

The Advocate of Truth





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E-Mail: cogsevday@aol.com

Web site: www.churchofgod-7thday.org

**Del DeLong
 David DeLong
 Bond Tennant.....Editorial Staff
 Gary Mills Managing Editor
 Ludina Mills.....Children's Page Editor**

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Christmas

By David DeLong

Christmas celebration is first mentioned in A.D. 336 in a Roman calendar, indicating December 25 as the day of celebration. At that time of year (year's end) the Romans held celebrations to Saturn, their god of the harvest. This was known as the Saturnalia. The celebrations included eating special foods, using greenery to decorate homes, along with gift-giving, and singing.

Christmas had become the most important religious festival in Europe by A.D. 1100. Saint Nicholas became a symbol of gift-giving to many Europeans. Christmas was increasing in popularity until the Reformation in the 1500's. Many people then began to question the celebration of this festival because of its pagan elements. Later, Christmas was outlawed in England, and in some parts of the English colonies in America. However, the customs of Christmas soon began to be followed once again.

During the 1800's, tree decorating and sending Christmas cards became popular customs. During this same time, the singing of newly composed Christmas carols came about. In some countries, including the United States, Santa Claus, instead of Saint Nicholas, became the symbol of gift-giving.

During the 1900's, Christmas grew in importance as a commercial enterprise. This commercial aspect of Christmas is still with us, today.

--The World Book Encyclopedia, C-Ch, pp. 528-529; S-Sn, pp. 150,153.

We can see from this short description of the World Book Encyclopedia that the celebration of Christmas is an invention of man, not a command from the Lord. It is based upon following the pagan customs of man, and is not based upon any example of Jesus or His disciples.

It was not introduced into the practice of any church, apparently, until A.D. 336, and then by a Roman calendar. A number of churches, from the time of the Protestant Reformation onward, have recognized the paganism of Christmas celebration at various times. But, instead of settling the issue once and for all, it seems that these churches have bounced the pagan element of Christmas back and forth like a ping pong ball. The Church of God, 7th day, Salem, W.Va. has settled the issue. The unbiblical origin, and continued celebration, of Christmas should not be partaken of.

As just one example of the Scriptures condemning a pagan custom relating to Christmas celebration, let us read Jeremiah 10:1-5. "Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good."

The practice of cutting a tree and decorating it for the pagan custom of idol worship became a standard practice in celebrations down through the years. Some will say, "But I don't worship the Christmas tree today." Why, then, do you have the tree in your home at all, and why celebrate Christmas since it doesn't honor Christ?

ACKNOWLEDGING ALMIGHTY GOD

By Bibi Shimoon Alicock



“My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth” (Proverbs 3:1-12).

We see here the benefit of acknowledging Almighty God and the keeping of His laws and commandments. As believers, we must keep our hearts and minds in tune with Him in order to partake of His benefits.

Pharaoh, one specific king of Egypt, who did not know Joseph, and did not have any knowledge of Almighty God, afflicted the Israelites (God’s chosen people) very much. He said to his people, “...Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they

built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses” (Exodus 1:9-11).

“And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour” (verses 13-14). “But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel” (verse 12).

After the Egyptians saw that the more they afflicted the Israelites, the more the Israelites multiplied they were grieved, because as the Israelites grew in number, the Egyptians thought to themselves that the Israelites would join hands with their enemies and fight against them. “And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah. And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live” (verses 15-16).

We see here that the Egyptians thought that multitude wins battles. However, we must remember that when we acknowledge God in everything, and live accordingly, that He will always be there for us whether we be by ourselves or with many. It all depends on God! “But the midwives FEARED GOD, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the

Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared GOD, THAT HE MADE THEM HOUSES” (verses 17-21).

In the book of Judges, we can see clearly what the Almighty God did for the Israelites when they had to go to battle against the Midianites. “And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude” (Judges 7:12). Almighty God showed forth His POWER AND MIGHT, through three hundred men. He gave the Midianites into the hand of the Israelites. But before they went into battle, Almighty God prepared Gideon for the battle, because He never sent anyone, anywhere, unprepared. “Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand. And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water” (Judges 7:1-6).

“And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear to go

down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host” (verses 9-11). “And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host. And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man’s hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do” (verses 13-17).

“When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man’s sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath. And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites” (verses 18-23).

We saw that although Almighty God reassured Gideon that He would deliver the Midianites into his hand, Gideon made certain that he acknowledged God’s presence by

worshipping before the battle. At times, difficulty may come our way, and we may pray once or twice and then give up. We may say that God is not answering, so we turn to something or someone else. We should not give up so easily. Don't you give up. Just keep on trusting, and things will get better. Keep on praying and fasting. God is always there, and it's never too late. Just call upon His name, and He will answer your prayer. When we have our issues, and we go before God, constantly begging for His mercies, He will adhere to our prayers if our petition is according to His will.

The Psalmist Asaph declared, "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart" (Psalm 73:1). Yet he declared something else when he was in doubt. "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image" (verses 2-20).

Finally, when Asaph acknowledged Almighty God, he understood certain things. He declared, "Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.

Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with my counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. BUT IT IS GOOD FOR ME TO DRAW NEAR TO GOD: I HAVE PUT MY TRUST IN THE LORD GOD, THAT I MAY DECLARE ALL THY WORKS" (verses 21-28). "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: FOR THOU SHALT JUDGE THE PEOPLE RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GOVERN THE NATIONS UPON EARTH. Selah" (Psalm 67:1-4). "Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. GOD SHALL BLESS US; AND ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH SHALL FEAR HIM" (verses 6-7).

A PERFECT DAY

Betty Whetstone

Today has been one to remember,
One like it you never did see;
It has been perfect from dawn to twilight,
And was created just for you and me.
The sky has been perfect above us,
The sun coming down, soft and warm;
The gentle breeze calms our spirit
As it erases all signs of a storm.
We see the beauty of God in each flower,
Hear His presence in each song of a bird;
The peace in His promise assures us
Of His power in every word.
The day has passed over us gently
As the sun kisses the tree tops "goodnight"
And we go to our rest gladly knowing
That we are all beloved in His sight.



THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Bond Tennant

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

We know that our Lord Jesus Christ was not born on December 25, and there is no command in the Scriptures to observe His birthday. In the pages of *The Advocate of Truth*, we have expounded on the pagan origin of Christmas. To observe His birthday on December 25, or any other time, is a commandment of men. “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9). We may not observe Jesus’ birthday, but we do rejoice that He was born.

We find the summary of Jesus’ genealogy recorded in Matthew 1:17: “So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.”

Verse 16 says, “And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.” By a casual reading of this verse, one could conclude that Joseph was the father of Jesus. However, this text does not say that Joseph was the father of our Lord.

It seems like the tradition in those days was for a long betrothal. It was during that time that Mary was begotten by God’s Holy Spirit, and she became the mother of Jesus. The Apostle John clarifies the point that God was Jesus’ father when he said, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

There was a forerunner of Jesus who would announce His presence. The Prophet Isaiah also foretold that the coming of this one would be as a “voice” crying in the wilderness, “...Prepare ye the way of the LORD...” (Isaiah 40:3). John the Baptist was identified as the one who fulfilled this prophecy. However, it does not relate to Jesus’ birth, but points to John’s work of introducing our Lord at the beginning of His ministry, several years later. Luke records the angel’s announcement to the shepherds concerning the birth of Jesus. “And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:10-14).

Matthew records some of the details as to how Jesus was made flesh. Read Matthew 1:18-25. In Matthew 1:18-25, we learn of the miraculous conception of His mother, Mary, who gave birth to Him in Bethlehem. It had been prophetically stated that the name of the anointed of God would be “Emmanuel,” which means, “God with us” (Matthew 1:23; Isaiah 7:14).

The name Jesus signifies ‘Savior.’ It is the Greek form of Joshua. It is cause for rejoicing when we realize that Jesus came to be the Savior of all mankind, saving them from sin and the penalty, death. Greater rejoicing will be when Jesus Christ establishes His kingdom on earth. Jesus was ‘anointed’ for this task by God’s Holy Spirit.

LIFE AND TIMES OF THE APOSTLE PAUL: THE 2ND TRIP BEGINS

By Tim Buechner

In order to gain better insight into the teachings of the Scriptures and a greater appreciation for the development of the Church with the early disciples, we are undertaking a series of studies on the Life and Times of the Apostle Paul. In the last edition of the Sabbath Christian Light, Paul had travelled to Jerusalem to meet with the leadership of the Church to determine how to manage the growth of the Church with the increase in the number of Gentiles joining.

Upon returning to Antioch, Paul and Barnabas decided to re-visit the churches they had started on the first trip, but, had a disagreement about taking John Mark with them. The resolution? Barnabas took John Mark with him on a trip to Cyprus and Paul took Silas with him to Syria and Cilicia. Read Acts chapter 16. Paul quickly learns that God wanted him to go to different cities than the first trip. It is interesting to consider that a significant amount of what Paul had planned was changing.

First, he was planning on travelling with Barnabas. Second, he was planning to re-visit the cities from the first trip; and third, his original objective was to "confirm" the churches. But God was calling him to different cities to continue to spread the gospel to new and different areas. Additionally, consider that since Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement they each went on different trips instead of the same one together. So, there were two trips instead of one, doubling the efforts.

Paul had to be open and flexible and his openness to the Holy Spirit allowed God to show him where they should and shouldn't go. Many times in life we make plans and we get upset when our plans don't go as planned. Let us be as open as Paul was to God's direction and flexible enough to adapt to changes in response to the direction of the Holy Spirit and I think we'll find that our lives will be more productive and effective. God's way is better than our way.

FORGIVENESS

By Jasmine Fowler

In Matthew 18:21-22, Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive his brother when he sins against him, suggesting up to 7 times. Jesus replies that he should forgive his brother not 7, but 70x7. But sometimes it can be hard for us to forgive someone even once.

When someone hurts you, your natural and first reaction is usually to be angry at them or even hate them. Most people don't want to forgive others who have hurt them because they don't deserve it. The thing about that, though, is that we don't usually apply this concept to ourselves. Imagine if every time you sinned or made a mistake, God decided to be angry with you, and hate you, and refuse to forgive you because you don't deserve it. If this was the case, we'd all be in trouble. But our God, the one true God, is kind, merciful and forgiving--not angry, hateful or spiteful.

