

# *The Advocate of Truth*

*Who Was in the Manger?*

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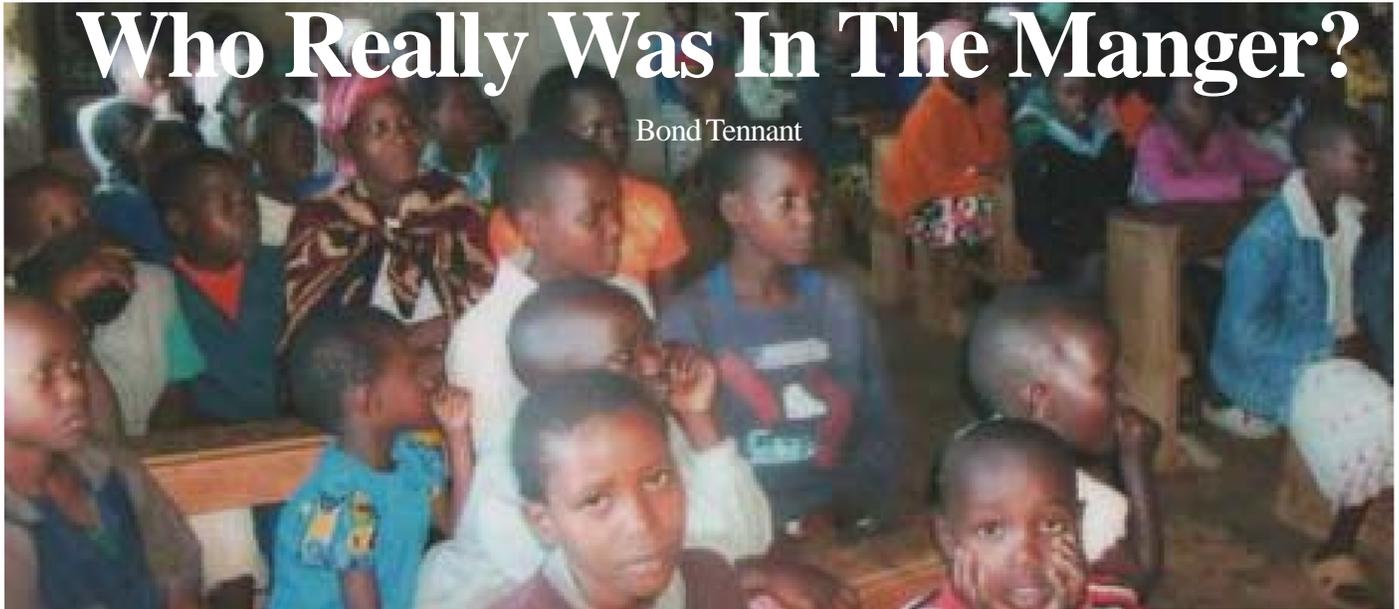
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# Who Really Was In The Manger?

Bond Tennant



It is that time of the secular year again when people think that they are celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, but are they really? We know that December 25 cannot be the birth of Christ. Almost every year, in the December issue of *The Advocate of Truth*, we publish an article about Christmas, telling its origin and the many traditions associated with it.

Many have not made Christ the center of their lives, and they do not even live as He instructed or do His commandments. Why should they wish to observe His birth?

Now, let us get to the heart of this article! Around Christmas, the manger scene is very popular. Among other things it shows a little baby who people call the Christ Child. Their emphasis seems to be upon this baby. Because they do not honor Him in their lives, they do not realize who this baby really was. Let us see four things this baby boy really was. You can use the verb “is” in the place of “was,” since He holds the same positions today!

**First, we see Him as the Son of God.** The angel said unto Mary, “... behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David” (Luke 1:31-32).

John the Baptist said, “And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God” (John 1:34). John also said, “...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

After seeing the graves opened and the earthquake, the centurion and others said, “...Truly this was the Son of God” (Matthew 27:54).

**Second, we see Him as the Son of man.** “...The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again” (Luke 24:7).

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14).

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5).

**Third, we see Him as a light to the Gentiles.** Simeon declared, “For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel” (Luke 2:30-32).

“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:11-13).

“And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost”

(Acts 10:45).

**Fourth, we see Him as the saviour of the world.**

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (I John 4:14).



# Empty Room

By Daniel Cruz

There was a preacher who had a massive congregation that he preached to on Sabbath. He was talking about the spiritual durability of the church and giving ways to endure the difficult times that can occur among the brethren. As he continued and gave various verses to support his message, he could see a lack of interest that was brewing in the congregation. There were some who were falling asleep. Others were doodling on pads of paper and even admiring their text messages during the sermon. The pastor, seeing these things, decided that he would give away something of value to the first parishioner who could give him an overview of the sermon that he gave. As he announced his intent, many began to sit up and pay attention to the remaining portion of the sermon.

The pastor finished his sermon and allowed for the service to end. As the congregation made its way out, many explained their thoughts, and the pastor was saddened to hear that the answers given were incorrect. As the line to exit the church was becoming shorter, the pastor continued to seek answers from the congregation. He looked back and noticed that the pews were empty, and there was no one left. How could this be that among all those who attended the service no one could give the pastor the correct overview of his message until a young man, who the pastor did not recall seeing exiting the church, went into the sanctuary and grabbed his Bible that he had left.

The pastor waited until he passed and asked the young man, "Did you hear the sermon today?" The young man said, "Of course. It was very uplifting for me, and I'm going home to tell my family." The pastor asked "Can you give me an overview of what was preached today?" "Yes!" said the young man excitedly. It was about strengthening ourselves in times of trouble and enduring the difficult days ahead." Surprised and overjoyed, the pastor embraced the young man. The young man asked about the gift that was to be given, and the pastor replied, "You have given me life to continue to preach and to stay the course. Your gift was what you gave to me."

