



Parable of the Sower

Christ, the Lifegiver

Jumping to Conclusions

The Advocate of Truth



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The Parable Of The Sower

Bond Tennant

Jesus taught a valuable lesson in the Parable of the Sower. This parable could also be called the Parable of the Soils. The Parable of the Sower is found in Luke 8:5-8: “A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

His disciples then asked Jesus, “...What might this parable be?” (verse 9).

Jesus explained the meaning of the parable in verses 11-15: “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with

patience.” Let us now dwell upon the sowing of the seed, which is the Word of God!

Seed Sown By The Wayside

Our Lord explained that those by the wayside are they which hear the Word of God but have the Word taken out of their hearts by Satan, lest they should believe and be saved. Revelation 12:9 tells us that Satan is a great deceiver. He employs an array of tricks by which he endeavors to take away the precious Word of God from those who may have received it with lukewarm zeal or just a passing interest.

Seed Sown On Stony Ground

Some of the seed fell upon ground that had not many necessary ingredients to sustain it and the right amount of moisture to nurture it. This part of the lesson portrays those who are joyful upon hearing the Word of God and believe it. However, they have no deep root, and they fall away in an hour of temptation. Jesus said, “But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended” (Matthew 13:20-21). The trials

may come because of the truth found in the Word of God. Those who uphold the Word of God will inevitably be tested by a world full of unbelief.

The Apostle Paul recorded, “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (II Corinthians 4:1-4).

Seed Sown Among Thorns

Jesus also pointed to other sown seed that fell among thorns, which sprang up and choked it. Jesus explained that this represents those who have heard the Word of God, and may go forth with zeal and commitment in an effort to fulfill the good life they desire to follow. However, these soon allow themselves to become entangled in the riches, pleasures, and cares of this world. Therefore, the sense in which they began their new Christian walk soon becomes choked and dies, having been the victim of another of Satan’s devices. In Matthew 13:22 we read, “He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”

We must not understand that those who hear and embrace the wonderful Word of God are to abandon their daily obligations to family, friends, and their fellow man. Those who faithfully follow our Lord are cautioned that it would be a mark of infidelity if they were to use their calling in Christ as an excuse to omit that responsibility. The Apostle Paul wrote the following to Timothy: “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (I Timothy 5:8).

It is very evident that one cannot avoid altogether the cares of this world. Jesus was not overlooking that reality, but He was exhorting those who would follow Him to avoid the pitfall of allowing earthly concerns and ambitions to overwhelm them. The Apostle Paul, when writing his epistle to the brethren at Rome, exhorted them, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2).

Seed Sown On Good Ground

The Lord concluded His wonderful parable by pointing to the seed that falls upon ‘good ground.’ He says, “But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Luke 8:15). He states that these hear God’s Word and ponder its teachings. Then they bring forth fruit with patience. Patience is a significant thought. It is the vital difference between the believers who constitute the good ground of the parable, and those merely professing believers He spoke of in the other categories of the parable.

During this age, the ‘good ground’ believers have endured with patience the various trials of a full and dedicated life.



Our Burden Bearer

By Bibi Allicock



About The Following Article

Jesus is the Burden Bearer for every child of God. God's children need no proof of this because they believe His words and are having a personal relationship with Him. Jesus possesses all the qualifications to be their Burden Bearer. He has the power, love and sympathy to sustain every burden. "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee" (Psalm 55:22, first part).

Bibi Allicock, a faithful contributor to *The Advocate of Truth*, has compiled several portions of Scripture with the purpose in mind to give us an overview of burden bearing.

As children of God, we must be confident that our Burden Bearer, which is Jesus, will take our burden despite how difficult it may seem, once we place it upon him. 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" (Matthew 11:28-30).

The song writer wrote: "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no

evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever" (Psalm 23).

The song writer accepted the Lord as his shepherd, thus he acknowledged he shall not want, meaning that the Lord will be his provider. In the Holy Book, the Psalmist declared, "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing" (Psalm 34:10). "For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11). "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (verse 10).

Although they had the Good Book to lead and guide them, man wanted to have riches, thinking that riches could do so much for them. But it was only for a time. "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity. Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them. God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God. Also unto thee, O Lord,

belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work” (Psalm 62:9-12).

In the book of Daniel the prophet, Daniel wrote: “And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those. And the king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion” (Daniel 11:2-5).

“So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own land. But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress. And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand. And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it. For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches. And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall. So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand. But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed. He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him. After this shall he turn his face upon the isles, and shall take many:

but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause it to turn upon him. Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found” (verses 9-19).

These kings thought they needed no Burden Bearer, and they trusted in their riches. Thus, their riches perished with them because they used them to cause hurt upon others. They also thought their riches would make them gain POWER, HONOUR and STRENGTH, but these things only come from Almighty God. “Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death” (Proverbs 11:4). “The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he added no sorrow with it” (Proverbs 10:22). “The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked” (verse 3). “As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation” (verse 25). “The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened. The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth” (verses 27-30). Those who accept the Burden Bearer will have their desires granted unto them. “The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted” (verse 24).

Our Burden Bearer has the strength and power to help us in the time of need when we wait upon Him. “Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD” (Psalm 27:14). “Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding” (Isaiah 40:28). “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth” (verse 26). “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (verses 29-31).

In Memoriam



Moisés Torres Islas
(1916 - 2013)

“Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.” (Matthew 24:46).

