

The Advocate of Truth

Servant of the Lord

Cross Bearing

Oracles of God





TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

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The Advocate of Truth

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A Thought About Cross-bearing 3

One must endure to the end to be saved.

Misconceptions 4-5

To avoid misconceptions we must know the truth.

Workers With God 5-6

Faithful tithing is a must in God's work.

Self Examination 6-7

Some tough questions we should ask our self.

The Servant Of The Lord 7-10

There is no higher honor than to be known as this.

The Oracles Of God 10-12

When God speaks we must listen.

The Perpetuated Lie 12-13

This lie, like all lies, has its source in Satan.

Faith 13

Do we trust the Lord implicitly?

The Signs Of The Times 14-15

Our crumbling infrastructure.

Questions And Answers 16-17

Who was Cozbi? and other questions.

The Church Around The World 18-19

This month we look at Salem, West Virginia.

The Children's Pages 20-23

Sabbath School Lessons

A Story - "Sooner Or Later"

Games and Puzzles

A THOUGHT ABOUT CROSS-BEARING

By Bond Tennant



When a person comes to the Lord and is converted, he becomes a partaker of the divine nature. “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 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” (II Peter 1:3-4). But he carries this treasure in an earthen vessel (body). “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (II Corinthians 4:6-7). “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Galatians 5:17).

True salvation is more than just merely being initially converted: “...he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 10:22, last part). Only those that endure until the end shall receive the crown of life. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (James 1:12). There will be no crown if we do not bear our cross and follow Him.

Consider the following verses: “And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27); “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (verse 33); “And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23); “And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:38).

The old man with its sins must be mortified. We must arm ourselves with the same flesh-denying mind that Christ possessed. “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin” (I Peter 4:1). The Apostle Paul says, “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh” (Romans 8:12). We are to follow in the footsteps of our humble and suffering Saviour. “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (I Peter 2:21). Cross-bearing is the result of our voluntary obedience to the commandments of God and to deny ourselves. Cross-bearing often results in suffering. “For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (I Peter 2:20-21).



Misconceptions:

Having the correct concept of things **MAKES THE DIFFERENCE**

By Moises Torres M.

Having a misconception of things and the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ is causing big problems and havoc in the church. The spirit of deceit and confusion causes division and takes the peace away from the people of God. However, the greater damage it can cause is to close the door of the kingdom of heaven to all of those who are in this situation.

Long ago, this same thing happened to the people in Israel, and the Lord Jesus Christ severely repudiated them. The sentence of the Lord is expressed in a very clear way in Matthew 23:13, “But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.”

This is a very serious statement, and we should meditate on it so we won’t be in the same condition of danger that the scribes and Pharisees were in. They closed the entry to the upcoming kingdom by giving more importance or value to something that really did not matter. In this same chapter of Matthew 23, the Lord says how wrong were the concepts of these masters of Israel. He told them, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves” (verse 15).

They were giving more value to the gold in the temple than to the temple itself which sanctified the gold, and they gave more importance to the offering that was put on the altar than to the altar that sanctifies the offering.

The Lord said, “Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso

therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon” (Matthew 23:19-22).

In other words, the Lord was saying, “You have misconceptions about the truths of God!” That is why He said, “for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.”

That same thing happens today in the church. There can be only one truthful and pure teaching. All other teachings are misconceptions that cause turbulence and kill the spirit of many in the church by closing the entry to the upcoming kingdom. The Pharisees were very materialistic and radical. In their erroneous findings, they only saw the value of the material gold and their personal handouts, but they never displayed JUDGMENT, MERCY, and FAITH. Jesus told them, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone” (Matthew 23:23). They never gave the credit to the true gold which was “tried in the fire”. To them, the old saying is applicable: “Not everything that shines is gold”. They had many misconceptions.

To desire authority and power, and to have complete control of everything and everyone, are misconceptions of the “earthly man” or spirit of man, NOT OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD. The Bible mentions these

misconceptions as the spirit of error which we should rid ourselves:

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Ephesians 4:22).

“We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (I John 4:6).

We have to understand and accept that the only AUTHORITY and the only POWER is God, and without Him there is nothing. “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have

said, For we are also his offspring” (Acts 17:28).

We should learn and value what really has value. Again, “Not everything that shines is gold”.

“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see” (Revelation 3:18).

Remember that having the correct concept of things makes the difference!



Workers With God

It is evident that God has entrusted to men and women an abundance of means for the carrying forward of His work of mercy and benevolence. Yet, there is always a lack of available funds for this purpose. It must therefore be equally evident that many are disloyal and are withholding from the divine treasury that portion that belongs to God. As a result, His work languishes, and thousands perish in their sins. There should be careful discrimination between tithes and offerings.

Hence, the Lord's entreaty, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house...” (Malachi 3:10). This is a command of God, and ought to be obeyed. No person can read this earnest counsel and instruction, face the responsibility, and go away the same as before. Neglect to bring to God the tithes and a suitable portion of offerings makes the man an offender, and he is charged with robbery (see Malachi 3:8). The tithing system challenges the loyalty of every professing Christian. God never put such tremendous emphasis upon paying

the tithes in any dispensation unless there was something inherently and eternally right and reasonable about it in all dispensations. Two of the severest tests of loyalty to God in the Old Testament times were keeping the Sabbath and paying tithes. It is doubtful whether there are any more important practical test of love and loyalty in the New Testament dispensation.

