

The Advocate of Truth

The New Year

The Sabbath

The Dream

Trials

Gospel Spreading

Mystery of Iniquity



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

<i>The New Year</i>	3
Let us put our complete faith in the Lord.	
<i>The Meaning Of The Sabbath</i>	4
The Sabbath is a sign for God's people.	
<i>The Dream At Bethel</i>	4-5
Jacob was given the assurance that he needed from God.	
<i>Trials And Tribulations</i>	5-6
Will we stand strong like Job and other faithful ones?	
<i>Forces Necessary For Gospel Spreading</i>	7-9
Three principles are needed for doing God's work.	
<i>The Mystery Of Iniquity</i>	9-13
Why are so many people transgressing God's laws?	
<i>The Signs Of The Times</i>	14-15
Today we are seeing a lack of caring in the world.	
<i>Questions And Answers</i>	16-17
What does it mean to live the Christ Life?	
<i>The Church Around The World</i>	18-19
This month we look at Myanmar.	
<i>The Children's Pages</i>	20-23
<i>Sabbath School Lessons</i>	
<i>A Story - "How Janice Helped"</i>	
<i>Games and Puzzles</i>	
<i>The Lord's Supper, this coming year, will be held Thursday evening, April 5th (Roman time) after sundown. This is the beginning of April 6th. The footwashing is always done before the emblems are given.</i>	

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The New Year

Bond Tennant

“My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me” (Psalm 31:15).

Another violent and turbulent year, 2011, in the history of this sinful world has come to a close. As the year 2012 is beginning, let us aim to put more trust in our loving and eternal heavenly Father. Let us keep in mind that He has promised His children that He will guide, strengthen and protect them from those who do them harm.

The Psalmist David tells of his very high sense of trust by putting his ‘times,’ or his life, in the hands of the most high God. He begins the psalm by saying, “In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness” (Psalm 31:1). These sentiments characterize all of God’s true children who are living in these last days. David continues, “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” (vss. 2-5). As we realize, as David did, that our times are truly in the hands of our Lord, let us

be inspired to greater trust and faithfulness in Him.

As we remember some of the events that took place last year, we note how desperate the conditions are in the world. and we are willing to leave all troublous matters in the hands of our powerful God.

We will now consider the serious words which were written by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the saints at Rome. He cautioned, “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. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (Romans 13:11-12).

As the year 2012 begins, we witness a level of violence and instability in the world that continues to increase. No ordinary human seems to know what lies ahead or how to prepare for it. However, the concentrated children of God are being guided by their heavenly Father who knows their every need.

Our salvation and the realization of being joint heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ is truly nearer than when we first believed. Let us continue to put our faith and trust in the promises of God.

THE MEANING OF THE SABBATH

by Dell Stout



Exodus 31:12-13, 17 reads, "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you." (Sanctify means set apart) "It is a sign between me and children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed."

So the Sabbath is a sign with much meaning. First, and foremost, it means that we belong to the Lord. We

are the ones He sets apart. Just try keeping the Sabbath in all its meaning from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown and see what happens. All of a sudden people look at you differently. It is a sign of our love for our Saviour and His Father, God Almighty. It is written, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). It is a sign that by keeping the Sabbath we are remembering that God is the Creator, and we are His creation. It is a sign that we are in obedience to His will. We do not keep the Sabbath as a duty or to have eternal life, we do it because of our love for Jesus and His Father.

The Dream At Bethel

"And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob" (Genesis 27:41).

"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it" (Genesis 28:12).

Esau was aflame with hatred toward his brother,

even though most of what had happened was a result of his own carnality and shortsightedness. His loss could not be regained though, and he vowed to take his revenge in blood. Esau restrained himself out of regard for his ailing father, but once Isaac passed away, Jacob would most certainly be slain.

Because of Esau's terrible anger, Rebekah prevailed upon Jacob to flee to her brother Laban and to take temporary refuge which would be found amid her

father's people until the wrath of her eldest son had passed.

