

The Advocate of Truth





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Questions And Faith

by David Royer



Have you ever wondered, as I have: Is asking too many questions of God, Jesus, and biblical statements considered unfaithful or not pleasing to God? Maybe we are just not “trusting” Him enough. Researching the issues for this article, I encountered the concept of “Blind Faith”. So, I’ll address this type of faith first.

Webster’s Dictionary has no definition for “Blind Faith,” as this is a phrase made up of an adjective and a noun. However, “Blind” is having no regard for rational discrimination, guidance, or restriction. “Faith” is something that is believed, especially with strong conviction. Put these definitions together, and we conclude that Blind Faith is belief (with firm conviction) without regard to rational discrimination, guidance, restriction, or a proper understanding. Source: www.merriam-webster.com

The phrase “blind faith” is found nowhere in Scripture. In the New Testament, we find: “Now faith is the substance

of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1). And Jesus explained to Doubting Thomas: “Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” (John 20:29) In other words, faith is believing about something that was not validated or verified firsthand. So, if we can see something, then there is no need for faith. Taken out of context, we conclude that all faith is blind. Should our faith be blind, without true understanding? Is this the type of faith God wants us to have?

First, look at why we need faith. We must believe in the Gospel: the good news that Jesus died for our sin and instituted God’s plan of salvation: Everlasting Life. When we allow the reality of the Gospel to affect every part of our lives, it changes the way we think and process unanswered questions. Faith causes us to act on what we have not experienced yet, believe promises in the Bible that haven’t been fulfilled yet, and trust God when our life situations overwhelm us.

God rewards the honest seeker with deeper faith and understanding according to Hebrews 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of

them that diligently seek him.” Keep the order of this verse in mind: belief, faith, and seeking come before obtaining a close relationship with God and His reward.

Second, how do we obtain or increase our faith? “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17). It is because of God’s and His Son’s righteousness, so convincingly presented in the Bible, that we draw our faith. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:” (Ephesians 2:8). In today’s English: “salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ”. Notice that Grace is the gift, and faith is a personal conviction that we exercise when we accept our Savior, Jesus Christ.

This personal conviction is the attribute, comfort, and energy source received from the Holy Spirit within us. Prayer and studying God’s words will ignite and increase our faith. Take comfort in this verse: “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:12).

God has revealed Himself to us. It may take faith to trust that God is our Creator, but this faith is far from blind. In addition to God’s eternal powers, He is also revealed to us in Psalms as the God of Truth: “Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.” (Psalms 31:5); God of Faithfulness: “Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;” (Deuteronomy 7:9) and the God of Hope: “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

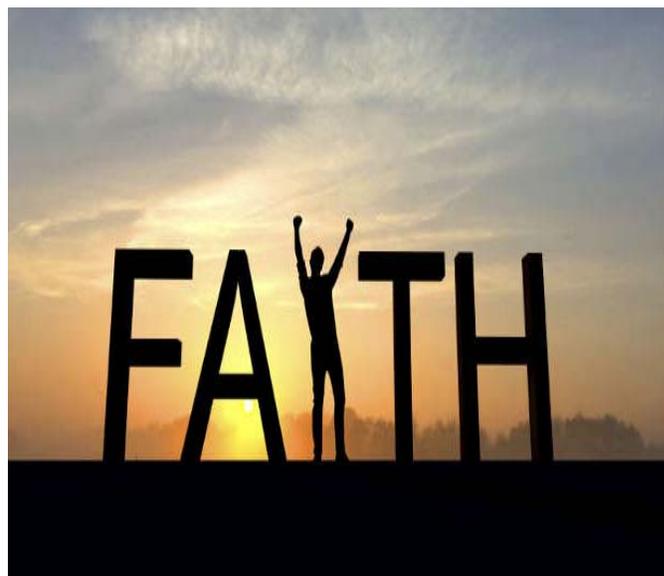
The same goes for Jesus. Our Savior’s power and promises never change. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.” (Hebrews 13:8). He was with God at the beginning of time as the “Word”. He is the same Son of God today who transformed lives and performed miracles in the scriptures.

He also can be trusted in His words and deeds. “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his

disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:30-31).

Trust is the keyword to think of when you encounter the word faith in the Scriptures. ¹Look up its Greek counterpart (Pistis) in a lexicon. You will see definitions like these: “that which evokes trust and faith”— (Notice that this definition revolves around trust and that this trust is not blind or unthinking, but is based on evidence) —“the reliability of the one trusted.”

So, blind faith is trusting in something without any evidence. It is a type of faith without thinking or discernment. It has been described as a leap into the dark. It is giving over of oneself to something despite a solid foundation. God does not expect us to have this type of faith.



Now that we know that our walk with God is not typically “blind”, I acknowledge that there will be times we will act purely on faith because we do not have the whole picture. Case in point is Noah (he had no concept of rain or floods); Abraham (traveling to an unknown destination); and Sarai (having a child in old age). However, their faith was not blind. Trust had been previously established because of God’s nature and character.

