

The Advocate of Truth

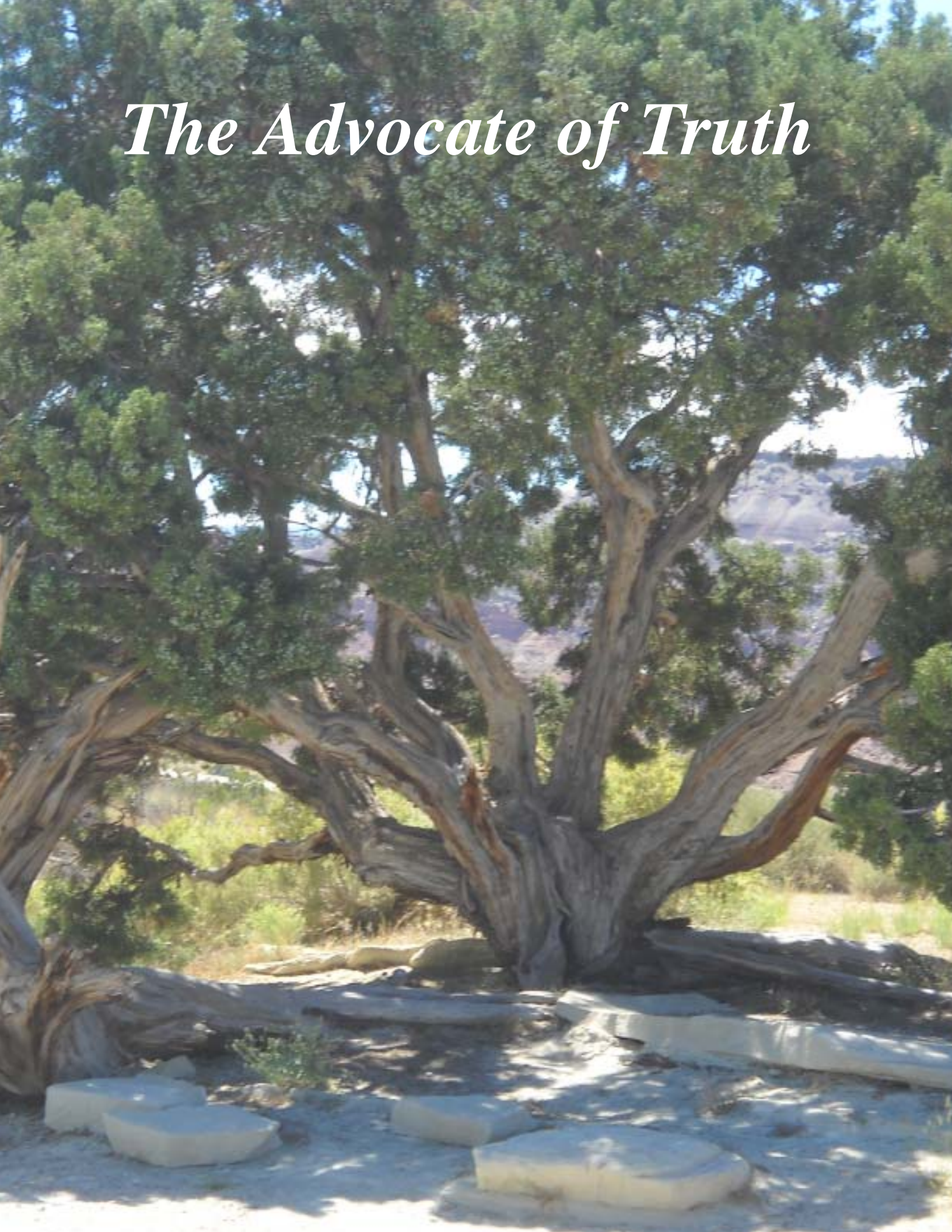




TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

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The Advocate of Truth

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Mary In The Bible 3-4

It may be hard to identify some Marys in the Bible.

Our Apostolic Church 5-6

Jesus chooses 12 apostles to lead the Church of God.

Paradise After Death 7-8

Paradise will be on earth to all who obey Christ.

Does Mankind Really Know His Purpose Upon Earth? ..
..... 8-11

Most of mankind is clueless about his purpose upon earth.

The Signs Of The Times 12-14

Thoughts on Independence Day in America and other topics.

Questions And Answers 15-17

A question about a shepherd and his lost sheep, and others.

The Church Around the World 18-19

This month we look at Myanmar.

The Children's Pages 20-23

Sabbath School Lessons

A Story - "When Betty Jo Hated"

Games and Puzzles



Mary in the Bible

By David Royer

Research for this article met some challenges. Our Bible uses various names for Mary depending on the text origin; mainly, Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic. Also, the New Testament writers were not explicit in identifying the "Marys" mentioned in their respective Books.

¹*Myriam* represents the Hebrew Old Testament version of Mary's name. In Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus, Joseph and Mary, Mary is called *Maryam*. The Greek translation of the Old Testament calls her *Mariam*, whereas with New Testament Greek she is *Maria*. The Latin uses the same expression: *Maria*. The name is used not only for Mary the mother of Jesus. There are nine other persons in the Old and New Testament who held the same name.

The Old Testament Mary or Myriam (spelled Miriam) refers to Aaron's sister Ex. 15:20-21 after the Egyptian army was destroyed in the Red Sea: "And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." The second mention of a Miriam was identified in the lineage of Juda: 1 Chron. 4:17: "And the sons of Ezra were, Jether, and Mered, and Epher, and Jalon: and she bare Miriam, and Shammai, and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa".

The New Testament provides us with more familiar

Marys:

Mary the mother of Jesus: Of course, she is the most recognized and written about. Mary was the daughter of Eli or Heli, of the tribe of Judah and of the lineage of King David. Matthew 1:20-21: "*But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*" Mary witnessed the crucifixion of her Son with Mary Magdalene and Mary of Cleophas. John 19:25: "*Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.*" At least two of these Marys also visited the empty tomb.

Mary Magdalene: The name Magdalene indicates that she came from Magdala, a city on the southwest coast of the Sea of Galilee. She was healed by Jesus (seven demons removed) and became one of His followers. Luke 8:1-3: "*And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.*" This Mary not only witnessed His crucifixion but met the risen Jesus: Mark 16:9: "*Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.*"

Mary the wife of Cleophas: The only thing we know for sure, is that she was a witness to the crucifixion of Jesus. We are not certain, but some identify (being the same) this Mary with the mother of James and John, who also witnessed Jesus' crucifixion.

Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus: John 11:1-2: "*Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which*

anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)” John further indicated Jesus’s love for this Mary and Martha.

Mary the mother of John/Mark: This Mary is the mother of Mark, the author of the second gospel. She is spoken of one time, yet this brief description of her is suggestive of her life and dedication. Mark wrote about his mother’s large house being a well-known center of Christian life and worship. Acts 12:11-12: *“And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.”*

Mary the mother of James and Jose (Joseph): We are told little about this Mary except that she was the mother of two sons, one of whom Jesus chose (James) as an apostle (Luke 6:13-14). She was one of the women, along with Mary Magdalene, who served Jesus in Galilee and followed Him to Jerusalem. Matthew 27:55-56: *“And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children”* -- This Mary accompanied Mary Magdalene to Jesus’s tomb. Mark 16:1: *“And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.”*

The Other Mary: This Mary (only identified as “the other Mary”) accompanied Mary Magdalene to anoint Jesus’s body at His grave site. Matthew 28:1: *“In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.”* It is not conclusive, but this Mary could have been the wife of Cleophas or Alphaeus or a sister of Mary the mother of Jesus. This “other Mary” and Mary Magdalene left the empty tomb quickly after being told by an angel that Jesus was not there. Both then met the risen Jesus. Matthew 28:8-10: *“And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with*

fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.”