This holy behavior of the Father is reflected in Jesus, His Son, and we see this numerous times: namely when Jesus is being crucified on the cross, where He says to God in Luke 23:34: "...Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing".

CONCLUSION:

As Christians, it is our job to strive to be like Jesus every day, and so it is also our job to forgive those who hurt us or sin against us. Not only is forgiveness necessary, but mandatory--because God will not forgive us if we will not forgive others.

Although it can be extremely hard to forgive, it is not impossible; for we can do all things through Christ who gives us strength.





This is a statement mentioned by Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:18 which must be taken very seriously in our lives: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but **be filled with the Spirit**” (Ephesians 5:18).

In the Bible we find many disciples who were filled with the Holy Spirit as the seven men mentioned in Acts 6:1-6, who were chosen to take care of the needs of the church; it is very interesting to see how these seven men were chosen from among a great multitude. Let us read about this story:

“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men **of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom**, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased **the whole multitude: and they chose** Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.”

How was it possible for that multitude to choose these seven men? I think it was not very difficult because of their outstanding deeds full of virtue, and of a good report.

But what about all others in that multitude? Were they not filled with the Spirit? They were not probably filled to the 100 percent required for that purpose. Perhaps some of them were only to the fifty percent, others to the 70 percent, others to the 30 percent, and some others only had a minimal filling, but they were not complete in this sense!

The parable in Matthew 25:1-13, shows ten virgins

who went forth to meet the bridegroom to enter into a wedding feast; five of them were wise or prudent, and the other five were foolish and did not care about this event they had been invited to. The wise took all the necessary oil for their lamps to light their way until they met the bridegroom, but the foolish neglected, or were indifferent to, this detail and failed to arrive on time to the place the bridegroom was waiting for them to get them into the ceremony.

Oil is an energy, which in this parable symbolizes the Holy Spirit we need to meet our Lord in the clouds to get us in the wedding chambers in the New Jerusalem, so **we must be full of the Spirit**. A 50 percent, or a 60 percent, or a 25 percent, is not enough. The Lord says in His gospel that he does not give the Spirit by measure (John 3:34), therefore this energy is always there completely available for those who want to use it to light their lamps (lives) in the way to eternal life. The Holy Spirit is not spent or worn out, since it is not a renewable, but a sustainable, energy, whose original source is the same Creator of the Universe; therefore this is an eternal energy for eternal life which the Lord is freely offering to everyone who believes. How may we be filled with this Spirit (energy)?

First of all we need to be completely convinced the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and believe in His teachings and testimony. Then we need to be baptized in his name to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of the Elders (Acts 2:38; Heb. 6:1-2), and continue in touch with this Spirit, studying the Scriptures, praying with diligence, and getting involved ourselves in the work of the Lord. We need also to live in a daily sacrifice separated from the spirit of the world. So let us be wise as the first five virgins and prepare ourselves with this Spiritual energy to meet our Lord Jesus in the clouds at His return for his saints. This is a personal matter we must work on according to our faith. Are you filled with the Spirit?

The Spiritual Kingdom

By David DeLong



There are, and have been many kingdoms, but there is only one kingdom which is guided by true, spiritual principles. That is the Kingdom of God and of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Though Christ has not yet set up His Kingdom upon the earth for the 1,000 year reign, we now live in the spiritual realm of His Kingdom and are guided by the spiritual laws and principles that come from the Word of God--the holy Bible.

God's Kingdom is not hard to find, when compared to all the kingdoms that have been invented by man. As we have alluded to, God's Kingdom is always a spiritual one, from that of today, through Christ's 1,000 year reign upon the earth, to God's eternal Kingdom after Christ turns the Kingdom over to the Father (see I Corinthians 15:23-28). His Kingdom is in total opposition to the natural inclinations that guide every other kingdom upon earth. However, God's Kingdom can only be spiritually discerned, and that by the principles of the Bible. We learn in I Corinthians 2:14: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Let us contrast the way things are done in the world's kingdoms to the way they are done in the Lord's Kingdom. "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my

right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:20-28).

Jesus also taught: "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:11-12). This is the opposite of how the natural mind thinks. Only the spiritual Kingdom could operate this way. Jesus emphasized the concept even stronger in Mark 10:44: "And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all." Being the servant of all includes serving children, outcasts, beggars, and other people.

Speaking of children, Jesus taught that one must be like a child to enter into God's Kingdom. "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me" (Matthew 18:1-5).

To prove this point, Jesus showed in Matthew 19:13-14: "Then were there brought unto him little children, that

he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Imagine the ruler of one of the worldly kingdoms saying that! It just doesn't happen. The Apostle Paul taught that we should be like children in not doing wrong things: "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men" (I Corinthians 14:20).

Once again, Jesus warned the disciples not to act like the Gentile leaders in Luke 22:24-25. Then He added: "But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth" (verses 26-27). Being as the younger puts a person in a place of humility and servitude. The younger person usually didn't get a double part of the father's inheritance in a family, according to my understanding, and the younger person was in a position to serve the elder ones. Jesus is our Leader who is an example to us of serving others.

