

The Advocate of Truth

Commanded Tithing

Somewhat Against You

Salted With Fire

*World's Best
Commentary*

Great is our God



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The Advocate of Truth is the official organ of The Church of God (7th Day) with headquarters at Salem, West Virginia.

It is published once a month on the fourth Monday of each month by The Advocate of Truth Press, Inc. PO Box 328, Salem, West Virginia 26426. Entered as Second Class Matter on January 22, 1990 (now periodicals) at the Post Office in Salem, West Virginia under the Postal Act of March 3, 1879. The magazine is mailed under the periodicals rate.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Your subscription is free. It is paid for by people who are concerned about the truth.

Your contributions are sincerely appreciated. You may request this periodical by sending your mailing address to this address.

POSTMASTER:

Please send address changes to:

**THE CHURCH OF GOD
PUBLISHING HOUSE
P.O. Box 328
Salem, WV 26426-0328**

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Volume LX

Number 3

September 27, 2010

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USPS 542-940**

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COMMANDED TITHING

BY BOND TENNANT

True children of God are dedicated. They neither stagger or are hesitant when it comes to obeying God in tithing. They know what the Word of God tells them about tithing! They know tithing is one of the things that they must do. Many habits of Christian living have taught them commitment. They have developed strong commitment having holy thoughts, doing good deeds, prayer, reading the Bible, faithful church attendance, etc.

Tithing is not an unusual requirement among God's standards. Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:29-30). The dedicated child of God would no more miss tithing than he would prayer. Tithing is worship, tithing is service, tithing is obedience. Joy is found in tithing. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Corinthians 9:7). Tithing is spiritual. It has both an earthly as well as an eternal consequence. The boy had to give his lunch before the five thousand were fed. The church cannot grow without the ministry. The difference is the number of souls saved or lost as a result of our tithing. God uses us! God does not need our tithe for Himself. Jesus founded the church, and we are to fund it.

Eternal consequences are involved with tithing. Jesus taught, "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through or steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:20-

21). The greatest statement on material possessions in all the world is Jesus' statement, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

Our object is not really for more possessions or things in life, but for happiness and peace of mind. Only God can give us that. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). Let us obey God in tithing and in all points so that we may be happy as He desires for us to be. God makes it possible for us to do His will. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

The government here in America makes it advantageous for us to give our tithes and offerings to God when we deduct what we give to the church from the income tax report. Most would rather know that their money was going to support the ministry of their church than to produce more guns and ammunition to be used in war.

The devil wants to keep God from getting our tithe, and he wants to use it for evil purposes. We owe our tithes to God! He gives us the strength to earn income. God will use our tithes for the ultimate good. God pays great dividends. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Corinthians 2:9).

Let us tithe faithfully.

“I HAVE SOMEWHAT AGAINST THEE”

REVELATION 2:1-6

By Josue Torres Martinez



The church in Ephesus had a pure doctrine, but it was deficient in love. Christ directs the church in Ephesus like a true shepherd. He does not close His eyes to the good or the bad. He eulogizes them for being faithful, and He condemns them of where they have failed.

Christ begins by telling the church that was in this city: **“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted”** (verses 2-3).

The church in Ephesus was established by the Apostle Paul. In its day, this church had a pure doctrine and persevered under adversity. Neither the world, nor the persecution, nor the economy caused it to lose its pureness before God. This church also abhorred false doctrines like those of the Nicolaitans. In fact, the brethren in the church in Ephesus were characterized as being clean, patient and persevering before God. This was one church with so many positive things. Could it have something negative? In verse 4, the Lord says: **“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”**

The church of the Ephesians did not take care of itself, and a spirit of jealousy and lack of confidence took them over. During three years, the Apostle Paul instructed them well in the good paths (see Acts 20:35). He taught them everything that was useful for salvation (see Acts 20:20). But because of their interest in material wealth and worldly distractions, they lost the love of one to another as well as their love toward the Lord Jesus. The church had become inconstant in the fulfillment of the faith in Christ, giving little

value to the salvation that God offers. The fervor and zeal that they felt in the beginning of their call became lost.

Because of that, the Lord said to the church in Ephesus: **“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent...”** (verse 5). The Lord asked them to repent, and that meant to change their way of thinking and acting. Christ wanted them to keep on being like they were in the beginning. They knew very well that their attitude must reflect at least the following five things: 1.) They must deny themselves: “...nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me...” (Galatians 2:20). 2.) They must hate this life (see Luke 14:26). 3.) They must forsake all (see Luke 14:33). 4.) They must seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (see Matthew 6:33). 5.) They must do the first works (see Revelation 2:5).

The call was to depend on the Christ life which was based in the faith of Christ. But what would happen if they did not do it? **“...or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent”** (verse 5). They would be like a candle which is not lit. There would be only darkness, but the church must be the light. “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid” (Matthew 5:14).