Perfection of character cannot possibly be attained without self-denial. The selfish love of money is the root of all evil. Money is the greatest slaveholder in the world. Greed and covetousness are our greatest sins, extravagance our greatest curse. But he who realizes the unspeakable gift of heaven in providing the plan of redemption will not allow worldly interests and plans to absorb his time and attention. He knows that there are higher interests at stake. He will put forth every effort to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (see Matthew 6:33). He knows that if he follows this instruction, the “things” or his needs will be supplied. Too many are

inclined to seek after the “things” first and the spiritual blessings second. The result is a blurred view of saving grace, neglected tithes, and restricted offerings.

When one recognizes the multiplied avenues of beneficence all about him day after day, when he discovers the infinite cost of his ransom from sin, he will quite fully

understand that “in the contemplation of the cross of Calvary, the true Christian will abandon the thought of restricting his offering to that which costs him nothing.” He will earnestly desire to practice heaven’s rule of giving. He will give not out of riches, but according to his riches. This is proportional giving.

Self Examination

Note: The following article appeared in the January 25, 1950 issue of *The Advocate of Truth*. I feel that it is a very timely article for all, especially children of God, to heed. --Bond Tennant

Thoughts For Consideration

Do you act as if a man has committed an unpardonable sin when he differs with you in opinion? He is accountable to God for his opinion, not to you. You are not to be conscience for the other man. “...Be not wise in your own conceits” (Romans 12:16). See also Proverbs 26:12.

Do you enter hastily into arguments, and persist in trying to have the last word? Perhaps the other person thinks he knows what he is talking about, and it may be that he does know. “Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame” (Proverbs 25:8).

Do you ever see that you have made a mistake? If so, do you acknowledge it? If so, do you make it right with the person you injured? David, a man after God’s own heart, acknowledged his sin. Saul tried to excuse his disobedience by laying the blame on others.

Do you like to be the center of attraction? Can you be happy in seeing the other man exalted while you are slighted? The Pharisees loved “...the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And

greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi” (see Matthew 23:5-7). They were called hypocrites by our Saviour. He humbled Himself. (See Philippians 2:3-8).

Do you monopolize the conversation when you have an opportunity? Others also have thoughts that they would like to express. Give them an opportunity. “In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise” (Proverbs 10:19).

Are You A Flatterer?

Do you flatter those in high position with the sole object of gaining personal advantage? “But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin...” (James 2:9). “To have respect of persons is not good: for for a piece of bread that man will transgress” (Proverbs 28:21).

Do you break in on a man like a clap of thunder because he happens to say something with which you, at first thought, do not agree? Better heed the admonition to be “...swift to hear, slow to speak...” (James 1:19). “As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife” (Proverbs 26:21).

Do you lose your temper upon slight provocation? If so, you lack in charity, for charity (love) “...is not easily provoked...” (see I Corinthians 13:4-5). “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be...slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God”

(James 1:19-20).

When your friends call, do you ever invite them to engage with you in a season of prayer, or do you spend the whole time in idle gossip and jesting? The servant of the Lord has said that we do too much talking and not enough praying. We can give definite assistance in the Lord's work by prayer, for "...the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

Are you telling Brother A the unfavorable things that Brother B says about him? If so, you are not a peacemaker, but you are widening the breach between them and adding fuel to the fire. "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth" (Proverbs 26:20).



The Servant of the Lord

By David DeLong

Many people in the world want to be a boss rather than a servant. After a discussion arose whether James and John could sit on Jesus' right and left hands in His kingdom, we then read: "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25-28).

In another incident we see the disciples disputing about a similar type of situation. "And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant

of all. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me" (Mark 9:33-37).

To be a servant of the Lord, and thus a servant to others, is one of the greatest honors and titles that a human can have. No other earthly title or honor is greater than being a servant: not being a president, king or queen, captain, V.I.P. (very important person), nor anything else! Our Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest example of what it means to be a servant of the Lord. Philippians 2:5-8 informs us: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." No wonder that God calls Jesus "my righteous servant" (see Isaiah 53:11).

To be a servant of the Lord, however, will cost a person everything. Jesus said in Luke 14:33: "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Let us now examine some of the cost of being a servant of the Lord. First, we will note that a servant must not expect to be recognized in this life for his or her service. Jesus taught in Luke 17:7-10: "But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

For an example of this, we study the words of Jesus that He spoke concerning the service we should give to the less fortunate. "Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:12-14). This is in stark contrast to the scribes and Pharisees who were always doing hypocritical works to be recognized by men.

Jesus exhorted His followers to expect being slandered by people. He said in Matthew 10:24-25: "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" One of the most disheartening things about doing good to others is that they may misinterpret your motives and speak evil of you. They may think you are being nice just to get something in return. But one should do good to them anyway.

Servants must always be faithful to the service that has been entrusted to them. Jesus spoke of this in Luke 12:42-48: "And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise

steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

In the parable of the talents, there were two faithful servants, and one unprofitable one. The two faithful servants were rewarded while the unprofitable one was punished. Jesus finished the parable with these words: "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:29-30).

