

The Advocate of Truth

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Were Adam and Eve Forgiven?

Marie Rasnick Fetzer

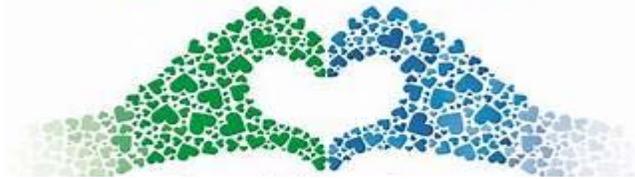
One of the continuing themes in the Bible is that sin brings with it consequences. We can read instances of this in the very first pages of Genesis, with the story of Adam and his family. Man's very first sin occurred with Adam and Eve's disobedience to God, which caused them to be cast out of the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:23-24). Later, their son, Cain, became angry when God refused to accept his offering because it had not been done in the proper manner (Gen 4:5). Although the Bible indicates that God gave Cain the opportunity to repent of his sin (Gen 4:7), he remained willful and unrepentant. After Cain murdered his brother Abel out of jealousy, God sent him into exile. Gen 4:16 tell us, "*And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.*" The "*Land of Nod*" may have been the name of the location of an actual place, however "Nod" is also the Hebrew root of the verb "*to wander*", therefore to dwell in Nod may have meant to live a life of continual wandering, a vagabond life. But it was his being cast "*out from the presence of the LORD*" that was the worst consequence.

But if you think about this, Adam and Eve had sinned, too. Why hadn't they also been exiled to the Land of Nod? Genesis 3:23-24 tell us, "*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." While Adam and Eve had been driven from the Garden of Eden, it seems as if they were allowed to remain under God's care. In Genesis chapter four we can read how God continued to love, care for and instruct them, even as He delivered them from the danger of accessing the Tree of Life while in their fallen state (Gen 3:24). When they were naked, God provided them with *coverings* made from animal skins (Gen 3:21) obtained by the first blood sacrifice, which introduced the doctrine of our sins being *covered* through the promise of a coming Savior (Gen 3:14-15). While not explicitly stated, it is implied that God had instructed Adam and Eve in the acceptable form of worship and sacrifice, and is understood that both of their sons knew the correct way, however it was only Abel who chose the proper way to serve God (Gen 4:3-5). God even gave Eve another son, Seth, to replace righteous Abel, through whom the line of promise would continue on down to our Savior, Jesus Christ (Gen 4:25). Because God continued to care for them and did not send them away, it seems likely that Adam and Eve must have repented from their sin and that they, and at least Abel and Seth also chose to follow God.

The story of Adam and his family establishes a pattern that can be seen throughout the Bible, that of two diverging paths. Man is given a free will, a choice. He can Choose Life or Choose Death (Deut 30:19, Rom 6:23). Choose to Follow God or choose to Reject Him. The path of the righteous travels towards God and the path of the wicked travels away from God. The faithful were allowed to dwell in God's presence and mercy, and the wicked moved farther and farther away from Him. The choice still exists today. "*And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD*" (Jos 24:15). The choice lies in front of us each and every day. Choose God or Choose Self. Choose God.

be kind



Frances Durisseau's

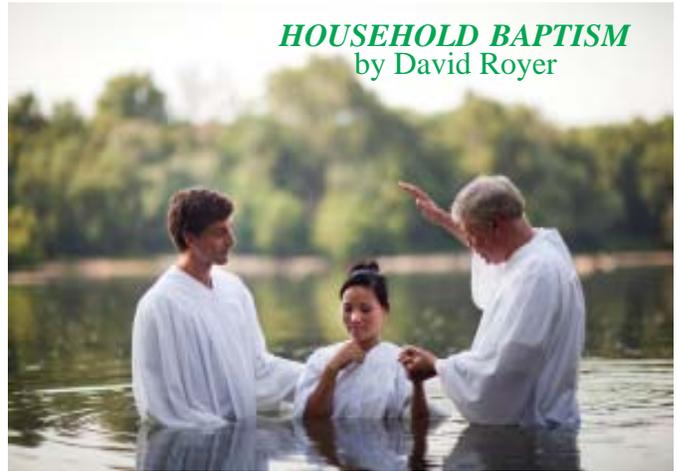
INSPIRATIONS: SACRED WORDS

We need to be careful with our words before we let them escape. Are they encouraging and kind? Are they shared with a smile and maybe with laughter to bring joy to someone? Are they filled with love and tenderness? Do we speak to friends and acquaintances nicer than we do our spouses, children and other family members? In fact, do we show better manners and respect to others than we do to those in our family? Are we quick to listen to a friend who wants to talk to us about something, but tell our children, "wait till I get finished with the laundry, dinner, or the dishes?" Do we have time or energy to go shopping or to the movies with our girlfriends, but don't understand why our husbands feel like we aren't spending time with them?

Here's my point: We need to always make sure we speak in respectable and loving ways to those in our family, first. We should use our very best manners with those we love, first. In my household, we speak very respectfully to one another... we compliment each other and say lots of thank you, even for little things. We say "I love you" often and hug a lot too. It's not formal, it's just kind and loving because we care about each other more than we care about anyone else. We also joke, kid, laugh, and have fun too. We have a lot of joy in our home. I have always believed that love and kindness begin at home and that it grows and overflows from there.

I also believe that you have to learn to be a good listener and that that starts at home too. Home is a sacred place wherever it is, and all those who are there should be treated with the utmost respect.

--From THE POST newspaper, Texas City, Texas



I recently visited an Eastern Orthodox Church and picked up one of their free pamphlets entitled: Infant Baptism.... The central theme was that this orthodox (Russian) Church believes that babies and children of parishioners are to be baptized. *This practice holds true for many Christian religions, including Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Assyrian Church of the East, Anglicans, Lutherans, Methodists, Church of the Nazarene, Reformed Church in America, Episcopalians, United Church of Christ, Presbyterians, Continental Reformed, and others. *Together, these constitute over 80 percent of all those who call themselves Christians. *Source: www.newworldencyclopedia.org

The pamphlet went on to say that the main reason for this position was because of several family/household baptisms mentioned in the Bible. Since the words "entire" and "all" are used in these biblical accounts, with no mention of the exclusion of children, they assume that any children in the household would have been saved and baptized. Here are the offered biblical episodes:

The Household of Cornelius, Acts 11:13-14: "And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."

