

A close-up photograph of a flowering plant, likely a Plumbago, featuring numerous small, light blue flowers with five petals and prominent stamens. The flowers are densely packed and surrounded by lush, green, oval-shaped leaves. The lighting is bright, creating a vibrant scene. A light blue rectangular box is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the text.

The Advocate of Truth



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Telephone: 304-782-1411
Fax: 304-782-2248

E-Mail: cogsevdav@aol.com

Web site: www.churchofgod-7thday.org

Del DeLong

David DeLong

Bond Tennant.....Editorial Staff

Gary Mills Managing Editor

Ludina Mills.....Children's Page Editor

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The Lord's Supper this year is Monday evening, April 10, 2017, after sundown (Roman time), which is the beginning of April 11, (Bible time).

The Second Coming of Jesus

(The Reaping Phase--From a Tract)

This tract will point out to you the most important event in the history of mankind. This is the most longed for event, and the most wonderful thing that could ever happen.

Let us see what it is by turning to Jesus' own words and promise. John 14:1-3 reads: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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. 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." There you have the great event spoken by the mouth of Jesus Himself. He said, "I will come again." Men and women have been looking for that blessed event now for almost 2,000 years, and it will soon come to pass.

Let us read another statement of Jesus on this very subject. Matthew 24:29-31 informs us: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." These texts show that every man shall see Him come. The tribes of the earth shall mourn, for "they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven." According to this, His coming is not secret, nor is it just to spiritual people, but to all tribes or nations of the earth.

There is another text that says this. Let us read it from Revelation 1:7: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and ev-

ery eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." This says exactly what Matthew said. When the kindreds of the earth see Him they shall mourn, wail, or cry, because of Him.

The burden of the Holy Bible, from the opening verses of the Book of Genesis to the closing paragraph of Revelation, is the two advents of our Lord Jesus. There is no fact in the history of mankind so firmly established by many infallible proofs as the fact of our Saviour's first coming. He came then as the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29; Revelation 5:6,12).

Now we seek the return of Jesus not as a Lamb and Saviour but as King of Kings and ruler-judge of the world. There is no future drama so frequently predicted in the pages of God's Word. Jesus shall come a second time, as a Bridegroom with His bride, (Revelation 21:9-11; 19:7-9) to gather His saints of all ages, as the Messiah for Israel, and to begin judgment of the nations.

Let us read another text showing how He will come. Acts 1:9-11: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

So Jesus is coming in the very same way, or manner, as He went away, and this by the testimony of angels.

Just what will this second coming be like? Of course it is impossible to get a true conception of the infinite mind, but Paul is led by the Holy Spirit in I Thessalonians 4:13-

18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Every one of the apostles of the New Testament confirmed this drama in clear and convincing language. There is to be the resurrection of the believing dead, and the transformation of the living saints, which will be the ultimate climax of this drama. It will be the salvation and redemption of everyone that is a child of God. We wait, says Paul, "...for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23).

This great spectacle of our Lord's return has three significant relationships. First, to all the saints of all ages, second to Israel, and third to the nations of the earth. So then every individual will be involved in this drama. It is the only hope for people in these desperate days of apostasy, apathy and atheism. We see the signs of the times very clearly now. The shadow of His soon return can be noted on every hand, and they make us very conscious of the curtain of this play opening up before us.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (I John 3:2-3).

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:4-5).

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thessalonians 5:23).

The Two Laws Contrasted

A.) The Ten Commandments Or The Law Of God

1. Was spoken by God --Deuteronomy 4:12-13.
2. Was written by God on tables of stone--Exodus 24:12.
3. Was placed inside the Ark--Deuteronomy 10:5.
4. Was right, true and good--Nehemiah 9:13.
5. Was a law by which man could live--Ezekiel 20:11,13,21; Matthew 19:17.
6. Is a perfect law--Psalm 19:7.
7. Christ did not come to destroy it--Matthew 5:17.
8. Jesus came to magnify the law and make it honorable--Isaiah 42:21; Psalm 138:2.
9. Not one jot or tittle shall pass away from the law till all be fulfilled--Matthew 5:18.
10. We must not break even the least of the law--Matthew 5:19.
11. Is the perfect law of liberty--James 2:12.
12. Is established through faith in Christ Jesus--Romans 3:31.
13. Is a spiritual law--Romans 7:14.
14. Is a law that is holy, and good--Romans 7:12.
15. Is called the royal law of the Scriptures--James 2:8.
16. Was proclaimed by God Himself, and God added no more--Deuteronomy 5:22.

This Law Remains Forever

B.) The Ceremonial Laws Or The Law Of Moses

1. Was spoken by Moses--Deuteronomy 1:1-6.
2. Was written by Moses in a book--Deuteronomy 31:9,24.
3. Was placed in the side of the Ark--Deuteronomy 31:26.
4. Was not a good law--Ezekiel 20:25; Hebrews 9:9-10.
5. Was a law that caused death--Ezekiel 20:25.
6. This law made nothing perfect--Hebrews 7:19.
7. Christ abolished this law--Ephesians 2:15.
8. Christ took this law out of the way by His death on the cross--Colossians 2:14.
9. Christ was the end of this law--Ephesians 2:15.
10. This was a yoke of bondage--Galatians 5:1.
11. Is the law of a carnal commandment--Hebrews 7:16 (read for clarification vv. 17-20).
12. Is contrary to us and is our enemy--Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:20.
13. Was the handwriting of ordinances--Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 9:10.
14. Was a law of shadows for good things to come--Hebrews 10:1; 8:5.
15. Was a law of death and persecution--Hebrews 10:28 (see opposite in verse 29).
16. Leaders in Israel had to add more and more rules and regulations to this law because it was so imperfect--Matthew 19:7-8; 23:1-5; John 7:22-23; Acts 13:39.

The Mosaic Law Was Abolished

The Ten Commandments of God are perpetual and immutable. The crime wave that is sweeping the world, wherein each offense is a definite violation of one or an-

other of the Ten Commandments, should make every father and mother carefully consider that these Commandments must be taught. The hateful deception that God's holy Commandments have been abolished and nailed to the cross has had a worldwide sowing, and how horrible the harvest. But the searchlight of God's precious Word, focused squarely on the situation, will clearly discern long hidden truth and people are everywhere awakening to the fact that it was the law of Moses and not the Law of God that was abolished and abrogated at the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

SOMETHING ABOUT WHICH TO THINK:

DEEDS VERSUS WORDS

Bond Tennant

I am sure that most of you have heard the old saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me." Let us examine this saying to ascertain if it is true.