Mary of Rome: This Mary was a helper to Apostle Paul while in that country. Paul writes to the Churches at Rome to remember several people for their help. Romans 16:6: *“Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.”*

As you can see, a form of the proper name “Mary” was common during Bible Times. ²About one in six Jewish women was named Miriam.

Except for two Marys (The mother of Jesus and Mary of Magdalene) little is mentioned specific to the others. What is important, is to know there were many devoted followers and assistants to Jesus. Just think how the Catholic Church would have idolized these many other Marys if more details were available. Look what they have unfortunately done to these two with misconceptions, sainthood and patronage:

³The Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican, and Lutheran churches believe that Mary, as mother of Jesus, is the Mother of God....Catholic saints wrote books such as *Glories of Mary* and *True Devotion to Mary* that emphasized Marian veneration and taught that “the path to Jesus is through Mary”....Mary Magdalene is patron saint to hairdressers, frail and penitent women.



¹Myriam and Mary : University of Dayton, Ohio <https://udayton.edu/imri/mary/m/myriam-and-mary.php>

²<https://www.quora.com/How-common-were-the-names-Jesus-and-Mary-during-Biblical-times>

³[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary,_mother_of_Jesus; /_wiki/Mary_Magdalene](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary,_mother_of_Jesus;_/_wiki/Mary_Magdalene)



OUR APOSTOLIC CHURCH

(Reprinted)

The visible church is a congregation of faithful folks, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the statements are duly administrated according to Christ's ordinance in all the things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

There are those who tell us that it does not make any difference to what church we belong. They tell us that we are all aiming for the same place, we are all going to end up in paradise, and that it does not matter what particular road we take. One man likes the hill road, another the valley road, and still another the river road. They tell us that because there are so many different churches in the world, and they are all teaching the same thing, that it does not matter which one you adhere to. This type of logic is absurd. There is only one Christ, one truth, one way, one faith, one baptism. There is only one church over which Christ is the head. Christ cannot be divided. The Apostle Paul plainly tells us in Ephesians 5:17-25 that Christ is the head of the Church. Notice that it states that Christ is the head of only one Church. Surely you would not think that Christ has many heads to lead the different churches?

Christ established the Church and purchased it with His own blood. With us it is wholly incredible that a Church can be made or grounded by men. It takes a higher being to establish the Church of God. Jesus Christ is the Divine Founder of the Church of the living God. "...upon this rock (the Father revealed that Jesus was Christ) I will build my church; and the gates of hell (death) shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). As it was thus founded by our Lord, so it is kept alive and made vital by the Holy Spirit, which animates it and guides us into all truth. The Church, created by the express word

of Jesus Christ (for without Him was not anything made that was made), who is the Divine Founder, and not a man-made affair, comes from above, and not from below. The Church of God is the body of Christ. It is one and not many.

The foundation of the Church of God is Apostolic. The Church is ... "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:20-22). The Saviour commissioned first 12 Apostles, then 70 prophets to go into the world and preach the gospel to every creature. To separate ourselves from this divine society which Christ founded should be considered as a grievous sin. To leave the apostolic church is unthinkable to one who knows what the Church of God, 7th Day is, and this act is clearly contrary to the express will of the Lord.

The great Apostle Paul exhorts us to endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. He reminds us that there is only one body and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in us all.

Not only is the Church of God (7th Day) one throughout the world, but it is Apostolic. The Church of God (7th Day) stands not only for a true and definite faith, but for an equally definite and constituted order of organization. This organization comes directly from Christ, who first set into the church Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, etc. (I Corinthians 12:28). The twelve Apostles and their successors have been traced

down through the centuries to the present time. The Church of God (7th Day) believes not only in the necessity of a right faith in God and in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Word of God, but also in the necessity of a divinely commissioned and ordained order of men to teach the faith, to bear witness to the faith, and to guard the faith throughout all ages. The Lord selected Matthias to take the place of Judas Iscariot on the Apostolic Council. Paul and Barnabas were both selected by the Lord to take the places of two apostles that had been executed (Acts 13:2; 14:14). In fact, there are twenty-one apostles named by name in the Bible taking the places of those that went to rest.

We sometimes hear it said that one minister is just as good as another so long as he is a good man. We of the Church of God (7th Day) reply that it is not a question of the personal goodness of the man. It is a question of the office and the duly constituted authority to execute that office. In the town in which you happen to live, there is an officer known as the postmaster. By the Constitution of the U.S., the sole appointing power to a post-office is vested in the president. There may be in your town or city many other men just as good and just as well fitted to discharge the duties of that office, but the government, and the people as well, can only recognize as postmaster the man who has been appointed by the president. We of our Church are instructed and taught to recognize and acknowledge as authorized to administer the duties of the Apostles (which are twelve), the prophets (which are seventy), the board of seven deacons and all the others are ministers (Acts 6:1-7). From the beginning of the Church of God's life on this earth, no man among us has presumed to take upon himself the office of an apostle, the office of a prophet, the office of a deacon, the office of a minister, except as he has been chosen by the Holy Spirit to become an apostle and a prophet, and by an ordination and a setting apart by the prophets and apostles. Through the centuries, during which the Church has existed, it is possible to show that at all times men were selected in this apostolic way for the ministry. We as servants of the Lord regard ourselves as trustees or stewards of Jesus Christ, to sacredly safeguard and pass on, unimpaired this Apostolic ministry or divinely constituted order of Church government.

ASHES TO ASHES

By Pat Evans

*Ashes to ashes,
And dust to dust;
A beginning and an end,
For everyone of us.*

*God decides when it's over,
and it never seems fair;
It always seems at the time,
Like He's just not aware.*

*Aware of all the future plans,
For many things to say and do;
And we all planned to be together,
Family and friends, me and you.*

*Yet over and over God has proven,
That our time is not our own;
When just one of us is taken,
and one of us is left alone.*

*Our grief keeps us from remembering,
How soothing Scripture can really be;
For death is only just an instant,
Before we gain immortality.*

*God has it planned already,
Death is a necessary thing;
But for all of His own children,
He has taken out the sting.*

*He will bring us back together,
Both from the present and the past;
When we celebrate God's victory
Together on the Sea of Glass.*

*So have patience and remember
Loved ones when they were their best;
They have served their human purpose,
Those whom God has called to rest.*

*Our human lives are just an instant,
A learning moment along the way;
When compared to life eternal,
The reward for following God's way.*

PARADISE AFTER DEATH

By Carlo Rasmussen (deceased)

In the world today, there is a popular doctrine that states a person will go to heaven, or paradise, when he dies. This teaching is not according to the Bible. The purpose of these few words is to bring forth an illustration in the light of this erroneous teaching. This illustration is only a story. However, the end result brings out some thoughts to consider for those who do believe in going to heaven immediately after their death and living in ease and luxury for eternity.