The Household of Lydia, Act 16:15: "And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."
The Philippian Jailor's Household, Acts 16:33: "And he

took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.”

The Household of Crispus, Acts 18:8: “And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.”

The Household of Stephanas, I Corinthians 1:16: “And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.”

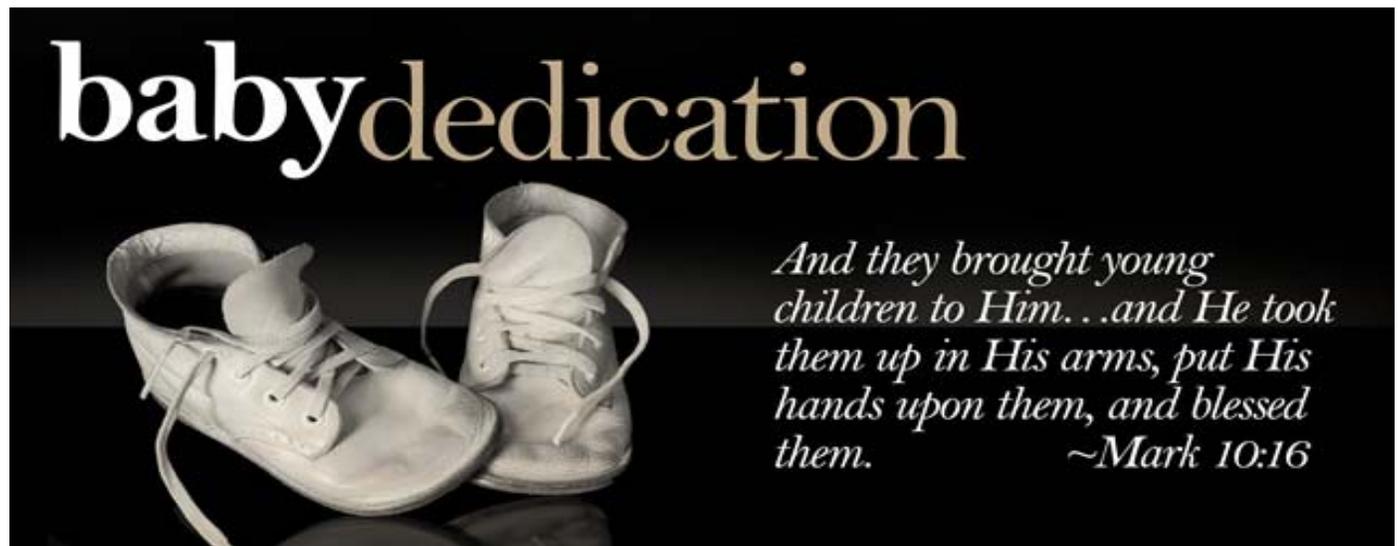
I argue that by an expanded reading of verses around these episodes, the context becomes clear that only those household members who accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior were baptized. Mark 16:15-16 is very clear: “And he (Jesus) said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” No one is included in Jesus’s command if they cannot first hear, understand, and believe the gospel. Apostle Paul reinforced this requirement in Romans 10:17: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Can a baby do and comprehend these things?

Notice that these biblical examples of household baptisms confirm that “belief” must precede baptism. The apostles understood Jesus’s final divine Commission and Command, and they always baptized repentant believers, not infants.

A further rebuttal for infant baptism is to look at the reason for baptism. In these “group baptisms”, the individuals were responsible for their own salvation. Romans 10:9 and Romans 14:12 makes it clear that personal faith and belief are the necessary conditions for each person’s salvation.

Individual baptism is then required for the forgiveness of our sins. Peter said to the multitude of people at Pentecost: “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). Baptism is a representation of complete burial of the old sinful self and the beginning or “redo” of our new life, free from the guilt of past sins and the surrender to the will and authority of God. Remember, strong faith and a sincere belief result in **real repentance**, or else all that we accomplish in baptism is just getting wet.

Children are a gift from God and a much-valued addition to the family and church community. Our Church recommends and encourages baby dedication as a wonderful service to present a newborn to the congregation and the Lord. Parents are making a public statement of faith to raise their child under God’s will and wisdom. However, neither infant baptism or dedication can impart grace or salvation to a child. Salvation only comes as each person recognizes his or her sinful nature and receives forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.



HONOR OF URIAH

By Tim Buechner

It is likely that you are familiar with the account in 2 Samuel chapters 11 and 12. Here David displeases the Lord by committing adultery with the wife of another man, Uriah. Then, he arranges for Uriah to be sent to the front lines of the battle to be killed, hopefully before he learns of his wife's situation with David. We understand the sin that David commits, the consequences of his actions and the forgiveness God has for those who are truly repentant. In this article though, I want to focus on a little discussed aspect of the story: Uriah.

Uriah was a soldier. He took his job seriously. His commitment to his job responsibilities, chain of command and God is unquestionable.

When David had Uriah pulled out of his unit to report to him, he faithfully obeys his commander's order. However, when David tells him to go home to his house, his sense of duty as a soldier does not allow him to. Highly committed to his job, he sleeps at the door of the king's house ready to defend the king during the time of war they were in.

When asked by David why he didn't go home Uriah's response demonstrates his integrity and how seriously he took his job. He told David that he could not go enjoy being at home with his wife when the ark of the covenant, Israel, Judah, his field commander and his fellow soldiers were camped in the fields at war. His sense of duty was beyond reproach.

Even after partaking of the king's food and drink, Uriah returned to sleep at the door of the king's house rather than going to his house.

When David ordered Uriah to return to the war front with a letter for his commander, Uriah obliged. The

Scriptures are silent on whether or not Uriah knew the content of the letter ordering his commander, Joab, to deploy Uriah to the front of the hottest battlefield. Nevertheless Uriah obeyed Joab's order which of course ultimately led to his death.

Think of the example we could be to others concerning our testimony of the Lord if we approached our responsibilities with the same mindset as Uriah. As an employer, employee, father, mother, minister, child of God, whatever roles and positions we have, if we demonstrated Uriah's sense of duty others would surely take note.

The Apostle Paul, in his letters to the Ephesians and Colossians addresses this type of Uriah commitment.