Our Dear Brother Moises Torres Islas passed away on Thursday, Feb. 28th, 2013 at the age of 97 years old in his home town, Mexico City. He left his wife, three sons and three daughters, thirteen grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren. He was one of the founders of the Spanish Advocate of Truth and member of the editorial staff for many years. He was baptized by brother Sebastian Garcia back in the late 70’s and remained faithful in the faith until the end. When young, he worked for a print shop as a linotype operator for many years and his knowledge of this profession helped a lot to initiate publishing the Spanish Advocate and literature for the church. He was a deacon in the ministry and was in charge of the cleaning and maintenance of the church building in Mexico. He was always very friendly and a kind person, and a very reasonable and knowledgeable man. His family, friends, the church in general, and all neighbors around who got to meet him will always miss him and feel his absence. An elder of the church is gone; he is now sleeping in the grave to be awakened by the Lord at the last trump.

We thank God for such a beautiful and respectful person like elder Islas. “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (II Timothy 4:8).

In Memoriam



José López
(1937 - 2013)

Our Dear Brother Jose Lopez from Mexico City passed away on Friday, Feb 15th 2013 at the age of 76 years. He knew the gospel of the kingdom through his uncle elder Sebastian Garcia and was baptized by him also in the late 70’s. He was also one of the founders of the Spanish Advocate of Truth and member of the editorial staff. He was in charge of the literature distribution to Central and South America. He left his wife, one son, one daughter, and one grandson. He worked in the ministry as one of the Seventy and also as a member of the Seven for some time. He traveled for different areas of Mexico, spreading the gospel and visiting groups of the church in different localities. He also visited once the churches in Panama and Honduras in Central America where he made good friends. Elder Jose Lopez was a very well known pastor and brother and a very sociable and friendly person in and out of the church. He leaves a vacancy and an example to follow. We are really sad because he is not anymore with us and we will miss him always. He went to sleep having in mind the blessed hope to be raised from the dead at the last trump.

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, said the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” (Revelation 14:13).



“I AM COME that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10, last part).

From the time of man’s fall, godly people of all generations had awaited and prayed for His coming. Prophets tried to peer forward into the corridors of time to see “...what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (I Peter 1:11).

Then He came, and the world knew Him not! “He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (John 1:11). He was the one the world was desperately in need of. The nation chosen by God to be the recipient of His written revelation, and to be the messenger of moral and spiritual light to all the world, had drifted so far from God that His name was blasphemed among the Gentiles because of them. Traditions had been substituted for divine law. A form of godliness without power had taken the place of worship in spirit and in truth. The Temple of God was used as a den of thieves and low-class market. The priesthood itself was corrupt. The night was dark when into the world came Jesus, the light of the world.

He was the one the world had waited for. Jesus said, “I am come.” Yet strangely true, the world still waits. Blinded by sin and deluded by Satan, the world at large is ignorant of the fact that He has come the first time.

Not only did Jesus announce His coming, but He told of a wonderful mission. “...I go, that I may awake him out of sleep” (John 11:11). That was His purpose in going. Just so definitely did Jesus come into this world that He might quicken those who were dead in trespasses and sins. He came not to reform man but to transform him. Man needed a new life. The woman taken in adultery did not need a social reform, but one who could impart the “go,-and-sin-no-more” life.

That is what the Lord Jesus Christ came to give. How tragic that the modern churches of today are engaged in almost every other ministry than that of life giving! What shame that they present almost every other message than

that of eternal life through Jesus Christ! They dabble into politics and social reform; and have adopted the techniques of the entertainment world. Instead of the robe of Christ’s righteousness, they use the garb of sacrament and ritual. The churches of our land would be filled if they would offer men life, eternal life through Jesus Christ. Lift Him up high enough, and men will be drawn to Him. Instead they deny Him by rejecting the only sign He gave. Please read Matthew 12:39-40.

In His announcement, Jesus revealed a wonderful mercy. “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”. What was this life for? Did Jesus come to bring it just to His friends, the godly men, the righteous people? No, it was also for those who hated Him. He died so that His enemies might live. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (see Mark 2:17). He came to seek the lost sheep. He died for the unjust. He came that faithless Peter might have life; that Barabbas might have life; and cruel Saul of Tarsus might have life. Christ came with grace greater than our sins.

In giving His life, He gave it in a wonderful measure. “I am come that they might have . . . it more abundantly.”

That is the measure of spiritual life Jesus came to give. That was the measure of life Peter had, and three thousand souls were added to the Church of God. This is the measure of life Paul received, and filled with that abundant life he shook the Roman Empire from Spain to India and turned the world upside down for God.

The type of life the professing church of today manifests is far from the measure of divine life available through Christ. In Him, you will find within a well of living water springing up into abundant life.

Christ Changes Lives

Before Jesus went away to heaven, He promised to send another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth (see John 14:16-17) to minister unto the people in His absence. This was the Holy Ghost or Spirit that was to come in His name (see John 14:26).

After the apostles had tarried in Jerusalem where they received the power promised them (see Luke 24:49; Acts 2:1-4), their lives were changed, even so much that the people, the priests, and the Sadducees took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). Their lives were changed by the great Life-Giver, Jesus Christ. They became new creatures. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

This change is required to obtain the more abundant life, even to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Christ leads man into a new environment. The carnally minded man is not subject to the law of God, and cannot be (see Romans 8:7), and the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned (see I Corinthians 2:14). Man in this condition cannot please God, as he is in the flesh, serving the lusts thereof. This is death, the very opposite of what Christ came into the world to perform.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Romans 8:9-10).

"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" (Hebrews 9:28). This, by the grace, of God brings in a new hope as described in Titus 2:11-14. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

--Reprinted

ACADEMY AWARD WINNING LIFE IN CHRIST

By Charles Bernard Ward Sr.

I am sure there are some people who have a real desire to overcome a shortcoming or two concerning their lives this year. To make it a can't miss hit, why not invite Jesus Christ into the picture. No matter what the problem may be, He can make the show an award winning motion picture. What better director to guide your "Show of Life" than God himself. he has the experience to successfully direct human beings if they will trust and follow His lead. God even inspired a manuscript to help us humans understand just what steps to take for success, and which to avoid so our motion picture of life does not bomb at the box office on earth.

