s admonition to some of the churches He addressed in Revelation, chapters 2 and 3. Let’s look at two examples.

To the church in Ephesus, Jesus commends the folks for a number of good things in their lives (which shows that they have a relationship with Him. See Revelation 2:2,3,6.) In verses 4 and 5 we read, “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” These folks were definitely not within Christ’s “inner circle.” In fact, they were less close to Him than they once had been. The Lord doesn’t coddle them and tell them their relationship with Him is all right the way it is. He commands them to repent, and to do it quickly!

The second example is that of the Laodicean Church which is neither cold nor hot. Jesus tells them in Revelation 3:16, “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.” Verse 19 says, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” Christ had not, at that point, severed the relationship He had with the Laodicean

Church. However, if they wouldn’t repent, they would be cast out of His Body (“I will spew thee out of my mouth”).

A certain illustration may help us to understand what being devoted to Christ means. In 1849, a group of people called the “forty-niners” made a generally long and hazardous journey to the gold fields of California. Many died on the journey, and many gave up and went back to their farms and homes. But the ones who traveled to the California gold fields were willing to take the risks of hunger and thirst; of danger from Indian tribes; of disease, exhaustion, and even death itself for the chance to become rich with gold. And once they got to these gold fields, they were willing to do “back-breaking” labor with a pick and shovel. They endured standing in “bone-chilling” water for hours on end. And, many of them suffered other hardships including living an isolated and lonely life. To them, however, the risks were worth the reward.

These “gold-seekers” left everything behind, including their families, in order to get rich. Jesus tells us in Luke 14:33 to give up all for Him. “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” They endured great hardships as we have seen. The Apostle Paul warns Timothy (and us) in II Timothy 2:3, “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” Sometimes, on the journey, the goods that the “forty-niners” were carrying in their wagons were too heavy for the mountains they had to climb. In such cases they were forced to dump many items from the wagons so that the horses could continue the trek. The writer of Hebrews admonishes us, “..., let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, (Hebrews 12:1). And finally, these hardy adventurers were willing to even be called “fools” for the opportunity to become rich. We go again to the writer of Hebrews. In chapter 11, verse 26, we read about Moses, who was seeking a treasure worth infinitely more than gold. It tells us that he was: “Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.”

Let us return to our original question, “Does the Lord have favorites?” Perhaps it would be more profitable for us to ponder another question instead: “Is He my favorite?” The affirmative answer to that is far more precious than gold.

STRIVE TO ENTER

BY BIBI SHIMOON ALLICOCK



"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:13-21).

Brothers and sisters, we were not promised a rose garden. If our lives go smoothly without thorns, we may be erring because the Word of God tells us that "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12).

We must have thorns and thistles because they were pronounced upon mankind after man disobeyed God. "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust

thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:17-19).

I suppose that we all know what a thorn is. After its continual pricking, we may need some peace, so we will definitely have to go to our Advocate, through whom we can gain the peace that passeth all understanding. When we pray, we should always ask for our needs, and not what we want, because we may only want it to fulfil our lusts, or we may want it because we see our neighbor or someone else have it. "From whence come wars and fighting among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God.? who-soever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:1-10).

"Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:7-14).

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shown toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end" (Hebrews 6:4-11).

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness,

neither shadow of turning" (James 1:12-17).

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:19-27).

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:12-13). "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible" (I Corinthians 9:24-25).

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (II Timothy 4:2-5). "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

GOD AND THE LAW

REPRINTED



The Ten Commandment law is referred to frequently in the New Testament as "the law of God" (Romans 8:7); "the commandments of God" (I Corinthians 7:19; Revelation 12:17; 14:12); "His commandments" (I John 3:22, 24; 5:2-3; II John 6). It is described as "holy," "just," "good," and "spiritual." (Romans 7:12,14,16; II Peter 2:21; I Timothy 1:8.) It is called "the law of righteousness," the "law of liberty," the "royal law." (Romans 9:31; James 1:25; 2:12,8.) Repeatedly it is referred to and quoted from as an active, binding law.