Not only that, but we are to put ourselves in a position of being last and least. In Mark 9:33-35 we learn: "And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." In Luke 9:46-48 we find: "Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him, And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great."

So, to be a leader in God's Kingdom (and everyone is a leader to some degree), one must not exercise dominion over others, must be a servant of all, must be like a little child, must be like the younger, and must put one's self last of all and least of all. But there's much more. To be a subject of God's Kingdom, one must be submissive in every area of his or her life. First, we must be submis-

sive to the Lord. James 4:7 commands us to: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Children are to be submissive to their parents, and fathers are to serve their children (see Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20-21; see also for husbands and wives, Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19). Servants must obey masters and masters are to be kind to their servants (see Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-25; 4:1). Congregations are to be submissive to the church leaders. "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Hebrews 13:7). Also, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (verse 17). The shepherds (elders) must take the oversight of the flock: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (I Peter 5:1-3). Everyone must be submissive to the laws of the government, if they don't contradict God's laws. I Peter 2:13-14 commands us to: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well." And in a general sense, everyone should be subject to each other: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (I Peter 5:5).

In God's Kingdom, the subjects of this Kingdom are to be examples to each other, and the world, of how the Lord expects His people to behave. For instance, Paul warned Timothy: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy 4:12). The Lord Jesus was our great example in all things. As being one example out of many, Jesus set us an example at the Lord's Supper. In John 13:14-15 He said: "If

I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

In earthly kingdoms, most, if not all, of the subjects of those kingdoms try to keep apart from the rulers and governors as much as possible. If there is no personal contact between the subjects and the rulers, then that is considered just fine by the citizens of those kingdoms. This, however, can never be the case with the subjects of God's Kingdom. The more personal contact between the Lord and His people, the better. This personal contact, through prayer and Bible reading, is actually required by the Lord. The Lord Jesus knew this Himself. We find in various places in the Gospels Jesus initiating contact between Himself and His heavenly Father. For instance, in Mark 6:45-46 we read: "And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray." And in Mark 1:35 we learn: "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."

Voluntary obedience, from the heart, to the laws and commandments of God's Kingdom is stressed. Forced obedience to the laws of earthly kingdoms is normally the way things are done there. Subjects of these kingdoms usually look for ways to circumvent these laws, and as we have noted, they try to have as little to do with the

rulers as possible. The perfect obedience of Christ shows us the way of God's Kingdom. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). Furthermore, we find in Romans 5:19: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

In earthly kingdoms, there is often little trust between the rulers and subjects. However, in God's Kingdom, trust is the basis for everything that goes on between the Lord and His people. Take being provided for as an example of trust in His Kingdom. Jesus taught: "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:31-34).

The principles of the spiritual, eternal Kingdom of God are all that matter. We are to be learning and living these principles now, for no other principles are allowed to be a part of His Kingdom. May the Spirit of God lead us in understanding these principles, so that we are not led by the fleshly inclinations that predominate the kingdoms of this world.



The Sacrifices of God

We read in I Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." True believers may know that they are a member of a "holy priesthood" and that, as priests, they are "to offer up spiritual sacrifices". What they may not know, however, is what are these sacrifices that are "acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"? Certainly, we are not to offer up animal sacrifices, for these are not acceptable to God.

No, it is spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God. But, what are they?

Our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, has set the example for us by giving Himself to us as the greatest sacrifice that could ever be given. I Corinthians 5:7 reminds us to: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us". Therefore, following the example of Jesus, we are to continually be giving of

ourselves as sacrifices. Romans 12:1-2 instructs us by Paul: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 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."

Perhaps the very first of sacrifices that we are to offer up to the Lord is that of repentance for sin. David wrote in Psalm 51:17: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." The reason for this is obvious. Repentance either starts a relationship with God, or else it restores the relationship that has been broken due to sin. This relationship with the Lord then brings about sacrifices related to joy. David wrote: "And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD" (Psalm 27:6).

Along with singing praises, we also need to do good to others. Hebrews 13:15-16 instructs us: "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. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Sacrifices of thanksgiving are contagious and tend to bring others closer to the Lord. Psalm 107:21-22 reads: "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing."

A faithful priest offered to the Lord incense upon the altar of incense. This represented faithfulness in prayer as we can determine from Psalm 141:2: "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." This shows that prayer should be daily, similar to the offering of incense or the evening sacrifice. Therefore, a faithful priest must also be daily offering the sacrifices of prayer.

Showing the type of love which Christ had for us when He gave Himself for us is a spiritual sacrifice that we should try to imitate. Paul wrote: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offer-

ing and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" (Ephesians 5:1-2).

Paul also wrote that having faith is a spiritual sacrifice. Philippians 2:17 teaches us: "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." Righteousness is considered a sacrifice which is acceptable to the Lord, but we must remember that righteousness is only imputed to us, as with Abraham, by faith. We have no righteousness of ourselves. David explained this to us in this way: "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD."

Sometimes we may help a brother or sister in need, and this is considered a sacrifice to the Lord. The Apostle Paul exclaimed: "But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God" (Philippians 4:18).

