

The Advocate of Truth

*The Kingdom
Message*

Christ Ascended

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Proclaiming The Kingdom Message Is Our Responsibility

Bond Tennant

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Let us read Jeremiah 20:8-9: “For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.”

This Word of the Lord was given to Jeremiah prior to the seventy years’ captivity of the Jews. Some false prophets among them declared that the king of Judah would gain victory over their enemies. Of course, the people were glad to hear this. They despised Jeremiah, the true prophet of the Lord, who told them the truth and gave them the real message from God! Jeremiah told them that they had failed in their responsibilities to God. They claimed to be His people, but they had not been faithful in their covenant to serve Him. He warned them that it was too late for any who would repent to be delivered, and the nation was to be overcome by their enemies and carried away into captivity.

Jeremiah knew that the king would be encouraged by the false prophets and that the king’s wrath would be upon his head because he reiterated the message which God had commissioned him to deliver. At first, he shrank from the infamy, the reproach, and the persecution which he knew would result from his loyalty to the Lord. However, he overcame the temptation to hold his peace. His message had to be spoken! He would speak as God commanded him, no matter what the cost. He would

give them a further warning! His previous declaration of the Word of God concerning Israel had been so despised and rejected that he had become disheartened.

Undoubtedly God would have set Jeremiah aside as His mouthpiece if he had allowed his fears to overwhelm him, and had withheld the message. Another would have been commissioned to deliver the message. The burning within Jeremiah’s heart would have grown feeble and ultimately would have died out. A fire will become extinguished when it is shut off from a draft for any length of time. This is as true in the realm of moral and spiritual forces as in that of the physical nature. The Apostle Paul urges us to “Quench not the Spirit” in I Thessalonians 5:19. One way to quench the Spirit is to fail to do our duty. Let us not let the Holy Spirit of God die out in our hearts by failing to do our duty. Let us not cause the light within us, the holy fire, to smoulder for a time and finally die out. The Prophet Jeremiah could not withhold that which God had commanded him to speak. If he had been silent, he would have quenched the fire within him, and he would have lost his relationship with God.

It is the same for us today as it was with Jeremiah. God has given to us an understanding of the truth. He has given us a vital message to give to the people. He has told us of the great change which is coming. We are informed that the Gentile times will end, and the millennial kingdom will be established on this earth. We understand that all religious error will be destroyed. We are told that the kingdoms of this world will become “...the kingdoms

of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15). Let us state this message. However, let us not state this message in a rude manner.

Let us tell this message in our words and actions, by the printed page, by pictorial presentations to the eye, and in every way that the Lord shall give us opportunity. If we fail to proclaim this message for any reason, it will be taken from us and given to another. The Lord is seeking out those who are valiant for Him in righteousness and truth. We are not fit for the kingdom if we are weak. Is this wonderful message burning within us?

The result will be that the fire of God’s Holy Spirit

within us will become extinguished if we fail to tell the kingdom message. If the light that is within us becomes darkness, how great will be that darkness. Knowing the truth brings with it a great responsibility. Shall we prove faithful to it? Let us show deep appreciation to God for His lovingkindness in giving us the knowledge of His glorious plan and salvation.

Let us be faithful in proclaiming the message of our Lord. Let us tell forth the words which He has put into our mouths, whether others hear or whether they forbear--whether our faithfulness brings us the favor or the disfavor of the world.



Bond Tennant
The brethren from Surigao City, Agusan del Norte and Iligan City

“And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:10-11).

There is no question that He ascended to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. Someone said that He went up as our representative, forerunner, high priest and intercessor. Let us consider six reasons as to why He ascended.

1. HE ASCENDED BECAUSE HIS WORK ON EARTH WAS COMPLETED.

Some of the things that He did while on the earth are listed in Acts 10:38: “...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.”

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4).

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is

day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4).

While dying on the cross, Jesus said, “...It is finished...” (John 19:30).

2. HE ASCENDED TO CONFIRM THE PROPHECIES.

“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth” (Job 19:25).

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

3. HE ASCENDED TO COMMENCE HIS MEDIATORIAL WORK IN HEAVEN.

To mediate means to bring about an agreement between parties, to settle disputes.

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ” (I Timothy 2:5).

“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of

the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Hebrews 9:15).

For what cause? “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:14).

“But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Hebrews 8:6).

4. HE ASCENDED TO SEND THE HOLY GHOST.

“And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me” (John 15:26).

“And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:4-5).

“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever” (John 14:15-16).

5. HE ASCENDED TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR US.

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

The Holy Spirit also makes intercession for us.

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8:26).

“And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (verse 27).

6. HE ASCENDED TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR HIS PEOPLE.

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many

mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:1-3).

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (I Corinthians 2:9-10).

“But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Hebrews 11:16).

It is recorded of Abraham, “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10).

Revelation 21:9-27 and 22:1-5 give a good description of that city!

Time for God in the Garden

By: Tamika Andrew

**Your life is like a beautiful garden, bright!
With plants, swaying in the gentle wind.
Its roots planted safely in the soil, so brown.**

**Picture your heart as the garden of God’s Word.
His words firmly planted and secured, stirred by
the loving breeze the comfort it yields. God’s Word
bears fruits, fruits of the Holy Spirit, which is
fulfilled in your life, fertilized with the very best of
God’s Word.**

**He provides an everlasting watering source for
His children,**

**So keep God in the garden, the garden of your
heart, and He will nourish you, everyday of your
life.**



Cebu

The Birth Of Christ

Bond Tennant

IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WAS NOT born on December 25. Those who know the truth of this matter and claim to be true children of God do not observe this pagan holiday called Christmas which is a tradition of man. Jesus said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). While we are not commanded to observe our Lord's birth, it is fitting that we pause to meditate upon it and what it did for us.

To the worldly minded, this incredible event passed without any mighty demonstration in world affairs. Nothing was seen on the surface of human society. Things continue as usual. Our Lord's birth was of a humble character. The scenery of His birthplace was of a nature of poverty and toil.

"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). Perhaps we can picture this scene. There may have been flickering lamps swinging from the center of a rope hung across the entrance of the stable. There were no provisions for human comfort. A few miles away was the palace fortress of the great Herod together with the lavish houses of his friends, but the Babe Jesus was not to be found in a palace or a mansion. He had nowhere to lay His head!

