

The Advocate of Truth

A New Year's Message

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Vain Deceit

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The Wedding Dress



*Tahan
choir
singing at
Hakhalay,
Myanmar*

A New Year's Message For 2011

Bond Tennant

Another secular year, 2010, has ended, and we are just beginning another secular year, 2011. The year, 2010, was a violent and turbulent year. As conditions in the world continue to deteriorate, fear is gripping the hearts of many. This is just as Jesus said it would be, "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" (Luke 21:25-26).

Let us endeavor more fervently to put our trust in our Heavenly Father as we have entered this new secular year of 2011! Let us not forget that He has promised His children that He will guide, strengthen and protect them from any who would hate and/or persecute them.

Let us list four things that God tells His children to do in 2011 and all during the remainder of their lives:

(1) **DRAW NEAR:** "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:22). To many, worship has become boring. "But it is good for me to draw near to God..." (Psalm 73:28). "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8, first part).

(2) **HOLD FAST:** "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)" (Hebrews 10:23). "Hold fast" implies that children of God are to keep their hope and faith ever in their memory and ever within grasp. What a person believes is important!

(3) **CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER:** "And LET US consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Hebrews 10:24). Consider literally means to "pay attention to one another." The temptation is to seize it now! Yes, we need each other. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Romans 14:7). "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (II Corinthians 1:4).

(4) **CONTINUE TO GO TO CHURCH:** "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). The importance of corporate worship cannot be overemphasized. "But exhort one another daily, while it is called TO DAY; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13).

Throughout the year 2011, let us consider the words of the Psalmist David as he reveals his trust in the Lord by putting his 'times' or his life in His hands: "In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength. Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth" (Psalm 31:1-5).

READ SOME MORE!

By Carol Buechner



Perhaps as you are reading the Word of God, you may have a tendency to pick and choose which verses or passages you want to concentrate on and even memorize. It is often important and beneficial to read more than just a few chosen verses to get a clearer, more concise understanding of what is being presented to the reader. If you have chosen a few verses of biblical Scripture from the middle of the chapter and do not read surrounding verses, you may miss important points and background information so you do not get the complete message.

The Apostle James wrote five short chapters contained in the Bible. What he has written may seem rather unimportant but if you peruse his writings carefully you will find much useful information to help you mature in your Christian walk.

Examination on one particular short passage from James can be an example of reading complete passages. James 5:13-15 reads: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

This passage gives instruction for what you are to do in three different situations. First, if you are afflicted

(distressed, troubled, tormented) then you are to go to God in prayer for guidance on how to handle the situation. Second, if you are merry (cheerful, lively, happy, mirthful) then you are to sing psalms. This is a time to praise God, reading His Word, singing hymns and lifting up thanksgiving to the Father and glorifying Him for His greatness, power, love, grace, mercy and blessings. Third, if you are sick (ill, unhealthy, diseased, ailing) there are three things that you are to do. First, you need to call for the elders of the church. Second, you are to ask them to pray over you specifically for healing of your sickness. Third, you are to be anointed with oil in the name of the Lord. Fourth, the prayer of faith is to be prayed by the elders and you. This is prayer with complete faith that God will hear your need and answer you with healing. James states that with this prayer of faith the sick shall be saved and their sins will be forgiven.

It is necessary to READ SOME MORE in James chapter five. Verse sixteen states: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." There are instructions in this verse that need to be examined more closely as they seem to be linked to verses thirteen through fifteen.

The statement, "Confess your faults one to another," is extremely important. What does it mean to confess?

This action is to acknowledge, declare, reveal, admit, speak or relate. This is not an action of withholding, hiding or concealing. What are faults? A fault is an offense, wrongdoing, transgression, sin, impropriety, mistake, misdeed, error, failing, defect or shortcoming. Now this confessing or speaking of faults is to be “one to another”. You know that it is extremely important to confess your faults or sins to God, repent and ask for forgiveness of what you have done. Without this confession and forgiveness, God does not hear your prayers. But this verse extends this to confession to others as well. This can include your family, work group, Bible study companions, a stranger, the church members or anyone you are acquainted with. If you are seeking healing and you have need of forgiving someone for a sin, then it must be admitted to them, as well as to God, to be forgiven. Why is this so important? These sins, although they may seem insignificant to you, can be a stronghold against receiving your healing. You may think that as long as it is confessed to God that it is taken care of. James five, verse sixteen, specifically says that you must “Confess your faults one to another. . . that ye may be healed.” Does it say that you can ignore this confession and only do it if you feel like it? Is it a choice or a necessity? It is not a choice because situations left in a state of unforgiveness can cause strife, conflict, quarreling, disagreement, contention, disharmony, anger, bitterness, disruption and so much more. Think about what it could do to a group of any kind. It can lead to very devastating consequences. When a group is in harmony through confessing to each other and praying for each other, much can be accomplished. This is something very important to meditate on.

Another statement in James five, verse sixteen, “. . . and pray one for another. . .,” must not be overlooked. It states that YOU are to pray (ask, supplicate, plead, implore, appeal) for OTHERS, and likewise OTHERS SHOULD pray for you. Why is this vital? Think about what your prayer habits are like? What do you spend most of your time praying about? Are your prayers mainly self-centered? Are you mainly praying for your needs and wants? Do you forget to pray for the neighbor who is ill, the church brother or sister who is in a difficult situation, the prayer requests that have been given by others, the very ill friend and so many more? How many times has someone asked you to pray for them and you have given a brief prayer. Was that sufficient? Even when prayer is being presented

to God for someone else in a group, are you not in harmony with the others in attendance? Could it be that down deep in your soul you do not really want a blessing answer for this person? The others will not know your heart but God most certainly will. Have you made a list of people who really need prayer? Do you consistently check this list to see who still needs your prayers? It is SO easy to forget that someone is ill or has special situations needing continued prayer. Is someone being completely ignored by you because you really do not want them to receive what they need? Just because the elders presented the “prayer of faith”, it does not mean that the matter is ended. Sometimes God answers immediately and there are times when you must continue to walk in faith for a healing or other matter to be terminated. That is when the prayers need to continue in harmony.

This would be a good time to pause and READ SOME MORE to examine the words of Jesus on how important it is to pray in a certain way for others. In Matthew 18:19-20, Jesus instructs: “AGAIN (repeating) I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” When people are gathered praying in AGREEMENT (accord, harmony, unison, conformity), Jesus IS THERE to hear and intercede to the Father for them, and prayers of such WILL BE (not might be) answered. If someone in the group is not in agreement with the others, whether it is a group of two, three, a hundred, a thousand, what can the result be? Can this disharmony, discord, or lack of unity cause an atmosphere to be infected by the wrong thing, thus stopping the Power of God to fulfill answers? In the book of Amos, the question is asked: “Can two (or many) walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3). They can walk together, but if agreement is not present, dire results can occur. It only takes one to infect the complete unit.