Does the church in these days look like the one in Ephesus? Today, the church also rejects those who say they are apostles but are not. After the apostles went to rest in their graves, new ones that came would have to be proved. As long as there are true apostles, false ones will appear as well. Today the church has patience, works the works of Christ and abhors the doctrines of demons.

“But they have not all obeyed the gospel”

(Romans 10:16, first part), Many brothers and sisters of the Church of God at this time have fallen into a lukewarm condition as well, when one cares more for the values that the world offers. In the church of today, there is also a loss of joy. The praise to God has become something monotonous and routine. There is loss of interest in real salvation, and love is sometimes feigned. Nowadays, many have lost the true perspective they once had. Instead of pleasing the Lord, they try to please themselves, preceding and imposing their personal interest in the church.

“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” (Galatians 5:7) Many brothers and sisters in the church have abandoned their first love (Christ) as well. The love that they felt for Him when they met Him does not exist anymore. It is not sincere because they are influenced by the devil. Because of this, we read the words of Jesus, “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent” (Revelation 2:5). The abandonment of the first love is historical in the church. Israel as well left their first love. “Israel was holiness unto

the LORD, and the firstfruits of his increase” (Jeremiah 2:3, first part). “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 provoked the LORD to anger” (Judges 2:11-12).

It’s evident that this admonition is not for impious people, but for the Church of God. Therefore, if you have forgotten your first love as well, repent, and come back to the “first things.” Our first love is not our material job, nor our children, nor our parents, nor any other material thing. Our first love is and should always be our Lord Jesus Christ.

“But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented” (Matthew 11:16,17). “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha” (I Corinthians 16:22). This means that whosoever does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be rejected at the coming of the Lord.

Congregation at the Gollanapadu, India church dedication.



SALTED WITH FIRE

BY MOISES TORRES MARTINEZ

After reciting the beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord tells His disciples in Matthew 5:13, “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”

The Lord calls His disciples in this verse the “salt of the earth”, but in this same verse, He says that the salt can be dispelled, and then it will be good for nothing, but to be cast out into the street and be trodden under the foot of men. Thus it was in the old ages, the salt that lost its flavor when it was exposed to the elements was thrown

into the street and used as a pavement or layer of the land. Nevertheless, the pure salt never lost its savor.

The interesting thing is to see that here the Lord compares His disciples to the “salt of the earth.” **But the question is: How is it that we are salted or prepared to come to be salt in a figurative sense?**

The answer is found in Mark 9:49 where it is recorded, “For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.”

The answer that the Lord Jesus, Himself, gives us is that WE ARE SALTED WITH FIRE.

In this verse, the Lord says that every sacrifice will be

salted with salt. In the days of the Levitical priesthood, all the tributes of grains, the sacrifices, and holocausts were salted with salt so they could be accepted by the Lord. Leviticus 2:13 says, "And every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant \of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt." Also read Ezekiel 43:23-24. Salt cleans, purifies, gives flavor and represents a pact with God. In Mark 9:49, the Lord says, in a figurative sense, that all our sacrifices should be salted with salt. The Apostle Paul tells us in the New Testament that we should offer ourselves a living sacrifice. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). Therefore, if we offer ourselves to God in a holy and living sacrifice, we should be seasoned with salt, and the Lord says in Mark 9:49 that the only way to be salted is through fire.

This fire represents the sacrifice by which we go through when we confront the daily trials and tribulations as children of God, according to the example or faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. The ones who reject the sacrifice and opt for disobedience, or for the easy way, do not suffer the trials and tribulations. They will never be seasoned with the salt that is pleasant to God. Let's remember that John the Baptist said that we will be baptized with the Holy Ghost (Spirit) and with fire by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 3:11 says, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost (Spirit), and with fire." Therefore, if we have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, we should be baptized with His fire to be prepared with His salt. We have to go through the fire of trials and tribulations to be seasoned with salt, so that our faith can be refined more than gold and be found worthy in the appearing of the Lord. I Peter 1:6-7 says, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

When we are exposed to the adversities of life, we

should face them according to the counsel of the Word of God and the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. We should not fall into the human tendency of abandoning that way and let our salt be dispelled because the verse says, "**...but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.**"

We have many enemies that trouble and oppress us, and try to offend us. There are many that want our salt to be dispelled and to see us humiliated and trampled upon in the street like the salt that has lost its savor. However, the Lord has placed in front of us the principles to follow to be triumphant.

In Matthew 5:38-41, the Lord says, "**Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:** But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."

In the past, the law was an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. However, the Lord expresses the principle which should govern us today. The command is not to return evil for evil, neither to appear as fools showing only a degrading or irrational attitude. We recall that, as children of God, we should present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service according to Romans 12:1. There should be good judgment in doing this, and the good judgment makes us children of God. The law, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, recorded in the Old Testament (Exodus 21:24-25; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21), known as the law of vengeance limited the retribution that the transgressor had to pay. By striking someone who strikes, the issue is concluded. The offense, or the aggression, only causes more hatred and offenses. On the other hand, if we use a passive attitude, it is possible that the offender will recognize his fault and repent. If he does not, the Lord will judge him with His justice, because His Word says, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

As well as this command, the Lord gives us principles to combat everything that can cause us danger, trials or tribulations. For example, if there is need for material things,

He tells us, "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:31-33).