The thought that we speak to someone about the Word of the Lord and find that God's Word is taken lightly can be troublesome for the hearer. "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side" (Matthew 13:19). Verse 21 states, "Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." Jesus expresses His concern for the listeners and pleads for them to receive the blessed news that He explains to them. Christ endured and was preparing the people for the things to come through His death. The truth is often offensive for a non-believer. God's Word should be given all reverence for

our edifying and exhortation. When your local pastor gives God's Word, it is to be enjoyed and treasured. "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors" (Proverbs 8:34). Job could see the importance of God's Word, and he did not take for granted the guidance of the Lord in his life. "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17). James was distinguishing God's wisdom from that of man. It can be said that man's wisdom can be deceptive in nature. He will use it for self gain. The verse is clearly stating that God's Word has no self interest. It gives so much more in our spiritual walk than any man can give.

Jesus was in the same predicament when He found us. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). Jesus has sought us out and given us His Father's promises. Our responsibility is listening and answering the call of the Father. Attending services and listening to the sermon is for our benefit and spiritual well being. When we get an opportunity to sit and hear the Word of God, we must be ready to hear the message that God has prepared for us and let it examine us for a bettering. Let us not be in a crowded sanctuary and not understand the sermon. God bless His Word.



# Ahab's Repentance

By Martin Williams

The thought may have come to mind: why does the Bible dedicate so many of its pages (I Kings 16:29 to chapter 22:40) to speak of Ahab? The answer may be as simple as this: Ahab was an ordinary man prone to all the sins of the ordinary man. The Word of God admonishes us in I John 2:15-17, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

In I Kings 16:28 we are told, "So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead." We see that Omri was the captain of the host of Israel, and upon the murder of Baasha, the son of Elah by his servant Zimri while he, Baasha, was "drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, the steward of his house in Tirzah," all Israel made him, Omri, king over Israel that day in the camp. In fulfillment of the Word

of God, spoken by Jehu, the prophet of the house of Baasha, Zimri "...slew all the house of Baasha: he left him not one..., neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends" (I Kings 16:11). In verses 25 and 26 of the same chapter we read, "But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that were before him. For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities."

As a man coming out of such a background in his position, it was almost impossible to change his character, for it seems, according to the history of Israel shortly before him, that he was destined to do evil. From verses 30-33 we read, "And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he

had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.” These verses confirm the evil character of King Ahab.

The first of the acts of God Almighty in relation to the evil state of Israel was to send to Ahab and to pronounce a period of drought, lack of rain for three years, by the mouth of Elijah the prophet. At the end of that period, Elijah showed himself to Ahab who greeted him with these words, “...Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim” (I Kings 18:17-18). A challenge was set up on the command of the prophet to the king upon Mt. Carmel, and it was consented to in the presence of all Israel: “...the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken” (verse 24). Ahab was present for the duration of the challenge when the four hundred and fifty (450) prophets of Baal, and the prophets of the groves four hundred (400) presented their offering to Baal from morning even up till noon, until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. My Bible and your Bible tells us “...that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded” (verse 29). After repairing the altar in the form described by God, and soaking the offering with water so that “...the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water” (verse 35). Elijah spoke to God and God answered by fire insomuch that “...the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench” (verse 38). The Bible testifies that “...when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God” (verse 39). The people of Israel that day were turned back to the one true and living God, the Almighty. All the prophets of Baal and the Groves were killed that day, and the rain came pouring down. God had turned back the heart of His people toward Him.

When Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, gathered a host and invaded the children of Israel with a mighty host “like the sand of the sea” he sent to Ahab requesting all his gold, silver, wives and children. Ahab did not refuse. The king of Syria sent the second time and requested in addition

to his first request all that was in the house of the servants of Ahab, all that pleased the men that he would send. Ahab refused. Ahab’s words to Ben-hadad were strong words when he said, “...Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off” (I Kings 20:11). God sent deliverance by the hand of the princes of the provinces to be lead by the king. The host of the Syrians fled before the people of God. The Syrians said that the Almighty was a god only of the hills and not a god of the valley, so that if the battle was to be fought in the valley they shall surely win. Warned of God of the return of the Syrians, the children of Israel again prevailed by God’s mercy and captured Ben-hadad alive. Ahab released him and by the mouth of the prophet death was pronounced on Ahab for such an act.

Ahab’s next evil activity was to covet the vineyard of Naboth in Jezreel which was next to the palace. When Naboth refused to give his father’s inheritance, as was the custom of Israel in those days, he allowed his wife Jezebel to use his name and the royal seal to cause the death of Naboth. In this plot were involved the elders and the nobles of the city of Naboth according to verse 8 of chapter 21. The Word of God came to Elijah the Tishbite, the man of God, that he should pronounce death the second time on Ahab and this time, how this death should take place. From verse 20 we read, “And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD. Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin. And of Jezebel also spoke the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat” (I Kings 21:20-24).

Ahab, upon hearing these words, repented and the Bible says, “And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly” (verse 27). By this action, God had mercy upon him and

changed his mind saying to Elijah, “Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son’s days will I bring the evil upon his house” (verse 29).

Ahab went to war in disguise thinking that God could not identify him. The king of Syria gave orders to his captains to fight only with the king of Israel, Ahab. When the captains saw the king Jehoshaphat, who had joined Ahab to fight against the Syrians, they thought that he was Ahab, but he shouted and saved his life. “And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country. So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake” (chapter 22:34-38). “So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead” (verse 40).

Before King Ahab went to battle, he asked the opinion of the prophets if he should go up or not to battle. All the prophets spoke good words to the king, but the prophet Micaiah spoke against the battle foretelling of the defeat of Israel and the death of Ahab. Ahab ordered concerning Micaiah that they should “...put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace. And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me” (verses 27-28).

We also see that the prophecy concerning Jezebel’s death was fulfilled to the letter in II Kings 9:30-35: “And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master? And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs. And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down:

and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king’s daughter. And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands.”

We see also the fulfillment of the words of God on the house of Ahab in chapter 10:7, “And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king’s sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent them to Jezreel.” “So Jehu slew all that remained in the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining” (verse 11).

The Bible story tells us of God’s great mercy to Ahab’s house and the punishment of his wife Jezebel of whom the Word testifies that “...there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up” (I Kings 21:25).

There is much to be learned today from this Bible story. We ought to examine ourselves daily to see if we have sinned by our words, thoughts or actions against the Most High. Ahab, when death was pronounced upon him and his household, repented and put on sackcloth and fasted before the Lord. God had mercy on him. We, too, are to take away pride in our hearts. My Bible and your Bible teaches us to be humble always and be not lifted up in pride no matter what the circumstances are. “...God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:6-7). “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (verse 10).