For those who are wondering why God did not help their show before it was about to become a flop, when we decide as so many human beings have that they don't need God's guidance, He lets us continue with our way of life until we finally understand that no matter who our co-stars are, without Christ, there is no "Real Success". Some pictures even get cut before their completion.

God's Big Plan is to give all human beings a chance at a successful life here on earth, and an Oscar Winning trip into His Kingdom!

On some occasions, even when sin is not involved, God has His way of letting all concerned know that He is the Answer. John 9:1-12 in His manuscript, where Jesus healed a blind man who was born blind, someone asked Christ who sinned that this man was born blind? Jesus said no one sinned. This man was born blind to display the work of God. No one there could deny the power of God after seeing the man healed.

There might be some now who are having problems in their motion picture of life, even though Christ is in the director's chair in their studio. Don't think your picture is a flop. God could be using your circumstances to help others in their "faith" just as He did with the blind man. If anybody is interested in an Academy Award picture of life, just call God to direct. He is only a prayer away, ready to say, Action!



Jumping To Conclusions

By David DeLong

Because of pre-conceived beliefs, many people jump to conclusions when they read various biblical texts. For example, when the term "breaking bread" appears in Bible passages, many folks assume that these verses are usually referring to the Lord's Supper. However, when these passages of Scripture are studied, one will find that in the majority of cases, "breaking bread" simply refers to eating a meal. In this article we will examine various portions of Scripture, including some pertaining to "breaking bread", to see where errors have come about because of jumping to conclusions.

Breaking Bread

In Matthew chapter 14, verses 15-21, we read about a miracle which Jesus performed. "And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. He said, Bring them hither to me. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children."

Probably no one believes that Jesus was here leading

a Lord's Supper service with this multitude of people. In fact, such a service had never been instituted by the Lord at this point in His ministry. We bring this situation to the reader's attention to show that Jesus was sharing a meal with the hungry multitude, and to show that He had been seen by thousands of people in His manner of blessing and then breaking bread before a typical meal (see also Matthew 15:32-38). We will have more on this later.

A classic text used by many who jump to conclusions is found in Acts 20:6-7. Here, Paul and his companions went to Troas in Asia Minor. "And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."

Not only do many assume that the disciples in Troas were weekly conducting Lord's Supper services, but also that these disciples were in the habit of meeting for worship services on Sunday. We know, however, that this simply was not the case. Scripture and history inform us that believers in the early church were keeping the Lord's Supper once a year on the fourteenth of Abib, and that they were observing the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week.

Furthermore, the context of the passage in Acts 20 will not reveal either a Lord's Supper service or a typical worship service. After Paul had preached until midnight (not the usual time for preaching), and the young man Eutychus had fallen out of the window (see verses 9-10),

Paul came up again to the "upper chamber" and ate some food. "When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed" (verse 11).

Paul had strictly charged the Corinthian church *not* to come together to eat a fellowship meal at the time of the Lord's Supper. We read in I Corinthians 11:20-22, and verse 34: "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not...And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come."

The Lord's Supper service is a special time in which members of the Church of God come together to celebrate the death of Jesus, not to have a potluck meal. We know that in Acts 20 food was available for a meal because Paul, himself, ate of this food (see text above). It appears that there were two meals available that evening: one at the time that Paul began his preaching, and the other one after midnight. Therefore, meeting "upon the first day of the week" in this passage was not for observing the Lord's Supper, but was a gathering for eating a fellowship meal. Though the Bible does not tell us why they were eating together, one could possibly infer that the disciples in Troas were meeting upon the Sabbath, and then as the seventh day came to an end and the first day of the week began at evening, they were sharing a meal together. Paul, then, preached a farewell message.

We know that the early disciples were in the habit of eating together as Acts 2 informs us. We read in verses 42, and 46-47: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers...And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

We mentioned earlier that Jesus had been known for His manner of blessing and breaking bread. This was not only during the Lord's Supper service since He partici-

pated in only one such service, and only His apostles were with Him, then. But, we find another situation in Luke 24 where Jesus met up with two of His disciples on their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Verses 13-17 introduce us to this story. "And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?"

After traveling with these two disciples for some time, Jesus and the two came to Emmaus. Here we learn: "And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight" (verses 28-31).

Later, we find: "And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread" (verses 33-35). This breaking of bread, by which these two disciples knew it was Jesus, was simply a shared meal and not a communion service. Verse 30 told us that it was "as he sat at meat with them" when Jesus took the bread, blessed it and gave it to these two disciples to eat. We can get no other interpretation from the context. Multitudes of people, as we have seen, would have known Jesus' manner of blessing and breaking bread, not from a Lord's Supper service, but from a shared meal with Him.

When breaking of bread refers to a Lord's Supper service, the Scriptures identify it as such. For instance, in Matthew 26:26-28 we find where Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new

testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (see also Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20).

Likewise, we discern in I Corinthians 10:16-17 that the breaking of bread referred to is the Lord's Supper. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."

In I Corinthians 11: 23-26 Paul is once more very explicit about the breaking of bread which refers to the Lord's Supper. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

Lord's Day

We come to another subject about which many jump to conclusions: the Lord's Day. This term is used only once in the Bible and it is thought by many "jumpers" to refer to Sunday. Revelation 1:10, concerning the Apostle John, reads: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet". Many assume that Jesus was raised from the dead on a Sunday morning (Easter Sunday they believe). Therefore, they also assume that the Lord's Day refers to His resurrection.

So entrenched in the minds of many is this belief, that the misinterpreted word "Easter" even got into the Authorized Version of the English Bible. We read in Acts 12:1-4: "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people." Any good Bible reference book, or even a marginal reading in

the Bible, will tell us that "Easter" is really the word "pascha", or "Passover".