"The commandments of God" and "the faith of Jesus" are linked by John in Revelation 14:12. In the Christian dispensation the law is as vital as grace was in the old dispensation. The gospel does not set the law aside (Revelation 14:12); faith does not make it void (Romans 3:31); it is there to point out sin (Romans 7:7).

The Master states His relation to the law in a negative as well as in a positive way. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law...I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). "Fulfill" cannot mean to abolish or do away with, for He plainly said, "I am not come to destroy." "Fulfill" means to do or accomplish, as illustrated by its use in His statement to John when He presented Himself for baptism. "...Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness..." (Matthew 3:15). If "fulfill" means to abolish, there has been no righteousness since His baptism. Paul bears definite testimony as to what was abolished: "Having abolished...the law of commandments contained in ordinances..." (Ephesians 2:15); "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances...nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14). "Ordinances" are defined in Hebrews 9:1,10, margin, as "rites, or ceremonies," which were not a part of the moral law of God.

Isaiah 42:21 predicted that Christ would magnify the

law, and make it honorable. This He did by making sin a condition of the mind as well as an overt act. To illustrate: "...whosoever looketh...to lust...hath committed adultery" (Matthew 5:28). The same principle is set forth in I John 3:15: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer..."

Christ affirmed the perpetuity of the law: "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18; See also Luke 16:18).

Christ observed the law in His own life, and His declaration, "...I have kept my Father's commandments..." (John 15:10), was so literally true that Satan, His worst enemy, could find no fault in Him (John 14:30). He obeyed the law for several reasons: (1) That he might be "without sin" (Hebrews 4:15); (2) to condemn "sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3); (3) to provide salvation, for "...By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:19); (4) to set an example that we should "...walk, even as he walked" (I John 2:6).

The purpose of the law is to define and convict of sin. "...sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4; See also Romans 7:7; 3:20; James 2:9.) "...sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Romans 5:13; See 4:15). When the law speaks, it is "...that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." (Romans 3:19.) The law as a standard reveals how far men have gone in transgression. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). As a plumb-line it demonstrates the crookedness of man's life; as a mirror it shows how soiled his life has become (James 1:23-25).

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Romans 10:4). "End" here means "object or purpose." As seen by its use in James 5:11:

"...Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord..." The same Greek work is translated "end" in both texts.

When we come to Christ, He does several important things for us:

1. He does "...what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh..." (Romans 8:3). It demands but cannot produce obedience; it is holy, but cannot make us holy; it convicts, but cannot save from sin; it reveals, but cannot cure the disease. This is not due to a weakness in the law, but man's failure.

2. Christ freed us from the condemnation of the law. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).

3. Christ frees us from the domination of sin. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14; See verses 2,6,7,11-13, 16-18.) The proof of this is that we no longer continue in "transgression of the law," which is sin. Our faith is "...the victory that overcometh..." (I John 5:4), and with Paul we say, "...the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

4. "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:4). This is where Israel failed. "...Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law..." (Romans 9:31-32).

Please note carefully that Christ does not free us from keeping the law of God. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?...What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." (Romans 6:1,15.) "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid" (Galatians 2:17). So, if, while we profess Christ, we continue in sin, or the violation of the law, Christ can do nothing for us, as it is His settled purpose to "...save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21), not in their sins. Thus Christ as the perfect, sinless Saviour by His complete obedience, will in us, condemn sin in our flesh.

FAITHFUL AND WISE SERVANTS

Excerpts from an old Sabbath School Lesson

"Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing" (Matthew 24:46).

When God created this earth, He intended people to enjoy it forever. They were to rule over all creatures. But sin entered, and man lost his estate, and the curse came upon this earth. God will not allow the devil to overthrow all His work and plan. But there is a great work to be done in the earth by teaching all people of the love of God and what He has in store for them that love Him. He sent His Son into the world to die for man. Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost.

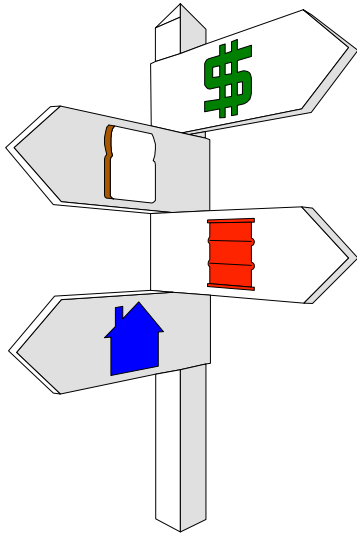
He went about teaching and preaching the gospel. But in the short time of His ministry, He could reach only a very few people. So when He went into a far country, He left the work of preaching the gospel to His disciples. This great commission has been handed down from generation to generation until today it rests upon you and me.