Rebekah was also upset by the conduct of her two daughters-in-law, the wives of Esau. They undoubtedly continued to practice their Hittite customs in her son's home, and it is not unlikely to suppose that Esau himself may have adopted some of their pagan ways. The thought of Jacob perhaps also taking a wife from the lineage of the sons of Heth was very distressing to her. Isaac agreed that it would be best for all concerned if Jacob spent some time with Laban. It would also be well for him to take a wife from among Laban's daughters while there.

When Jacob was sent to Padan-aram with his father's blessing and given special instructions to seek a wife from among his mother's family, Esau came into full realization of just how ill-regarded by his parents were his own two wives. Anger was now heaped upon anger.

And so it was that Esau packed up the two Hittite women and departed also, traveling to the home of his Uncle Ishmael. He took to himself yet a third wife – Ishmael's daughter, Mahalath. He then settled in the Mount Seir region and formed alliances with other noble tribes through still other marriages.

As so often happens with the born achiever who is blessed early on with a seemingly unbroken chain of good fortune, Jacob was assailed with many grave doubts

upon receiving his first major setback. He had sufficient time to ponder on memories of his early life as he journeyed on toward Padan-aram. As the younger son, he had been entitled to neither birthright blessing nor inheritance. His gains had all been achieved with hypocrisy, deception and falsehood. He had at last succeeded in receiving his father's blessing through trickery. Would the blessing be honored in view of the sort of a person he was?

As the sun went down, Jacob made camp at a place called Luz. Gathering stones from the ground to use as a pillow, he at last fell into a troubled sleep. Then, in a dream, Jacob saw the heavens ablaze with the glory of God. A great opening appeared in the sky, and a ladder had been extended until its bottom touched the earth. Angels of the Lord were ascending and descending the ladder rungs. Looking up, Jacob saw God Himself standing at the very top.

The dream gave Jacob the assurance he needed. The Lord told him that the entire land of Canaan should belong to his descendants: "And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 28:14).



Trials And Tribulations

By Bibi S. Allicock

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall

be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is

glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (I Peter 4:12-19).

As we study the Bible carefully, we can be assured that we must go through trials and tribulations. "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:3-4).

The Scriptures depict great trials for a God-fearing servant, Job. Job was a man who was perfect and upright in the eyes of Almighty God. "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil" (Job 1:1).

Yet it pleased the devil that Job must be tried. Thus he challenged God and said, "...Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face" (verses 9-11). Nevertheless, brethren and friends, the devil could not have been victorious. His aim was that Job would curse God to his face. Job lost everything that he possessed, even his children, and the devil smote him "...with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown." The devil also put his wife against him that she told him to curse God and die. "But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips" (Job 2:10). He kept his integrity with God, and he sat down among the ashes (see verse 8).

At times, we pass through a little smoke and scream. However, Job's grief was very great that when his friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came to mourn with him and to comfort him. "And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every

one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great" (Job 2:12-13).

Brethren and friends, can we fathom such grief when four people sat together among ashes and couldn't find words to speak to each other? "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:8-11). "So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters" (Job 42:12-13).

Let us also remember some of our other God-fearing brethren, "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings, and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:33-40). "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10) Amen.

Forces Necessary For Gospel Spreading

Bond Tennant



"And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen" (Mark 16:20).

"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42).

What those, mentioned in the above Scriptures, were doing was not in their own strength. Another source gave them their courage and strength. This source, which is above the realm of human effort and human power, was moving them to do this task. Let us mention three necessary and important forces which motivated them. These forces are necessary for spreading the gospel today!

