

THE ADVOCATE OF TRUTH





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**Telephone: 304-782-1411
Fax: 304-782-2248**

E-Mail: cogsevday@aol.com

Web site: www.churchofgod-7thday.org

David DeLong

Bond Tennant.....Editorial Staff

Gary Mills Managing Editor

Ludina Mills.....Children's Page Editor

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THE PROMISES IN GOD'S WORD

RECEIVING GOD'S PROMISES

Bond Tennant

“...Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fail” (II Peter 1:10).

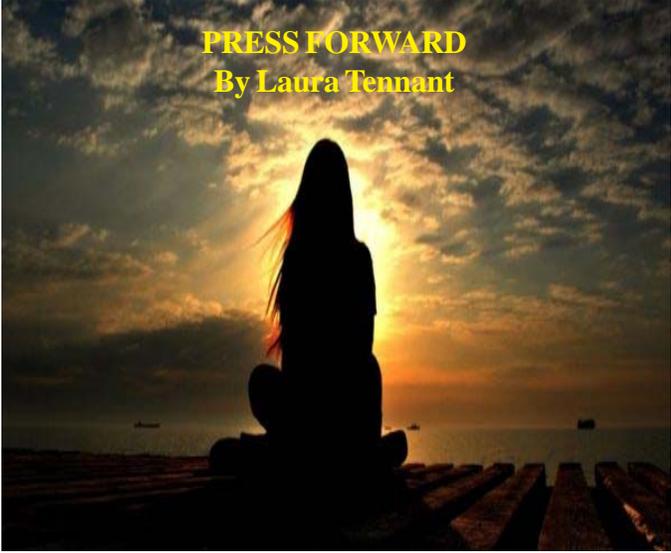
Peter's words in the opening text are just one of the many reminders given to us in the Scriptures that the promises of God to His people have conditions attached to them. If we are to experience their fulfillment we must, as individuals, comply faithfully with those conditions. Jesus' promise in Revelation 2:10 is another good example of this: “...Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Indeed, to receive the fulfillment of this great promise, that being a crown of life, requires the meeting of the condition of faithfulness “unto death.”

In God's dealings with Israel, He promised them rich blessings if they obeyed His commandments. Therefore, these promises were not unconditional. If the people did not obey, then God would hold back the good things He promised, and the people would not receive them. While various experiences were permitted to come upon Israel, which demonstrated the importance of the conditions attached to their blessing, the same holds true for God's people today. “Exceeding great and precious” are the promises which the Lord has made to us - promises which, if we are faithful to the conditions attached to them, will lead to the divine nature, and to “...glory and honour and immortality...” (II Peter 1:4; Romans 2:7).

In Peter's reference to the precious promises of God,

he emphasizes the necessity of adding to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. He explains that “if these things” be in us and abound, then we will not be unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if we lack these things, Peter says we will be spiritually blind, and eventually forget that we were purged from our sins. Rather than this, Peter exhorts, we should “give diligence” to make our calling and election sure. He assures that “if we do these things,” then an abundant entrance shall be ministered unto us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Peter 1:4-11).



PRESS FORWARD
By Laura Tennant

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13, 14).

Do you consider yourself a person who lives in the past, present or future? We all may know someone who seems to live in the past, someone who is always talking about the past. Past memories seem to overshadow their present experiences. The “good old days” always seem to be more pleasant and better than the present time. Conversely the past may be hard to move away from because of some past mistake or tragedy in our lives. That one argument, that one wrong decision, that one grudge, and your mind just won’t let you forget. The unhappiness just doesn’t want to let you go forward. Whatever you refuse to forgive and let go of, you carry with you into the present and into the future. In Acts 8:3 we read, “As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and healing men and women committed them to prison.” In Acts 9:13 Ananias said “I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to the saints at Jerusalem.” Saul, soon to be Paul, had gained quite a reputation. Was this a reputation he could or would run away from? Would Paul let these early actions define him? In Acts 9 we read of Saul’s encounter with Jesus on his journey to Damascus, his blinding and Ananias putting his hands on Saul and restoring his sight. Acts 9:18-20 reads, “And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had

been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.” Paul could have allowed himself to be defeated and rob himself of his life for (with) Christ. Paul could have lived in the past. Paul refused to do this. “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, 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). In Mark 11:25, 26 we read, “And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.” To move forward we must forgive others and ourselves.

Living in the present means letting go of the past and not waiting for the future. It means living your life consciously, aware that each moment is a gift. Matthew 6:34 reads, “Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Conversely we see in Luke 9:62, “And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” Have you heard the term “living in the moment”? When we live in the moment we are focusing on the “now.” We do not worry about what has happened in the past. We do not consider what the future will bring nor do we worry about events in the future. We are too busy enjoying what is happening now and living for today. At some point you just have to [let go](#) of what you thought should happen and live in what is happening. People who live in the present want to “stop and smell the roses.” Some people want to relax and take time out of their busy schedule to enjoy or appreciate the beauty of life. Each moment lived positively becomes a good memory for the future. Or, like some people they want to make the most out of today as if there was no tomorrow. They want to fill up as much in the day as they can. Should we live every day like there’s no tomorrow? If we did that we would have no hope of a future life with Christ. Henry Thoreau said the meeting of two eternities, the past and future... is precisely the present moment. But

at the same time the present is constantly moving. To live in the moment, or now, means being conscious, aware and in the present with all of your senses. It means not dwelling on the past, nor being anxious or worrying about the future. When we concentrate our attention on the present we focus on the task at hand. When we live in the present we are working for the future but not anxious.

Living in the future may mean an attachment to something that never was and might not come in to being. We have heard of people who live only for the future. Some people are so busy working towards a goal they cannot enjoy the present and have no time to think of the past. They spend every minute thinking of only the future and what it can bring, good or bad. There is uncertainty in this world. We know our plans can change without warning or fore knowledge. James 4:14-15 says, "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."

Does this mean we should not make plans for the future? We should all be wise in planning for life like getting a good education, preparing for marriage and a family, etc. Jesus commended the wise man who builds his house upon the rock instead of the sand (Matthew 7:24-26). He also asked the question, "For which of you, intending to build a tower (building), does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it?" (Luke 14:28) God wants us to do everything we can to assure our success and happiness in the future, but let us not boast. "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Proverbs 27:1). God wants us to plan for the future, but not be anxious.

Whether we consider ourselves a person who lives in the past, present or future, it is undeniable we all need to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus". To press means to pursue after. Like a runner we must focus on the goal ahead of us. This prevents distractions and stumbling. A person cannot move ahead if his thoughts are focused on the past. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, 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). We must focus on what we can do today and in the days ahead. We must not set our eyes on things in the past, present or future, but on the Lord Jesus Christ. Dedication, commitment and consistency are necessary to reach the finish line and reach our prize. We must study and discern the word of God so that we can know which direction to go. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). There will be obstacles, but we have the power of prayer for strength and to overcome. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7). Those on the same journey will help encourage us to continue. "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do" (I Thessalonians 5:11). "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:23-25). We must build strength and stamina in the face of adversity. Philippians 4:13 reads, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15:13). "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:1-5).

What will you do to reach the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus?

WOODLAND RECYCLING SYSTEM

By John N. Clayton

I have lived my entire life in the woodlands of North America. I love walking through the vast areas of pines, birches, maples, oaks, blueberries, ferns, mosses, aspens, and raspberries. To me, it is pure joy to sit in the woods or in a boat on a lake or river and listen to the sounds of nature. I especially enjoy the fall when the colors become vivid, and animal life is in a rush to prepare for winter. The falling of leaves to the ground, followed by frost and snow, adds its own magic to the joy of being in the woods.