In closing, the text in Ezekiel 18:20-24 seems very appropriate: “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I

any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall

he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.” May God Almighty have mercy upon us all!

# THE APOSTLES

There are several interesting things connected with the call of the twelve disciples by the Servant-Son to be His apostles. It is particularly interesting to note who they were and what they were called to be and to do.

## **The Twelve Called Apostles by the Lord**

We gather this information from Luke 6:13. The title “apostle” is a rather significant title, and from the lips of our Lord it means a great deal.

According to the Greek definitions, the word thus rendered means first, as an adjective, dispatched or sent forth; second, as a substantive, the actual delegate of the person Jesus Christ. Maclear says, “In the classic Greek, the word was almost entirely restricted to the meaning of a ‘naval expedition,’ a fleet dispatched on foreign service.” The title “apostle” actually means a “messenger,” or “one sent forth” (Hebrews 3:1; I Kings 14:6).

The twelve apostles were chosen by the Lord to be His associates, His representatives and messengers.

## **The Lord’s Purpose for the Choice of the Twelve**

Seven things in particular arrest our attention in respect to the Lord’s choice of the twelve disciples to be His apostles, which are very noteworthy and interesting.

1. He made choice of them to be His apostles of His own sovereign will and plan. They had nothing whatsoever to do with it (John 13:18; Acts 1:2).
2. He made choice of them to be His apostles that they might be with Him and that He might send them forth (Mark 3:14).
3. He made choice of them to be His apostles that they might be separated from the world, and bring forth fruit (John 15:16-19).
4. In His choice of the twelve to be His apostles, the

Lord had His eye, not only upon their immediate ministry, but also upon their future ministry after His death, resurrection and ascension to the Father in heaven. Immediately upon His baptism and the entrance upon His public ministry, He began to call His disciples (John 1:35-51). When He called them, He undoubtedly had their future work and ministry in mind. All through the course of His earthly life and ministry, He was engaged with them. After His resurrection from the dead, He still continued with them for forty days to further their instruction (Acts 1:3). After His ascension to the Father, He bestowed upon them the Holy Spirit to empower them for their future work and ministry (Luke 24:48-49; Acts 1:8; 2:1-5, 32-33).

5. The Lord chose twelve apostles to whom He could impart the mysteries of the Kingdom of God (Mark 4:11-12; 13:36-51). This hidden mystery was not only imparted to the first twelve apostles but to the ones that came on the field of action after the original twelve went to their rest. Ephesians 3:5 states, “Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.” “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (verse 9).

6. The office of the apostle was often counterfeited. The Apostle Paul warns the Corinthian Church to beware of false apostles. If there were only the original 13, which some people say there are, how could anyone impersonate the Apostle Peter, or James, or John? They were added to the Board of Twelve as vacancies occurred. Therefore, Paul wrote, “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the APOSTLES of Christ”

(II Corinthians 11:13).

7. In the future, apostles will be here on earth doing the will of God. They will be twelve in number, and they will rejoice over the destruction of Babylon. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her" (Revelation 18:20).

### **Who the Original Twelve Disciples Were**

Who the twelve disciples were is indicated by their names and the brief historical sketches here and there throughout the New Testament.

1. Simon. He was surnamed Peter by the Lord Jesus (Matthew 10:2; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14). He is elsewhere called Simeon (Acts 15:14). He was the son of Jona (Jonas) (John 1:42), and a native of Bethsaida (John 1:44).

2. James. He was the son of Zebedee and Salome (Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40), and surnamed by Christ with John, Boanerges (Mark 3:17). James was commonly called James "the Great."

3. John. He was the brother of James and the writer of the fourth Gospel, surnamed by Christ with John Boanerges (Mark 3:17). The name Boanerges means "sons of thunder." The Lord possibly called James and John by this name because of their fiery zeal (Luke 9:54; Mark 9:38; 10:37).

4. Andrew. He was a brother of Peter (Matthew 4:18), and a former disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:40). Andrew was a native of Bethsaida (John 1:44).

5. Philip. He was a native of Bethsaida and one of the earliest disciples of Christ (John 1:43).

6. Bartholomew. It is likely that he was Nathanael ((John 1:44-46; 21:2).

7. Matthew. He was the publican (Matthew 10:3; Luke 5:27), called also Levi (Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27), the son of Alphaeus (Mark 2:14).

8. Thomas. He is elsewhere called Didymus, and he was a twin (John 11:16; 21:2). Thomas was greatly given to doubt and despondency (John 14:5; 20:24-25).

9. James. He was the son of Alphaeus, also called "James the Less" (Mark 15:40). He was not the Lord's brother and author of the Epistle of James (Galatians 1:19).

10. Thaddaeus. He was called Lebbaeus, and surnamed Thaddaeus. He was the Judas of John 14:22, possibly a son of James, who it is held was bishop of Jerusalem (Acts 1:13).

11. Simon the Canaanite. He was called the Cananaean (Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:18), called Zelotes (Luke 6:15;

Acts 1:13).

12. Judas Iscariot. He was sometimes called the son of Simon (John 6:71; 13:2, 26), but more generally Iscariot; namely, probably "a native of Kerioth," a little village in the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:25; Jeremiah 48:24). Judas Iscariot was he who betrayed the Lord.

### **The Apostles that came after the First Twelve**

The apostles remained a continuous body of workers in the Church of God. When Judas Iscariot hung himself, his vacancy was filled by the selecting of another from the disciples of the Lord. They drew lots from men that had been faithful and true to the Lord all the time that He was on the earth. In fact, the men that were chosen had to be members of the disciples from the time of John the Baptist.

13. Matthias. He was a man full of sincerity and truth. His qualifications are mentioned by Luke in Acts 1:19 to 26. The qualifications of a Bishop are found in Titus 1:7 to 9.

14. Paul. He was first called Saul, and was a persecutor of the Church of God. He was converted on the way to Damascus by a revelation from the Lord Jesus. God revealed His Son in Paul, that he would preach Jesus Christ among the Gentiles (Galatians 1:11-16).