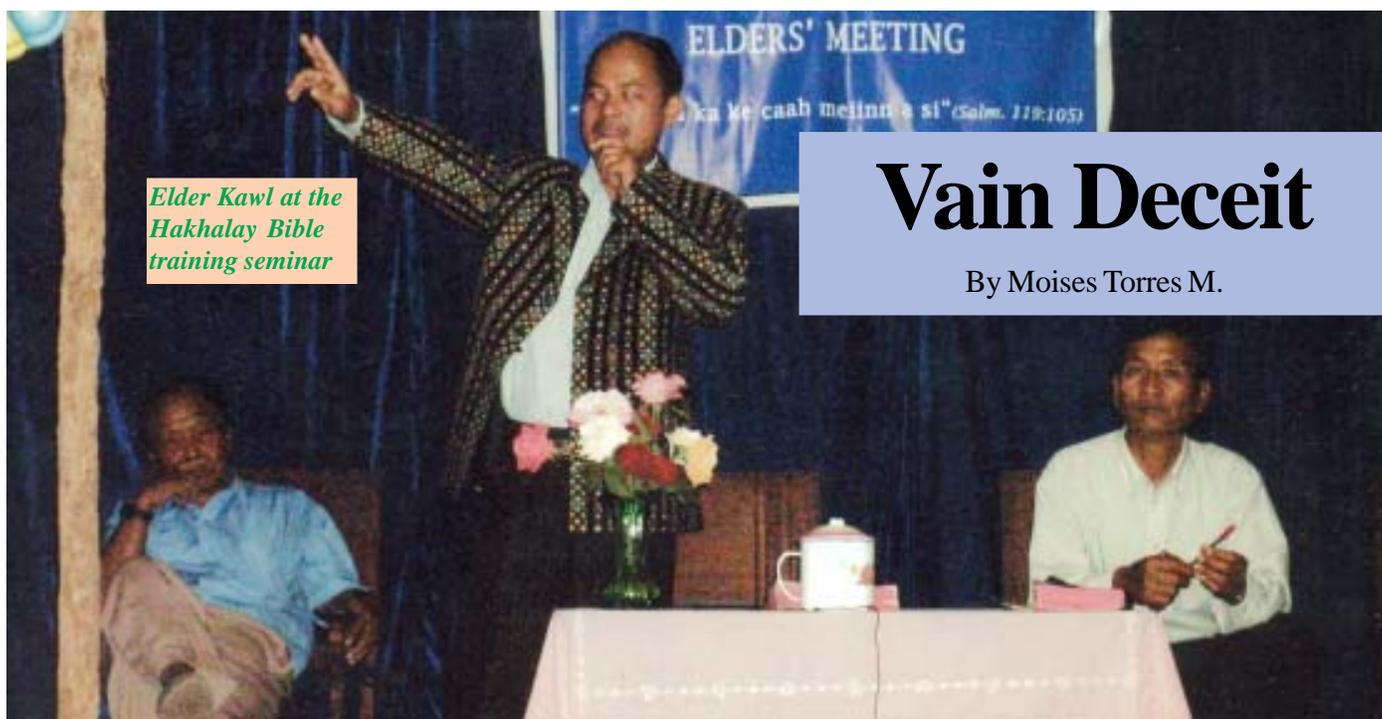
There is one more statement from James 5:16 to be examined. It reads, “. . . The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Effectual means able to produce, valid, bringing the desired effect, efficient and authoritative. Fervent means to have or show great warmth of feeling, intensely devoted, earnest and passionate. Righteous means upright, virtuous, proper or in accordance with God’s commands. Avail means to be

useful, helpful in accomplishing an end, of value and profitable. Putting this all together, it could be said that the prayer that produces the desired results comes from a person who is passionate, sincere, serious and devoted to seeking God. The person knows what God's promises are and prays according to His Word, thus producing valuable and positive answers or results. The prayers are not just brief and general but specific and given humbly and earnestly from the heart.

To enhance what has been discussed in this article, it is helpful to READ SOME MORE in James chapter five, verses seventeen and eighteen. "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." James is simply reminding you that Elias was just like you,

and he was able to pray a famine into existence and stop it, too. Therefore, if you will pray seriously, intently and determined, you can have what you ask. Yes, it is possible when your whole heart is in it.

As you contemplate what has been presented in this article, keep in mind one particular part of what James has to say. That part is "CONFESS YOUR FAULTS ONE TO ANOTHER, and PRAY ONE FOR ANOTHER, THAT YE MAY BE HEALED." This may mean a shift in your prayers to include others to a greater extent. It may mean doing some confession of your faults to others. Is it worth a try? Could it be that you have not received the positive answers to your prayers because you are leaving out part of these instructions or all of them? READ SOME MORE in the Bible about the healing process and how to go before God and others in a spirit of prayer.



Elder Kawl at the Hakhalay Bible training seminar

Vain Deceit

By Moises Torres M.

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ”
(Colossians 2:8).

VAIN DECEIT is translated as “empty words” in the King James Version of the Bible. In this same verse, the phrase “the rudiments of the world” refers to the ways of the world.

Colossians 2:8 was an admonishment from the Apostle

Paul to the churches in Colosse and in Laodicea, which were separated by only nine miles of distance. The admonishment that the Apostle Paul gave them was to have much communication and participation between them and to follow the advice that he was giving to them. “And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea” (Colossians 4:16).

The churches that were in Colosse and Laodicea

followed vain deceit which was not part of the doctrine taught in the Church of God. Philosophies and thoughts from the Greek school reigned in those days, and their customs were flooding the entire world. These strange teachings were later known as **“Gnosticism,”** (from “gnosis” or knowledge).

The Gnostics’ intellect, actions and special works replaced the faith in Christ! Mysticism and Jewish legalism along with Greek philosophy was mixed with true Christian doctrine. This started to affect the church of the Colossians and came to be a heresy that was a false Christianity in the second and third centuries. This heresy taught that salvation could only be obtained by a great and special intellect, and through certain disciplines and special works.

The Greeks built worship schools that displayed physical beauty. In fact, they created the physical culture, and they were the first ones to establish gyms and special diets to the embellishment of the body. They were the inventors of the Olympic games that prevail in our day. They wanted a healthy mind in a healthy body. However, the Apostle Paul contended against this philosophy when he told the church, “For bodily exercise profiteth little...” (I Timothy 4:8).

The Greeks invented many myths and gods and gave them great powers and dominance in certain dimensions. Paul contended in the churches in Colosse and Laodicea saying to be comforted in "...the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Please read Colossians 2:1-3. This advice from the Apostle Paul cannot be confused by strange philosophies and vain deceit based on the rudiments of the world.

On their part, the Jewish people, in their radical legalism, and in their excessive mysticism, started to exercise faith by works and fulfillment of the ritualistic laws, and they worshiped angels, putting aside the faith in the One who had been resurrected from the dead! That is why the apostle reminds the church that the Lord Jesus Christ, Who nailed to His cross "...the handwriting of ordinances that was against..." them, and contrary to them, made it possible that no one could judge them nor obligate them to participate "...in meat, or in drink or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come, **but the body is**

of Christ." Please read Colossians 2:13-17.