Joseph and Mary found themselves in this position because they were required to journey to Bethlehem, the city of David, in response to the requirements of the Roman census. They were both of the lineage of David. In a providential manner, Joseph and Mary arrived in the very place from which Micah (5:2) had foretold that Jesus would be born. Israel expected a Messiah King, rather than a suffering servant. Their hope was of One who would be the glory of His people, not a light to lighten the

Gentiles.

The Israelites believed that divine privileges belonged exclusively to them. To the Jews, Jerusalem was the center of the world. The advent of Messiah to deliver and restore all Palestine to them was their common hope.

Let us consider the condition of the Gentiles at this time. The empire of Rome ruled. Julius Caesar had subdued the then known world. Augustus ruled it. All nations bowed to the mighty Caesar. There was a small and elect upper class steeped in pleasure, luxury, and every selfish desire. An elegant literature flourished, but it was for the very few.

The general population was oppressed and ground down by cruel bondage. Slaves taken in war were forced to work wearing chains on their feet. Their spirits were worn down by fatigue. Might was esteemed right, and there was no reverence of God and no hope of life after death. Such was the condition of the Roman world into which Jesus was born.

At the time of our Lord's birth, shepherds and their flocks were in the field. The account tells us that the shepherds were sore afraid, but the angel's message calmed their fears. "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10). The Lord revealed this to the humble shepherds, not to the rich and the wise of the world.

Later, we find Jesus thanking His Father that these things had been hid from the wise and prudent. However, we are glad that the ignorance will not last forever, and in due time God will remove the blindness from mankind. When Satan is bound, the knowledge of the Lord will cover the whole earth. "And in that day shall the deaf

hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness” (Isaiah 29:18).

The word “Saviour” signifies “Life-giver.” The dying race in the world needs deliverance. Children of God can respond, “Glory to God in the highest,” for there was born that “day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” This Saviour had been made flesh. As the perfect man, Jesus Christ devotedly sacrificed Himself for our sins. The Scriptures also speak of the Saviour glorified, and in due time, He will establish His kingdom of righteousness in order that all mankind may have the opportunity to be delivered from sin and death.

We read in II Timothy 1:10 that Jesus “...brought life and immortality to light...” Not only had a new perfect man appeared, but a new spiritual race. “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 new race is not built upon the old because its nature and character are not hereditary. They are “...born {begotten}, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13). They are God’s “...workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works...” (Ephesians 2:10) and “...have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Colossians 3:9-10).

As heirs of the kingdom of heaven, they are meek and lowly in heart. They hunger and thirst for righteousness. They are merciful, kind, longsuffering and peacemakers. They are persecuted for righteousness’ sake. They are the salt of the earth, and they are the light of the world. Their new mind is engaged in a continual struggle with the old. Like Jesus, they are not of this world, and they are subjected daily to severe discipline of self. “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Galatians 5:17).

We read in John 1:9 that Jesus was “...the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” The light at that time was local. Only a few saw it as it shone in a dark place. To those who did see it, our Lord said, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see.” Light is a symbol of life. If we follow Jesus, we shall not walk in darkness. Those who have no light cannot have life. This light is so important that Paul told Timothy that it is the will of God

that all men should be saved and brought to an accurate knowledge of the truth.

Just as Jesus was the Light of the world, even so since Pentecost His footstep followers have constituted that Light. We are favored! Jesus is the express image of His Father. Through Him the fully consecrated members of His body are a reflection of the Father’s Light in the earth.

The expression “true light” implies there are false or imitation lights. The only true light is that which shines forth in our Father’s Word of truth, and which includes our Lord’s teachings and example.

More than 2,000 years have passed since Jesus first appeared as the true Light. One might ask if there is any remote hope of the prophecy of the light filling the whole earth coming to pass. The Scriptures give abundant testimony that before this light fills the whole earth, the world must continue to experience the results of sin. During the present time, the footstep followers of Jesus are trained and educated to reign with Christ during His righteous kingdom of a thousand years. See Revelation 20:4, 6. As the knowledge of the Lord fills the earth, the darkness will be dispelled, and mankind will learn the truth.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end...” (Isaiah 9:6-7).

OBEY YOUR PARENTS

By: Renley Charles
(Grenada)

Obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.

Children! Let’s all obey our parents.

For everyone who obeys, will receive a reward,
Yes! A reward. God has a special place in store for all
children

who obey their parents in the Lord!
We will all dwell in the kingdom of God!

Unclean Lips

By Moises Torres M.



The prophet Isaiah had a vision in which he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne surrounded by seraphims that worshiped him, saying, "**Holy, holy, holy**, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." Please read Isaiah 6:1-7. In Hebrew, three times "holy" means The Most Holy.

When Isaiah saw the grand glory of God, he considered himself of unclean lips because before God no one can consider himself just and perfect. The Apostle John says, "**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 1:9-10).

God saw the humility of the prophet and sent one of his seraphims to burn his lips with a live coal from off the altar and said, "**...Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged**" (Isaiah 6:7). This means that only by coming before the altar of sacrifice, and being cleansed with the fire of God can we be freed from our guilt and sin.

Psalms 12:1-2 says, "**Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.**"

What does David say about unclean lips? David says that they are liars who have flattering lips. Verses 3 and 4 say, "The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; **our lips are our own: who is lord over us?**" This was a reality in the days of David! That is why he shouted to the Lord saying, "Help, Lord;

for the godly man ceaseth."

This is a reality in our day also. Most of the inhabitants of the earth speak proud things (verse 3) about the big projects and businesses that they plan for the future. They are conceited and proud of themselves.

They have flattering lips and teach lies. They cause many inappropriate situations by using **the uncleanness of their lips** to achieve their diabolical purposes. Nowadays there are too many who get rich and powerful through their lying and flattering lips, without caring if they oppress and humiliate anyone else. We are surrounded by this kind of people every day. Let the church pray, "Lord, save us from this kind of people!"

David pronounced this sentence as well upon those with unclean lips: "Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous" (Psalm 31:18). Unclean lips will be put to silence by the coming judgment.

What did our Lord Jesus Christ say about unclean lips?

"He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mark 7:6).

What does the Apostle Paul say about the dwellers of the earth?

"Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" (Romans 3: 13-14). These verses really describe ones who have unclean lips. They are full of cursing and lies. They display great malice and arrogance. This shows that they are empty and full of bitterness.