15. Baranbas. Baranbas was called by the Lord at about the same time that Paul was chosen to become an apostle. Barnabas and Paul worked together for a few years in spreading the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ everywhere (Acts 13:2-4; 14:14).

16. James. James was the fleshly brother of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 13:55). This personal brother of Jesus seemed to become the spokesman for the Church of God. He is the one whom the Apostle Paul went to see in Jerusalem for advice. This incident is recorded in Galatians 1:17-19 where we read that the literal brother of Jesus is numbered with the other apostles.

17. Andronicus –

18. Junius. These two apostles are only mentioned once by the Apostle Paul. But in mentioning them we learn that they are of note and of renown among the other apostles. They were in the faith and had the testimony of Jesus even before the Apostle Paul (Romans 16:7).

19. Silas. He was a worker with the Apostle Paul and accompanied him on numerous journeys and adventures. Much of the Book of Acts is filled with the good work of the Apostle Silas (I Thessalonians 1:1; 2:6).

20. Timothy. He was converted as a young man

through the work of his mother and grandmother (Acts 16:1-3). He became a good fellow-laborer and minister of the Lord (II Corinthians 1:1, 19). Much later, after Paul was imprisoned, was Timothy ranked with Paul and Silas as an apostle (I Thessalonians 1:1; 2:6). History tells us that he became the apostle of Caesarea.

21. Apollos. He had a wonderful work for the Lord in the land of Asia Minor. Apollos is also called the steward of the mysteries of God by the Apostle Paul.

The mission of the apostles was divided into two periods and consisted in two relations. Before the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ and the advent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, their mission was in relation to Israel and the gospel of the kingdom. After the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ and the advent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, their mission was in relation to the second offer of the kingdom to Israel, which was refused and rejected, and the gospel was sent to the Gentiles, for which proclamation after Peter had opened the door into the sphere of Christian profession and the church of Christ to the Gentiles (Acts 10), Paul was chosen of the Lord. When the King was rejected by Israel, the gospel of Christ took the place of the gospel of the kingdom.

The gospel of Christ is the good news that Jesus Christ,

the rejected King of the Jews, has died on the cross of Calvary for the sins of the whole world, and that in Him, and by His death, God has righteously dealt with the sins of the whole world, and that He arose from the dead for the justification of every one who believes on Him. It is the good news that by grace through faith in Christ there is salvation, justification and eternal life, both to the Jew and Gentile alike. This is the gospel which is to be proclaimed during the present dispensation, which is the dispensation of grace.

The apostles of the church were also called bishops. In Acts 1:20, the office of an apostle was called a "bishoprick." Two men were selected, and their lots were placed into a container, and one was drawn forth from it. **I Corinthians 12:28-29 reads: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?" No!** All positions are important beginning with the apostles and down to the ones that help. All are necessary for proper functioning of God's church. Thank God for creating a wonderful workable organization which Jesus purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28)

--Reprinted from an old file



A tale is told about the Union Civil War general, Ulysses S. Grant. When he defeated an opposing army on the battlefield he demanded total, or unconditional surrender, as the terms of conquest. Because of this, folks began calling him "Unconditional Surrender" Grant instead of Ulysses S. Grant. In our lives as well, the Lord Jesus demands nothing less than total, or unconditional, surrender to Him. In Luke 14:33 the Master said: "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all

that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

We generally tend to think of sinfulness as total corruption in a person or group. However, if an individual holds back even a little bit of himself or herself from the Lord, that person is still living in a state of sin. We understand this concept with the sports world. In athletics, if a person or team loses by one point or thirty points, a loss is still a loss. The Lord wants all of us or none of us. We can readily see what He thinks of the person who is living

in a Laodicean condition (see Revelation 3:14-16).

Why is the Lord so insistent upon our giving total allegiance to Him? One reason is because living for self leads to total corruption. We see this situation unfolded in the life of the greatest example of apostasy the universe has ever known: the angel, Lucifer, turning into the devil, Satan. Ezekiel 28:17 informs us: "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness:..." (please read verses 12-17, and compare with Isaiah 14:12-17; Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:7-9). Lucifer, a one time high ranking angel became enamored with his own beauty and brightness, until he became corrupted and wanted to be like God, Himself. Now, as Satan, he is awaiting his destruction in the Lake of Fire.

We can see many other situations in the Bible when those who did not give full allegiance to the Lord ended up with many sorrows, or even death. Let us now examine some of these situations. Genesis chapter 6 records one such episode in history. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (verses 5-8).

The above corrupt situation had apparently come about because of the marriages of "the sons of God" with "the daughters of men" (in other words, the godly line of Seth was mingling with the ungodly line of Cain. Please refer to Genesis 6:1-4). Whenever this situation occurs, the ungodly influence in the families involved has a terrible influence upon the children born into these families. That is why the Lord warns us in II Corinthians 6:14-15: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" Only God's grace can salvage the children in such marriages.

After the Flood it wasn't long before the world, once again, began to fall away from the Lord. This time it was

through the ungodly line of Ham. This son of Noah was not a dedicated person to the Lord as we can see from an incident that occurred in Genesis 9:20-24. "And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him."

We are told that Noah was "a preacher of righteousness" (see II Peter 2:5). It seems that he did commit a sin by becoming drunk from his wine, but his life was dedicated to serving God. However, Ham, being an ungodly man, would have had a terrible influence upon his descendants. The next great apostasy, as we have already noted, was directly through his lineage. Genesis 10:6,8-12 reads: "And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan...And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city."

We know from history the terrible idolatrous system of worship that Nimrod helped set up. This Babylonian system has spread to many parts of the world and includes in christendom: Sunday worship; festivals such as Halloween, Christmas, and Easter; confession of sins to a priest; and many other pagan inspired doctrines. Other religious systems in the world have been greatly influenced by the Babylonian system. The Lord has some people who are still caught up in some of these Babylonian doctrines. We read of this in Revelation 18:4: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (please read all of Revelation 18).

Next, we will examine a situation where the choosing

of a seemingly advantageous position in life was actually very costly. The story concerns Lot and Abram, when Lot's servants strove with Abram's servants. "And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly" (Genesis 13:8-13).