What we are seldom aware of is the massive amount of waste produced in the woods. We all know about leaves and probably have had some cruel words about them when they cover our lawns. The fact is that a constant rain of organic material falls to the floor of the woods. Limbs, bark, twigs, dead grass, moss, sawdust, animal excrement, and carcasses pile up year after year. Yet when you walk in the woods, the floor is made up of a thin, spongy layer of black soil. What happens to the massive amount of debris that falls to the forest floor every year?

The answer to this question is under-appreciated by most of us. God has built into the forest an incredibly efficient recycling system. When something organic falls to the forest floor, it is swarmed on by bacteria, termites, ants, fungi, and worms, which form the basis of the food chain for higher forms of life. Nutrients in the woods seldom last longer than a few weeks at the most. Rain is moderate and percolates through these nutrients, rapidly helping them find their way back into the forest's living tissues.

Those places where there are not dense forests have a completely different system of recycling. In the far north, where forests are not dominant, migrating salmon provide the ecological balance needed. In desert areas, the lack of ecological balance means that life for humans is difficult at best. Human survival depends on God's recycling

system. In some areas of the rich farmlands of America, we can measure the soil in feet. That allows us to grow our grain crops that sustain our existence, but those areas were built in an ancient forest. God told us to take care of what he gave us. See Genesis 2:15. One part of caring for the Earth is to copy God's recycling techniques and replenish the nutrients we take from the soil rather than polluting the air by burning them or polluting the ground by bagging in plastic and burying them.

From Does God Exist?



SHUN PROFANITY

In II Timothy 2:16-18 Paul points out the danger of profanity: "But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." "Shun profane....babblings." Ordinarily when we think of profanity we think of "cuss" words, which I trust never cross your lips. We sometimes say, "My, that man is a profane person. Almost every sentence issued from his mouth contains a profane expression. He curses and swears in the name of God and the name of Jesus Christ."

What is profanity? Profanity is a violation of that which is sacred. Profanity means to treat with irreverence or contempt. It means to debase by a wrong or unworthy or vulgar use. It is a violation of that which is sacred. It is to treat with irreverence or contempt anything that is sacred. Many men, many ministers of the Gospel, evangelists and missionaries who would be horrified at an accusation of profanity, will without any respect whatever, say "amen" to everything. Profanity! Just the same as if they would

curse and swear. it is taking anything, any expression, any word, any object, which is sacred and dedicated to God and using it in irreverence as a slang expression, as a by-word. I will confess that there is something in me that is resentful against these modern jazz songs that use the words "amen" or "hallelujah." Christians can do the same thing. Everything is "amen" or "praise the Lord" or "hallelujah", when there is no reverence behind and no sound or sensible application of the circumstance. To me "God's Word is a sacred thing. The Bible is a holy Book. I like to see it when I come into a home. I like to see the Bible in its place of honor, not lying on the floor, not torn to shreds by the dirty hands of little children - although that may happen sometimes - not thrown under a pile of trashy, filthy magazines and comics. I am afraid we have lost, to a large extent, a sense of reverence today. Paul writing to Timothy, as a soldier of the cross, no doubt warned him to watch out for the danger of profanity, not cursing and swearing of necessity, but getting to that place where things that should be revered are degenerated or relegated to an inferior position, and are debased by a wrong or vulgar use, "But shun profane and vain babblings."

May we touch on just one more thing in the line of profanity. We are to avoid profanity in our conversation. We should avoid profanity in our use of sacred objects...the Bible, God's House. I sometimes wonder as I sit in churches and hear the laughing and talking, uproar and commotion, what Jesus Christ thinks of it. It is inexcusable. It would be just as easy for everyone to quietly take his place and bow his head and pray until the moment of the service opening. God's House should be treated with reverence.

There should be no profanity in the use of our bodies, for the Word of God reminds us that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. My dear friends, You may come around all you please and defend your habits. You say, "There is nothing wrong with this habit of mine. You cannot show me a word in the Bible against it." That may be. I do not find the word "beer" mentioned any place in the Bible, I will admit that. I cannot find "card games" in the Bible. The Bible does not say a word against it. The Bible does not say a word against the modern dance. It does not say a word against the filthy products so prevalent which guarantee that there is not a cough in a carload. There is not a word in the Bible against it. But I tell you what the Bible does say. It tells us that our bodies are the

temples of the Holy Spirit, and that we are not to be profane in the use of our bodies. My dear child of God, when Jesus Christ accepts you, makes you a child of God, and you were begotten of the Holy Spirit, God put a part of Himself in you and your body became the temple of God. I would say more literally that the church building is the House of God. In your fingers and in your brain and in every part of your body, the Holy Spirit is pleased to dwell. Any defilement of your body, any contamination by evil habits or sins, is an act of profanity against a sacred object. "Ye are not your own...for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." The child of God has no right whatever to engage in any practice or habits that do not glorify God in his body and in his members.

There is a deadly danger in godless chatter, in too much conversation. The Word of God says, Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. "When God's people get together, the moment that their conversation drifts off Jesus Christ and legitimate subjects, it soon becomes godless, dangerous chatter and gossip. "Look out for that godless chatter, vain babblings." He said they will increase or lead to more ungodiness, to vain philosophies, to silly and dangerous surmisings and deductions. Jesus said, "Let your communication be, Yea, Yea: Nay, Nay." Paul adds. "Their word will eat as doth a canker (or an ulcer)."

The last danger that God points out to our attention in this study is the danger of not depending, not building upon the right foundation; not being founded in and fastened to the Rock. Would you look at II Timothy 2:19 please: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." That is tied right in with verse 18, the last phrase, "and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless..." "Although the faith of some is overthrown; although some depart from the faith, although some have drifted into cults, isms, and false doctrines; although all about us the world is trembling and things are decaying, "nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure." This is the assurance that God's soldiers possess. Thrones may totter, rocks may crumble, God's foundation shall never move. The Word of God reminds us that the world passeth them, that all the things shall be dissolved what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation

and godliness.. "but Paul adds, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure." My friend, those things for which you are fighting so hard to attain, those things for which you are neglecting God's Word and God's worship, some day you are going to hold in your hands and find them all crumbled to dust. They will all dissolve. The word of God tells us that the banks, stocks, security, real estate, institutions, denominations, clubs, amusements, pleasures, everything that is in this world shall one day be dropped into God's acid of divine wrath and judgment. Peter said, "All these things shall be dissolved." There will be nothing left! "But nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure."

On that foundation Paul tells us here that there are two things inscribed in this foundation. First of all, as we come to this foundation that shall never pass away, we see deeply inscribed in that living, eternal granite of Gods foundation, these words: "The Lord knoweth them that are His. Yes, He knows His sheep. He knows me by my name. If you are a child of God, He can never forget you, for engraved right into the eternal foundation of God is the inscription, "The Lord knoweth them that are His." God said, "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." You are the pupil, the apple, of God's eye. How could God forget? The skies may become dark at times, the burdens of life extremely heavy, the support of life may be swept away from underneath us, and apparently all hope may be gone, but the Lord knoweth them that are His. He will never forget His own.

Then underneath that God has inscribed a second inscription, "Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity," Let everyone who has taken upon himself the name of God depart form iniquity. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." My friends, are you sure that you are the Lord's? If you are sure of that fact, no matter how you feel about it, no matter what the circumstances of life may be, there is nothing that shall ever be able to destroy that fact. Paul said: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." - Romans 8:38-39.

"The Lord knoweth them that are His." Now that He knows us, "let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

Jesus said, "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" Matthew 12:33-37.