The Apostle Paul also admonished them in the following way: “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?” (Colossians 2:18-22).

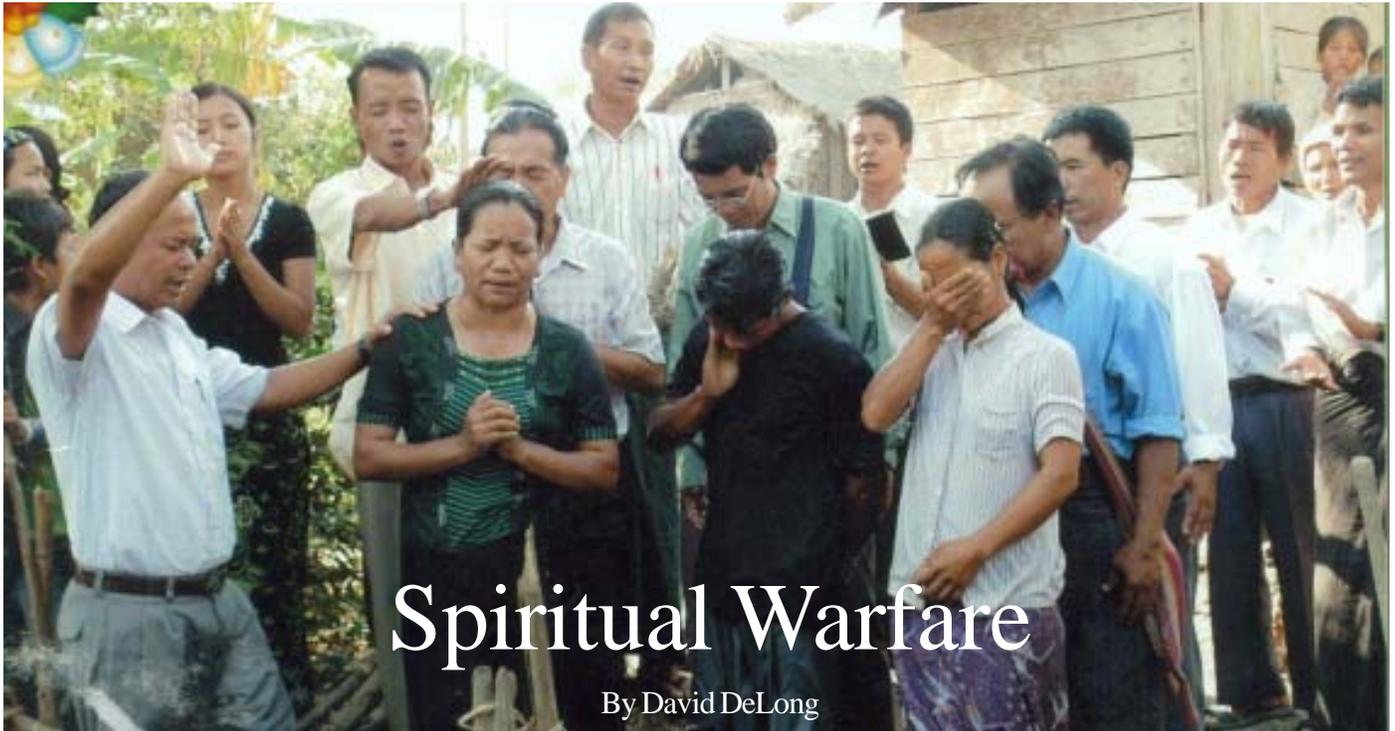
What about the Church of God in our day?

Do we worship mysticisms, angels, sophisticated idols such as the false concept of power? Let us remember that Lucifer wanted to overthrow God so he could be the most powerful. He never noticed that the true power was in the One who created him, who can only give life and take it away. Many today believe that humanity can be powerful without having the need to accept an All-Powerful Creator.

The same that happened in the churches in Colosse and Laodicea could happen in our church during our day. The evil one (Satan) can make us believe in our own selves, in our physical beauty and intellectual ability. He can make us believe we have the power to save ourselves without the need for a redeemer. These are the vain deceits and basic elements of the world which the Apostle Paul fought against in the Church of God!

Let us analyze our spiritual condition and consider if in any way we are being legalists and mystics just like the Jews in those days, or if in any way we are following the Greek customs of our time. The evil one can confuse you and make you believe that you can be saved by the works of the law, and make you feel that the law in itself has the power to save you without the need of faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer.

This is the same subtle lie told by the evil one (Satan) in Eden: Eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and "...ye shall be as gods..." , "...Ye shall not surely die." (See Genesis 3:5,4). **False, false, LIE! This is only vain deceit. “Hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”**



Spiritual Warfare

By David DeLong

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Timothy 6:12-14).

Now, is our Christian life similar to going to a movie theater? Do we pay for our ticket (tithes and offerings); sit in a movie seat (pew); watch the movie (observe the ministers and others in action); eat and drink our popcorn and coke snacks (potluck); and then go home until another performance comes along? Perhaps we have found ourselves caught up in such a situation. The Bible assures us, however, that we are involved in an all-out spiritual war, and the outcome is nothing less than *life or death!* As the hymn says, "Like a mighty army, moves the Church of God."

Our Command

Every army must have a supreme commander who gives out the orders, develops the war strategy, and is the one whom all the troops look to for inspiration. The Commander of the Church of God is Almighty God, Himself. Directly under Him is our Captain, the Lord Jesus Christ (see Hebrews 2:9-10). To our Commander, and to our

Captain, we, as true soldiers, owe supreme loyalty. This loyalty includes our devotion to Their cause, as well as a strict obedience to Their marching orders.

The Bible is our field manual. It gives the troops their marching orders and defines the war strategy that they must follow in every situation. In fact, obedience to these instructions is the test of loyalty to our Captain. Jesus specified in John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (See also I John 2:3). We must be people of the Word, not only reading it frequently and memorizing its passages, but also meditating upon its life giving words and obeying its injunctions.

We must be faithful stewards, at all times, to that which is entrusted to us. "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Corinthians 4:1-2). As we march the narrow way--a path that is only as wide as the footsteps of Jesus--may we give up all of the things of the world, and be totally surrendered to Him. This will include our being in submission to the immediate officers over us--the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers--who watch for our souls (see Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 13:17).

King Saul and King David give a sharp contrast to being surrendered to the Lord. When Saul was commanded of the Lord to utterly destroy Amalek, we learn

in I Samuel 15:9: "But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly." We see in King Saul only a half-hearted attempt to obey the Lord. His heart contained pride, rebellion, and a sense of self-justification. The Spirit of the Lord eventually left him and an evil spirit troubled him (see I Samuel 16:14).