What then, could the Lord's Day be referring to? There are two possibilities, neither of which have any connection to Sunday. Concerning the first possibility, we turn to the book of Mark, chapter 2. In verses 27-28 Jesus made this wonderful statement: "And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath." We can easily see that since Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath, then the Sabbath is the Lord's Day, not Sunday. But, in Revelation 1:10, why wouldn't John simply say, "I was in the Spirit on the Sabbath" if that was what he was referring to?

Another possibility to the meaning of the Lord's Day is found in II Peter 3:10, where Peter refers to the day of the Lord. He wrote: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." We know that John was about to see many things in vision that would pertain to the day when Jesus comes to bring judgment to the earth and its inhabitants. In any event, we know that the Lord's Day cannot refer to Sunday because Jesus was actually resurrected on a Sabbath afternoon and not on a Sunday morning.

First Day Of The Week

Besides the belief that the Lord's Day refers to Sunday, many think that references to the first day of the week, in the Bible, are showing Sunday worship services. We have already examined the text in Acts 20:7-11 concerning the first day of the week. This passage of Scripture, as we have seen, only informs us that the disciples in Troas ate a fellowship meal on the first day of the week, and that Paul took the opportunity to preach to the gathered disciples until midnight, and even longer, "till break of day".

Another reference to the first day of the week is in I Corinthians 16. Verses 1-3 informs us: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality

unto Jerusalem."

Many jump to the conclusion that Paul is informing the Corinthian brethren to collect an offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem during their Sunday church service. However, just the opposite, it appears, is being advocated by Paul concerning this offering. The collection for the saints, which was to be done upon the first day of the week, would very likely consist of more than just a money offering. It would almost certainly include food from the fields and gardens, as well. A great amount of labor, therefore, would be needed to collect the gifts which would then be sent by approved brethren to the saints in Jerusalem. By setting a certain day for the collection (i.e. the first day of the week), Paul could ensure that such labor, as good-intentioned as it might be, was not done on the Sabbath.

Sabbath Always Means Saturday?

The last topic that we will look at in this article, with which many jump to conclusions, is that the sabbath day always means Saturday. We go, for instance, to John 19:31 to see that in this text such is not the case. This verse, referring to Jesus' crucifixion, reads: "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away."

Many assume that this sabbath day was Saturday, and that the preparation day referred to here was Friday. Because of this, these folks wrongly assume that Jesus was crucified on Friday and was raised again on Sunday. This sabbath day, however, was "an high day" and was not on Saturday, the seventh day of the week. Mark 15:42-43 gives us more information: "And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus."

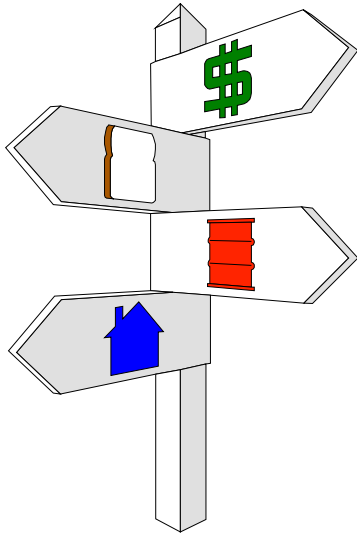
Now, notice Mark 16:1: "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him." This sabbath day does refer to

Saturday, the seventh day of the week. To avoid confusion, let it be said that there were two sabbath days and two preparation days the week of Jesus' crucifixion. This was not an unusual occurrence because, in the Jewish calendar, there were two sabbath days and two preparation days every year during the week when Passover was observed.

The Passover involved the feast of unleavened bread, or seven days when unleavened bread was eaten (see Exodus 12:14-17; Luke 22:1). The first day of this feast was a holy convocation and the last day of this feast was a holy convocation when no work was to be done. In other words, these convocations were yearly sabbaths for the children of Israel. The day before the first convocation was a preparation day. In the year that Jesus was crucified, the Jews' preparation day was Wednesday, the same day on which Jesus was sacrificed as the Lamb of God.

The second preparation day in the crucifixion week was Friday, the day before the seventh day sabbath, and also the day on which the women bought spices to anoint the body of Jesus. Luke 23:54-56 gives us a synopsis of both preparation days and both sabbath days in that week. Joseph of Arimathaea had gone to Pilate, begged the body of Jesus, and had placed the wrapped body in a sepulchre. Then we read: "And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment."

In the book of Colossians, chapter 2, verses 16-17 we read of these yearly sabbaths. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Notice that these sabbath days are "shadows". Hebrews 8:3-5 and 10:1 informs us that the law of shadows refers to the Levitical priesthood which was involved with the tabernacle service. This system was done away with in Christ (see Ephesians 2:15).



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.

Are You Observing?

First, let us quote a small brief thought about observing found on the second page of the June 23, 1986 *The Advocate of Truth*. As you read it, carefully consider the contents to see if the things we are told to observe are not true of many people today. The following is the brief thought:

Observe how we pray to God but refuse to let Him govern our lives. Why do we wonder that all is not well with us and the world? God has not failed us, we have failed God.

Observe the ill-educated Christian, how he denies Christ before men. How clever he is in the ways of the world and how ignorant of the testimony of Jesus. And yet how proud of that ignorance, how contemptuous of simpler folks who are saints because they have followed the Commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Observe the resistance of truth, slowly turning him into an agnostic, possessed with irritable boredom with what he has never examined, allergic to what he has obstinately refused to understand.

Calling Time More Than Ever

While browsing through my old *Advocate* files, I saw an article in the April 9 1979 issue entitled **This Is Calling Time** with a caption which read, A Time of Trouble.