THOUGHTS ABOUT LOVE

Bond Tennant

The attribute of love cannot be overemphasized. However, it cannot merely replace other important considerations in the life of God's children. Love cannot take the place of the fundamental doctrines taught in God's Word. However, love can guide them in the proper use of these teachings. Love cannot take the place of faith and activity which is done in the Lord's name, but it must be the motivation for faith and service acceptable to God.

God's children must "...stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27). As they do this, they must "...love one another with a pure heart fervently," and "...consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (I Peter 1:22; Hebrews 10:24). They are not to antagonize. As far as possible, they must avoid every word and act that might incite to misunderstanding, strife, envy, bitterness, hatred, and evil speaking (Ephesians 4:31). All of these are the lust of the flesh brought on by the Adversary. If they "stand fast" in a faith which is impelled by love, they will have a living faith and surely be "...kept by the power of God ... unto salvation..." (I Peter 1:5).

Jesus said that there would be a time when "...the love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:12). This should not be true of God's children. Their love toward others, as they stand fast in the faith, must remain fervent, even though it may be ridiculed and spurned. They may be criticized and belittled, but they must see to it that "...being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it" (I Corinthians 4:12). Though they may be persecuted, they must never join the ranks of the persecutors.



SOME LESSONS FROM A HONEY BEE

Reprinted

The Honey Bee is one of the most helpful, interesting and suggestive creatures that we have. His worthy traits, if emulated, will make us better children of God. The first lesson I draw from him is that he is an industrious creature. You hear the expression, “busy as a bee.” The bee is busy. He works from light to dark during his busy season. You will recall it was said of Jesus, “He was always going about doing good.” He said, “My Father works hitherto and I work.” Our Heavenly Father wants us to be busy in His vineyard.

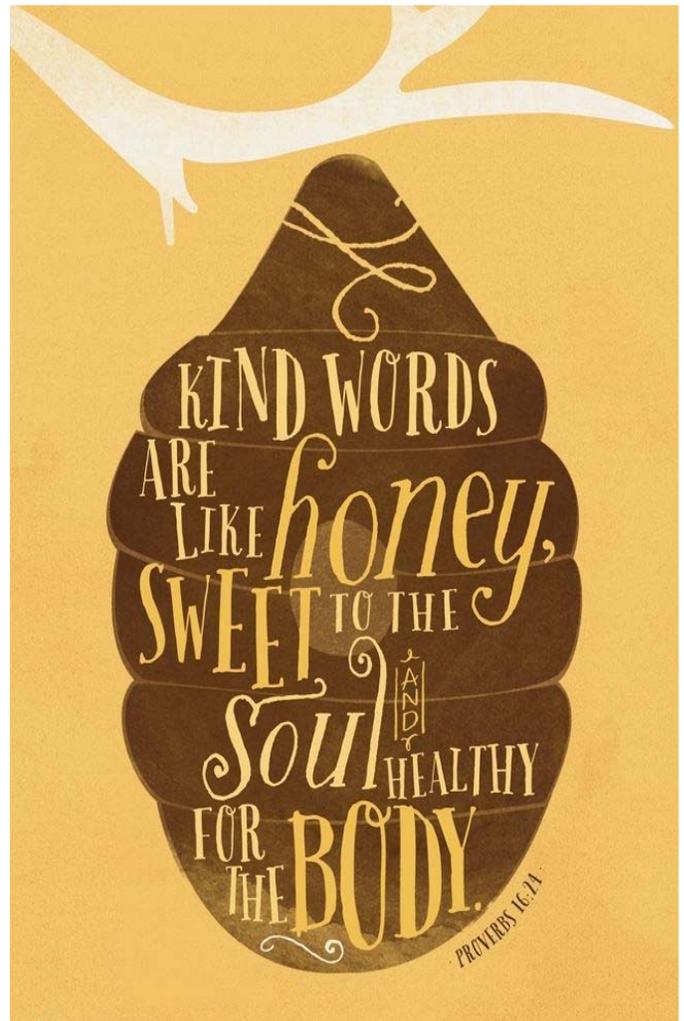
The Honey Bee goes straight. You hear the expression, “straight as a bee line.” The little busy fellow flies away to the flower gardens or to the blooming trees and loads up with honey and rises up to the level of his home. Then he goes like a bullet straight to his home. Speaking geometrically we would say, “A straight line is the shortest distance between two points.” He loses no time just floundering around.

The Honey Bees know how to divide responsibilities among themselves. They have their separate duties to perform. Some are watchmen. You disturb them and the same ones will come out and investigate the disturbance. If you are meddling around his home, you had better watch for soon he will have all the guards on your neck, if you don't get out of their way. Others have the responsibility of chiseling out the honey and sticking it to their legs and bringing it home. When he arrives all out of breath, he falls on the floor of the bee gum and another helper collects it and packs it away in the top, so each one has his

respective task to fulfill.

They are loyal to their leaders. They will follow the queen and they dare not practice insubordination. Woe unto the soldier who strays away from the army. They do not tolerate drones. If one gets lazy and refuses to work, he is taken to the door and kicked out.

The Honey Bee spends his time making life sweet. If all children of God were as concerned about making life sweet and attractive as is the Honey Bee, we would have a different world. The bee is wise. He prepares for the future. He lays up in the summer for the cold winter months. If this creature can look ahead and get ready for tomorrow, should we not see the importance of the future? The Bible says, “Prepare to meet thy God.” We get ready by receiving Christ as our Saviour and Lord and enlisting our lives in His church for worship, service and growth.





10 Bible Scriptures That Are Perfect for the Summer

By John Callahan

When the seasons change and the summer rolls around, it seems like a lot of things change around us. People's attitudes change, people get into shape, and smiles are floating in the air. The hot weather and happiness just seem to go together. The Bible provides heartwarming verses that are perfect for the start of summer.

If we had to draw summer with crayons on a piece of paper, it would be very bright and make you smile when you look at it. That is what the Bible does as well. No matter what season, day, time, or hour, the Bible always provides a positive message. Jesus and this time of the year seem to have a lot of things in common, and we should read His Word to create a positive attitude for the start of the summer season.

Take a look and consider these Bible verses:

“Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter” (Psalm 74:17).

“So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. And the land had rest forty years” (Judges 5:31).

“His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me” (Psalm 89:36).

“For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water” (Isaiah 1:30).

“For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs” (Deuteronomy 11:10).

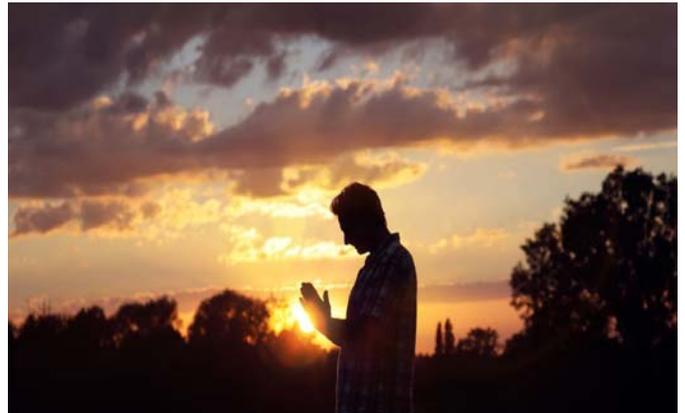
“For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah” (Psalm 32:4).

“When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand” (Luke 21:30).

“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh” (Matthew 24:32).

“He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame” (Proverbs 10:5).

“Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest” (Proverbs 6:6-8).