Implied within the concept of faithfulness to our Master is the concept of loyalty to Him as well. We read about this in Luke 16:10-13: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

In II Timothy 2:23-26, Paul instructs Timothy on how a minister must act towards others. Some of this advice is good for all servants of the Lord. Paul wrote: "But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness

instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

Finally, we will discuss the fact that servants of the Lord must follow Christ wherever He takes them. We find this addressed in John 12:26. Jesus said: "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." We sometimes sing in our hymn books: "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord, over mountain or plain or sea; I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord; I'll be what you want me to be."

All of the Lord's true followers in the Bible were honored to be known as His servants. Paul wrote to the saints in Rome: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God". Paul further emphasized his role as a servant in I Corinthians 9:19-23: "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."

Some other of Christ's disciples who were referred to as servants were: Phebe, "...a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea"; "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting"; "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ"; "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called"; "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John" (Romans 16:1; James 1:1; II Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1; Revelation 1:1).

A faithful servant, and none other, will be richly rewarded by the Lord. Sometimes, however, God's blessing upon His servant will overflow onto others as well. When referring to the city of Jerusalem we learn what the Lord said: "For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh."

Listen to what the Lord will do for the faithful people of Israel: "Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses" (Isaiah 44:1-4).

Listen to what He will do for His people today: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17-18). Furthermore, we have this promise of the Lord: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Romans 6:22).

There seems to be a progression in the relationship that Christ has with His people. In John 13:13 a Master-servant relationship is given: "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." Later, Jesus said to His disciples: "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15). Even later in the book of John, Jesus referred to His disciples as brethren. When speaking to Mary Magdalene we find: "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God,

and your God" (John 20:17).

And yet, in the New Jerusalem, after God's people have been changed to immortality, they will continue to be servants of the Lord. Revelation 22:3 reads: "And there

shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him". We were created to be servants of the Lord. There is no higher calling; there is no higher honor.



The Greek word for oracles is "logion" and it means "an utterance (of God)". However, we should distinguish between the oracles of God and the oracle of God. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word that is usually used for "oracle" is "debiyr" or "debir", and it refers to "the shrine or innermost part of the sanctuary". In other words it is designating the most holy place of the tabernacle or temple.

For instance, we find a reference to the oracle in I Kings 6:14-16 where Solomon is building the house, or temple, for the Lord. "So Solomon built the house, and finished it. And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling; and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir. And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar: he even built them for it within, even for the oracle, even for the most holy place."

In verse 19 we learn that the ark of the covenant was placed in this oracle: "And the oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD." In chapter 7, verse 49, we read: "And the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs of gold". This is highly significant as we shall see.

Let us also remember that the Ten Commandments were in the ark of the covenant. Going to chapter 8, verses 6-9, we are instructed: "And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims. For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above. And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not

seen without: and there they are unto this day. There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt."

Since the oracles of God pertain to His spoken word then the oracle of God, the most holy place of the tabernacle or temple, was a place in Old Testament times where God spoke this word. We find this to be so in Exodus 25:21-22 where the Lord instructed Moses: "And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel."

So, the Lord communed with Moses from within the oracle. The ark of the testimony containing the two tables of stone--the Ten Commandments--was also within the oracle. Above and upon the ark was the mercy seat. The Lord met with Moses from above this mercy seat, "between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony" to give Moses in commandment His instructions to the children of Israel. We know that only the high priest was allowed into the oracle, or most holy place, once a year on the Day of Atonement (see Leviticus 16:1-34; Hebrews 9:1-10). Therefore, it is thought that Moses was on the outside of the oracle while God communed with him from within the oracle. So sacred was this oracle of God that many years later we find David saying to God: "Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle" (Psalm 28:2).

Today the oracles of God are not spoken from His oracle since the temple was destroyed by the Romans centuries ago. Rather, God's oracles are contained within His written Word--the holy Bible--Old and New Testaments. We mentioned earlier that the golden candlesticks of the tabernacle were placed "before the oracle". The seven churches of God as given in the book of Revelation are likened to seven candlesticks. We read of Jesus saying: "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the

seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches" (Revelation 1:20).

God's church is to be a light unto the world. In one sense His people are also His oracle (temple) on earth today, wherein God dwells and communes with them. They are the ones who must receive the oracles of God and pass them on to others. Jesus taught: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

As the oracle in the Old Testament housed the Ten Commandments within the ark, so too, God's people must have His Law within their hearts. Jesus taught in Matthew 5:17-19: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

Also, we learn from Hebrews 8:10-11: "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."

All believers must learn the oracles of God. In other words they must be mature enough in the Word of God to be able to know what is right and wrong in every situation of life. In contrast, some of God's people were chided by the writer of Hebrews for not being mature in the Word. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses

exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:12-14).

The Ten Commandments are a part of the oracles of God. They are the righteous standard of God which He spoke to His people, and they are the basis for all morality. The martyr Stephen testified of this law when he said: "This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us" (Acts 7:37-38).

In fact, the Apostle Paul said that the Jews actually had an advantage over others because God directly gave them His oracles. Romans 3:1-3 records: "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did

not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?"

Finally, the Apostle Peter warned every man to be responsible for the gifts that the Lord has given to him, including speaking God's Word. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (I Peter 4:10-11).

