

The Advocate of Truth

*He Girded
Himself*

Israel's Downfall

*The Ten
Commandments*

*Keys of the
Kingdom*

We must stand upright in the ways of God, just as this lone pine tree stands upright in the foreground. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness" (Psalm 112:4 first part).



HE GIRDED HIMSELF

BY MOISES TORRES M.

The account in John 13:1-5, describes the moment when the Lord Jesus washed His disciples feet before partaking of the bread and the wine. The text says that He laid aside his garments and "girded" Himself to perform this service.

The Webster's Dictionary defines the word "gird or girded", as 1. To encircle or fasten with or as if with a belt. 2. To invest specially with power or authority. 3. To get ready (girded themselves for a fight).

Based on this definition, we can say that the Lord was empowered with authority to wash His disciples' feet when He laid aside His outward garments and girded himself with a towel. In so doing, He enabled Himself for that service.

Many workers and employees have to wear proper dress to do their different jobs and work. Sometimes they have to use special shoes, gloves, helmets and tools. This protects them and enables them to do their jobs with authority and confidence. In the same case, the Lord Jesus girded himself with a towel to perform the footwashing service. Likewise, we should have our towels ready as well as our basins and enough water. We should not permit others to do our job unless we are disabled. That would only show that we are not in a complete spiritual state or authority.

We need to gird ourselves with that authority of love, humbleness, and determination to do what our Lord has commanded us: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). This is the only acceptable atmosphere that should prevail among the children of God in this service.

The Old Testament describes the condition in which the children of Israel had to be to celebrate the Passover. They had to be girded in the proper way. "And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover" (Exodus 12:11).

In a spiritual sense, King David was also empowered with authority of God for battle. "For thou hast girded me with strength to battle: them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me" (II Samuel 22:40).

Jeremiah also had to gird himself with authority to go out to declare the will of God to the nations around. "Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee..." (Jeremiah 1:17).

John the Baptist was girded with a leather belt about his loins. That shows his authority as a messenger of God. The seven angels in Revelation 15:6 are also girded or

prepared with seven plagues. "And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles." The golden girdles suggest their rank or authority God enables them with, to be in charge of the seven last plagues, to pour them out upon the earth.

The Lord Jesus, Himself, is presented in Revelation 1:13 as having a girdle about his paps, denoting his priestly rank. "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."

The Lord Jesus admonishes His church to be girded for

His coming. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning... Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them" (Luke 12:35,37).

We conclude that being girded means to be empowered with authority from God to perform a service commanded by Him. And as the footwashing is a service commanded by the Lord, we need to be empowered to celebrate it. So, let us have the character to gird ourselves with humbleness to wash our brother's feet, keeping in mind the glorious hope mentioned above. "Blessed are those servants..."



"And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves. Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years" (Judges 3:5-8). "Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:11-12).

The history of Israel tells about her faults. She did evil in the sight of the Lord and forsook Him. Let us consider the cause of Israel's downfall.

THEY FAILED TO DRIVE OUT THE ENEMY: According to Genesis 15:18, God promised Abraham's seed all the land from the River of Egypt to the great River Euphrates. Moses, in his great address in Deuteronomy 11:22-24, said, "For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be

yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be."

"And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out" (Judges 1:28). Many Christians fail to drive out the enemy. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid" (Romans 6:12-15). Saul failed to destroy all, so Amalek boasted of killing him.

The story is told of an old man who was always praying, "God remove the cobwebs." One brother, upon hearing this prayer he had heard so many times before, said with a loud voice, "God, kill the spider!"

THEY INTERMARRIED WITH GOD'S ENEMY: It is easy to make one bad step after another. Study the lives of Abraham, Esau, Saul, David, Solomon, and Jehoshaphat when they married heathen wives. Intermarrying with the heathen caused heartache and turmoil. Young people must be aware of going with sinners. Mixed prin-

ciples result in mixed lives. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3)

THEY SERVED HEATHEN GODS: They should have converted the heathen, but the heathen converted them. It is said, "One rotten apple spoils the barrel." Heathenism brings about the sin of idolatry. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols..." (I John 5:21). This was addressed to children of God. Our God is Who we worship!

THEY FOUGHT THEIR GOD: God is not Satan, and Satan is not God. The Israelites forgot how God had delivered them, how He had kept them forty years, and how He had led them to the Promised Land. His altars were neglected, but Baal's altars were crowded. They forgot God and duty.

What was the result of Israel's doing these things which displeased God? The result was that God sold them into bondage. Six times in Judges we read that the Israelites did wrong, and six times they were turned to the enemy. It is sad to be carried into bondage, back to the same old life, like a dog returning to vomit, wallowing in the mire.

We should take heed lest we fall. Let us take to heart the words of I Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

The Ten Commandments



The subject of the Ten Commandments is one of the greatest subjects of the Bible. By them we receive a knowledge of sin. "...for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). "What shall we say then? Is the law

sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, THOU SHALT NOT COVET" (Romans 7:7).

David tells us that God's commandments are "righ-

teousness." Also God's law (commandments) is the truth (Psalm 119:142, 172). He also tells us that these commandments will stand "for ever and ever" (Psalm 111:7-8). James tells us that if we offend in one point of the law we are guilty of all (James 2:10).

Some say that this law is not binding now, but Paul says, "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?" (Romans 7:1) By this, we can see that the law is still binding. The remnant church that the dragon is wroth with, "...keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17; 14:12). Only those that do God's commandments will have an entrance into the city of God (Revelation 22:14).

Dear friends, may we all, as it were, wake out of sleep and confess our sins and choose whom we will serve. We cannot serve God unless we keep His commandments. Whoever or whatever we obey, the same we serve. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (Romans 6:16)

The Ten Commandments are found in Exodus 20. He said to the children of Israel, "I AM THE LORD THY GOD..." "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." There are many things that people can worship, and do worship. God in His Word warns against worshipping other gods. Jesus said to the devil, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." If we love God, we will serve Him in spirit and truth.

The second commandment is against making graven images and bowing down to them and worshipping them. By keeping this commandment, we recognize the Father in heaven as the only true and living God. He shows His mercy to those who keep His commandments. See verse 6.

The third commandment is against taking God's name in vain. We should exalt God's name and at all times hold His name in reverence. As king David said, "...let us exalt his name together." His name means much to His people. Dear friends, let us hold God's name in high esteem and exalt Him above all else.

