



The Advocate of Truth



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Your Lord's Supper offering this year will go to the Church in India. It will be used for church building projects. Thank you for your generosity.



THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isaiah 53:1-11).

This chapter, containing Christ's sufferings, is called THE GEM of Isaiah's writings by some. He bore such

witness to Christ that some call him the evangelical prophet. His writings are both classical and polite especially in the closing portion of his book. However, it is plain and easily understood. Isaiah portrayed Christ's sufferings in three ways.

First, He suffered at the hands of God.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (verse 4). He suffered for our sins, not His. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21).

"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin..." (Isaiah 53:10). In the natural, this is difficult to understand.

As He was being crucified, Christ cried with a loud voice, "...My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34).

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32) "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). God concludes Him guilty. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree..." (I Peter 2:24). It was an offering to God as to an altar, and offered Himself on it. He was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21). "And being found in fashion as

a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8).

Second, He suffered at the hands of men.

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed (respected-regarded) him not" (Isaiah 53:3).

Jesus told His disciples that He must "...suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matthew 16:21).

"I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (Isaiah 50:6). Beaten, beard plucked out, illegally tried, illegally crucified, nails in hands and feet, pierced in the side, crown of thorns, spit on Him--yet He opened not His mouth!

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:16-17). "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41). A man said, "We don't serve Him to get fame, but to suffer His shame."

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Hebrews 13:12-13).

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth..." (Isaiah 53:7). "He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation?... " (verse 8). "And he made his grave with the wicked..." (verse 9).

In reality, men did not take His life. Jesus said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again..." (John 10:17-18).

Third, He suffered in His heart for us. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows..." (Isaiah 53:4). "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities..." (verse 5). He suffered on the cross for us, that the punishment of God would be turned off of us onto Him.

"...Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matthew 8:17). He suffered "...that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21).

He suffered so we could become a new creature. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

He suffered to free us from sin and its consequences. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Romans 6:22). He suffered that we may rule with Him when His kingdom is established.

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

Indian Tribe's Translation: "God hurts in His heart for us."

For all of His sufferings, should we not serve Him with all our hearts?

WHAT GOD REQUIRES

In this age, children of God are to work out their "...own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13). "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" (II Corinthians 6:1). The Apostle Paul reminds us that "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Romans 13:12). If we perform these things faithfully, the promise is: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21). The foundation of God's throne is justice. Therefore, those who will be seated with the Father and Jesus on their throne must have a good appreciation of justice. We are told in Micah 6:8: "He hath shewed thee, **O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"**

These are very reasonable requirements. God could

not require less from those whom he is educating for the future work of judging the world. This is evident; and yet all three of these qualities specified through the prophet are comprehended in one word, Love. Love requires that we deal justly with our neighbors, with the brethren, with our families, and with ourselves. We must cultivate our appreciation of the rights of others. This includes their moral and intellectual rights, and their liberties. Appreciating these, we shall in no sense of the word seek to abridge or deny them.

The attitude that we must have in working for the Lord is brought out well in the experience of King David. David had sinned in disobeying God by numbering the people. Therefore God caused a plague to come upon Israel, and many died. The Prophet Gad then told David to erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite. So David went to Araunah and told him that he wanted to buy his threshing floor to make an offering to the Lord. Araunah was very cooperative and offered his threshing floor without charge--oxen, wood, and all that would be necessary for the sacrifice. But David declined this kind offer, saying: "...Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So

David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel" (II Samuel 24:24-25).

We also must sacrifice that which belongs to us, and not to others. **In our dedication and consecration to the Lord, we give our time, influence, talents, and our possessions, using all of these wisely and well in His service.**

While justice is the first feature of the commandment of love, and it is also the foundation of God's throne, these are not the end of its requirements. It requires that, going beyond strict justice, our love shall prompt us to exercise mercy and forgiveness. In thus exercising mercy, we are again copying Divine love. Therefore, in our dealings with others, who like ourselves are fallen and imperfect, we are to remember this feature: we must not only be just toward them, but additionally, to be merciful, generous, kind, even to the unthankful.

Jesus said, "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:35-36).



"BAALS AND CHEMARIMS"

BY MOISES TORRES M.

Zephaniah, the prophet, predicts the downfall of Jerusalem in the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, saying: "I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the **remnant of Baal from this place, and**

the name of the Chemarims with the priests" (Zephaniah 1:4). The prophet was talking about exterminating the "remnant of Baal" from the city of Jerusalem. The temple of God was there, and the worship should have been just to Him.

Baal was the supreme male deity for the Phoenicians and Canaanites; as well as Ashtoreth was the supreme female deity, according to the *William Smith L. L. D. Dictionary*. Some people thought that Baal corresponded to the sun, and Ashtoreth corresponded to the moon. Others said that Baal was Jupiter, and Ashtoreth was Venus. There is no doubt of the antiquity of the great worship of Baal. It prevailed in the days of Moses between the Moabites and Midianites (Numbers 25:3-18; Deuteronomy 4:3). In Judah were temples built to Baal, and much ceremony was performed in his worship (I Kings 16:32; 18:19, 26-28; II Kings 10:22). During the time of the kings, this became the religion of the court and the people of the ten tribes (I Kings 16:31-32; 18:19,22).

Baal means: Lord, magistrate, possessor, owner, powerful, etc... The ancient people worshiped the sun because they believed it was very powerful and full of energy. Since those days, the people from those lands were marked by Baal, a supposed sun god, and many cities and towns took a form of his name:

Baal-zebul - ("Lord of Flight.") Worshipped in Ekron (II Kings 1:2-3, 16).

Baal-hazor - ("Lord of the Village").

Baal-ammon - ("Lord of Multitude").

Baal-gad - ("Lord of Fortune").

Baal-perazim - ("Lord of Divisions"). This was the place of one of David's victories over the Philistines which caused a great destruction of their images (II Samuel 5:20; I Chronicles 14:11). Isaiah calls it mount Perazim (Isaiah 28:21).