Noah was told about the coming end of civilization, so he acted out his faith because of his established trust with God. Abraham used his reasoning power based on God’s

promise about the Covenant and his son Isaac's future dynasty. He knew God's nature as faithful and trustworthy. Then he acted accordingly. Sara judged God to be faithful in His promises. "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised." (Hebrews 11:11)

God created us to be curious souls and to "reason" Why? What? and How? He gave us the ability to think and reason. At its core, the goal of wisdom, motivation, and logic is to find the truth, and Jesus told us that He is truth, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) So, reasoning should lead us to Jesus every time.

Proverbs 3:13 says we are blessed when we find knowledge and understanding. In Act 17, Paul commends the church at Berea because they searched the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul said was true. James tells us to ask God for wisdom. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5)

Throughout the Scriptures, God's and His Son's promises (both executed and in the future) give us the grounds to "reason." Our faith is built on a solid foundation. It is based on God's revelation of Himself and our understanding of that revelation. It is trusting, and it is faith, but it is far from blind.

So, back to our original question: Is it wrong to question? No! Pray for answers and search the scriptures if you doubt. I believe God wants us to question His plan and His ways. He settles our doubts by giving us the belief that His ways are not always our ways. The good and the bad in this life can lead us to a deeper faith and trust in God — a blessing for all who will believe.

While, at first, "blind faith" may seem to some as the most authentic way to pursue one's Christian life, it is not how our relationship is developed with God. He wants us to seek Him for guidance, wisdom, and understanding in all areas of our lives. Questions are sometimes a part of this guidance. ²Here are a few examples of questions asked in the Bible:

Abraham:

(Gen. 18:22-25) "And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Moses:

(Ex. 3:11) "And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

Joshua:

(Josh. 7:7) "And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!"

Elijah:

(I Kings 17:20) "And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?"

(II Kings 2:14) "And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over."

Job:

(Job 13:23) "How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin."

David:

(Psalms 10:1) "Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?"

Isaiah:

(Isaiah 64:12) "Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD? Wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?"

Jeremiah:

(Jeremiah 12:1) “Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?”

Ezekiel:

(Ezekiel 9:8) “And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?”

Paul:

(II Corinthians 12:8) “For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.”

(Paul asked God three times to remove his “thorn in the flesh”)

And others:

Jacob: (Gen. 32:29)

Gideon: (Judg. 6:36-40)

Manoah: (Judg. 13:11-12,17)

Samson: (Judg. 15:18)

Israelites: (Judg. 1:1)(Judg. 21:3)

Solomon: (1 Kin. 3:9)

Habakkuk: (Hab. 1:1-2,12-14,17)

The Martyrs: (Rev. 6:10)

If these renowned people in the Bible could ask God their questions, we can do so as well. I saved the best for last as an example of questions asked of God. Jesus asked in Matt 27:46: “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

In Jesus’s humanity, He felt truly abandoned and in agony. He is bearing the total weight of our sin and judgment. Notice this is the same question that King David asks in Psalms 22:1. “(To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shajar, A Psalm of David.) My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?” This chapter in Psalms appears to foretell Christ’s crucifixion.

³Tidbits: In the Gospels, Jesus asks many more questions than he answers. To be precise, Jesus asks 307 questions. He was asked 183, of which he only answers 3.



There is a difference between sincerely asking God questions and accusing God of wrongdoing or doubting His existence. Such an attitude would be wrong, as God is perfect, steadfast, and never sins or lies. “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;” (Hebrews 6:17-19)

Our questions to God should begin with prayer for wisdom and understanding. Ask with a respectful and humble attitude of faith.



Here are a few guidelines to follow
as we ask God questions:

**Ask questions to know God better—not to pretend
you are God and have all the answers.**

**Ask questions to serve others better—not to prove
yourself correct.**

**Ask questions to challenge oppressive theology and
doctrine—not for discrimination within the Church.**

**Ask questions to bask in the wonder of the Lord—
not to try to fully understand what we know is
unfathomable to our human hearts and minds.**

***Do not make receiving answers a substitute for
faith. *(added by the writer)**



**A CHALLENGE:
To Our Readers**

I purposely did not write on the subject of “Blind Faith” Bible verses taken out of context because I would like our readers to write a comment or article addressing this issue. Would you please send your thoughts and comments in writing to our headquarters? They may be published in a future Advocate of Truth. Send to: Church of God (7th Day) P.O. Box 328, Salem, WV 26426 or cogsevday@aol.com

Confidence

by Sister Makeda Richards

Grenada West Indies

**When I say you need to have confidence,
I don't mean having a humble arrogance.**

**It's that sure dependence on God,
Knowing he will provide no matter how much
our situation seems flawed.**

**When I say you need to have confidence,
It is not self-dependence.
It is to have that certainty,
In the way, you walk and talk with consistency.**

**When I say you need to have confidence,
It is to have a mindset of belief, trust, and
perseverance.
Knowing that our mindset creates our perception,
And we should always be positive
regardless of the situation.**

**So all in all, confidence triumphs everything,
And with it, you can achieve anything.
Most importantly it must not be misdirected,
But always be in the ONE
in whom we can be perfected.**



Reasons and Principles

THE RIGHT TO EXERCISE OUR FREE WILL

By: Moises Torres M.