One. The first necessary force for spreading the gospel is a conviction of truth. Conviction is a "state of being convinced." It is a strong persuasion or belief. When Pilate was confronted with making a decision, he asked, "...What is truth?..." (John 18:38). Verses 36 and 37 tell us, "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." He had already declared He was truth. He was

truth in the flesh, and He was truth personified. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). The Bible is truth written, truth printed, and truth perpetuated! Jesus told the woman of Samaria, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23). Jesus also said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

The Apostle Paul spoke about the truth of the gospel. "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Galatians 2:5). The truth is that Christ died for the whole world. John 3:16 tells us, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Hebrews 2:9 tells us, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37). "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). The gospel is to go unto every creature and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

The truth is that Jesus left the church the responsibility

of getting the gospel message to the lost. "For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch" (Mark 13:34). He expects His footstep followers to take charge and be His ambassadors. While praying to His Father, Jesus said, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John 17:18). In John 21:16, Jesus told Peter, "...Feed my sheep." "And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:23). In Mark 16:15, Jesus said, "...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

The basic truth is that there is no other way and no other plan. Men can be saved only by hearing, accepting, and obeying the gospel of Christ! "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Jesus told Nicodemus, "...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Acts 4:12 tells us, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Since Christ died for all men, all must hear. Since there is no other way, we must hurry to the task. When this conviction sunk into the minds of the disciples, Mark 16:20 tells us that, "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following..."

Two. The second necessary force for spreading the gospel is a compulsion of spirit. Compulsion is "an act of compelling," "a state of being compelled." It is subjection to force. It is an impulse or feeling of being irresistibly driven toward the performance of some irrational action. This word comes from the Latin words which mean "intensive push." It is that push of the Spirit, the force of the Spirit, that impelling and constraining power of the Spirit. It means to be moved upon contrary to one's own will and plan. It means to be pushed forward and urged on.

When Jesus started in His public ministry, He declared, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18). Luke 4:1 tells us that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

and Mark 1:12 records that "...the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness." Another translation says, "The Spirit impelled him to go into the wilderness." To impel means to drive forward. After the wilderness experience, the great temptation, "...Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee..." (Luke 4:14). "Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38). The words "send forth" can actually mean "thrust forth." This gives hint to an unwillingness to go. People must be thrust out by an impelling force.

Notice the sending of Barnabas and Saul in Acts 13:2-4, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus."

The Apostle Paul was forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia. "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not" (Acts 16:6-7).

After a great revival in Samaria, Philip departed to go to Gaza. There he preached to an Ethiopian eunuch. "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot" (Acts 8:29). II Corinthians 5:14 says, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." The first part of this verse could be rendered, "For the love of Christ controls us." Romans 5:5 tells us that, "...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." When the disciples were threatened and warned not to preach, they replied, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). After Jesus healed the deaf and dumb man in Mark 7:36, "...he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it."

Three. The third necessary force for spreading the gospel is a compassion for souls. Compassion is "sorrow or pity excited by the distress or misfortunes of others."

Compassion is related to sympathy. The compassion that our Lord Jesus Christ had while on the earth has never been equaled. We cannot manufacture passion. It is a quality given by God to the righteous. "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). Another translation says that Christ was "touched with pity for them." His sympathy went out to them.

Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" (Luke 13:34). Yes, Jesus wept over Jerusalem. Jesus preached to the despised Samaritan woman. Please read John 4:7-26. He cleansed the demoniac at Gadara

from the evil spirits that possessed him. Please read Mark 5:1-15. He cast an evil spirit out of the Syrophenician woman's daughter. Please read Mark 7:24-30.

The Apostle Paul also had compassion for his people. He said, "...I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Romans 9:2-3). He also said, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1).

In Exodus 32:7-14, God's anger was kindled, and He was going to destroy the people. Moses interceded for them. That was great love and compassion.

We have considered three necessary forces for spreading the gospel which every child of God must possess.



THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY

BY DAVID DELONG

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way" (II Thessalonians 2:7). With these inspired words, the Apostle Paul informs us that "the mystery of iniquity" was already working in his day. Reading more of the chapter we find that it will continue until the Lord comes back, who will eventually put an end to this great apostasy. What is this mystery of iniquity? And who will "let" ("hinder", margin) until taken out of the way? This is an engaging study, and one with the utmost importance for every follower of Christ.