The fourth commandment is given in such simple language, and the only one that says to "Remember." "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt

thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God...For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

When we keep God's Sabbath, we remember Him as the Creator of heaven and earth. Just any day will not do: for the commandment says "the seventh day." Teaching any other day for the Sabbath is the teaching of man. Let us believe God and obey Him. We know that it pleases Him when we keep His commandments.

The fifth commandment tells us that we should honor father and mother, and who would deny that command is not binding? We are sure that no one would deny it. A large per cent of the children today dishonor their parents, and it causes lots of grief. To the true christian, father and mother are the dearest to them than anyone else on earth.

The sixth commandment says, "Thou shalt not kill." The world is full of bloodshed and violence because people have it in their hearts to kill. No murderer will ever get into the kingdom of God. Jesus tells us that if we have hate in our heart for anyone, we are murderers. Hatred breeds murder. It takes love to keep God's commandments.

The seventh commandment says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Only a pure heart, and love unfeigned, can keep any of God's commandments. Love is the fulfilling of God's law. True love wants to see girls and boys live a pure, virtuous life.

"Thou shalt not steal," is the eighth commandment. What an awful crime it is to take something that doesn't belong to us. This command is broken as much and maybe more than most of the commandments. An honest heart will not steal from its fellow men. If everybody kept this commandment, all of our belongings would be safe. We would have no need to lock our cellar, houses, barns, or anything else.

The ninth commandment says that we should not bear false witness. Bearing false witness has gotten many an honest person into trouble. False witnesses are a curse. Falsehoods of any kind are not pleasing to God. War is brought on by breaking the commandments, and the ninth one is violated as much as any.

The tenth commandment is against coveting. We have no right in the sight of God to covet. We are commanded

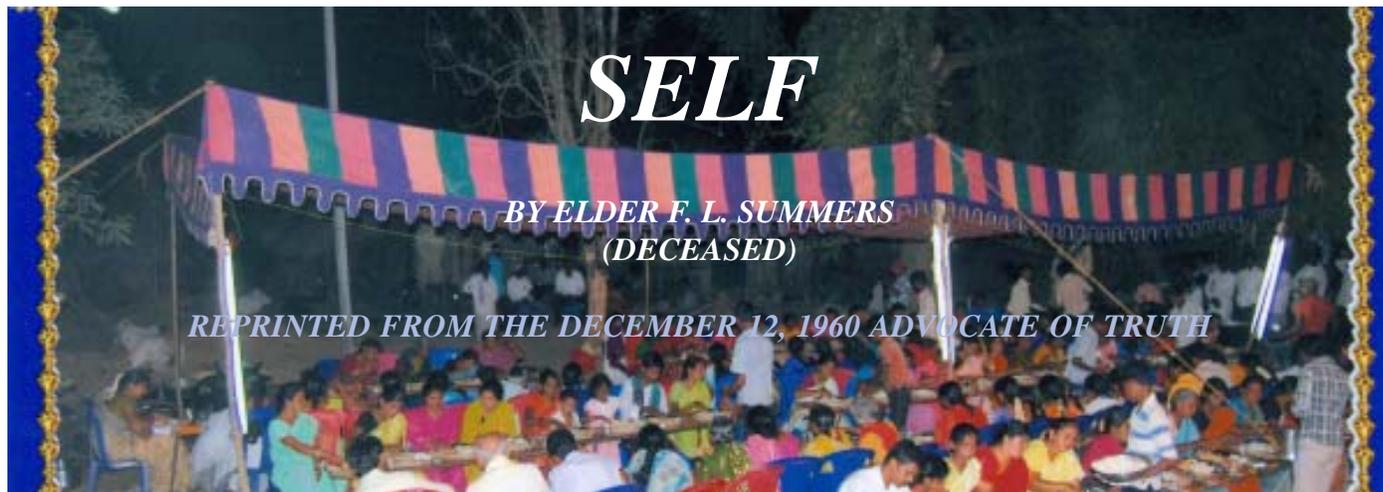
not to covet our neighbor's wife, house, manservant, maid-servant, ox, ass, or anything that belongs to our neighbor. It was the tenth commandment that convinced Paul of sin. He said, "...I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, THOU SHALT NOT COVET" (Romans 7:7).

The words of Solomon are to the point, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep

his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Christ said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

From the Salem BIBLE ADVOCATE
June 19, 1944



"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (II Corinthians 13:5).

God intends for man to see himself just as he is seen from God's point of view. Our real problem and common enemy is "self". It is not the other fellow. We must overcome self if we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. We are to examine self, prove self, and to know our own self.

This seems to be God's ordained way with man from the beginning. God told Israel, "...the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no" (Deuteronomy 8:2).

David realized that self was his real enemy. He said, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts." David said search, try, and know. Paul also said examine, prove, and know. Our Lord wants to prove us to know if we really do love Him. Oh yes, there are many who say they love Him, but do they? Are they worshipping Him with their mouth while their hearts are far from Him? If they love Him with all their heart, will

they not do His will and keep His words?

"Self" must be examined, tested, proved, and tried, not only that God may know our love to Him but that we also may know in whom we have believed. First, it requires an honest heart and a sincere heart if we are to focus God's Word inwardly into our own self-life. It is not difficult to see the mote in our brother's eye, but to see the beam in our own requires the necessity of placing "self" under the scrutinizing light of God's eternal Word.

There are numerous ways that self is made known. A few are self-will, self-pity, self-love, self-righteousness, self-exaltation, self-promotion, self-glory, self-indulgence, self-sufficiency, and self-admiration. If you have any one of these, dear reader, it is time to fall on your knees and ask God to forgive and to remove it from you. Man's ways are all for self. God's way is against self. Man would keep his self-life, but God would have him lose it.

Self is an unpredictable personality from the deepest humility to the most exalted heights of egotism. Self will fall at ease among the most pious or bask in the spotlight of glory, fame and honor. Self may weep and cry in prayer or feel at home among the most hilarious and jubilant. Self is not embarrassed with preaching, praying, singing, neither troubled when being deceitful, proud, arrogant, or

boastful. From self's point of view, "self" is always right. "Self" may be content to live in squalor, poverty, ignorance, or become discontent with riches, luxury, or learning. Self may be stubborn or agreeable, foreboding, or extremely optimistic. Self has a host of self-sins. Self delights in anything that elevates or promotes self.

Self's first instinct is self-preservation, the exact opposite of self-crucifixion. Self desires to live, not die. Self wants to be exalted, not humbled. Self seeks power and pleasure, not poverty and pain; self-indulgence, not self-denial. Self wants the praise and honor of men, not the shame of Calvary, but we are told to take up our cross and follow Him. Self would gain the world, not lose all.