Baal-berith - ("Lord of Covenant"). The god that comes in covenant with its worshippers (Judges 8:33).

Since the old ages, the spirit of Baal was planted in the dwellers of the earth. Its influence is still with us in these days. This spirit creates "suns," famous men, for whom the media and the crowds say "shine like the sun" and illuminate with their presence.

In our days, the world is full of **BAALIM** (lords) that only seek power. They cause many people to enrich themselves and be served and worshipped. The Apostle Paul declared that this kind of people will exist in the last days: "...lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, ...unholy, etc." (II Timothy 3:1-2).

"Chemarims" were priests in black serving the Baals and the idolatry, priests who worshipped false gods. They

were the ones who hauled people to worship the Baals or lords (II Kings 23:5; Hosea 10:5). We see the same thing today in our society, in politics, in churches, at work, at the enterprise level. The Lord Jesus harshly criticized these attitudes, saying: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matthew 23:15). Poor are the ones who are "hauled" by hypocrites, as they are used for acts of injustice. In these days, there are men who practice this type of "priest's office" who serve as "chemarims" worshipping someone and hauling people to praise "their lord, or Baal."

The influence of Baal and the Chemarims is still with us today. Men still worship the sun, the moon, the power, and the whole army of heaven. Great pyramids have been built in honor of the sun and the moon. Carnivals are pagan festivities in honor of the sun, and its meaning is "Flesh of Baal." "Sunday" is a day established many ages ago to worship the sun. It is the sun's day, Sunday. These things are part of the "remnant of Baal."

The speedy invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, was used by the inspired vision of the Prophet Zephaniah as a figure of "THE DAY OF THE LORD", the day of the wrath of God that will come upon all of those who have the spirit of Baal and chemarim. Zephaniah concludes his prophesy making it extensive to all the dwellers of the earth: "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy" (Zephaniah 3:8). "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent" (verse 9).

When the Lord Jesus Christ returns, He will remove the spirit of Baalim from all the people, and only the name of the Lord will be exalted. May the Lord's will be that in His church, The Church of God, there is no spirit of Baal or Chemarim whatsoever.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER



According to Peter's opening words, this letter was sent to the brethren "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." The groups of brethren in this general territory were brought into being largely through the ministry of the Apostle Paul. It is thought by some that one of Peter's objectives in writing the letter was to confirm that the gospel was true and that Paul, although the newest of the apostles, could be depended upon as a special teacher sent from God.

While this may have been in Peter's mind when writing the epistle, the theme of his letter is definitely of a doctrinal nature and no doubt designed to strengthen the brethren in their endurance of Christian suffering by revealing its relationship to Christ's cause. To appreciate this, we need to recall briefly Peter's own former experiences by which he was especially equipped to discuss this particular subject.

Peter, more than any of the other apostles, rebelled against the course of his Master in voluntarily surrendering himself to his enemies and allowing them to put Him to death without a just cause. He said to Jesus, "...Be it far from thee, Lord..." (Matthew 16:22). In the Garden of Gethsemane, he drew his sword and undertook to prevent Jesus' arrest, but was told by his Master to desist, that those who take to the sword shall perish by the sword (Matthew 26:52).

To Peter, it seemed altogether wrong that Jesus, who had done no wrong, Who had spent His life doing good--comforting the people with the kingdom message, healing the sick and raising the dead--should be arrested and put to death. In the upper room, Jesus said to Peter, "...I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32).

Peter was not then fully "converted" and able to understand just how, as Jesus had stated it, one who lost, or gave up his life, would find it (Matthew 16:25). However, the Holy Spirit revealed this to him, and now, in his first epistle, we find him in harmony with His Master's special commission, endeavoring to strengthen the brethren along the every line which had presented such a problem to him; namely, suffering for well-doing.

In the opening chapter of the letter, Peter lays down the scriptural foundation for his lesson on this topic. He speaks of a great salvation which the prophets foretold but did not comprehend, "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and glory that should follow" (Chapter 1:10-11).

Peter reminds us that the prophets had foretold the "sufferings of Christ," and now he understood that Jesus' voluntary suffering and death were in keeping with this prophetic testimony, and that His death was necessary to redeem the world from sin and death. Peter also understood something further in connection with those prophecies pertaining to the sufferings of Christ, for he realized now that they also applied to the followers of Jesus.

Jesus had, on occasions, explained to His disciples that if they would come after Him, they would have to take up their cross and follow Him--into death (Matthew 16:24). Now Peter understood fully what that invitation implied, and in this epistle seeks to strengthen the brethren to endure the suffering involved in faithfully following in the Master's footsteps. Note the following excerpts: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up...sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (chapter 2:5).

"For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (verses 19-23).

"...if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled" (Chapter 3:14).

"For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened (made alive) by the Spirit" (verses 17-18).

"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (Chapter 4:1).

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (verses 12-13).



According to *Webster's New World Dictionary*, fidelity means "faithful devotion to duty or to one's obligations or vows; loyalty; faithfulness".

Some children of God are apparently like some fruits which ripen more quickly than others. There are those who become speedily ripe in understanding. Although we

Yes, Peter makes clear the great privilege of suffering with Christ that we might reign with Him. It was this that the Holy Spirit had testified through the prophets; that is, the "sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." This glory to follow the suffering is described by Peter as "...an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (Chapter 1:4).

Peter realized that it would be impossible for any follower of Jesus to endure this foretold suffering in his own strength, so he speaks of their being "...kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (chapter 1:5). He explains also that this trial of our faith is "...much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire..." (verse 7).

He speaks of the "...appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love..." (verses 7-8). One of the inspirational powers in the lives of the early Christians was their steadfast hope in the return of Christ. It would be then that the glory to follow their suffering would be revealed. God's kingdom would then be established, and they would rule with Christ in that dominion which would be from "...sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Psalm 72:8). It was to strengthen them in this hope that Peter wrote, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever..." (Chapter 5:10-11).