The story goes that there was one time a rich man who had one son only. In this rich man's household, there also lived a distant relative who was an orphan girl. Both children were about the same age, and they grew up together working and playing and getting along very well together.

Now the boy was somewhat lazy and was impressed while growing up with stories he had heard about a place called paradise. He was told in that paradise there was no need for work or study and that the best meat of the wild oxen and sea bass would be served. Also, one would only drink of special wine reserved by the Lord for the just. Every day one would sleep late and do absolutely nothing.

Upon growing up, the two fell in love and were planning on marriage when the boy became suddenly ill with an unknown sickness. Soon the boy began to imagine he was dead. Since the only way to get to this paradise was to die, the boy felt to do just that. He thought about it so much and soon really felt he was actually dead. His parents became very worried and tried in every way to convince him this was not true. However, the boy would then say, "Why do you not bury me, cannot you see I am dead? Because you do not bury me, I cannot get into paradise."

After visiting many doctors, the parents finally found a doctor known for his wisdom and knowledge. The doctor promised to cure the boy in eight days under one firm condition. The parents must do exactly as the doctor tells them no matter how strange it may seem. The parents fully agreed. The doctor then visited the boy, and upon seeing him, the doctor said, "Why do you keep a dead body in the house? Why do you not make a funeral?"

The parents were awestruck. However, they followed the orders as agreed. The boy then said, "You see, I was right all along."

Under the doctor's orders, a room was made up to look like paradise as the boy had imagined it. The walls were hung with white satin, and the windows were darkened so candles would burn day and night. The servants even wore white clothes with wings on as if to be angels. Funeral arrangements were made, and the boy was placed into an open coffin, and the ceremony was held. The boy then fell asleep. When he awoke, he found himself in a room he did not recognize. "Where am I?" he asked. A winged servant told him he was in paradise. The boy said he was hungry and asked for the food and sacred wine. Upon the clapping of hands, the golden trays filled with meat and fish, pomegranates and persimmons, pineapples and peaches were brought in. A golden goblet of wine was also served. After finishing the feast, the boy became tired and requested rest. Two servants prepared and bathed him and placed him into a bed with silken sheets and a purple velvet canopy overhead. Immediately the boy fell into a deep, happy sleep.

When the boy awoke, it was morning. However, he could not tell because of the darkened windows and burning candles. When the servants found him awake, they served him the same meal as before. The boy asked for some milk or coffee with fresh rolls and butter instead. "No my lord, in paradise one always eats the same food," was the reply. Then the young man asked if it was day or night, and the answer was, "In paradise there is neither day nor night." The boy ate the meal, but his appetite was small now for it was not as tasty as before. After eating he asked for the time of day and was informed that in paradise time does not exist. "Where are the other saints?" he asked. "In paradise each family has a place of its own, and the dwelling places are thousands of miles apart, and visiting would take too long." "When will my family come?" he asked. "Your father still has 20 years and your mother has 30 years to live," he was told. "As long as they are alive they cannot come here," the servants told him. "What about the girl I am going to marry?" the young man asked. He was told that she was mourning

for him now, but soon she would forget him and marry another man. "This is the way it is with the living" a servant informed him. For the first time in years the boy desired to do something, but there was nothing he could do in this paradise. He missed his father and longed to see his mother so much now. Also, he deeply missed his wife to be. He wished for something to do, and he dreamed of traveling and of speaking with his friends.

Finally, the time came when he could no longer tolerate his boredom. He said to one of the servants, "I see now that it was really better to be alive than dead." The servant then stated, "Yes my lord, but to live one must study and work and do business, and here everything is so easy." The boy then said that he would rather chop wood and carry stones than to just sit there. He asked how long this would last. "Forever," the servant said. "Stay here forever," the boy cried out and began to pull his hair in grief. "I would rather kill myself," he said. The servant replied, "A dead man cannot kill himself."

Then on the eighth day when the young man was in his deepest despair one of the servants, as was pre-arranged, came and said that there had been a mistake, that he was not dead and that he must leave paradise. "I will take you back to earth," said the winged servant. After being blindfolded, the boy was led back and forth through the hallways of the house and was brought to a room where his family was waiting. After uncovering his eyes, he saw the beautiful sunshine through the opened windows and the birds singing outside in the garden. Joyfully, he embraced and kissed his parents and his wife to be. He said to his fiancée that if she still loved him it was time to be married. Both were very happy and lived a long life together. The young man became one of the most respected and hardworking men in the community.

Here ends the story for this illustration. To those who believe there is a paradise somewhere immediately after death, this illustration may present some thoughts to consider. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and God intended for man to take care of the earth. It is here on the earth where God will have paradise for all who will obey Him. Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). There is no other place where mankind will be. May God bless you to understand these thoughts in the light of the Word of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

DOES MANKIND REALLY KNOW HIS PURPOSE UPON EARTH?

By Bibi Shimon Allicock

There are so many advantages and disadvantages upon Earth for mankind. If we only take time to meditate upon the ways of Almighty God and the things that He desired and designed for us, we will be overcome. First of all, let us look at what He did for us. "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. FOR GOD SENT NOT HIS SON INTO THE WORLD TO CONDEMN THE WORLD; BUT THAT THE WORLD THROUGH HIM MIGHT BE SAVED" (John 3:16-17). But does mankind really care what God did or did not do? "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, THAT LIGHT IS COME INTO THE WORLD, AND MEN LOVED DARKNESS RATHER THAN LIGHT, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the LIGHT, neither cometh to the LIGHT, LEST HIS DEEDS SHOULD BE REPROVED. BUT HE THAT DOETH TRUTH COMETH TO THE LIGHT, THAT HIS DEEDS MAY BE MADE MANIFEST, THAT THEY ARE WROUGHT IN GOD" (versus 18-21). We see in verse 21 that when one comes to the LIGHT, GOD IS ABLE TO SHINE FORTH IN HIS LIFE. THUS, HIS DEEDS MAY BE MADE MANIFEST BECAUSE, "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 see here the love THAT ALMIGHTY GOD has for mankind, but does mankind return LOVE TO GOD? No! Most of us do not! Instead we adhere unto man's

TEACHINGS. We do our own things and worship what and how we feel, claiming we are worshippers of GOD, calling and praising daily on whom we know not. However, we must understand that it is not the GOD OF HEAVEN we are calling upon, because we are doing our own thing and worshipping our own way. Since there is only ONE GOD, therefore we should all be worshipping ONE WAY. "There is ONE BODY, AND ONE SPIRIT, even as ye are called in ONE HOPE of your calling; ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM, ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL, WHO IS ABOVE ALL, AND THROUGH ALL, AND IN YOU ALL" (Ephesians 4:4-6). Why then are there so many religious sects? There are many denominations who call themselves Christian, but they practice things which are far from Christ's teachings. We are only fooling ourselves, calling upon Almighty God in vain. "...Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, THIS PEOPLE HONoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he (Jesus) said unto them, FULL WELL YE REJECT THE commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER; AND, WHOSO CURSETH FATHER OR MOTHER, LET HIM DIE THE DEATH" (Mark 7:6-10). We see here the obligations toward our father and mother, but how many of us are fulfilling these obligations toward our biological parents, let alone our HEAVENLY FATHER, who is SUPPOSED TO RECEIVE DOUBLE HONOUR? The Psalmist David declared, "MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE UNTO THE LORD, ALL YE LANDS. SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS: COME BEFORE HIS PRESENCE WITH SINGING. KNOW YE THAT THE LORD HE IS GOD: IT IS HE THAT HATH MADE US, AND NOT WE OURSELVES; WE ARE HIS PEOPLE, AND THE SHEEP OF HIS PASTURE. ENTER INTO HIS GATES WITH THANKSGIVING, AND INTO HIS COURTS WITH PRAISE: BE THANKFUL UNTO HIM, AND BLESS HIS NAME. FOR THE LORD IS GOOD; HIS MERCY IS