At this point, we may want to ask ourselves some tough questions. Is God's presence lacking in my life? Is my heart turning cold? Is there just "formalism" in our church services? Do I detect apathy, complacency, or lukewarmness in my relationship with the Lord? Am I only going through empty or vain traditions? The Apostle Paul admonished the Corinthians (and us) to examine ourselves to see whether we are in the faith (see II Corinthians 13:5). Jesus counselled the Laodicean church "...to buy of me gold tried in the fire..." (Revelation 3:18). King David, in contrast to Saul, deeply repented when he sinned against the Lord, and gave himself in unconditional surrender to his heavenly Commander (see Psalm 51:1-17).

A good soldier of the Lord must be disciplined. The word "disciple", in the Scriptures, refers to a disciplined follower of Jesus. A disciple, therefore, is he or she who follows the example of their disciplined Captain. We can see the very disciplined life that Jesus lived when we study the Gospels. For instance, in His prayer life we read about Jesus in Mark 1:35, "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." The Lord, after speaking about one's service to his master, said in Luke 17:10, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

The Enemy

Near the end of his life the Apostle Paul wrote: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Timothy 4:7-8). Who, or what, was the enemy which Paul had to fight against? Some might think it was the people who tried to destroy him. Others might believe that it was the great amount of

obstacles he had to overcome. (See II Corinthians 11:23-28). Ephesians 6:12, however, gives us the answer. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Satan rules over a kingdom and he is desperately trying to defeat God and His kingdom. Satan's kingdom apparently is not divided even though it is a kingdom of darkness (see Matthew 12:25-26; Colossians 1:12-13). In fact, his kingdom appears to be quite organized in the spiritual realm. We get a glimpse of this in the book of Daniel, chapter 10. Daniel had been fasting for 3 weeks (verses 2-3), when an angel of God came to show him the understanding for which he was seeking (verse 12). Then verse 13 informs us: "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia."

This passage is most enlightening. The "prince of the kingdom of Persia" must have been a demon since an angel would have had no trouble at all defeating a human prince. The angelic messenger who was sent to Daniel apparently fought against this demon prince for 21 days until the archangel Michael (see Jude 9) came to help him. The "kings of Persia" may have been higher up demons who also resisted the angelic messenger. This would indicate that the countries of the world are being controlled to some degree through demonic powers. (Remember that Paul wrote that "we wrestle...against the rulers of the darkness of this world"). These "rulers" cannot be defeated by a believer (or even the whole church) alone. We must depend upon the Lord's Spirit to accomplish such a task.

Thankfully, the saints have been delivered from this kingdom of darkness. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:1-2). Now, when King Saul lost God's Spirit, he went from God's kingdom back to Satan's kingdom. Can a saint today lose God's Spirit and, thus, revert back to Satan's kingdom? Tragically, the answer is yes. Paul's warning for God's people is, "Quench not the Spirit" (I Thessalonians 5:19). Here, "quench" means "to extinguish" or "go out".

Jesus even warned about a situation in which a person, when once cleansed of an evil spirit but who keeps himself "empty", can be possessed by the original demon, plus seven more demons worse than the first (see Matthew 12:43-45).

Every soldier of the Lord *must* know his or her enemy, Satan! This fallen angel knows about you. He knows your weaknesses, therefore, he is able to tempt you accordingly. And tempt you, he will. Even our Captain was tempted by him (see Matthew 4:1-11). But Jesus was triumphant over Satan's every temptation. One needs to be wary of the devil's tactics, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (II Corinthians 2:11). The saints are the main target of Satan's darts for they constitute a major threat to his evil goals. Being apathetic toward Satan, or having a dread of him, can both be disastrous. Some people become so preoccupied with evil that they take their eyes off of the Commander.

Let us now examine some of the "devices" that Satan uses to try to defeat human beings. Satan, and his demons, can gain access into people's lives when these people open doors to them. This could be done knowingly or unknowingly. One of these doors of access is how king Saul opened his life to demonic activity: by sin and rebellion. Samuel had told Saul that "...rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft..." (I Samuel 15:23). Saul actually ended up using witchcraft when he sought the witch of Endor (see I Samuel 28:7-20). This, then, is a second means of demonic invasion--the use of the occult. We will discuss more of this topic shortly. Another device for Satanic activity is when a person harbors unforgiveness in his or her heart (see II Corinthians 2:9-11). We have already mentioned apathy and fear, two more of his devices. Also, if one has a love for the things of this world, "...the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life...", Satan can more readily tempt this person to fall away from the faith (see I John 2:15-16).

Now, Satan acts in at least two ways: "...as a roaring lion...seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8), or as "...an angel of light" (II Corinthians 11:14). Many times he tries to hide his identity and methods of attack so that "...some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seduc-

ing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (I Timothy 4:1). He is a master of deception. Jesus said of Satan, "...When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Satan seems to crave being worshiped. This is something that he even desired of Jesus. After he had showed Jesus "...all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time", Satan said, "If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine" (Luke 4:5,7). Jesus used the Word of God to defeat His enemy: "...Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (verse 8). Satan doesn't seem to care if he is worshiped indirectly, as long as he is worshiped. For instance, if a person worships an idol, he is actually paying homage to the demon behind the idol (see Psalm 106:36-38). Idolatry is worshiping another god, whether it be an idol, self, a person, or possessions. The Apostle John warned us about idolatry (see I John 5:21).

Many people have fallen for the lie that they can know the future (and sometimes other facts) outside of what the Bible foretells or allows. Satan is behind this deception, and he instigates people to become involved in various occultic activities. Psychics, claiming to have clairvoyance, say they are able to "see" hidden images or events in their minds. This occultic practice has become so acceptable in today's world that even some police departments use psychics to try to solve crimes. Other people seek out fortunetellers who use tarot cards, or similar devices, to try to foretell the future. Many read their horoscopes ("horrorscopes"), in the daily newspapers, for the same reason. Still others attend seances in a vain attempt to communicate with deceased loved ones. The Lord warns us in Isaiah 8:19-20: "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Because unbelievers have no assurance that God is protecting them, many times they resort to the use of "good luck charms" for safety. Satan is probably more than delighted for these people to take such actions since their focus is not on the Lord and His Word. Four leaf clovers, rabbits' feet, and other such things are thought to bring

safety to these gullible people. Superstitions will cause numbers of folks to take foolish actions such as: turning a horseshoe upright; not walking under a ladder; trying not to break a mirror; not opening an umbrella in a house; not letting a black cat walk in front of them; and throwing salt over their shoulders. Some people are petrified that if a bird flies at their window, someone could die in that house. Others believe that death always comes in threes. Believers, however, *know* that protection only comes from the Lord.