How are we attending to this business? Are we good stewards or are we slothful in this business of the Lord? There are so many souls who have never heard the gospel and who are hungry to hear. God is our Partner in this work and a good Partner also. He sends the sunshine and the rain. He gives us the power to get wealth. The gold and silver are His and the cattle upon a thousand hills. He gives us life and the things attendant thereupon. He gives us of His Spirit to help us.

He blesses our efforts and gives us our increase. What does He ask of us? He asks that we put in six days of our time, and then He gives us nine-tenths of our increase for our part. If God did not do His part, we would starve. And then in addition to all He does for us now, He has promised eternal life if we are true to Him and attend to our stewardship well. We have nothing to lose by going into partnership with God. But, on the other hand, we have everything to gain.

There are many ways for us to work for God. There are those living near us who do not know the Lord. We can talk to them. We can scatter tracts and papers. Many people have come to know the Lord by finding a tract or paper someone has left for them.

May we all be co-workers with God.



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 article appeared in the *Missoulian*.

WEST BANK PROMISED LAND

Some Jews, Christians believe removal of Gaza settlers violated Bible

by **Richard N. Ostling**
Associated Press

Some Jews and Christians say the removal of Israeli settlers from Gaza was not only bad security policy but a violation of the teaching of the Bible, even while many other Jews and Christians reject such applications of the Scriptures to the current Mideast.

Religious Zionists are biblical literalists who put Gaza and the occupied West Bank permanently within Israel because of passages such as Genesis 15:18-21: "The Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, To your offspring I assign this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates." ("River of Egypt" referred to a wadi, a valley or ravine that is dry except during the rainy season, southwest of Gaza, not the Nile.)

The Promised Land, as further defined in Numbers 34:1-12, Deuteronomy 1:6-8 and Joshua 1:1-4, extended to sectors of present-day Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

One Holy Land maximalist is Rabbi Binyamin (Benny)

Elon, a member of Israel's Parliament and moledet (Homeland) Party chairman, who was ousted from the Cabinet last year for opposing Prime Minister Sharon's Gaza plan.

Elon states his case in a book "God's Covenant with Israel: Establishing Biblical Boundaries in Today's World," issued just as the Gaza pull out was completed. The book comes from the pro-Israel Balfour imprint of the conservative Protestant New Leaf Press in Green Forest, Ark, which specializes in Bible prophecy. Other militant titles from Israeli authors include "Muhammad's Monsters" and "The Road Map to Nowhere."

Elon's poorly written poorly edited book will persuade only those already in agreement.

He said "Jews have rights to this land and the biblical covenant is true. "Gaza is assigned to Judah in Joshua 15:47, so Sharon's pullout, with U.S. Complicity, violated God's design.

Elon's purportedly biblical "right road to peace": Israel annexes all the land west of the Jordan River; including the West Bank and Gaza, while exceeding its biblical right to lands east of Jordan. The Palestinian Authority and Palestinian refugee camps are eliminated. Jordan becomes the only representative of the Palestinians. Arabs who remain within the newly expanded Israel become Palestinian (Jordanian) citizens.

Such biblical interpretation is hardly the agreed upon view among biblical conservatives. For example Meredith Lkine, retired professor at Gordon-Vonewll Theological

Seminary in Massachusetts, writes that God's "land covenant" with Abraham was succeeded by a new and "universal covenant" with the coming of Jesus Christ, encompassing Jews and Gentiles alike.

A vastly different view, with growing support on the Protestant and Catholic left, is Rosemary and her man Ruether's "The Wrath of Jonah," a polemic published by the Evangelical Lutheran Church's Fortress press.