FIDELITY

have not all borne the great heat and burden of the day, the words of the Revelator are addressed to all alike: "...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). Be fruitful all your life, all your days. Though your life may be imperiled, be faithful until the hour of your departure.

Fidelity is the way of straightforwardness. God said to Israel, "Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" (Deuteronomy 5:32).

"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). The Apostle Paul said, "...but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Philippians 3:13).

Time with its changes, sorrows, labors, and temptations tries one's love for God. It is not so much the fierce onset that tries one as it is the endurance test. Whether in the workshop, or when we return home; when we rest in bed, or are in the bustle of the day; whether in our family circle, or in society; alone in the field, or in secret retirement; we can never elude the enemy.

The conflict goes on. There must be no season of rest, no truce. If we halt, it is at our peril. If we pause, we may be wounded. The conflict continues even unto death, and we must wrestle in God's strength until the end. Even the oldest cannot relax if he would be a faithful follower of the Master.

Faith must always abound. We must be in the world, yet not of it, for we have come out of it, not by monastic seclusion, but by overcoming its temptations and living apart from its spirit. We can appreciate innocent delights, yet we must not be ensnared by them. In the power of the Holy Spirit, we must ever rise above material things of this life.

Many things appeal to our sight, yet we must value rather the things unseen--seeing Him who is invisible. Sometimes we pray and see no answer to our prayer. However, we must still watch and pray. Sometimes we

shall be harassed with doubts and fears, seemingly walking in darkness and seeing no immediate light, yet by faith we must continually trust God. To endure to the end is no easy task, but it is not by our own strength that we shall continue steadfast. Like the Apostle Paul, we must look for our sufficiency in God.

Many triumphs are credited to Paul! He kept the faith at Lystra, Iconium, and at Antioch against erring Peter. Paul kept the faith at Philippi, and made the dungeon echo back his praises to God. Paul kept the faith at Ephesus, pointing men not to Diana, but to Jesus Christ as their only Saviour. In Jerusalem, Paul kept the faith when he was bound with fetters.

This same strength, from the very same Source, to help us continue faithful, is ours, through faith and obedience. Our conflict is not bereft of encouragement. Our armor has been proven, and we have a mighty Champion. No warrior who has been faithful to the Saviour's banner ever perished eternally. Upon that banner is written, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper..." (Isaiah 54:17).

Let us consider our glorious Leader, who was exalted above principalities and powers, and who "...led captivity captive..." (Ephesians 4:8). Let us think of the prophets, apostles, and others who had found God faithful! Let us then be inspired to action. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (I Corinthians 16:13). "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9). Let us toil on in patience, doing our Lord's work. We must do battle with evil, both from within and without, to gain daily victory over sin. Let us deny ourselves and be willing crossbearers of our Lord.

Contributed

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE

Elijah is one of the most colorful personalities of the Old Testament. He was a faithful servant of God and an



outstanding prophet. The New Testament identifies him and some of his important works as being of a typical

nature. And yet, the only information the Scriptures give us as to his background is that he was a Tishbite, "of the inhabitants of Gilead." He is referred to in the Bible five times as Elijah the Tishbite. It is thus that he is introduced to us in I Kings 17:1.

We first find him standing before the wicked King Ahab of Israel, saying, "...As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (I Kings 17:1).

Physically, Elijah stood before Ahab when he uttered these words; but he looked beyond this wicked king, in faith believing that in a more important sense he was standing before God. Thus he acknowledged the authority of the God of Israel and displayed his defiance of the Baal worshipping kings who had departed from their worship of the true God of Israel.

Ahab was angry over Elijah's announcement that there would be no rain except by his "word," and at once this wicked king determined that he would kill the prophet. But the Lord protected His servant, saying to him: "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. **And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there**" (verses 3-4).

The Lord fulfilled His promise. Safe in his retreat by the side of the brook Cherith, Elijah was fed by ravens night and morning, and he drank from the brook. This continued for a considerable time. The record does not say just how long.

In James 5:17, we learn that the total period during which by Elijah's "word" it did not rain in Israel was three and one-half years. His fleeing from Ahab and Jezebel and finding shelter by the brook Cherith was apparently at the beginning of this period, and the drought continued until the prophet's victorious challenging of the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel.

During all this time, Elijah was in a "wilderness," in the sense of being isolated, and was protected from the wrath of Ahab and Jezebel. When the brook Cherith failed, the Lord instructed the prophet to go elsewhere and indicated that He would continue to protect him. The Lord said, "Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee" (verse 9).

Elijah obeyed but discovered that the widow to whom the Lord sent him was virtually without food, having no

bread, and only a "...handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse..." (verse 12). When Elijah found her, she was about to make up the last cake possible with her bit of meal and few drops of oil, with the idea that she and her son would eat and thereafter die of starvation.

So now it was time for another miracle. Through the power of the God of Israel, who had caused the ravens to feed Elijah by the brook, the meal and oil continued to increase sufficiently for the needs of the widow and her son and the prophet as well. Elijah said to the widow, "For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth" (verse 14). In fulfillment of this promise, the family had food.

Later, the widow's son became ill, and it proved to be a sickness unto death: "...his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him" (verse 17). Then the widow said to Elijah, "...What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" (verse 18).

Elijah offered no explanation but took the dead child to his own bedchamber and put him on his own bed. In prayer, he asked the Lord: "...hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. **And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived**" (verses 19-22).

This was a wonderful miracle! The power which created life had restored life. But a word of explanation is in order here. An inappropriate translation gives the impression to many that the boy's "soul" was a personality, separate from his body, which escaped when the child died but was forced to return by the miracle which restored life. This is not the case! The word soul here is translated from the Hebrew word **nephesh**, which literally means "living creature." However, this word also, according to Prof. Strong, means abstractly, "vitality."