The oracles of God, both spoken and in written form, are sacred to us. We know that they must not be compromised. With humility we receive these oracles to live out in obedience. We recognize the truth of Jesus' own words as He said: "...It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

The Perpetuated Lie

By Glenn Williams

The lie that killed humanity was told to our fore parents, Adam and Eve, by Satan and they believed him. Genesis 3:4-5 reads: "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Today, in many religions, the same lie is being told by many of their leaders. They say that when you fall asleep (die), your spirit lives on in heaven (as angels) or purgatory or

somewhere else. Some say that you will be reincarnated into another being to live on earth. Such promises are not made by God, the Creator. They also say to their followers you can do anything and it will be all right, believe what you like and it will be all right, and not keep the Ten Commandments and it will be all right, because it's not necessary for life. All you have to do is just believe, they say. But, I will tell you this, that faith (believing) without works (obedience) is dead. "Thou believest that there is

one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" (James 2:19-21).

We all know what happened in the beginning of humanity did not work out well, but the second Adam (Jesus) made a way possible for us to make it right by faith and total obedience. We find what the Philippian jailer inquired of Paul and Silas in Acts 16:30-31: "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Furthermore, we learn what Moses said in Deuteronomy 18:15: "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken". Also, Matthew 17:5, concerning Jesus, reads: "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." As the devil taught our fore parents to disobey God which caused us to die, Jesus said that if we enter into life we

must do what God our Father commands us to do. "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (Matthew 19:16-21).

Joshua told the children of Israel: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15).

Faith

By Sister J. La Borde

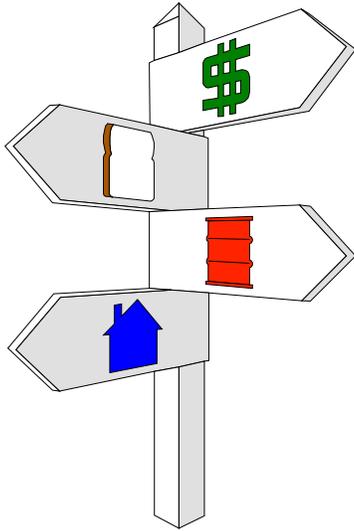


The unseen things that we accept are by faith and are confirmed by the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 11: 1 informs us: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Things not seen! Many people doubt the Bible because it does not agree with their lifestyles or, rather, their lifestyles do not coincide with the Bible, so to them it is easy to make excuses for walking contrary to the words of God. On the other hand there are those who believe,

but apply the Scriptures in their own way and understanding to suit their ways of living.

Faith teaches us a lot. "(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)" (II Corinthians 5:7). The Concise Oxford Dictionary uses the word "implicitly" in its definition of faith, and implicit means "absolute" and "unquestioning". Therefore, our faith in God should be implicit; in other words absolute and unquestionable.



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.

Our Crumbling Infrastructure

Infrastructure refers to the foundation, basis or underlying framework upon which a particular community or institution is established and depends. Numerous basic services, facilities, equipment and institutions make up the daily operation of a community as well as its growth and development. These may include a broad range of public utility, communications, transportation, financial and many other systems. Whether large or small, all communities depend on highways, bridges, railroads, airports, and other forms of transportation. They also depend upon water and sewage systems, and gas, oil, hydropower and various forms of energy to heat and light their homes and to provide a safe and secure environment for citizens. Among many city, state and federal officials in America, there has been a very complacent attitude which has led to a very serious and steadily worsening situation that needs to be addressed. This is also true in other parts of the world. The problems are great in many places. There is an urgent need to rebuild the infrastructure system. In some cases, there seems to be an unwillingness because of the cost to address the mounting problems, or to consider the catastrophic consequences of not doing so!

Just recently, there have been several examples of disasters caused by poor and decayed pipeline infrastructure.

The World--A Safer Place?

I saw on the news that President Obama declared that the world is now a safer place because of a nuclear deal. He said that a security summit has taken "concrete steps" to prevent nuclear material from falling into the

hands of terrorists. It was reported that at a two day summit in the Hague 35 countries pledged to turn international guidelines on nuclear security into national laws. The summit also featured new reduction commitments with Japan, Italy and Belgium agreeing to cut their stocks of highly enriched uranium and plutonium.

Comment

The world being a safer place is wishful thinking on the president's part. Many nations have never honored their agreements in the past. Why do not all of the nations agree to stop producing nuclear weapons?

When speaking of the last days, Jesus said: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matthew 24:21-22).

The world is perilous (dangerous) now, and it will continue to be more perilous (dangerous) each day!

Drone Delivery?

I read that Amazon is working on a way to get packages to customers in thirty minutes or less. Amazon has a project called Prime Air unmanned aircraft project. But this project will take years to advance the technology. The Federal Aviation Administration must make necessary rules and regulations.

Amazon's CEO said that the drones can carry packages up to five pounds which covers 85 percent of items delivered by Amazon. The delivery drones have a range of ten miles. However, it will take four or five years for the project to become a working service.

The delivery drones are different from the drones used

by the military. The delivery drones will not need humans to control them remotely. Amazon's drones will have a set of GPS coordinates and automatically fly to them. It is presumed that they will avoid buildings, power lines and other obstacles.

Comment

The invention of drones, unmanned aircraft, seems mindboggling. They can be used for peaceful purposes such as delivering packages and mail, which was just noted. They can also be used for evil purposes such as evil instruments of war.