Relying on liberal Bible scholars, the Ruethers say Abrahams' covenant was merely a "religious myth" developed for nationalistic purposes when David was king, long after Abraham and Joshua. Working from there, they champion Palestinian grievances and excoriate policies of Israel and the United States.

To them, Israel's "Punitive violence" against Palestinians "far exceeds any actual military threat" Palestine has posed to Israel's security. The Jewish state has been a "moral debacle" from its 1948 founding, when Israelis expelled Palestinians from their land, and constitutes a "racist, colonial state" akin to South Africa during apartheid.

The Ruether peace plan: Israel surrenders Gaza and the West Bank permanently, withdraws to the borders before the 1967 war and unites people for all religious and ethnic groups.

That prospect seems just about as likely as Elon's game plan.

Further on Gaza: The city is one of the world's oldest, mentioned in the Bible's primordial history following Noah's flood (Genesis 10:19). It stood along one of the world's oldest military roads, connecting Egypt with Asia. The Bible mentions the site numerous times.

Gaza was part of the city-state federation for the Philistines, Israel's archenemies, who moved in from Aegean Sea regions around the time of Joshua's invasion. In biblical accounts, Israelites controlled Philistine areas only briefly.

COMMENT

In spite of the present circumstances, Israel will possess all of her land in the Kingdom. God's Word cannot be broken!



"Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck" (I Timothy 1:19).

Do people tamper with their consciences today? It would be criminal to tamper with the guidance system of an airplane. When you start tampering with your conscience, you start calling good bad and bad good. That is when trouble starts, and you lose your way.

Should conscience change? Times change. Should conscience change with them? When anything as delicate as your conscience is pushed around, there's no doubt that damage is done to it. It is better to mutilate your sense of speech or hearing than to damage your sense of right and wrong. The Apostle Paul says it leads to moral shipwreck. He says it will make God unreal. The things you used to believe without doubt won't seem so real. God begins to seem far away. Prayer appears to be a waste of time. Going to church is unnecessary. That is what happens when you begin juggling your conscience.

Moral shipwreck is never due to ignorance. Moral stability is not the product of education. It is the product of an inner voice. The man who wants to do the right thing, who would rather die than knowingly do the wrong thing, and who cries out to God to help him do the right thing will never miss the way.

A good conscience is the world's fine traveling companion. What a monster a bad conscience can become! To be "pure in heart" is not to be perfect. It's to be sincere and honest. The man who can see God in his life is the successful, contented, happy man. To do His will is to know. No one will ever lose his way if he is always willing to do God's will.

- Selected



Questions and Answers

Question: Must one have an emotional experience when he or she is converted?

Answer: Many have only a vague idea of what is involved in true conversion. They seem to think that conversion must be accomplished by some very decided emotional experience that instantly and completely changes the entire life.

Perhaps they think of the experience of the Apostle Paul. At the time of his conversion, he was on his way to persecute those who did not agree with his religious ideas. His whole early training was wrong. He had great ideas. His whole early training was opposite to what is truth. He had a great education, but that learning was set in a different manner. Then the Lord spoke to Saul (Paul) as he was on his way to the city of Damascus, and his entire purpose in life was instantly changed.

The word, CONVERT, means literally to turn about. This means that one has a complete change in his nature. The things he once hated he now loves, and the things he once loved he now hates. In the experience of Saul, this was accomplished suddenly and dramatically. Instead of going into Damascus to bring persecution, he began in that same city to advance the very cause he came to persecute.

But most people do not have a sudden and awe-inspiring conversion. They come to the place where they must make a decision for or against Christ, but they do not have an extreme emotional feeling in the manner. Some emotion is involved, but this varies with individuals, just as in nature no two personalities are exactly alike. But whether the emotion is much or little, at that time they make their decision to let Christ rule in their lives. The change is definite, and they demonstrate by all of their actions that a change has been made. They are truly converted.

Another person may not make any sudden decision, but the change is gradual. Perhaps the person himself does not realize that any change is occurring. He is unconsciously being influenced, but is not aware of any sharp change in his attitude. After a time, he realizes fully that he should be a child of God, and that he should acknowledge his allegiance to the Lord Jesus. The decision is made, and he is baptized, and hands are laid on him for the reception of the Holy Spirit. He is then a child of God!