When we begin to examine self in the light of God's word, we find that vanity, disobedience, boasting, pride, together with a froward heart and a tendency to forget God's commandments, self-efforts, self-works, self-righteousness are insufficient and will not suffice to correct self's weaknesses. God has provided His own way. He has set the standard. Who am I that I can say I need not confess to God and His forgiveness for such weaknesses? God's way is by the cross. We must lose our self-life if we expect to have a more abundant life. Self must submit and surrender to the divine will of God.

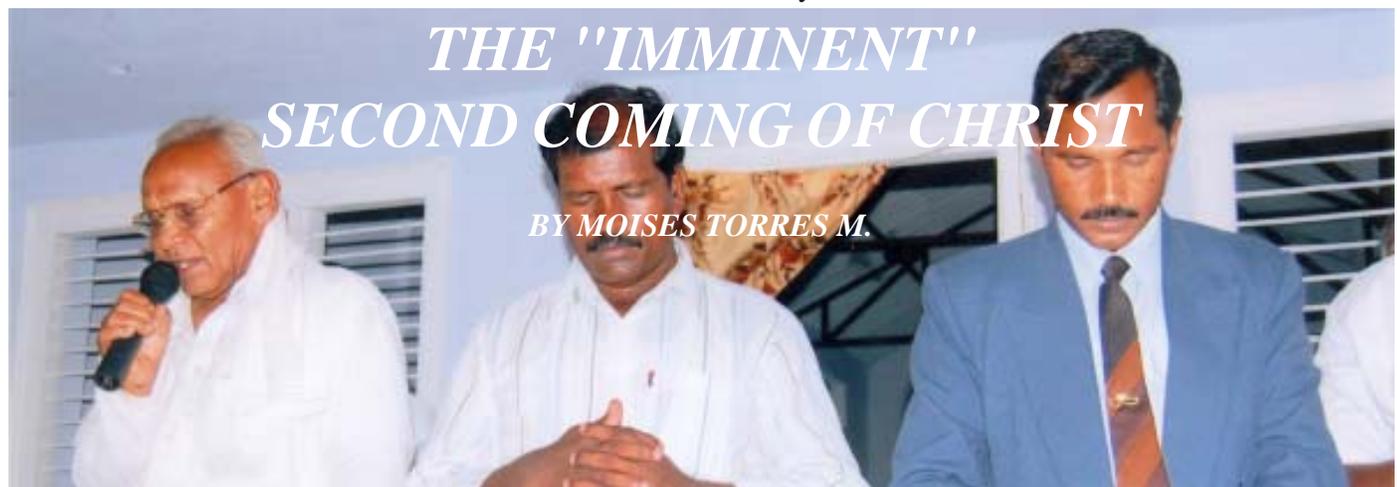
Our greatest enemy is not the man on the outside, but the "self" man inside of every human heart. It is self, and a victory over self is the only victory acceptable to God.

We must take up our cross and follow Him with humility. Then God can find out just how much you really love Him. God requires a reciprocal love. We must love God with all our heart, mind, and soul, and our neighbor as ourselves. We cannot fool God. Oh yes, we can say we are God's children and that we are perfect in God's sight, but let us remember, dear one, that it is God who has the last and final say. It is His will not ours, and His Word not ours that must be obeyed and lived. God cannot work through self-willed men and women. That was why He taught His disciples to pray, "Thy will be done in earth as in heaven."

Jesus even said, "I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). Jesus also said, "...My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me" (John 7:16). In John 9:4; He said, "I must work the works of him that sent me..." In John 7:17 He said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine..."

If it was necessary for Christ to say and do as above, how much more should we do that if His life is to shine through us? When we take up our cross and follow Him, it will cause us to lose self.

May God bless and cause each one of us to lose self and go all the way with Christ. If we believe in Him, we shall be saved, but if we believe not, we are condemned already.



How true is it that the Lord will return to Earth in the near future?

Is it only a fable invented by some writers, or is there a solid foundation on which we may answer this question?

The Bible is the only book inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is the book in which God has declared His will to man. The Bible is the Word of God. II Peter 1:21 tells us, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy

Ghost (Spirit)."

Based on this, we know that all the angels, as well as the prophets, the apostles, and even the Son of God, Himself, assures us that Jesus will return to Earth a second time. This term, "second time," is only recorded in the book of Hebrews 9:28, where it says, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

The term, "and the second time without sin," means the Lord is not coming back again to bear the sins of many, but to give the reward to all those who have waited for Him to bring health and salvation to the earth. This is one of the reasons why the Lord has to come back.

After His resurrection, our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives. Leaving His disciples, He blessed them. In that blessing, He included the promise made by the angels, that the same Jesus will return in the same manner that He was going away. This promise records the most direct assertion, made by celestial beings or angels, on the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth. Acts 1:11 records, "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."

Another reason for the imminent second coming of Jesus is that He Himself assured His disciples that He will come again. John 14:3 tells us, "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." This is the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord left and will come again just as He promised, first to receive His body which is the church. Ephesians 1:22-23 says, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

For believers to be part of the body of Christ, they must conform to His thinking. They must repent and be baptized to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Only then can they be transformed to a new mind pleasing to Him. Ephesians 1:13-14 says, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed

with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

Believers' minds have to be transformed from a carnal nature to a spiritual nature so they can see the Lord just as He is at His coming. "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" (I John 3:2). Here is another testimony given by the Apostle John ("**we know that, when he shall appear**"). He assures us of the appearance of our Lord in glory in the future. Therefore we have to be transformed to the same mind as that of our Lord so we can see Him as He is when He appears. We cannot live with the Lord or understand His heavenly nature with this human mind and with this corruptible body.

Other reasons for the imminent coming of our Lord

Jesus has to come to take away those who exercised His same Spirit of mind, His same way of thinking and acting. He will come for those who exercised His same justice and mercy, for the ones that developed His same spiritual essence, to give them the reward that He promised them during His first coming. He is coming a second time to complete the purpose of His first coming, which is to give eternal life to the righteous and to give payments to the unrighteous.

Another reason for His imminent coming is to restore God's creation. He will restore this earth and this universe as they were when they were first created. He has to come to institute a kingdom of justice and to make all things new. "Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21).

The Lord must come to destroy those who have destroyed the earth in their ambitions. The governments of the world are destroying the earth, and their ambitions do not cease. "...and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth" (Revelation 11:18).

The Lord Jesus has to come back to fulfill some of the prophecies that still need to be fulfilled, including His coming. "...for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10). The testimony of Jesus is what

makes prophecy valid.