Every child of God must be tested before the Lord. Jesus said: "For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another" (Mark 9:49-50).

It is because of the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf that we can be called a saint, or a child of God. Psalm 50:5 gives us this word from the Lord: "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

There may be other spiritual sacrifices that the priest in God's "holy priesthood" needs to offer up to Him, but these that I have listed today somewhat represents them. May we be found faithful, as priests of the Lord, to serve Him in His "spiritual house".





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.

DON'T KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN

“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” (Romans 13:11).

I have used Romans 13:11 before in this column. It is especially true for those of today who are sincere in their commitment of following our Lord Jesus Christ and are awaiting and prepared for the first phase of His coming.

When you receive this **Advocate**, another year will soon be coming to a close. Who can deny that we are living in the last days? It seems that the world is completely out of control, and many people have really become insane.

Let us consider some of the events that transpired in America and around the world in 2016. I do not know where to begin to mention the many signs of the times, so let us generally mention just three outstanding ones.

There was, and is, unrest among nations. The battle against ISIS continues although at this time it is reported that ISIS is losing ground in the fight. Death and destruction is still taking place in Iraq and Afghanistan with no end in sight. North Korea has flexed its military muscles.

Natural disasters, such as floods, tornados and severe weather, increased in the United States and has caused a great deal of suffering and financial loss.

Racism was exposed to a large degree. Police were accused of shooting several black men who were

unarmed. In return, several police were slain by those seeking revenge. Many homes and businesses were destroyed by demonstrators.

Again, as we have done before many times, we go to Matthew 24 to confirm that the things just mentioned are true signs of the times. “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places” (verse 7). At the time of this writing, there was a major earthquake in Italy. It is imperative to note verse eight which states, “All these are the beginning of sorrows.” Without a doubt, many more events will follow on the earth that have not happened before.

The sincere child of God has peace of mind in the midst of all the turmoil on the earth. Let us consider Luke 21:25-28: “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; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. AND WHEN THESE THINGS BEGIN TO COME TO PASS, THEN LOOK UP, AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS; FOR YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH.”

THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL RACE

At the time this **Advocate** is received, we will know the name of the next president of the United States. It,

most likely, will be either Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton.

Of course the Republican and Democratic conventions and primaries are over, and Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton were nominated. At the time of this writing, they are both on their campaign trails. Both candidates had an unfavorable rating for integrity and honesty.

My mother had a saying which stated “politics are dirty.” We know that politics are necessary in order for our government structure to be effective. However, those involved in politics many times go about running for their offices in a less than godly manner.

They accuse their opponents of doing wrong things in the past, question their honesty and ability, and they call them names. This was quite prominent during the 2016 conventions and primaries.

As I viewed the coverage of the conventions and primaries, I recalled the words of Jesus and the saints on how to act toward one another. All true children of God must display the fruit of the Spirit. This eliminates the many negative and carnal thoughts and feelings that they may have toward others just to be declared famous or a winner.

The point that I am trying to make is that the church does not function like a political campaign where the candidates call each other names and attack their opponents with charges which may, or may not, be true.

The candidates, in order to become the winner, often times display the works of the flesh which are the following: “...Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like...” (Galatians 5:19, last part to verse 21, first part).

Candidates running for an office, especially those wishing to be president, should display the fruit of the Spirit which is found in verses 22 and 23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

The Church of God rejects the works of the flesh. Unlike many political candidates, its members do not call each other names or bring accusations against each other which would be displaying the lust of the flesh. The Church of God displays the fruit of the Spirit in each of its members. Therefore, there is a great difference between the fruit of the Spirit being manifest in the Church of God

and the lust of the flesh conversation of many political candidates.

CHURCH DEFIES ITS OWN RULES

I read an article contributed by a brother that a Methodist church in California has elected its first openly gay bishop in defiance of church rules. The article stated that after being elected the bishop, who is a lady, said “I think at this moment I have a glimpse of the realm of God. Today we took a step closer to embody beloved community, and while we may be moving there, we are not there yet. We are moving on to perfection.”

ZIKA VIRUS

The zika virus keeps spreading. You may have seen on the news that the zika virus has appeared in Florida. I read that a baby affected with the zika virus has died. The Florida appearance of the zika virus was the long expected first U.S. transmission of the disease afflicting Latin America and the Caribbean. One report stated that it is only a matter of time before mosquitoes elsewhere start transmitting along the Gulf Coast and elsewhere.

SELF-DRIVING BIG RIGS

The soon appearance of self-driving cars has been mentioned in this column before. Now engineers say that the road will also feature self-driving big rigs which are sometimes call eighteen-wheelers. However, according to a report, they may not appear for decades despite the progress made with automated passenger vehicles.

Comment

Can we picture an 18-wheel truck coming down the highway with several thousand pounds of cargo and perhaps no one but a robot at the wheel? That may really scare us!



BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Do you believe that it is important for a family to do things together?

ANSWER: Yes, it is important! Over a thousand children were asked, “What do you think makes a happy family?” Their answer was strange by average adult standards, and yet filled with wisdom. They replied, “doing things together.”

Godly family members agree with this thought. There is time spent together working, playing, attending worship services and eating meals. Said one mother, “We’ve had some of our best and closest times working together.”