There are three general types of conversion. No one kind can be declared superior to the other two. The important thing is that a person be really converted and that he will show a real evidence of true conversion.

Too often people think that unless they have an expe-

rience just like that of another person, they have not been converted. But since the Lord Jesus has ordained that no two persons look exactly alike, why should we expect the experience of becoming transformed to be identical?

It is possible, of course, for one to think he has had the experience of true conversion when he has not. One may follow the crowd, and may think he is all right in his experience, when actually he is far from it. Paul said one time that he had lived all his life with a good conscience, though on the road to Damascus he was bent on murder. The Savior once told Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen the brethren," yet Peter thought he was already changed. Jesus laid down the rule for all men when He said In Matthew 7:12, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them..." This coupled with the command of chapter 22:37-39, that we love the Lord with all our heart and our neighbor as ourself, provides a safe guide for true living. When one lives up to these ideas, he can be pretty well assured that he is a changed person.

When baptized, some may go into the water and come out wet without a change of heart. They just were making a show to someone that they wanted to impress. Others may seem to be depending more on their feelings than on faith.

A minister told of his experience traveling on a plane. The minister was traveling on a plane going from Houston to Lake Charles. He fell asleep as soon as the plane was airborne. Later he awakened with a start. It seemed to him that the plane was flying west instead of east. About that time, the stewardess came down the aisle. He asked her whether he was on the proper plane. She assured him that he was. He then told her that it seemed to him that they were going west instead of east. She replied, "Well, just what does that have to do with it, anyway? You are on the plane bound for Lake Charles." Her reply to this minister was sensible. Feelings are unimportant compared with the facts.

The believer's experience is a matter of faith, not of feeling. If it were otherwise, we would be voluntarily uncertain about our relationship with God the Heavenly Father. A minister asked a little girl whether she knew what faith is. She replied, "It is believing what the Lord Jesus says, and then acting like it." That seems to cover the

situation quite adequately. Abraham believed the Lord, and his belief was accounted to him for righteousness. The same may be true of us. We should believe God's promises.

Jesus said, "..., Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

Question: When was the English Bible translated?

Answer: It was first translated and published in England in 1380 A.D. by John Wycliffe. In 1525 A.D., William Tyndale also translated and published the English Bible. In 1611 A.D., a committee of Bible scholars translated what is known as the Authorized Version (AV) or King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. In 1881-1885 A.D., the English Revised Version (RV) of the Bible was published, followed by the American Revised Version (ARV or ASV) in 1901.

Roman Catholic authorities burned Tyndale's Bibles. When they could not do so fast enough, they burned Tyndale instead. The same authorities dug up the bones of John Wycliffe, burned them to ashes and scattered them in the River Thames. He is called "the morning star of the Reformation," because he had exposed the wrong doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1609 A.D., the Roman Catholic Church translated and published an English Bible from the Latin Vulgate. It is called the Douay-Rheims Version. It also contains the Apocryphal books.

Question: Why does the Bible record the evil deeds of some good men as well as the evil deeds of evil men?

Answer: The Bible records things as they are! No attempt is made to hide the weaknesses of those who served God in the past. Their shortcomings were reproved, and their virtues and faithfulness commended. This is a good lesson for us. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4).



The Congo, R.D.C

The Church pictured below is in the town of Kasumbalasa, Congo R.D.C. The photographs were sent by our minister, Brother Placide Mithonga Mwambe.





*Pictured below is Brother Placide,
a man out standing in his field.*



LESSON I

JONAH DISOBEYS GOD

Scripture Reading: Jonah 1:1-17.

Golden Text: Jonah 1:3 (first part).

"But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa;..."

NOTE: Jonah was a minor prophet during the reign of Jeroboam II. He labored among the people of the Ten Tribes, and during this time he was suddenly called by the Lord to do a dangerous mission. We will study about Jonah and what happens to him when he disobeys God.