In Ephesians 6:5-8 Paul tells the servants to obey their masters as unto Christ. This tells them to think of the orders their bosses give to them as if they were issued by Christ Himself! He tells them to not put on false pretenses about their service to give the appearance of being good employees, but, instead as the servants of Christ, as if they were doing service to the Lord and not men. Can you imagine that? If we responded to the requests of those we are employed by in this manner we would stick out like sore thumbs (in a good way of course). We would clearly be examples that afford us an opportunity to witness of our Lord.

Colossians 3:17, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him". Paul challenges us to make all of our words and actions in the name of the Lord Jesus. How often would we participate in the water cooler talk, the rumor mill or add hours not worked to our timecard if we approached our work in this way?

Paul's message to the Colossians in Colossians 3:22-24 is very similar to what he told the Ephesians. In these verses he adds that whatever we do we should do it heartily, as to the Lord and not men.

Uriah exemplifies these teachings of Paul. Let us learn from his example and be great witnesses as he was.



PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB

--Reprinted

At three o'clock one morning recently I was awakened from a sound sleep in a supposedly fireproof hotel. Screaming sirens told of fire-fighting equipment hurrying through the murky darkness of a Midwestern city. At first it sounded as if the equipment was coming from the east. Then I heard sirens coming from the west and the north and the south. It must be a big fire, I thought, and it must be nearby.

Looking out of the seventh-story window, I noticed that the shiny red trucks were parked around my hotel! Quickly I called the desk clerk.

"Where's the fire, friend?" I asked.

"It's on the sixth floor," he responded, "but nothing to be alarmed about.

Maybe it was nothing for him to be concerned about, for he was on the ground floor, but I was seven floors up. It did not take me many seconds to get into my clothes and out into the hall. Down on the sixth floor were helmeted men in rubber coats, with lanterns, fire extinguishers, axes, and fire hose. Someone had been smoking a cigarette in bed, and the smoldering bedding had caused a lot of smoke.

As I made my way back to my room, I noticed cards conspicuously hanging on the doors of three rooms close to mine. In large type there was printed on these cards the terse message, "Please do not disturb."

Millions of other people have that card hung out today. By their actions they say, "I know these are serious days, but I am having a wonderful time. I know I am not going the right way. I have drifted far from the straight and narrow path; but, please, do not bother me."

Or perhaps, "I haven't been inside a church in months. We do not have family worship in our home. I am not teaching my children to read the Bible. But don't disturb me."

Or, "I have a violent temper and am often unkind. I am a poor example in my home. I have been ignoring and even knowingly disobeying some of God's commandments. But I would rather not talk about it."

We are not much different from the people of Noah's day. They preferred not to be disturbed by Noah's preaching of a coming flood. Nor are we much different from those who lived in wicked Sodom. They were warned that God would destroy their city and that they ought to get out and change both their place of abode and their manner of living. But they didn't want to be disturbed.

We are human, and we don't like to be reminded of our mistakes, shortcomings, weaknesses, failings, sins. But if we are going to be ready for what is soon to come upon the world, we ought to face the facts.

These are serious days. The end of all things is at hand. "The hour of his judgment is come." As the Apostle Paul wrote, "It is high time to awake out of sleep." High time, indeed, to remove the notice from the door of our hearts, "Please do not disturb."

NOT BY MIGHT NOR BY POWER

--Reprinted

“Peace be to you; do not fear, you shall not die!” This proclamation of peace by the Lord to Gideon was a turning point in his life. Out of a frightened man who in a most unusual way was threshing his wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites grew one of the greatest heroes in Israel’s history. The memory of his triumphs over Israel’s enemies reaches as far as the times of David (Psalm 83:9-10), the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 9:4; 10:26) and echoes in the New Testament (Hebrews 11:32).

We seek peace in time of war. Such were the times when Gideon built an altar to the Lord and called it THE LORD IS PEACE. The land Israel was laying waste. The people were hiding in dens and caves to save their lives and property before the robbing bands of Midian. “And Israel was brought very low because of Midian; and the people of Israel cried for help to the Lord.”

In a miraculous way the Lord twice reassured Gideon that He is going to save Israel once again out of the hands of His oppressor, however, “...Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit...” (Zechariah 4:6).

In faith, Gideon destroys the altar of Baal, and “winning strength out of weakness” (Hebrews 11:34) calls the tribes of Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali to meet the enemy.

In response to this call, 32,000 men appeared on the plain beside the spring Heron. But the Lord said to Gideon, “The people with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel may say, my own hand has delivered me.”

“Whoever is fearful let him return home,” said Gideon to the assembled army. Twenty two thousand returned and 10,000 remained. The Lord said to Gideon, “The people are still too many, take them down to the water... Every one that laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set by himself; likewise every one

that kneels down to drink.”

Those who lapped were 300 men. “With the 300 men that lapped I will deliver you and give the Midianites into your hand, and let all others go every man to his house.”

The camp of the Midianites lays in mighty rest. “Men like locusts for multitude, their camels with out number.” Unawares Gideon slipped at night among the enemy tents to be once again reassured that the Lord has given the enemy into his hand. He heard an enemy sentry telling his companion a dream, how a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian and struck a tent that it fell.

The other man answered, “This is no other than the sword of Gideon... into his hand has God given Midian and all the host.” Hearing this, Gideon worshipped God in thankfulness and returned to the camp of Israel with new strength and courage.

So Gideon divided the 300 men into 3 companies, encircled the Midian camp and just when the watch was set at midnight they blew their trumpets and smashed the jars exposing their lighted torches, and they cried, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!”

The Lord was faithful to fulfill His promises to Gideon. Through this mighty assault, the Lord caused such a panic among the enemy soldiers that one attacked the other, killing his own fellows. The rest of the smitten army fled toward the border of Abel-meholah pursued by the men of Israel.

Dear Friends,

The secret of Gideon’s success was not the fact that he was strong. “My power is made perfect in weakness,” said the Lord. “When I am weak I am strong,” wrote the Apostle Paul to the church at Corinth (II Corinthians 12:9).

We may have quite other situations to handle than had Gideon and other difficulties to overcome or win battles of a different kind. But whatever our walks of life may be, we have the assurance: “**In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy path.**”

Don’t we need God’s guidance in these troublesome days? So here is a promise for today: “**I {the Lord} will never fail you, nor forsake you**” (Hebrews 13:5).



To a Maple by Betty Whetstone, deceased

How many good things and miracles
Are our eyes permitted to see?
From the small on up to the greatest,
As we stop to consider a tree.