What the record properly states is that when, through Elijah, the life-giving breath was forced into the lungs of the child, he began to breathe, and the vitality which had left him returned. Thus he again became a living creature.

With the awakening of the widow's son from the sleep of death, Elijah's sojourn in Zarephath seems to have been

nearing its end. The next chapter opens with the statement: "And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth" (Chapter 18:1).

Elijah proceeded to obey. On the way, he met Obadiah, governor of Ahab's house, one of the few in Israel who continued to reverence the true God. Prior to this, when Jezebel had ordered the destruction of all the Lord's servants, Obadiah had concealed, and thus saved, a hundred of them from death. Now he was searching throughout the land for possible springs of water.

"And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him..." (verse 7). Elijah requested Obadiah to notify Ahab that he was ready to meet him. Ahab had been searching in many places for Elijah in order to have him slain; and now it seemed incredible to Obadiah that this much sought after prophet of the Lord would voluntarily present himself before the king. But Elijah assured him that this was exactly what he intended to do; so Obadiah complied with his wishes.

But Elijah was not surrendering to the king. It was at this meeting that he proposed a test to demonstrate to the people that Jehovah is the true God. [He called upon Ahab to summon all the prophets of Baal \(of which there were 450\) and 400 prophets of the groves to Mount Carmel and have them prepare a sacrifice to their god.](#) Elijah proposed that two bullocks be provided by the people and that the prophets of Baal should choose one, and he would take the other. Baal's prophets were to offer their bullock first, and then Elijah would offer his.

Elijah said to the prophets of Baal: "...call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken" (verse 24). Just previous to this, Elijah had said to the people: "...How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word" (verse 21).

The test began. The prophets of Baal prepared and presented their bullock to their god and called upon him to show his acceptance by fire. There was no response. They cried to Baal from morning until noon. No answer. Baal did not respond!

Now Elijah's anticipated triumph over the worshipers

of Baal expresses itself in a bit of justifiable sarcasm. He mocked the frenzied prophets, saying: "...Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." The prophets of Baal seemed to think that this was good advice so "they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them" (verses 27-28).

But their crying aloud and cutting themselves was of no avail. Baal did not answer, although they continued their efforts until the time of the "evening sacrifice." Then came Elijah's opportunity: "...he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down," using twelve stones, one stone for each of the tribes of Israel. The bullock was cut in pieces and placed upon the altar.

After this, Elijah instructed that four barrels of water be placed upon the sacrifice and upon the altar. This was repeated twice, making a total of twelve barrels of water which were used. The altar and the sacrifice were soaked. The water filled the trench surrounding the altar. Then "...Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. [Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench](#)" (verses 36-38).

"And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, "The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God" (verse 39). Elijah directed that all the prophets of Baal be slain. The same day the drought was broken. In fact, Ahab had to hasten down from the mountain before the approaching torrents of rain. Elijah ran ahead of him (verses 41-46).

King Ahab reported to Jezebel what had happened and that the prophets of Baal had been slain. She was not willing to accept the situation, as Ahab apparently was, and vowed vengeance upon Elijah. She sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, "...So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them (the prophets of Baal) by to morrow about this time" (I Kings 19:2). So Elijah was again forced to flee for his life.

His servant fled with him as far as Beersheba. Leav-

ing him there, Elijah proceeded for another day's journey into the wilderness "...and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers" (verses 3-4).

Utterly exhausted from his flight from Jezebel, Elijah fell asleep under the juniper tree, and while he was sleeping, an angel of the Lord awakened him, saying, "...Arise and eat. **And he looked, and behold, there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again**" (verses 5-6).

"And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God" (verses 7-8). At Horeb, Elijah found shelter in a cave. The Lord asked, "...What doest thou here, Elijah?" And he replied: "...I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (verses 9-10).

Elijah was mistaken in supposing that he was the only one left who was loyal to the true God. The Lord informed him that there were "...seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (verse 18).

Elijah had asked God to let him die. Instead of granting this request, God now gave him a further assignment of service: "...the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria" (verse 15). He was also instructed to anoint Jehu to be king over Israel, and Elisha to take his place as a special prophet (verse 16).

"So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him" (verse 19). Traditionally, Elijah's mantle was a cape of sheepskin. The Bible's reference to it as a symbol of authority to serve in the name of the Lord has supplied the world with one of its most familiar figures of speech. How many realize when reading or hearing of a noted person's mantle falling upon another that this language stems from God's dealings with

Elijah?

It must have been obvious to Elijah that his service as a prophet was nearing an end. But there still was an important assignment for him to fulfill. He was instructed to "...go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it" (I Kings 21:18). Naboth was a peace-loving Israelite who, through a conspiracy conceived by the wicked queen, Jezebel, was killed in order that she, together with Ahab, might take possession of his vineyard (verses 1-14).

It was fitting that Elijah, who had been used by God on previous occasions to defy and rebuke Ahab and Jezebel, should now be the one to prophesy the judgments of the Lord that would come upon them. They had threatened his life and had done all they could to destroy him, but now Elijah was commissioned to say to Ahab, "...In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine" (verse 19). "And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel" (Verse 23).

II Kings chapter 1 records a final service rendered by Elijah, as prophet, in rebuking King Ahaziah for seeking information concerning his health from Baal-zebub instead of the God of Israel.

His work over, Elijah was directed by the Lord to Bethel, thence to Jericho, and finally to Jordan. He knew now that his passing was to be as dramatic as his courageous life of service that he would be taken away in a whirlwind (II Kings 2:1). Reaching Jordan, Elijah "...took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two (Elisha, his successor, was now with him) went over on dry ground" (verse 8).

Not long after this, "...it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (verse 11). **Thus the eventful and courageous service of one of the greatest men who ever lived suddenly reached a consummation, ending, we might say, almost literally in a blaze of glory.**

Referring to the home and throne of God, Jesus said, "...no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). Apparently, the "heaven" to which

Elijah was taken in a whirlwind was merely the earth's atmosphere. He was dramatically removed, and as far as Elisha was concerned, he saw him snatched away by the force of the whirlwind and did not see him afterward. Elijah died and will remain asleep in death until he is brought forth from the grave.