Lot lost a great deal by choosing to move his family to the wicked city of Sodom. He lost his home because it was destroyed in the destruction of that city. He lost his two sons-in-law who stayed behind rather than flee from Sodom (see Genesis 19:16). Later, he lost his wife who disobediently looked back at the city as it was being destroyed, and was turned into a pillar of salt (see verses 17,26). Lot, even though he was a just and righteous man (see II Peter 2:7-9), committed sin with his two daughters when he, like Noah, became drunk. Referring to this incestuous relationship we read in Genesis 19:32-36: "Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the first-born went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father."

After the Israelites had entered the Promised Land, and Joshua and that generation had all died out (see Judges

2:8-10), we learn: "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies" (verses 11-14).

During the period of the Judges, the Israelites returned to the Lord, at times, only as long as the judge was alive to lead them. Then, as we shall see, they rebelled once more. "Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so. And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way" (verses 16-19).

Total surrender to the Lord is a personal choice that one must make. If a person follows the Lord because of a church leader's enthusiasm, or because one was born into a church going family, then that commitment will wither away when the leader or family is no longer present. Many have a relationship with the Lord only through another person or through a church group. Everyone must decide to follow the Lord and to stand for Him on an individual basis. This is the type of relationship that the Lord is looking for, and it is a life of total surrender to Him.

A good example of living the life of total surrender is found in many of God's prophets recorded in the Old Testament. Elijah was one such example. This prophet of

the Lord would not compromise, even with the terror of the threats of King Ahab or Queen Jezebel upon him. He was also willing to live a life without material comforts if need be. We pick up the story in I Kings, chapter 17. "And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook" (verses 1-6).

Eventually, the brook dried up and he lived with a widow woman and her family in Zarephath (see verses 7-16). In chapter 18, Elijah met up with Ahab and a challenge was given by the prophet to the king to go to Mount Carmel, with the prophets of Baal and the people of Israel, to see who is the true God, Baal or the LORD. "Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men...And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God. And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there" (verses 22, 36-40).

Even though Elijah was totally dedicated to The Lord, he still had human emotions, the same that we might experience today. "And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had

done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee" (19:1-7).

After Elijah had eaten and drunk, twice, of that heavenly meal provided for him by the angel, he had the strength to go "forty days and forty nights" unto Mount Horeb. While lodged in a cave at Mount Horeb, the Lord spoke to him saying, "What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (see verses 8-14).

(Please turn to page 18).



# 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.*

## **“Look Under The Hood”**

There is a saying that has just recently become popular, especially in politics. It advises one to “look under the hood” when he hears of a position that is in a platform or a new piece of legislation that is being considered.

The same advice applies to children of God. There may be some doctrines that sound very good. But when one looks “under the hood,” he finds that they do not stand up according to the Word of God.

Two of these doctrines are British Israelism and the Sacred Name doctrines. This writer leaned toward British Israelism before he looked under the hood and found that it is false.

When speaking about God setting those in His church government, Ephesians 4:11-14 tells us: “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: THAT WE HENCEFORTH BE NO MORE CHILDREN, TOSSED TO AND FRO, AND CARRIED ABOUT WITH EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE, BY THE SLEIGHT OF MEN, AND CUNNING CRAFTINESS, WHEREBY THEY LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE.”

Hebrews 13:9 tells us, “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.”

## **Arming The Syrian Rebels**

The United States decided to help arm the Syrian rebels. It is not clear as to who these rebels really are. The intentions of the United States are good in thinking that the defeat of the Syrian regime will be good for the people and even establish a democracy. There is no guarantee that the new government will not become just as corrupt as the present regime. We know what happened in Egypt when a duly elected president was overthrown by the Egyptian army. As of this writing, there is no lasting peace in Egypt.

This is just another example of supporting a conflict. The victory of the Syrian rebels will not lessen the rough conditions that the Syrian people endure and the hatred of one another.

When speaking about the natural man being separated from God because of iniquities, Isaiah 59:8 records, “The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.”

The cross-reference is found in Romans 3:17 which reads, “And the way of peace have they not known.”

## **Baby Boomer Divorce Rate**

I read that there has been a big jump in Baby Boomer divorce rates and that many are now divorcing after the age of fifty. This has been especially true following the Great Recession. Why should this be true? No doubt, it may be more difficult to sustain the same standard of living and work through the many complexities of life that a husband and wife may have since the Great Recession.

However, this is no excuse to obtain a divorce. Among the many reasons given for the rise in these divorce rates, not one was for unfaithfulness, which is the only grounds given by our Lord for a divorce.

It is easy for a husband and wife to be united when the going is easy. However, according to God's Word, the husband and wife are one flesh. They must stick together and make decisions and consol each other as one flesh.

Getting a divorce on grounds except unfaithfulness is a violation of one of God's Ten Commandments. When speaking of the many things that transpire before His coming, Jesus said, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13). It pleases God when a husband and wife endures until death does its part.

### **United We Stand--Divided We Fall**

I see in the newspaper that many of the state governments in the United States have passed laws which contradict the laws of the federal government. These opposite laws mainly have to do with issues such as immigration and gun control although there are others. It seems like America has become nothing but a bunch of bickering politicians in the state governments and the federal government.

This is not (or should not ever be) true in the Church of God! The Church of God is not a political party, and the members do not argue and bicker among each other as is very common among many politicians. Yes, there are some decent politicians, but they are very few.

The saints in the Church of God take note of what is written in Ephesians 4:1-3: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." These words were written by the Apostle Paul. Therefore, there can be no politicizing in the Church of God.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1).

### **Farmers' Almanac Weather Prediction**

I saw while viewing the Internet that the Farmers' Almanac has predicted an extremely cold winter coming up. The Farmers' Almanac may be correct in its prediction as it usually is. But the extremely cold weather this winter remains to be seen since winter is just beginning to dawn.

At the time of this writing, the weather, especially in the Midwest, is extremely hot. The extremes in the weather and in the actions (either right or left, etc.) of the people are surely signs of the times!

### **A Small Country Paradise?**

I often see on CNN an advertisement inviting people to come to a small country not far from the United States to invest and live. It is claimed that it is safe in government and business. I believe that it is called Belize. (I am not sure of the spelling).