A tree is truly a miracle
From its roots on up to the top;
For the whole tree to us is most useful,
And the lists just don't seem to stop.

The roots go deep into earth's surface,
Bringing up minerals that everything needs;
From the tiniest plant that it shelters
To flowers, and branches, and seed.

Its branches lift up towards the heaven,
Thank God for the good things it can give;
As it quietly serves His Creation,
And blesses the life that we live.

It provides safe nesting for small birds,
And its wood gives us fuel for our heat;
Its sap gives a most tasty sweetness
To bless the food that we eat.

Its leaves cleanse the air of pollution,
And furnishes shade for our rest;
Its wood makes our wonderful furniture,
And for beauty, it is one of the best.

When it's all "dressed up" in the autumn,
Its leaves are bright yellow, red and gold;
The sight of it is truly breath taking,
And is quite a sight to behold.

So let's pause and give thanks for the maple,
For it's more than only a tree;
It's proof of God's many creations,
And a blessing for us all to see.

**INFLUENCES --
GOOD ONES AND BAD ONES**

--Reprinted by Siegfried Maywald

We live in the greatest and most difficult time the earth of this age can provide: knowledge doubles, but also do troubles.

Instead of love to each other, and happiness, we see destruction of each other and frustration as a result of human wisdom. There is poison all around us, in the land, in the air, in the water. All are man made in the so-called scientific progress which even fabricates roboters to dominate man! What a "progress" in a world, whose god is money! Let us here read I Timothy 6:10-12:

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

In the greed for richness in the armament business men finally can annihilate all life on earth without hesitating to play with such thoughts. They are proud to fabricate more and more weapons of death, presenting them to a hopeless world which is moaning in helplessness.

**"The Love of Money is
the Root of All Evil"**

1 Timothy 6:10

Are we helpless? It seems so. But is it really so? Or can we rely on help which is more powerful than men's science? Men can fly to the moon and monitor stars, but they are not able to rule themselves or master their earthly problems like per example tornadoes, floods, earthquakes or the safety of their drinking water. They can measure it

8. Pathological lying - observed in those with fantasies and delusions.

WHY DO PEOPLE LIE?

Most studies and surveys made on this subject show that more lies are told to escape censure or punishment than any other reason. A study of nearly seven hundred instances of lying confessed by high school students, college students, and adults showed the following for the lies:

- 41 percent were told to escape punishment or censure,
- 14 percent were told so that the person could get his own way,
- 8.5 percent were told to gain sympathy or praise,
- 6 percent were told to avoid work or a tedious situation,
- 4.5 percent were told to avoid ridicule,
- 3 percent were told in an attempt to impress others,
- 17 percent were told to protect another, or to avoid hurting feelings,
- the rest were told for miscellaneous or undetermined reasons.

WHY IS IT WRONG TO LIE?

Before attempting to answer this question let us review the ingredients of a lie. A lie generally involves (1) the expression of what is false or misleading, (2) the intention to deceive, (3) a violation of some moral obligation.

The Apostle Paul condemned lying in our text upon the premise that one should put off the old man with his deeds (II Corinthians 5:17-21). Lying is one of the deeds and a part of the nature of the old man, and, therefore, especially, must not be a part of the life of a child of God. You see, Satan is the master author and editor in chief of lies. Jesus said that the devil "...is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Since Satan is the father of lies, in a sense all liars are his children and you cannot be the child of the devil and the child of God simultaneously! So, lying is wrong because it is of the devil! It is part of the old man, the old nature, which must burn away in the crucible of the Refiner's fire.

Then, lying is wrong because it violates the new man. Paul further said, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have...put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Colossians

3:9-10).

The old man comes to Calvary bent beneath a load of guilt because of sin; he leaves Calvary a new man freed from his load because of Christ. According to Paul he has undergone a renewing process that results in a new man "after the image of him that created him." After whose image? after God's image and God cannot tell a lie -- even a little one! (Titus 1:2).

Lying is also wrong because it hurts others as well as the liar. In Ephesians 5:25 Paul said; "Stop lying to each other; tell the truth, for we are parts of each other and when we lie to each other we are hurting ourselves." Abraham's lie brought plagues to Pharaoh's house (Genesis 12). Gehazi's lie to Naaman brought a curse upon his posterity (II Kings 5:27). Lies may not always cause plagues, but they can and do hurt others.

Lying hurts the liar. Did you know that the entire nervous system is affected by lying? Medical authorities say that lying can, and frequently does, have a damaging effect on the general health.

Lies, even little ones, have a damaging effect on the spiritual health. Solomon said that it was the little foxes that spoiled the vine. A little lie is a little fox that will spoil the moral tone of any relationship or person. Lies destroy testimonies and confidences. They destroy friendships and reputations. The Roman philosopher Epictetus even says that lies are at the base of all the sins and crimes of the world!

In a certain university the students one morning found that the professor had suspended in the air a solid beam of iron, hanging perfectly motionless. He took up a little pellet of paper and threw it at the beam, which remained motionless. But he went on throwing these paper pellets until struck repeatedly in the same place, the beam began to tremble, and then slowly to swing to and fro, finally acquiring a considerable momentum.

Little lies are like that. At first they seem insignificant but if repeatedly engaged in they will achieve a momentum almost impossible to stop. It usually takes a big lie to cover a little lie and a bigger lie to cover the big lie. Soon the pendulum of disaster has begun to swing! The best advice is that of Exodus 23:7: "Keep thee far from a false matter..."

**For prayer without the heart,
The Lord will never hear;
Nor will He to those lips
Attend whose prayers are not sincere.**

Tongues

By David DeLong

Many who call themselves Christians today believe that one must speak with "tongues" as a sign that the person involved has the Holy Spirit. I would like to show otherwise.

Having the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life is of the utmost importance as we can discern from Romans 8:9: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." And it is also true that when the Holy Spirit came upon some of the disciples recorded in the Bible that they did speak with tongues. We read in Acts 19:1-6: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

One must also display in his or her life the evidence of the Holy Spirit dwelling within. But, this display is not always shown in the disciple's life by speaking in tongues. In I Corinthians 12:28-30 we are told: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" These verses show that speaking in tongues is the least of the gifts of the Spirit. And just as all of the saints are not apostles, so too not everyone is going to speak with tongues. That is the obvious answer

to the above questions.