We should not offend, and no one should offend us. The Lord Jesus makes strong statements against offenses. In Mark 9:42 and following, the Lord says that no one should offend us or put a barrier in front of us to cause us to fall. Still, He tells us to remove from us everything that can cause our salt to be dispelled. Please read up to verse 50.

The trial, or baptism of fire, with which we have to be seasoned, is always there, inside and outside of church.

However, we should confront it and go through with it to be salted with fire so that our sacrifice can be acceptable before God. The Lord Jesus went through with it to the death, and He came out triumphant. His sacrifice was a sacrifice seasoned with salt. What about us? Can we be baptized with the baptism with which He was baptized? Can we drink from the same cup from which He drank? Can we also be seasoned or salted with fire? Dear reader, what do you say? The Lord says, "For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt" (Mark 9:49).

"Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, AND HAVE PEACE ONE WITH ANOTHER" (Mark 9:50).

BE PREPARED! THE COMING OF THE MASTER DRAWETH NIGH

By Bibi S. Allicock

We see in Genesis that before God made man, He prepared a place where man should dwell, eat and be happy. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). "And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good" (verse 25). "And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good" (verse 21). "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7).

"And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree



of knowledge of good and evil" (verses 8-9). "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (verses 15-17).

Nevertheless, we see that the man did eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Genesis 3:6).

"Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword

which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life” (verses 23-24).

We see here that man disobeyed, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Nevertheless, “God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3, last part). “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:8-11).

Our Brother Paul admonishes us that, “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (verses 12-13). “If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 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” (Philippians 2:1-7). “Do all things without murmurings and disputing: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (verses 14-15).

“Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body” (Hebrews 13:1-2). “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Remember them which have the rule over

you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. 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” (verses 5-9).

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him” (Hebrews 12:1-5).

“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (verses 6-11).

“Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears” (verses 12-17).

“Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not

when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch” (Mark 13:33-37). Amen.



*Elder M. Kanakarathnam
preaching in Gollenapadu.*

HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD?

BY SEPTIMUS JOHN

“Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite” (Psalm 147:5).

Israel went down into Egypt because of the famine that was sweeping the globe during the days of Jacob. They were well accepted and cared for during the life of Joseph, who was then the governor of Egypt. But there arose another king in Egypt who knew not Joseph, and the children of Israel, Jacob’s offspring, became slaves. In delivering them from Egypt, the Lord showed great in the depths of the sea, while Israel traveled through that very part upon dry ground, making it safely to the other side.

“And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace” (Exodus 14:13-14). It is important to read the entire 14th chapter of Exodus to get a full description of the power of Pharaoh’s army and the mighty hand of God in triumphing over each and every one of them. Great is our God and is worthy to be praised.

On their journey to the Promised Land, the land of

Canaan, the Israelites murmured very much concerning the condition which they saw before them as they moved ahead. Food and water were of vital importance, and for these two things they were provided, not knowing from whence they came. The Lord miraculously provided for His people, not for a month, or a year, but for forty long years, by providing them with manna from heaven and quails to satisfy the need for everyone. “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God. And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat. This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his

tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating” (Exodus 16:11-18). The great power of God is unlimited, and regardless of the challenge that will present itself, He is able to rise and to reign victorious.

For instance, Israel was besieged by the Syrians, so that there was little or no food left in the city. An ass head was sold for four score pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove’s dung for five pieces of silver. II Kings 6:26-29 says, “And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress? And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him:...and she hath hid her son.” So very serious was this situation that cannibalism was being practiced. Nevertheless, the great God used His power by sending four feeble lepers to put the camp of the Syrians to flight, and to provide food enough to feed the whole city.

“Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria. Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die. And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there. For the LORD had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of

Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life” (II Kings 7:1-7). So, by the mighty and powerful hand of God, the coming of the four lepers may have sounded like the host of a great army, thus putting the entire army of the Syrians to flight. Only four lepers! How marvelous it is indeed to speak about the greatness of our God.

He is the God of the mountain and the God of the valley. When things get tough, His mighty grace is always enough. Benhadad, king of Syria, depended upon the strength and size of his army to bring Israel, the people of God, to their knees. However, Israel’s defense was always in the Lord, and so that battle which was fought in the hills was easily won by the Israelites. On seeing the failure that was met by the Syrian army by attacking Israel in the hills, they decided to stage another attack, this time in the valley. They said that Israel’s God is a God of the hill, and surely they would be able to defeat them in the valley. Within a year, a battle was staged again. Israel, being guided by the powerful hand of God, was once again victorious.