That is all well and good for the present. But the town officials and inhabitants must remember that no country or place is immune to unexpected upheavals. Belize is no exception!

### **Witch Burning Still Alive**

Consider the following article about the burning of a woman in Papua New Guinea.

#### **Woman Accused Of witchcraft Burned Alive**

##### **PORT MORESBY**

A woman accused of witchcraft has been burned alive in front of hundreds of witnesses in one of the highest profile sorcery-rated murders in this South Pacific island nation, police said.

The brutal slaying of 20-year-old Kepari Leniata on Wednesday has been condemned by the nation's prime minister, police and diplomatic observers. Leniata was stripped naked by several assailants, tortured with a hot iron rod, bound, doused in gasoline, then set alight on a pile of car tires and trash in the Western Highlands provincial capital of Mount Hagan, police said.

Leniata was accused of sorcery by relatives of a six-year-old boy who died in a local hospital the day before. Responses to sorcery allegations have become increasingly violent in recent years.

--From Wire Reports



# Questions and Answers

**QUESTION:** I would love to have Jesus personally belong to me alone. Can one have this same feeling although he knows that all the saints are united in the body of Christ?

**ANSWER:** You certainly can have Jesus personally belong to you! He is your personal Friend. Even though He is the Bridegroom and the New Jerusalem is His Bride, and even though He is the Lord of all and the King of Kings, He will always have the time to spend with you and your problems or thoughts. He is a wonderful Saviour and will bring you faith, hope and love. "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love" (Ephesians 3:15-17). This means that the true glory of the incorporated members of the Church of God, which is the Body of Christ, is so great, so immeasurable, that we can only imagine it through pictures as the Lord uses when He says that we are His body, His temple, His personal guests at the marriage of the Lamb.

You may say, "But that applies to everyone and not to anyone personal." We would like to say in answer that our Lord is so great and infinite in versatility of His glorious Person He is capable of being absolutely your personal Saviour and Lord in a way that is far above your understanding. He is so personally yours that He knows

the smallest detail in your life. He knows your thoughts. He cares for you and loves you immensely.

**QUESTION:** What are the Catholic Epistles? Do they have any reference or relevance to Catholics, as apart from Protestants?

**ANSWER:** The Catholic Epistles are not epistles with special reference to or relevance to Catholics.

The word *catholic* comes from a Latin root meaning "universal general." The Catholic Epistles were so designated because they were seen as being addressed to church members in general, not the members of any particular congregation. The Apostle Paul wrote many epistles which were written to specific churches to address local circumstances, and they are known by the names of the congregations to whom they were initially sent (e.g., Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians). The Catholic Epistles, on the other hand, are known by the names of their authors: James, Peter, Jude and John.

**QUESTION:** What is the Scriptural function of the heart?

**ANSWER:** This question can be best answered by quoting **Treasury Of Gospel Words** by Elder Jerry Womble. His column about the heart appeared in a past issue of *The Advocate of Truth*.

A widely quoted Scripture is "As a man thinketh in his heart." Is that the blood pumping muscle? Is it in the chest or head? When talking of our heart retaining God's

words, we are not thinking of the fleshly muscle. The word heart is a symbolic word, and its meaning cannot be found from science, but from the Word of God. From the Hebrew and Greek definitions, we see heart used as thoughts, feelings, perception, intellect. All of these are of the mind. The Word of God is stored in the heart. We are to retain His words in our heart. Our mind is used to store Scripture by memorizing and meditation. This is not kept by our blood pump, but by our brain. Yet, it is much more than the physical brain. The brain is only the storehouse. The term heart includes all of our thoughts, feelings, and emotions that we display. The words we say and the things we do are motivated by what we are thinking about, the thoughts that we hold in our mind, heart.

Solomon tells us in Proverbs 4:23, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” We see an example of this in what happened to his father, David. David looked upon Uriah’s wife as she bathed, and the thoughts and plans of the flesh were placed in his mind. Had he kept his mind diligent, he would not have failed in this issue of his life.

The heart then is our control center for the way of life that we lead. It is similar to a computer. The computer can only play back the information that is put into it. The computer is only as accurate as the operator. So our mind is effective only to the point that we allow it to be. If we are following the lust of the flesh or are under the control of the devil, then our life will reflect what abides in our minds. On the other hand, if we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and that Spirit controls the input to our heart, then we will reflect the “Mind of Christ.”

This will result in our displaying the Fruit of the Spirit after we feed upon the Word of God and program His Commandments and Doctrines into our control center.

Whoever is in charge of the control panel of our mind will be seen when we are under pressure, such as in times of temptation or tribulation. It will also be displayed in our relaxed moments by the output of our tongue, hands, or body.

**QUESTION:** What is the “Neoorthodox Theory” view of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and what is the correct view?

**ANSWER:** The “Neoorthodox Theory” view of the inspiration of the Scriptures says that the Bible is a fallible

and often unreliable “witness” to the Word of God. In a fallible way, it points to Christ.

This view does not make any sense. In order to get the correct view of Christ, those who accept this “Neoorthodox Theory” must believe the things written about Christ were authored by uninspired men. We know that the men who wrote the Bible books were moved by God’s Holy Spirit. If the Bible is a fallible and unreliable witness to the Word of God, where may one find a true and reliable witness?

We believe that the Scriptures were inspired exactly as II Peter 1:20-21 tells us: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” The only reliable record that points to Christ is found in the Bible.

**QUESTION:** I have a friend who told me that the New Testament is made up of fairy tales. Do you think this is true?

**ANSWER:** No, we do not think that is true! The New Testament is based on eyewitness testimony. In II Peter 1:16 we read, “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.” I John 1:1 affirms this, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.”

**QUESTION:** Will you please give one good reason to believe in the miracles that Jesus performed?

**ANSWER:** One good reason is the brief time that elapsed between Jesus’ miraculous public ministry and the publication of the Gospels. The time was insufficient to think up miracle legends. Several eyewitnesses to Jesus’ miracles would still be living to refute any untrue miracle account. “After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep” (I Corinthians 15:6).

We must recognize the excellent character of the men who witnessed these miracles. These men did no misrepresentation. They were willing to give up their lives rather than to deny their beliefs.