All human beings have a mind of their own, and their own will was given by God. This is the perfection with which God endowed mankind—having a free will to make our own decisions and determinations. This is a right given to man by the Creator, and we should respect it, and no one should take some else's place to make decisions for the other.

Let us read an example of this in Genesis 2:15-17.

GENESIS 2:15-17: "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

We see that God warned and ordered man not to eat out of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but then he left everything up to them, to their free will. The Lord did not force them to obey his commandment, neither interfere at the very moment they took their decision to eat what was forbidden and so they were deceived by "that" old serpent called the Devil and Satan.

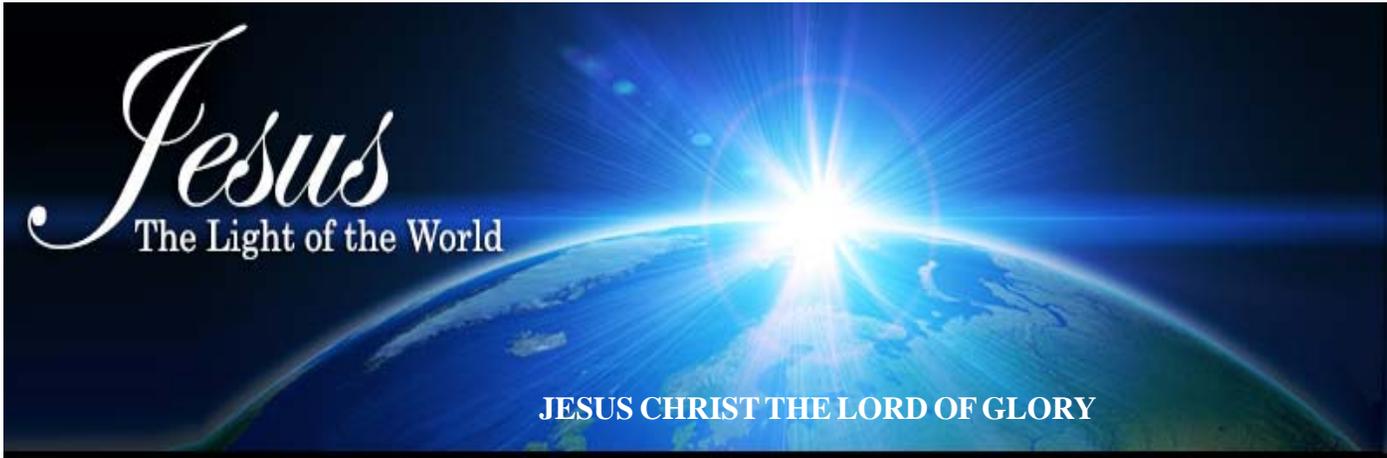
We find here something very interesting, if God respected man's decision or will at the moment of a great temptation, then what right do we have to force others to take decisions related to their own life according to our personal will or point of view? Should we do that? At the end, each one of us will be accountable of our own decisions before our Creator.

The word of God is truth; and its prevention and teachings are to safeguard man's life; therefore, our decisions should be based on God's truths; nevertheless, it is up to everyone to take them or not into consideration. Our duty in church, as elders and ministers is to bring good counsel and admonition based on the word of God, and not based on our own way of thinking, otherwise we will get compromised by others decisions. The final decision about any subject should come from our "own free will," at last, nobody is going to be accountable for some else's decisions and deeds before the Creator, "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. (Ezekiel 18:20).

The Lord wants every single one of us to be saved, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." As the Lord advised Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, the same advice of salvation has come to our knowledge today to prevent us from being deceived; It is up to every one of us to care about our salvation. It is up to "our free will" (I Timothy 2:4).

REVELATION 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

REVELATION 22:11: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."



Jesus

The Light of the World

JESUS CHRIST THE LORD OF GLORY

Jesus came down from heaven in the likeness of a man, making Himself of no reputation.. He, the meek carpenter from Galilee, brought down to us the true WORD of his FATHER. He was preaching and teaching love and understanding amongst men and brethren. He had neither social nor political ambitions but taught God's truth in all fairness and simplicity. Therefore we are admonished to follow His example as it is written in Philippians 2:4-5: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. - Let this mind be in you, which was also in CHRIST JESUS."

In the human form of a servant JESUS CHRIST observed all of His FATHER'S commandments, thru showing men how one can live unaffected by the spirit of this world.

What is the spirit of this world? It is an attitude shown in enjoyment of selfish lusts, in greed for power, for money, for vanity, for pride and outward show.