“And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they” (I Kings 20:23). “And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD” (verse 28). As you have the time, go to the Bible and read the full story found in I Kings 20:1-30. The God of heaven knows no equal!

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, the three Hebrew servants, were delivered from the burning fiery furnace, thus showing to Nebuchadnezzar the power of the great and mighty God who was able to deliver them out of His hands and from the fierceness of the fiery furnace, which was heated seven times more than it was supposed to be. Please read Daniel, chapter 3. Likewise, Daniel spent a comfortable night as the angel of God protected him in the lion’s den. During the night, it was very quiet in the den. Please read Daniel, chapter 6. Even the devil himself had to be obedient to God’s command during the

testing of Job, for he was only able to do as much as God allowed him to do. Please read Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6.

Our God reigns supreme, and if we but put our faith and confidence in Him, all of our cares will be taken care of. "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I

say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:25-33). Let us cast all our cares upon our mighty and powerful God. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6).



Gollenapadu church dedication

The World's Best Commentary

By David DeLong

Commentaries are sometimes useful for determining background information in a Bible study. However, if you have a Bible, you possess the world's *best* commentary for such a study, for the Bible interprets itself. Therefore, the Bible should be the first book to turn to when studying any topic which it covers. This advice is almost so self-evident that it would seem to be not needed. Yet, it appears that many people who study the Bible use almost every other source, *rather* than the Bible, in their studies—including Bible commentaries, dictionaries, study guides, and books containing Bible topics.

The problem with using other sources as one's main study guide is that one will get, in many instances, another person's view point of what the Bible teaches, rather than what the Bible really teaches. This, of course, can lead

one into error. Let's take the example of the law, for instance. Many people are confused as to what the Bible teaches about this subject, therefore they lump together all biblical passages concerning the law, not realizing that there are important differences to be made in this matter. Thinking that the Ten Commandments are a part of the abolished law of Moses, multitudes of misguided Bible students believe that these Commandments are no longer in force.

This situation could be corrected if the students mentioned above would use the Bible to interpret itself, rather than going on man's traditions and teachings concerning the law. It takes diligent Bible study to come to the truth on this, or any other, biblical subject but the results are very rewarding. Proverbs 2:1-5 informs us: "My son, if

thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.” Verse 6 tells us where this wisdom comes from. “For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.”

The Bible clearly teaches that there is a difference between the *moral* law of God--the Ten Commandments--and the law of *commandments in ordinances*. First, I would like to show this difference, using the Bible in a short study on the subject, and then second, I will use the Bible to interpret various passages concerning these two sets of law.

In Deuteronomy 5:6-21, we read where the Lord spoke the Ten Commandments. Verse 22 explains, “These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.” We see here that the Lord “added no more” to these Commandments. Therefore they stand, as a unit, by themselves. Also, they were written, by God Himself, “in two tables of stone”.

After Moses came down from the mount where he had received these Ten Commandments from God, he saw the idolatry which the Israelites were committing, and he threw the tables of stone breaking them (see Exodus 32:15-19). The Lord then wrote the Ten Commandments a second time on two tables of stone (see Deuteronomy 10:1-4). Verse 5 reads, “And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me.” So, the Ten Commandments were placed, by Moses, “in the ark” (see also Hebrews 9:1-5).

Concerning this Law, Psalm 19:7 tells us, “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.” Isaiah 42:21 further informs us about the Ten Commandments, “The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness’ sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.” This is a prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus and the righteousness that

He would display. We can partly see how Jesus magnified the law and made it honorable in Matthew 5:20-28. In this passage of Scripture our Lord made it plain that the commandment, “Thou shalt not kill”, is not only about the physical act of murder, but it also is about a person’s heart attitude as well. The same is true for the commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery”. One can commit adultery by lusting after a woman in one’s heart as well as committing the physical act.

Now we will briefly examine the law of commandments in ordinances which, by the way, contains many moral laws as well. Deuteronomy 31:24-26 explains who wrote this law and where it was placed. “And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.” This law was written by Moses (which was given to him by the Lord), in ink, presumably on a scroll (“book of the law”), and it was placed “in the side of the ark”.

Just this abbreviated comparison of these two laws shows a vast difference between them. God, Himself, spoke the Ten Commandments, and also wrote them on two tables of stone. These tables were then placed in, or into, the ark. This Law is the basis for God’s covenants, both in the Old Testament (see Deuteronomy 4:13), and in the New Testament (see Romans 3:19-23). This shows the superiority of this Law over the book of the law, which was penned by Moses on a scroll (book), and placed in a subordinate position in the ark’s side. In fact, this book of the law was to be in service only until Jesus came, and it was abolished at His death (see Galatians 3:19; Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14). Therefore, no one should ever equate these laws as having the same purpose or scope. The moral laws of God are perpetual, whereas the laws in ordinances were to be in force only for a time, pointing to Christ.