The Transfiguration

Near the close of Jesus' ministry, He took Peter, James, and John with Him into a mountain. There they saw Jesus transfigured before them, and there also appeared Moses and Elijah. By some this is taken to mean that Elijah did not die but was alive in heaven and thus able to appear on the Mount of Transfiguration. How-

ever, as they came down from the mountain, Jesus said to His disciples who accompanied Him, "...Tell the **vision** to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead" (Matthew 17:9).

From this, it is clear that it was merely a vision that the disciples saw on the mountain. Moses and Elijah did not actually appear. Deuteronomy 34:5 states that "...Moses the servant of the LORD died..." His burial place is not known. Elijah also died and his burial place is not known. Read Hebrews 11, and note verses 39 and 40.

The Apostle Peter later explained that in the vision on the mountain they saw "...the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ..." (II Peter 1:16-18). In other words, it was a vision pertaining to the time of Christ's return to earth when the promised messianic kingdom would be established.

- Contributed

PROPHECY

Prophecy has two biblical meanings. In a general sense, the term refers to everything God has to say to His rational creatures. The Bible, therefore, as God's specific revelation to mankind, is a completely prophetic book (II Peter 1:19-21). It is His foretelling us things we could not know otherwise. Prophecy also includes His foretelling, or telling us ahead of time what will take place. The ability to predict the future, which, as we said, pertains to nearly one-third of the Scriptures, is declared by God to be a major proof that He alone is God: "...I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done..." (Isaiah 46:9-10).

Nearly all predictive prophecy deals with Israel and the First and Second coming of the Messiah. In fact, God tells the Israelites that they will be a sign to the world, glorifying Himself in and through them (Isaiah 46:13). In Isaiah 43:10 God declares to them, "Ye are my witnesses...and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me." In other words, God will use them and their

land to be "witnesses" both to themselves and to the world, not only that He exists, but that He is actively involved in shaping the history of Israel, as well as bringing about His purpose for all mankind. Prophecy declares God's plan in advance. And the purpose is that we all may "know" Him, and "understand" that He alone is God. Prophecy is compelling proof not only for the existence of God, but that the Bible is exactly what it claims to be--His Word!

So, what profit is there in prophecy? Much in every way, to borrow two phrases from Romans. The Lord tells us, "...who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, ...and the things that are coming, and shall come...Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses..." (Isaiah 44:7-8). Biblical prophecy assures us that God exists, and that He alone knows "the things that are coming," and we who have faith in Him have no reason to walk in fear. More than that, we are to be God's "witnesses," using biblical prophecy as a testimony to the revealed truth of the Scriptures and proof that faith alone in Jesus, His only begotten Son, is mankind's only hope for salvation.

Excerpts from The Berean Call



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.

"JOHN PAUL II CURED ME" Nun stops short of declaring her case a miracle, but says she is cured of Parkinson's

**By Elaine Ganley
Associated Press**

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, FRANCE--Parkinson's--the same disease her beloved Pope John Paul II suffered--robbed Sister Marie Simon-Pierre of her ability to walk, drive or even write.

Then, in one night of prayer and mystery the Vatican may accept as the miracle it needs to beatify the pope, the French nun's symptoms vanished.

"John Paul II cured me," the 46-year-old nun said Friday, smiling serenely as she spoke for the first time in public about her experience.

"It is difficult for me to explain to you in words... It was too strong, too big, a mystery."

Described as a gentle, reserved woman who had hoped to keep her identity secret, the nun coped well with the media spotlight. She looked a little bemused as journalists huddled around her, putting microphones in place.

She smiled and held up her left hand, which, she said, had hung limply at her side before her recovery.

Only momentarily, when describing how her symptoms worsened after the pope's death on April 2, 2005, did she lose a little of her poise.

"Please excuse me, I'm a little emotional," she said.

But many questions remained unanswered--not least whether she herself considers her experience miraculous.

That "is for the church to say," came her firm reply. "All I can tell you is that I was sick and now I am cured."

"Pope of our generation"

The nun said she comes from a family of practicing Catholics in the Cambria region of northern France--but she refused to be more precise about her hometown than that. She has four younger sisters and brothers and has always been an admirer of John Paul, who became pontiff when she was 17.

"He was, in a way, my pope, the pope of our generation," she said.

His courage in the face of Parkinson's inspired her--but she couldn't bear to watch him on TV. Seeing him frail and hunched by the disease was a too-stark foretaste of her own future.

"I saw myself in the years to come, to be honest, in a wheelchair," she said. When he died, "I felt as if I had lost a friend."

"He was extraordinary," she added. "I wish only to

pay homage to him."

Exactly two months after his death, on June 2, 2005, the nun said she could bear her worsening illness no more.

She told her mother superior that she could no longer do her job at a maternity ward near Aix-en-Provence in southern France.

The mother superior's reaction was somewhat surprising: she told the nun to write down John Paul's name on a piece of paper. She did--and it was practically illegible, the sister said.

"Completely transformed"

The little Sisters of Catholic Maternities, the nun's community, all prayed together to the late pontiff. After evening prayers, she went to her room. There, she said, an inner voice urged her to write again.

"I wrote a little bit and, upon seeing my handwriting, I said to myself, 'That's strange. Your writing is very readable,' she said. She went to sleep and woke about 4:30 a.m.

"I bounded out of bed, and I felt completely transformed. I was no longer the same inside," she said. To a fellow nun, she said, "Look, my hand is no longer shaking. John Paul II has cured me."