Jesus spoke of this spirit of the world in Luke 20:46-47 as he was critical of some of the religious leaders in Israel at that time. "Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; Which devour widow's houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation." Staying away from the things of this world is also pointed out in I John 2:15-17 "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

Jesus refused to be familiar with any of these things. Instead of that He became the LIGHT of the world, which His disciples were following. Therefore He prayed for them as seen in John 17:24-26. But to the Pharisees He said:

"Ye are from beneath: I AM FROM ABOVE: Ye are of THIS world: I AM NOT OF THIS WORLD" (John 8:23).

How clearly does this verse underline JESUS' statement

"My kingdom is NOT of this world..." (John 18:36).

Why is JESUS' Kingdom not of this world? Because His Kingdom is far greater than human wisdom is able to even imagine. JESUS has received ALL the POWER FROM ON HIGH, which means He received ALL the Holy Spirit given to Him in full measurement.

Let us hereby not forget that we have chosen Christ to belong to Him, but CHRIST HAS CHOSEN US - and that even before the foundation of the world, as seen in Ephesians 1:3-4; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as he chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."

In deep reverence we have to be thankful to GOD the FATHER for our LORD of Glory, the Heavenly LIGHT He has sent into the darkness of this world, praying "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 2:10-11).

RESERVED UNTO FIRE

By David DeLong

"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (II Peter 3:7-14).

The Apostle Peter records in II Peter 3:5-6 that the first world perished with water. We know that to be at the time of Noah when the whole world was covered in the Flood. Our world is reserved unto fire to be burnt up: "...the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Peter wrote in verse 10: "...the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night..." Jesus talked about His second coming as being like a thief. Luke 12:39-40 reads: "And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." And in I Thessalonians 5:1-2 we find: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord

so cometh as a thief in the night." So when Jesus comes again the heavens will burn away with fire and the elements will melt as well. In Revelation chapter 6, verse 14, after the sixth seal is opened we read: "And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."

Nahum 1:5-6 informs us: "The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him." What is the indignation of the Lord when the earth is burned at His presence? Let us turn to Revelation 8:6-7 for the answer: "And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."

This is a part of the seven last plagues. So, it appears that when Jesus comes in the clouds to resurrect the saints there will be a burning of the heavens and the elements will melt, and then again, when the seven last plagues are poured out upon the earth there will be a burning of a third part of the trees and of all green grass.

But praise the Lord, the heavens and the earth will not remain burned up. The Apostle Peter also wrote: "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (II Peter 3:13-14).

Hebrews 12:29 tells us: "For our God is a consuming fire." But Hebrews 13:20-21 reads: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."



"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13).

In Matthew 28:19-20 we read of the great commission that Jesus gave unto His disciples "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Again in Romans 10:14-15 we find that ministers must be sent by the direction of God's Holy Spirit to each and baptize people who have not heard before the gospel message. Notice these questions as recorded in these verses: "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

Preaching the gospel of peace, and bringing glad tidings of good things is pleasing to God. Read I Corinthians 1:21, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." You must believe by faith to be saved. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). In Mark 16:15-16 we find the object of preaching the gospel. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Again the question, "How shall they preach, except they (the ministers) be sent? Let us read what Paul has to say in I Corinthians 9:7, 11, 13-14. "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof, or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?"

"If we have sown unto you carnal spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your things? Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they (the ministers) which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

Tithes and offerings are needed to send out faithful ministers to carry out the great commission of our dear Lord Jesus Christ. Robbing God is one of the greatest curses of this age. It prevents the message of salvation from being preached so that many could hear, and have faith and believe. Surely God will bring great destruction upon every individual who robs God of His portion, which is the tenth part of all the increase. Tithes are paid not given, for that part already belongs to God. Offerings are given and this is a solemn obligation that is binding upon every Christian today the same as tithing.

"Will a man rob God? But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Bring ye ALL the tithes into the storehouse" (Malachi 3:8, 10).

We appeal unto you brethren, to send in your tithes and offerings for the gospel work to the Church of God (7th Day), P.O. Box 328 Salem, West Virginia 26426.

Test Your Bible Knowledge



ACROSS

1. Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law in this city (see Matthew 8:14-15).
3. Saul was on his way to this city when Jesus appeared to him (see Acts 9:3-6).
5. Jesus was baptized in this river (see Matthew 3).
6. This is the garden where Jesus went to pray, atoned for us and oater was arrested (see Matthew 26:36-50).
7. This is the hometown of Philip, Andrew, and Peter (see John 1:44).
9. Jesus made His triumphant entry in this city (see John 12:12-13).
11. Jesus was crucified at this "place of a skull" (see John 19:16-17).
12. This is the hometown of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha (see John 11:1).