There are multitudes of people in the world who are seeking more power, or control, in their lives. For instance, some look for healing by going to "magic healers" (even many of those who claim to be faith healers). Misguided ones claim power by conjuring spells upon their enemies. Books such as "Harry Potter" make occultic magic seem exciting or as a means for one to have more control in life. Cults, or secret societies, invite unsuspecting people to belong to a "family" or a "brotherhood". Real power in a person's life, however, can only come through the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught His disciples: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The Fight

We mentioned earlier that the Church of God is like a mighty army. The local church, then, is like a squad. The definition of a squad is, "a small party...grouped for drill, inspection, or other purposes." All members of this unit must work together (not against each other or independently). Psalm 133:1 reads, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (See also I Corinthians 12:14,21; Ephesians 4:3).

Being a united local church means that all the members fight together and watch out for one another. This spiritual squad fights back to back, and marches shoulder to shoulder. It is similar, in some respects, to the "phalanx" that Alexander the Great used to conquer many kingdoms. A phalanx is "a body of heavy-armed infantry formed in ranks close and deep." We will examine what are our spiritual armor and weapons, shortly.

Paul admonished Timothy, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that

warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (II Timothy 2:3-4). Every soldier of the Lord must be fit as well as disciplined. This should include being physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually fit. Even though I Timothy 4:8 says, "For bodily exercise profiteth little...", Paul was speaking of this in relation to "...godliness...having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Often we don't feel as sharp spiritually when, for instance, we haven't had a good night's rest. The same is true with our diet, exercise, or other physical aspects of our life. Even in just physical battle it was noted that the Greeks could run across a large open plain (possibly as much as a mile), wearing armor and a backpack, *before* engaging the enemy in a fight.

Perhaps we should think of our church gatherings on Sabbath (and at other times) as opportunities to form spiritual battle strategies and to encourage our brothers and sisters in the battle. I Corinthians 1:10 instructs us: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." We all must be on the "same page" when it comes to fighting this spiritual war. The local church should also serve as a "hospital" for the wounded. Many are hurting and are discouraged, while others may feel that their spiritual life is almost gone.

And may we never forget to be dressed for battle. Ephesians 6:14-17 lists the armor we need: "...having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (See also Revelation 19:14). Not only is the Bible our field manual, but it is also our main weapon.

Our spiritual fight is an offensive one and a defensive one (see Matthew 16:18). As we submit to our Commander, the enemy will flee from us (see James 4:7). In fact, Colossians 2:15 informs us that our Captain has already won the war. Let us look to Him for our victory as well!

The Wedding Dress

By Moises Torres M.

"And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:1-14).

In verse 2 of this parable, Jesus described what the kingdom of heaven is like: a king who made a marriage for his son. In verses 3-5, we can discern that the king had gone to a good bit of expense for this wedding, having prepared oxen, fatlings, and other things for a grand dinner. ("Fatlings" means that only the best animals were chosen. Everything was anticipated.) Twice the king sent out servants to invite those who were bidden to come to the marriage, but they found excuses not to come, one going

to his farm and another to his merchandise. So spiteful was the "remnant" that they even killed the servants who had been sent to bid them to the wedding. Understandably, the king was very angry and sent his army to destroy those wicked people, and to burn their city (see verses 6-7).

The king then sent his servants into the "highways" to invite all who would come to the wedding, including "both bad and good" people. So the wedding was now "furnished with guests" (see verses 8-10). When "the king came in to see the guests" one of them was not wearing a "wedding garment". When the king questioned the man about this situation, the man "was speechless" (see verse 12).

That man kept quiet because there was no justification for his not wearing a wedding garment. We should not misunderstand that someone could enter into the New Jerusalem not being dressed in a wedding garment and be taken away later. This is only a parable to warn us that we are called to always wear our wedding garments. The bride has not appeared yet as the wedding has not started.

According to Isaiah 61:10 we read, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." This is the wedding dress for the invited guests to the marriage. The clean and righteous are the ones who will be taken in by our Lord Jesus Christ at His return.

Sadly, the man without the wedding garment was cast "into outer darkness" (See Matthew 22:13). Luke 8:17-18 warns us: "For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad. Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have."

Four Important “One Things”

(1) David wrote, “One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple” (Psalm 27:4).

This verse gives us the thought of contemplation, as in the case of the Israelite approaching the Tabernacle and high priest for cleansing.

(2) Jesus said to a young ruler, “...One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me” (Mark 10:21).

This young ruler, who had riches, found renunciation too taxing. He represented all those who discern what is required in full devotion to God, and fail to take action.

(3) To Martha Jesus said, “But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:42).

The one thing that Mary chose was to become better acquainted with her Lord and His teachings. This corresponds to those who live in the light and are devoted to and pray to their Heavenly Father.

(4) The Apostle Paul wrote, “... this one thing I do forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before” (Philippians 3:13).

Like Mary, Paul continued unto the end to offer the affections of a good and true heart.

B.T.

The Boy and His Bible

By: Nakasonene Findley
(Grenada)

Once upon a time, there lived a boy named Michael. He was a very lazy boy. All he did was lie under trees and sleep.

One day, Michael’s mother said, “You need to learn to read.”

“I don’t want to read,” he replied. His mother got him a teacher, but she could not teach him, and frustrated, she gave up.

One day, a man came to visit Michael and his mother. He asked, “Michael, why didn’t you try to make an effort to learn to read when my aunt was teaching you?” Michael did not respond. The man continued, “If you learn to read by next month, you will get a prize.”

Motivated by the word ‘prize’, Michael started to practice; his mother saw and commended him on his good performance. As the end of the month drew nearer, Michael grew better and better, and as the deadline arrived Michael had transformed into an avid reader.

Michael was now anxious for his prize, but a week went by and there was no sign of the man who had promised him his bounty.

Then one day, while retrieving his mother’s mail from the mailbox, among the letters he saw a package addressed to him. He hurried inside and showed his mother. His prize had finally arrived. Michael was giddy with excitement, he opened the present and to his delight it was a Bible with his name and a small note etched inside. The note read, “Cherish and obey.” It was the best present that Michael ever received, and he read from its pages every day.

God’s Love to Me

*God’s love is so wondrous,
It helps me to serve and to love Him.*

.....

*God helps me through my many troubles,
I love Him and will never forsake Him.*

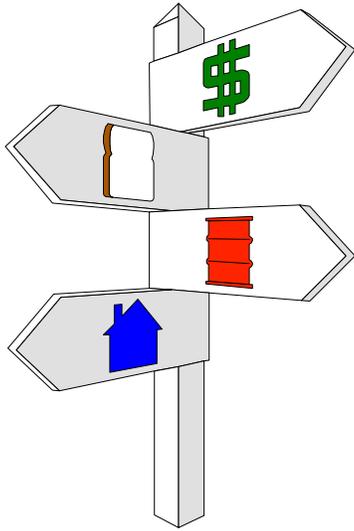
.....\

*He’s always present, through sickness and health,
It gives me pleasure to love and serve Him.*

.....

*Through good, bad, and even sad times,
I’ll keep His love in my heart forever.*

Amor Joseph
Grenada



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.

MIXING OLD TIME RELIGION, NEW AGE

Study: Many in America customize beliefs

By William Wan
Washington Post

Can you believe in Jesus and in astrology?