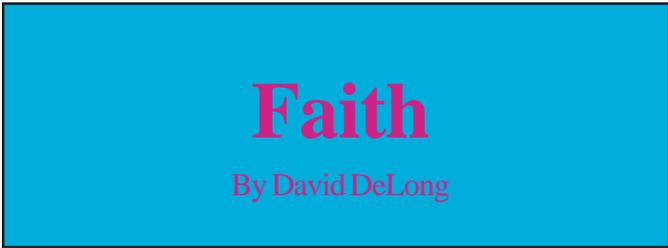


A LITTLE TALK WITH JESUS

*A little talk with Jesus,
How it smooths the rugged road:
How it seems to help me onward,
When I faint beneath my load,
When my heart is crushed with sorrow,*

*And mine eyes with tears are dim,
 There's nought can yield me comfort
 Like a little talk with Him.
 Ah, this is what I'm wanting
 His lovely face to see;
 And I'm not afraid to say it,
 I know He's wanting me;
 He gave His life a ransom
 To make me all His own,
 And He can't forget His promise
 To me, His purchased one.
 I cannot live without Him,
 Nor would I if I could;
 He is my daily portion,
 My medicine and food,
 He's altogether lovely,
 None can with Him compare-
 The chief among ten thousand,
 The fairest of the fair.
 I know the way is dreary
 To yonder far off clime,
 But a little talk with Jesus
 Will while away the time,
 And yet the more I know Him,
 And all His grace explore,
 It only sets me longing
 To know Him more and more.
 I often feel impatient
 And mourn His long delay,
 I never can be settled
 While He remains away;
 But we shall not long be parted,
 For I know He'll quickly come,
 And we shall dwell together
 In that happy, happy home.
 So I'll wait a little longer,
 Till His appointed time,
 And glory in the knowledge
 That such a hope is mine.
 Then in my Father's dwelling,
 Where "many mansions" be,
 I'll sweetly talk with Jesus,
 And He shall talk with me.*

-The Gideon



Faith is not something that we should turn on and off like a faucet, trusting the Lord when things are going badly and not trusting when they are going well. The Bible tells us that, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17).

Hebrews 11:1 gives us the definition of faith: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Faith is both a substance and an evidence, making it something very real to the believer. In fact, verse 6 says, "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." It is impossible to please the Lord without faith. Everything in our life must be based upon it. Romans 14:23 informs us: "...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

However, for faith to be genuine, it must always be backed up by a person's works. James 2:17 instructs us: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Therefore, our works must be faith works. Keeping God's Ten Commandments, for instance, is faith works. Obedience to all of the Lord's commandments comprises faith works. A person cannot be saved without being obedient to God, because this obedience backs up his faith, making the faith genuine.

Even having a little faith is acceptable to the Lord. Jesus explained to His disciples in Luke 17:6, "...If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." However, even little faith can be increased as we find in Luke 17:5, "...And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith."

Even though little faith is acceptable to the Lord, a lack of faith is not. When Jesus taught the people in His own country, Matthew 13:57 and 58 inform us: "And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet

is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

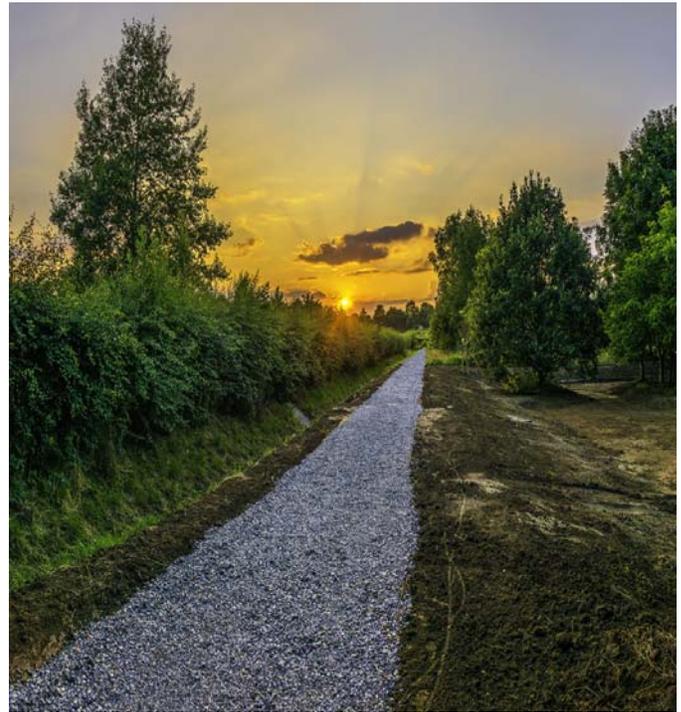
Faith, or faithfulness, is a fruit of the Spirit. We read in Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." It is apparently one of the three greatest virtues. I Corinthians 13:13 says, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

Two examples from the book of Acts show us the importance of being full of faith. The first example is that of Stephen. Acts 6:5 tells us: "And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch". The second example is that of Barnabas. We likewise see that he was full of faith. "Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord" (Acts 11:22-24). It appears from these verses that being full of faith and of the Holy Ghost go together. It appears that when one is full of faith, he or she is also full of the Holy Ghost, and vice versa.

Righteousness can only be imputed to a believer through his or her faith. Romans 4 tells us about the faith of Abraham and David. Verses 3 and 8 read: "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness...Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

A time is coming when true faith will almost be wiped from the face of the earth. Jesus said in Luke 18:7-8, "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

A true believer will always be composed in his or her life of two great attributes: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."



What is the Way?

By David DeLong

What is the way of a loyal saint?
Faithful he will be;
Though he is tried, he will not faint,
But, stands like a weathered tree.

What is the way of a loyal saint?
True is his heart within;
He's not like a tomb with whitened paint,
But, is free from hidden sin.

What is the way of a loyal saint?
Obedient to his Lord;
And though to the world he may look quaint,
He will surely gain reward.

What is the way of a loyal saint?
Forgiven of all wrong;
Upon his record is no taint,
Upon his lips a song.

DON'T FRET

Reprinted

It is easy, we think, to “rest in the Lord” and to “wait patiently for him” – until the nest is upset; until we live, as many are living today, in tumult and anguish. Is it possible then? Resting in the Lord does not depend upon external circumstances, but on the relationship of the life of God in me to God Himself. Fussing generally ends in sin. We imagine that a little anxiety and worry is an indication of how wise we really are; it may, however, be an indication of how wicked we really are.

DON'T CALCULATE WITHOUT GOD

Let not your heart be troubled (John 14:1).

Whenever you evaluate your life, God should be the greatest factor in your calculation. How are we to have untroubled hearts? When we are well, we express the “wellness;” but when circumstances are twisted upside down, can this command function? This “don’t” of our Lord’s must function in days of perplexity as well as in days of peace.

God seems to have a delightful way of upsetting plans when we calculate without Him. We get into places and circumstances He never chose, and suddenly they are shaken and we find we have been calculating without God; He has not entered in as a living factor. Have we learned the wonderfully practical lesson of not calculating without God? To take God into all our calculations – and that alone – keeps us from worrying. According to the wisdom of this world, God seems to be haphazard. He is not calculable in His providence; He works in ways we cannot estimate. If we try to solve our problems logically, we are liable to find that suddenly in the providence of God a great upheaval comes that did not enter our calculations.

Fretfulness springs from a determination to get our own way. Our Lord never worried, nor was He ever anxious,

because He was not “out” to realize His own ideas: He was “out” to realize God’s ideas. Have I learned to consider God the greatest factor in my common-sense decisions? There – in the secret place of the Most High, under the shadow of the Almighty – shall no evil befall you. No plague can touch that dwelling place; no matter what happens on the outside, it remains perfectly secure.