(from page 13) The Lord gave Elijah some orders to follow after he would leave Mount Horeb, and then He assured the prophet: "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (see verses 15-18). Elijah, plus these 7,000, were totally surrendered to God. Come what may they had dedicated their lives to Him, personally, and were committed to following their Lord, not selfish desires or worldly fashions.

The greatest example of absolute, unconditional, total surrender to God was the Lord Jesus Christ. We are told of Him: "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" (Philippians 2:5-8). The reason that Jesus was so surrendered to God was because of His attitude which was always expressed in the saying: "...nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). May we ever follow our Lord's example.



**THE CHURCH AROUND  
THE WORLD**

*San Antonio, Texas*





*Pictures from a Camp Meeting in San Antonio*



**LESSON I**

**ABIJAH MAKES WAR AGAINST JEROBOAM**

**Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 13:1-20.**

**Golden Text: II Chronicles 13:17 (first part).**

**“And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter.”**

NOTE: We have just finished studying about the reign of king Rehoboam. King Rehoboam died, and his son, Abijah, reigned in his stead. Abijah reigned as king of Judah from 915-913 B.C. We are going to study now about how he made war against Jeroboam.

1. In what year did Abijah reign over Judah? II Chronicles 13:1.
2. How many years did he reign in Jerusalem? With whom was Abijah at war? II Chronicles 13:2.
3. How many men of war did Abijah have? How many did Jeroboam have? II Chronicles 13:3.
4. What did Abijah say to all Israel when he stood upon Mt. Zemaraim? II Chronicles 13:4-5.
5. What did he say Jeroboam had done, and who had gathered unto him? II Chronicles 13:6-9.
6. Was Abijah still serving the Lord? What did he say about the Levites and about Israel? II Chronicles 13:10-12.
7. Did Abijah and the men of Judah call upon God at this time, and did God hear their plea? II Chronicles 13:14-16.
8. Abijah and his men slew the Israelites with a great slaughter. Why did the children of Judah prevail? II Chronicles 13:17-18.
9. Did Abijah pursue Jeroboam? What was the result? II

Chronicles 13:19-20.

**LESSON II**

**KING ASA'S GOOD REIGN**

**Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 14:1-15.**

**Golden Text: II Chronicles 14:2.**

**“And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God.”**

NOTE: In our lesson, we learned that Abijah reigned over Judah for three years. He defeated Jeroboam in battle. Abijah died, and his son, Asa, was king in his place. Let us study about the new king and see if he proved to be a good ruler over the people.

1. Abijah died and was buried in the city of David. Who reigned in his stead? II Chronicles 14:1.
2. Did Asa do what was right in the sight of God? II Chronicles 14:2.
3. What did he take away from the land and command the people of Judah to keep? II Chronicles 14:3-4.
4. What else did he take away from all the cities of Judah? What did he build? II Chronicles 14:5-6.
5. Did the people of Judah build cities and prosper, and how many men were in Asa's army? II Chronicles 14:7-8.
6. Who came against them? Where did this battle take place? II Chronicles 14:9-10.
7. What did Asa ask from the Lord, and did God answer Asa? II Chronicles 14:11-12.
8. When the Ethiopians fled, what did Asa and his men do? Did they destroy the Ethiopians? II Chronicles 14:13-14.
9. What did they carry away with them to Jerusalem? II Chronicles 14:15.

## LESSON III

## KING ASA ABOLISHES IDOLATRY

**Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 15:1-19.**

**Golden Text: II Chronicles 15:8 (first part).**

**“And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin...”**

NOTE: Asa was the son of Abijah, and he did that which is good and right in the eyes of the Lord. He took away the altars of the strange gods and broke down the images. He completely abolished idolatry and made a covenant to seek the Lord in the chapter we are studying today.

1. Who went out to meet Asa, and what did he tell King Asa? II Chronicles 15:1-2.
2. What further did Azariah tell all Israel in II Chronicles 15:3-6?
3. What did Azariah tell them would happen, and what did Asa do when he heard these words? II Chronicles 15:7-8.
4. Whom did he gather then with him, and during what year and month of his reign did this happen? II Chronicles 15:9-10.
5. What did they offer unto the Lord, and what kind of covenant did they make with Him? II Chronicles 15:11-12.
6. What would happen to those of Israel who would not seek the Lord? II Chronicles 15:13.
7. Did all Judah rejoice at the oath, and how did they show they were happy over it? II Chronicles 15:14-15.
8. Why did Asa remove Maachah, his mother, from being queen? What did he do to her idols? II Chronicles 15:16.

9. Was there any more war during the reign of Asa? Was he perfect all his days? II Chronicles 15:17-19.

## LESSON IV

## ASA'S LEAGUE WITH SYRIA

**Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 16:1-14.**

**Golden Text: II Chronicles 16:9 (first part).**

**“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him...”**

NOTE: We are going to study the last years of Asa's reign. In the chapter which you just read, King Asa made a league with Syria, so let us see if he did that which was pleasing to God.

1. During what year of Asa's reign did Baasha come up against Judah? What did he do? II Chronicles 16:1.
2. Asa sent to Ben-hadad, king of Syria, and what did he desire of him? II Chronicles 16:2-3.
3. Did Ben-hadad hearken unto King Asa? II Chronicles 16:4.
4. What did Baasha do when he heard that the armies were sent against the cities of Israel? II Chronicles 16:5.
5. Asa then took all Judah. What happened to Ramah? Did they continue to build Ramah? II Chronicles 16:6.
6. What did Hanani, the seer, tell Asa would happen because he relied on the king of Syria instead of the Lord? II Chronicles 16:7-9.
7. Was Asa wroth with the seer? What did he do to him? II Chronicles 16:10.



## Found- A Pair Of Shoes

“Mama, can you buy me a pair of shoes from the store, will you? These are full of holes and I am ashamed to go to school.”

Mother looked at the footwear, and shook her head. How glad she would be to see those dear little feet covered. But the list of things she could not do without was a long one, and her purse was small.

“Ah! Willie, I am afraid your old shoes will have to serve for some time yet. Mama has only just enough money to buy flour, and other necessities we need. So, my little man, be good and don’t ask me for them.”