It mentioned several events among the nations which occurred then. These things continue to occur, perhaps with different players. The point is that we must heed II Peter 1:10: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." Jesus said that many are called,

but few are chosen.

Romans 13:11 tells us what time it is: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

Let us quote portions of the above mentioned article. These words are so fitting in these days. Here are the words:

"Men swooning with panic and foreboding of what is to befall the universe" is the way the Master described last day conditions. "Such as never was since there was a nation" is the way Daniel speaks from the cryptic pages of his book. A strange feeling of panic grips the hearts of men. The whiplash of God's judgment is already laid upon men's backs. God is abroad in the world, seeking to correct false tastes and carnal expectations.

Now it is that man holds in his hands the means of sudden annihilation. The ability to control his own life is the inescapable corollary. Our present day bombs make the bombing of Hiroshima a primitive effort. This responsibility, this ordering of life, dwarfs every other unrelated purpose into insignificance. Man's progressive triumph over nature in the sphere of applied science, coupled with his forgetfulness of God makes this period of history the most dangerous since there was a nation. Before us is literally set life and death, and we must choose. To have a faith great enough for this Atomic Age is the pressing problem. America needs the upward pull of God. Science can air-condition our houses, but it cannot convert them into homes. It can increase speed and decrease distances, but it cannot develop travelers who

keep their word. It can dream of trips to the moon, but it cannot give us a faith to live by. Man, of himself, cannot reconstruct the world. He can erect tall buildings, but he cannot put the nervous system back together again. Man continues to make history, but he is never its master. The decisive factor is God (end of article quote).

Bee Problem Still Exists

In a past column, the problem of the disappearing honeybees was mentioned. It seems like it is still plaguing the beekeepers. The following is a segment from an article which is taken from the *Houston Chronicle*.

Soaring 2012 Bee Deaths Sound Alarm

BAKERSFIELD, Calif.

A mysterious malady that has been killing honeybees en masse for several years appears to have expanded drastically in the last year, commercial beekeepers say, wiping out 40 percent or even 50 percent of the hives needed to pollinate many of the nation's fruits and vegetables.

A conclusive explanation so far has escaped scientists studying the ailment, colony collapse disorder, since it first surfaced around 2005. But beekeepers and some researchers say there is growing evidence that a powerful new class of pesticides known as neonicotinoids, incorporated into the plants themselves, could be an important factor.

The pesticide industry disputes that, but its representatives also say they are open to further studies to clarify what, if anything, is happening.

"They looked so healthy last spring," said Bill Dahle, 50, who owns Big Sky Honey in Fairview, Mont.

"We were so proud of them. Then, about the first of September, they started to fall on their face, to die like crazy. We've been doing this 30 years, and we've never experienced this kind of loss before" (end of article segment).

Wild Pork In Harris County, Texas

I understand that the employees of Precinct 3 Commissioner Steve Radack came up with the idea of building 8-acre pens to catch the invasive feral hogs that cause tremendous damage to parks, soccer fields and baseball fields. They make those places look like they have been plowed. They also tear up peoples' yards. The meat of these feral hogs is said to be great meat, and the plan is to send the meat to food banks.

Comment

I am sure that the thought behind the idea of sending the pork of these feral hogs to food banks sounds like a good gesture to most people. This gesture is just an example of the mass ignorance and disbelief in the "law of the clean and unclean" which is to be observed in this age.

Tipsy Diplomats, Budgets Don't Mix

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The U.S. thinks the United Nations has a drinking problem.

Ambassador **Joseph Torsella**, who represents the U.S. on the U.N.'s budget committee, said Monday that the tense process of negotiating the annual budget is made more complicated by the number of diplomats who turn up drunk.

The U.N. budget is finalized in December when holiday parties apparently lead to some revelry spilling over into budget negotiations.

The U.S. is making "the modest proposal that the negotiating rooms should in future be an inebriation-free zone," Torsella said during a private meeting of the budget committee.

Comment

Those diplomats who show up drunk are not worthy to make vital budget decisions that affect so many people of the world. God will punish them.

America--A Christian Nation?

Many church leaders in the U.S. have concluded that America is not a Christian nation. Some believe that it once was a Christian nation when founded by its forefathers, but they say it is no longer Christian. They admit that now there are many non-Christians and even anti-Christian beliefs and behaviors in America.

Many professed Christian people say that the Bible speaks of people being Christian, not nations.

Comment

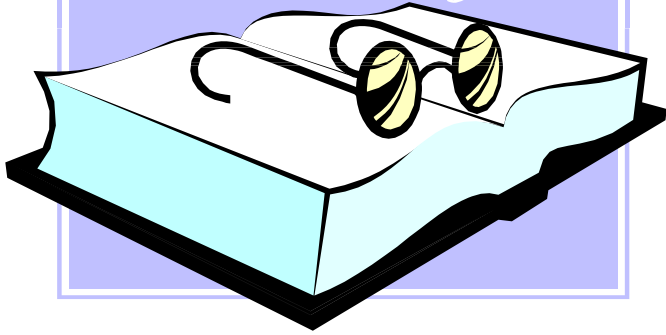
What is the point of this argument? I suppose it depends upon from what perspective we consider it. First, we may say that in the original founding of our country, it was Christian in that our forefathers established it upon Christian values. As time went on, many of other religions and those with weird ideas claimed America as their home.

Now, as far as religion is concerned, America is no different than other countries. There are many religions in all of them. However, there is more freedom for those of other religions here in this country

What is needed is for Christians in our country to act like Christians!

BIBLE

Study



QUESTION: A popular saying says, “Seeing is believing.” However II Corinthians 5:7 reads, “(For we walk by faith, not by sight:).” These two statements are in direct conflict. What am I to understand from this fact?