The evidence for the indwelling Spirit is not speaking in tongues, but rather, a display of the fruit of the Spirit. A disciple of Jesus must display this fruit as given in Galatians 5:22-24: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

The purpose of speaking in tongues is not to edify the Church, but rather, it is for unbelievers. We read in I Corinthians 14:1,22: "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy...Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe."

The Apostle Paul made it clear that it is the fruit of the Spirit, and not tongues, that is most important. He wrote in I Corinthians 13:1: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

Babylon is Fallen

By David DeLong

"Babylon is fallen,
Is fallen", was the word;
The angel flew through heaven,
And John, the message, heard.

Babylon's become the hold
Of every unclean bird;
The nations, all, have drunk her wine,
And have become absurd.

"Come out of her, my people,"
To Babylon, referred;
So that you don't partake her sins,
Nor have her plagues incurred.

"Be Ye Angry, And Sin Not"

By David DeLong

"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26). This verse tells us it is alright to get angry. Christians don't always need to go around with a grin upon their faces. However, the verse also tells us to "sin not". In other words, if I get angry at my brother or sister in the Church, I am still not allowed to treat them poorly. I am not to yell or scream at them. And, I am not allowed to seek vengeance on them. The anger that I feel is a vehicle for me to straighten out the problem that I have with the brother or sister.

The second part of verse 26 tells us: "...let not the sun go down upon your wrath". So I have until sunset to get rid of my anger. I don't have to solve the problem by sunset, but I can't let my anger go beyond that point. The Apostle Paul is adamant about this. So is the Lord.

We are told about an incident in Genesis, chapter 49, where the brothers Simeon and Levi became extremely angry, to the point of murder. Verses 5-7 inform us: "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."

This incident, most likely, is described in Genesis 34. Shechem, the son of Hamor, defiled Dinah the daughter of Jacob. Shechem wanted to marry Dinah, but Jacob's sons wanted to seek vengeance on him. Shechem and his men even became circumcised so he could marry Dinah. We pick up the story in verses 25-31: "And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which

was in the field, And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house. And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?" So we see that these two men let their anger become sin.

Even the Lord Jesus became angry at people, at times. In Mark 3:1-5 we find this story: "And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other." But though He was angry, He didn't sin.

Of course it is not a sin to be angry with the things that God is angry with, such as wickedness. Psalm 7:11 informs us: "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day." We also know that He will fill up His wrath with the wicked by sending upon them the seven last plagues (see Revelation 15:1; 16:1).

It is tragic that much of the anger that comes from humans is not godly. James 1:19-20 tells us: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." This can be perhaps made worse by the company we keep. Proverbs 22:24 says: "Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go".

May we use our anger for the Lord's honor and glory and may we never sin with our anger.



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.

ANOTHER NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE

Sometime ago, we featured the stories of some who said that they had glorious near-death experiences in which they visited heaven before they were resuscitated. The following is another example taken from the internet:

An Arizona woman who “died” for a total of 27 minutes asked for a notepad after she was resuscitated to share an urgent message about the afterlife, the family claims.

Madie Johnson took to Instagram last month to share photos of her new tattoo, modeled off a note written by her aunt, Tina Hines, who suffered a massive heart attack in February 2018.

“Her story is too real to share and has given me a stronger confidence in a faith that so often goes unseen,” Johnson wrote.

Hines, from Phoenix, was getting ready to go for a hike with her husband, Brian, last year when she suddenly collapsed.

“Her eyes didn’t close, and they were rolled back in her head,” Brian Hines told AZFamily at the time. “She was purple and not making any noise or breathing.”

Hine’s husband was successfully able to resuscitate his wife before paramedics arrived, but she coded multiple times on the way to a local hospital, where she had to be intubated.

“We ended up shocking her three times on scene and two en route,” one Phoenix firefighter told the outlet. “I’ve

never shocked anyone five times.”

Miraculously, the mom of four woke up and immediately gestured for a pen and piece of paper, with which she scribbled down, “It’s real.” When asked what her note referenced, Hines responded by “pointing up to heaven with tears in her eyes,” according to her niece.

“It was so real, the colors were so vibrant,” Hines recalled of her vision, which she said included Jesus standing in front of black gates with a bright yellow glow behind him.

Johnson said she wanted the tattoo as a permanent reminder of her aunt’s journey, which has given her a “tangibleness to an eternal hope that is not too far away.”

“The way you boldly love Jesus and others has changed the way I hope to live and love,” she added.

Johnson’s tattoo artist, Suede Silver, took to Facebook to share photos of the tattoo along with the story behind it. They have since been shared over 237,000 times and racked up 38,000 comments, some from people who have experienced similar visions following near-death experiences, which is not an uncommon occurrence.

Comment - Near-death experiences are devices of Satan to deceive the people who firmly believe in the continuation of life in heaven after death. As we have stated before, these are called near-death experiences, not experiences after death. Scientists tell us that the brain does not immediately shut down after the heart stops functioning. Why does not everyone who is resuscitated and believe in going to heaven have a vision?

One would think that the description that they give of heaven and seeing Jesus would be quite uniform. In this near-death experience, Tina Hines saw Jesus standing in

front of black gates with a bright yellow glow behind Him. Others have seen different visions of Jesus. Others even claim that they saw their loved ones in their near-death experience.

There are many Scriptures to refute the visions that some people experience in their near-death experience. “To the law and to the testimony (the testimony pertaining to death): if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20).

BACKPACKS

I saw an article from a reliable source which states that sales of bullet-resistant backpacks are increasing. It stated that in recent years, there has been an increase in bullet-resistant consumer products coinciding with the rise in shootings at schools and other public places.

Comment - This is a sad state of affairs! No one is safe anymore. Scripture tells us that perilous (dangerous) times shall come in the last days. By the increase in single shootings and mass shootings we know that these are the last days.

We long for the kingdom of God wherein there will be no more shootings at schools or any public place.

BEWARE OF MEASLES

Measles is a disease thought to be eradicated in the United States, but it has risen its ugly head again around the world.

The following is an article entitled *Measles cases rising around the world* which appeared in the **Houston Chronicle**:

There has been a rapid increase in the global measles outbreak, with reported cases jumping 300 percent in the first three months of 2019 compared with the same period last year, according to the World Health Organization.

As reasons for the increase, the organization has cited deep mistrust of vaccines, gaps in immunization coverage and lack of access to health care facilities or routine checkups.