Places in the Bible

DOWN

1. Jesus performed His first miracle here (see John 2:1-11).
2. This is where Moses received the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 34:1-2).
4. This is the hometown of Saul (see Acts 9:11).
5. Joshua fought the battle of _____ (see Joshua 6).
7. Jesus was born in this city (see Matthew 2).
8. Jesus grew up here (see Matthew 2:23).
10. Moses led the people of Israel out of this place (see Exodus 13:3).

Answers found on page 13

7

Things You May Or May Not Know About SACRIFICES

By Warren H. Randall Jr.

1. Blood needs to be shed for the remission (forgiveness) of sin.

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

2. Noah offered clean beasts and fowl to the Lord after the flood.

"And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings of the altar" (Genesis 8:20).

3. Abraham was to offer Isaac as a burnt offering in the land of Moriah.

"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 son 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).

NOTE: Isaac foreshadowed Christ. Abraham was well aware of God's coming kingdom, and he trusted in the Lord.

4. The Passover Lamb represented "Christ or Passover."

"Your lamb shall be without blemish a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening." (Exodus 12:5-6).

"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover

is sacrificed for us:" (I Corinthians 5:7).

5. Elijah prayed, before the prophets of Baal, the God of Israel.

"And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench" (I Kings 18:36-38).

6. After Jesus was born, Mary had to offer a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.

"And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every MALE THAT OPENETH THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A PAIR OF TURTLE DOVES, OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS" (Luke 2:22-24).

7. We are to become a living sacrifice.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

Answers to Test Your Bible Knowledge Places in the Bible Crossword Puzzle -

*Across: 1.Capernaum 3.Damascus 5.Jordan
6.Gethsemane 7.Bethsaida 9.Jerusalem
11.Golgotha 12.Bethany*

*Down: 1.Cana 2.Mount Sinai 4.Tarsus
5.Jericho 7.Bethlehem 8.Nazareth 10.Egypt*

FOLLOW THRU TO COMPLETION

by Gary Mills



One of the messages for us in the Bible is that we need to follow thru to completion when we are told to do something. In the old testament Israel struggled following thru to completion when they were told to do something, especially if they did not have a strong leader. This was the situation when Joshua passed away and Israel was to finish taking possession of the land promised to them.

Judges 1:1 “Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?” In the rest of chapter 1, Israel was told to fight and remove all of the enemies from the promised land and take possession of it. They were not to make agreements with the inhabitants of the promised land, but were to drive them out. While Israel did take possession of some of the promised land, they did not utterly drive the current inhabitants out. Instead they compromised and let some of the current inhabitants worldly ways remain.

The Lord sent a message about this failure to follow thru with what they were told in Judges 2:1,2 “And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And ye

shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice.”

Because Israel did not follow thru there were consequences, which remain until this day. Judges 2:3 “Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be *as thorns* in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.”

Israel lost their chance to be God’s shining light in the world by following after and adopting the ways of the world instead of following after the ways of God.

After the sacrifice of Jesus we are given this same opportunity to be part of God’s family. The Apostle Paul spoke of this often in the scriptures. In one memorable chapter he compared following God’s will to running a race.

I Cor 9: 24-27. “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 therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached

to others, I myself should be a castaway.” We need to keep ourselves under control and train ourselves for this race which is life. We then need to follow thru to completion of the race.

What is it in particular that Paul was talking about that we need to do? I John 2: 1, 3-5. “My little children, these things write I unto you, **that ye sin not**. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

Rev 14:12 “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that **keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.**”

We are told that we are to keep the Ten Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. If we do this we will be given a reward. Rev 22:14. “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.”

We will have eternal life and rule with Jesus as kings and priests. To obtain this reward we need to thank God for the many blessings he has bestowed upon us and continue to dedicate our lives to keeping God’s commandments and the faith of Jesus, thru to the completion of this race that is our mortal life.



PEOPLE ARE EITHER SAVED OR LOST

The future of individuals, as well as the course of nations, is determined by personal contact with individuals. A sinner is lost because some one did not bring unto him the message wherein is salvation. A nation deteriorates and goes down the road to destruction, because the leaders are not spiritually minded, but are worldly, or outright sinful. This is because no one who is clean, upright, pious, spiritually minded, took the time to bring to these leaders the words of truth and righteousness, that would turn them from wrong to right. Of course the most effective sermon one can preach is a daily life, filled with goodness, righteousness, holiness, love, compassion. But that life must be supplemented with goodly words - backed with a heart of love. It is not enough to know the truth, to live the truth, but one must tell the truth, scatter it forth, bring IT to others and win them to God, through Jesus the Saviour. Others can be contacted with personal visits, a word lovingly offered. But one can also bring the message by a personal letter to a friend, a neighbor, a relative and through tracts which carry the message of truth and salvation.

Tomorrow will be determined by the works or lack of personal works of the saved individuals living today. What shall the morrow bring? May we be used to bring others to the Everlasting Father, and do our little part, wherever we live, to make our part of the vineyard a little brighter, cleaner, happier, and holier.