In the thousand-year kingdom, there will be no instruments created by man that are harmful to man.

Rising Terror Threat

As time goes by, man is becoming more wicked, especially in the terrorization threat. An article entitled **U.S. terror threat rising, lawmakers say** was published in the *Houston Chronicle* from the ASSOCIATED PRESS. Here it is.

Washington – The terrorism threat against the U.S. is increasing and American's aren't as safe as they were a year or two ago, the leaders of the House and Senate intelligence committees said.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein said that there are more terrorism groups than ever, with more sophisticated and hard-to-detect bombs. The California Democrat said "there is huge malevolence out there."

Rep. Mike Rogers said there's enormous pressure on U. S. intelligence services to "get it right, to prevent the attack."

The Michigan Republican said that job is getting more difficult because al-Qaida is changing, with more affiliates around the world.

Rogers also said terrorists are adopting the idea that "maybe smaller events are OK" and still might achieve their goals.

"That makes it exponentially harder for our intelligence services to stop an event like that from happening," he said in a joint interview on CNN's "State of the Union" that aired Sunday. Although neither offered specifics about what led to their conclusions, Feinstein spoke of "a read displaced aggression in this very fundamentalist jihadist Islamic community, and that is that the West is responsible for everything that goes wrong and that the only thing that's going to solve this is Islamic Sharia law and the concept

of the caliphate." The caliphate is an Islamic state led by a religious and political leader, or caliph, considered a successor of the prophet Mohammed and who governs by Sharia law.

Rogers said al-Qaida groups have changed their means of communication as a result of leaks about U.S. surveillance programs, making it harder to detect potential plots to the early planning stages.

"We're fighting amongst ourselves about the role of our intelligence community that it is having an impact on our ability to stop what is a growing number of threats. And so we've got to shake ourselves out of this pretty soon and understand that our intelligence services are not the bad guys," Rogers said.

Comment

Terrorism is a long and outstanding evil being in existence many years. It has increased, and it will continue to increase. II Timothy 3:13 tells us that "...evil men and seducers shall wax (become) worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." Committing terrorism is an easy way for a person to harm his enemies, or those whom he thinks are his enemies. The U. S. is not the only country that suffers from terrorists. There is just no end to the cruelty of man against man. The subjects in the thousand-year kingdom of God will not become terrorists. Isaiah 11:9 proves this. It reads, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain (kingdom): for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

Blood Moon Eclipse

There was a blood moon eclipse last April when the moon took on a glow resembling blood. I understand that there are to be three more blood moon eclipses over the next two years.

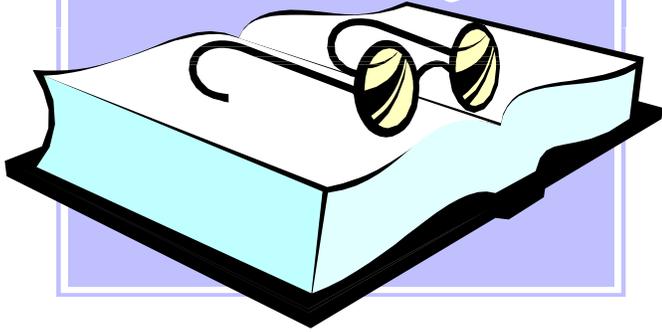
Many people to whom I spoke were wondering if it was some sort of sign for the world. Signs in the sun and the moon are given by Jesus as events which would take place before His coming again. However, we must not be excited about the importance of just one event at one particular time. Jesus said that the end is not yet.

Driverless Cars?

I saw in the business section of a reliable newspaper that--I think it was GM--is working on the technology of developing a driverless car. It is going to be interesting to find for what purpose these cars will be used.

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Who was Cozbi?

ANSWER: Cozbi, meaning “voluptuous”, was a Midian woman around 1400 B. C. who tried, with others, to tempt Israelite men into sexual relationships involving idolatry. Phinehas, Aaron’s son, whose decisive action in defense of the faith was rewarded by God, killed Cozbi and her Israelite paramour. Read about this event in Numbers 25.

QUESTION: Will you please comment on the word fire and the “spiritual fire within” the child of God?

ANSWER: The word fire is used many times in the Bible. In some places, it means the fire of the “lake of fire” where all the wicked will be burned up during the 1,000 year reign of Christ. When fire is mentioned among those who study the Scriptures, this is usually what is thought of.

Did you ever stop to think that from fire there can come light and heat? Through the proper use of fire, metals can be purged (made pure). God has provided fire for us to use in many ways. God also used fire in the burning bush when He spoke to Moses and again at Mt. Sinai.

Now, let us consider the indwelling Holy Spirit within every true believer and the spiritual “fire” therein. Did you ever realize that from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the true believer will be inflamed with the love of God and

zeal for the glory of God. Thus we have the text in Hebrews 1:7 which states that God’s ministering angels are “...a flame of fire.” God’s human ministers need to also be a flame. Many people, when they think of a minister, automatically think that this means the local pastor. This is an incorrect assumption. Every true child of God is a minister both unto God, and to his neighbor. The word minister means “one who serves,” which includes more than only those who give sermons to the congregation. Everyone in the body of Christ serves in one way or another. Each has his respective talents and abilities of service, and together they all serve as a whole body, the body of Christ. There is more accomplished for the Lord from our daily helps to those around us than is accomplished in many sermons. We need sermons! However, there must be the works as a result of the sermons if any true results are expected. Here is where those who are “flames of fire” will shine forth.