This month, the WHO sounded the alarm over the disease’s grip on the Democratic Republic of Congo,

where nearly 5,000 people with measles died the first 10 months of this year.

The highly contagious disease is caused by a virus and typically begins with a high fever and rash that can lead to complications of deafness, pneumonia, diarrhea and encephalitis, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And although measles has become largely preventable through vaccines administered during childhood, the WHO estimated that 110,000 people, most of them children younger than 5 and living in developing countries in Africa and Asia, succumbed to it in 2017.

Here are some of the countries that have detected a large number of measles cases.

The world’s biggest measles epidemic is in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with more than 233,000 people infected this year alone, the WHO estimated. A total of 4,723 people died of it in January through October as the disease spread to all 26 provinces in the country.

The measles outbreak has gripped Congo even as it grapples with the Ebola epidemic, which has killed nearly 2,200 people.

Local and global health officials are undertaking tremendous efforts to contain both diseases amid political instability and insecurity. Yet even Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director general of WHO has conceded that measles has received “little international attention” even though it has proven deadlier than Ebola.

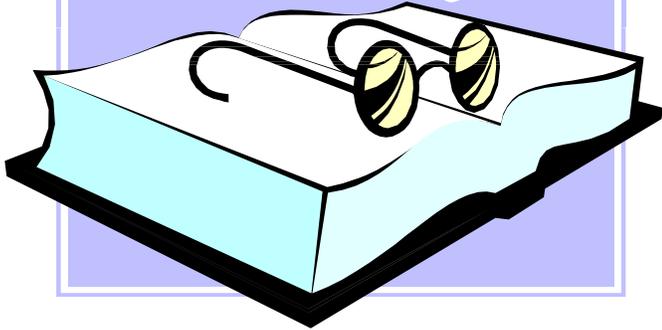
Over 1,200 measles cases were confirmed in 31 states in 2019 as of early November, with a majority of new cases appearing in New York. The outbreak constitutes the greatest number of cases reported in the United States since 1992, according to the CDC. More than 120 people have been hospitalized from measles this year.

Comment - The above article may remind one of what Jesus said in Luke 21:25 when He said: “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring”.

Take special note of the word perplexity which means “no way out”. There is just no way out of experiencing old diseases.

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Did Abraham beget other children after Isaac?

ANSWER: The answer to your question is yes. God did for Abraham “exceeding abundantly above” all that he asked or thought. After Sarah’s death, Abraham took another wife named Keturah and by her he fathered numerous children, whose names are given to us in Genesis 25:1-4.

QUESTION: What did Job mean by a “daysman” in Job 9:33?

ANSWER: The word has the same meaning as “mediator”. The answer to Job’s desire for a daysman is found in I Timothy 2:5-6.

QUESTION: Do you believe that the insights about the last days which the Apostle Paul were given came to him by divine inspiration?

ANSWER: Paul was given remarkable insights which are so uniquely applicable to our modern world that they could not possibly have come to him by any means except divine inspiration. He warned “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves.” (II Timothy 3:1-2). Mankind has always been self-centered, selfish, and narcissistic. Our generation is the first one in history that is being taught to love self. It is now widely accepted that

we naturally dislike ourselves and must learn to love ourselves before we can love God or other people. The first commandment has become “Thou shalt love thyself,” relegating “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God” to second place.

QUESTION: Will you comment on why God cares what we do?

ANSWER: Someone throws a beer can out of a car window. Cars seem to speed past us when we are going the speed limit. Filthy jokes and pornography are so common one may think nothing of it! Sometimes drugs are sold openly, but the police look the other way! Many people tell “little” lies here and there to get what they want.

People say that everyone else does it. With a shrug of the shoulders and a sigh, they ask, “So what? Who cares?”

Sometimes people may ridicule our “old-fashioned” ideas. We are made to feel so alone. Many times we grow tired of doing what is right. We may lose a job, friendship, a good business deal. Relatives may misunderstand us. Who cares?

GOD CARES! He sees all that may befall us and understands us fully! He is going to clean up the moral mess of the world system!

Day and night God sees everything that is going on in

the world. “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good” (Proverbs 15:3). He will expose sin! The lord told the Israelites, “. . . and be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23).

God cares, and He still has absolute standards of right and wrong! No matter what other people do or how many do it, God holds us accountable for what we do. We must not follow the crowd in doing wrong. The voice and actions of the majority of the people is more than often not the voice of God!

Jesus said in Matthew 12:36, “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.”

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (II Corinthians 5:10).

Yes, it often seems to us that no one cares and that it makes no difference what we do. It often seems as though the ones who do wrong are the ones who prosper.

God has promised to punish evil and reward good. “Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb” (Psalm 37:1-2).

QUESTION: I have a friend who believes the theory that man is a creature of evolution. What questions does his theory pose?

ANSWER: If man is a creature of evolution, then why do we not see this process going on yet today? At the edges of rivers, lakes, and seas, why do we not see creatures that are half fish and half birds? Why do we not see the many links between all the various species of sea life, fowls of the air, and land animals, which we are told once existed in the evolutionary climb? Why did the fish, the birds and the land animals suddenly decide to remain as they were and cease evolving? What happened to all the claimed links between the species that exist today? None of these supposed links have been found. Apes have survived as apes. If evolution be true, a link, supposedly more developed than the ape, but less developed than humans, should have survived as well.

We know that certain species of animals which existed in prehistoric times have become extinct. There are certain birds and animals today whose continued existence as a species is threatened, but this does not prove the theory of evolution. It proves only that changing conditions and circumstances make it impossible for certain species to continue their existence. When for example, the existence of the American bison was threatened during the nineteenth century, it did not mean that the bison was about to evolve into another species of animal.

QUESTION: What does the term “Abba” mean?

ANSWER: Abba is the Aramaic term for “father” which is recorded in Mark 14:36; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6. It is always used in conjunction with the normal Greek word for “father.” This suggests either an added intimacy in its usage or a translation added for the non-Aramaic reader. Jewish law forbade slaves to use this word in addressing the head of the family. Its use was especially reserved for those of a most personal bond.

QUESTION: What is one aspect of observing the Sabbath?

ANSWER: All of God’s children must strive to develop a closer relationship with Him. The Sabbath is a perfect opportunity for them to separate themselves from the world and all its distractions while they seek that closer relationship.