The answer is a resounding yes, according to a study that shows Americans' beliefs to be more complex than might be expected.

The survey – one of the first by a major religion polling group to tackle American belief in such things as “the evil eye” and “spiritual energy in trees” – was conducted in August by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. The goal was to explore the complexity of faith in the modern world and the overlap between religions and other supernatural beliefs.

Experiencing other faiths

According to results to be released today, the overlap is considerable. Researchers found that 24 percent of U.S. adults sometimes attend services of a faith different from their own. (That figure doesn't include people who go for special events such as weddings and funerals or

services while traveling.)

The study also found Americans' personal beliefs often combine aspects of major religions such as Christianity with Eastern or New Age beliefs such as reincarnation and astrology.

For example 25 percent of about 4,000 U.S. adults surveyed believe in reincarnation, the rebirth of the soul in another body. Among Christians, the number drops only slightly, 22 percent.

“We know that religion in U.S. society is quite diverse. What's interesting is this data shows that even at the individual level, a single person holds that same diversity and range of beliefs,” said senior researcher Gregory Smith.

Researchers asked specifically whether people believed in or had experience with the following: reincarnation, spiritual energy located in physical things, yoga as a spiritual practice, the evil eye, astrology, being in touch with the dead, consulting a psychic, or encountering a ghost. About 65 percent expressed belief in at least one of them.

For most of the questions, little previous data exists for purposes of comparison. But two questions – “have you ever had a religious or mystical experience?” and “have you seen or been in the presence of a ghost?” – have been asked before, and in both cases, there was a significant increase in the number of people saying yes.

Nearly half of those surveyed in August said they have had a mystical/religious experience, compared with 22 percent in a 1962 survey. The percentage who said they have interacted with a ghost doubled from 9 percent in 1996 to 18 percent this year.

“We don’t have hard data to explain what’s behind this,” Smith said, “But you look at popular culture . . . and it could be that expressing this kind of belief is just somehow more socially acceptable today.”

Believers in ghosts

Clement Akoto, 52, a District of Columbia resident who participated in the study, said he does not see a conflict in his wide-ranging beliefs. Akoto, a Catholic who attends Mass every week, said he believes in astrology and communication with the dead and ghosts.

People have complex backgrounds, which translates into complex beliefs, Akoto said. Born in Ghana, he was taught to believe in spirits but became Catholic while attending a missionary school.

“I can swing with both sides. I believe in God and in what my parents taught me,” he said. “And why not? Even in the Bible, you have ghosts, you know the Holy Ghost. And with astrology, didn’t Daniel mention astrologists? Didn’t the Three Kings follow a star to Jesus?”

The Houston Chronicle

COMMENT

We have featured other articles on this same subject of mixing different beliefs to form one’s religion! This article is tops!

In spite of what a survey may reveal, one cannot be a true follower of our Lord and also believe in astrology! We repeat that astrology is forbidden in the Word of God because it is related to the occult. Isaiah 47:12-13 records, “Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy

counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.”

Eastern or New Age beliefs are very prominent enemies of the true worship of God. The Bible mentions the practices of the New Age Movement. Those who practice those things of the New Age Movement are inviting judgment upon themselves. Let us quote a few verses: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them...” (Exodus 20:3-5). Since the New Age practices are condemned by God, those who dabble into New Age practices put another god before the true God.

In Deuteronomy 18:9-12, God instructed Israel likewise: “When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.” So we see that New Age practices are ancient heathen practices which have crept into the churches just like Sunday, Christmas and Easter!

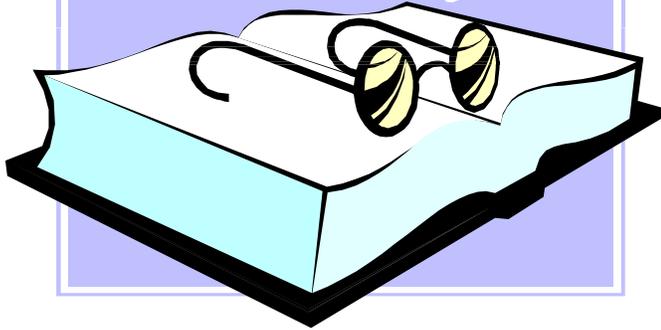
Society may be complex today, but that has nothing to do with the pure worship of God. Most people wish to make the true worship of God complex. They believe that their religion must be complex or of a mystical nature. They miss the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus.

Many are like Clement Akoto who can swing with both sides.

Jude gives us advice to “...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). New Age beliefs and practices were never delivered unto the saints, but they crept into the nominal church several years later in the beginning of the apostacy.

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Will you please discuss the power and authority of Jesus?

ANSWER: First, let us quote Matthew 7:28-29: “And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

“These sayings” referred to in verse 28 are commonly referred to as the “Sermon on the Mount”. He had gone up into a mountain away from the multitudes, and His disciples came unto Him (Matthew 5:1). Matthew 5, 6, and 7 include the doctrine that astonished the people who listened to Him. It was not like the teaching of the scribes who were among the religious leaders of that day. Jesus had authority from His Father to speak the way He did, and to proclaim the wonderful righteous principles as we read them in these three chapters. He also said in Matthew 28:18, “...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” His power and authority was the voice of God speaking to the people (Hebrews 1:1-2) in these “last days”. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter, John and James heard a voice out of the cloud saying, “...This is my beloved Son: HEAR HIM” (Mark 9:7).

Jesus manifested His power over the devil. In Matthew 4:4, 7, 10, 11, He rebuffed Satan with the authority which God gave unto Him, and in verse 10, He commanded the evil one, saying, “...Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt

thou serve.” Jesus shows here that even Satan should worship the Lord God of heaven and earth.

Jesus Christ would have His people victorious today by refusing to follow sin, to live in sin, and be followers of the devil. “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (I John 3:8). There is a continual warfare with Satan through the lusts of the flesh. Read Romans 7 where the Apostle Paul contrasts the good and the evil in his life. He sums it up in verse 25, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:1-2).

Christ was victorious over Satan, and we are admonished to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. As He had authority to rebuke and overcome sin, we also can prepare ourselves and have vested in us the power of His might by putting on the whole armour of God. We find in Ephesians 6:10-18 the reason for this protection is that “...we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness

in high places” (verse 12). We need the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ to overcome the evil that Satan has poured upon the inhabitants of this earth. He has come down in great wrath for he knows he has but a short time. His final end is given in Revelation 20:10. He will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone and be destroyed for ever.

Jesus has the authority over the Church of God--to build it upon His Father which is in heaven (Matthew 16:17-18); to purchase it with His own blood (Acts 20:28); “...to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” To be the head (Ephesians 1:17, 22, 23); “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, ... hath put all things under his feet, and gave him (Jesus) to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular” (I Corinthians 12:27).