EVERLASTING; AND HIS TRUTH ENDURETH TO ALL GENERATIONS" (Psalm 100). In the Book of Acts, the Apostle Paul instructed the brethren to, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the HOLY GHOST hath made you overseers, to feed the CHURCH OF GOD, WHICH HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD" (Acts 20:28). Also, our LORD JESUS asked OUR HEAVENLY FATHER to keep his followers in HIS OWN NAME. "...HOLY FATHER, KEEP THROUGH THINE OWN NAME THOSE WHOM THOU HAST GIVEN ME, THAT THEY MAY BE ONE, AS WE ARE" (John 17:11, last part).

We must understand and know our purpose here. Almighty God will take great care of us and be kind and compassionate toward us and our seed after us. We are more valuable in the sight of GOD than all the animals and everything else upon the earth. "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6-7). Do any of us know how many hairs are on our head? I guess not! Can you imagine Almighty God knowing how many hairs are on our head? However, we do not find the time to acknowledge HIM or give HIM praises and thanks unto Him for the many wonderful things that HE HAS DONE FOR US. All He wants from us is to be thankful and obedient unto HIM. "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; AND GOD FEEDETH THEM: HOW MUCH MORE ARE YE BETTER THAN THE FOWLS? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, NEITHER BE YE OF DOUBTFUL MIND...BUT RATHER SEEK YE THE KINGDOM OF GOD; AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU" (verses 24-29, 31).

Can you imagine when ALMIGHTY GOD gave instructions unto Moses to give unto the children of Israel? HE EVEN HELPED THEM TO MAKE A CHOICE. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you LIFE AND DEATH, BLESSING AND CURSING: THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE, THAT BOTH THOU AND THY SEED MAY LIVE" (Deuteronomy 30:19). When Moses spoke about life, he meant not only our physical life but also LIFE AFTER DEATH, which is ETERNAL LIFE. Many may say that was for only the Israelites, but the same choice is for all mankind living today. Therefore whosoever will may come, and HE WILL FREELY ACCEPT US, once we be OBEDIENT AND DO AS HE PLEASES. "For GOD hath not called us unto uncleanness, BUT UNTO HOLINESS" (I Thessalonians 4:7). "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour" (verses 3-4). "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more" (verse 1).

Almighty God is so tenderhearted and compassionate, that if we take time to see all the wrong things that we do daily and repent of them, we will be able to really declare His GOODNESS as the Psalmist David did. "GREAT IS THE LORD, AND GREATLY TO BE PRAISED IN THE CITY OF OUR GOD, IN THE MOUNTAIN OF HIS HOLINESS. BEAUTIFUL FOR SITUATION, THE JOY OF THE WHOLE EARTH, IS MOUNT ZION, ON THE SIDES OF THE NORTH, THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING. GOD IS KNOWN IN HER PALACES FOR A REFUGE" (Psalm 48:1-3). "As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our GOD: GOD will establish it for ever. We have thought of thy LOVING KINDNESS, O GOD, in the midst of thy temple. According to thy name, O God, SO IS THY PRAISE UNTO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH: THY RIGHT HAND IS FULL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS" (verses 8-10). "FOR THIS GOD IS OUR GOD FOR EVER AND EVER: HE WILL BE OUR GUIDE EVEN UNTO DEATH" (verse 14).

In the world today, men and women get married, and before you know it, they become divorced, forgetting all

the vows they took. Within a few months, there is all kinds of bickering. They cheat against each other, and they may kill (murder/suicide) each other. These things ought not to be, if we really comprehend how mankind was made. "And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26, first part). "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him" (verse 27, first part). "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (Genesis 2:21-25). "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good..." (Genesis 1:31). Almighty God made everything so very good so that man should live in good standing, but do they do this? They do not! Let us see how the Apostle Paul admonishes us how a man should show his love towards his wife and visa versa in the Book of Ephesians. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave HIMSELF FOR IT" (Ephesians 5:22-25). "That he might present it to HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought MEN TO LOVE THEIR WIVES AS THEIR OWN BODIES. HE THAT LOVETH HIS WIFE LOVETH HIMSELF. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; BUT NOURISHETH AND CHERISHETH IT, EVEN AS THE LORD THE CHURCH" (verses 27-29). "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, AND THEY TWO SHALL BE ONE FLESH" (verse 31). "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband" (verse 33).

Almighty God has designed everything so good and wishes that mankind put their trust and confidence in Him, whereby they can gain of HIS RICHES. "THE BLESSING OF THE LORD, IT MAKETH RICH, AND HE ADDETH NO SORROW WITH IT" (Proverbs 10:22). "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not HIGHMINDED, NOR TRUST IN UNCERTAIN RICHES, BUT IN THE LIVING GOD, WHO GIVETH US RICHLY ALL THINGS TO ENJOY" (I Timothy 6:17).

Instead of living lives pleasing unto the Lord, mankind is only disfiguring, hurting, hating, etc. each other. By doing such things, what does mankind gain? The answer is absolutely nothing good. They only gain sorrow and pain! "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, AND CANNOT OBTAIN: YE FIGHT AND WAR, YET YE HAVE NOT, BECAUSE YE ASK NOT" (James 4:1-2).

Some people are practicing all kinds of lawlessness, whereby they are deceived because once we are not living according to the ways that Almighty God designed, definitely we will be subjected to follow the ways of the devil. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; FOR HE IS A LIAR, AND THE FATHER OF IT" (John 8:44).

Therefore, to know our purpose upon the earth, we do have to do as our Lord Jesus said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). Then we must do as our Brother Paul instructed Timothy: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a LIGHT THAT SHINETH IN A DARK PLACE, UNTIL THE DAY DAWN, AND THE DAY STAR ARISE IN YOUR HEARTS: 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" (II Peter 1:19-21). Therefore, we must understand that, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE PERFECT, THOROUGHLY FURNISHED UNTO ALL GOOD WORKS" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

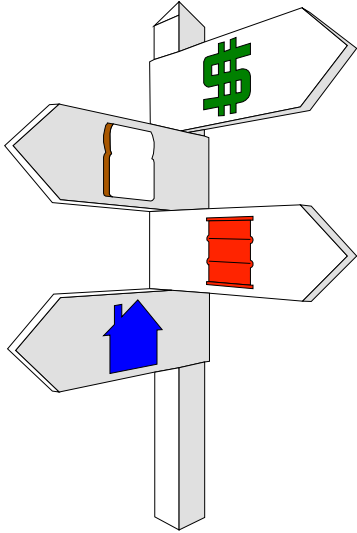
"As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: EVEN SO THOU KNOWEST NOT THE WORKS OF GOD WHO MAKETH ALL" (Ecclesiastes 11:5). "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: FEAR GOD, AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: FOR THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN. FOR GOD SHALL BRING EVERY WORK INTO JUDGMENT, WITH EVERY SECRET THING, WHETHER IT BE GOOD, OR WHETHER IT BE EVIL" (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

The Lot System

"The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD" (Proverbs 16:33). The Lord has chosen the drawing of the lot to be His method for determining certain outcomes such as the choosing of various church officials such as apostles. The reason that the Lord has chosen the lot is found in Proverbs 18:18: "The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty." Contentions cease because we believe that the Lord is behind the decisions made by the outcome of the lot.