The "**man of sin**," described in II Thessalonians 2:9-

10, will have unclean lips. He will speak lies and deceive every one who does not receive the love of the truth in order to be saved. **“Even him,** whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”

Satan was the first to have unclean lips. He was described as the father of lies by our Lord Jesus Christ as He was speaking to the Pharisees. He told them, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he

speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44).

What good recommendations can we give to the children of God from the Bible to defeat unclean lips? Pray just like David by saying: “Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth.” “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, **the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name**” (Hebrews 13:15).

Do not praise yourself. Recognize your sins, and be careful what you say when you speak.

“As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise” (Proverbs 27:21).



Religious/Political Groups in Ancient Israel

By David DeLong

At the time when Jesus brought the true faith to Israel, and thus to the world, there were in existence six other groups of various beliefs: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Herodians, the Nazarites, the Zealots, and the Essenes. Each group had its own agenda; each group believed that its teachings were right; and each group was in opposition to the message and work of Christ. In this article I will briefly address each group for the purpose, hopefully, of giving a clearer understanding about the times in which Jesus lived.

The Pharisees

The word “Pharisee” comes from the Aramaic term “perishin”, meaning “separated”. Pharisees represented formalism in religious belief and practice in ancient Israel. The Apostle Paul, before his conversion, was a member of this group. Concerning Paul, Philippians 3:5,6 informs us: “Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as

touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless” (see also Acts 23:6; 26:5).

Many Pharisees believed in observing both the written law *and* the oral law. The written law, of course, came from the Old Testament Scriptures. The oral law came from the first part of the Talmud called the Mishna (traditions on how the law was to be kept). These traditions eventually became more important than the written law, itself. Jesus tried on various occasions to correct the Pharisees’ observance of their traditions, usually to no avail.

One such tradition that the Pharisees kept was the ceremonial washing of their hands before they ate bread. We find such a situation in Matthew 15:1-6: “Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye

also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.”

Within the above passage of Scripture we see a good example of the Pharisees observing their own tradition above the written law (in this case the Ten Commandments). Mark 7:1-13 is a parallel passage to that found in Matthew 15. In the Matthew text, where it reads “gift”, the Mark text reads “Corban” (“...It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free”--Mark 7:11). Corban referred to a consecrated offering to the Temple fund. In other words, the financial help which the Pharisees should have given to their fathers and mothers was instead pledged to the Temple treasury, thus supposedly, freeing them up from their obligation to help their parents. Jesus rightly rebuked the Pharisees for their horrible selfishness.

Not only did the Pharisees wash their hands often, but they also washed their eating and drinking utensils as well. Mark 7:4 records: “And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.” This washing become more important to them than repentance for their sins. Once again, Jesus rebuked them for this situation. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Matthew 23:25-28).

According to Luke 18:10-12, the Pharisees made a point of emphasizing their “righteousness” and looking down upon “sinners”. “And he (Jesus) spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the

temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (verses 9-14; see also John 8:1-11).

This Pharisee bragged about his fasting and tithing practices. In fact, it appears that many Pharisees were very careful to pay their tithes, but were not careful to do the more important parts of the law. We find, once again, Jesus rebuking them for such carelessness in Matthew 23:23. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” (Please read all of Matthew 23 for other traditional practices that the Pharisees did.)

Traditions of the Pharisees surrounded the matter of Sabbath keeping. We find some of them accusing Jesus’ disciples (and thus Him indirectly) of breaking the Sabbath by eating grain they had picked on the Sabbath day (see Matthew 12:1,2). Part of Jesus’ answer to the scribes and Pharisees is recorded in verse 7: “But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.” Thus, He exposed their traditions, here, as being groundless.

A short time later, the Pharisees tried to find accusation against Jesus, Himself, on the question of healing upon the Sabbath. Jesus then healed a man with a withered hand right in the synagogue. The Pharisees were so outraged by this act of mercy that they wanted to destroy Jesus (see verses 9-14).

It has been suggested that Jesus really did break the Sabbath by His healings, etc., upon this day. For instance, there is a belief that when He healed the infirm man by the pool of Bethesda, and then told this man to take up his bed and walk--both events here being upon the Sabbath day--Jesus was nullifying the Sabbath. Let’s examine this belief. In John 5:8-10,18 we read: “Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the

man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed...Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.”

The thought is that the Scripture here is saying that Jesus broke the Sabbath and, therefore, that He did away with it. Now, the fourth commandment of the Decalogue does say, “But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work...” (Exodus 20:10). Technically, the infirm man who was healed did do some work on the Sabbath by carrying his bed (probably a rolled up mat). However, Jesus’ healing of the man, and the carrying of the bed, were types of *mercy* work. Notice what Jesus declared back in Matthew 12. In verse 5 He said, “Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?” The priests *profaned* (broke) the Sabbath? Yes, by their works of ministry, and they were blameless! Once more, let us read where Jesus quoted, “...I will have mercy, and not sacrifice...” (verse 7). Jesus didn’t do away with the Sabbath, and He showed that works of mercy are allowed upon this day.

The Pharisees’ traditions concerning Sabbath observance seem to have become very tedious, or very convenient, according to the persons involved. For instance, there appears to be a scriptural allowance for a Sabbath day’s journey (see Acts 1:12). However, a tradition was observed, apparently, in which a person, after traveling a Sabbath day’s journey from his home could place upon the ground a box he was carrying, declare this box his “home”, and then continue on for another Sabbath day’s journey. This practice may have been carried on indefinitely. Also, according to tradition, it was unlawful for a person to look in the mirror on the Sabbath because it may cause him or her to notice a gray hair and be tempted to pull it out. Nor could anyone kill an insect upon this day. Jesus freed up the Sabbath from such traditions so that it could be kept rightly, and joyously.

One thing that many Pharisees loved was attention being brought to themselves. They coveted the praise of men, and wanted to be honored by them. Jesus warned the people in Matthew 5:20: “For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness

of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Then He exhorted the people, in chapter six, not to seek the honor of men when they did alms (see verse 2), when they prayed (see verse 6), and when they fasted (see verse 16).