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:21-24).



Taken from **The Home Instructor Part I** - If you'd like to receive a hard copy of this book, send request to The Church of God Publishing House P.O. Box 328 Salem, WV 26426 or call 1-304-782-1411.

PART 8 - THE SEA OF GLASS

QUESTION: Upon what did John see the saints?

ANSWER: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Revelation 15:2-3).

QUESTION: What did Abraham look for?

ANSWER: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose

Questions and Answers

builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:8-10).

NOTE: This city that Abraham was looking for is the New Jerusalem. It is the city of the living God (Hebrews 12:22), and is a continuing city (Hebrews 13:14).

QUESTION: What has God prepared for the saints?

ANSWER: "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Hebrews 11:16).

"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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

QUESTION: What do we seek to come?

ANSWER: "For here (on earth) have we no continuing (eternal) city, but we seek one to come" (Hebrews 13:14).

QUESTION: What is the mother of us all?

ANSWER: "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Galatians 4:26).

QUESTION: What is the bride, the Lamb's wife?

ANSWER: "And there came unto me one of the seven

angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:9-10).

QUESTION: How is the bride (New Jerusalem) described?

ANSWER: "Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal (glass)" (verse 11).

QUESTION: How does the wife, the New Jerusalem, prepare herself for the wedding?

ANSWER: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife (New Jerusalem) hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God" (Revelation 19:7-9).

NOTE: The saints will adorn the New Jerusalem, the bride and wife of Christ.

QUESTION: How does the city appear?

ANSWER: "And the building of the wall of it was of jasper, and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass" (Revelation 21:18).

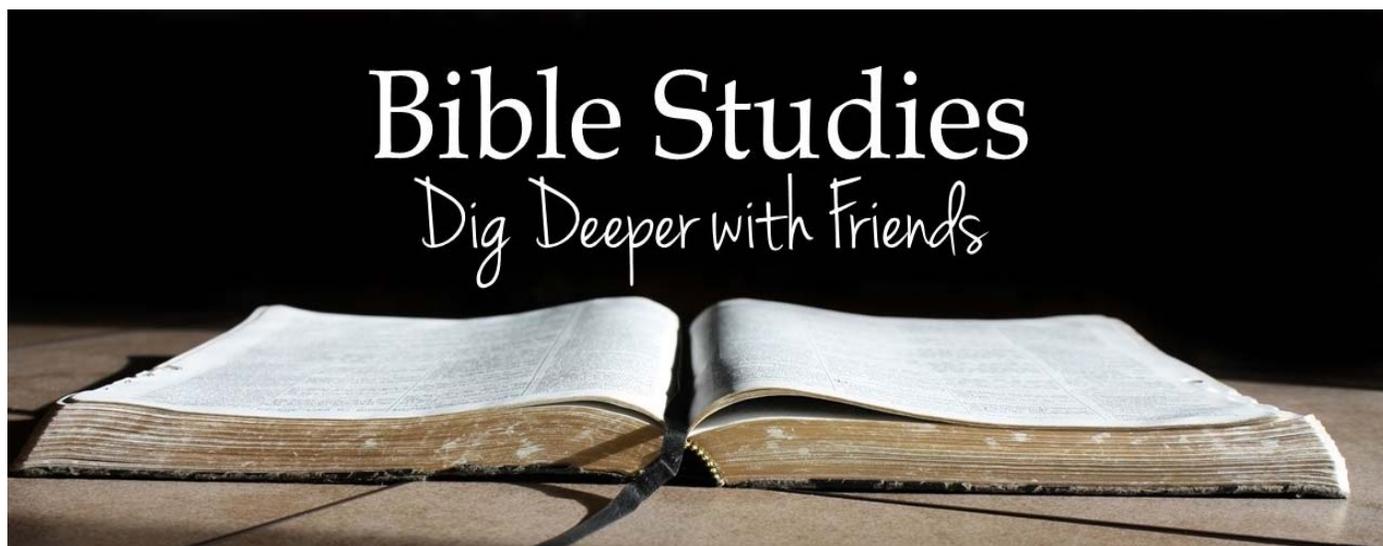
QUESTION: Unto what is the street of the city described?

ANSWER: "And the twelve gates were twenty pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (verse 21).

QUESTION: How does the river of life appear?

ANSWER: "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal (glass), proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Revelation 22:1).

"Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither their river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-ge-di even unto en-egiam; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; with fish shall be



according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine" (Ezekiel 47:7-12).

"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be" (Zechariah 14:8).

QUESTION: What does Christ bring with him when he comes?

ANSWER: "And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12).

QUESTION: Into what will commandment keepers be able to enter?

ANSWER: "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" (Verse 14).

QUESTION: Is this the Holy city that Abraham was looking for?

ANSWER: "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:10).

QUESTION: Where will this city or mountain of the Lord's house be established?

ANSWER: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isaiah 2:2).