Taking a strong stand will result in ridicule and maybe even persecution. This will come from the world and in many cases from their own unconverted family members. The world has developed all sorts of pleasures to keep God’s children occupied -- especially from sundown Friday until late into Sunday evening. God’s children will resist these temptations and tell those who do not agree with them that the Sabbath is the Lord’s, not theirs.

Jesus said; “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:18-19). He also said: “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33, last part).



India

A new church building was dedicated on January 19, 2020, in Balarajugudem Village.





Apostle Yehoshuva cutting the ribbon during the dedication ceremony.



LESSON I

SAUL'S FIRST MISTAKE

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 13:1-23.

Golden Text: I Samuel 13:9.

"And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt-offering to me, and peace-offerings. And he offered the burnt-offering."

NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned that Saul was king of Israel, and that the nation seemed to be on its way to greatness. Samuel warns Israel and Saul to not forget God, and they will accomplish great things. Let us see now if Saul obeyed the voice of Samuel.

1. After Saul had reigned two years, what did he do? I Samuel 13:1-2.
2. Where did Jonathan smite the garrison of Philistines? I Samuel 13:3.
3. What then did the Philistines do? I Samuel 13:5.
4. What did the men of Israel do? Were they afraid? I Samuel 13:6-7.
5. How long did Saul tarry in Gilgal, and what did he do there? I Samuel 13:8-9.

NOTE: Saul offered a sacrifice which was what the priests were to do. Saul thought he was great enough to do it.

6. When Samuel heard that Saul had offered a burnt offering, was he pleased? I Samuel 13:12-13.
7. What did Samuel tell Saul would happen to his kingdom? I Samuel 13:14.
8. What happened that the Israelites had neither sword nor spear? I Samuel 13:17-23.

LESSON II

JONATHAN'S GREAT VICTORY

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 14:1-24.

Golden Text: I Samuel 14:13.

"And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew after him."

NOTE: King Saul was quite successful at first, but humility soon gave place to pride in his life. He offered sacrifices, which was the exclusive function of the priests. This was the first sign of Saul's self importance. Now we shall study about Jonathan.

1. Who was Jonathan, and where did he go? I Samuel 14:1.
2. Where was Saul at this time, and how many men were with him? I Samuel 14:2.
3. Describe the passage way by which Jonathan went unto the Philistines' garrison. I Samuel 14:4-5.
4. Jonathan and his armourbearer made themselves known unto the Philistines. What did the Philistines say to them? I Samuel 14:11-12.
5. What did Jonathan do in I Samuel 14:13-14?
6. Did Saul and his people assemble and come to the battle? I Samuel 14:20-22.
7. Did the Lord save Israel that day? I Samuel 14:23.
8. Why had Saul commanded his army to abstain from food? I Samuel 14:24.

LESSON III

SAUL'S SECOND MISTAKE

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 14:25-52.

Golden Text: I Samuel 14:44.

"And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan."

NOTE: Saul's first mistake was made when he offered sacrifice, which was the exclusive function of the priests. Now we shall learn what the second great mistake was. Saul commanded all the people of Israel to not eat any food until the evening. Let us see if everyone in Israel obeyed his voice.

1. What did the people find upon the ground as they came to the wood? I Samuel 14:25.
2. Did all obey Saul and not touch the honey which dripped? I Samuel 14:26-27.
3. Was Jonathan afraid of his father and what he might do to him for eating the honey? I Samuel 14:28-30.
4. What did the people of Israel do that day? I Samuel 14:31-32.
5. When Saul heard what the people had done, what was his command, and what did he do? I Samuel 14:33-36.
6. Did Saul seek counsel from God? Did God answer his plea? I Samuel 14:37.
7. Jonathan was taken, and he told Saul that he had eaten the honey. Did Saul still want to impose the death sentence upon him? I Samuel 14:43-44.
8. Were the people in sympathy with Saul or Jonathan? Did they rescue Jonathan? I Samuel 14:45.
9. Was there war against the Philistines as long as Saul was king? I Samuel 14:52.

LESSON IV

SAUL'S COMPLETE DISOBEDIENCE (PART 1)

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 15:1-11.
Golden Text: I Samuel 15:11 (first part).

"It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments."

NOTE: Saul made two great mistakes while he was king over Israel. We studied about his second mistake in our last lesson which was the death sentence imposed upon his son Jonathan. Now let us study about his third and final mistake.

1. When Samuel anointed Saul king, what did he instruct Saul to do? I Samuel 15:1.
2. What did the Lord say about Amalek? I Samuel 15:2.
3. What was Saul instructed to do? I Samuel 15:3.
4. Did he obey this command? How many men were with him? I Samuel 15:4-5.
5. What did Saul tell the Kenites to do? I Samuel 15:6.
6. Did Saul smite the Amalekites? What did he do with their king? I Samuel 15:7-9.

NOTE: The Lord told King Saul to destroy all that the Amalekites had, and we find now that he did not obey God.

7. What did the Lord say to Samuel in I Samuel 15:10-11?





TWO OF JESUS' LAMBS

Mrs. Brown thought Johnny and Margie were far too young to understand the sermon they heard at church one night. The minister had preached on how two lambs were saved, and how they had helped others to receive the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. Of course, the lambs were a little boy and girl, just like Johnny and Margie.

Johnny and Margie were so unusually quiet as they rode home in the back seat of the car that night from church that Mrs. Brown noticed it, and wondered if they were thinking about the message they had heard.

As soon as they reached home, the children went to their rooms and quietly got ready for bed. Later as usual, Mrs. Brown went to their beds to say goodnight but found both children fast asleep. As she bent over Margie to kiss her goodnight, she noticed a note pinned to Margie's pillow. Looking closely, Mrs. Brown read the words, "I wished I was a little lamb too, because I want to be saved," written in Margie's childish handwriting.

"My precious child!" murmured Mrs. Brown, as she stood by Margie's bed, wondering whether to waken her right then or wait until the morning, to show her that the Lord Jesus was her Saviour. Mrs. Brown decided it would be best to wait until the morning for she was sure the Lord knew all about it, and His all-seeing eye had seen the note, even before she had discovered it on Margie's pillow.

In the morning, as soon as Mrs. Brown heard the sound of childish voices, she called Margie to her room.