ANSWER: Being partially true, the first statement can be very misleading. The second statement is totally true. While it helps to “see” something with one’s own eyes, or to witness an occurrence, one does not always “see” accurately. This makes seeing not a good reason for believing. Seeing is not essential for believing because we obviously believe in much that we have never seen.

QUESTION: I am struggling with this thing called faith. Although I want to believe in God and the Bible, I cannot seem to make myself do it. What can I do?

ANSWER: Please don’t make yourself believe in God or the Bible. Why don’t you begin by facing the logical necessity of God’s existence. Without God, neither the universe nor we ourselves would exist. Therefore, there would be no purpose or meaning for anything. God’s Word begins like this, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). It doesn’t argue God’s existence. This is because that fact is self-evident from the universe we see around us and has been planted into man’s conscience.

QUESTION: What about the inerrancy of the Bible?

ANSWER: The Bible is inerrant in its original

Questions

and

Answers

manuscripts, not in every copy and translation that has been produced since then. Not every copyist and every translator worked so flawlessly that every copy in every language is perfect in every word. Any seemingly mistakes in word content were made by someone centuries past when the documents were copied by hand.

QUESTION: Will you please explain the closeness of our Lord Jesus Christ to the law (Ten Commandments)?

ANSWER: The Ten Commandment law is referred to frequently in the New Testament as “the law of God” (Romans 8:7); “the commandments of God” (I Corinthians 7:19; Revelation 12:17; 14:12); “his commandments” (I John 3:22, 24; 5:2-3; II John 6). It is described as “holy,” “just,” “good,” and spiritual” (Romans 7:12, 14, 16; II Peter 2:21; I Timothy 1:8). It is called “the law of righteousness,” the “law of liberty,” “the royal law” (Romans 9:31; James 1:25; 2:12, 8). Repeatedly it is referred to and quoted from as an active, binding law.

“The commandments of God” and “the faith of Jesus” are linked by John in Revelation 14:12. In the Christian dispensation, the law is as vital as grace was in the old dispensation. The gospel does not set the law aside (Revelation 14:12). Faith does not make it void (Romans 3:31). It is there to point out sin (Romans 7:7).

The Master states His relation to the law in a negative as well as in a positive way. “*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, ... I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill*” (Matthew 5:17). “Fulfill” cannot mean to abolish or do away, for He plainly said, “*I am not come to destroy.*” “Fulfill” means to do or accomplish, as illustrated by its use in His statement to John when He presented Himself for baptism. “*...Suffer it to be so now: for*

thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). If "fulfill" means to abolish, there has been no righteousness since His baptism. Paul bears definite testimony as to what was abolished: *"Having abolished ... the law of commandments contained in ordinances"* (Ephesians 2:15). "Ordinances" are defined in Hebrews 9:1, 10, margin, as "rites, or ceremonies," which were not a part of the moral law of God.

Isaiah 42:21 predicted that Christ would magnify the law and make it honorable. This He did by making sin a condition of the mind as well as an overt act. To illustrate: *"...whosoever looketh ... to lust ... hath committed adultery..."* (Matthew 5:28). The same principle is set forth in I John 3:15: *"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."*

Christ affirmed the perpetuity of the law: *"...verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled"* (Matthew 5:18). See also Luke 16:18.

Christ observed the law in His own life, and His declaration, *"...I have kept my Father's commandments..."* (John 15:10), was so literally true that Satan, His worst enemy, could find no fault in Him (John 14:30). He obeyed the law for several reasons: (1) That He might be *"without sin"* (Hebrews 4:15); (2) to condemn *"sin in the flesh"* (Romans 8:3); (3) to provide salvation, for *"...by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous"* (Romans 5:18-19); (4) to set an example that we should *"walk, even as he walked"* (I John 2:6).

The purpose of the law is to define and convict of sin: *"...sin is the transgression of the law"* (I John 3:4). Also see Romans 7:7; 3:20; James 2:9. *"...sin is not imputed when there is no law"* (Romans 5:13; 4:15). When the law speaks, it is *"...that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God"* (Romans 3:19). The law as a standard reveals how far men have gone in transgression. *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). As a plumb line, it demonstrates the crookedness of man's life. As a mirror, it shows how soiled his life has become (James 1:23-25).

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Romans 10:4). "End" here means "object of purpose," as seen by its use in James 5:11: *"...Ye have heard of the patience of Job,*

and have seen the end of the Lord..." The same Greek word is translated "end" in both texts.

When we come to Christ, He does several important things for us:

1. He does *"...what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh..."* (Romans 8:3). It demands, but it cannot produce obedience; it is holy, but it cannot make us holy; it convicts, but it cannot save from sin; it reveals, but it cannot cure the disease. This is not due to a weakness in the law, but to man's failure.

2. Christ frees us from the condemnation of the law. *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"* (Romans 8:1).

3. Christ frees us from the domination of sin. *"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace"* (Romans 6:14). See verses 2, 6, 7, 11-13, 16-18. The proof of this is that we no longer continue in "transgression of the law," which is sin. Our faith is *"...the victory that overcometh..."* (I John 5:4), and with Paul we say, *"...the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"* (Galatians 2:20).

4. *"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"* (Romans 8:4). This is where Israel failed. *"But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone"* (Romans 9:31-32).

Please note carefully that Christ does not free us from keeping the law of God. *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?... What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid"* (Romans 6:1, 15). *"But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid"* (Galatians 2:17). So, if, while we profess Christ, we continue in sin, or the violation of the law, Christ can do nothing for us, as it is His settled purpose to *"...save his people from their sins"* (Matthew 1:21), not in their sins. Thus Christ as the perfect, sinless Saviour by His complete obedience will, in us, condemn sin in our flesh.



The Philippines

A general meeting of the Philippine brethren



Brethren from Badas, Matis City, Davao, Oriental



and Bogayo, Kumalarang, Zamboanga Del N.