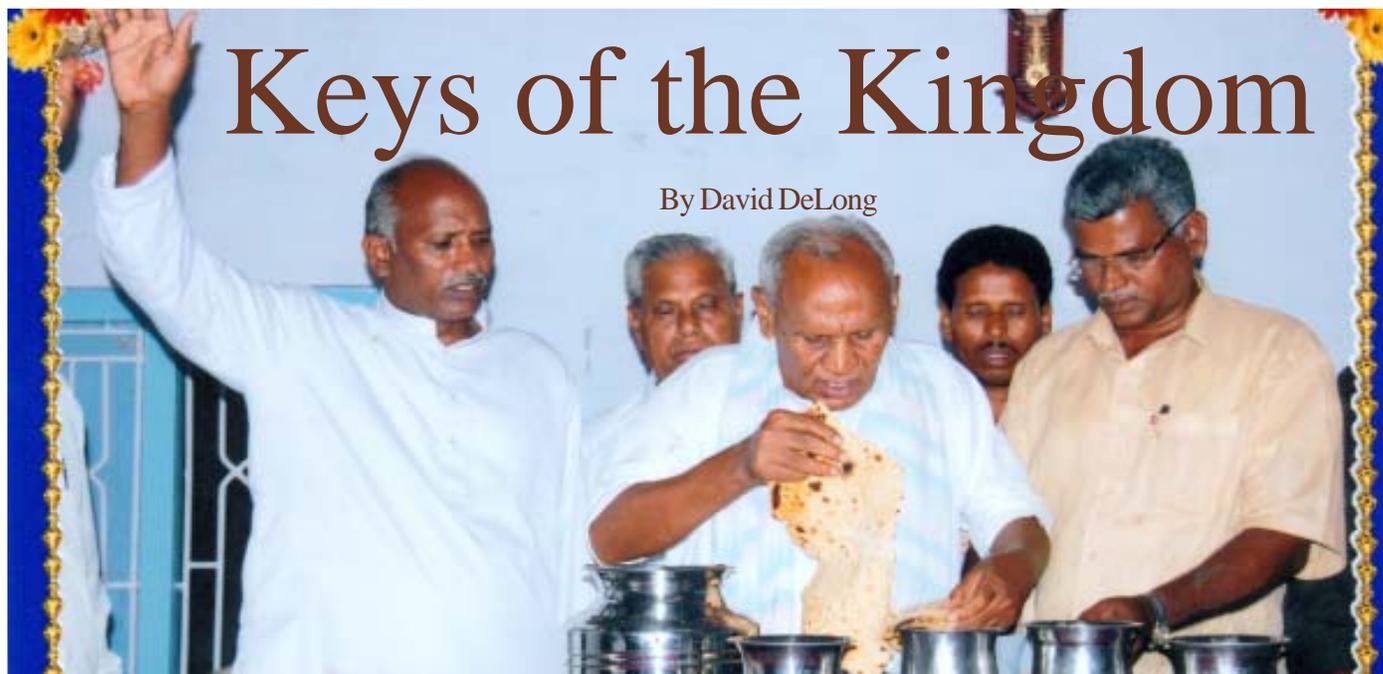
Our Lord has to come back to take away the blindness of His people Israel and to set them free from the threat of other nations because Israel is His nation, and Jerusalem is His city. "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Romans 11:26).

Jesus has to come to destroy the anti-Christ and the beast, to take Satan prisoner, and to establish the kingdom that He promised to His disciples. He promised this kingdom in what we call the "Lord's Prayer" when He said, "Thy kingdom come."

These, and many more reasons for the return of our Lord, are found in the Holy Scriptures. They ensure us that the return of Jesus is imminent.

When will He return? Only the Father knows. We must be prepared! The signs of His coming are all around us, being viewed by the world and His church. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).



When Jesus asked His disciples the question, "...But whom say ye that I am?" (Matthew 16:15), a dialogue took place between Simon Peter and the Master. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven which Jesus gave to the Apostle Peter and, by implication, to

other disciples? (See Matthew 18:15-19.) Keys, we know, are devices which close or open a locking mechanism and thus, in a spiritual sense, "bind" or "loose" a person or situation. Before we look at these spiritual keys, however, let us consider some of the ones which our Lord Jesus has.

For instance, we read in Revelation 1:18, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." In this text, the word "hell" is from the Greek word "hades" and refers to the grave. We are assured in the Scriptures that Jesus will open (loose) the graves of the dead and will bring them forth in the first and second resurrections (see John 5:25-29).

In another case, the Apostle John, in writing to the

church in Philadelphia, penned these words of the Lord Jesus: “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth” (Revelation 3:7).

This verse seems to be the fulfillment of Isaiah 22:22, “And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.” This refers to Eliakim, who replaced the unfaithful “treasurer” Shebna who was “over the house” (see 22: 15-25). Eliakim, then, apparently became the chief minister of king Hezekiah, having the royal authority that went with the position. This would likely involve the promoting and demoting of Jews, living in Jerusalem and Judah, in various positions of service.

It is believed, therefore, that this verse in Isaiah makes Eliakim a type of Christ, Who has the “key of David”. Christ also opens and shuts in royal authority, and no man can undo what He accomplishes. This “key of David” may also have reference to King David, who is also a type of Christ. In Psalm 89 we read: “I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him...But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted...Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth...My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me” (verses 20-21,24,27,34-36).

There seems to be a difference of authority here. Whereas Eliakim had the “key of the house of David” (a possible reference to the Jews only), Christ has the “key of David” and all the covenant promises that were given to David as well. This involves an eternal throne, with Christ being made “higher than the kings of the earth.” Therefore, Christ has the authority over the kingdom of heaven, to give the keys unto His followers, so that they can bind and loose on earth and in heaven. Now then, what do these keys include?

One specific key that Jesus, Himself, spoke of was the “key of knowledge”. We read of this in Luke 11: 52, “Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that

were entering in ye hindered.” This key of knowledge, of course, is the Word of God. These supposed teachers of God were twisting the Scriptures so that they did not enter into His kingdom, nor were they teaching others how to enter into it. Thus, they “hindered” those who were trying to enter in. Disciples of Jesus have an awesome responsibility to use this key of knowledge to enlighten themselves, and others, in how to enter God’s kingdom.

In fact, Jesus said that He is the door through which the sheep enter into the sheepfold (see John 10:1,7,9). By entering the door of the sheepfold, the sheep enter into God’s kingdom now, in a spiritual sense, and later, in a physical sense. As disciples show others this door (Jesus), they are using the key of knowledge to help people enter into God’s kingdom.