DON'T CALCULATE WITH THE EVIL IN VIEW

Love taketh not account of the evil (I Corinthians 13:5).

Apart from God we reckon with evil, and we reason from that standpoint. To take no account of evil does not mean that we are ignorant of its existence; it means simply that we do not consider it a calculable factor.

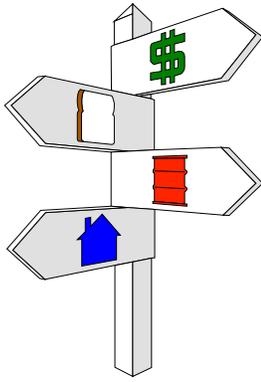
A man ought to be a quiet citadel of the Holy Ghost for prayer for all nations. The one who is suffering according to God’s will is the one who has “a heart at leisure from itself.” The discipline of our lives is externally evident, and if we are not suffering according to the will of God, we will care to let everyone know it. Sympathy is awakened for us, and others say, “How distressing that person’s circumstances are!”

“Come unto me,” says Jesus, **“and I will give you rest.”** Do Jesus Christ’s words apply to me? Does He really know my circumstances? Fretting is sinful if you are a Child of God.

DON'T CALCULATE WITH TOMORROW IN VIEW

“Take therefore no thought for the morrow...” (Matthew 6:34).

When we take thought for the morrow, it becomes the dominating calculation of our life. Our Lord is not saying, “Take no anxious thought,” but, “Don’t make tomorrow the ruling factor in today’s work.” Most of us do. Today is lived without the power God intends us to have because taking thought for the morrow is the dominating calculation – not Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is not telling us to be careless, but to be carefully careless about everything save one thing – seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.



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.

MORE ABOUT THE YEAR 2020

An article, from **USA TODAY**, was recently featured in the *Signs Of The Times* column which featured the many devastations and problems which occurred in America during the year of 2020. I should like to continue the same trend of thought in this *Signs Of The Times* Column.

The following is another article appearing in the December 23 issue of **USA TODAY**. It is entitled 2020 is the deadliest year in America's history:

NEW YORK – This is the deadliest year in U.S. history, with deaths expected to top 3 million for the first time – due mainly to the coronavirus pandemic.

Final mortality data for this year will not be available for months. But preliminary numbers suggest that the United States is on track to see more than 3.2 million deaths this year, or at least 4000,000 more than in 2019.

U.S. deaths increase most years, so some annual rise in fatalities is expected. But the 2020 numbers amount to a jump of about 15%, and could go higher once all the deaths from this month are counted.

That would mark the largest single-year percentage leap since 1918, when tens of thousands of U.S. soldiers died in World War I and hundreds of thousands of Americans died in a flu pandemic. Deaths rose 46% that year, compared with 1917.

COVID-19 has killed more than 321,000 Americans and counting. Before it came along, there was reason to

be hopeful about U.S. death trends.

The nation's overall mortality rate fell a bit in 2019, due to reductions in heart disease and cancer deaths. And life expectancy inched up – by several weeks – for the second straight year, according to death certificate data released Tuesday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But life expectancy for 2020 could end up dropping as much as three full years, said Robert Anderson of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC counted 2,854,838 U.S. deaths last year, or nearly 16,000 more than 2018.

That's fairly good news: Deaths usually rise by about 20,000 to 50,000 each year, mainly due to the nation's aging, and growing population.

Indeed, the age-adjusted death rate dropped about 1% in 2019, and life expectancy rose by about six weeks to 78.8 years, the CDC reported.

"It was actually a pretty good year for mortality, as things go," said Anderson who oversees CDC death statistics.

The U.S. coronavirus epidemic has been a big driver of deaths this year, both directly and indirectly.

The virus was first identified in China last year, and the first U.S. cases were reported this year. But it has become the third leading cause of death, behind only heart disease and cancer. For certain periods this year, COVID-19 was the No. 1 killer.

But some other types of deaths also have increased.

A burst of pneumonia cases early this year may have been COVID-19 deaths that simply weren't recognized as such early in the epidemic. But there also have been an unexpected number of deaths from certain types of heart and circulatory diseases, diabetes and dementia, Anderson said.

Many of those, too, may be related to COVID-19. The virus could have weakened patients already struggling

with those conditions, or could have diminished the care they were getting, he said.

Early in the epidemic, some were optimistic that car crash deaths would drop as people stopped commuting or driving to social events. Data on that is not yet in, but anecdotal reports suggest there was no such decline.

Suicide deaths dropped in 2019 compared with 2018, but early information suggests they have not continued to drop this year, Anderson and others said.

True overdose deaths, meanwhile, got much worse.

Before the coronavirus even arrived, the U.S. was in the midst of the deadliest drug overdose epidemic in its history.

Data for all of 2020 is not yet available. But last week, the CDC reported more than 81,000 drug overdose deaths in the 12 months ending in May, making it the highest number ever recorded in a one-year period.

Experts think the pandemic's disruption to in-prison treatment and recovery services may have been a factor. People also are more likely to be taking drugs alone – without the benefit of a friend or family member who can call 911 or administer overdose-reversing medication..

But perhaps a bigger factor are the drugs themselves: COVID-19 caused supply problems for dealers, so they are increasingly mixing cheap and deadly fentanyl into heroin, cocaine and methamphetamine, experts said.

“I don't suspect there are a bunch of new people who suddenly started using drugs because of COVID,” said Shannon Monnat, a Syracuse University researcher who studies drug overdose trends. “If anything, I think the supply of people who are already using drugs is more contaminated.”

COMMENT

Our featured article presents just several thousand guesses why 2020 is the deadliest year in America's history. Of course the facts presented can be contributing factors. However, there is certain to be future years of many deaths

in America as we draw nearer to the time of the return of our Lord. This is born out in Luke 21:26 which reads, “Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.” No country has seen its deadliest year. Many other things will transpire to cause men's hearts to fail!

AMERICA'S DEMOCRACY UNDER ATTACK

At this time, the other big sign of the times, beside COVID-19, is the insurrection that occurred November 6 in Washington D.C. Just exactly who these violators were is difficult to know. Several terrorist groups were cooperating together. They stormed and broke into the Capitol Building where the Senate and House were in session. The building was put on lockdown, Several of the terrorists (I call them terrorists-not protesters) were bearing arms. The lawmakers took cover. One terrorist broke into the house speaker's office, sat down in her chair, and left a note declaring a message. One of the terrorist even carried a Confederate flag into the building. One woman was shot and later died. In all, at least five died, including two police. The Homeland Security were alerted that a demonstration like this may happen. But they were not prepared to handle it, and they did not suspect that it would be so brutal.

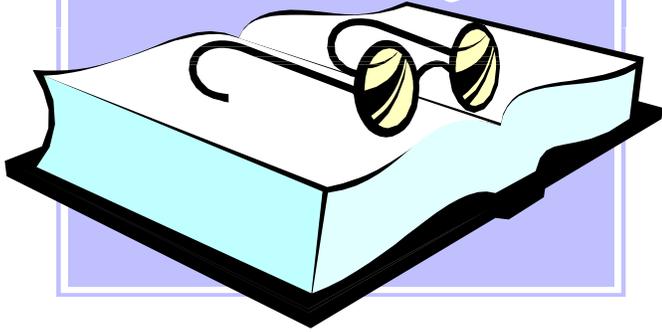
The reason for the demonstration was that it was supposed to support President Trump who claimed that the election was stolen and he was not defeated by Joe Biden. That gave reason for many terrorist groups to unite in coming to Washington.