Jesus was given authority over preaching the gospel, and after His resurrection, He spoke these words to His disciples: “...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world...” (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Apostle Peter summed up Jesus, the man of authority, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost when he told the men of Judea, and all that dwelt at Jerusalem these words: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ ... Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the NAME OF JESUS CHRIST for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:36, 38-39).

QUESTION: What is the definition of expediency? Will you please cite two Bible characters who displayed expediency?

ANSWER: Expediency is the attitude of putting one’s own interests and immediate purposes first. Usually it is used in a pejorative sense. We say that a person does

what is expedient rather than what is right.

That was exactly the attitude of Annas and Caiaphas in relation to Jesus. It was a great tragedy that the two main leaders of Israel were such unprincipled rascals. But it all worked out in the providence of God in bringing the atonement of Jesus to pass. Annas and Caiaphas are examples to us of what we ought not to be. It is too bad that those who most need to profit by the warning of their misdeed are the ones least likely to read this account. What a contrast these two men are to most of the individuals in the Gospel of John. When these two men came into direct contact with the Lord Jesus, they failed completely to be benefited by it.

Annas and Caiaphas are warning examples to us of the dangers of shortcuts. They both did what seemed to them to be expedient rather than what was right. These two men were haughty, but still they were acknowledged as the leaders of Israel. They were autocratic and dictatorial. Political power was what they glorified in.

But what does history tell us? These men stand condemned before conscience of decent people as the ones who condemned to death the best Man who ever lived on earth. Their names are execrated today for the heinous crime they committed. The lesson for us is that it does not pay to be motivated by selfish interests or political expediency. Rather, we should always do what is right and stand by the truth. That will pay off in the end.

John tells us that Jesus was first brought to Annas for a preliminary hearing. Later Jesus was brought to the Sanhedrin for a formal trial. Annas is identified as the father-in-law of Caiaphas. He was high priest all through the reign of Pontius Pilate’s procuratorship. It was at this point that Caiaphas was pointed out by John and identified him as the one who had advised the Jews that it would be good if one man died for the nation of Israel (John 11:47-54).

QUESTION: I have heard some people use the term “present truth.” Is this term scriptural, and where may it be found in the Bible if so?

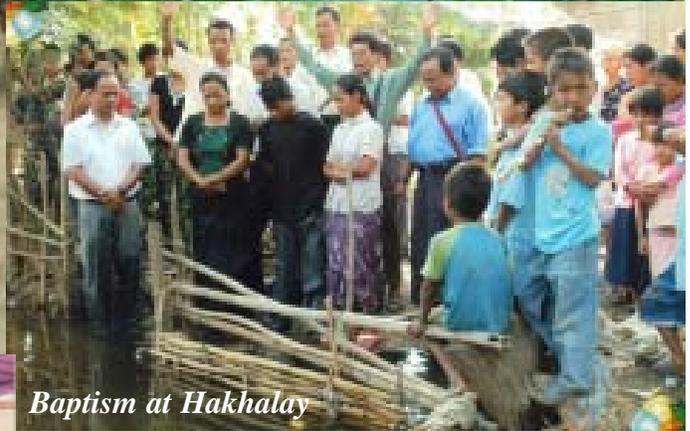
ANSWER: Yes, the term “Present Truth” is found in the Scripture. It is used in II Peter 1:12: “Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.”

**THE CHURCH
AROUND
THE WORLD**
BY DEL DELONG

Myanmar



Tahan Church



Baptism at Hakhalay



Hakhalay



Hakhalay



Baptism at Hakhalay



Aibur brethren at Chin Hill



Kuatthit church



Khampat



Aibur



Hakhalay

LESSON I

MOSES SLAYS AN EGYPTIAN

Scripture Reading: Exodus 2:11-20.

Golden Text: Exodus 2:12.

“And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.”

1. What did Moses do when he was grown? Exodus 2:11.
2. What did Moses do to the Egyptian? Exodus 2:12.
3. What did two men of the Hebrews do? Exodus 2:13.
4. Did Moses believe that his deed was known? Exodus 2:14.
5. What did Pharaoh seek to do, and what did Moses do? Exodus 2:15 (first part).
6. Where did Moses dwell after he fled from Pharaoh? Exodus 2:15 (last part).
7. What did the priest of Midian have, and what did they do? Exodus 2:16.
8. What did Moses do for the priest's daughters? Exodus 2:17.
9. What did the father say to his daughters? Exodus 2:18.
10. What did his daughters tell him? Exodus 2:19.
11. What was the father's reply to his daughters? Exodus 2:20.

LESSON II

MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH

Scripture Reading: Exodus 3:1-14.

Golden Text: Exodus 3:2.

“And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.”

1. Where did Moses lead Jethro's sheep? Exodus 3:1.
2. How did the angel of the Lord appear unto Moses? Exodus 3:2.
3. From where did God call unto Moses? Exodus 3:4.
4. What did God say unto Moses? Exodus 3:5-10.
5. What was Moses's reply? Exodus 3:11.
6. What did God say unto Moses? Exodus 3:12.
7. What question did Moses ask of God? Exodus 3:13.
8. What answer did God give Moses? Exodus 3:14.

LESSON III

MOSES IS COMMISSIONED BY GOD

Scripture Reading: Exodus 3:15-22.

Golden Text: Exodus 3:15.

“And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.”

1. What did God say unto Moses? Exodus 3:15.

2. What did God tell Moses to do? Exodus 3:16.
3. Where did God say He would bring the children of Israel? Exodus 3:17.
4. Would the children of Israel hearken unto Moses's voice? Exodus 3:18 (first part).
5. Then what was Moses to do? Exodus 3:18 (last part).
6. What did God say about the king of Egypt letting the children of Israel go? Exodus 3:19.
7. What did God say He would do? Exodus 3:20.
8. Would God give favour to the children of Israel in the sight of the Egyptians? Exodus 3:21-22.

6. Then what did the Lord tell Moses to do? What was the result? Exodus 4:6.
7. What happened when Moses put his hand into his bosom and took it out again? Exodus 4:7.
8. What did the Lord say would happen if the Egyptians would not hearken to the voices of the first and latter signs? Exodus 4:8-9.

LESSON IV

**MOSES'S OBJECTION
(THE UNBELIEF OF THE PEOPLE)**

Scripture Reading: Exodus 4:1-9.

Golden Text: Exodus 4:1.

“And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee.”

1. What did Moses say? Exodus 4:1.
2. What did the Lord ask Moses, and what was Moses's reply? Exodus 4:2.
3. What did the Lord tell Moses to do? What was the result? Exodus 4:3.
4. Then what did the Lord tell Moses to do? What was the result? Exodus 4:4.
5. What was the purpose of this miracle? Exodus 4:5.



SOMETIMES GOD SAYS NO

By Dorothy Walter

Jonnie wanted a new wagon for his birthday. He wanted a new wagon more than he had ever wanted anything else in his life.

"Will you get me a wagon for my birthday, Mother?" he asked.