If Satan should put it into my mind to steal from my brother and I yielded, it would not seriously harm him, because no matter what I stole, it could be replaced. If Satan should induce me to burn down someone's barn, it could be repaired or rebuilt. However, when it comes to hearsay, rumors, gossip and just plain lies, which are all words, evil results because these are very difficult to erase from the mind. If I do these things, it is an indication that I am losing the battle which takes place in my mind. "He that soweth discord among brethren," the Bible states, "doth the LORD hate" (Proverbs 6:16, 19).

Although it may appear that more damage could be done by evil deeds than by evil words, it is not so! An evil deed might break or bruise the flesh, while an evil word might break or bruise the heart. The way we are constituted, most flesh wounds heal fast and easily, while heart wounds sometimes bleed a long time and often leave a scar.

BAPTISM

“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).

The Apostle Paul tells us that the things that can be seen are temporal, but the things which we cannot see are eternal (II Corinthians 4:18). For this reason, the Lord wants us to take our eyes off the tangible and reach out by faith to that which is eternal. We must learn to walk by faith and not by sight (II Corinthians 5:7).

Most people desire tangible things to hold on to, even in their spiritual lives. For this reason, most religions have rituals to teach spiritual principles. But the Bible only teaches two: baptism and the Lord’s Supper (the footwashing service is a part of the Lord’s Supper).

Even though we are able to walk by faith, the Lord seemed to know that, as weak mortals, at times we need something tangible to illustrate a spiritual truth. Baptism is a very beautiful symbol of what Christ does for us through His Spirit.

Baptism signifies three aspects of the work of Christ in our lives. First: It signifies the cleansing of our sins through the blood of Jesus Christ. Baptism does not remove our sins; it simply represents what has already happened when we accept Jesus as our Savior.

Second: It signifies our identifying with Jesus,

especially in His death, burial and resurrection. Jesus’ death purchased our salvation. His resurrection proved Him victorious over Satan and guaranteed that we, too, will be resurrected. But it did much more than that. Jesus defeated Satan by His resurrection, and thus, if He dwells within us, we can overcome sin in our lives.

The sixth chapter of Romans explains how our baptism parallels the work of the Spirit in our lives. When we ask Jesus to come into our heart and rule, our old man (or carnal nature) is crucified. At that point, we are new creatures in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:17). Baptism signifies the burial of the old man and the resurrection of the new creation.

Third: Baptism is the initiation ceremony in which we are placed into the body of Christ. The pagan religions of Paul’s day had initiation rites whereby new converts were initiated into the heathen religions. He used baptism to illustrate how we are baptized into Jesus Christ and become a part of His body.

Symbolic ordinances have no inherent power and are effective only as they hold meaning to those who participate in them. Their significance is only in relationship to the spiritual principles they represent.

--From an old Sabbath School lesson

The Parable of the Great Eagle

(Ezek. 17:1-24)

Jerry Womble

God tells Ezekiel to give this parable to Israel about their fate going forward in time. There are four kings and kingdoms that make up this parable. Even though each king had his special place in the parable each also had

something in common with each other. We will see that the eagles, the vine and the branches all form parts of the parable.

The first eagle is Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

He has great wings full of feathers and colors representing the greatness of his kingdom at this time and was taking over kingdoms of the earth while Egypt was diminishing in its power. He came and took the young twigs to Babylon. These were the youngest, strongest and wisest men of Israel. Remember this is when Daniel and his companions were taken captive.

He “took of the seed of the land”; this was Zedekiah, who we studied about in previous Sabbath School lessons, and made him king and to prosper as long as he remained faithful to Nebuchadnezzar. He is described as a “spreading vine of low stature”; that is, he was subject to Nebuchadnezzar. This vine, Zedekiah, turned to another eagle who was Pharaoh the king of Egypt to come to his aid, which ultimately led to his destruction and being taken into the Babylonian captivity, also.

We see that Babylon is the first kingdom, the second

is Zedekiah which was subject to Nebuchadnezzar by his oath in vs. 13 and the third is Pharaoh who was not able to help Zedekiah free himself from Nebuchadnezzar.

The fourth king will be Jesus. He is the tender twig in vs. 22. He will take Israel and place it upon a “high and eminent mountain”; this is the restoration of Israel in the millennial kingdom and at that time every winged fowl, that is every nation, will benefit from the teachings going out from Israel. This is the same kingdom that is in Dan. 2:44, 45. It will be established as a kingdom forever and “never be destroyed” because it is set by God and will consume all kingdoms of the past and will “stand forever”.

This parable was to warn Israel of what would come if they did not forsake their idols and turn to God because He will not share them with any other god. Let this be a lesson to us to always examine ourselves and be faithful because he will not share us with any other god, either.

Blessed Savior!

By David DeLong

Blessed Savior, Son of God!
No other man, this way has trod;
His sweat, as drops of blood, was falling,
In the garden of His calling.

Blessed Savior, Son of God!
Prayed, as His disciples nod
In sleep, for all their heart-felt sorrow,
Not knowing what was on the morrow.

Blessed Savior, Son of God!
Watch Him to Golgotha, plod;
See the nails in hands and feet,
He gained the victory from defeat.

Blessed Savior, Son of God!
Took on Him the wrathful rod
For our sins; for this He came,
O holy One, who took our shame.

Blessed Savior, Son of God!
Some said that He was just a fraud;
But this lie could never stand,
For He was in the Father's hand.

Blessed Savior, Son of God!
His blood was poured upon the sod;
And also, risen from the grave,
He is alive, and still does save.

Rest in the Lord

By David DeLong

There are times in our lives when the days are a bustle of activity. Or, there are situations that cause us much distress and sorrow. These times, especially, are wonderful opportunities to rest in the Lord. Just to trust Him completely and know that He is in absolute control. However, every day can, and should be, be an opportunity to rest in Him and let Him bear our burdens. Let us look at some people, and situations from the Bible, which show to us examples of resting in the Lord.

The first example at which we will look is that of Samson, who had just killed 1,000 Philistines. The story is found in Judges, chapter 15. The men of Judah had bound Samson to deliver him to the Philistines for things that Samson had done against the Philistines. We pick up the story in verse 14. "And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith. And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men. And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramath-lehi. And he was sore athirst, and called on the LORD, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof

Enhakkore which is in Lehi unto this day. And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years" (verses 14-20).

We might look upon this action of the Lord as a miracle. But this was the way that He chose to supply the need of His servant, Samson. And, if we rest in the Lord and depend fully upon Him, He will choose the way to supply all of our needs as well. The Lord has many ways to supply our needs, even if we don't see even one way.