The Pharisees, at least, did believe in the resurrection as well as in angels and spirits (see Acts 23:8). And some of them did become believers in Christ as we read in Acts 15:5. “But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.” However, even here we find that they mixed their belief with requirements of the law of Moses concerning circumcision for salvation. Nevertheless, the list of true believers from the ranks of the Pharisees includes, not only the Apostle Paul, but, apparently, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathaea, and Gamaliel, as well.

The Sadducees

The Sadducees were followers of Zadok from whom, it is thought, they received their name. They were the “free thinkers” among the leaders of Israel, and came from the aristocracy class. In Acts 5:17 we learn that they made up the high priestly class as well. This group denied the oral law (which the Pharisees accepted), and received only the written law. They also believed in the freedom of the will--something that the Pharisees denied.

However, they denied the resurrection and the existence of angels and spirits (see Acts 23:8). Jesus attempted to correct them from this error. We read in Matthew 22:23-32 of a situation where the Sadducees came to Jesus with a story about a woman who had had seven husbands, and to whom would she belong to in the resurrection. This, of course, was a trap that they were trying to set for Jesus since they didn’t even believe in the resurrection.

Jesus’ answer to them is noteworthy. “Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (verses 29-32).

There were times when the Sadducees teamed up with the Pharisees when it was to their perceived advantage.

This happened, for instance, when both groups tried to ensnare Jesus, as was the case in Matthew 16:1-4. "The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed."

The Sadducees also attacked the disciples of Jesus. Acts 4:1-4 informs us: "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand."

Jesus warned the disciples about the false teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees, which were like leaven. "Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread...How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matthew 16:6-7,11-12).

The Sadducees seemed to have disappeared after the destruction of Jerusalem by The Roman general Titus. It is not known why they disappeared, apparently, but it is speculated that: 1.) since they didn't believe in a resurrection, a number of the people didn't support them, and 2.) with the spread of Christianity and the teachings of Jesus, a belief in the resurrection was infinitely more attractive.

The Herodians

This political group was made up of supporters of King Herod, and also of Caesar in Rome. It appears that they favored a national government led by these forces. The Herodians were among others who tried to trap Jesus by

their attempt to force Him into taking a political side concerning taxes to Caesar. "Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way" (Matthew 22:15-22).

The Nazarites

This religious group is the only one of the six groups which has a biblical sanction. Numbers 6:1-6 gives the scriptural qualifications for a Nazarite. "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD: He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk. All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. All the days that he separateth himself unto the LORD he shall come at no dead body."

Jesus was a Nazarene (from the city of Nazareth), but He *wasn't* a Nazarite. Probably the most well-known Nazarite was Samson. The angel told Samson's mother: "For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (Judges 13:5; see also 16:17).

The Zealots

The Zealots consisted of those members who consid-

ered themselves to be patriots of Israel. One of Jesus' original apostles had, apparently, been a Zealot before his call by the Lord. Luke 6:15 includes him as being among these apostles: "Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes" ("the Zealot"). Some have speculated that Barabbas, who had "...made insurrection..." (and was a murderer and a robber), was also a Zealot (see Mark 15:6,7; Luke 23:17-19; John 18:40).

The Essenes

The Essenes is the only group of these six groups which is not specifically mentioned by name in the Bible. They considered themselves as Puritans, adhering to an ideal purity rather than to doctrines. They lived on the north-west shore of the Dead Sea, and they combined ascetic virtues of the Stoics (see Acts 17:18) with divine law. The Essenes ordered their communities with strict rules, holding all things in common. They believed in self-denial, temperance, and labor--especially farming--and were noted for giving relief to the poor. Slavery, war, and commerce were forbidden. (Some of the above material was taken from Smith's Bible Dictionary).

In each of these six groups, as we have probably noted, man's traditions prevailed above the Word of God. Even the Nazarites, who had originally been approved by God, needed to cease, as a movement, when Christ came upon the scene and showed a better way. Proverbs 14:12 is surely correct when it teaches, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." May our beliefs, and practices, be firmly rooted in the Word of God, and not upon our own traditions.

My Morning Prayer

by Marie Rasnick Fetzer
Member of Church in Lake Helen, Fla.

Dear Father in Heaven,

Praise and glory to You Father, God, Creator of the universe, and all that is. And praise and glory be to Your Blessed Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Whose glorious return we anxiously await. Thank You for allowing me to wake up another day in the peace and safety of a land that is free from calamities and occupying armies, where we are still able to live and worship according to

Your will.

Please, Father, give me the strength to live this day towards Your glory, through a life that is in accordance with the calling of Your saints. I thank You, Lord, not only for providing my daily bread and all the necessities of life, but also for the abundant gifts that You so lovingly bestow in my life daily.

I ask that You watch over the Saints around the world, and heal those who are suffering, according to Your will. Protect them Father, nourish and preserve them unto the Day of Salvation. May their governments and employers be favorably disposed towards them so that they can live and worship You in peace and freedom.

I pray for Your ministers around the world, that they might be blessed with the wisdom and knowledge that will enable them to abundantly feed Your sheep, Father God. I pray for the newly converted, that You will protect them from the attacks and influences of Satan, the devil, lest they become discouraged and turn away from the truth. I ask also, Lord, for Your protection and blessings on my own family and loved ones, who You have so lovingly cared for all the days of their lives. And I pray that all those who would be saved, could be saved, Father.

I come before You now a sinful and weak servant and I humbly pray for Your forgiveness and mercy. I pray for wisdom and discernment to know Your will, and I pray for the courage and strength to do Your will, and to always stand up for You and Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that Your Holy Spirit may comfort me and all the Saints, Father God, in times of trial, and I count myself worthy to be judged through my infirmities of the flesh now, and pray that I won't be judged in the future. I pray for mercy and compassion, Father God, and to receive the Spirit of a servant, just as Your Son Jesus displayed while He was on this Earth. Your Word is true.

Father God, keep me true during the trials while in this earthly body. I look forward to the day when I will shed this imperfect body to take on the better, spiritual body of perfection. I pray to be counted as one of those whose name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life so that I may be called to rise up into the air to meet your Son at His glorious return - to be swept up into the clouds and be allowed entrance into that Holy City, the New Jerusalem, so that where my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ is, so shall I be forever and ever. And I pray, too Father, that one day in the future I'll be able to look upon Your face, after all things have been restored back to You through your Son, Jesus.

I pray for the peace of Jerusalem, Father, and ask all these things in faith through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. - Amen.