HUGE CYBERATTACK

You, no doubt, heard about a huge cyberattack that stole much data from many U.S. military and other vital concerns. They really are not sure which country is responsible, but many officials think it to be Russia. This is one of the drawbacks of cyberworld!

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

dwelt in the land of Tob” (verse 3).

His ability as a leader and militarist was apparently recognized even by those who thought themselves socially superior. However, when Israel became sore oppressed by the Ammonites, the elders sought out Jephthah and asked for his help, promising him the leadership of the nation after he defeated the Ammonites. Jephthah reluctantly accepted and was victorious, as many other Israelitish generals previously had been when the Lord’s blessing was upon them.

However, Jephthah’s name is prominent in the sacred record not because of his military victories, but because of a vow which he made to the Lord in anticipation of the victory which would be given to him by divine help. The vow was that whatever first came out of his house when he returned from the battle would be offered to the Lord in sacrifice (verses 30-31).

When Jephthah did return from the battle, his young daughter was the first to come out from the house to meet him. The account says, “...It came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back” (verse 35).

Among the noble of Israel the making of a vow before the Lord was a very serious thing. Solomon wrote that it is better not to vow, than to vow and not to pay (Ecclesiastes 5:4-5). Jephthah held this viewpoint; and while his vow proved to be much more costly than he had expected, having entered into such a solemn obligation, he saw no way of changing it. Nor did his daughter rebel. She understood the situation and asked only for two months in which, as the record states, “...I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my

Question: What was there in the paradise of Eden?

Answer: In the garden there were many trees bearing fruit, and trees of great beauty. There were many living creatures - birds, animals, and fish - who lived in peace and who ate only food that was natural to their areas. See Genesis 1:29-30; 2-9.

Question: How was the first man created?

Answer: The first man, Adam was created in the “image and likeness of God {in godly character of love, wisdom, power, and righteousness}” (Psalm 8:5-8; Genesis 1:26-28; 5:1). Almighty God created man “...of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man **became a living soul**” (Genesis 2:7). Note here, carefully, that the body and the breath of life together constitute a living soul. There is no separate “soul” within the body.

Question: Will you please comment on Jephthah and his vow that he made to the Lord concerning his daughter?

Answer: After the death of Abimelech a series of judges were raised up by the Lord to direct the affairs of Israel. Little or no information is given them until we come to Jephthah, a son of Gilead, who is introduced as being a mighty man of valor (Judges 11:1). However, Jephthah was socially ostracized by his brothers because he was the son of a harlot, and he fled from his brethren and

fellows.” Jephthah granted this request. After the two months “...she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man...” (versus 36-39).

It is generally supposed that Jephthah actually offered his daughter in sacrifice, as a bullock or goat would be offered. A casual reading of the King James Version of the Bible rather favors this viewpoint. But the marginal rendering of verse 40 seems to give a different thought. It explains that the daughters of Israel went yearly “to talk with the daughter of Jephthah, the Gileadite, four days a year.”

This, verse 39 explains, became a custom in Israel. Obviously, Jephthah’s daughter must have remained alive, else the daughters of Israel could not have talked with her each year. Examining the record more carefully, it becomes apparent that what really happened was that the girl remained a virgin throughout her entire life, which from the Israelitish viewpoint, was a tremendous sacrifice for the father to ask of her.

This thought is evident from the record. When Jephthah explained his position to his daughter, and she asked for two months’ grace, she did not request these two months in order to prepare for death, as some commentators explain, but in order to bewail her virginity (verse 37). When she returned and her father “...did with her according to his vow which he had vowed,” it is explained that “...she knew no man...” Indeed, as one who was led of the “Spirit of the Lord” (verse 29), it was not possible for Jephthah to have made a vow to offer his daughter as a sacrifice, for this was contrary to Mosaic Law. Read Deuteronomy 12:30-31 and Jeremiah 7:30-31.

After his victory over the Ammonites, Jephthah found it necessary to put down a rebellion of the Ephraimites within Israel. Their rebellion was largely due to the fact that they had not been consulted in the choice of Jephthah. His period of judgeship lasted for six years.

Question: Will you comment on the topic of suffering from a biblical prospective?

Answer: No one really wants to suffer! We all shrink from it. Many who are Christians do not really know God’s plans. They feel that as God’s people they should

be protected from suffering. When they are not, they become discouraged, and many lose their faith. This should not be so! If we do wrong and recognize the discipline of the Lord, we should have no difficulty in accepting it. The Apostle Peter shows us a higher form of suffering: “...It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing” (I Peter 3:17). Jesus Himself suffered and eventually was put to death.

Jesus went about doing good, but He suffered for it. Indeed, His entire sacrifice, including His death on the cross, was in the nature of doing good unto all. Thus, it was that, in harmony with His Father’s plan, He provided redemption for the dying world of mankind. So far as His earthly life was concerned, the reward was suffering. It is our privilege to follow in His footsteps, not expecting the praise of men. This is a severe test! However, it is one of the tests we must pass in this our judgment day if we are to live and reign with Christ.

When Paul was in prison in Rome, expecting to be executed, he wrote to Timothy, “It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us” (II Timothy 2:11-12). In the preceding chapter of this epistle, Paul mentions many who had turned against him, perhaps because they did not wish to expose themselves to danger from the Roman authorities. On the other hand, he mentions Onesiphorus. Paul explains, “...He oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me” (II Timothy 1:15-17).

Paul was one of the Lord’s little ones, and a failure to stand with him in his hour of trial was like denying the Lord Himself. This was a test that came upon many in those days of the Early Church, and some of them failed. Others passed the test, such as Onesiphorus and Timothy. A similar test is upon us today. True, none of our number is incarcerated and await execution for the proclaiming of the truth. However, the Gospel of Christ, and those who proclaim it, are still unpopular.

Let us gladly take our position with those who are letting their light shine and are incurring the ill will and ridicule of the world. Let us not prefer the friendship of the world, which is enmity toward God!

God OUR Great Deliverer

By O.D. Grimm
reprinted from The Advocate of Truth
February 13, 1956



"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Here we find Paul describing a deliverance, a freedom made possible by our Lord Jesus Christ, and he says for us to "stand fast therefore in this liberty which was purchased with a great price. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:20). "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with price; be not ye the servants of men" I Corinthians 7:22-23.

Peter tells us by inspiration what this great price was that ye are bought with. Read I Peter 1:18-21 of chapter one. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (perfect): Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last days for you (us), who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."

Man was created free and with the privilege of choosing whether he would obey or disobey God, the Creator of the universe. He chose the evil, disobedience, and therefore placed himself in bondage under the law which was death.

"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of 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."

Satan tempted man until he partook of the fruit of this forbidden tree, and received the sentence of death from the Lord. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19).

Now Jesus Christ was manifest in these last days for us. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me (us) free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1-2).

What a wonderful deliverance by God sending His only begotten son into the world, that we through Him might not perish, but have everlasting life! How many were under sin and therefore in bondage? "For the Scripture hath concluded ALL under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law (the penalty of the law), shut up unto the FAITH which should afterwards be revealed. 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 have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

But that after faith (Jesus Christ) is come, and we are no longer under a schoolmaster, do we do away with the law which was our schoolmaster? "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Romans 3:31).

Paul says: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I

had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7).

This is the tenth precept of the Ten Commandment law which was established at the creation of the world by God Himself, and Christ came into the world to deliver us from the penalty of sin. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgressing of the law." (I John 3:4).

To this we add the words of Jesus to His eleven disciples: "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" (Mark 16:15-16).