1. Who was Jonah, and what did God tell him to do? Jonah 1:1-2.
2. What did Jonah do to flee from God? Jonah 1:3.
3. What did God cause to happen to the sea, and what did the sailors do? Jonah 1:4-5.
4. What did the shipmaster say to Jonah, and what was decided to do at this time? Jonah 1:6-7.
5. What did the sailors ask Jonah, and what was his answer? Jonah 1:8-10.
6. When faced with his sin by the sailors, what did Jonah do? Jonah 1:11-12.
7. What did the sailors do to Jonah in chapter 1:13-16?
8. What did God prepare for Jonah, and how long was he there? Jonah 1:17.

LESSON II

JONAH IN THE FISH AND GOING TO NINEVEH

Scripture Reading: Jonah 2:1-10; 3:1-10.

Golden Text: Jonah 2:10.

"And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land."

NOTE: We last studied how Jonah disobeyed God and went on board a ship. God caused a storm on the sea, and Jonah was thrown overboard. God prepared a great fish that swallowed Jonah. We will now study what happens to Jonah while in the fish and on his journey to Nineveh.

1. What did Jonah do while in the fish's belly? Jonah 2:1.
2. Read Jonah's prayer in Jonah 2:2-9, and tell if he admitted his sin and promised to obey God.
3. What did God cause to happen after Jonah's prayer? Jonah 2:10.
4. What did God ask Jonah to do a second time? Jonah 3:1-2.
5. Did Jonah do as God asked this time? Jonah 3:3-4.
6. Did the people of Nineveh listen to Jonah and obey God? Jonah 3:5.
7. What did the King of Nineveh proclaim when he heard Jonah's message from God? Jonah 3:6-9.
8. Did God spare the city of Nineveh? Jonah 3:10.

LESSON III

JONAH IS ANGERED

Scripture Reading: Jonah 4:1-11.

Golden Text: Jonah 4:1.

"But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry."

NOTE: In our last lesson we learned that God rescued

Jonah from the fish's belly, and Jonah went on to Nineveh to warn them of their destruction. The entire city heeded his warnings, repented, and turned to God. God showed mercy on the people and saved the city. We will now study about Jonah's anger and the lesson that God teaches him.

1. Jonah is angered because God saves Nineveh. What does he pray to God? Jonah 4:1-3.
2. What was God's reply to Jonah in Jonah 4:4?
3. Where did Jonah go? Jonah 4:5.
4. What did God prepare that made Jonah glad? Jonah 4:6.
5. What did God prepare next that made Jonah unhappy? Jonah 4:7-8.
6. What did God tell Jonah in Jonah 4:9-11? Discuss the comparison of the gourd to the city of Nineveh.

NOTE: We should also remember that God has love for all nations and that His forgiving peace is extended to all the people of the world.

LESSON IV

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE - EZRA

Scripture Reading: Ezra 1:1-11.

Golden Text: Ezra 6:15.

"And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king."

NOTE: When we studied II Chronicles, we learned that the Children of Israel were taken captive. In the book of Ezra, we will learn of their return from captivity. They were in captivity for about 70 years.

1. What Persian king captured Babylon? Ezra 1:1-2.

2. Who was the King of Babylon? Ezra 2:1.
 3. How many Jews returned after the captivity? Ezra 2:64-65.
- NOTE: This totals about 50 thousand.
4. What was one of the first things the people did upon their return? Ezra 1:5.
 5. Did they bring the vessels of the temple with them? Ezra 1:7.
 6. What king stopped the work? Ezra 4:21-24.
 7. Who reversed this order? Ezra 6:1, 7-8.
 8. Who were the principal workers in this building? Ezra 5:2.
 9. Who was Ezra, and what did he want to do? Ezra 7:1,6,10.

ONLY A PENNY!

A small boy observed that his mother put a penny on the offering plate at the Sabbath Morning Worship Service. On the way home from church, she freely berated and criticized the poor sermon they had heard. "But Mother," said the boy, "what could you expect for only a penny?"

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. (Romans 6:21)

**If you were another person,
would you like to be a friend
of yourself?**

OUR GOD-GIVEN FREEDOM

By Hope Caswell

Hi, boys and girls!!!

Here we are enjoying another summer vacation, away from our school books and lessons, and free to play, ride bikes, swim, play ball, and to do the many other activities which are in the happy lives of children during their summer vacation.

As it is near the time for the 4th of July, we begin to think of noisy celebrations and loads of fun as always.