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.

Is GOD trying to TELL us SOMETHING? By OMAR SACIRBEY RELIGION NEWS SERVICE

What do homosexuality, health care and British advertising standards all have in common? They're all things that have ticked God off, some religious leaders say, and He's vent his frustration with the angry fires of Iceland's Eyjafjallajokull volcano.

Moscow's Interfax newswire reported that the Association of (Russian) Orthodox Experts blamed the April 14 eruption--whose gigantic cloud of ash grounded transatlantic flights for more than a week--on gay rights in Europe and Iceland's tolerance of neo-paganism.

Conservative commentator Rush Limbaugh, meanwhile, said God was angry over health care reform. San Antonio megachurch pastor John Hagee, the founder of Christians United for Israel, said God was unleashing His wrath on Britain for deciding that Israeli tourism ads featured parts of the disputed Palestinian territories, not Israel.

The eruption is the latest in a long line of natural events to which some religious leaders attribute divine judgment. In short, they say, God is using nature to channel His displeasure with human behavior and that we had better shape up.

It's an impulse that goes back thousands of years and still thrives in religious quarters that are generally skeptical

of science and seek divine explanations for natural calamities:

Iranian cleric Hojatoleslam Kazem Sedighi recently told his Shiite Muslim followers that immodestly dressed and promiscuous women are to blame for earthquakes.

In February, Rabbi Yehuda Levin of the Rabbinical Alliance of America warned allowing gays in the military could cause natural disasters to strike America.

Religious broadcaster Pat Robertson blamed the devastating Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti on a pact between the devil and Haitians rebelling against French rule in the 18th century.

Both Robertson and Hagee blamed Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans' debauchery and immorality.

Malaysian Muslim cleric Azizan Abdul Razak said in the 2004 South Asian tsunami was God's message that "he created the world and can destroy the world," and Israel's Sephardic Chief Rabbi Shimo Amar said it was "an expression of God's great ire with the world."

So what is it about nature's fury that attracts theological interpretation? For many religious leaders, scholars say, it's an opportunity to win new believers.

"Natural disasters are disruptive. When there's a disruption, people's worldviews are shaken and need to be repaired," said Steven Friesen, a biblical studies professor at the University of Texas at Austin.

Who accepts these proclamations and who doesn't often depends on how a believer views God: benevolent, wrathful, active, passive or maybe something less defined, like a cosmic force.

“This stuff attracts people with a strong authoritarian image of God and who believe that He – it’s almost always a he – does in fact punish people who do not follow His rules,” said Wade Clark Roof, professor of American religion at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Another common thread among people who link disaster to divine judgment is that they tend to consider disasters as confirmation of already held beliefs.

But many religious leaders reject linking disasters to divine judgment.

Rabbi Michael Lerner, president of the Network of Spiritual Progressives, said, "You start blaming the victims for a process that is a result of something that they had nothing to do with."

Belief

Houston, Texas

Comment

God has already told us, by the words of His Son, that natural disasters would occur readily on the earth in these last days. The problem is that those who ask this question, Is God trying to tell us something, are not listening.

Jesus spoke only the words from His Father. The answer to the question is found only in the Bible, which many do not believe and have not read. God is telling us that it is later than we think. The Bible contains the words and the mind of God and His Son, Jesus. Jesus said in Mathew 24:7-8, “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: AND THERE SHALL BE FAMINES, AND PESTILENCES, AND EARTHQUAKES IN DIVERS PLACES. All these are the beginning of sorrows.” He also said, “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring” (Luke 21:25). These are words spoken with authority!

We should not second guess God as to why these natural disasters, which come upon the earth, sometimes affect the saints in an adverse manner and cause many of them to die. Let the child of God remember the words of Romans 14:8: “For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.”

SURVEY: LESS THAN HALF LINK EASTER TO THE RESURRECTION

By Adelle M. Banks

Religious News Service

Though most Americans describe Easter as a religious holiday, less than half of U.S. adults surveyed link it to the resurrection of Jesus, a Barna Group study shows.

Seven in ten respondents mentioned religion or spirituality in their response to an open-ended question about how they describe what Easter means to them personally. But just forty two percent tied Easter to the Resurrection.

About 73 percent, baby boomers (ages 46 to 63) were the most likely to describe Easter as a religious holiday, compared to two-thirds of those ages 26 to 44 and Americans 64 and older. The youngest group of adults (ages 18 to 25) were least likely, at 58 percent, to use that kind of description.

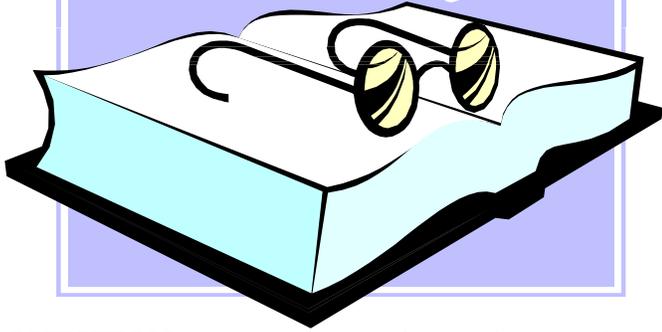
Other than the day Christians believe Jesus rose from the dead, respondents described Easter as “a Christian holiday, a celebration of God or Jesus, a celebration of Passover, a holy day” or a special day to go to church, Barna researchers said.

“The Easter holiday in particular still has a distinctly religious connection for people, but . . . the specifics of it are really fading in a lot of people’s minds,” said David Kinnanman, president to the Barna Group, which is based in Ventura, California.

**From Belief
Houston, Texas**

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: How am I to understand mustard seed faith?

ANSWER: One of the most misunderstood statements of our Lord was one relating to our having faith as a grain of mustard seed in order to remove mountains. It is most frequently misquoted. Therefore, it is common to hear one say, "If you only had faith as small as a grain of mustard seed, you would surely receive your desired object from God." But Jesus never hinted that it was the smallness of the mustard seed to which He was referring. In fact, the Master was constantly remonstrating with His disciples because of their smallest of faith. Many times He had to exclaim: "O ye of little faith!" Note a few examples: Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8. Small faith is never commended by the Lord. "But without faith it is impossible to please him..." (Hebrews 11:6), and the same obviously applies to "little faith," for the above references record His displeasure with it. And if our Master is not pleased with small faith, we must not misapply this much-quoted statement: "...If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17:20). A misunderstanding of this statement has led to the condoning of diminutive faith.