We can see, then, that there is a difference in the usage that the Scriptures give in pertaining to the law. But just how does a person determine which law is being referred to in the New Testament when this subject is being addressed? Again, we need to let the Bible be its own interpreter. Let us look at four New Testament books--

Romans, Galatians, James, and Hebrews to see how they interpret themselves to give us this vital answer.

In Romans chapter 2, Paul discusses the issue of those who have the law as opposed to those who don't. How will they be judged when Christ returns, and what law is he referring to? Verses 12 and 13 reads, "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified)" (see also verses 14-16).

Paul continues his discourse about the law in verses 17-20. In verses 21-23 he writes: "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?" The Bible has interpreted for us, in these passages, the law being the Ten Commandments.

Similarly, when we go to Romans chapter 7, the apostle writes again about the law. It is holy, just, and good (see verse 12); it is spiritual (see verse 14); it is "the law of God" (see verses 22,25). What law is Paul addressing? Verse 7 gives us the answer: "What shall we say then? is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Once more the Bible has interpreted itself, telling us that this law is the Ten Commandments.

Now, when we turn to the book of Galatians, chapter 2, we notice somewhat of a shift in the Apostle Paul's writing about the law. The subject is about some people ("false brethren") who were teaching salvation by works, especially being circumcised. Verses 3-5 reads: "But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."

If a person seeks to gain salvation through works (justified by the law), then the Bible makes it plain that that

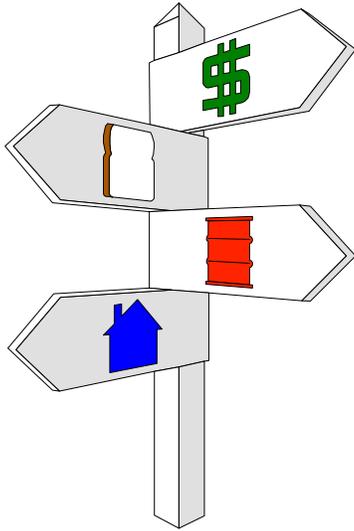
person cannot pick and choose what works he or she will do. That person must do *all* the works written in the book of the law. Notice how Galatians 3:10-12 puts it: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them." Trying to gain salvation through works is totally impossible. Only Christ can give us salvation.

Going on to the Book of James, chapter 2, verse 8, we read about a "royal law". Verse 12 mentions a "law of liberty". What law is the Apostle James referring to? Let's let verses 10 and 11 answer that question for us. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." Once again, the Scriptures are referring to the Ten Commandments.

For our last example, let us turn to the book of Hebrews. Chapter 10:1 informs us, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." This passage immediately gives us some clues as to what law the writer is designating. It is a law "having a shadow" and it is concerned with sacrifices (see also chapter 8:3-5; Colossians 2:14-17).

Much of chapter 9 and parts of chapter 10 refer to the tabernacle service of the Old Testament. If we didn't know by now which law is being addressed, Hebrews 9:19,20 identifies it for us: "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you." The law being referred to here is the book of the law.

May we never take someone's word for the things which we believe. Rather, may we study God's Word diligently, letting the Bible be its own interpreter. In other words, may we gain the truth from God, Himself. To do anything else will lead us into error and destruction.



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.

PERSONAL ABOUT APOCALYPTIC THEORIES

Perhaps many of you have either read or heard about the latest date (perhaps there is a new date that has been proposed since this one was conjured up) that is set for the ending of the world. Yes, I am thinking about December 21, 2012. That is when an ancient Mayan calendar runs its course and ends. Some prognosticators say that this marks the end of an era as well. This theory of Apocalypse has sparked much interest, and many in the market place world have taken advantage of it.

The following is a quote from a column which appeared in THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE entitled "Are we soon to be goners?" "This fascination with apocalypse is not surprising, said Matthias Henze, associate professor of religious studies at Rice University. Its roots can be traced through the history of humanity and religion to ancient Mesopotamia.

Apocalyptic theories have come and gone with centuries of Bible code interpretations, messianic cults, followers of comets Halley or Hale-Bopp, readers of Nostradamus, and those fixated on Y2K.

"What happened inevitably is that the end did not come," said Henze, who studies early Christian and Jewish apocalyptic literature. "You would think in theory that this

is the end of the story. What we have seen is this kind of thinking is surprisingly resilient."

Henze is so right! Apocalyptic thinking is really resilient. People have itching ears, and they have turned away from the truth found in God's Word. They have turned to fables just as God's Word said that they would. They are like those of whom the Apostle Paul spoke: "(For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)" (Acts 17:21).

The only true information pertaining to the end of the world (age) is found in the Word of God with the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to set up His kingdom for a thousand years.

Bond Tennant

CALIFORNIA MAN SEES VIRGIN MARY IN FOOTBALL-SIZED ROCK FOUND IN ORCHARD

By Brandon Bowers

McClatchy Newspapers (MCT)

MERCED, California - Nobody can say why the Virgin of Guadalupe would appear on a hunk of rock

formed millions of years before the birth of Jesus.