In Strong's Concordance we find that one of the Greek words for "iniquity" is "anomia", meaning "violation of law" (or "lawlessness", margin). Iniquity, therefore, is the sin of transgressing God's law (see I John 3:4). The transgressing, or breaking, of God's law is not new. It goes back to

our first parents, Adam and Eve, who disobeyed the Creator, and it has continued down the course of history until our time. As the passage of Scripture in II Thessalonians indicates clearly, it will still be working, as a mystery, when Christ returns. What makes it a mystery is that this great system of iniquity has been operating under the guise of religion for centuries, undetected by the vast majority of humanity. This word "mystery" comes from the Greek word "musterion", and it refers to "a secret or 'mystery' (through the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites)"--see Strong's Concordance.

Looking back through the pages of Scripture and history we get a glimpse of how these things came to be. Except for the light (truth) which the Lord gave through His Word, the rest of the world was, and still is, in spiritual darkness. Paganism was universal. Many cultures were

involved in pagan mystery religions in which candidates were initiated, by various rituals, into secret cults. These religions were dominated by priesthoods which claimed to have the sole knowledge of "divine" wisdom. Therefore, a type of spiritual despotism developed whereby the priests held great power over the beliefs of the masses of people. Examples of this include the Chaldean, or Babylonian, priesthoods and the priests at the Greek oracle of Delphi. Wherever such systems developed, men and women placed themselves under the authority of the priests, rather than God, and thus they were always misled into keeping traditions of men instead of the laws of God.

After the children of Israel were deported into Babylon during the Babylonian captivity, some of them adopted heathen beliefs and customs from the pagan peoples around them. Later, when Alexander the Great spread Hellenistic (Greek) beliefs to the areas he conquered, some of these beliefs were also incorporated into the Jewish mindset. One example of these beliefs appears to be the immortality of the soul. Faithful Jews, however, continued to keep the truth of God.

When Jesus came to earth He taught the pure Word of God and bought the Church of God with His own blood. It wasn't long thereafter, however, before perverted men crept into the church bringing false doctrines, or carnal lifestyles, based upon the traditions of men. We see, for example, Simon the sorcerer with his "money" mentality (Acts 8); "the doctrine of the Nicolaitans" (which apparently involved immorality) (Revelation 2); and the legalism, mysticism, and asceticism that the Apostle Paul had to contend with in the Colossian church (Colossians 2).

The mystery of iniquity has certainly continued down to our day. It exists in every belief system, including that of christendom, which places the traditions of men above the Word of God. It is known by a number of terms: anomia, antinomian (against law), violation of law, lawlessness, etc. It will come to a climax under a world system led by the "man of sin". "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (II Thessalonians 2:3-4). The One who hinders

("letteth") the mystery of iniquity can only be the Lord, working through His Holy Spirit. It appears that when God's Spirit is taken out of the way, then this "son of perdition" will be revealed.

Let us now examine some beliefs, that come under the heading of the "mystery of iniquity", which exist today as taught in a number of churches. The most obvious one, perhaps, is the change of the seventh-day Sabbath to the observing of the first day of the week, Sunday. Since no authorization for such a change can be found anywhere in the Bible, then this "unlawful" substitution is definitely an iniquity. It certainly is a mystery that so many "Christians" have been misled into believing such a falsehood.

Another belief held by many "Christians", including their famous leaders, is the teaching of radical eternal security, or once saved always saved. I use the term "radical" because there is some truth to the doctrine of eternal security. A person is eternally saved in Christ, *if* he or she continues to follow the Lord until death. The problem comes when this belief says that a person is saved in Christ even if he or she stops following the Lord, and continues to commit unrepentant sin. This is an antinomian teaching and definitely comes under the mystery of iniquity.

The breaking of any one of God's Ten Commandments constitutes lawlessness. So does transgressing any of His other commands such as keeping the law of the clean and unclean and tithing. Notice what Jesus has to say about lawlessness, or iniquity: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23).

Since Jesus is against iniquity, then we know that God feels the same way. Listen to the words in Psalm 5:4-6: "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man." We see in this passage a number of related terms: wickedness, evil, the foolish, iniquity, leasing (lying), bloody and deceitful man. We can

also see that these terms involve the breaking of God's Ten Commandments, and that He hates the workers of iniquity, He will destroy liars, and He will abhor murderers. This is very serious business.