What then is mustard seed faith? It is tremendous faith! In one of Christ's parables, He had said that a grain of mustard seed was the smallest of seeds, and yet it pushes itself irresistibly up through a mountain of earth

under which it has been buried, and becomes the greatest among herbs (Matthew 13:31-32). Christ had taken notice of this fact with admiration. That little inanimate grain, because it possessed life, was able to remove mountains in order to fulfill its God-ordained function. Just as that little, insignificant seed had unconsciously accomplished that immense task, so Christ expected His own disciples who possessed His life to consciously fulfill God's will, even though it might mean the removal of mountains of difficulties and opposition. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard has faith ye shall be able to remove mountains," is the sum and substance of what the Lord meant. His reference was not to the quantity of the seed, but to its quality. They had just failed to heal the demoniac child, and when they had asked Jesus "Why?", He replied: "Because your faith is small" (revised). Previously He had reprimanded them for this smallness of faith in these words: "O unbelieving and perverse generation ... how long shall I endure you?" (Matthew 17:17, revised). Clearly, then, He does not in one breath both condemn and commend small faith.

We may learn from a statement the Apostle Paul made that mustard seed faith is synonymous with superlative faith. In his immortal chapter on love, he says: "And though ... I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains..." (I Corinthians 13:2). So mustard seed faith is equivalent to all faith. To summarize it, it would read like this: All faith removes mountains. Mustard seed faith is all faith.

How are we to develop such faith? When a famous man was asked about his mountain removing faith, his reply was: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing

by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). He claimed that it was his constant habit of meditating in the Scriptures which developed his faith. And although the Word does state that some have a gift of faith by the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:9), yet God will (as we appropriate the promises of Scripture and prayerfully walk in the Spirit), supply every child of His with faith sufficient to remove every mountain that would obstruct the way of obedience to the will of God. Truly, every mountain and hill shall be brought low on the pathway before the trusting child of God. In these days of apparently insurmountable difficulties which face the church, let us remember the mustard seed and its mountain-removing propensities, and ask God to enable us through His Spirit within us to do our part in overcoming obstacles.

Question: What is the Pentateuch? Do evolutionists believe the facts stated in it which pertain to creation and the fall of man? Did Jesus and the apostles believe these facts? Are children of God to believe them?

Answer: The Pentateuch is the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy). Evolutionists claim that these first five books do not present the truth concerning creation and the fall of man. However, Jesus and the apostles quoted the truth concerning creation and the fall of man which is found in it. Therefore, children of God who follow the example of Jesus and the apostles will also believe this truth!

Question: Is Jesus King or Lord? A friend, who studies the Bible much, told me that Jesus is Lord, but He will never be a King.

Answer: Your friend is wrong! Our Savior is our Lord, and one day He shall appear as "...KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (see Revelation 19:11-16).

Question: I have heard people call our Lord Jesus “our elder Brother.” Is this phrase found in the New Testament? If it is there, please give me the place where I can find it.

Answer: The phrase “elder Brother,” in regard to Jesus, is not found in the New Testament. We do not know who originated it.

Question: Please tell me who are those meant in John

7:5 where it is recorded that “For neither did his brethren believe in him.”

Answer: The reference is to our Lord’s brethren according to the flesh. These would be the other children of His mother Mary. There are those who deny that Mary had other children, but Scripture is against them. In Matthew 12:46, it mentions “his mother and his brethren.” In Matthew 13:55, four of His brethren are named. They were James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, and in the 56th verse, His sisters are also mentioned.

Question: Who was Veronica?

Answer: Tradition tells us that she was a pious woman of Jerusalem, the story of whose kindness to Jesus when He was being taken to crucifixion has been preserved. She is not mentioned by name in the Gospels. Some suppose her to have been the woman mentioned in Matthew 9:20.

Question: Was the animal that Aaron fashioned from the earrings of the wives, sons and daughters recorded in Exodus 32 really a molten calf?

Answer: The animal was not really a calf. Instead it was a miniature bull whose size was determined by the scarcity of the precious metal used in making it. Thus, “the little bull” entered many English translations as “calf.”

Assyrians, Babylonians, Canaanites, Egyptians, and Hittites all worshiped bull gods. First in Memphis and later throughout Egypt, the bull was among the most important sacred animals. Here he was usually depicted as black. In other lands spotted and tawny animals were venerated. Wherever bull symbolism was employed, the animal stood for strength and plenty because he was the only source of power with which to plow the land and practice agriculture. Frequently the divine bull was considered capable of bestowing sexual fertility upon his worshipers.

When Moses came down from Mt. Sinai and discovered his people engaged in a religious dance in honor of a miniature bull, he became so angry that he threw down and broke the stone slabs on which the Ten Commandments were engraved. Then he called for volunteers to help him, and with their aid killed about three thousand bull worshipers.

THE CHURCH AROUND THE WORLD

BY DEL DELONG
The Philippines



The Young People from Johnny Ang Paradise, General Santos City, South Cotabato



Delegates from Apopong, New Society, Gen. Santos City, SC, led by Pastor Felipe Panon



The Delegates from Davao Oriental led by Provincial Minister Pastor Mars Cabantao (left) and Local Church Elder Bro. Donald Ede



Three Delegates from Comval Province led by the Provincial Minister Pastor Juan Sumbid (second from left)



Delegates from Calumpang Church Gen. Santos City, SC led by Brother Margarito Diguifon Jr. Assistant Church Elder.



THE FACILITATORS: (L—R): Eld. Orlando V. Otrerasaga, Bro. Nelson M. Bual, Eld. Salvador R. Olivero Jr., EMS, Sgt. de Eris, Bro. Fe A. Bard, Bro. Jade A. Basit, Eld. Beethoven Q. Sausal, Bro. Goldwin G. Alvarado, Bro. Marvie C. de Eris and Bro. Richie H. Salubre.



Bogayo, Kumalarang, Zamboanga del Sur



Kitabog, Titay, Zamboanga Sibugay



Negros Occidental



Leyte Province



Negros Oriental

LESSON I

JACOB IN EGYPT

Scripture Reading: Genesis 46:28-34; 47:1-12.