The children of Israel determined the division of the land of Canaan by using the lot method. "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance: to every one shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of him. Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit" (Numbers 26:52-55).

In the New Testament the Apostle Judas Iscariot was replaced by Matthias after Judas hanged himself. "And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles" (Acts 1:26). Today we still use the lot for showing us God's will.



THINK ABOUT THIS

This last July, America observed Independence Day. One news source reported that Independence Day is a patriotic holiday for celebrating the positive aspects of the United States. It stated that on that day people in the United States express and give thanks for the freedom and liberties fought by the first generation of many of today's Americans.

The news source also reported that Independence Day, also known as the Fourth of July, is the anniversary of the publication of the Declaration of Independence from Great Britain in 1776.

Comment

Independence Day has lost its true meaning to many in the United States. The news source stated that Independence Day is a patriotic holiday for celebrating the positive aspects of the United States.

It seems to me that there may be very few positive aspects in our country in these last days. Our country seems to have lost its moral compass from the higher authorities down to the average citizen. Everyone wants to do his own thing, whether good or evil, and the elected leaders, for the most part, are dishonest, corrupt and hypocritical.

I wish to share with you a portion of an article that I read in a publication called **Gospel Minutes**. It describes exactly the political climate in America today. "One of the tiring aspects of living in our world today is that we cannot seem to escape partisan politics. One side accuses the other side, then the other side comes back with even more invective. Every time I turn on the television to get

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.

the local weather, I have to endure the latest attack/counterattack. For some, when their side speaks, it is good news, while others reject it entirely."

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

A HOTEL IN SPACE?

Someone told me that a hotel in space was being planned, but I seriously doubted him. Then I saw the following short article, complete with picture, in the **Houston Chronicle**. The article is called *Space hotel bookings take off like a rocket*.

"Wealthy space enthusiasts are paying \$80,000 deposits to secure spots in the solar system's first-ever space hotel, which could accept guests starting in 2020.

Aurora Station, the brainchild of Orion Span based in Houston and Silicon Valley, sold four months of reservations within 72 hours of being announced last week. The modular space station would allow guests to float in zero gravity, grow food to take home as a souvenir and see 16 sunrises and sunsets every 24 hours.

"People from all over the world are extremely excited by the prospect of space travel and want to enjoy our authentic astronaut experience," said Frank Bunger, CEO of Orion Span. "We're proud to be at the leading edge of moving space travel forward, and our long-term goal remains to make it accessible to all."

The hotel will host six people at a time, including two

crew members. Guests would get a 12-day journey for \$9.5 million. The refundable deposit of \$80,000 is required to reserve a spot in the yet-to-be built 43.5-foot-long hotel. Its diameter will be 14.1 feet.

Before strapping into a spaceship, tourists would visit Houston to train. The low-Earth-orbit hotel would also be made in the Clear Lake area.

“Houston is by far the best place in the world for human spaceflight and human spaceflight development,” Bunger previously told the Chronicle.

Comment

The construction and reality of a hotel in space is just another wild plan of man. I have not come in contact with many in my area who are extremely excited about the prospect of space. Many say they would be afraid to experience an authentic astronaut experience!

Only the very wealthy are able to experience visiting the hotel in space! I doubt that there are many able to pay 9.5 million dollars for the 12 day journey. For all practical purposes, the journey is a vain undertaking.

WHAT ABOUT SYRIA?

The conflict in Syria continues despite many years of conflict. The initial reason for sending troops just for advisors into the country was to defeat ISIS with the help of the Russians, but things became more complicated as the Russians are in support of the Syrian government, but the U.S. is not. It is said that the Russians spent more time bombing the rebels, those Syrians opposing their government, than they did bombing the territories held by ISIS. Later the Syrian army instituted a chemical weapons attack upon the Syrian people. President Trump gave an order to strike back at the Syrian Army in retaliation for the attack. This attack infuriated the Russians. There was another chemical weapons attack instituted by the Syrian regime.

This time France and the United Kingdom joined forces with the U.S. to launch another attack. Russia took the issue to the United Nations to have the attack condemned. The condemnation article failed.

Comment

The above is just a view of main things that have happened during the Syrian civil war.

The fact that I wish to point out is that Russia is not a friend of the United States. Now they say that it can be

proved that Russia hacked or interfered by way of cyber with the 2016 election. Russia also has attacked some of its former territories in order to expand its present size.

Russia helping the United States defeat ISIS reminds us of the Scripture found in II Corinthians 6:15, “And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” The United States has no concord with Russia!

ATHEISTS AT IT AGAIN!

I heard from a reliable source that several U.S. government cabinet members attend a regular Bible study at the White House. The members generally include Attorney General Jeff Sessions, CIA Director Mike Pompeo, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, HUD Secretary Ben Carson, Energy Secretary Rick Perry, and when his schedule allows, Vice President Mike Pence. However, several atheist groups are not happy with this regular Bible study. They have requested documentation about the Bible studies under the Freedom of Information Act. They wish to know whether government money is being used to fund the studies. The answer is No! They also want to know whether employees in the agency feel coerced into organizing and participating. Again, the answer is no! Only cabinet members and vice president can attend. President Trump is invited, but he does not attend.

Comment

Why should the atheist object to Bible study in the White House? The Bible study does not affect his weird philosophy. In this country, there is freedom of religion or from religion. The atheist wants only freedom for himself!

SITTING TOO MUCH?

I read an article entitled *Too much sitting could impact memory*. I did not understand all the details of how sitting too much could impact memory. It has something to do with the brain structure for the key lobe. This may or may not be true. It is the result of a study. Every study has a certain percentage of error.

However, doctors tell us that sitting too much is not good for one’s body. They say our bodies need exercise in order to keep healthy. The Apostle Paul wrote, “For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and

of that which is to come” (I Timothy 4:8). Bodily exercise profits our health during this life only, but godliness in this life profits our present mental health and assures us of an entrance into the kingdom of God.

MORE ABOUT SYRIA

Earlier Syria was mentioned in this column. I just read that the United States wants to confine the scope of the Syrian war. The defense secretary says that the goal remains the end of ISIS.

President Trump at one time announced that the troops in Syria would be soon pulled out, but he was advised that this was not a good strategy. ISIS is about wholly defeated in Syria. What is the benefit of the troops remaining?

A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

We have heard about the soaring national debt. It was a problem even before the income tax overhaul which is thought to add much to the debt. Opponents of a large national debt say that our grandchildren will fret the bill. However, there are many entitlements that must be met and other expenses of the government. Therefore, the national debt cannot be reduced without hurting a number of citizens of our country.

This is a perplexity. A good definition of perplexed is “no way out.” This means that a high national debt will continue with no end in sight. Jesus spoke of perplexity in Luke 21:25 when he spoke of “distress of nations, with perplexity” when referring to the signs before His return.