LET GOD BE TRUE

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," Therefore God existed before He created. He simply spake, and said, "Let there be..." And the thing that he spake came into existence. Before He named the day He created his desire for that day, and this He did for six days. Now, notice that He did not create anything on the seventh day, all creating was done in six days. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." (Genesis 1:31) Then He made the seventh day and sanctified it: "Because that in it He had rested from all his work that He had made" (Genesis 2:1-2).

Faith is required to believe the word of God, 'But without faith it is impossible to please God.' "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Hebrews 11:6, Romans 14:23).

God did not rest because He was tired, he simply stopped creating. In relating God's creation only the sanctification of the seventh day is mentioned, later on the in the Decalogue, the ten commandment law, we learn " it is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."

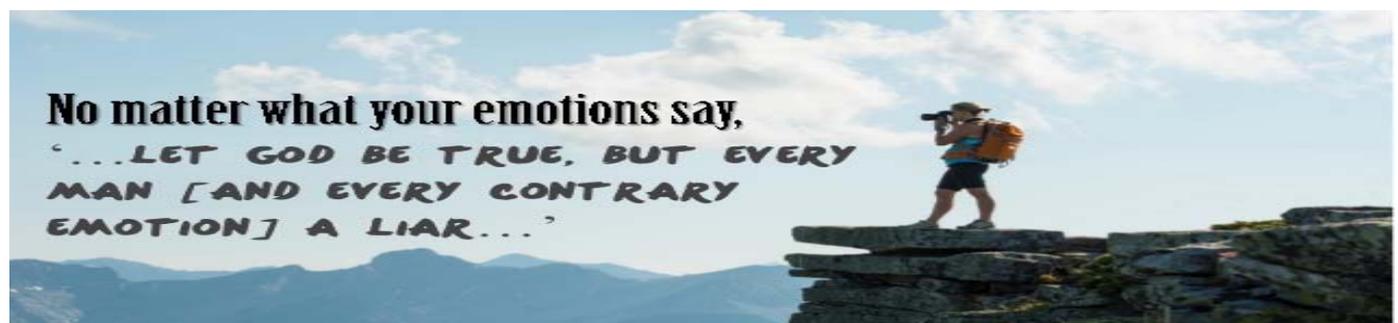
No man ever created a world, therefore no man ever did or ever can make a Sabbath day. Jesus rose from the

dead on the seventh day. That in itself did not make it the Sabbath because of the very fact that God HIMSELF made the day right into creation.

When the disciples of Jesus told Him that "the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?" Jesus answered, 'are there not twelve hours in a day? If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not, beware he seeth the light of this world.' He refers to the artificial day beginning at sunrise and ending at sunset, which is the light part of the natural solar day of 24 hours which is from sunset to sunrise. The term "day" according to the Bible stands for both the natural and artificial. Cruden's Concordance says, "In the New Testament the day is divided into twelve hours after manner of the Greeks and Romans (Matthew 10:1-3, John 11:9). These hours were equal to each other, but unequal with respect to daylight during different seasons. The twelve hours of the longest days in summer were much longer than those of the shortest days in the winter. the first was that which follows the rising of the sun, and was answerable to our six o'clock in the morning of the Equinox: and that other times in proportion to the length or shortness of the days, and so on. The night was reckoned by watches." (Matthew 14:25, Luke 12:38).

Ever since the earth has turned on its axis until that GREAT DAY OF GOD shall come, it will bring with its turning the holy atmosphere in the seventh day Sabbath which is the seventh day of the week.

The Apostle Paul says if we receive THE WORD OF GOD AS IT IS IN TRUTH it works effectually in us, that is, it causes us to do the things that are right - and that means we will keep the seventh day of the week HOLY. Proverbs 29:25 says "The fear of MAN bringeth a snare." This kind of fear will eventually, before the coming of Christ, ensnare all who reject the Sabbath of God - the seventh day of the week. (Revelation 14:9-12).



LESSON I

JEHOSHAPHAT, KING OF JUDAH

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 17:1-19.

Golden Text: II Chronicles 17:3.

"And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim."

NOTE: In our last lesson we studied about the reign of Asa, king of Judah. Jehoshaphat is now king of Judah, and we will see whether he was a righteous ruler or if he was an unjust one as many of the kings have been that we have studied about.

1. What did Jehoshaphat do in the land of Judah? II Chronicles 17:2.
2. Was the Lord with him? Why? II Chronicles 17:3-4.
3. Did he have riches and honor? II Chronicles 17:5.
4. What did he take away from Judah? II Chronicles 17:6.
5. In the third year of his reign, whom did he send out to the cities of Judah? What was their duty? II Chronicles 17:7-9.
6. Why did the people not make war against Jehoshaphat? What did the Philistines bring to the king? II Chronicles 17:10-11.
7. Describe Jehoshaphat's greatness? How many men of war did he have? II Chronicles 17:12-14.

Answers to Bird Quiz on page twenty-two:

1. Ravens (I Kings 17:6)
2. Dove (Genesis 8:11)
3. Quail (Exodus 16:13)
4. Cock (Matthew 26:34)
5. Swallow (Isaiah 38:14)
6. Stork (Psalm 104:17)
7. Eagle, vulture, kite and others
8. Sparrow (Matthew 10:29)
9. Hen, chickens (Luke 13:34)
10. A pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons (Luke 2:24)

LESSON II

JEHOSHAPHAT FORMS AN ALLIANCE WITH AHAB (PART 1)

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 18:1-15.

Golden Text: II Chronicles 18:1.

"Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab."

NOTE: We learned in our last lesson that Jehoshaphat was a good ruler who prospered and waxed great during his reign because he feared the lord. Now we shall study part of chapter 18 to see how he joined forces with Ahab.

1. Jehoshaphat now has riches and honor. After several years, where did he go? What happened while he was there? II Chronicles 18:1-2.
2. When Ahab asked the king if he would go to war with him, what was king Jehoshaphat's reply? II Chronicles 18:3-4.
3. The king of Israel demanded 400 prophets who gathered together. What did Ahab say to the prophets, and did Jehoshaphat wish the advice of someone else? II Chronicles 18:5-6.
4. Who was the man whom the king of Israel said he might inquire? Did Ahab like this man? II Chronicles 18:7.
5. Did they send for this certain man? What was his name? Where did the two kings sit for the prophets to prophesy before them? II Chronicles 18:8-9.
6. What did Zedekiah say to the kings? What did all the prophets prophesy to them? II Chronicles 18:10-11.
7. What did the messenger say to Micaiah when he went to him, and did Micaiah promise to speak what God would say to him? II Chronicles 18:12-13.
8. The kings asked him if they should go to battle. What was his reply? II Chronicles 18:14.

9. Was the king doubtful that he was telling the truth? II Chronicles 18:15.

fight against the Syrians? II Chronicles 18:33-34.

LESSON III

LESSON IV

JEHOSHAPHAT FORMS IN ALLIANCE WITH AHAB (PART II)

JEHOSHAPHAT RETURNS TO JERUSALEM

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 18:16-34.
Golden Text: II Chronicles 18:22 (first part).

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 19:1-11.
Golden Text: II Chronicles 19:9.

"Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets..."

"And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart."

NOTE: We have learned in our past lessons that Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance. He joined forces with Ahab, and at this point they are about to seek the advice of Micaiah. Let us see if this prophecy is good or evil.

NOTE: In our last lesson we learned that King Ahab of Israel was killed at the battle of Ramoth-gilead. Jehoshaphat cried out to the Lord and was spared from death. Now he returns to Jerusalem, and let us see what instructions he gives the Levites, judges and priests.