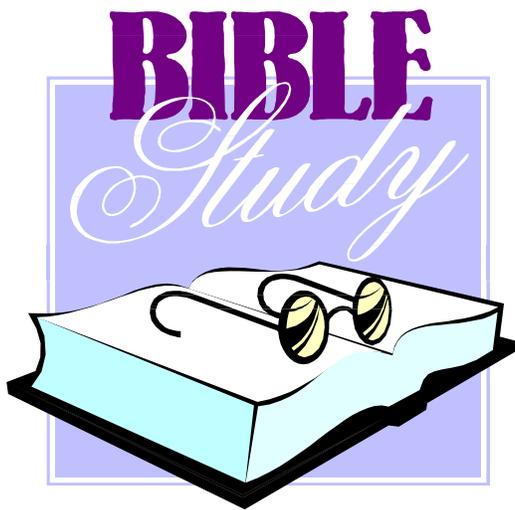
She said she has been medication-free since that day.

Before John Paul can be beatified--the last formal step before possible sainthood--the Vatican requires that a miracle attributed to his intercession be confirmed. A second miracle would be needed for sainthood.

The nun is to travel to Rome for ceremonies Monday marking the second anniversary of the pontiff's death and the closure of a church investigation into his life.

COMMENT

The above article records a real deception of Satan. Pope John Paul did not and cannot cure anyone because he is asleep in the grave and knows not anything. May we not be deceived by such workings of Satan. No matter what may occur, if it is not according to God's Word, it is of Satan.



Questions & Answers

Question: For what does the Church of God count?

Answer: There are several things that make the Church of God count and be a good fellowship of vibrant faith. Let us consider just a few.

It Is Jesus That Makes It Count

Jesus came to form the Church of God. He is the "...head of the body, the church..." (Colossians 1:18). God, the Heavenly Father, gave Jesus, His Son, "...to be the

head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23). It is Jesus who gave His life that the Church of God might exist. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseer, to feed the church of God, which he (Jesus) hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Without Jesus, we could not be members of the Church of God. It is He who directs the affairs of the Body. It is through Him that life and inspiration come to the members of the Body.

Jesus determines the overall policy of who becomes a member of His body and who does not. "...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). Jesus controls the Church of God through His power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said to Peter: "...upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18).

The Word Of God Counts

The Bible is ageless. It will continue to stand. The more its pages are turned and read the more it will sustain the power of God in the reader. The Word of God is our guide to all the things material and spiritual. We are told to "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). The Bible is the only absolute measure of truth. In a time when truth is very scarce and morality is disappearing, we need a firm Word of guidance. Unlike much modern theology that spins off the pens of modern religionists, the Scriptures will stand the test of time. Its words will tell us what the will of God is and how to keep from sinning.

The Power of God Counts

The power of God is a gift from the Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:3-5). The Holy Spirit is the "radar system" of God to warn children of God not to sin

and to help them out of impending danger. The Holy Spirit is a gift-giver of spiritual things, such as apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, healing, tongues. "For by one Spirit, are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:13). "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" (I Corinthians 12:8-11).

The power of God also imparts the fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23). The Holy Spirit certainly counts very much in the Church of God.

It Is You That Counts

"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid" (I Corinthians 6:15). We are members of the Church of God. We are the people for whom Christ lived and died. We are the "Called Out Ones" for whom Christ made an atonement for sin and reconciliation. We are the people for whom Christ intercedes before the throne of His Father. It is for the membership that the New Jerusalem is being prepared. Jesus said: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). Jesus will return and catch us up into the air with Him. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). "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).

Members count in the Church of God. You are not a computerized number or a card in this Body. We know that the Church of God is created in Christ Jesus. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature"(Galatians 6:15). You, as members in particular, are both the missing force and the field of the church. Faces, not places, are our concern. We are interested in bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to as many as will listen.

The Doctrine of God Counts

We are to be power readers of the holy Word of God. Our opinions and other peoples' ideas are cheap, but the Word of God "rightly divided" is the foundation of eternal life. Never say "It does not matter what I believe as long as I am sincere in my belief." The devil is sincere. The devil also believes, and he trembles, for he knows the doctrines do count. Atheism is sincere, but it is a deadly poison. Jesus said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine" (I Timothy 1:4-10).

You may save your earthly life by following the Safety Council's advice to "Buckle Up." This is a secular doctrine, and one that should be obeyed. What do the officials call people who fail to buckle their seat belts? They are called "stupid." Likewise, there are laws of God that need to be obeyed. Just notice how many who disregard the doctrines of God are "stupid." The Church of God

emphasizes the keeping of doctrine to live sound lives and to continue with faith toward God.

The Church Itself Counts

Obedience of the congregations to the Word of God is a definite part of how the church counts itself. As the membership obeys the truth and the doctrines of Jesus Christ, we constitute the Church of God.

Togetherness is what the Church of God is all about. The church is always more than just people. It encloses heaven and earth together through the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Ephesians 3:14-15). There is something mystical about working together with Christ. Never get involved in the life of Christ through the church unless you are willing to risk the change of your life, and your very life itself. Everything a person does is recorded. At the end of his life, he will present this account to God. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). Thoughts and motives are recorded in this diary. Will you be justified or will you be condemned? We are all mortal, and because we are born under sin, we grow up and transgress. But the good news of the gospel is that God laid on Jesus all of our iniquities. Jesus has given us a new lease on life and has wiped our record clean. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). This is what the Church of God itself counts.

We are offered salvation, eternal life as a free gift. Jesus said, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). The Apostle Paul says that Jesus is the One "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). Romans 3:23 tells us, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Man chose to disobey God. Man wants to go his own way. Man still makes this choice. There is a great gulf, or gap, between what man is and what God intends him to be. Man cannot save himself-- not by good works, nor by self-righteousness, or morality. He needs what the Church of God counts for. Do you have it?



The Church Around The World

By Del DeLong

Mexico

The following photos were taken last year.





LESSON I

TRIBUTE TO GOD AND CAESAR

Scripture Reading: Mark 12:13-17.

Golden Text: Mark 12:17

"And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's..."