The next example that I wish to consider is found in I Kings, chapters 18,19. The Prophet Elijah had told King Ahab to send all Israel unto Mount Carmel, along with the priests of Baal. Two bullocks were to be sacrificed, one by the priests of Baal to Baal, and one by the Prophet Elijah to the God of Israel. The one that answered the sacrifice by sending fire upon the altar, was the true God. The people consented to this. After the priests of Baal tried first, there was no answer by fire. But, when Elijah prayed unto the God of Israel the fire came from heaven and consumed the sacrifice, the wood on the altar, the stones of the altar, the dust of the ground, and licked up the water that had been poured upon the sacrifice. This, of course, proved that Israel's God was the true God. The priests of Baal were then slain.

We pick up the story in I Kings 19:1-8. "And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilder-

ness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. 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."

Dear brother or sister, do you sometimes feel alone such as Elijah felt when facing the priests of Baal, and then running for his life from Jezebel? The Lord has many ways to help you and strengthen you through any circumstance of life. Just rest in Him.

Notice, carefully, the promises of the Lord to us if we are depending upon Him. Psalm 37:3-8 instructs us: "Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil."

Even the apostles of Jesus needed rest from their daily activities. Jesus provided them that rest. We see this in Mark 6:30-34: "And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they de-

Dear brother or sister, do you sometimes feel alone such as Elijah felt when facing the priests of Baal, and

then running for his life from Jezebel? The Lord has many ways to help you and strengthen you through any circumstance of life. Just rest in Him.

parted into a desert place by ship privately. And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things." We see here that Jesus was interrupted from His rest to serve the people that came to Him.

But it is the Lord Jesus Himself who provides us with the rest that we need on a daily basis. In Matthew 11:28-30 He said: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." The burdens of the world are hard burdens, but Jesus' burden is light. Rest in Him.

It is wonderful that the Lord provides for our rest, both physically and spiritually, on a weekly basis with the holy Sabbath day of rest (see Exodus 20:8-11; Isaiah 58:13-14; Mark 2:27-28). This pause from our weekly labors gives us the strength to serve God and our fellowman.

Moses felt the great burden of leading the Israelites in the wilderness. He implored the Lord to show him the Lord's way. "And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest" (Exodus 33:12-14).

The Lord promised Moses rest in the turmoil of leading such a great nation as Israel. That rest can be ours as well, if we wait upon the Lord, trust in Him at all times, and pray, like Moses, to know the Lord and His way.

Blasphemy--The Breaking of God's Holy Law

By David DeLong

Revelation 13:1-10 records a beast coming up out of the sea, full of names of blasphemy. This blasphemy is connected to the breaking of God's Law. "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

This beast breaks God's first Commandment by being worshipped by the inhabitants of the world whose names are not in the book of life. The beast also breaks the third Commandment by opening his mouth and speaking blasphemy against God and against His name. He breaks the sixth Commandment by making war with the saints and overcoming them. In short, the beast, most likely, will break every one of God's Commandments in-

cluding the Sabbath Commandment.

To show that Sabbath breaking, as well as idol worship, both constitute blasphemy we turn to Ezekiel 20. In verses 24 and 27 we find the children of Israel breaking these Commandments: "Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols...Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed a trespass against me." Trespassing against the Lord is breaking His Law, which is considered blasphemy.

If children cursed, or blasphemed, their parents they were to be put to death in Old Testament times. Jesus confirmed this in Matthew 15:1-4: "Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death." This constitutes breaking the fifth Commandment.

Committing adultery, stealing, as well as idol worship will blaspheme the Lord as we can discern from Romans 2:17-25. "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not com-

mit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision."

James said basically the same thing about blaspheming God by breaking His Law. This time, though, murder, or the eighth Commandment, is included. "But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law" (James 2:6-11).

Lying, or the bearing of false witness, is considered blasphemy in Revelation 3:9 and 2:9: "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." (Please also read Revelation 2:9).

Covetousness, according to Colossians 3:5, is the same as idolatry which we have seen is a form of blasphemy. The text in Colossians reads: "Mortify therefore your mem-

bers which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry".

We can readily see, therefore, that the breaking of God's holy Law is blasphemy, of which the beast of Revelation, chapter 13, is filled. (Please read all of Revelation 13 and chapter 17). We are probably well acquainted with the breaking of the third Commandment to be blasphemy. An example of that is found in Leviticus 24:10-16. "And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel: and this son of the Israelitish woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp; And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the LORD, and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses: (and his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan:) And they put him in ward, that the mind of the LORD might be showed them. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin. And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death."

This is blaspheming God with a person's speech, but one can blaspheme with his or her actions as well. Let us be careful to honor the Lord with our total being: thoughts, speech, and actions.

Does The World Hate You?

By David DeLong

Here is a question that we should ask ourselves: "Does the world hate me?" Obviously, the entire world won't hate me, as an individual, because the entire world can't know me. Also, some people are going to love me such as my immediate family and my church friends. But, the question still remains. Are there some people that hate me, not for my doing evil or harm to them, but because of my relationship with the Lord and because I have wit-

nessed to them about the Lord?

Of course, we want everyone to like us, or love us. This is a natural feeling that we all have. But Jesus said this condition cannot be to a child of God. He explained in Luke 6:26: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets." If everyone is our friend, then that makes the world our friend, also. We have compromised with the world. James

4:4 teaches us: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." We can't have it both ways. We must choose. Jesus taught in Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 24:9-13: "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Now, since Jesus spoke this to His immediate disciples, we can't be excluded from similar situations. In Matthew 5:11-12 the Lord exhorted us: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." It's not a matter of if people will do this to us, but when. II Timothy 3:12 assures us: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." If we are living godly in Christ Jesus we shall suffer persecution. We should expect it. I John 3:13 teaches us: "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." Otherwise, we are not living godly in Christ Jesus. We have compromised with the world.

Jesus suffered persecution, His followers in the New Testament suffered persecution, through the pages of history His faithful followers suffered persecution, and we will, too. In His intercessory prayer, before going to the cross, Jesus prayed this about His disciples: "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14). Notice what the Lord spoke about His disciples in John 15:18-20: "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. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if

they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."

What should be our reaction to those who persecute us? Jesus answered that question. He said: "But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you" (Luke 6:27-28). But why does the world hate true followers of the Lord Jesus? The Lord gave the answer to that in John 15:19. "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." Simply because we don't belong to the world, the world hates us. In a sense, the world is a big clique which only accepts those who are like the worldly people. The world hates everyone else.