God is too holy to let iniquity be. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity..." (Habakkuk 1:13). Because Jesus was of the same mind as the Father, He was elevated in position: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Hebrews 1:9).

So serious is committing iniquity that we find in Psalm 66:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me". So, if God will not hear our prayers under such circumstances, then we have broken our connection to Him. However, it is very different for the person who obeys God. "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways" (Psalm 119:1-3).

The Scriptures are so plain! Walking in God's law, then, equates to not doing iniquity, while not walking in God's law (transgressing the law) is committing iniquity. Walking in God's law, of course, requires His help, His working within us. Ephesians 2:10 informs us: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

The whole human race, however, is born with an attitude to break God's law. In essence, even from childhood and onward, people have a tendency to rebel against authority. The feeling is that "no one is going to tell me what to do". This is actually a part of the mystery of iniquity working within the lives of unconverted people. Psalm 51:5 reads: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Upon repentance and conversion, however, one seeks to have this antinomian attitude removed. King David was deeply sorry for his transgressions. He said, "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities" (verse 9; see also Psalm 130:3-4).

Satan fell through iniquity. We read about this originally perfect cherub in Ezekiel 28:14-15. "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked

up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." It has been Satan's goal to tempt others to commit iniquity so that they will follow his evil course. But Jesus "was manifested" to "destroy the works of the devil" (see I John 3:4-8).

As we have seen, committing iniquity separates a person from the Lord. Isaiah 59:1-3 makes this abundantly clear. "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness."

But, thank the Lord, He is also ready to forgive the repentant person. When Moses presented himself before the Lord on Mount Sinai, the Scriptures tell us: "And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation" (Exodus 34:5-7).

Indeed, the Lord in His mercy doesn't punish the repentant sinner in the way that he deserves. David proclaimed: "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases...He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Psalm 103:1-3,10). To the forgiven person the Apostle Paul quotes: "...Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Romans 4:7-8).

The process of forgiveness must begin with man's response to God. As the Prophet Jeremiah said to Israel, "Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God..." (Jeremiah 3:13). This, of course, is repentance. The Lord Jesus, Himself,

paid the penalty for our sins by His death on the cross. We learn in Isaiah 53:5,11: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed...He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." After repentance, receiving Christ's sacrifice for us, baptism in Jesus' name, and receiving the Holy Spirit through laying on of hands (see Matthew 4:17; John 1:12; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:14-17), we must be zealous of performing good works (see Titus 2:14).

We see then that if we allow iniquity to be a part of our lives, we not only break our relationship to God so that He will not hear our prayer, but we are also a part of the mystery of iniquity which Christ will come to destroy. Let us heed the admonition in Proverbs 16:6: "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil." A person filled with God's love will not rejoice in iniquity, but rather will rejoice in the truth (see I Corinthians 13:6).

There is a spiritual principle in which a person who lives in iniquity will become trapped in the same. Proverbs 5:21-22 tells us: "For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins." And in Job 4:8 we glean: "Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same."

Now, there is another spiritual principle that at a certain passing of time, known only by the Lord, a person, group, or nation involved in the transgressing of God's law (iniquity) will finally be brought to judgment. We catch a glimpse of this in Genesis 15:13-16, where the Lord is speaking to Abraham. "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."

Here we learn that after 400 years the Lord would judge the Egyptians for enslaving the children of Israel and mistreating them. Also, in the fourth generation, the Israelites would return to the land promised to Abraham because "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." The Lord gave the Amorites a number of years to repent of their iniquity before His judgment fell upon them. The Amorites were among those societies which were involved in transgressing God's law. They were one of the groups of pagan peoples occupying the land promised to Abraham's seed (see Genesis 15:18-21). Their chief gods seem to have included Baal and Ashtoreth, the worship of which was involved with pagan fertility rites of gross immorality.