1. Who came to see Jesus, and why did they come? Mark 12:13.
2. What question did the Pharisees ask Christ? Mark 12:14.
3. Did Christ know what was in their hearts? Mark 12:15 (first part).
4. What did He ask them to bring to Him? Mark 12:15 (last line).
5. What question did He ask them? Mark 12:16 (first part).
6. What was their answer? Mark 12:16 (last part).
7. What was Christ's answer? Mark 12:17.

NOTE: "Caesar" in this lesson represents the state. As long as we live in this world, we must pay taxes in order to keep the affairs of the state operating. We may not want to pay taxes, but it is our obligation to the state. However, our first duty is to God. God should come first in all things.

LESSON II

THE WIDOW'S MITE

Scripture Reading: Mark 12:41-44.

Golden Text: Mark 12:44

"For all they did cast in of their abundance; but

she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

1. Where was Jesus sitting at this time? Mark 12:41 (first line).
2. What was He watching? Mark 12:41 (second line).
3. Did the rich give to the treasury? Mark 12:41 (last line).
4. Who came to the treasury? Mark 12:42 (first part).
5. How much did she put in? Mark 12:42 (last part).
6. What did Christ say concerning the widow? Mark 12:43.
7. Why did He say this? Mark 12:44.

NOTE: When we give to the Lord, we do not have to be rich. Whatever we have to give, we should give willingly. There are many people in the world who have a lot of money, but who give very little to God, while others may be like the widow of our lesson and give all they have. God does not expect us to give all our money. But we should try to follow the example of the poor widow and receive God's blessing.

LESSON III

SOME SIGNS OF CHRIST'S COMING

Scripture Reading: Mark 13:3-10.

Golden Text: Mark 13:7

"And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet."

1. Where was Jesus sitting this time? Mark 13:3 (first part).
2. Who came to Him and asked Him questions? Mark

13:3 (last part).

3. What questions did they ask Him? Mark 13:4.
4. What did He warn them about? Mark 13:5.
5. Would anyone come in His name? Mark 13:6 (first part).
6. What would they do? Mark 13:6 (last part).
7. Should we be frightened when we hear of war? Mark 13:7.
8. What must first be done before Jesus comes? Mark 13:10.
9. Is it possible to tell the exact time that Jesus will come, and what should we do? Mark 13:33.

NOTE: You can also read Matthew 24 for this same lesson to study. Jesus is coming back to earth some day, and we should all be ready to meet Him. Therefore, we should study the Bible more and more each day to be ready to meet the Lord when He comes.

LESSON IV

TEN BOYS AND GIRLS

Scripture Reading: Matthew 25:1-13.

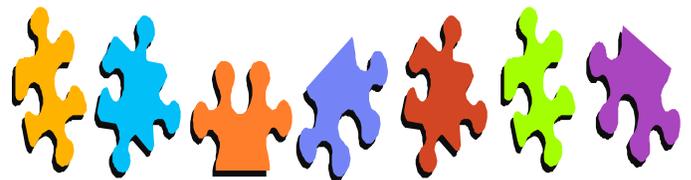
Golden Text: Matthew 25:2

"And five of them were wise, and five were foolish."

1. In Matthew 25:1, what does Jesus say the kingdom of heaven will be likened unto?
2. How many of the young boys and girls were wise, and how many were foolish? Matthew 25:2.
3. What did the foolish boys and girls do, and what did the wise do? Matthew 25:3-4.

4. What did the ten young people do while waiting for the bridegroom, and what happened at midnight? Matthew 25:5-6.
5. What did all the ten boys and girls do in Matthew 25:7?
6. What did the five foolish ones say to the five wise ones, and what did the wise young people reply? Matthew 25:8-9.
7. What happened while the five foolish persons went to buy oil? Matthew 25:10-11.
8. What did the Lord say to the foolish young people when they returned? Matthew 25:12.
9. Do we know when Jesus will return? What are we to do? Matthew 25:13.

NOTE: We should always watch and be ready for the Lord's return. He comes like a bridegroom for His bride. Do not be like the five foolish young people who were not ready. Will you be ready to receive your reward?



Answers to Tens -

1. *The 10 Plagues (Exodus 7-10)*
2. *The 10 Virgins (Matthew 25:1-14)*
3. *The 10 Commandments (Exodus 20)*
4. *The 10 Lepers (Luke 17:12)*
5. *Joseph lived in Egypt; Benjamin remained at home (Genesis 45:4; 44:20-22)*
6. *Abraham (Genesis 18:32)*
7. *Elkanah, husband of Hannah (I Samuel 1:8)*
8. *The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:28)*
9. *Jacob (Genesis 31:7)*
10. *Daniel and his three friends (Daniel 1:3-21)*

BE KIND TO ANIMALS

It was a beautiful day, and George and Jerry were on their way home just taking their time and watching all the people as they passed by. They had been swimming all afternoon down at their favorite swimming hole, and they were a little tired. "Did you ever see such a funny looking man?" said George, and at this they both laughed.

As they strolled along a little farther they saw a little white dog running gaily down the road, and at the same time they noticed two empty tin cans along the side of the road. "Come on George, we're in for a little fun," shouted Jerry as he picked up one of the tin cans and raced out after the little dog. George soon followed close behind with the other in his hand. It was not long before they caught the poor little dog. Jerry pulled out a piece of string from his pocket, and while George held the poor shaking little dog, he securely tied both cans to the little dog's tail.