The most outstanding thing about a fire is its heat. A good fire will produce much heat. A Spirit filled saint likewise will be a flame for the Lord from within the heat. The greater the portion of the Spirit, the greater and better will be the flame thereof. This is not speaking of the kind of fire that brings forth words and actions of wrath and strife from the heart, but rather the kind of fire which brings words and actions of profound gentleness and clarity wherein there is no doubt as to Who is the real Authority behind them. This is the fire of the Holy Spirit of God

from within the heart. It is this kind of fire God wants in all His ministers. God needs continuous fire which burns with an even heat, thereby shedding much light in the darkness around.

While looking into a fire which was burning inside a woodstove, I could not help but take notice where the real source of the fire was coming. At the very base of the fire, there were a few extremely hot coals or embers from whence was coming the real heat of the whole fire. Those few coals were all that remained of large pieces of wood, which had been placed into the fire earlier. Over the time of a couple hours, the large pieces had been burned up until all that remained was a small piece of hot ember that burned so hot at times it appeared partially white due to the heat. From the extreme heat radiating from those embers, came the true heat of the fire which in turn burned up the newer large pieces which had been placed into the fire. God's saints are like that as long as they remain true to the faith and testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ. As the seasons of time wear on, the Holy Spirit of God from within burns off gradually all that is sinful and contrary to God. Here we see the child of God growing in grace and knowledge. By continuing therein, the heat from the Holy Spirit will increasingly radiate from within. Here we will find that of which the Scriptures speak. Here is the flaming fire of sincerity and truth through the Lord Jesus Christ. The child of God radiates a white heat, and as the body of Christ is fitly framed together into a complete unit, we find a spiritually hot fire which continues to burn around the world and lights up the darkness everywhere.

God needs men and women who are on fire with zeal from the Holy Spirit. The harvest truly is ripe, and the laborers are few as we read in the Bible. Those who are a flame of fire in sincerity and truth are few and far between. There is no question to the fact that throughout the world there are those who are God's "burning embers." However, they need help in spreading the warning message of the coming of God's wrath and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. God is separating those from the world who are searching the Scriptures to find the Truth within, and He is placing them into the body of Christ wherein they will burn off that which is contrary to God's will, and they also shall burn, thus maintaining the flame of fire which shall never be put out.

Jesus asked a question when He was on the earth. He wondered if He would find faith on the earth at His

second coming. This should not be misunderstood that there may not be any faithful when He returned. There will be some who will be faithful. Jesus said that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His church, the body of Christ. What Jesus was asking was to what degree would the faith be found at His return. How hot with the indwelling flame of fire would His brethren be? There is no question that lukewarmness is evident in the church today. It is even prevalent in the world about us where we find a soft attitude in everything of importance. The Lord knew this and therefore asked this question.

A lukewarm attitude will not prevail however in the sight of God. We are warned in Revelation 3:16 of the result of a halfway attitude. God wants us "hot" or "cold", and we can take our pick. He knows the heart and will reward us accordingly.

If you should feel a desire to be on the Lord's side in these days, please do not let your desire burn out, but rather feed that desire through studying the Scriptures to show yourself approved unto God. See II Timothy 2:15. As you continue to study in sincerity and truth, then allow yourself to follow what the Scriptures teach which will lead you in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ. By doing so, you too will become a complete and full "flame of fire."

QUESTION: Were the six cities of refuge in Israel sanctuaries for hardened murderers?

ANSWER: Deuteronomy 19:4-5 states that the cities of refuge protected only the unintentional manslayer. In these cities, the unintentional manslayer could claim refuge in the nearest city. He would be out of the reach of the victim's nearest male relative, who could otherwise avenge the shed blood. After stating his case to the elders of the city, the fugitive was taken to the place having jurisdiction over the location where the death occurred. There he had the opportunity to prove his innocence. His relationship between him and his victim was reviewed by the elders, noting if prior hatred existed. Read Numbers 35:20-24; Deuteronomy 19:6-7; Joshua 20:4-5.

If found innocent, the fugitive returned to the city of refuge and had to remain in its vicinity. These cities were not prisons. Upon the death of the high priest, all refugees could leave the cities of refuge in safety. Read Numbers 35:6, 25-28.



Salem, West Virginia

Some of the Salem brethren leaving a Sabbath church service.





Apostle Del DeLong preaching.



A Sabbath service.



Some members of the congregation.



Sister Viola Hardman playing piano.



Brother and Sister Hill and family.



Elder David DeLong.

LESSON I

LESSON II

JOSIAH IS SLAIN AT MEGIDDO

JERUSALEM WHOLLY DESTROYED

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 35:1-27.

Golden Text: II Chronicles 35:23.

"And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded."

NOTE: Josiah began his reign when he was eight, and at the age of twelve began to form the kingdom. In our last lesson, we learned about the finding of the book by Hilkiah. Then he began a thorough reform in Judah. Let us see now why Josiah was killed.