Notice what *Halley's Bible Handbook*, page 166, says on this subject. "Temples of Baal and Ashtoreth were usually together. Priestesses were temple prostitutes. Sodomites were male temple prostitutes. The worship of Baal, Ashtoreth, and other Canaanite gods consisted in the most extravagant orgies; their temples were centers of vice."

The children of Dan did not annihilate this group but, rather, we read: "And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley: But the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalvim: yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries. And the coast of the Amorites was from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward" (Judges 1:34-36).

Because the children of Israel did not destroy the inhabitants of Canaan, they became a source of sin (iniquity) for the Israelites. We find in Judges 3:5-7: "And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgat the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves."

When the iniquity of the Amorites became full, God pronounced judgment upon them through their conquest by Israel. The Israelites, however, did not accomplish a

full conquest of these people but, instead, they lived among them, adopting a number of their pagan customs. The Lord then sent judgment upon His people for their iniquities (see, for example, Judges 3:8). God is no respecter of persons.

So, too, we learn that a time is coming when a false, world-wide religious system will suffer the judgment of God for its iniquities. "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (Revelation 18:1-5).

This last statement, written by the Apostle John which reads, "God hath remembered her iniquities" may tie this world-wide religious system in with that which the Apostle Paul wrote about in II Thessalonians 2 regarding "the mystery of iniquity". This seems especially so when we read that this "Babylon the great" is styled "...MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5). Both systems are marked with the title, "mystery", and they are both full of iniquity.

In both passages, II Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 18, the Lord brings destruction on the people for iniquities committed. A warning is given in Revelation 18:4, "...Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." If this warning is ignored, then those involved may also expect to be led astray "...with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who

believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thessalonians 2:10-12).

We are living in a time when the mystery of iniquity is rapidly increasing, and the effects of that system is seen on society. Jesus said, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:12). Though the mystery of iniquity may be sanctioned by false religious systems, or by individuals who believe that breaking God's law is all right, the result is the same: love for others will grow cold. This situation may be witnessed by violence or persecution against true believers. Jesus had warned His disciples, "And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another" (verse 10). Jesus also taught, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:41-42).

In conclusion, let us not be deceived that God's laws are no longer to be reckoned with. Many in today's world teach just such a thing. Many are turning away from Sabbath-keeping and other commandments of the Lord. This is a part of the mystery of iniquity which will still be present when the Lord returns. The Lord's commandments are still His way for us to go. Proverbs 10:29 reads: "The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity." Finally, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (II Timothy 2:19).





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.

Personal Thoughts Then And Now

Perhaps it is because I am getting older, but I have noticed a change in the actions and attitudes of people as time progresses. Have you noticed the same? No, it is not because I am getting older. It is because God's Word tells us that is the way it will be.

When I was younger, people seemed to be more friendly. They would speak to strangers and do many acts of kindness. My family had old family friends who would visit us and comfort us in times of sadness or trouble. They would also rejoice with us, and we with them, in times of victory and happiness. No one was ever too busy to help another.

Now it seems that it is difficult to find those who really care for others. Most seem to be wrapped up in their own selves. A CNN commentator said that many think that America is much meaner that it used to be. He asked people to tweet to give their reasons why they think that America is much meaner that it used to be. He received many tweets with various answers, but no one gave the real cause for this problem. The real cause is that many people in America are not taking admonition from the Word of God. The child of God knows that it is just not America that is meaner than it used to be. It is all of the countries in the world!

I do not mean to wear II Timothy 3:1-5 out, but let us quote it again: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own

selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." Therefore, it stands to reason that as the last days progress, the more meaner the countries of the world will become.

As I look in the Scriptures when preparing the columns and writing a few articles, I notice the Scriptures which tell us how a child of God must behave and conduct himself. I think to myself how wonderful it would be if we all conducted ourselves accordingly.

The Apostle Peter wrote, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (II Peter 3:11). If this question was a serious consideration in his day, how much more is it true in our day?

--B.T.