1. What did Micaiah tell the king in II Chronicles 18:16?
2. Read II Chronicles 18:18-22, and then tell what the prophet told Ahab and Jehoshaphat.
3. What did Zedekiah do and say to Micaiah in II Chronicles 18:23?
4. What did the king of Israel command his men to do with Micaiah? II Chronicles 18:25-26.
5. The king of Israel and the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead. what did they do before they went to battle? II Chronicles 18:28-29.
6. What had the king of Syria commanded his captains to do? II Chronicles 18:30.
7. Did the Lord help Jehoshaphat when he cried for help? II Chronicles 18:31.
8. Did the captains pursue him again? Why? II Chronicles 18:32.
9. Was the king of Israel wounded? How long did he

1. Who came out to meet Jehoshaphat as he returned to Jerusalem? What did he say to the king? II Chronicles 19:1-3.
2. Where did the king go to gather back the people unto the Lord God? Whom did he set up the land? II Chronicles 19:4-5.
3. What instruction did he give to the judges? Do you think he gave them good advice? II Chronicles 19:6-7.
4. Whom did he set up next in the kingdom? II Chronicles 19:8.
5. What were his instructions to them? II Chronicles 19:9-10.
6. Who was to be the chief priest over the people? Who was ruler of the house of Judah? What were the Levities to do? II Chronicles 19:11.
7. Read the last sentence of verse 11 again. That was King Jehoshaphat's final advice to his rulers. Don't you think that was good admonition and something we should remember and apply to our own lives?



WHAT A LITTLE BIRD TAUGHT BEULAH

by Ellen Mary Stewart

Even though Beulah Mays was a very little girl, there were certain little tasks about the house that Mother Mays insisted on her doing. The most important of these was keeping her playthings together.

Beulah didn't mind putting her toys away when she was in a good humor, but - oh, dear - if she happened to be sleepy or tired or cross, then at the task became extremely unpleasant.

One day just when she was ready to go with her Aunt Sallie for a walk in the park, Mother discovered she had left her playthings scattered about the floor, and called her back to pick them up. Then what do you think happened? This dear child began to whine and fret, and when her mother began to talk to her, she began to cry, and the first thing she knew, Aunt Sallie had taken off and declared she would not walk in the park with a red eyed little girl.

Of course, after that Beulah tried to get her face straightened up again, but by the time she succeeded it was too late to go to the park, so the day was spoiled.

"I know what I'll do," pouted Beulah, go in the garden and play by myself."

"That could be a nice place for all ill-tempered child to go," answered Mother. "But do not go outside of the gate."

Pretty soon Beulah's attention turned to a mother bird that seemed to be having a hard time. It did not take her long to find out that she was feeding her babies with food. Again and again she would fly away and soon come back

carrying a worm to the hungry birdies. Then she would lift her bill toward heaven, and she would sing a beautiful song. Off she would fly again to find another worm for another hungry baby. And this was the way she kept on doing as long as Beulah watched her.

Suddenly a bright thought entered her brain, and she ran back to her mother faster than she came.

"Oh Mother, Mother," she cried. "I've learned a lesson. From this time on when I have anything to do, I will sing while I work."

"That is a beautiful idea," answered Mother, "I wonder where you go it."

"From a little bird," answered Beulah, and Mother knew from the bright smile on her face that she meant to do what she said.

BIRD QUIZ

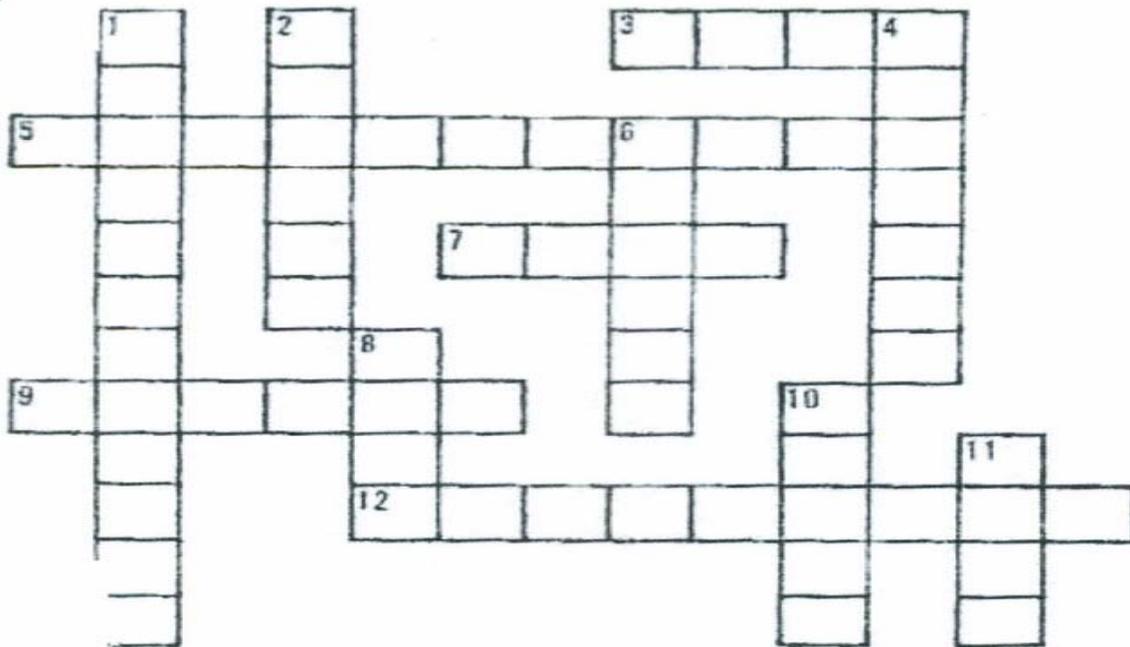
1. What bird fed Elijah?
2. What bird brought an olive leaf back to the ark?
3. What bird was given to the Israelites in the desert?
4. What bird do you associate with Peter?
5. What bird does Isaiah say "chatters"?
6. What bird does the Psalmist say "makes its home in the fir trees"?
7. Name two birds of prey mentioned in the Bible.
8. What bird was sold at "two for a farthing"?
9. What bird is mentioned by Jesus in a figure of speech as He gazed over Jerusalem in sorrow?
10. What birds did Jesus' mother offer in the temple as a sacrifice after Jesus' birth?

INSECTS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

*Look up the following verses in the Bible and find the names of insects that are in the verses.
Place the name of the insect in the appropriate squares in the puzzle.*



- ACROSS**
 3. Matthew 6:19
 5. Joel 1:4
 7. Exodus 8:17
 9. Proverbs 30:28
 12. Revelation 9:10



- DOWN**
 1. Judges 7:12
 2. Leviticus 11:22 (second one named)
 4. Exodus 23:28
 6. Deuteronomy 28:38
 8. Judges 14:8
 10. Ecclesiastes 10:1
 11. Proverbs 30:25



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LIFE IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT

*To the preacher, life's a sermon,
To the joker, it's a jest
To the miser, life is money,
To the loafer, life's a rest;
To the lawyer, life's a trial,
To the poet, life's a song;
To the doctor, life's a patient
Who needs treatment right along.
To the soldier, life's a battle,
To the teacher, life's a school;
Life's a good thing to the grafter.
It is failure to the fool.
To the man upon the engine,
Life's a long and heavy grade;
It's a gamble to the gambler;
To the merchant, life is trade.
Life is but one long vacation
To the man who loves to work;
Life's an everlasting effort
To shun duty, to the shirk.
Life is what we try to make it.
Brother, what is life to you?*

E.S. Kiser