1. What were they observing in Jerusalem? II Chronicles 35:1-2.
2. Where were the Levites to place the holy ark? II Chronicles 35:3.
3. For what were the people instructed to make preparation? II Chronicles 35:4-6.
4. What did Josiah give to the people? II Chronicles 35:7-8.
5. Read II Chronicles 35:9-14, and then describe the service in your own words.
6. What else did they keep besides the Passover? II Chronicles 35:15-17.
7. After the keeping of the Passover, who came up to fight against Josiah, and what message was given to him? II Chronicles 35:20-21.
8. Did Josiah hearken unto Necho? What happened to him? II Chronicles 35:22-23.
9. Did Josiah die as a result of his wounds? II Chronicles 35:24.

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 36:1-21.

Golden Text: II Chronicles 36:16.

"But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy."

NOTE: We have just finished studying about Josiah, king of Judah, who was a righteous ruler. The people were idolaters, and for the 57 years of the wicked preceding reigns, Jehovah had almost been removed from the people's thinking. Josiah's reign delayed, but could not avert, the fast approaching end of the kingdom. We are going to study now briefly about the reign of the last kings of Judah before the destruction of Jerusalem.

1. Who was made king upon the death of Josiah? How old was he, and how long did he reign? II Chronicles 36:1-2.
2. What happened to Jehoahaz, and who then was made king over Judah and Jerusalem? II Chronicles 36:3-4.
3. How old was Jehoiakim, and how long did he reign? II Chronicles 36:5.
4. Who came up against Jehoiakim? What happened to him, and who reigned in his stead? II Chronicles 36:6-8.
5. How old was Jehoiachin when he began to reign? Who was made king in his place? II Chronicles 36:9-10.
6. How old was Zedekiah, and how long did he reign? II Chronicles 36:11.
7. The Lord sent messengers to His people. Did they hearken unto them? II Chronicles 36:14-16.
8. Who did the Lord cause to come upon the people?

What did they do to the house of God? II Chronicles 36:17-20.

and Sapphira and what happened to them. Another may tell how Achan's theft was revealed and how he was punished. It will be the same way at the day of judgment when every sin that was not confessed will be revealed.

LESSON III

LESSON IV

CAN WE HIDE OUR SINS FROM GOD?

PRAISING THE LORD

Scripture Reading: Genesis 3:1-14.

Golden Text: Proverbs 15:3.

“The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”

Scripture Reading: Psalm 9:1-10.

Golden Text: Psalm 106:1.

“Praise ye the LORD, O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.”

NOTE: We have finished our study of the book of II Chronicles and the destruction of Jerusalem. We will now study to learn if God sees our actions and if we can hide our sins.

NOTE: We should praise the Lord daily. When you say your daily prayer, do not forget to first praise the Lord before you ask blessings from him. Prayer and praise go together.

1. Does the Lord see all that we do? Job 34:21-22; Proverbs 15:3.
2. Can our sins be hidden from God? Jeremiah 16:17.
3. According to David's testimony, is there any place where we can hide from the Lord? Psalm 139:1-12.
4. Did not Adam and Eve try to hide their sin from God? What was the result? Genesis 3:8,11,23-24.
5. What is said of those who try to hide their sins from God? Numbers 32:23 (last part); I Corinthians 4:5.
6. Can we hide anything that shall not be known? Matthew 10:26; Luke 12:2.
7. What is the day of judgment called, and what great event will take place? Romans 14:1-12; Ecclesiastes 12:14; II Corinthians 5:10.

1. How often did David praise the Lord? Psalm 34:1; 145:2.
2. How are we to serve the Lord? Psalm 100:2.
3. How are we to come into His courts? Psalm 100:4.
4. Why should we praise the Lord? Psalm 100:5.
5. How often should we praise the Lord? Ephesians 5:20; I Thessalonians 5:16.
6. When we offer praise unto God, whom do we glorify? Psalm 50:14-15.
7. Should the poor praise the Lord also? Psalm 74:21.
8. After God revealed the king's dream to Daniel, how did he praise Him for this? Daniel 2:23.

NOTE: Someone may wish to tell the story of Ananias

SOONER OR LATER

“A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape” (Proverbs 19:5).

Below is the beginning of a story. We would like you to write its ending. How would our heavenly Father like to see this story end?

As Chad bounded down the steps of the school, he saw Derrick crossing the playground. He yelled for Derrick to wait for him. “Aren’t you all excited about camp?” Chad asked.

Derrick shrugged. “You will earn enough points to pay all your way to camp,” he said, “But I doubt that I will get to go. You are smart and good. You do everything right.” Pretending to be their teacher, he added in a mocking voice, “I wish more people were like Chad.”

“Cut it out,” Chad said. “What I wanted to tell you is that the camp is offering horseback riding this year. I thought maybe you could go and do some riding. I know how much you like horses.”

“I would like to,” Derrick admitted, “But you know I will never have enough points to go free. I have a harder time learning things than you do.”

“Maybe I could help you with your lessons,” Chad suggested.

“Thanks, but it is too late to earn enough points this year,” Derrick said. “My folks cannot afford to pay the extra money, either. But I wish I could go! I will just have to try to think of a way to earn the money.”

“I will help you,” Chad offered. “Let’s make a list of jobs we can do. Then we will go around the neighborhood and line up some work.”