Well, let's think of what the 4th of July really is. It is really "Independence Day". Do you all know what that means? It means that on July 4, 1776, America obtained her full freedom. That is why we are all free to live as we please, as long as we obey the laws of the land.

It is hard for us to realize how thankful we should be to God for this freedom until we think of the many children in foreign countries who cannot even worship God as they please. In some of these countries, you would be punished. Just think how terrible it would be if we could not even read our Bibles, and could not pray to God to thank Him for His kindness and listening to us, and to ask Him to guide, and bless us, and keep us always safe. It seems terrible, doesn't it, but that is the way some children are in those faraway countries. That is why we should think seriously at least for a while on the 4th of July. That is why we could give a small portion of that day to God in prayer, thanking Him for His goodness to us.

Let's all use this freedom God gave us to the best advantage. Let each one of us be a little missionary for God, letting our light shine and telling others of Jesus.

WAITING FOR JESUS

By Rae Cross

Jesus will be coming soon;
I pray He will, each day.
And while I wait I'll do my best
To do what He would do and say.

LETTER TO DAD

There are so many things I'd like
To tell you face to face;
I either lack the words or fail
To find the time or place.
But in this special letter, Dad,
You'll find, at least in part,
The feelings that the passing years
Have left within my heart.

The memories of childhood days
And all that you have done
To make our home a happy place
And growing up such fun.
I still recall the walks we took,
The games we often played;
Those confidential chats we had
While resting in the shade.

This letter comes to thank you, Dad,
From needed words of praise;
The counsel and the guidance, too,
That shaped my grown-up days.
No words of mine can tell you, Dad
The things I really feel;
But you must know my love for you
Is lasting, warm and real.

You made my world a better place
And through the coming years,
I'll keep those memories for you
As cherished souvenirs!

-Author Unknown



**CITIES AND TOWNS
IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

Many cities and towns have Bible names.
Look up the Old Testament verses and see if your town is mentioned in the Bible. Next month we will look up cities and towns in the New Testament.

1. L _____ II Chronicles 2:8
2. B _____ Jeremiah 50:24
3. S _____ Genesis 14:18
4. M _____ Jeremiah 40:10
5. B _____ Ruth 2:4
6. B _____ Isaiah 62:4
7. G _____ Hosea 6:8
8. S _____ Psalm 68:17
9. C _____ Psalm 106:38
10. H _____ Numbers 13:22
11. A _____ Genesis 8:4
12. P _____ Deuteronomy 3:27
13. Z _____ Psalm 126:1
14. T _____ Joshua 19:29
15. D _____ Genesis 37:17
16. B _____ I Kings 13:11
17. H _____ Psalm 133:3
18. C _____ I Kings 18:42
19. K _____ Jeremiah 31:40



**DAD -
IN ANY LANGUAGE**

This item translated from a Dutch magazine shows that families are pretty much about the same the world over:

DAD

- 4 Years: My Daddy can do anything.
- 7 Years: My Dad knows a lot, a whole lot.
- 8 Years: My father doesn't know quite everything.
- 12 Years: Oh, well, naturally Father doesn't know that either.
- 14 Years: Father? Hopelessly old-fashioned.
- 21 Years: Oh, that man is out of date; what did you expect?
- 25 Years: He knows a little bit about it, but not much.
- 30 Years: Must find out what Dad thinks about it.
- 35 Years: A little patience; let's get Dad's meaning first.
- 50 Years: What would Dad have thought about that?
- 60 Years: My Dad knew literally everything.
- 65 Years: I wish I could talk it over with Dad once more.



ABRAHAM

By David DeLong

**The Voice of God--The Great "I AM,"
Proclaimed His sacred Word;
The Friend of God, who that Voice heard
Was faithful Abraham.**

**He dwelt in Canaan, son of Ham,
As heir of this great land;
And swift obeyed his Lord's command,
This willing Abraham.**

**"Behold... the wood: but where's the lamb...?"
Asked Isaac, wondering;
"God will provide... a(n)... offering,"
Said Father Abraham.**

**He raised the knife, but soon a ram
Was found; and then this beast
Was killed, and Isaac was released,
O, noble Abraham!**