Believers go through Christ the door, and Christ goes through the believer’s door (access to the heart and will.) Each person, by faith, must unlock his or her door to receive Christ. Jesus said, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

Many times the Lord,
Himself, is the key
by which doors are
unlocked.

Many times the Lord, Himself, is the key by which doors are unlocked. For instance, Paul wrote about doors of opportunity in preaching the gospel. We read in II Corinthians 2:12,13, “Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.” Again, we read about Paul in I Corinthians 16:8,9, “But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto

me, and there are many adversaries” (see also Colossians 4:3).

Other doors which need to be opened or closed by the Lord are: “the door of my lips” (Psalm 141:3); “the door of faith” (Acts 14:27); and the doors for wisdom and understanding to enter through (Proverbs 8:1-4).

We have been discussing various doors that keys of the kingdom of heaven can open or close. But there are other locks which these keys can do the same for. We might call these “chains of circumstance” which can be used to loose or bind a person with. Let’s look at an example from the Scriptures which shows the loosening of such chains of circumstance.

Isaiah 58:6-9 declares: “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity...”

These chains of circumstance can be loosed or undone by any child of God. All it basically takes is a compassionate heart, a willingness to leave one’s comfort zone, and a reliance upon the Lord to provide the things necessary to meet the needs of people. The Lord will see to it that we are richly blessed for doing these things.

Sometimes, chains need to be locked, or bound. This can even include circumstances in the lives of individuals. The book of Proverbs informs us in chapter 3, verse 3, “Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart.” Also, we read in chapter 7, verses 2 and 3, “Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.” These things need to be such an integral part of our lives that they are bound (locked if you will) upon us (see also Isaiah 8:16).

Notice what the Psalmist wrote, concerning God’s

saints, which seems to pertain to their use of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Though this was written in Old Testament times, I believe it has a bearing upon Christians also. We are referring to chapter 149, verses 5-9. “Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.”

The word “heathen”, here, refers to the nations. In a spiritual sense, the “twoedged sword” may refer to the Word of God (see Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 19:15). When children of God have “the high praises of God ...in their mouth”, *and* they use the “sword” of God in their witness to other people, then they are able “to bind their kings with chains”. This may refer to the act of pricking the peoples’ consciences so that they can have the opportunity to hear God’s truth. Or, it may refer to what Jesus said in Revelation 2:26,27: “And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.”

Finally, I would like to mention a key that has been given to Christ’s disciples which will help greatly in the furtherance of His kingdom. This is the authority to bind Satan and his cohorts, or to cast them out, in the name of Jesus Christ. Our Lord said in Matthew 12:29, “Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.” However, sometimes prayer and fasting is necessary for this to be accomplished (see Matthew 17:14-21).

The Lord Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven to His disciples so that they could help in the building up of that kingdom. Doors of opportunity and commitment need to be entered; chains of circumstance need to be unlocked; other chains need to be bound. May we recognize, with the early disciples, that “...Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 18:18).

JESUS AS PORTRAYED IN THE BOOK OF JOHN

IF

If you can keep "the faith" when those about you
are losing it and seeking something new;
If you can stand the firmer though they flout you
as being simple and old fashioned too;

If you can smile when human hopes are banished,
when castles fall and cherished prospects die;
And just keep on, tho' earthly props have vanished,
content to see the pattern by and by.

If you can meet abuse without complaining, and
greet your unkind critic with a smile,
If, conscious that your human love is waning,
you claim a calvary love that knows no guile;

If you can bear the unjust imputation without a
murmur or revengeful thought,
And even forfeit rights and reputation because
His glory is the one thing sought;

If you can give an honest commendation to him
whose work looms larger than your own,
Or scorn to speak a word of condemnation to him,
who falls or reaps what he has sown.

If you can be content with His provision, though
others seem to prosper and succeed;
Nor let repining mar the heavenly vision, and
simply trust in God for every need.

If you can let the mind of Christ possess you, to
think on "things of good report" and true;
And ever let the love of Christ possess you--
constraining everything you say and do;

If you can find in Him your highest treasure, let
Him hold sway o'er heart and soul and limb,
Then Life is yours, and blessing without measure,
And--what is more,
You'll live and reign with Him!

1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).
2. "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).
3. "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).
4. "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).
5. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11).
6. "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).
7. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).
8. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman" (John 15:1).
9. "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written..." (John 21:25).

Compiled by Bond Tennant



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.

EARTH'S SALVATION UNITES SCIENCE AND EVANGELICALS

**Groups vow to ignore rift over
life's origin to fight global warming**

**By Rodrigue Ngowi
Associated Press**

Boston - Some leading scientists and evangelical Christian leaders have agreed to put aside their fierce differences over the origin of life and work together to fight global warming.

Representatives met recently in Georgia and agreed on the need for urgent action. Details on the talks will be disclosed in Washington on Wednesday.

"Whether God created the Earth in a millisecond or whether it evolved over billions of years, the issue we agree on is that it needs to be cared for today," said Rich Cizik, vice president of government relations for the National Association of Evangelicals, which represents 45,000 churches.

Eric Chivian, director of the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School agreed, saying: "Scientists and evangelicals have discovered that we share a deeply felt common concern and sense of urgency about threats to life on Earth and that we must speak with one voice to protect it."

Chivian and Cizik, both whom participated in the talks, declined further comment.

In February 2006, 86 evangelical leaders signed a

statement to fight global warming, saying that human-induced climate change is real, that its consequences will hit the poor the hardest, and that Christian moral convictions demand an urgent response.

They argued that governments, businesses, churches and individuals all have a role to play. Signatories included presidents of evangelical colleges, aid groups, churches and pastors of megachurches.

The powerful National Association of Evangelicals, however, did not join the initiative. It is unclear whether Cizik's involvement in the new campaign will lead the organization to adopt the environment as a central part of its agenda.

Evangelicals and scientists previously failed to launch a large-scale joint initiative, partly because of differences between evolutionary science and a literal interpretation of the Bible--a rift that dates back to Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection.

Speakers Wednesday will include megachurch pastor Joel Hunter, who refused to take the leadership of Christian Coalition of America because the organization wouldn't let him expand its agenda to include the environment and poverty.

Others are Harvard biologist and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Edward O. Wilson and NASA scientist James E. Hansen, who came under fire from the White House after a 2005 lecture in which he called for urgent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Comment

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "**Preach the**

word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:2). Of course the apostle meant God's Word.