Brethren from Cebu City

Brethren from Kericho



Sabbath meeting



Brethren from Sicayab, Dipolog City, Zamboanga Del Norte



LESSON I

THE GIBEONITES AVENGED ON SAUL

Scripture Reading: II Samuel 21:1-22.

Golden Text: II Samuel 21:9 (first part).

“And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the LORD:...”

NOTE: We have already learned that Absalom tried to steal the throne from David. This must have been one of the most troublesome things in David's reign. It involved the defection of some of David's most trusted advisors and utterly broke his heart. You may read chapters 17-20 of II Samuel to learn how Absalom was killed and how David was restored to his throne.

1. Why had there been a famine in the land for three years? II Samuel 21:1.
2. David called the Gibeonites unto him. Who were the Gibeonites, and what did David want with them? II Samuel 21:2-3.
3. What request did the Gibeonites make of King David? II Samuel 21:4-6.
4. Did the king spare any of Saul's family from death? II Samuel 21:7.
5. Who was delivered into the hands of the Gibeonites? What happened to them? II Samuel 21:8-9.
6. What did Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, do? Did David hear of this? II Samuel 21:10-14.
7. David and his servants again fought the Philistines. Read II Samuel 21:15-22, and then tell the story in your own words of the battles with the giants.

LESSON II

DAVID'S SONG OF THANKS FOR DELIVERANCE

Scripture Reading: II Samuel 22:1-51.

Golden Text: II Samuel 22:33.

“God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.”

NOTE: King David is very thankful to God for delivering him from all his enemies. Some of the same thoughts which we read in this chapter appeared in many of David's Psalms.

1. Why is David speaking to the Lord at this time? II Samuel 22:1.
2. What did he call the Lord in II Samuel 22:2-3?
3. For what had David been delivered? II Samuel 22:4-8.
4. How does David picture God when He is wroth? II Samuel 22:9-16.
5. How had the Lord delivered David? II Samuel 22:17-21.
6. Had David been upright before God? II Samuel 22:22-29.
7. Read II Samuel 22:30-44, and then name the many ways in which the Lord had helped David.
8. Did David realize he could do all things with the help of the Lord? II Samuel 22:45-51.

LESSON III

DAVID'S LAST WORDS

Scripture Reading: II Samuel 23:1-23.

Golden Text: II Samuel 23:2.

“The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.”

NOTE: We have been studying for some time the life of David. We are going to study now about the coming of his glorious but troubled existence. David was a grand character, impulsive, intensely human, generous to a fault; and though he did some things that were very wrong, he was strongly devoted to God and His ways. David stood like a rock for God.

1. What were David’s last words? II Samuel 23:1-5.
2. What did he say about the sons of Belial? II Samuel 23:6-7.
3. David’s mighty men are all listed in this chapter. Read II Samuel 23:8, and tell what these two men did.
4. Tell how Eleazar smote the Philistines in II Samuel 23:9-10.
5. Who was Shammah, and what did he do for David? II Samuel 23:11-12.
6. What did three of the thirty chiefs do to help David defeat the Philistines? II Samuel 23:14-17.
7. Who was Abishai? How did he help defeat the Philistines? II Samuel 23:18-19.
8. Who was Benaiah? What acts did he perform to help David? II Samuel 23:22-23.

LESSON IV
THE NUMBERING OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

Scripture Reading: II Samuel 24:1-10.

Golden Text: II Samuel 24:1.

“And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.”

NOTE: In our last lesson, we studied about the close of David’s reign as king. We are going to study now about how David numbered the people and how God regarded the act a sin to be punished.

1. What did the king demand Joab do in II Samuel 24:2?
2. Did Joab believe David was right in taking a national census? II Samuel 24:3.
3. Did Joab finally obey King David in this matter? II Samuel 24:4.
4. Name the cities where they numbered the people. II Samuel 24:5-7.
5. How long did it take them to do this? II Samuel 24:8.
6. How many people were in Israel and Judah? II Samuel 24:9.
7. Did David immediately realize he had sinned? II Samuel 24:10.

TOO MANY MELONS

By Moeita M. Burch

Bill whistled softly because he was happy. Jack and Melvin had told him to meet them at the bridge at two o’clock, and they would have a surprise for him.

Bill had lived in Happy Valley only a week, and Jack and Melvin were his nearest neighbors. They had taken him to their swimming hole in a nearby creek and into the woods to pick wild raspberries. He had much fun with his new friends.

Soon the bridge that crossed Cherry Creek came into view. Jack and Melvin were sitting under the bridge. They got up as Bill came near and went to meet him. “Hi!” They called, “you’re right on time.”

“Yes,” said Bill, “I like to be on time. If I tell someone I will meet him at a certain time, I don’t want to be late.”

“Well, most people are not so particular,” said Melvin.

“What do you have to show me?” asked Bill.

“Come on, and you’ll see,” said Jack. Bill followed them across the bridge, under a wire fence, through a

little meadow, and down a narrow trail to a big green field. The boys stopped at the fence.

Bill's mouth fell open.

"This is a surprise," he said. "I never saw so many watermelons in my life. Aren't they beautiful?" The boys grinned at him. "They taste better than they look" said Melvin. "Hold the wire down, Jack, and I'll crawl through." Jack held the wire, and soon Melvin was among the melons.

"What are you going to do?" asked Bill. "Is this your father's garden?"

"No, it's Sam Barnes' patch," answered Melvin. "He won't miss a couple of melons. He had hundreds. I heard him say he would be in town at two o'clock. That's why we're here."

Bill was shocked. They were going to steal Mr. Barnes' melons. "Don't", he exclaimed. "Please don't pick any. That is stealing."

"Aw, it isn't either," growled Jack. "We'll only borrow a couple. He wouldn't miss them if we took a dozen."