QUESTION: Where will this city or mountain of the Lord's house be established?

ANSWER: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isaiah 2:2).

"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels" (Hebrews 12:22).

"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it" (Micah 4:1).

I GO TO CHURCH! By Carol Buechner

I go to church to meet with the God that I love
Where He embraces me in His special love from above.
I sing praises to His glorious name
And bow in His Holy presence as thanks I proclaim.

I go to church to learn more about Jesus
With my mind focused on all He means to each of us.
I enter with an attitude of great joy and peace
Knowing that God has provided for my sins
to be released.

I go to church where everything I do and speak
Will be done humbly and in a spirit so meek.
I spend my time in God's marvelous house of instruction
Having put all my selfish wants
and desires out of function.

I go to church because I love going there
For it is where I can put away my worldly cares.
I don't look for things to complain about or criticize
For I go to church for my spiritual exercise.





Church congregation in Pico Rivera California



LESSON I

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Scripture Reading: Matthew 2:1-11.

Golden Text: Matthew 2:2.

"...Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

NOTE: We are going to start studying the New Testament and the life of Jesus Christ. In this first lesson, we will learn about Jesus' birth. In the first chapter of Matthew, you can read about the generations from Abram to Jesus and also about Jesus' parents Mary and Joseph.

1. Where was Jesus born, and who was the king at this time? Matthew 2:1.
2. Who had seen His star? Matthew 2:2.
3. What did the king do when he heard about the birth of Jesus? Matthew 2:3-4.
4. What did the chief priests and scribes tell him? Matthew 2:5-6.
5. What else did the king want to know? Matthew 2:7.
6. What did he tell the wise men to do? Matthew 2:8.
7. What did the wise men do? Matthew 2:9-10.
8. What did they do when they saw the baby Jesus, and what did they bring him? Matthew 2:11.

LESSON II

PROTECTING BABY JESUS

Scripture Reading: Matthew 2:12-23.

Golden Text: Matthew 2:12.

"And being warned of God in a dream that they should

not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way."

1. Why didn't the wise men return to Herod? Matthew 2:12.
2. What did the angel of the Lord tell Joseph? Matthew 2:13.
3. What did Herod do when he found out the wise men had mocked him? Matthew 2:16.
4. How long did Joseph stay in Egypt with the young child Jesus and His mother? Matthew 2:14-15.
5. What happened after Herod died? Matthew 2:19-21.
6. What did Joseph find out when he arrived in Israel? Matthew 2:22.
7. Where did he go then, and why did he go there? Matthew 2:23.

LESSON III

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:40-52.

Golden Text: Luke 2:52.

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

1. In what way did Jesus grow? Luke 2:40, 52.
2. Where did Jesus go with Joseph and His mother when he was twelve years old? Luke 2:41-42.
3. What happened when Joseph and Mary were returning home? Luke 2:43.
4. Where did they look for Jesus? Luke 2:44-45.
5. When they returned, where did they find Jesus, and what was he doing? Luke 2:46-47.

6. What did mother say to Him? Luke 2:48.
7. What was His answer? Luke 2:49.

LESSON IV

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Scripture Reading: Matthew 3:1-12.

Golden Text: Matthew 3:1.

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea."

NOTE: We will now study about a man called John the Baptist. He was called this because he baptized many people in his time. We do not want to confuse him with John, one of the disciples.

1. What great preacher told the world that Jesus had come? Matthew 3:1.
2. What did John the Baptist preach? Matthew 3:2.
3. What did God want John to do? Matthew 3:3 (first part).

NOTE: What is repentance? It means to be sorry for sin and to ask for forgiveness.

4. What did John the Baptist wear and eat? Matthew 3:4.
5. John lived in the wilderness of Judaea. Where did the people come from to see him, and where were they baptized? Matthew 3:5-6.
6. Who also came to see John the Baptist, and what did he say to them? Matthew 3:7-10.
7. Some people believed that John the Baptist was Christ. What was his response to them? Luke 3:15-16; Matthew 3:11.



LEARNING TO WORSHIP GOD

*Learning to worship GOD
 I'm learning every day
 Learning to worship GOD
 As I work and as I play.
 Worship is a word
 That is hard to explain
 Elijah worshipped GOD
 When he prayed for rain.
 Worship is a word
 That explains how I feel
 When I stop to think
 That GOD is very real.
 Miriam worshipped GOD
 With a joyful song
 When she started singing
 Her friends sang along.
 Worship is a word
 That explains what I do
 When I quietly listen
 To GOD'S WORD so true.
 Learning to worship GOD
 As I listen and as I sing
 We can learn to worship GOD
 In each and every thing!*



I am sure each boy and girl is busy at this time of the year. What a lot of things there are to learn about in this world. If we were to live for hundreds of years and study all that we could, we would still be learning and still making mistakes. Someone has said, "That is what erasers on pencils are for, to erase our mistakes." But the real mistakes we make cannot be erased with an eraser. When you are young is the best time to learn, and the best part of it is our mind is clear then, and we never forget the things we learned in our youth.