A subdued sob resounded sadly in the Mother’s ears as she bent down to embrace her little boy. And this made her go on her way to the store with her head bowed down. However, she was one of those happy souls who look on the bright side of things. She rejoiced in the faithfulness of Him who would never leave her.

The bus which Mrs. Harvey took that morning was a busy one, but she took less notice than usual, her mind was occupied with going over her list to see if she could manage to include a pair of shoes in it. But she had not made a mistake. She had no money for that. Then she stopped. A verse had just come to her mind: “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” Then she poured out in the ears of Him who hears in secret all her cares, one after another, not forgetting in her long list the shoes for her boy. From that moment her ride became lighter, and a half an hour later she was at the counter of the shopkeeper.

“Have you had success today, Mrs. Harvey? You look so happy,” he asked, as he bagged her purchases.

“By no means! replied the lady, “on the contrary, times are very bad. But I find all along the way mercy and faithfulness.”

“Yes, that is good.” The shopkeeper knew his customer well, for her conversation was always refreshing to him. But there are many people who groan on the way of life. What is it that makes you so happy today?”

“Just the knowledge that the Lord cares for me and mine,” answered the lady.

Then the conversation changed, and Mrs. Harvey prepared to leave.

“While I think of it, I have here a pair of shoes, nearly new, which my Bernard cannot wear, since they are too tight for him, as he is a year older than your Willie you will allow me, I shall be pleased to give them to him.”

Mrs. Harvey couldn’t restrain her feeling when she saw on the the counter a splendid pair of shoes. “I told the Lord that Willie needed a pair of shoes, and He sent them to me by your means.”

I do not know which was the happier of the three; the shopkeeper, when he knew that he was the instrument in God’s hands; Mrs. Harvey, when she realized better than ever the care of God for her; or Willie when he proudly put on his new pair of shoes and was told that God had sent them.

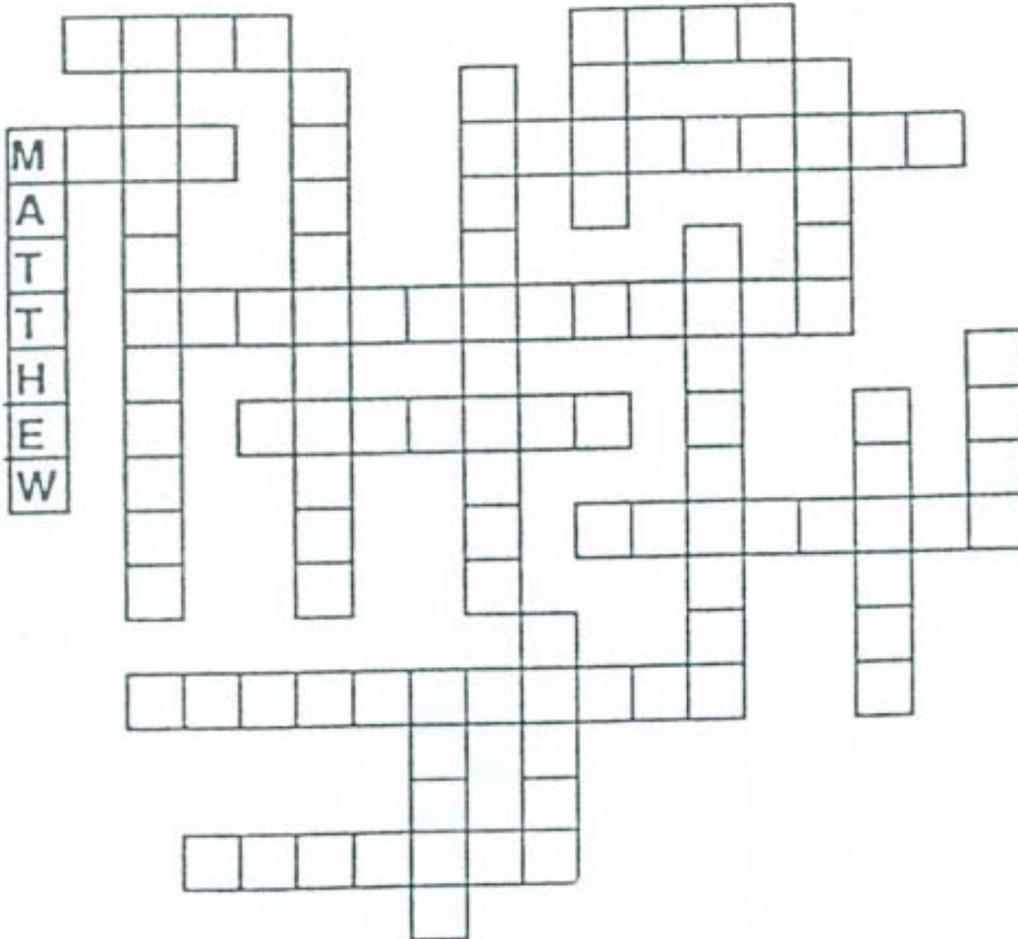
“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (I Peter 5:7).

*NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS OF THE BIBLE*

*Fit the names of the New Testament books into the puzzle below.  
The numbers are not used in the puzzle.*

*MATTHEW  
MARK  
LUKE  
JOHN  
ACTS  
ROMANS  
I & II CORINTHIANS  
GALATIANS  
EPHESIANS  
PHILIPPIANS  
COLOSSIANS*

*I & II THESSALONIANS  
I & II TIMOTHY  
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PHILEMON  
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JAMES  
I & II PETER  
I & II & III JOHN  
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## **A RAINBOW**

**by Betty Whetstone**

**Whenever the storm clouds gather,  
God left us a promise to know,  
And so that we can all remember,  
He left us the pretty rainbow.  
No matter how dark the storm clouds,  
Or how cold the mighty North Wind;  
If we only just trust and believe Him,  
Then all will be well in the end.  
For even the storm clouds obey Him,  
And will do anything He might say;  
And the North Wind loses its power  
Whenever we kneel down to pray.  
How blessed we are to believe Him,  
And to know that He gives us His best,  
When we put all our troubles behind us,  
Then God will take care of the rest!**

**--Genesis 6:13,16**