IN INDIA

I understand that a pastor in an Indian village was leading his congregation of eight in a meditation on Bible passages. Hindu extremists burst into the room and began beating him. He said that they forcefully dragged him outside and beat him some more. He said they spewed many words in foul language and beat him on his chest.

They told him and the congregation that all Christians in the area should beware. They told him that there is no place for Christianity here. They told him that all must embrace Sarna [an Indian religion]. They told him that if anybody goes against this rule, their houses will be set on fire, and they and their family will be killed.

The pastor said that he reported the incident to the

local police, but they refused to register a case against the assailants.

Comment

I understand that the majority in India are Hindu, but India is supposed to be a democracy, if I am correct. There are a great many Christians in India, including those of the Church of God (7th day).

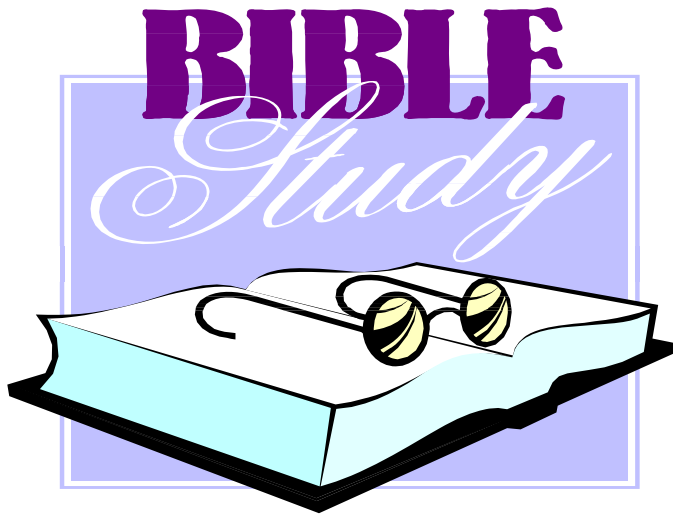
Let us pray for the Christians and those who are persecuted in India.

Making Plans and Setting Goals

Some people, apparently, believe that a Christian should not make plans and set goals because they believe that such actions are man-oriented and are not of God. I have even heard it said that a minister should not prepare a sermon beforehand with notes from which to preach, but should just let the Lord direct his thoughts when he preaches. However, some preachers wander way off their subject without some notes to guide them. If prayer for guidance has been offered when a minister prepares his sermon, there is no reason why he should not use notes to help keep his thoughts clear. After all, the greatest sermons given are recorded for us in the Bible which then become notes for ministers from which to preach.

Being well prepared is a theme from the Bible. For instance, punishment is pronounced upon the servant who does not prepare himself for service. "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes" (Luke 12:47). And in II Timothy 2:20-21 we find: "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

Even the Lord, Himself, makes preparation. We learn from Psalm 103:19: "The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all." When a person is relying upon the Lord for guidance, it can truly be said: "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD" (Proverbs 16:1).



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: To what did Christ compare the joy of a shepherd who had found a lost sheep?

ANSWER: To the joy in heaven over one repentant sinner. See Luke 15:3-7.

QUESTION: Will you please name some ways in which Satan can work in us today?

ANSWER: The following are just four ways in which Satan can work in us today:

Through Depression of Spirit

There are a number of people today in whom Satan, not only has a place, but has control through depression! He brings to them doubts and discouragements regarding their spiritual condition. Whenever such doubts and discouragements assail you, you may know that it is caused by Satan. God never torments one of His children. When this depression of spirit means torment and torture for you and me, we may know that it is Satan at work in our hearts. It is his mark.

All he wants is that we should get our eyes off of Christ.

If he can do that through this concern as to our spiritual condition, he has won his first victory in your life and mine, and he will lead us on to morbid introspection, and to a deadly dissection and analysis of our spiritual condition. It is fatal! The moment we find ourselves so doing, we should be on our guard. Satan never asks for the control of your life and mine at the first. All he asks for is a place there. We have the command so simple and definite, "Neither give place to the devil (Satan)" (Ephesians 4:27). All he wants, first of all, in your life is standing room, and he knows if he can get standing room he will soon get control, and he can get that standing room through depression of spirit.

Through Delusion of Mind

The world is being flooded by organizations, movements and cults. Many of them are satanic in origin. Many of them contain half-truths and half-lies, subtle counterfeits that deceive even the very elect, if it were possible. Satan today will take even the most glorious truth, the truth of the Holy Spirit, and he will use it and capitalize it for himself. Thus, through cunning deception, Satan lays hold upon many hungry hearted people and leads them away from the Lord and His Word.

Through Discord in the Home

Through alienation between husband and wife, parents and children; through misunderstanding between members of the same family.

Through Discord in the Church

Yes, division in that part of the church that is sound and true and fundamental. I am sorry to say it, but I have scarcely touched division that is caused by intolerance of workers one with another, by insignificant things, by jealousies. It is Satan's most deadly work within the evangelical part of the Church of God.

QUESTION: I have a friend who believes that she will go to heaven when she dies. I told her that no one goes to heaven when they die. She countered me with the examples of Elijah and Enoch. Will you please prove from the Bible that I am correct?

ANSWER: Yes, the Bible states that Elijah was taken up by a whirlwind into heaven (II Kings 2:1), and Enoch was "...translated that he should not see death..." (Hebrews 11:5). Did they go to heaven to be with God? If you were to die today, would you go to heaven? To these

questions, many would answer “Yes!” without a moment’s hesitation. But wait! Jesus said, “No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven – the Son of Man.” Did Christ mean what He said? Does “no one” include Elijah and Enoch?

What is the answer to these seemingly contradictory Scriptures? Do God’s servants go to heaven when they die? Is anyone in heaven now? If not, what happens to Christians when they die? What is the reward of the saved?

“As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind” (II Kings 2:11). At first, this might seem to directly contradict what Christ said – “No man has ever gone into heaven.” But this is simply because many people are scarcely aware that there are three heavens referred to in Scripture. The first is our earth’s atmosphere where the birds fly (Genesis 1:20). The next is where the moon and stars are (Psalm 8:3). Then there is the heaven where God’s throne is, often called the third heaven (II Corinthians 12:1-2). This is the heaven that most readily comes to mind, so it is easy to assume that this is where Elijah was taken. But a closer look will reveal that he was merely transported, or translated, to another spot on earth where he died later on! Some ten years later King Jehoram of Judah received a letter from Elijah – he simply had been taken away miraculously by a chariot and dropped off somewhere else on earth.

But what about Enoch, who Paul said was “translated that he should not see death?” Did he not go to heaven without ever dying? Well, what did Christ say? It is clear that Enoch was just moved, like Elijah, from one place on earth to another. He did not see death at that time, but he died eventually, like everyone else listed in Hebrews 11. Enoch is mentioned in verse 5, and in verse 13 we read, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises...” That includes Enoch!