So that is what they did. Both boys worked together

to earn money for Derrick’s camp fund. Derrick was thrilled to go to camp, and Chad was happy he could be a helper.

Chad and Derrick listened carefully as Mr. Collins gave the instructions for horseback riding. Each camper would be assigned to a horse for a week. They would be responsible for its care, but were never to ride without permission.

One afternoon when Mr. Collins went to get the horses at riding time, he found the gate open and all the horses gone! They were soon found nearby, but one horse was covered with sweat. It had been ridden recently.

After the horses had been rounded up, the campers were called to the dining hall. “Someone disobeyed and rode a horse without permission,” began the horsemanship counselor. “When it was returned, the gate probably was not latched tightly, and all the horses got out. They have been rounded up, but if anyone knows anything about this, see me in my office. If the guilty person does not come forward by tomorrow morning, the situation will be taken to the camp director.”

As the boys were leaving the room, they began to question one another. “Say, what horse was it?” Chris asked Mr. Collins.

“Flame,” the counselor replied.

“That is Derrick’s horse,” called one of the boys.

“Derrick’s the horse fan. He is probably the one who did it,” Tim joined in.

“I did not!” Derrick yelled.

“You are lying,” said one of the boys.

“Yeah! You are the guilty one,” said another. “You are always so...”

“Stop that!” interrupted Mr. Collins. “There will be no accusations without definite evidence. Many of you claim to be Christians, but right now you are jumping to conclusions. That does not please God any more than the disobedience of the one who rode the horse. I want you all to go back to your cabins and think about your actions. If you are guilty, or if you actually know something about this situation, I want you to speak up. But if you do not know anything specific, I expect you to keep quiet! You are dismissed.”

As Chad entered his cabin after supper, he found Derrick packing his suitcase. “Hey, Derrick, what are you up to?” Chad wanted to know.

Derrick whirled around. “What does it look like I am doing? I am leaving. My Dad will come and get me if I call him.”

“But why?” Chad asked.

“As if you did not know!” Derrick snapped. “You all think I am guilty of taking that horse today, so I might as well go, I am not wanted here.”

“But if you go now, you will really look guilty,” Chad said.

“Who cares!” Derrick barked. “I am convicted already by everyone. Now move out of my way.”

FINISH THE STORY FROM HERE.

HAIR RAISERS

1. Who hung by his hair in the oak?
2. Who had his hair cut for a vow?
3. Who lost his strength when his hair was cut?
4. Who was covered with red hair?
5. Who wiped Jesus’ feet with her hair?
6. What color hair goes with leprosy?

WORD SEARCH

Below is a list of the words you will be looking for in our word search. They come from the book of Daniel. You will find these words horizontally, vertically, and diagonally.

DANIEL DARIUS SHADRACH
 MESHACH FOOD ABEDNEGO
 CAPTIVES PRAY IMAGE LIONS

FIGURE THIS OUT

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.

How old was Joseph when his brother put him in the pit?

ALL OF THESE PEOPLE ARE DESCRIBED IN THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL. HOW MANY CAN YOU IDENTIFY, USING THE CLUES BELOW.

1. She took her son to the temple and there “lent him to the Lord” but each year she went to see him and gave him a new coat.
2. He died when he learned that the ark of God had been taken in battle by the Philistines.
3. A sleeping child, he was awakened and told to give sad news to the old man who had been kind to him.
4. He went looking for some missing farm animals and returned as the anointed king of his people.
5. A king’s son and the hero of his people, he ate a little honey without knowing he would be killed for doing so (I Samuel 14:27).
6. A brave and loyal soldier, he was killed because a king wanted his wife.
7. A very handsome man with much ability, he rebelled against his father and almost succeeded in dethroning him.
8. He is described as “the sweet psalmist of Israel.”

Answers: Hannah, Eli, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, Uriah, Absalom, David

**“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.”
 Ecclesiastes 3:1**

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THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Jesus told His disciples a story,
In words they could understand;
What it means to be a good neighbor,
And to offer a kind, loving hand.
A traveler came down from Jerusalem,
And so the story did go;
(The day was fine and he whistled a tune)
As he traveled toward Jericho.
A band of robbers came upon him,
They beat him and left him for dead;
They had stripped him of all of his garments,
And all of the money he had.
Along came a priest that way,
And pretended that he didn't see
The poor dying man in the dust of the road,
"Thank God, that didn't happen to me!"
Then along came a Levite, and he too, passed by
On the opposite side of the way;
("I know I should help, but I'm in such a rush,
I'll remember him next time I pray!")
Then along came a Samaritan,
Who stopped by the traveler's side;
He looked upon him with compassion,
(It wouldn't do if the poor man died.)
And seeing the wounds he wanted
To give of his help to him;
He bound up the wounds with oil and wine,
And brought him along to an inn.
("Don't thank me" he said as he put him to bed,
"This is only the least I can be;
You soon will be strong, and can go on your way,
That'll be thanks enough for me.")
And early next day as he arose to depart,
He placed money in the inn keepers hand;
"Just see to his needs, and if you spend more,
I'll repay you when I return."
"Now, who was his neighbor?" Jesus then asked
To the lawyer with downcast eyes;
"He that showed mercy" he said with his voice,
Jesus answered, "Go...do thou likewise!"

--Betty Whetstone