But David Nunez says the image is unmistakable--a bluish-black stain on the football-sized rock outlines what looks like the Holy Mother.

Nunez's father found the partially buried boulder while looking for landscaping rocks in an Oakdale, California orchard. Nunez and his father, Jesus--both Catholics from Merced--insist that it's hard to dispute that the image resembles the famous image of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

"Everyone thought it looked like a turtle shell, but once he brought it home, we saw a figure on it," Nunez recalled.

Friends have called it a miracle.

The Rev. Harvey Fonseca, of Saint Thaddeus Roman Catholic Church in nearby Livingston, California, isn't so sure.

He recalled a time when a window featured streaks that also seemed to mimic the Virgin Mary.

"People see what they want to see," said Fonseca, who hasn't examined the rock. "It's usually just a coincidence when something looks like something else. For me, It would have to be a great likeness. Then again, God is the one who makes mineral formations, so if He chooses to have an image appear on a rock, He can do it."

The rock is a 14-pound caramel-brown and chalkboard black hunk of gneiss, a branded metamorphic rock that started out as sandstone and shale, according to Rob Rogers, a professor of geology at California State University Stanislaus in Turlock. Rogers didn't examine the rock in person, but reviewed several photos e-mailed to him.

"The original sandstone and shale were deeply buried and subjected to high levels of heat and pressure, probably when today's Sierra Mountains were formed between forty million and one hundred forty million years ago," Rogers said. "The rock's rounded edges suggest that it

was moved by water from the mountains into the valley, probably during a flood event in the last three million years," he added.

The Virgin of Guadalupe is said to be an image of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. According to Catholics, Mary appeared to a Mexican peasant named Juan Diego in the 16th century. To prove it was a miracle, her image then formed itself on Diego's cloak. People say that appearances of the image since then indicate some kind of religious sign.

"Historically, appearances of the Virgin of Guadalupe are associated with hope and healing," said Max Hallman, a professor of humanities at Merced College.

"With all the economic problems and stress in our area, some may interpret it as a hopeful sign," he said.

Like Fonseca, however, Hallman points out that people will see what they're inclined to see.

**From THE BULLETIN
Lake Jackson, Texas**

COMMENT

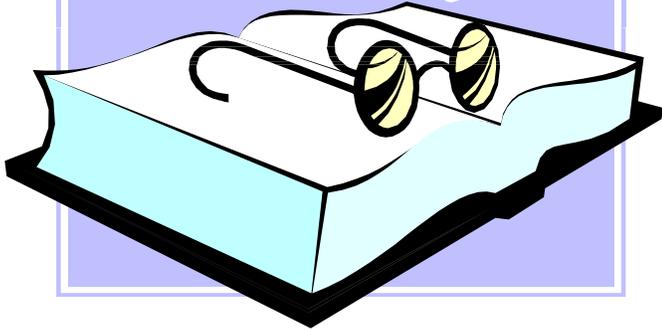
Regardless of the dates, given in this article, for the time and manner of the formation of this rock being false, we can safely say that the image in this rock is not of the Virgin Mary, sometimes called the Virgin of Guadalupe.

No one really knows the real appearance of the Virgin Mary. The appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ and His mother, the Virgin Mary, as we see them in pictures has been handed down from tradition.

II Thessalonians 2:9 tells us of one whose coming is after the workings of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. The appearance of the Virgin Mary and some other so-called miracles can be classified as lying wonders performed by Satan during these days.

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: How is it possible to be perfect?

ANSWER: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Jesus spoke these words in His Sermon on the Mount. We know that every word spoken by our Lord has its purpose because He never uttered any idle speech.

We find these words: "perfect" and "perfection" used in various verses in Scripture. “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection...” (Hebrews 6:1). “But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James 1:4).

After examining these verses, and especially Jesus' words, are children of God to consider themselves in a state of perfection? The answer to that is NO, and a thousand times NO! We are reminded that the Scripture hath concluded that we are all under sin. Therefore, we are not perfect as long as we remain in our fleshly bodies.

Are we then to think the Scripture would contradict itself? The answer to that is also in the negative.

In the Word of God, we understand that the word "perfect" may have more than one meaning--depending on how it is used.

Let us examine a verse that we may gain understanding. “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9). We know that God is perfect, and so is His Son. Therefore, God's will is perfect in that He would that all would receive salvation through repentance. Does this mean that all will be saved? We know by the Scriptures themselves that certain people will be lost. Therefore, we can safely conclude that God's desire is perfect. However, its total fulfillment will not be accomplished because of those who did not desire Him.

We now begin to realize the meaning of being perfect in the sight of God. As children of God, our desire should be to do our Father's will. By maintaining that basic desire (though we are not of ourselves perfect) we will be perfect in Christ Jesus. “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Galatians 2:16).