Now let us see how the Bible really defines death and the resurrection that will follow. The Bible depicts death as a state of sleep (I Thessalonians 4:13-14). During this state, one knows nothing, not even the passing of time (Psalm 146:3-4; Ecclesiastes 9:5). The body goes to the grave where it decomposes. The spirit “goes back to God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7). “Spirit” is better rendered “breath,” “wind,” or “life.” There is no sense in which this word suggests a conscious entity apart from a

living body. You are just dead when you die. But does that mean you will never live again? By no means! Just as God resurrected Christ, the firstborn of many brethren (Romans 8:29), He will resurrect you when Christ returns if you are truly a Christian. “...The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (I Corinthians 15:52-55)

Right now all Christians who have already died are waiting in their graves for Christ to return. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thessalonians 4:16-17). This is when all the faithful of Hebrews 11 will be resurrected. David, who is listed among the faithful in Hebrews 11, is dead and buried and has not ascended to heaven (Acts 2: 29, 34). God preferred to offer all His people their reward at the same time – at the return of Christ. “And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Hebrews 11:39-40). We read in I Thessalonians 4:15 that those who are alive when Christ returns will not precede those who are “asleep,” that is dead. God did not want those who have died to receive their reward before those who are alive.

QUESTION: I wish to know the meaning of the following three words: Cruse, Topaz and Rue.

ANSWER: The following is the meaning of the three words which you mentioned:

Cruse – During a journey one would carry a small pot or jug called a cruse. This was used to carry water. In I Samuel 26:11, we learn that David stole the cruse of Saul while he slept. We read about Elijah and how a cruse of water suddenly appeared at his head. A cruse also held oil. A certain widow woman told Elijah she had but a little

oil in a cruse in I Kings 17:12.

Topaz – The topaz is a precious stone. It is a hard crystal of various colors with the yellow variety being the one usually cut and prized as a gem. It was such a precious stone that it was used in the breastplate of the high priest. We find note of this in Exodus 28:17. It was the second stone in the first row. The topaz is also mentioned in connection with the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:20). The ninth foundation of the wall of the city is adorned with the topaz. You can read about the topaz in Job 28:19 and Ezekiel 28:13. At each mention, it is considered a precious stone.

Rue – Rue is a woody perennial herb with yellow flowers. It has a strong smell and bitter-tasting leaves. It grows 23 feet high with bluish-green leaves. It is indigenous to the Mediterranean region. In Palestine, it was cultivated as a medicine and quite possibly as a condiment as we see from reading of it in Luke 11:42. The Pharisees were accused of paying tithes on it (being careful about minute details) and overlooking the judgment and the love of God.

QUESTION: What is wrong with the dogma of the Catholic Church which calls the Virgin Mary “Mother of God?”

ANSWER: The Virgin Mary is worshiped as the Mother of God in the Catholic Church. The expression “Mother of God” is not found in the Bible as such, and it does not describe the truth of the matter. We know that Mary was the mother of Jesus, and Jesus is always termed as “Son of God.” Jesus is never identified as the heavenly Father. It was the purely human babe Jesus who was born of Mary, not the Creator of the universe who existed from “everlasting to everlasting.” The title “Mother of God” expresses serious error. He who exists and has neither beginning nor end is timeless and could not be born of one who herself was a product of His creation.

QUESTION: I wish to know the origin of lying. Who was the first liar, and what was the first lie? Is the first lie believed by anyone today?

ANSWER: Satan (the devil) is the father of lies. Jesus said, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, AND ABODE NOT IN THE TRUTH, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44). The first lie is found in Genesis 3:4-5 which reads, “And

Being Faithful

By David DeLong

A servant, wise, had talents, five,
Another one had two;
And with these, both had doubled them,
For both the men were true.

A third man only given one
Talent for his work
Had failed to make a profit, and
His duty he did shirk.

The first two servants, given praise,
Entered their lord's joy;
The slothful servant, thrust away,
His lord did then destroy.

Now, gifts and talents given us,
Our Lord has penned instruction:
"Occupy, until I come,"
Or, you will have destruction.

And like the wicked servant
Into outer darkness, cast;
We could meet this awful fate
If our "good ways" don't last.

.....
the serpent said unto the woman, YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” This contradicts God’s statement, “...THOU SHALT SURELY DIE” (Genesis 2:17). All those who believe in the immortality of the soul believe Satan's lie.



Myanmar

Some of our brethren in Myanmar enjoying a fellowship meal.





LESSON I

GOD'S MESSAGE TO PHARAOH

Scripture Reading: Exodus 4:18-31.

Golden Text: Exodus 4:22.

"And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn."

1. Who did Moses ask permission to leave, to go to Egypt? What was his reply? Exodus 4:18.
2. Who went with Moses, and what did he take in this hand? Exodus 4:20.
3. When Moses returns to Egypt, what is He to do, and what will God do? Exodus 4:21.
4. What was Moses instructed to say unto Pharaoh? Exodus 4:22-23.
5. Where did God tell Aaron to go, and did Aaron obey? Exodus 4:27.
6. Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord and the signs which He had commanded them. What did Moses and Aaron do after this? Exodus 4:28-29.
7. Aaron spoke to the people, and Moses did the signs before them. Did they worship God after Aaron spoke to them? Exodus 4:30-31.

ANSWERS to Bible Riddles: 1. Arib, 2. Samson, 3. A sinning woman, 4. The Good Samaritan, 5. Zacchaeus

ANSWERS to Hunting Wild Animals: 1. lions, 2. wolves, 3. bears 4. swine, 5. camel, 6. leopard, 7. ram, 8. dromedary, 9. foxes, 10. dragon

ANSWERS to The Beatitudes: A-f or c, B-d, C-a, D-i, E-g, F-b, G-e, H-c or f, I-h.

LESSON II

MOSES AND AARON SPEAK TO PHARAOH

Scripture Reading: Exodus 5:1-14.

Golden Text: Exodus 5:2 (first part).

"And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?"

1. What message from the Lord did Moses and Aaron give to Pharaoh? Exodus 5:1.
2. What was Pharaoh's answer? Exodus 5:2.
3. What were the children of Israel supposed to do, and what would happen if they did not do this? Exodus 5:3.
4. What question did Pharaoh ask Moses in Exodus 5:4?
5. What did Pharaoh command the taskmasters to do to punish the people? Exodus 5:6-9.
6. Did the taskmasters tell the children of Israel what Pharaoh said? Exodus 5:10-11.
7. What other punishment did the children of Israel get while they were working? Exodus 5:14.

LESSON III

THE ISRAELITES MURMUR AGAINST MOSES

Scripture Reading: Exodus 5:15-23.

Golden Text: Exodus 5:22 (first part).

"And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people?"

1. What did the officers of the children of Israel say to Pharaoh? Exodus 5:15-16.

2. What was Pharaoh's answer? Exodus 5:17-18.
3. Who did they go and meet then? Exodus 5:20.
4. What did they say to Moses? Exodus 5:21.
5. What question did Moses ask the Lord? Exodus 5:22.
6. What did Moses say that Pharaoh had done since Moses had spoken to him in the Lord's name? Exodus 5:23.

LESSON IV

GOD REASSURES MOSES

Scripture Reading: Exodus 6:1-13.

Golden Text: Exodus 6:2.

"And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD."

1. What did the Lord say unto Moses? Exodus 6:1-2.
2. By what name was he not known to the Israelites? Exodus 6:3.
3. God had established His covenant with Israel. What land was he to give to them? Exodus 6:4-5. God heard their groanings and remembered this covenant.
4. What was Moses instructed to tell the children of Israel? Exodus 6:6-8.
5. When Moses tried to tell these promises to the children of Israel, did they listen? Exodus 6:9.
6. What then did God tell Moses to do, and was Moses doubtful that Pharaoh would hear him? Exodus 6:10-12.
7. What did the Lord speak unto Moses and Aaron? Exodus 6:13.