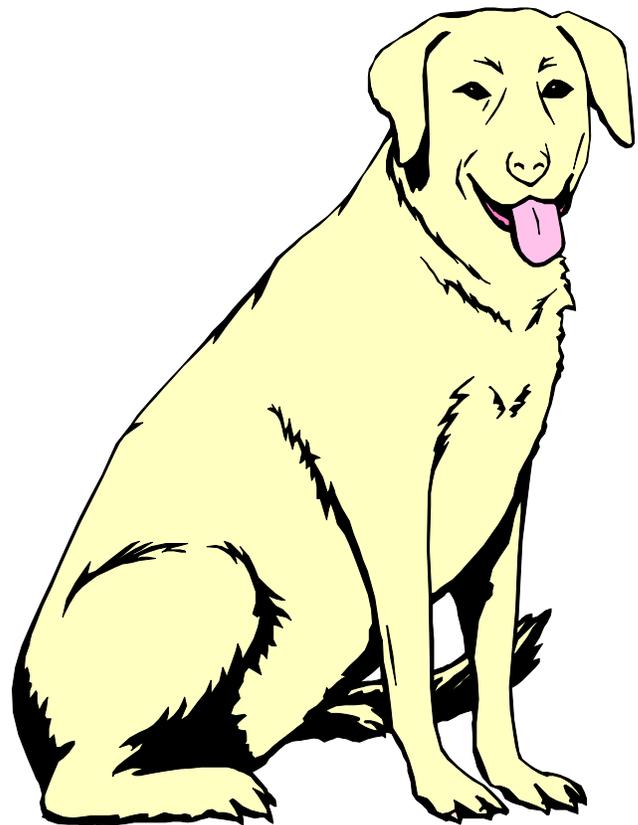
Then they set him free and he darted down the road, terrified by the bumping of the cans on the road behind him.

Then they set him free and he darted down the road, terrified by the bumping of the cans on the road behind him. One of the cans was tied too short and the sharp edge bumped against him and cut a large gash in the poor little dog's leg. George and Jerry just laughed as they watched the little dog as he tried to free himself from the crashing, terrifying things behind him.

Billy Allen heard the frightening yelps and came out to see what the excitement was all about. When he saw what had happened, he called to the poor little dog in a

kind voice. "Poor little fellow! Come here and I will help you." He picked up the quivering little dog and gently unfastened the cans. He noticed the gash in his leg, and carried him into the house. He put him down on the rug and ran into the kitchen and got a pan of warm water. He then returned to the little dog and bathed and bound up the cut on its leg. "Now you will be alright," said Billy as the little dog gratefully licked his hand.

The next Sabbath in Sabbath School the class had a study on the many wonderful things Jesus did during his life. Billy learned how He healed the sick and comforted and restored the people to good health and spirit again. It made him think of the little white dog who had refused to leave him, and of the look of trust and love that shown from the little dog's eyes and of the fast healing cut. It made him feel good and now he didn't care anymore if George and Jerry did call him a "sissy" for helping a poor little dog and spoiling their fun. He knew now that Jesus would have done the same thing, and he wanted to be like Jesus. "It is much more fun helping people instead of hurting them," he thought as he left the church.



NATURE'S MELODY

TENS

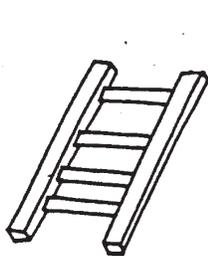
How happy we should be that we can see and hear and feel and taste and smell. Today, we have a poem that was written by a blind man, Dr. Kallenbach, who was killed in an accident, November 16, 1946, before his poem was published.

I cannot view the bloom upon the rose,
But oh, the scent is very dear to me,
And I can feel the cooling breeze that blows
Through pearl-tipped peaks of hills I cannot see.
I cannot see the wild birds on the wing.
But I can hear the swallows in the caves;
I hear the song that nature has to sing;
The gentle music of the rustling leaves.
I cannot see the children going by,
But I can hear their laughter as they pass;
I cannot see the sunset in the sky,
But I can feel the swaying of the grass.
I cannot see the moonlight on the sea,
But I can hear the waves beat on the shore;
I feast upon all nature's melody,
And thank my God and do not ask for more.

- 1. What name is given to the calamities that overtook a nation which persecuted the Hebrews?
- 2. What group of maidens went to meet a bridegroom?
- 3. What famous laws were given to Moses on Mount Sinai?
- 4. What ten men were cured of a vile disease by Jesus at the entrance to a certain village?
- 5. Jacob had twelve sons, but he only sent ten down to Egypt to buy corn. Where were the other two?
- 6. Who pleaded with God to save a city if "even ten righteous" should be found there?
- 7. What man said to his wife, who wanted a child: "Am I not better to thee than ten sons"?
- 8. In what parable is one man told to give his money "unto him which hath ten _____"?
- 9. What man complained that his wages had been changed ten times?
- 10. Who begged to be allowed to eat pulse and drink water for ten days instead of the wine and meat which King Nebuchadnezzar ordered?

BIBLE LETTER HUNT

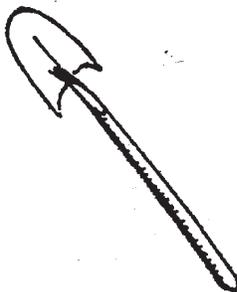
To find this Bible name print the correct letter below each clue.



3rd letter



3rd letter



4th letter



2nd letter



1st letter

Creation

By David DeLong

With love and great worth, God made the earth,
Then, on the first day He made light;
He fashioned this globe from darkness and dearth,
And divided the day from the night.

Next, God made the sky, beneath waters up high,
While waters were bounded below;
Later, He moistened the land that was dry
With a mist that upward did flow.

On day number three, God gathered the seas,
And made the dry land to appear;
He garnished the earth with grasses and trees,
And with flowers to make the heart cheer.

Then, lights in the heaven, the fourth day of seven,
Were made to rule night and day;
The moon and the sun, and the stars of the heaven,
Were placed there for signs to display.

And then on day five, came the waters alive
With fishes; and sky full of fowl;
The whales in the seas, then downward did dive,
While up flew the osprey and owl.

Day six, not the least, brought cattle and beast,
And then, since creation began;
The greatest of these, told by prophet and priest,
God's crowning creation was man.

The Creator then rested, from all He'd invested,
Making the Sabbath His Own;
This day is for man, God's Word has attested,
And written on tables of stone.