Now what does the Lord Jesus teach us? The way to eternal life, of course, because he wants us to have a home on this beautiful earth made anew. It is a wonderful thing that the Lord Jesus offers to teach us himself.

Sometimes teachers will make mistakes, and it's very awkward when they think you have been talking when you haven't. I remember the first day of school one year. I had used my own money to buy me a new dress and a new red sweater. I never did know just how it really happened but first thing the teacher accused me of talking during class when I didn't.

Human teachers do make mistakes, but the Lord Jesus never makes mistakes, for He is the Son of God.

We can safely follow Him all the way. He is ever ready to forgive our sins if we ask Him, and will never remind us of them again.

One day a little boy named Johnny was playing with his blocks under the table. In the same room his Mother was talking to his two older brothers, but as Johnny was only four years old, Mother did not think he was taking notice of what she was saying.

She spoke of the Lord Jesus dying on the cross for them, and told them that they must believe it for themselves, belong to God, and become His children. As she finished speaking she said, "Yes, and Jesus died for Johnny, too, little as he is."

It would seem that Johnny had taken no notice, but the words sank deep into this little heart, and when he knelt to say his evening prayer, he whispered, "Thank you, Jesus, for dying for me."

Johnny is now a grown man, and for years has been a faithful worker for Him. He says he knows without a doubt that he was converted at the age of four.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, "...Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14). Why not accept Him now and say to Him as Johnny did, "Thank you, Jesus, for dying for me."

Answers to Who Killed Them?

1. He was beheaded by the order of Herod (Mark 6:27).
2. His brother was Cain (Genesis 4:8).
3. He was stoned to death by the Jews (Acts 7:59).
4. He was crucified by the Romans.
5. She was thrown from her window by the eunuchs, at Jehu's command (II Kings 9:33).
6. He was hanged by order of King Ahasuerus, on a gallows he had built for Meordecai (Esther 7:10).
7. He was struck with three darts by Joab, while he was hanging by the hair from an oak tree (II Samuel 18:14).
8. He was killed by David's slingshot (I Samuel 17:49).
9. He was stoned to death by Jezebel's orders (I Kings 21:13).
10. He was slain by the sword at Herod's orders (Acts 12:2).

WHO KILLED THEM?

1. Who killed John the Baptist?
2. Who killed Abel?
3. Who killed Stephen?
4. Who killed Peter?
5. Who killed Jezebel?
6. Who killed Haman?
7. Who killed Absalom?
8. Who killed Goliath?
9. Who killed Naboth?
10. Who killed James?

Below are some Bible verses about love with a word missing. Finish the verses by adding the missing words. Use the Bible verse to help you.

1. Love the Lord thy God with all thy _____ .
Mark 12:30.
2. We _____ him because he first loved us.
I John 4:19.
3. The love of _____ is the root of all evil.
I Timothy 6:10.
4. His _____ over me was love.
Song of Solomon 2:4.
5. Greater love hath no man that this, that a man
lay down his _____ for his friends.
John 15:13.
6. Love not the _____
I John 2:15.
7. Love is of _____
I John 4:7.
8. Love your _____, do good to them
which hate you.
Luke 6:27.
9. Love thy _____
Mark 12:31.
10. For God so loved the _____ that he gave
his only begotten _____, that whosoever
believeth in him should not perish,
but have everlasting _____.
John 3:16.

PRAYER TIME

All over the world many children are homeless today. Even though the orphanages they live in are nice, they are not like home. Pray for all the orphan children everywhere, Thank God for your own home.

To find out what God did on the 7th Day,
cross out all the following letters:
A - H - L - N - W.

HARLLENASHTWEWD

Write the remaining letters _____



FIGURE - IT - OUT - PUZZLE

How old was Joseph when his brothers sold him?
Start with the number of years Moses led the
Hebrews in the wilderness (Numbers 14:33).
Subtract the number of chapters
in the book of Jude.
Divide by the number of crosses
on the hill where Jesus died.
Add the number of chapters in the book of Ruth.
Now, how old was Joseph
when his brothers put him in the pit?
(Answer found also in Genesis 37:2).

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*GOD LOVES YOU, FRIEND
By David DeLong*

*God loves you, friend, He gave you life,
And gave you Mom and Dad;
He set you in a family
To help you to be glad.*

*God loves you, friend, he gave you choice
To choose what's best for you;
And when you fail, repent and see
That he will make things new.*

*God loves you, friend, he gave you eyes
For many things to see;
For rainbows, sunsets, and blue skies,
And Autumn-colored tree.*

*God loves you, friend, He gave you ears
To hear His precious Word:
To hear "I love you" from a friend,
The sweetest things you've heard.*

*God loves you, friend, He proved it so
By giving you His Son;
No greater gift could any give,
No greater deed be done.*