Concerning the thought of quality versus quantity, a wise family understands the time spent together needs to be good times and also needs to be fulfilling. God quality interaction does not develop from only a few minutes together. One mother states it this way, “To excuse myself for spending so little time with my daughter by saying, ‘It was only fifteen minutes, but it was high quality’ is a cop-out.”

We are reminded how the Lord instructed the parents in Israel to conduct themselves toward their children; “And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a

sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates” (Deuteronomy 6:5-9). These words mean a lot of time as well as the quality of it. The example of Spirit-filled parents will be easy to understand and follow by their children. This may be truly accomplished by spending much time together.

There are other factors also which the members of a family should consider. They are our work and its requirement of time, attention and energy. There is a story of a father who at times felt that his time may have been better spent at the office than with his sons. Then he is reminded that those reports will affect lives for a few days or weeks. It is important, however his responsibility as a father is more so. He considers that by being a good father to his sons that they will be good parents too. Then after he has passed away, that report will have rooted. However, that grandchild or great grandchild will have a good father because I was a good father.

QUESTION: Where does the saying, “Let your light shine,” originate? How can we let our lights shine?

ANSWER: To begin with, Jesus first said this to a large crowd of people. It is recorded in Matthew 5:1 that Jesus went up into a high mountain and His disciples came unto Him. There He gave His famous “Sermon on the Mount.” This is where the Beatitudes are found. After the Beatitudes, He went on to say that we are the “salt of the

earth” and the “light of the world”.

Just stop and think about these things for a moment. Have you ever eaten food that should have been salted and was not? Doesn't it taste flat or flavorless? So is the world without the love and hope we, as children of God, can share with it. How about the “light of the world?”

Jesus went on to explain that a city that is on a hill cannot be hid, just the same as a candle is not lit to hide under a basket, and just the same, as we are saved, not to keep our joy and hope to ourselves, but to speak it abroad to those who have never heard this wonderful message. In this way we will “let our light shine.”

The children of Israel, in the time of Jesus, spoke readily of God, the Father in heaven, as the light of the world. They also applied this term to the Law of God, the Ten Commandments. In so doing, it was in line with the Old Testament where God is seen as the source of light and all of life.

In the person of Jesus, the promised light has risen on the world (Matthew 4:16). Jesus is the light of the world. If you belong to Jesus, you are also a light to the world. Read John 1:1-13; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46. Jesus is still saying to you: “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid” (Matthew 5:14). The disciples are now, in their turn, the bearers and witnesses of the light which emanates from Him. “Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:14-15). Just think how great it is to keep ourselves within this orbit of light without reflecting and radiating it! This wonderful light can no more be hidden than can a city set on a hill. The traveler sees it from afar. Likewise, the light is to give light “unto all... in the house.” Who would dream of putting it under a bushel? Its reason for being is to give light to those who surround it.

There is one more thought we must remember about our lights. Jesus said to let them shine rather than to force them to shine. We should show by our lives and deeds most of all, rather than try to tell someone, the way to Jesus. We should speak of Jesus when we have a chance, but we should never push these wonderful truths to anyone. Our lights must shine gently, clearly to all.

So the best way we can let our light shine is by following Jesus' example and by thoughtful, loving, obedience, and by praying. Let us all try to let our lights shine more clearly for Jesus.

QUESTION: How are false prophets just like wolves?

ANSWER: The Apostle Paul wrote, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29).

False prophets are just like wolves in that they may not be aware that they are not what they should be. They go about doing what they know to do. They do not know what they do is corrupt and evil. They appear as sheep, but consume all they can in order to fill whatever appetite, personal conviction or doctrine they have.

False prophets are just like wolves in that they are out for self and personal gain. They are concerned first with realizing their own motives and purposes. They push their own thoughts and formulas for succeeding in life.

False prophets are just like wolves in that they wish a following to acknowledge their lead in intelligence and ability. They appear as sheep, but they proclaim their own false gospels.

False prophets preach heresies. They proclaim justice, morality, righteousness, and good. They may teach mental and emotional strength and positive thinking, but they never preach the true gospel.

Inwardly false prophets are really wolves knowingly or unknowingly. They may appear as sheep, but they are wolves!

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15).

QUESTION: What book in the Bible records the following passage: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”?

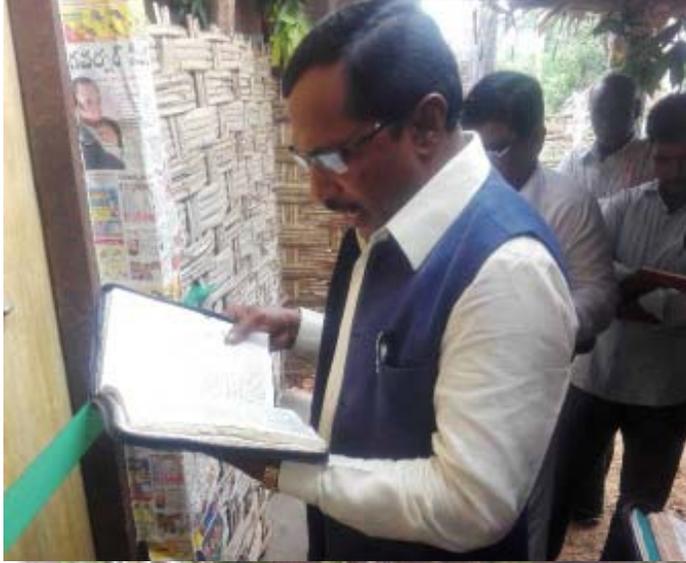
ANSWER: Your passage is found in Isaiah 55:8-9. This passage of Scripture magnifies the greatness of God. On every hand, the futility of man's efforts is evident. But we have assurance that God's purposes will be accomplished.