Christians make the world feel guilty and uncomfortable. Jesus, by His testimony, made the scribes and Pharisees feel this way. So, they hated Him and wanted to kill Him. John 3:32-33, speaking about Jesus, reads: "And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true."

The example of Jesus infuriated the worldly religious leaders of His day, by His going about doing good, while they were hypocrites in their daily lives. Again, this made them feel judged and condemned. It isn't our job to judge or condemn the world, but by our godly example the Holy Spirit will convict sinners of their sins. A few will repent, but the majority may end up hating us.

A believer's strict beliefs and practices will seem arrogant or intolerant to worldly people. Many times this will be enough for them to hate us. The world believes that, basically, anything goes in a person's lifestyle, and they will turn away from someone who says that God only has one Word and one way.

Joseph, in the Old Testament, is a good example of being a steadfast person for the Lord. Though his brothers hated him, he remained faithful to his father, Jacob, and to the Lord. Later, when he was in Egypt, his master's wife accused him of attempted adultery. And when he was put into prison, he continued to stay faithful to the Lord. He had no way of knowing at the time what his steadfastness to the Lord would bring. He was placed in a position next to Pharaoh, and his brothers eventually repented of their bad treatment of Joseph.

Are you being steadfast for the Lord, or does the world feel comfortable around you? Worse yet, have you come to a place in your life where you feel comfortable with the world? I John 2:15-17 reminds us: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

I'm not saying that we should be obnoxious to the world. We don't need to get into people's faces or start arguments. But if we are not making much of a godly influence in the people around us, then we are like salt which has lost its flavor. Jesus said in Matthew 5:13: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." Because Satan hates godly people, then many of his followers will hate them, too. Jesus said that those who are true to Him will be hated by the world. So, again I ask: "Does the world hate you?"

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

*As a Son to Joseph and Mary
He was a most obedient child;
He constantly did all their bidding,
And was faithful all of the while.*

*Mary may have known she would lose Him
As she looked ahead, down thru the years;
But bravely she bore her sorrow,
And carefully hid all of her fears.*

*Then Jesus began His commission,
And Satan was ready to step in;
And he felt very sure of his purpose,
Feeling sure he could cause Him to sin.*

*Jesus knew that His job was important,
And He must not be caught unaware;
So leaving His childhood behind Him,
He went off for some serious prayer.*

Forty days and nights He fasted,

*Discussing with God what's ahead;
He knew He must preach the gospel,
Even raising some from the dead.*

*Satan knew that He had to be hungry,
The long fast would have taken its toll;
And he proceeded to quote the Scriptures,
Feeling confident of reaching his goal.*

*In his sly, evil way he told Jesus:
"Turn some of those stones into bread";
But bread alone was not the answer,
And He worshipped His Father, instead.*

*Then to the Holy City, he took Him,
Setting Him up on a pinnacle, high;
"Just jump," he then taunted Jesus,
"If You're God's Son, You won't die."*

*Calling on His strong faith, Jesus told him:
"You must never tempt God on His throne;
His power most surely will save us,
And His promise to not leave us alone!"*

*But Satan wasn't about to be defeated,
And off to a high mountain he went;
And there before the eyes of Jesus
Was a sight sure to make Him relent.*

*The whole world with all its splendor
Could be His for the rest of all time;
But Jesus had ready His answer,
You can't give Me what is already Mine!*

*"So get thee behind Me now, Satan,
For your evil I'll always withstand;
For I'll worship none but My Father,
And remain under the rule of His hand."*

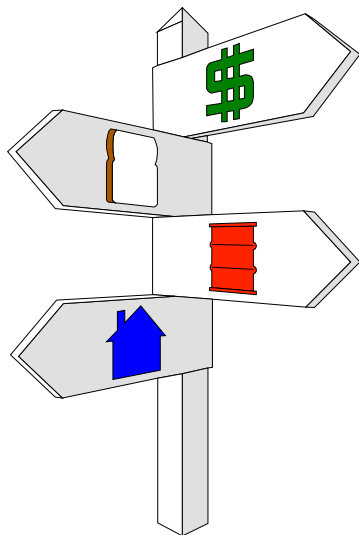
*Then Satan stomped off in a temper,
Such faith he thought never to see;
Then angels came and cared for Jesus,
And by His Father, we too, can be free!*

Matthew 4:1-11

By Betty Whetstone

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.



MOST YOUNG ADULTS WITHOUT RETIREMENT SAVINGS, PENSIONS

We quote an article by Stan Choe entitled *They Lack money, not confidence* which appeared in the **Houston Chronicle**. It has been condensed.

NEW YORK – Young Americans with even just \$1 saved for retirement are ahead of the pack.

Forty-eight percent of all Americans aged 18 to 30 have zero in retirement savings and no access to a traditional pension, according to a GenForward poll by the Black Youth Project at the University of Chicago with the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The youngest in that group are more likely to still be in school, but the trend also holds for those in their late 20s. More than four in 10 of those aged 25 to 30 have nothing in retirement. These same Americans are part of a generation whose retirements, if they happen at all, will be more dependent on their personal savings. That's because traditional pensions are becoming more and more rare. Only 7 percent of those surveyed say they're in line to get the coveted benefit, which promises to pay a set amount monthly after retirement.

Plus, young Americans are likely to get less in Social Security benefits than their parents or grandparents. The age to receive full Social Security benefits is climbing up to 67 from 66. And most young Americans don't have much faith in the Social Security system to begin with. Only 5 percent say they're confident in it, and 28 percent say they're somewhat confident.

Despite all that, a majority of young Americans still say they are confident that they'll have enough to retire

when they want to. African-Americans, Asian-Americans and Anglo-Americans have similar levels of confidence, between 53 percent and 56 percent. Latinos are an exception. Only 43 percent say they're very or somewhat confident.

"I feel pretty good about our future, says Shavonne Henry, a 26-year-old who lives in Vancouver, Wash., with her 25-year-old husband and children. They have some money saved in a 401 (k) through her husband's work and a rolled-over 401(k) account from her old job.

"The reason we got to saving at all was I took a finance class in college, and part of the course was: If you want to have the kind of retirement you want to have, you should start saving at 20," she says. I don't think that's talked about enough."

There is no magic answer for how much a person needs to have saved for retirement.

The GenForward poll did not ask how much young Americans had saved for retirement, only whether they had done so.

Aisha Ahmouda, a 30-year-old registered nurse, is optimistic about her future despite having little in retirement savings and less faith in the future of Social Security.