Thus, we come to understand that the heart of the matter is in our ATTITUDE rather than our ATTAINMENT. It is for us to REACH OUT AND TRY. Our eventual hope in the attainment which will come in

due time--our present intention is what we must now concentrate upon.

As each day ends, we may not have accomplished our desired goals, but we are more accomplished for the attempt.

Consider the man Moses. This great leader of Israel was brought up under very good conditions being raised with the royalty in Egypt. He did not realize it at the time, but this was part of his training by God for those things to come. Moses' years in the desert were also for the same purpose. Those latter years were not very easy, and many hard setbacks occurred which no doubt brought disappointment. For forty years, we find this preparation taking place in the life of Moses. We also know that this most meek of men continued each day to reach out and try that his effort would be made perfect before God. After those forty years of preparation, we then read how Moses led the children of Israel for forty years in the wilderness because of their lacking faith at the border of the promised land. Even through such setbacks and disappointments with Israel, we still see faithful Moses trying his best as he followed God's will. We know that this meek one could not finally enjoy the blessed feeling of crossing over into the promised land because of his striking the rock the second time. Nevertheless, he remained committed to giving his best right up to the end.

There have been other saints down through the ages who have willingly served the Lord in their various capacities and under extreme conditions. By doing their best every day, they fulfilled the will of God. Under these conditions, one betters his best.

This is exactly what the purpose of the ministry is to be as given in the Scriptures. "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...unto a perfect man..."(Ephesians 4:12-13). "...that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28).

Not every member is already perfect, but that they daily reach forth unto that perfection in the best way they know how through God's indwelling Holy Spirit. "Blessed

are they that DO (that daily love and reach out to fulfill) his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

QUESTION: Does the book of Esther originally have another name?

ANSWER: Yes, the book of Esther originally had another name. It was "Hadassah" which means "Myrtle." Her name was changed to "Esther" which means "Star." Esther is a type of the Church of God exalted from a lowly place to the New Jerusalem for she became the king's bride. Please read I Samuel 2:8.

QUESTION: Does the expression "Son of Perdition" in John 17:12 and II Thessalonians 2:3 refer to the same individual?

ANSWER: No! In John 17:12, Jesus is referring to Judas Iscariot, who would betray Him. II Thessalonians 2:3 refers to the "Man of Sin" that will come on the scene just prior to the catching up of the saints and during the Seven Last Plague period. Both are messengers of Satan, and will not repent. Therefore a person who has not repented becomes a "Son of Perdition."

QUESTION: The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (I Timothy 4:14). What does the part which reads, "which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" mean?

ANSWER: The Apostle Paul told Timothy that he had received a wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands by the elders of the church. This was an ordination service to help Timothy to prophesy (speak and preach).

The Apostle Paul laid his hands on Timothy at another time. Perhaps Timothy needed help to again stir up the gift of God and to remove the fear Timothy had when Paul was put into prison. "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands" (II Timothy 1:6).



The Ukraine

Some of these photos were taken when Brother Yuri Andreew travelled to Ternopol.





LESSON I

JACOB MEETS RACHEL

Scripture Reading: Genesis 29:1-20.

Golden Text: Genesis 29:18.

“And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.”

1. As Jacob continues on his journey, where does he arrive? Genesis 29:1-2.
2. While at the well, what did he ask of the men present, and what was their reply? Genesis 29:3-6.
3. Who arrived next at the well? Genesis 29:9.
4. What did Jacob do when he saw Rachel? Genesis 29:10-11.
5. What did Rachel’s father, Laban, do when he heard of Jacob’s presence? Genesis 29:12-14.
6. What did Laban offer Jacob? Genesis 29:15.
7. What was Jacob’s request, and did he agree? Genesis 29:18-20.

LESSON II

JACOB RETURNS TO SEE ESAU

Scripture Reading: Genesis 32:1-8; 33:1-20.

Golden Text: Genesis 33:4.

“And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.”

NOTE: Laban wasn’t honest with Jacob and tricked him by giving him the oldest daughter, Leah. Jacob worked another seven years for Rachel. Jacob continues to work hard and has much wealth. He decides it is time to return home to make peace with his brother, Esau.

1. Where does Jacob send his messengers, and what are they to do and say? Genesis 32:3-5.
2. What did the messengers report back to Jacob? Genesis 32:6.
3. How did Jacob feel, and what did he then do? Genesis 32:7-8.
4. When Jacob first approached Esau, what does he do and why? Genesis 33:1-3.
5. When Esau sees Jacob, what does he do? Genesis 33:4.
6. After Esau meets Jacob’s family, what do the two men discuss? Genesis 33:8-15.
7. Where did Esau return, and where did Jacob go? Genesis 33:16-20.
8. What name did God give to Jacob, and what did God promise him? Genesis 32:28; 35:10-12.

NOTE: This was a continuation of God’s promise to Abraham as Jacob was Abraham’s grandson. Matthew 1:2.

LESSON III

JOSEPH THE DREAMER

Scripture Reading: Genesis 37:1-11.