India

Inside the newly dedicated church building in Mookamamid Village.





Dedicating, and worshipping inside, the church.

LESSON I

PAUL'S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY

Scripture Reading: I Timothy 1:1-20.

Golden Text: I Timothy 1:2.

"Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord."

NOTE: The book of Acts closes with Paul in prison in Rome. Paul wrote many letters. Some were written to churches, and others were written to the pastors of the churches. These letters are called Epistles. We will now study a few of the letters.

1. To whom is Paul writing, and what does he think of him? I Timothy 1:1-2.
2. Where is Timothy at this time? I Timothy 1:3 (first part).
3. About what did Paul warn Timothy? I Timothy 1:3-4.
4. What did Paul say about the commandments? I Timothy 1:5-8.
5. For what did Paul thank the Lord, and how did he describe himself? I Timothy 1:12-14.
6. What did Paul say concerning Christ Jesus? I Timothy 1:15-17.
7. Why did Paul give this charge to Timothy? I Timothy 1:18-19.

LESSON II

PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS TO TIMOTHY

Scripture Reading: II Timothy 2:1-26.

Golden Text: II Timothy 2:1.

"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

1. What advice does Paul give to Timothy in II Timothy 2:1-3?

NOTE: Paul was writing from prison and enduring many hardships. He is instructing Timothy to be strong in the faith.

2. Why did Paul tell Timothy he had to endure these hardships? II Timothy 2:10-12.
3. How did Paul show himself as a good workman? II Timothy 2:15-16.
4. What else should a child of God strive to do? II Timothy 2:22-24.
5. What must we work to avoid happening? II Timothy 4:2-5.
6. What did Paul say would be laid up for the righteous? II Timothy 4:7-8.

NOTE: We should try to be like Paul and endure hardships to the end and also study the Word of God to show ourselves approved.

LESSON III

SOMETHING OF GREAT PRICE

Scripture Reading: I Timothy 2:1-6; 6:1-11.

Golden Text: I Timothy 2:2 (last part).

"That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

1. What is of great price in the sight of God? I Peter 3:4.
2. What should we study to be? I Thessalonians 4:11.

NOTE: What does it mean to be quiet? To be calm and peaceful.

3. There are two things we should do to have strength in

the Lord. What are they? Isaiah 30:15.

4. How are the words of wise men heard? Ecclesiastes 9:17.

5. Would the Lord have us to pray for kings and for those who have the rule over us? Why? I Timothy 2:2-3.

6. If we are to learn from Jesus, what should we do? Matthew 11:29.

7. From what should we withdraw? I Timothy 6:5.

8. Who will inherit and live on the new earth? Matthew 5:5.

NOTE: Let us remember to be gentle and peaceful (meek).

LESSON IV

SHARING OUR FAITH

Scripture Reading: Philemon 1.

Golden Text: Proverbs 19:20.

"Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end."

NOTE: We are going to study the letter that is sent from Paul to his friend, Philemon. This short letter is a good example of Paul's sharing of his faith with another by writing a letter.

1. How did Paul address Philemon? Philemon 1:1.

2. To whom else did Paul address this letter? Philemon 1:2.

3. Tell what kind of a person Philemon was? Philemon 1:5-7.

4. Who was Paul writing about in Philemon 1:10.

NOTE: Onesimus was Philemon's slave. Onesimus ran

away to Rome. There he met with Paul who was able to win him to Jesus. He became a friend of Paul and wanted to do the right thing by his master. Paul helped him to do this by writing his letter.

5. How did Paul ask Philemon to receive Onesimus? Philemon 1:16-17.

6. What did Paul say he would do if Onesimus owed anything? Philemon 1:18-19.

7. Was Paul confident that Philemon would forgive Onesimus? Philemon 1:21.

NOTE: We feel sure Philemon did what Paul asked him and forgave Onesimus. Now he was something more than a slave--he was a brother in the family of God.

Answers From John 4:

- 4 -Samaria
- 5 -Sychar
- 6 -Jacob's well
- 7-woman of Samaria
- 8-unto the city
- 9-Samaritans
- 10-living water
- 11-no
- 14-everlasting life
- 16-her husband
- 18-5 husbands
- 20-in the mountain of Samaria
- 20-Jerusalem
- 22-no
- 23-in spirit and in truth
- 25-Messias or Christ
- 26-Jesus
- 27-Jesus' disciples
- 28-her waterpot
- 29-the Samaritan woman
- 39-yes
- 40-2 days
- 41-yes

A BIG JOB

A youth once asked an old man why he was often weary in the evening. "Well, you see," answered the old man. "I have so much to do every day that it keeps me busy from morning until night. I have two falcons to tame, two hares to keep from running away, two hawks to manage, a serpent to keep penned up, a lion to tend, and a sick old man to care for."