She's pursuing a master's degree to become a nurse practitioner, a job that comes with loan-assistance programs if she goes on to work in a medically underserved area. She also hopes that it puts her on a career track that will allow her to continue working into her late 60s or early 70s, even if her mobility starts to wane, giving her time to build up savings.

"Not everything is certain, even when you're putting away savings," she says. "I'm going to do the best I can and leave the rest up to a higher power."

Comment

It is easy to visualize young people not putting away savings for retirement. It is something about which many

young people do not think. A great many young people do not visualize the kind of retirement they wish. No age can be determined as to when to begin saving for retirement, although it is a good idea to stress more about retirement security in college classes. No one can be assured of the retirement he wishes. He may die before he reaches his retirement age!

Aisha Ahmouda is correct as she says, “Not everything is certain, even when you’re putting away savings. I’m going to do the best I can and leave the rest up to a higher power.”

Really nothing is certain except the Word of God. “For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth forever...” (I Peter 1:24-25).

AMERICAN RELIGION

The following is another article by James A. Haught which appeared in the **Houston Chronicle**:

Where is American religion heading?

For the first time in history, Congress has passed a law that protects “non-theists.”

The Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act – named for a former congressman who championed freedom of conscience – is designed to shield all types of minority believers who suffer attacks and prejudice.

It specifically says authorities must “protect theistic and non-theistic beliefs as well as the right not to profess or practice any religion.”

The bill passed Congress last week and is expected to be signed by President Barack Obama.

The first time inclusion of nonbelievers recognizes a transformation in U.S. society: the rapid growth of adults who say their religion is “none.” A recent survey by the Public Religion Research Institute found that “nones” have become America’s largest faith category. They constitute 25 percent of the adult population, compared to 21 percent who are Catholics and 16 percent who are white evangelicals.

Since 1990, unaffiliated people have climbed with remarkable speed in national polls. The increase surely will continue, because young adults under 30 are more strongly secular than older Americans.

Amid many other changes in daily life, rising secularism raises an intriguing question: Where is U.S. religion heading? Demographers and sociologists predict that faith will continue shrinking in America, but it will remain more

powerful than in other Western democracies.

Since World War II, Europe has suffered enormous loss in churchgoing. Perhaps only 5 percent of adults still attend in many nations. Cathedrals sit empty, except for a few elderly worshippers and tourists.

A generation from now, will U.S. society be similar? All surveys imply a trend in that direction.

Some analysts foresee a time when more than half of Americans will have no church connection, and churchgoers will be a minority.

National Geographic recently bannered a story titled: “The World’s Newest Major Religion: No Religion.” It said Christianity is dwindling in all northern democracies, while it grows in sub-Sahara Africa and other tropical lands. The revered magazine said: “There have long been predictions that religion would fade from relevancy as the world modernizes, but all the recent surveys are finding that it’s happening startlingly fast. France will have a majority secular population soon. So will the Netherlands and New Zealand. The United Kingdom and Australia will soon lose Christian majorities. Religion is rapidly becoming less important than it’s ever been.”

Freedom of religion means that people may reach their own decisions about faith, without pressure from the government or the surrounding culture. Great numbers of Americans are choosing to go their own way, apart from organized churches.

It’s fascinating to watch society evolve. Keep reading the news to detect where America is heading.

DRONE DELIVERY

I read that Amazon.com has delivered its first order by a drone to a real customer in Great Britain. It was part of a test that could transform logistics. It seems that the delivery came three years after it was revealed that Amazon was working on dispatching items through the air by flying robots. The drones will only carry packages of up to five pounds, and weather may delay the service to a customer.

CHURCH RECONCILIATION

Pope Francis has urged Catholics and Lutherans to reconcile and heal old wounds. This is not the first time that such attempts have been made. Pope Francis visited the cities of Lind and Malmo in Southern Sweden for a joint Catholic-Lutheran commemoration of the reformation. The Pope observed the 499th anniversary of Luther’s protest of the sale of indulgences by noting the beneficial impact it had on Catholicism.



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: In John 17:12 and II Thessalonians, we find the expression “the son of perdition.” Does this expression refer to the same person?

ANSWER: No, it does not! The first reference is to Judas, and the second reference is to the Antichrist of the last days. There are Bible teachers who hold that Judas will be reincarnated in the Antichrist, but there are no grounds to verify this theory!

QUESTION: Who was Cain’s wife?

ANSWER: There is only one possible answer to your question. It is that Cain married his sister. In Genesis 5:3-5 we learn that Adam, who lived 930 years, begat daughters as well as sons. The names of these daughters are not given, and we are not told of how many there were. However, at least one of them had to become the wife of one of the sons in order that the race might be perpetuated.

QUESTION: Was the Flood universal, or was it confined to that part of the earth inhabited at that time?

ANSWER: It is evident, from the record in Genesis 7:19-20, that the Flood was universal: “And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills,

that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.”

QUESTION: What is the meaning of the word “Raca” used by Jesus in Matthew 5:22?

ANSWER: First, let us quote Matthew 5:22: “But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”

The word “Raca” means empty-headed or intellectually void. I have the word worthless after the verse in my Bible. In plain words, Jesus is telling His disciples not to tell a brother that he is good for nothing.

QUESTION: Will you please comment on the message that a prophet gives?

ANSWER: We many divide the message of the prophet into two general categories: *foretelling and forthtelling*. Foretelling is the predicting of certain future events. Forthtelling is edification, exhortation, and consolation for certain contemporary events.

Let us consider two points. Point number one is that when the prophet prophesies, he speaks words that directly

come from God. The prophet is not the real speaker. The real speaker is God. We must not confuse this with popular preaching and teaching. Teaching and preaching require preparation and the use of God's written Word.

Point number two is that the only proof that a prophet has really spoken God's Word is to be found in the fulfillment of the prophecy itself. Prophecies of a true prophet always come to pass. "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:22).

QUESTION: Will you please briefly discuss spiritual decay?

ANSWER: Spiritual decay is a process. It does not come like a splash of cold water in the face of a real hot day. Therefore, it is hard to recognize! Satan is sly, and his tactics are subtle. Just like the onslaught of many diseases can be insidious, the washing away that occurs in the heart of the one, who is suffering from spiritual decay, may be nearly imperceptible. Spiritual decay may begin with a feeling of spiritual indifference. As one fails to focus upon spiritual things, his flesh seeks fulfillment. His prayer life may be crowded out with other interests, even innocent pastimes such as sports, hobbies and television. His hunger for God's Word diminishes, and his church attendance slackens off as he fills his heart and life with worldly things.