Golden Text: Genesis 47:7.

“And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.”

1. What land did Joseph’s family go to? Genesis 46:28.
2. Did Joseph go to meet his family? What did his father do when he saw him? Genesis 46:29.
3. Joseph took his father and five of his brothers to Pharaoh. What question did Pharaoh ask them, and what was their answer? Genesis 47:3-4.
4. What did Pharaoh tell Joseph to do with his brethren? Genesis 47:5-6.
5. Jacob blessed Pharaoh and then Joseph took his family into the best land of Egypt. What were the names of this city and country? Genesis 47:10-11, 27.
6. Did Joseph continue to see that his family had bread? Genesis 47:12.
7. How long did Jacob live in Egypt, and how old was he? Genesis 47:28.
8. When Jacob became old and sick, what request did he have for Joseph? Genesis 47:29-30.

LESSON II

THE LAST DAYS OF JACOB

Scripture Reading: Genesis 49:28-33; 50:3,11,15, 19-26.

Golden Text: Hebrews 11:22.

“By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of

the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.”

NOTE: Jacob has called his sons together so that he could tell them what would befall them in the last days and to bless them. Genesis 49:1-2.

1. After Jacob (Israel) blesses his sons, what did he instruct them to do? Genesis 49:28-30, 33.
2. How many days did the Egyptians mourn over the death of Jacob? Genesis 50:3.

NOTE: A score is twenty years.

3. When Joseph and his brethren returned Jacob to the land of his father, what did the inhabitants say? Genesis 50:11.
4. After Jacob was buried, what did Joseph’s brothers say about Joseph? Genesis 50:15.
5. How did Joseph treat his brothers after his father died? Genesis 50:19-21.
6. How long did Joseph live in Egypt? Genesis 50:22.
7. What were Joseph’s last words to his family? Genesis 50:24-26.

LESSON III

ISRAEL IN EGYPT

Scripture Reading: Exodus 1:7-22.

Golden Text: Exodus 1:7.

“And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.”

1. What happened to the children of Israel who lived in Egypt after Joseph died? Exodus 1:6-7.

2. How did the new Egyptian Pharaoh feel about the children of Israel? Exodus 1:8-10.
3. What did the Egyptians first do with the children of Israel? Exodus 1:11.
4. Why did the Egyptians still continue to grieve? Exodus 1:12.
5. How were the children of Israel treated by the Egyptians? Exodus 1:13-14.
6. What did the evil Egyptian king next command? Exodus 1:15-16.
7. Did the midwives do as the king commanded? Why? Exodus 1:17-21.
8. What did Pharaoh still command his people to do? Exodus 1:22.

4. Whom did she call to nurse the baby? Exodus 2:8.
5. Did the mother take the child and nurse it? Exodus 2:9.
6. Did Moses become the son of Pharaoh's daughter? Why did she call him Moses? Exodus 2:10.
7. Moses' true parents had faith that God would save their baby. Hebrews 11:23.

BIBLE RIDDLES

1. Once when Adam fell asleep, This was taken from his keep.
2. Once I set fire to a field of corn, That was before my locks were shorn, or I lost the power of eyes to see, The lady who did marry me.
3. Once with tears I hard did cry, And used my hair as a towel to dry, The dampness on the Master's feet, When He did with a Pharisee eat.
4. Once while traveling down a road, I put a human with my load, Beaten he was and left for dead, but I nursed him well and helped instead.
5. Once they found me in a tree, which I had climbed a parade to see, Then I gave a goodly meal to the Christ Who the sick did heal.

LESSON IV

THE BIRTH OF MOSES

Scripture Reading: Exodus 2:1-10.

Golden Text: Exodus 2:10 (last part).

“And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.”

NOTE: We learned in our last lesson that Pharaoh ordered all boy babies be put to death. We will now learn about Moses and how he is saved.

1. When Moses was born, what did his mother do to save him? Exodus 2:2-4.
2. Who found baby Moses in the river? Exodus 2:5-6.
3. What did the sister of the baby say to Pharaoh's daughter? Exodus 2:7.





THE WIDOW'S FIRE

In the mountains that rise beyond the campus and buildings of the University of Colorado at Boulder, there was once a town with the odd name of Oradelfen. During the gold boom, many pioneers from the East settled in Oradelfen in their search for wealth lying hidden in the ground. Some came out poor and went home rich, for there were gold strikes at the poor Man Mine and the Golconda Mine.

But for the few who found gold, there were many who found nothing but sorrow and misery, like the widow we shall call Hattie Jones.

Larkin Jones, her husband, had been killed in a power blast, and the wife left with two small children, no money and poor health. She supported herself by taking in washing for the wives of prospectors and miners. But there were long periods when she was too ill to work, and then Hattie Jones would have no money to pay the rent for the ramshackle log cabin, or to buy food and firewood.

In the midst of all tribulations, however, Hattie Jones remained the staunchest Christian in Oradelfen. Hungry or cold or facing eviction, she was never known to falter in her faith. And this confidence in Providence she maintained in spite of constant ridicule from a neighbor called Bart Atkins.

Bart was the town atheist and quite proud of his heathenism. On every possible occasion, he would start a religious argument, and he seemed to take a persistent pleasure in pointing out to Hattie Jones that the God she prayed to seemed quite unconcerned about her distress.

"Do you expect He's going to perform a miracle just for you?" Bart would taunt the widow.

"Yes, I do," she told him. "He can soften the hardest hearts."

It was late autumn then, and the family needed firewood, but Hattie had no money to buy it with, and everybody in town was too busy digging for gold to chop down trees for the widow. One freezing morning she knelt down with her two children and prayed long and fervently for God to help her by sending some firewood.

Just outside the cabin window Bart Atkins stood listening.

"It's just a stinking' shame," he uttered. "That trusting fool woman refuses to learn anything from experience... on her knees there now praying to empty air, that's all... I'll show her."

He started off down the road with grim determination on his face. But a curious neighbor stopped him.

"Where you headed for, Bart?"

"I'm going to prove to Hattie Jones once and for all there ain't no God," snapped the unbeliever. "He won't answer her prayer. He won't send her no firewood. So I'm getting her the firewood myself!"