BIBLE RIDDLES

1. Once when Adam fell asleep, This was taken from his keep.
2. Once I set fire to a field of corn, That was before my locks were shorn, or I lost the power of eyes to see, The lady who did marry me.
3. Once with tears I hard did cry, And used my hair as a towel to dry, The dampness on the master's feet, When He did with a Pharisee eat.
4. Once while traveling down a road, I put a human with my load, Beaten, he was left for dead, but I nursed him well and helped instead.
5. Once they found me in a tree, which I had climbed a parade to see, Then I gave a goodly meal to the Christ Who the sick did heal.

THE BEATITUDES

Can you match the parts of these beatitudes to the ones on page twenty-three? If you need help read Matthew 5:3-12.

- A. Blessed are the poor in spirit:
- B. Blessed are they that mourn:
- C. Blessed are the meek:
- D. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst for righteousness:
- E. Blessed are the merciful:
- F. Blessed are the pure in heart:
- G. Blessed are the peacemakers:
- H. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake:
- I. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake;

*"Love worketh no ill to his neighbour..."
(Romans 13:10).*

WHEN BETTY JO HATED

By Mary Garner

"I hate that girl, and I'll not listen to her anymore," Betty Jo snapped as she switched the radio off. With her fist clenched, she stamped her foot and screeched, "I hate her! I hate her! I hate her!" Then she ran to the sofa and buried her face in the pillows.

Betty Jo's mother was speechless. Never had she seen her daughter in such a rage. For a few moments she sat, listening for some explanation of such action. But the only sound was the sobbing that seemed to come from a broken heart.

"Why don't you like Phyllis anymore?" asked Mrs. Larson, "I think she has a sweet voice, and I know she's a nice girl. You've always had such good times together."

"I hate her! I could pull her hair out! She's a cheat! I'll never speak to her again! I'll - I'll -" Betty Jo searched for words to express her hatred even more. She wanted to say something terrible, but she knew she didn't dare. Her mother was very kind and patient, but Betty Jo knew that it was time to find a stopping place.

"Be careful, Betty Jo," interrupted Mrs. Larson. "Remember Jesus is hearing every word you say, and He knows every thought in your heart."

"Well, Mother, it wasn't right of her. She told a lie to get to sing that song. Anyone who sings on that program is supposed to be under twelve years of age, and Phyllis was twelve her last birthday. I could have sung it, Mother, if it hadn't been for her. Jesus heard her tell that lie, too, didn't He?"

"Yes, Betty Jo, that is true, and liars will be punished. But let me read a Scripture to you, found in I John 3:15: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." You see, Betty Jo, it isn't only lying that can keep us out of the kingdom. Hatred will do it too. Hatred is a terrible sin, and the best thing to do is to get rid of it quickly as you

can."

"How can you get rid of it? If you hate a person, you hate her and you can't help it."

"Of course you can help it. Ask the Lord to help you love her."

"I don't want to love her. I'll never love her again! I wish she'd take a cold an..." She clamped her hand over her mouth just in time.

"Betty Jo, I can't permit you to talk like that. Even though you could have sung in her place, you shouldn't act as you are. You must go to your room until you can act like a lady."

Gladly, Betty Jo obeyed her mother and marched toward her room. There she could say and think what she pleased, and no one could do anything. "I'll get even with her, if it takes me a year to do it. There's that silly old doll she gave me last year for my birthday," With a slap and kick, little curly headed Nancy went sailing under the bed. Wham! Her head struck the wall.

"Oh, you poor dear, I didn't mean to do it. I love you. I really wasn't mad at you. I am sorry." But all this was too late. Nancy's head was cracked so badly that it could not be fixed. Betty Jo cuddled her in her arms and tried to press her head together, but the blow had been too much. Nancy would never be the same again.

Betty Jo's sobs had turned into real crying. To think she had broken the doll she loved most of all. Mrs. Larson heard the wailing and went to see what had happened. Between sobs, Betty Jo told her the story.

"The Lord is teaching you a lesson, dear. See what anger and hatred have caused you to do? You have broken your doll so that she will be of no use anymore. You can not comb her curls or make her pretty hats anymore. That's what you do to your friends, too, when hatred is in your heart. Your friends are no good to you anymore. You can't do anything for them, and they can't do anything for you. Hatred will cause a person to do terrible things; things they wouldn't do at all if they loved everyone."

"Oh, Mother, I'm so sorry about it all. I do not want anything to happen to Phyllis. I want Jesus to forgive me for the mean things I said. I'll not let hatred into my heart again."



HUNTING WILD ANIMALS

Hidden away in the Bible are many animals. Some of them seem to be doing very strange things. It's hard to guess what they are from the descriptions. You will have to hunt carefully to find some of them.

- 1. *Twelve beasts of the jungle guarding the throne of a king. (I Kings 10:18-20)* _____
- 2. *Wild animals in sheeps' clothing. (Matthew 7:15)*

- 3. *Mother animals eating saucy children. (II Kings 2:24)* _____
- 4. *Hundreds of these animals leaping over a cliff into the sea. (Mark 5:13)* _____
- 5. *An animal which is carrying a bride to her marriage. (Genesis 24:64)* _____
- 6. *This animal "cannot change its spots." (Jeremiah 13:23)* _____
- 7. *An animal caught in the bushes. (Genesis 22:13)*

- 8. *A beast like a camel, carrying the mail. (Esther 8:10)* _____

9. Wild animals racing through the grainfields with fire tied to their tails. (Judges 15:4) _____

10. A storybook creature you have never seen. (Ezekiel 29:3) _____



BEATITUDES

- a. for they shall inherit the earth. (verse 5)
- b. for they shall see God. (8)
- c. for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (10)
- d. for they shall be comforted. (4)
- e. for they shall be called the children of God. (9)
- f. for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (3)
- g. for they shall obtain mercy. (7)
- h. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in heaven. (11-12)
- i. for they shall be filled. (6)



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REALITY

You can see us on wheelchairs and walkers,
Seeking windows and glass doors to sit by;
We are hoping to absorb some sunlight,
We see you each time you pass by.
But even God's wondrous creation,
When viewed through shatter proof glass;
The image is blurred, and the features are dark
When in the shadows they pass.
You say we seem one happy family,
But nothing could be farther from true;
We are just a few scraps of humanity
Put here to be cared for by you.
There is nothing "home like" about it
That can be found anywhere in this place;
And you won't find a trace of contentment
Written on anyone's face.
We should be sitting on porches at evening,
Not contained behind these doors, instead;
And absorbing the good sounds of nature
As night puts God's creatures to bed.
We have been through many troubles,
And hard work, just a phase of our life;
We have all known trouble and heartaches,
And seen the loss of a husband or wife.
Now our wishes are really quite simple,
Even so, no one seems to really care;
If the wishes fit "a corporate decision",
They won't find any honor here.
So don't tell each other how happy we are
To be in such a warm, loving "home";
For all we have left to look forward to now
Is our leaving, to die here alone.

--Betty Whetstone