QUESTION: In Philippians 3:14, we read: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." To what does the high calling refer, and what is its prize?

ANSWER: Hebrews 3:1 speaks of the "high calling" as a "heavenly calling". It is the call to be a partaker of the heavenly or spiritual nature of God, as a joint heir with Jesus Christ. The prize is immortal life. Read Romans 8:17 and II Peter 1:4.

QUESTION: To whom does the prophecy found in Psalm 22:16-18 apply.

ANSWER: Psalm 22:16-18 reads, "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." This prophecy is another remarkable proof telling of the crucifixion of Jesus. Read Mathew 27:35.

QUESTION: How do bitter experiences and persecutions benefit the church?

ANSWER: In Romans 8:28, we read: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

The bitter experiences and persecutions produce a beneficial effect for the church. It is only through suffering that true character can be developed and perfected. Only through suffering can a sympathetic nature be produced that is mindful of the difficulties of others. God wills that every member of the Body of Christ be touched with a feeling of the world's infirmities and difficulties.

QUESTION: In the resurrection, will we rise with the same bodies that we had upon earth?

ANSWER: It is not possible that we should rise with the same body that we had upon earth! The Bible teaches that we shall not rise with the same body. We read in I Corinthians 15:37-38, "And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." The body that rises is not the very body that was buried. It is the outcome of that body. The body that rises is not composed of the same material elements of the body that was laid in the grave. Nevertheless, it is a real body. "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It (the body) is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It (the body) is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it (the body) is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (verses 42-44).



In Memoriam



The late Pastor Luke Okoro was born on the 20th day of June, 1938, to the family of the late Pastor Samuel Ozuruoke Okoro and Mrs. Nwshi Maria Okoro. He was the first child out of over twenty four children his father had and the only surviving child of his mother until death.

Pastor Luke E. Okoro had his Elementary education at the Roman Catholic school Erema, after which, he proceeded to the college of Education, St. John's Port Harcourt, where he did a certificate course in teaching. He retired from teaching in 1992 at the age of 55 years.

Pastor Luke Okoro married Mrs. Patience Ucheoma Zagbogor Okoro (Nee Zagbogor Odu) in

September, 1968. The marriage is blessed with nine (9) children.

He was a devoted Christian who served God all his lifetime. He was a good chorister who served in various arms of the church and rose through the ranks and files to become a pastor. After the death of his father, who was the founder of the Church of God, 7th Day--Salem, in Nigeria. Pastor Luke E. Okoro was a senior pastor until his death.

He took ill in 2013 of Parkinson's disease, an illness he lived with until his death. He was buried on the 15th of December, 2016.

He is now resting in the Lord.



The late Elder Gilbert Nnadi was born on the 26th of February, 1923 at Obagi Town to Mr. & Mrs. Unadi Nwa-Echedu of Umu-Ikoro family of Imeagi Kindred in Obagi Town, Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni local government area of Rivers State, Nigeria.

Elder Gilbert Orjiri Nnadi attended standard school at Idu - Waterside between 1932 and 1936 under the tutelage of missionary teachers and pastors. He was very intelligent and highly creative.

Due to financial constraints of his parents at that time, he could not further his education to higher levels though he had the zeal to do so. Nevertheless, Elder Gilbert Nnadi was determined to break the chains of illiteracy in his life. He improved himself through training, self-study and sojourning to other lands. Until his death, he could read, write and speak good English as well as Spanish and Portugese. He also spoke Efik, Ekpeye and Igbo languages fluently.

Elder Gilbert Orjiri Nnadi was married to Mrs. Janeth from Oboburu Town but the marriage did not survive the test of time. Later on in 1956, he married Mrs. Eunice Nnadi Nee Amirize from Ikiri Town in Onelga, Rivers State, Nigeria. The marriage was blessed with nine (9) surviving children.

In 1976 Elder Gilbert Nnadi married Mrs. Patience Nnadi nee Okoro from Obuburu Town, Onelga Rivers State Nigeria. The marriage was blessed with seven (7) children.

Elder Gilbert Oriji Nnadi was born into a pagan home but he embraced the Christian faith during the early advent of Christianity in Ogba land. He pitched his tent with the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) and later moved to the Seventh Day Church of God (SDCG) where he was involved in conveying missionaries and pastors with a bicycle to and from Idu-waterside.

Later on, he joined the Jehovah's Witnesses. He was a strong and devoted member until he renounced his membership and aligned with other Christian brothers to establish the Church of God, 7th Day--Salem, in Nigeria. This was his church where he served as an Elder until his death. He was the oldest man of the church, worldwide.

In this church, Elder Nnadi as he was called, was a baptized and committed Christian devoted to the work of God. He contributed immensely to the growth of the church in Nigeria.

Elder Gilbert Oriji Nnadi trusted in the Lord and it was well with him. Like Joshua in the Bible, he and his household chose to serve the Lord. He was truly committed in the service of God and never wavered till death. Little wonder why God blessed him with old age and prosperity (Psalm 112 : 2 - 3). He was buried on the 8th of December, 2016.

He is now resting in the Lord.

LESSON I

FAITH OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 11:1-13.

Golden Text: Hebrews 11:6 (first part).

“But without faith it is impossible to please him.”

1. What is faith? Hebrews 11:1. What does the word “Faith” mean to you?
 2. How does faith come to us? Romans 10:17.
 3. Why is faith so important? Hebrews 11:6.
 4. We must have more than just faith, for we are told that even the devils believe that there is one God and tremble. What else, then, must accompany our faith? James 2:14-20.
- NOTE: Your works are a result of your faith. Because of our “faith”, we will want to be doers.
5. What will faith produce in our lives? (a) Hope, Romans 5:2; (b) Joy, I Peter 1:8; (c) Peace, Romans 15:13; (d) Confidence, Isaiah 28:16; I Peter 2:6.
 6. What three young people exercised great faith, and what was the outcome? Daniel 3:14, 16-17, 26-27. Can you name one other Bible character who exercised faith?

NOTE: Faith is the basis upon which God performs all His promises. Often fear instead of faith seizes the heart of God’s children. If Satan can weaken a child of God by doubt and fear, he was won a battle. Do not let Satan win, EXERCISE YOUR FAITH!

LESSON II

GOD CARES FOR US

Scripture Reading: Psalm 23; John 10:11, 14.

Golden Text: Psalm 100:3.

“Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.”