God's Word contains nothing about actively uniting with those of the world to save the earth. This is not included in the gospel. However, God's Word does give a warning to those who would destroy the earth. Therefore, every true child of God will be a good steward of God's creation.

Not everyone thinks that global warming is really caused by greenhouse gas emissions. Some say that the changes in the sun is the primary cause. They have noticed the same effect happening on the planet Mars. The true church will not become entangled in worldly affairs which will cause an "unholy alliance."

SUPERMACHINES OF FUTURE MAY BE A MIXED BLESSING

Conference looks at dangers

**by Marcus Wholsen
Associated Press writer**

San Francisco - At the center of a black hole there lies a point called "singularity" where the laws of physics no longer make sense.

In a similar way, according to futurists gathered Saturday for a weekend conference, information technology is hurtling toward a point where machines will become smarter than their makers. If that happens, it will alter what it means to be human in ways almost impossible to conceive, they say.

"The Singularity Summit: AI and the Future of Humanity" brought together hundreds of Silicon Valley techies and scientists to imagine a future of self-programming computers and brain implants that would allow humans to think at speeds nearing today's microprocessors.

Artificial intelligence researchers at the summit warned that now is the time to develop ethical guidelines for ensuring these advances help rather than harm.

"We and our world won't be us anymore," Rodney Brooks, a robotics professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, told the audience. When it comes to computers, he said, "who is us and who is them is going to become a different sort of question."

Eliezer Yudkowsky, co-founder of the Palo Alto-based Singularity Institute, which organized the summit, focuses his research on the development of so-called "friendly artificial intelligence." His greatest fear, he said, is that a brilliant inventor creates a self-improving but amoral artificial intelligence that turns hostile.

The first use of the term "singularity" to describe this kind of fundamental technological transformation is credited to Vernor Vinge, a California mathematician and science-fiction author.

High-tech entrepreneur Ray Kurzweil raised the profile of the singularity concept in his 2005 book "The Singularity is Near," in which he argues that the exponential pace of technological progress makes the emergence of smarter-than-human intelligence the future's only logical outcome.

Most "singularists" feel they have strong evidence to support their claims, citing the dramatic advances in computing technology that have already occurred over the last fifty years.

In 1965, Intel co-founder Gordon Moore accurately predicted that the number of transistors on a chip should double about every two years. By comparison, singularists point out, the evolution of modern humans from primates has resulted in only a threefold increase in brain capacity. With advances in biotechnology, they say, there's no scientific reason that human thinking couldn't be pushed to speeds up to a million times faster. Advocates argue it would be irresponsible to ignore the possibility of dire outcomes.

"Technology is heading here. It will predictably get to the point of making artificial intelligence," Yudkowsky said. "The mere fact that you cannot predict exactly when it will happen down to the day is no excuse for closing your eyes and refusing to think about it."

THE ADVOCATE
Baton Rouge, La.

Comment

A double question is asked in Psalm 2:1. It is: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" In one of my old Bibles is a footnote which uses the word "nations" for "heathen" and "foolish" for vain. Foolish is just what it is for those so-called brilliant minds of the

(continued on page 18)

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Does Satan tempt everyone?

ANSWER: Yes, Satan tempts everyone. Some believe that after one is converted, he or she is perfect and cannot sin. **This is a lie!** "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:8-10).

Even our Lord Jesus Who was tempted in all things as we are (Hebrews 4:15), had to cope with the Devil and his snares.

After having been in the wilderness for a number of days, fasting, the Devil came to Jesus and said; "...If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matthew 4:3). Grippled in this great conviction, Jesus fled the crowds and the haunts of men. He felt that He must be alone for a while to think things through carefully. There must be no stumbling, no doubt about it all. So He went out to fight His doubts alone.

The doubts came from the Devil. The Satanic power tempts us all. He was shrewd, terrible, tempting Jesus at His weakness point. Satan tempts us also at the point where we are weakest. He uses our senses against us. He knows the physical temptations are the strongest to withstand.

Jesus, isolated in the midst of the barren desert, was

physically hungry. All about Him were stones of brown coloring that looked very much like brown rolls. The Devil whispers: "So you think you are the Son of God. All right, prove it to me, and to yourself. Turn these stones into bread!" That would prove beyond all doubt that He was the Son of God. Prove it by a miracle.

But Jesus had little faith in that type of a miracle. That was tempting God. Many preachers of today want to prove their godliness by the miracles they can perform. But they are not known by the Lord (Matthew 7:22). Man lives for Jesus Christ to live in him. We must have that spiritual Bread of Christ in us, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:26-27). Jesus knows that a spiritual hunger is far more painful than any stomach gnawings. He knows what is important, but so important as love, forgiveness, eternal life, and the presence of God. Many people on this earth today live in hunger from the cradle to the grave. If you do anything to impress people, you are wasting your time.

Some people believe in having a gimmick to prove their faithfulness. They will make noises with their tongues and throats and claim the gift of tongues. Some do sensational acts of one kind or another. Others will want to say the names of the Father and the Son in the Hebrew language, etc. They will do almost anything to attract attention. We want the crowd to listen to us. We love acclaim. We go to sensational methods to get it. And when we get it, it is simply ashes in our hands. Jesus never cared for sensational acts. He covered up His successes. He asked those He healed not to say anything (Matthew 9:30). He led men individually to God. Crowds were only incidents in His life. When He preached the truth about Himself,

the crowds walked with Him no more (John 6:66).

QUESTION: Is the popular idea we must "plead the blood" over a situation or one's home, room by room, biblical?

ANSWER: The phrase "plead the blood" does not appear once in all of Scripture. The word "plead" is found thirty times but never in association with blood.

This is an unbiblical practice. The Bible contains no record of its ever being used by any apostle, prophet, or any other believer. Paul and the other apostles preached in many demonic places without once reciting this mantra. This is a vain practice. Do not engage in it!

QUESTION: What is the significance of the number seven in the Bible?

ANSWER: In the Old as well as in the New Testament, a good number of events occurred and were foretold by the number seven. This number has been said to be God's number, but nowhere does Scripture say it in those words. We imply that seven is God's number because it inspires sacredness, confidence, and reverence in God as we read about different sevens in the Bible.

The source of the sevens in Scripture comes from the fact that when God created this world, He did it in six days. Then He blessed and sanctified the Seventh Day and rested thereon. God did many things with sevens and multiples of sevens. For instance the seventh year, the fiftieth day and year, which is in view of the seven weeks, and seven times seven. This helps us to understand Hannah's statement, "Hath born seven," meaning she had come to an end of her grief.