"Margie, dear, I read the note you had pinned to your pillow last night, and it made me so happy to know that my little girl wants to be saved and to belong to the Lord Jesus Christ."

Mrs. Brown then opened her Bible to a verse that Margie could easily read. John 3:16. Aloud, Margie read: "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."

"Now what is meant by the world?" asked her mother, to which Margie replied, "Everybody."

"And does everybody include you, Margie?" questioned Mrs. Brown.

"Yes, it does," agreed Margie.

"Then just read the verse again, and put your own name in that place," said Mother.

And Margie read, "For God so loved Margie that He gave His only begotten Son."

"Isn't it wonderful, my dear children, that God loved you so much that He sent His only Son into the world to die for you and for your sins?" asked Mrs. Brown. Then she asked Margie the direct question, "Do you believe that Jesus died for you?"

"Yes, I do," answered Margie.

"Then according to God's own Word, you shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

"Well, Mother is there nothing for me to do then but just believe, and I shall be saved? That seems so very easy," said Margie.

"Yes, Margie, there is something," said Mother. "The Bible says: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is your whole duty. To fear God means to love Him enough that you do not want to disobey Him, or His words."

Johnny was then called to his mother's side, and the precious verses that pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ were then read to him; and like Margie, he too, accepted the Lord Jesus as his Saviour.

"Let us thank Him for this wonderful gift," said Mother. So, Johnny and Margie prayed; "Father, we thank Thee for the Lord Jesus who loved us and died for us. Please forgive us our sins."

What a happy day that was in the Brown home!

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

The books of the Old Testament can be divided into five parts. Fit each book into the puzzle below.

Law:

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy

Poetry:

- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Solomon

Minor Prophets:

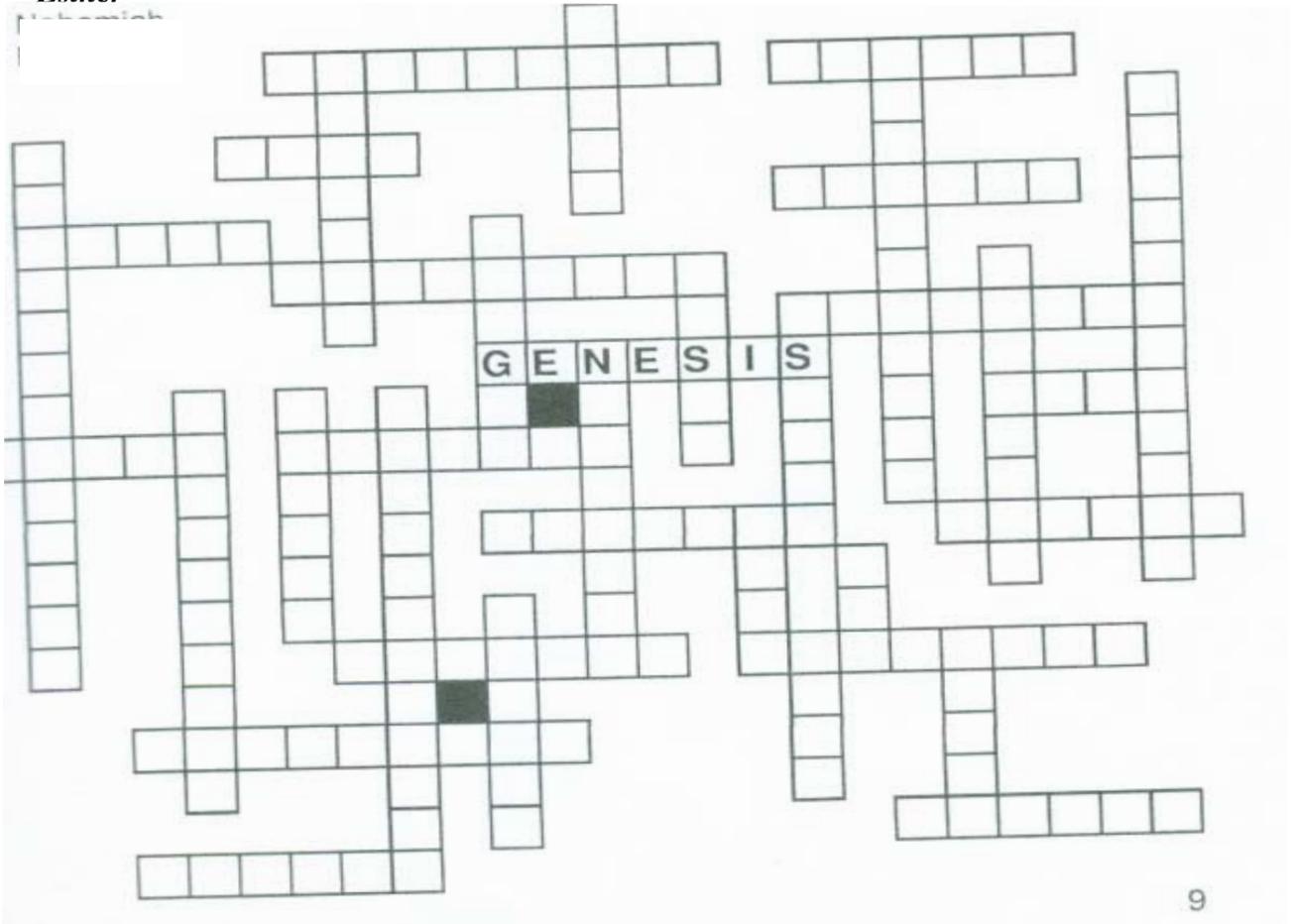
- Hosea
- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi

History:

- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- I & II Samuel
- I & II Kings
- I & II Chronicles
- Ezra
- Nehemiah
- Esther

Major Prophets:

- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Lamentations
- Ezekiel
- Daniel



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THE SECRET

*I met God in the morning,
When the day was at its best;
And His presence came like sunrise,
Like a glory in my breast.*

*All day long the presence lingered,
All day long He stayed with me;
And we sailed with perfect calmness,
O'er a very troubled sea.*

*Other ships were blown and battered,
Other ships were sore distressed;
But the winds that seemed to drive them
Brought to us a perfect rest.*

*Then I thought of other mornings
With a keen remorse of mind;
When I, too, had loosed the mooring,
With Thy presence left behind.*

*So I think I know the secret, learned
From many a troubled way;
You must seek Him in the morning
If you want Him through the day.*