The young man looked surprised and thought the old man was wandering in his mind, when the old man continued, "My two eyes are the two falcons which I must constantly hold back so that they do not enter the ways of the wicked. My two hares are my feet which I must keep from running to mischief. I must walk before God in the light of the living. The two hawks are my two hands which I must keep busy with something useful so that I may have food and clothes and the necessities of life. The serpent is my tongue which is dangerous and an unruly member that must always be kept as with a bridle to keep it from speaking untruth, evil, or unkind words. The lion is my heart which must always be guided lest it become proud and haughty. The sick old man is my entire body that always needs care and attention to keep it fit for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

As the youth listened to all this, he became aware that life is a possession to be guarded and a gift to be carefully used, so that it may serve the true purpose for what it was given. Many do not seem to think of this. They live in a carefree way trying to get all the pleasure and enjoyment out of life they possibly can, and applying little attention to getting ready for the sterner duties which they must soon face and undertake.

Youth should have pleasure and enjoyment, but it should be of a kind that will not soon cause life to be drab and dull. The world is full of pleasures which do not destroy the young person's respect for himself. The real pleasures of life are those which bring joy into the life and help to build a good character.

-Selected.

MIRACLES

What miracles do you associate with the following expressions?

1. *"But he was asleep."*
2. *"Give them to eat."*
3. *"Fill the waterpots with water."*
4. *"Go, wash in the pool of Siloam."*
5. *"L_____, come forth!"*
6. *"Lord, save me."*
7. *"Stretch forth thine hand."*
8. *"Cast the net on the right side of the ship."*
9. *"Where are the nine?"*
10. *"Yea, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the master's crumbs."*

TWELVE DISCIPLES

Using Matthew 10:2-4 find the names of the twelve hidden in the puzzle below. Move right, left, up, down, or diagonally. Circle the names as you find them.

A B D E S O P J T Q R
 C A R D E P H I L I P
 T R J A M E S T K P L
 H T O S A N D R E W E
 A H O T J U D A S E B
 M O S I M O N D T H B
 E L D A I T O H N M A
 P O T H O M A S O S E
 I M A T T H E W M J U
 L E B A M A U E L T S
 M W I L B A R U T A H

SOMETHING TO DO

VERSES FROM JOHN 4

***TAKE YOUR BIBLE
AND FILL IN THE ANSWERS***

4 - Through what country did Jesus feel He must go?

5 - To what city did He come? _____

6 - On whose well did He rest? _____

7 - Whom did He ask for a drink? _____

8 - Where did Jesus' disciples go? _____

9 - With whom did the Jews usually have no dealings?

10 - What kind of water did Jesus offer the woman?

11 - Did the woman understand Jesus's offer at first?

14 - What kind of life does Jesus's living water give?

16 - Whom did Jesus tell the woman to call? _____

18 - How many husbands had the sinful woman had?

20 - Where had the Samaritans been worshipping?

20 - Where did the Jews worship God? _____

22 - Did the woman really know why she worshipped?

23 - How do true worshippers worship God? In _____ and in _____

25 - Who did the woman know was coming?

26 - Who said He was that person? _____

27 - Who were surprised to find Jesus talking to the woman? _____

28 - What did the woman leave as she went to the city?

29 - Who said, "Come, see a man who told me all I ever did"? _____

39 - Did many or few Samaritans believe in Christ because of the woman's testimony? _____

40 - How many days did Jesus stay there to teach?

41 - Were any more souls saved during that time?

Now complete the testimony of the Samaritans in Sychar (verse 42).

"Now we _____, for we have _____ him ourselves and know that he is indeed _____".

Answers to Miracles:

1. The stilling of the tempest (Matthew 8:24).
2. Feeding of the five thousand (Luke 9:13).
3. The water made into wine at Cana (John 2:1-11).
4. The man born blind receives his sight (John 9:7).
5. The raising of Lazarus (John 11:43).
6. Walking on the water (Matthew 14:30).
7. Healing of the man with the withered hand (Mark 3:5).
8. the miraculous draught of fishes (John 21:6).
9. The cleansing of the ten lepers (Luke 17:17).
10. The Syrophenician's daughter cured (Mark 7:28).

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Prophecy, Now Here!

By David DeLong

The days that have been prophesied
By prophets, long ago
Are now upon us, earthly-wide,
For blessings, or for woe.

For proof of this, we cite below:
Israel is a nation;
The fig tree, now, despite the foe
Grew leaves as demonstration.

We know what Daniel prophesied,
For knowledge has increased;
The Prophet also never lied
About each kingdom Beast.

The Apostle Paul was very sure
That perilous times would come;
And come, they have, without man's cure,
Leaving mankind numb.

The disciple John wrote of the truth
That anti-Christ's are here;
They will deceive both old and youth,
Unless the Lord we fear.

Jesus prophesied to all
Of famines and of war;
These are, for us, a wake-up call,
And He is at the door!