Then there are many personal things of God that are seven, such as we find in the Book of Revelation. Seven messengers, to go to seven churches, the seven armed candlestick, the seven seals, the seven plagues and the seven trumpets, the seven vials, seven thunders, the seven new things in the New Jerusalem, seven ceremonial days of uncleanness, etc.

QUESTION: What is the significance of the word "abba" when it precedes the word "father" such as is found in Mark 14:36; Romans 8:15; and Galatians 4:6?

ANSWER: "Abba" is the Hebrew word for "father," in the emphatic or definite state, as "thy father." Its use in referring to God was common among the Jews; but in order that it might not seem too familiar or irreverent, the New Testament writers gave it the two-fold form, which has become a recognized phrase in Christian worship. It is as though they said: "Father, our Father."

QUESTION: What is the difference between Hebrew, Israelite, and Jew?

ANSWER: Hebrew is the racial name. Israel is the national name, and Jew is the religious name for the descendants of Abram through Isaac and Jacob.

QUESTION: Does the Bible disapprove of capital punishment?

ANSWER: No, it does not. Quite to the contrary, capital punishment is authorized by God Himself in the dispensation of human government committed to Noah and his descendants. In Genesis 9:6, according to the divine decree, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." This decree has never been done away with, and it is still in full force.

QUESTION: Why do you believe Satan to be a real being?

ANSWER: The most obvious reason that we believe Satan to be a real being is that we believe God to be a real being!

The Word of God mentions Satan by name sixty-six times, and calls him the Devil thirty-four times. In every one of these one hundred mentions of him, he is shown to be a personal being. Also, he is often mentioned in the Bible in places where his name is not used. But wherever he is mentioned in Scripture, whether with his name or without it, he is shown to be a mighty person who seeks to turn men away from the worship of the true God.

QUESTION: Was the iron that swam (floated) in II Kings 6:5-6 the same material as we know today called "iron"?

ANSWER: We cannot find a reason to doubt it.

(continued from page 15) technology field to develop artificial intelligence whether it be friendly or unfriendly.

No doubt this will happen if man is left to his own devices. There is no limit to what man can do short of thwarting God's promises and His plan for mankind.

When man got the idea of building a tower and a city, the people were one and there was only one language. God was very displeased with the building of such when He came down to see them. Therefore, He confounded their one language and scattered them abroad upon the face of the earth. Please read Genesis 11:1-9.

Today, men are getting together again through the guise of globalization. The language barrier seems to be overcome by various means and there are plans in the making for world wide cooperation which eventually will produce a world-wide government.

Carnal man has the ability to do things and invent machines that can destroy himself and everything around him. That is one reason Jesus said, when speaking of the last days, "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matthew 24:22).



NDA





LESSON I

THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

Scripture Reading: James 3.

Golden Text: Proverbs 18:21.

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."

1. What is said of a person who bridles his tongue? James 3:2.

NOTE: Bridle means anything that restrains, limits, or guides movement.

2. Does the tongue (our speech) require close watching? James 3:8-10.

3. If we do not bridle our tongues, does our religion amount to anything in the sight of God? James 1:26.

4. From what are we to keep our tongues and lips? I Peter 3:10; Psalm 34:13.

5. What is said to be in the power of the tongue? Proverbs 18:21.

6. Tell what a good tongue is referred to in the following verses? Proverbs 10:20; 12:18; 15:4.

7. What blessing is promised for a right conversation? Psalm 50:23.

LESSON II

WHAT DOES GOD EXPECT OF A CHILD OF GOD

Scripture Reading: I Peter 2:1-25.

Golden Text: Romans 12:1.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

1. Does God ask something unreasonable of us when He calls us to His service? Romans 12:1.

2. When we become children of God, do we have room for growth? I Peter 2:2.

3. How can we grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord? II Timothy 2:15.

4. In what order will the fruit of the Spirit be added to us if we are sincere and study and pray in His name? II Peter 1:5-8.

5. Are we to know whom we serve? Are we suppose to know our doctrine? I Peter 3:15.

LESSON III

WHAT DOES THE WORLD EXPECT OF A CHILD OF GOD?

Scripture Reading: I Corinthians 4:9-13; John 14:18-25.

Golden Text: John 14:27.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

1. Does the world of sin think very highly of one striving to do God's will? I Corinthians 4:10-13.

2. Does this affect you as a child of God to know that the world cares little for Christ? Matthew 5:44-45.

NOTE: The world does not expect much of a child of God. It thinks of him only as one who is a pretty good fellow but just "a little bit off" on some things. But you just let a child of God fall down on his principles and see who notices it first.

3. Did Jesus advise us to disregard the civil laws of the nation? Matthew 22:21.

4. Why does the world not understand why the child of God cannot do everything which they do? James 4:4.

5. Should a child of God go looking at everyone as if they were against him? Study well the attributes of a child of God. Galatians 5:22-26.

6. Is it better to suffer for our good deeds or evil doings? I Peter 3:16-17.

LESSON IV

REJOICING

Scripture Reading: Psalm 97.

Golden Text: Philippians 4:4.

"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice."

NOTE: In the Word of God, we are told to be joyful and to express our joy. To rejoice means to feel joy or great delight.

1. What does the Psalmist tell the righteous? Psalm 5:11; 32:11; 68:3.

2. Why should the child of God rejoice even when persecuted? Luke 6:22-23; Acts 5:41; I Peter 1:5-9.

NOTE: It was from a prison cell, when his future was uncertain, that the Apostle Paul said "Rejoice in the Lord always."

3. What shall be the reward of those who sow in tears? Psalm 126:5-6.

4. What does Solomon say is "the gift of God?" Ecclesiastes 3:12-13,22; 5:19.

5. Does the Lord require a joyful people, ever rejoicing? Joel 2:23; Deuteronomy 12:10-12; 16:11; II Chronicles 6:41.

NOTE: God wants us to be happy and triumphant. Satan wants us to be ashamed of our calling and without joy. By rejoicing in the Lord, we can show others that being a child of God is what we should strive for. Enjoy being God's children, He wants you to.



"HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE"

"Mamma, let me read tonight," said seven-year old Maxine as her mother took the Bible from the table for their evening devotions.

"Very well," agreed the mother, and Maxine got her own little Bible to read from. "Shall I read the Twenty-third Psalm again?" she asked.

"Well," hesitated Mrs. Martin, "you read that pretty often; suppose you try another one tonight. I'll help you with the words. Let's try the Ninety-first Psalm."

So little Maxine began.