1. What does a shepherd do? Ezekiel 34:12 (first part).
2. Who was the famous shepherd boy that is said to have written portions of the book of Psalms? I Samuel 17:15, 34-35.
3. Who did David say was his Shepherd? Psalm 23:1.
4. Who said He was the “good shepherd”? John 10:11, 14. What was this Shepherd willing to do for His sheep? Did he actually do this?
5. Who did God say were His sheep? Ezekiel 34:31.
6. Where was David’s Shepherd leading him? Psalm 23:3.
7. Why did David say he would fear no evil? Psalm 23:4.

LESSON III

LIGHT

Scripture Reading: I John 1:1-10.

Golden Text: I John 1:5.

“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

1. What does the Apostle John declare God to be? I John 1:5.
2. What did Jesus declare Himself to be? John 8:12.
3. What effect did the coming of Jesus have upon those who sat in darkness? Matthew 4:16.
4. What is necessary for men to do to walk in the light of Jesus? John 12:46.

5. What is the fate of those who do not believe in this light, and why? John 3:18-19.
6. Some love light and accept it while others hate light and reject it. Why is this so? John 3:20-21.
7. Why do men stumble and fall when they turn to travel life's road alone? John 11:10.
8. What two wonderful blessings will we receive if we walk in the light? I John 1:6-7.
9. How is the path of righteousness defined, and where will it finally lead? Proverbs 4:18.

NOTE: The Bible, the Word of God, is also called light. See Psalm 119:105. This means that it is free from error. It is truth and righteousness. It is able to light the way for all those who believe and follow it. We can turn this light, the Bible, upon us and see just what we are. Jesus is the light upon which we should keep our eyes fixed to the end. He will guide us safely through. Are you following Him?

LESSON IV

TO KNOW GOD IS TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS

Scripture Reading: I John 2:1-15.

Golden Text: I John 2:3.

“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.”

1. Who is the propitiation for our sins? I John 2:2.

NOTE: The word “propitiate” means “to cause to be favorably disposed: appease; conciliate.” What do you think it means when we say “he is the propitiation for our sins”?

2. What is Jesus called in I John 2:1?

NOTE: “Advocate” means “one who pleads for another.”

3. How do we know that we know Jesus? I John 2:3.
4. What is said of him that saith I know Him and keeps not His commandments? I John 2:4.
5. In whom is the love of God perfected? I John 2:5.
6. Did Jesus write any new commandments? I John 2:7.
7. What is a result of a love for the world, and what is the result for the love of God? I John 2:15-17.

Answers to: "Names For Christians"

- S (II Timothy 2:5)-Striver*
- B (Acts 6:3)-Brethren*
- C (I Peter 4:16)-Christian*
- E (I Peter 2:21)-Example*
- H (Titus 3:7)-Heirs*
- K (Revelation 1:6)-Kings*
- P (Revelation 1:6)-Priests*
- S (Colossians 3:24)-Servants*
- S (John 1:12)-Sons of God*
- S (I Peter 1:17)-Sojourner*
- V (II Timothy 2:21)-Vessel*
- W (II Timothy 2:15)-Workman*
- B (Acts 5:14)-Believers*
- C (Romans 8:16)-Children of God*
- D (Acts 9:36)-Disciple*
- F (John 15:15)-Friends*
- H (II Timothy 2:6)-Husbandman*
- P (I Peter 2:11)-Pilgrims*
- S (Acts 9:13)-Saints*
- S (II Timothy 2:3)-Soldier*
- S (I Timothy 1:15)-Sinners*
- S (I Peter 2:11)-Strangers*
- W (Acts 1:8)-Witnesses*



THE GOLD WATCH

It was a beautiful morning in the month of April. The birds were singing and the flowers were showing their cheerful smiles. Even the trees seemed to whisper, "Good Morning" as Jimmy passed them on his way to school.

He was busy looking for some flowers to take to his class this morning. He had to start for school a little earlier than usual; but he knew how much they liked the flowers he brought each spring. You see, he was the only boy who had the chance to pick the wild flowers on his way to school because he lived out in the country. His classmates all lived in a little town close by.

Just as he was about to pick a pretty Baby-Blue-Eyes (that was what they called those blue flowers--perhaps because they resembled a baby's blue eyes so much), he spied something shining on the ground. "Oh, it's a watch. Just like Daddy's!" He was so excited and thrilled just to hold it. He had always wanted a watch.

He was so excited that he hurriedly picked about ten more flowers and was off to school.

"Miss Peggy," he almost shouted, "see what I found!" He held up the shining watch so they all could see it.

"Oh, the owner surely must miss such a good watch," exclaimed Miss Peggy, Jimmy's teacher.

"Surely such a fine watch must have been a keepsake for someone. Is it running now?"

"No, it isn't running now," answered Jimmy sadly for he had not thought of the owner before. He had only thought of how happy he would be to own that beautiful watch.

"If you want me to take care of it today...I'll do so; then you can take it along home tonight. Perhaps your father would like to put an ad in the paper so that its owner may have it again," suggested his teacher.

"Yes, we'll do that," agreed Jimmy rather sadly. He could almost feel the tears coming as he handed her the watch.

As Miss Peggy took the watch she wound it and immediately it softly ticked. "Just like a little kitty purrs, so soft and smooth," thought Jimmy as she held it close to his ear.

It was time for classes now, so Miss Peggy carefully put the watch in her drawer so no harm would come to it during the day. The day dragged on. All his classmates were excited about the watch, too. Miss Peggy and the students loved the flowers Jimmy had brought for them. She thanked him before the last class was dismissed that day and added, "We always appreciate the flowers, Jimmy. I would like to tell you and the class a little story my mother used to tell me. Each time you bring sunshine, or do a good deed for someone else, you will be rewarded. I'm sure you will be rewarded for your thoughtfulness, Jimmy. The flowers have been a sunbeam to us today; besides you also found the watch because you picked the flowers for us--for which I am sure you will be rewarded."

As Jimmy took the watch from his teacher's hand a few minutes later, he looked up into her face and said smilingly, "This morning I thought I wanted it for my very own, but now I realize that it belongs to its owner and I will try to find him."

She smiled and said, "I knew you would!"

As he entered the kitchen he didn't even notice his mother baking his favorite cookies. "Mom, see what I found on my way to school this morning," he explained excitedly, "I am going down town to put an ad in the paper to find its owner."

His mother looked at his watch and said, "No, Jimmy, wait! This looks like your grandfather's watch, the one he lost when he was here for a visit. We'll ask your father tonight when he comes home from the shop."

"Why it does look like Grandfather's watch. It's funny, I never noticed that before. I guess I must have been too excited."