Golden Text: Genesis 37:3.

“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.”

1. Who were Jacob’s twelve sons? I Chronicles 2:1-2.
2. Why did Joseph’s father love him the most? Genesis 37:3 (first part).

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.

You now know how old Joseph was when
He was sold by his brothers.

BIBLE TREES

Many events in the Bible involved trees in some way.
How many blanks can you complete without looking up
the references?

1. After Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, they made themselves aprons from the leaves of _____ tree (Genesis 3:7).
2. As the Lord Jesus rode a little donkey into Jerusalem, the people shouted and waved branches of _____ trees (John 12:13).
3. Elijah, discouraged and fleeing from Jezebel, went a day's journey into the wilderness, sat down beneath this tree, and prayed that he might die. While he slept, an angel touched him, and he awoke and found food and water set out for him. Name the tree _____ (I Kings 19:4).
4. When the spies returned from the land of Canaan, they brought back grapes, figs, and the fruit of the _____

tree (Numbers 13:23).

5. King David's palace was built from the wood of the _____ tree (II Chronicles 2:3).
6. When Noah released the dove the second time from the ark, the dove returned with a leaf from an _____ tree in her mouth (Genesis 8:11).
7. When Zacchaeus wanted to see the Lord Jesus, he climbed a _____ tree (Luke 19:4).
8. King David's son, Absalom, died when his long hair caught in the branches of the _____ tree (II Samuel 18:9).
9. God told Moses to have the leader of each of the twelve tribes of Israel bring a rod to the tabernacle, and the following day Aaron's rod had buds which blossomed and bore a certain type of nut (Numbers 17:8). Name the tree.

10. When the children of Israel were taken captive and sent to a strange land, they were sad and could not sing. They hung their harps on the _____ trees (Psalm 137:2).

11. The Lord told King David he should go to battle when he heard the sound of marching in the branches of the _____ trees (II Samuel 5:24).

12. In John's vision of the heavenly city, he tells about the tree which bears twelve kinds of fruit (Revelation 22:2). Name the tree



THE EMPTY ENVELOPE

"Mother," said a little girl one day, "you and Father get letters, but I get none. Why? I can't understand!" Said Mother, with a smile, "Jessie, a received letter is often like an answered prayer--you get it because you've asked for it. How can you expect to receive a letter if you don't write one?"

Jessie said, "Then I'll write one. I can write a little. I'll write to Uncle Charles in Scotland. May I?"

"Yes dear," said her kind mother. And so Jessie wrote the letter, and having received a stamp from her mother, she put it on the envelope she had addressed and posted the envelope.

But no answer came, though she waited for days.

"You see, Mother," she said, "it's no good. Uncle will not write to me."

"But," said Mother, "what did you say in your letter?"

"Oh! I forgot--lots."

"Did you post it?"

"Yes, I posted the envelope."

"But what about the letter?"

"Oh, I don't know what became of that."

"You mean you posted the empty envelope?"

"Yes, I don't think the letter mattered much. There was nothing worth reading in it. It was a scribble."

"Foolish child," said Mother. And then she taught her little daughter a lesson which her child still remembers.

"Jessie dear," said she, "do you not sometimes pray, but there is nothing in your prayer for God? I've heard you pray: 'Our Father who art in Heaven', and 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,' and 'Be present at our table, Lord,' thoughtlessly repeating the words, and not feeling or really meaning what you have said. It has been like sending an empty envelope to God, for only true and heartfelt prayer reaches Him. Think about what I have said, dear."

Jessie began to think about it, and presently she too felt how solemn it was to speak to God--to send Him a prayer, and yet for Him to find nothing in it that He could answer.

But by and by Jessie yielded her heart to the Savior, and learned to know, to love, and to trust Him. Then when

she prayed there was something inside her prayer for God. It was like a full envelope with the letter inside it, and not like an empty envelope.



MAKING SUNSHINE

When days are dark and rainy
And I am feeling blue,
My mama tells me gently
The things that I should do.

She says that I should never
Be cross or sulk or pout,
Or keep complaining all the time
Because I can't go out.

Instead I should be happy
And smile and laugh and play,
And frolic with the baby
On every dreary day.

She calls this making sunshine
When there is none outside,
And tells my papa when he comes
That I'm her joy and pride.

--Sunshine for Little People.

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Be Helpful

By Peter Blackman (Grenada)

A helpful child I ought to be,
That's how Jesus wants to see me.
I won't give Mum cause to say
Do your work first, and then go to play.

Jesus wants us to be kind,
Always letting His light shine.
We must help friend as well as foe,
That will help our spirit to grow.

Salvation is our ultimate goal,
Being helpful should be our role.
Don't fret nor frown,
Neither, with scorn, on others look down.

Lend a helping hand today,
And at the end Jesus will say,
"Well done, good and faithful servant";
Yes, that's what we will hear,
For the fruit of the Spirit we must bear.