"He that d-w-e-l-l-e-t-h,"

"Dwelleth," prompted her mother.

"-dwelleth in the s-e-c-r-e-t-,"

"Secret."

"-secret place of the Most High shall a-b-i-d-e-"

"Abide."

"abide under the shadow of the A-l-m-i-g-h-t-y,"

Thus went the reading of the Psalm by the little girl, stumbling over the big words. So intent were mother and daughter on the reading that neither heard the faint rustle outside the window nor saw the dark face peering through the pane. It was summer and the window was partly raised so that the words spoken inside were clearly audible to that crouched, watching figure so near.

"He shall give his angels charge over thee. What does that mean, Mamma?" Maxine interrupted herself to ask.

"It means, dear, that God sends His angels to take care of us so that harm will not come to us. They are watching over us all the time."

"Right now?" questioned the child. "Right now when Daddy's gone and it is dark outdoors? Are there angels here now?"

"Yes, right now," assured the mother. "God and His angels are watching right now." And they proceeded with the reading once more.

Could they have seen the figure outside their window they would have noticed his quick look about him at the mother's words. She said God was watching. Where was God? Who was God? It was a name he habitually used vilely--and he had a vague notion that God was some terrible Being. "The wrath of God." Those words that he had once heard spoken by a preacher as he passed an open air service one night came suddenly to mind. Somewhere in the darkness, unseen by him, was this God who could see all. The woman had spoken so confidently of his watching eye. Then, if God were watching over this mother and daughter, He could see him, too. The wrath of God! What would God do to him? Fear made him almost motionless, and while he was crouching down to the ground he heard a child's clear voice lifted in praying. "...Thank you, God; for having Your angels take care of Mommy and Daddy tonight, and help all the bad people tonight to stop being bad..."

The fear in the man's heart gave way to a new emotion. A lump rose in his throat and tears--strange unaccustomed tears--smarted his eyelids.

He had a little girl, too, just about her size. What was she doing now, while this little girl was saying her prayers and would soon be tucked in by loving hands? He could imagine her in the dingy little room they called home. Perhaps she had crept into bed by now, trying to get to sleep,

or maybe crying again. He remembered one night recently when he had gone home to find her crying because she was hungry. There hadn't been anything in the room to eat. He had slapped her for being a baby and told her if she didn't like the way he fed her she could get somebody else to take care of her. Anyway, if she had any backbone she'd get out and steal something if she was hungry. The wife and mother had died two years before and this was how he cared for the little girl. He thought of her now; poor, thin, hungry-looking and ragged. Scant attention had he given her, spending his days and nights in drinking, gambling, and petty thievery.

He thought of himself as a child. How different his life might have been had he been reared as this child that he had been watching read and pray. How different his child would be with proper training. Slowly he raised himself from the ground and stumbled away. He was going home to his own little daughter.

"Mamma, what was that noise outside?" asked Maxine.

"I never heard anything," her mother answered.

"I guess it must have been the angels' wings brushing against the lilac bushes," murmured the child sleepily, curling up in bed.

But the next day while outdoors Mrs. Martin noticed footprints under the window by the lilacs. They were the prints of a man's shoe. Her heart seemed almost to stop its beating for a moment. Had Maxine really heard something last night? Had danger been close to them?

The man who crouched beneath the window that night, bent on mischief, went to his room to pray for the first time in his life. He didn't know how to pray but he wanted God and God heard his cry. Life for the little daughter became a new thing. She could scarcely comprehend it all, even when the man explained that it was Jesus who had changed him. Daddy didn't gamble. He had a real job instead and brought home groceries and clothes to her. They moved out of the stuffy little room into a nice, airy, sunny one with a carpet on the floor. Daddy took her to Sabbath School and church, and at night he read Bible stories to her and taught her to pray. Many times he read to her from the Ninety-first Psalm: "He shall give his angels charge over thee."

-Mrs. Audre Pitts

HIDDEN LESSON

Write in the answer to each clue in the circles and squares provided to the right of the clue. If you need help, the answers can be found in the book of Judges by looking in the chapter next to each clue. When you have completed the puzzle, read the words that now appear in the column of squares. Reading from top to bottom, you will discover a verse that is summarized from chapter 21 of Judges.

Chapters - Clues

- 6 - Land of bondage for Israel
- 4 - Woman who killed Sisera
- 3 - Othniel's older brother
- 3 - Left handed Benjamite judge
- 16 - Woman who deceived Samson
- 18 - Set up by children of Dan
- 12 - Twelfth judge
- 11 - A solemn promise to God
- 2 - Son of Nun
- 16 - God of the Philistines
- 10 - Judge from Issachar
- 6 - Father of Gideon
- 2 - Did in sight of God
- 12 - Eleventh judge
- 3 - Nation that oppressed Israel
- 6 - Gideon put this on the floor
- 6 - Angel appeared before him
- 10 - Judge with thirty sons
- 3 - Early judge - Caleb's brother
- 10 - Children of Ammon camped here
- 17 - These were of silver
- 4 - Barak went up this mountain

"Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them." Judges 2:16

FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS

Matthew 3:13-17; 4:1-17;
Mark 1:9-11;
Luke 3:21-22.

Use the number code to solve this puzzle.

A=1, B=2, C=3, D=4, E=5, F=6,
G=7, H=8, I=9, J=10, K=11, L=12,
M=13, N=14, O=15, P=16, Q=17,
R=18, S=19, T=20, U=21, V=22,
W=23, X=24, Y=25, Z=26

--- --
"13,1,14 19,8,1,12,12 14,15,20

--- --
12,9,22,5 2,25 2,18,5,1,4

--- --
1,12,15,14,5." "20,8,15,21 19,8,1,12,20

--- --
14,15,20 20,5,13,16,20 20,8,5

--- --
12,15,18,4 20,8,25 7,15,4."

--- --
"7,5,20 20,8,5,5 8,5,14,3,5

--- --
19,1,20,1,14."

The Pine's Grasp

By Del DeLong

*The outstretched arms of the lonely pine,
Grasp firmly to the sky.
The howling winds around it whine,
To break its hold on high.*

*But firm and strong is the hold it keeps -
A monument to all.
While with this vigil it never sleeps,
And never will it fall.*

*Let us like pines hold to God's truth,
His Word hold in our grasp -
No wind will tear it from our hold
His Word is true and lasts.*

*The Advocate of Truth
PO Box 328
Salem WV 26426-0328
Address Service Requested
Return Postage Guaranteed*

*Periodicals
Postage Paid At
Salem WV 26426-0328*