His father recognized the watch immediately. "Yes, this is your grandfather's watch. See those tiny initials J.B.? It has been handed down for generations. I'll call him right now. He was so worried because he lost it."

The telephone call came through just fine. As he hung up, he looked at Jimmy and said, "Guess what? He told me that the watch is yours for keeps, now. He said he is very proud of you because you wanted to find the owner. He wanted to save the watch until you were older--but he knows it is in good hands."

Jimmy was so happy he could hardly speak for a while. Now he knew how true the little story his teacher had told them really was.

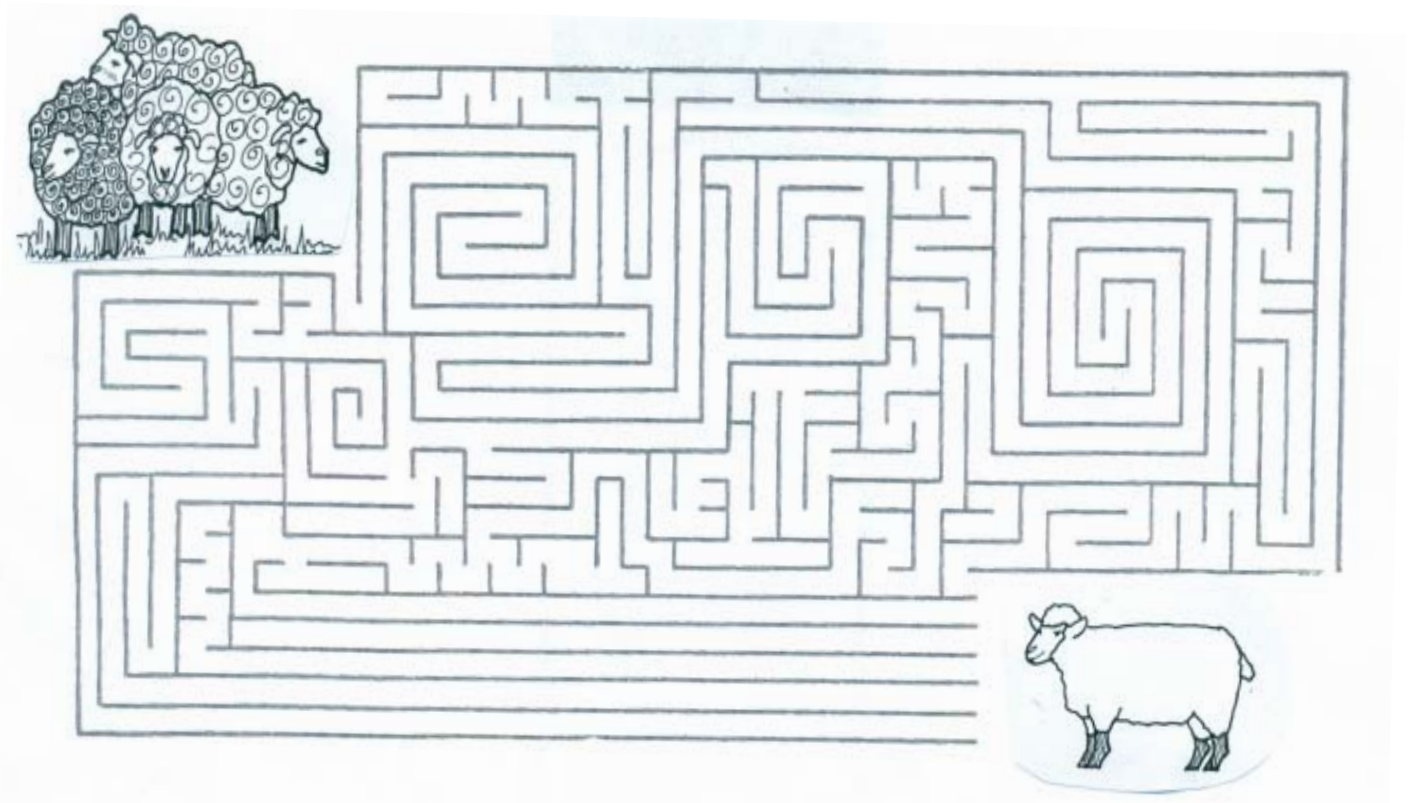
NAMES FOR CHRISTIANS

In the New Testament, Christians are given a variety of names. Twenty-three of these are hidden. The first letter is given. Can you find the name in the Bible?

- S (II Timothy 2:5) _____
- B (Acts 6:3) _____
- C (I Peter 4:16) _____
- E (I Peter 2:21) _____
- H (Titus 3:7) _____
- K (Revelation 1:6) _____
- P (Revelation 1:6) _____
- S (Colossians 3:24) _____
- S (John 1:12) _____
- S (I Peter 1:17) _____
- V (II Timothy 2:21) _____
- W (II Timothy 2:15) _____
- B (Acts 5:14) _____
- C (Romans 8:16) _____
- D (Acts 9:36) _____
- F (John 15:15) _____
- H (II Timothy 2:6) _____
- P (I Peter 2:11) _____
- S (Acts 9:13) _____
- S (II Timothy 2:3) _____
- S (I Timothy 1:15) _____
- S (I Peter 2:11) _____
- W (Acts 1:8) _____

THE SHEEPFOLD

The little lamb would like to get into the sheepfold. He must get to it without crossing any line. Can you help him out? A VERSE TO REMEMBER - "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." John 10:14.



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IN THE BEGINNING

By Pat Evans

*Please do me a favor when you are looking
At the vast star-filled sky at night;
Think of a void with nothing in it,
No, not a single anything in sight.*

*Hold both hands outstretched in front of you,
Like you're holding a great big, round ball;
And your mission if you choose to accept it:
Create the universe from nothing at all.*

*Try to place yourself in God's position,
When He thought about what He would do;
The blank canvas of Creation lay before Him,
Yet even then His plans included me and you.*

*He had a Helper from the very beginning,
Even before he said "Let there be light";
It was His Son, the first born of all Creation,
And through Him, He formed everything in sight.*

*It was Jesus who carried out God's orders,
The whole universe is the work of His hands;
And when the dust had settled on the sixth day,
In Their image, stood woman and man.*

*Can you imagine a being so powerful,
With just His words He formed our DNA;
With the five senses we enjoy His Creation,
And for our pleasure He gave the Milky Way.*

*How can we measure God's awesome power,
The human yardstick is far too small;
We take for granted our daily existence,
And most of the time God gets no credit at all.*

*We seem to forget where all blessings are from,
And who allows us to wake up every day;
For all things we should thank and praise Him,*