Mother shook her head slowly. "I don't see how we can this time. There have been so many bills to pay since Betsy was sick. No, son, I'm afraid we can't get it this birthday. Maybe later."

But Jonnie wanted a new wagon. "I'll ask Jesus for a wagon," he said. "Jesus knows how important it is for a boy to have a wagon."

"Do you really need a new wagon, Jonnie?" Mother asked.

"We-e-e-ll," admitted Jonnie, "I guess I could get along without a new one. But Billy has a new red racer, and I want one, too."

"Do you think that you should pray for something you don't really need?" Mother asked quietly. "Jesus is always ready to give us the things we really need. But I'm not so sure we should ask Him for things that are just wants."

Jonnie didn't say any more. But he kept thinking about the wagon. And every night in his prayer he would ask Jesus to send him a new red racer like Billy's. And the more he prayed, the more sure that he was going to get it.

Jonnie could hardly wait for his birthday to come. He told all his little friends about the new wagon. Only he didn't tell them about praying for it. He just told them that he was getting a new wagon for his birthday.

Finally the night before his birthday came, Jonnie was so excited that he could hardly go to sleep. He could hardly wait to play with the new wagon.

The next morning Jonnie woke up early. He could hear Mother in the kitchen downstairs. He didn't stop to dress. He didn't even put on his house slippers. He ran down the stairs as fast as he could go. He ran in the kitchen.

"Where is it? Where is it?" He shouted.

"Where is what?" Mother asked.

"My wagon," said Jonnie. "My new red wagon."

"But, Jonnie," Mother said. "I explained to you that we couldn't buy a wagon for you."

"I know that," said Jonnie. "But I prayed, and Jesus is going to give me a wagon."

Mother sat down in the big rocking chair by the window. "Come here, Jonnie," she said. She set him on her lap. "Now, son, let's talk this over."

"But, Mother," Jonnie cried, "I prayed and Jesus answers prayers."

"Yes," said Mother. "Jesus does answer prayer. But only when we ask for the right things in the right way. Daddy and I have to say NO sometimes when you ask for something. It is the same way with Jesus. Jesus sometimes has to say no, too."

"But, why?" Jonnie asked. "He can do anything He wants to. He's got more money than anyone else in the whole wide world. Why couldn't He give me a wagon?"

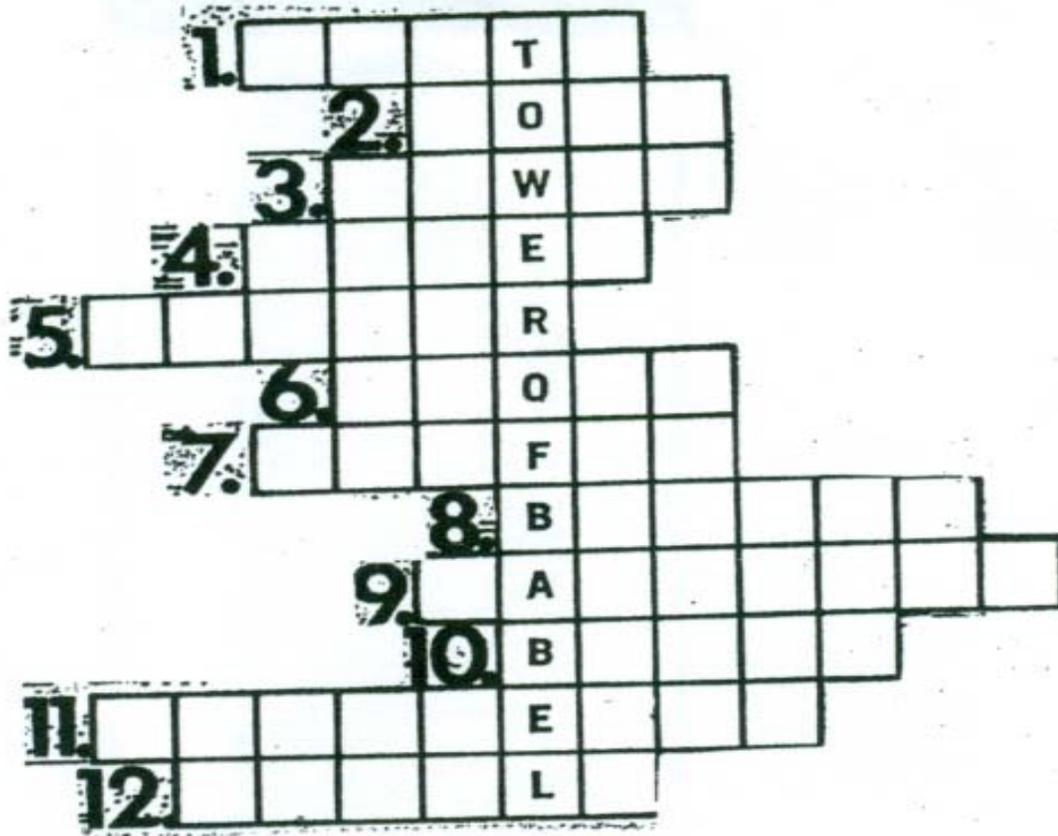
"He could do it," said Mother quietly. "But He knows what is best for each one of us. When we ask for something selfishly, then we shouldn't have what we are asking for. For weeks you have thought about nothing but that wagon. I think Jesus wants you to learn about the importance of things. And maybe when you can put what Jesus wants for you first, instead of thinking only of what you want--" Mother smiled down at Jonnie, "Then maybe He might help us get you the wagon after all."

Jonnie didn't say anything for a long time. At last he said in a small voice, "I see. I didn't ask Jesus whether He wanted me to have it. I just said, 'Give it to me.'"

"That's about it," said Mother.

Jonnie reached up and gave Mother a big hug. "I was selfish. Next time I'll try to remember to be unselfish instead."

TOWER OF BABEL



1. There was a dispersal of men throughout the _____.
2. They came to a plain to build a _____.
3. _____ came to see what the sons of men had done.
4. They wanted to build a _____ to reach heaven.
5. They found this plain in the land of _____.
6. The people _____ the same tongue.
7. Yahweh said "Come, let us go down and _____ their language."
8. They said "Come let us make _____ and bake them in the fire."
9. The town was named Babel because their _____ was confused.
10. They were not able to _____ the town.
11. Yahweh _____ them over the face of the earth.
12. They were not a _____ people with one language.

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Do What You Can

By David DeLong

**When the tough times come around,
And life just seems to plod;
Do what you can to hold your ground,
And leave the rest to God.**

**If a brother comes your way,
Tired, hungry, cold;
Don't shut your door on him and say:
'Be blest by others' gold!'**

**Or, when the evils of the time
Press in to gain a stance;
Then fight the sin, the filth, the crime,
And let them have no chance.**

**Do what you can, though all seems lost,
Your effort is not in vain;
Do what you can, though high the cost,
And Christ will give you gain.**

**You don't have to make the whole plan go,
That's too much for a man;
The work belongs to God, we know,
Just do then, what you can.**