"When you borrow things," said Bill, "you pay them back. I know you're not going to put two melons back where they were."

"Of course not, silly", said Jack. "We're going to take them to the creek and have all the melon we can eat for once." Melvin handed Jack a big green melon and went back for another.

Bill still protested. "You know it isn't right," he said. "You said it isn't stealing, and you know it isn't borrowing. What are you doing, then? What do you call it?"

"We're swiping them, if you like that better", said Jack. "It isn't bad to swipe watermelons. Everybody does it. Sam Barnes has too many. He never sells all of them."

"We are not mean, either," added Melvin. "Some people trample all over the fields and plug the melons to see if they are ripe. I walked carefully, and I thumped them to see if they were ready."

"I hope these are ripe," said Jack. "If they aren't, I will pick out the next ones."

"Come on, Bill", said Melvin. "Let's eat them."

Bill followed the boys slowly. He didn't feel right. "I wish, we had waited and asked Mr. Barnes for the melons," He said.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Jack and Melvin, "I can see

him giving us any. He would probably sick the dog on us," added Jack.

"Well, then, he certainly wouldn't want us in this patch," said Bill. Perhaps Mr. Barnes was selfish with his melons." Maybe he did have too many. Bill looked back. The fields reached as far as he could see. There must be melons enough for all of the towns nearby.

Bill was hot and thirsty, too. He had not had a watermelon for a long time. His throat was dry. He had not helped steal the melons. Maybe it wouldn't be wrong to eat a little piece as long as it was given to him. But even at the thought of it his conscience bothered him.

One melon gave a loud pop as Melvin's knife cut into it. It was bright red and dripping with juice. Bill's mouth watered.

"Look at that," said Jack. "Isn't that a beauty?"

Melvin cut a big slice and handed it to Bill. Bill reached for it, and then dropped his hand to his side. "No, thank you," he said quietly. "I couldn't enjoy a melon that was stolen." "Well, if you aren't an odd fellow," said Jack.

"I may be odd," said Bill, "but I am honest."

He turned and made his way through the tall grass toward home. He was warmer than ever, but he felt good. His feet were as light as a feather, and he wasn't thirsty at all.

Bill found his mother on the porch mending, "Mom," he said, "I almost did something wrong, but I didn't."

"I am glad that you didn't," said Mother. Bill told her the whole story. When he had finished his said, "I wish Jesus wouldn't let Satan tempt us. I wanted a piece of that melon so badly that I almost took it."

"Yes, Stan is allowed to tempt us," said Mother. "But remember that Jesus can give us power to overcome every temptation."

"I am glad of that," said Bill.

"Now, I have a nice surprise," said Mother. "Mr. Barnes came by this afternoon with a truck load of watermelons and left two big ones for us. He said he had too many melons, so he is taking a load to the county hospital so the sick people there could have a treat."

QUIZ KID

By Nadine Wear

Unscramble the books of the New Testament and then find them in the puzzle.

They are backwards, forwards, up and down.

- 1. Asloniscos 2. Repet
- 3. Tacs 4. Nathinicors
- 5. Stiut 6. Tailganas
- 7. Temtawh 8. Breshew
- 9. Sanmor 10. Deju
- 11. Ramk 12. Samje
- 13. Hesienspa 14. Mothyti
- 15. Kuel 16. Lapipinship
- 17. Elimophn 18. Nojh
- 19. Slaonesithans 20. Neltevaioir

.....IF!

IF!.....

*If every boy and every girl,
 Arising with the sun,
 Should plan this day to do alone
 The good deeds to be done;
 Should scatter smiles and kindly words,
 Strong, helpful hands should lend,
 And to each other's wants and cries
 Attentive ears should lend;
 I do believe their starry crowns
 Would shine with clearer light,
 When they see the loving Saviour
 In that land so fair and bright.*

--Selected

SABBATH QUIZ

A V C O L O S S I A N S D A B J
 K J I F W J J N O D S L S E E A
 R E K U L N O E E L S P P T Z M
 T N E A I T H V T P R X H P O E
 A T H A I N N E P H E S I A N S
 S N E A D C B I X R O T L K O R
 A S U E D U J S R A E Q I T T E
 C I O A Y R E T E P E N P I D V
 S C O G I R D T D W O J P M E E
 T A E T D N R O M A N S I O C L
 O C O R I N T H I A N S A T V A
 H T I A O Q I R S I F U N H U T
 Q K R A M A H E B R E W S Y T I
 S N A I N O L A S S E H Y Y D O
 T T I T U S S N A I T A L A G N
 C S T O I P H I L E M O N T I T
 A M A M A T T H E W P A E C D S

1. For whom was the Sabbath made? (Mark 2:27).
2. What did Jesus's disciples once do on the Sabbath day which met with the disapproval of the Pharisees? (Mark 12:1-8).
3. What did Jesus usually do on the Sabbath day? (Luke 4:16).
4. When God created the world, what did He do on the Sabbath? (Genesis 2:2).
5. What wonderful cure did Christ perform at the pool of Bethesda, on the Sabbath day? (John 5:9).
6. What commandment mentions the Sabbath? (Exodus 20:8).
7. When are all Sabbaths observed? (Leviticus 23:32).

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FLOWERS FOR GOD

By Betty Whetstone

God has a wonderful garden
With flowers, butterflies, and bees;
And the sound of beautiful music
Drifts down from the birds in the trees.
There are millions of beautiful flowers
Of every size, shape and hue;
Each one is a deed that was done on the way,
Planted by someone like you.
The pause to offer an encouraging word
To help some poor traveler hold on
Is noted by God, and turns into a seed
That becomes a flower for God.
Each thing that we do to show that we care,
Each smile, or each word, or each prayer;
Each one will become a flower so rare--
A flower you planted for God.