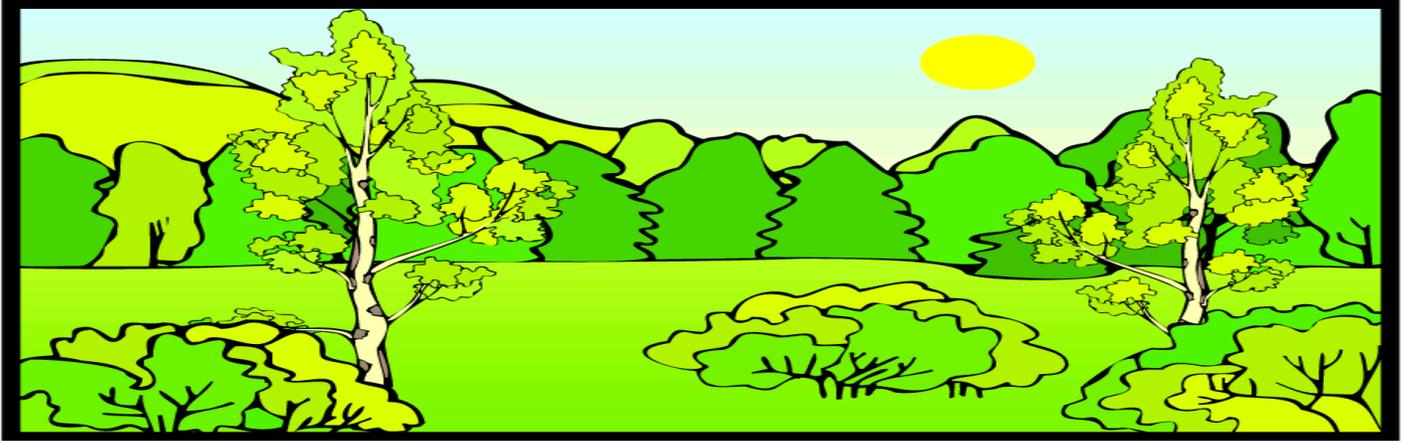
Of course there are always different views about these matters. Some would argue it was only a coincidence, but for the rest of her life Hattie Jones insisted that God softened Bart Atkins' heart that morning, and she thought that was a greater miracle than she had dared to pray for. And she used to add:

"I'm thankful for the wood, too!"

That Bart did chop the wood for Hattie Jones is history.

The story comes from Helen Worden, whose mother was a little girl when it all happened in the now vanished town of Oradelfen, Colorado.

Answers to Bible Riddles: 1. A rib, 2. Samson, 3. A sinning woman, 4. The Good Samaritan, 5. Zacchaeus



PSALM 23 CROSSWORD PUZZLE

How well do you know the 23rd Psalm? Try filling in the crossword puzzle without using your Bible.

The Lord is my (1 across); I shall not (12).

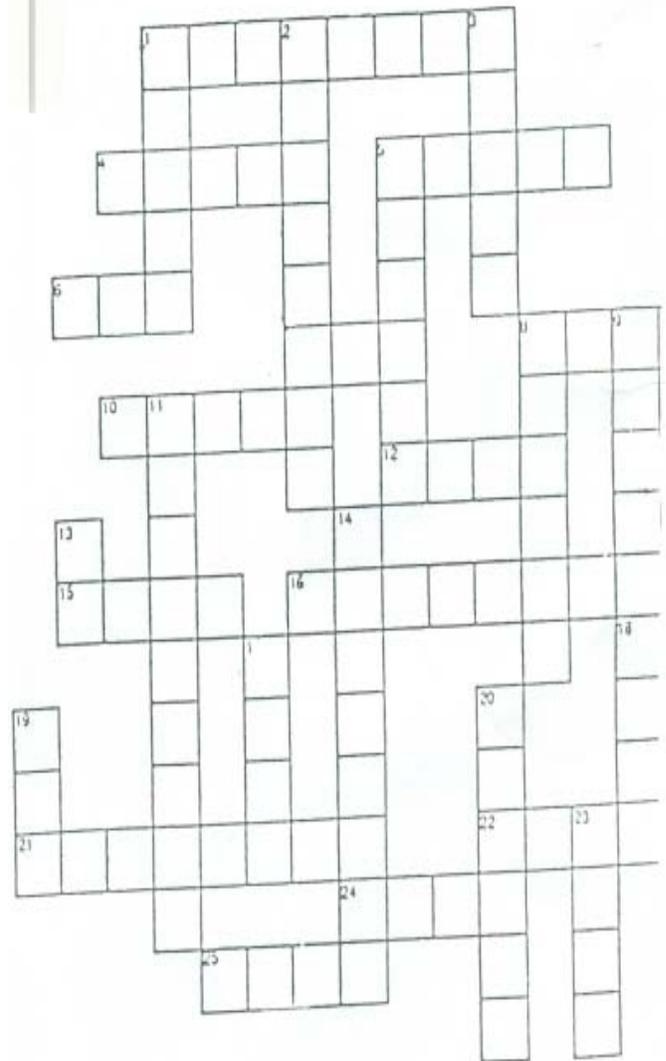
He maketh (13) to lie (7) in green (2): he leadeth me beside the still (8 down).

He restoreth my (24): he leadeth me in the (4) of righteousness for his name's (18).

Yea, though I (8 across) through the (20) of the (5 down) of (3), I will (23) no (15): for thou art with me; thy (7) and thy (5 across) they (16) me.

Thou preparest a (10) before me in the (21) of mine enemies: thou (11) my head with (6); my (19) runneth over.

Surely (14) and mercy (1 down) follow me all the (25) of my (22): and I will dwell in the house of the (9) for ever.



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Be Ever True

By David DeLong

*Strait is the gate, and narrow the way,
And those who find it are few;
If you are going, don't stop or delay,
As you travel, be ever true.*

*The past is the past, the future to be,
But now is the time to renew;
Repent, and be baptized, at last you are free,
And promise to be ever true.*

*With sins all gone, and hope up ahead,
Your life is as fresh as the dew;
My friend, you've now come back from the dead,
So now you must be ever true.*

*Sometimes the road is rocky and rough,
There are obstacles you must go through;
And just when it seems you've had quite enough,
Don't quit, but be ever true.*

*Patiently journey, the goal is in "sight",
Your glorious home you will view;
And soon you will be where never is night,
If only you'll be ever true.*