Ongoing War over same-sex marriage could include
POLYGAMY

By Lindsay Whitehurst
SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

Salt Lake City – Utah's complicated history with polygamy has started a new chapter as a reality-show

family challenges the state's ban on plural marriage, a fight that could go all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Nationally known constitution law professor Jonathan Turley said the federal lawsuit does not call for plural marriages to be recognized by the state. Instead, it asks for polygamy between consenting adults like his clients, Kody Brown and his wives, to no longer be considered a crime.

"We are only challenging the right of the state to prosecute people for their private relations and demanding equal treatment with other citizens in living their lives according to their own beliefs," Turley said.

The Browns star in the TLC show *Sister Wives*. Kody Brown and wives Christine Brown, Janelie Brown, Meri Brown and Robyn Sullivan portray themselves as living an otherwise middle-class life. They lived in Lehi, Utah until last year, when they moved to Nevada with their 16 children after police started an investigation sparked by the show.

No charges have been filed against them, though Utah County Attorney Jess Bushman said the case remains under investigation.

Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff said the country's ongoing legal wrangling over same-sex marriage will necessarily grow to include plural marriage possibly centered around this case.

"I'm confident that we can (defend) a challenge all the way to the Supreme Court," Shurtleff said. The Supreme Court toyed with taking on polygamy five years ago, when it asked for briefs in the case of polygamous police officer Rodney Holm, who was accused of having sex with a 16-year-old plural wife. The justices ultimately refused to hear his appeal.

Kody Brown released a statement saying his is one of tens of thousands of polygamous families looking for "equal treatment."

"While we understand that this may be a long struggle in court, it has already been a long struggle for my family and other plural families to end the stereotypes and unfair treatment given consensual polygamy," he said.

The complaint, Turley said, presents seven constitutional challenges to the state's anti-bigamy law; the lawsuit is largely based on the right to privacy.

"In the sense, it is a challenge designed to benefit not just polygamists but all citizens who wish to live their lives

according to their own values – even if those values run counter to those of the majority in the state," said Turley, a member of the faculty at George Washington University.

**--From Belief
Houston, Texas**

Comment

People continue to do just what they want. This reminds me of what we read in Romans 1:28: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." Both polygamy and same-sex marriage are in opposition to the Word of God. To believe otherwise is to be vain in imagination and foolish in heart as stated in Romans 1:21.

As a matter of fact, it is an abomination for any two of the same sex to have a husband and wife relationship. Let us quote Romans 1:26-27: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet."

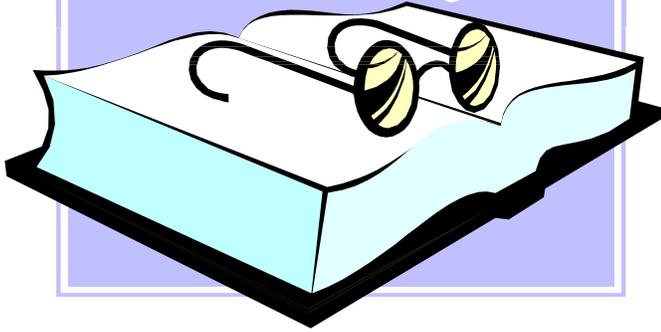
Fidelity to just one husband or one wife is taught by our Lord in the New Testament. What is the purpose of having several wives if polygamy is not sanctioned by the authorities. Polygamy is one of the facets of the lust of the flesh which leads to serious consequences.

We come across the word *lasciviousness* in Scripture. See Mark 7:22; II Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:19; I Peter 4:3; Jude 4. In theological terms, *lasciviousness* means simply license to sin.

The Jews observed the Law of Moses faithfully. Christ freed His followers from the Law of Moses. In Galatians 5:13, the Apostle Paul wrote to the brethren, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Many people in America and other countries that have freedom wish occasion to observe same-sex marriage and polygamy which means that they are taking occasion of their freedom to fulfill the lust of the flesh.

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

Question: Will you please write about living the Christ Life?

Answer: Yes, we will. How often do we reflect on the circumstances that brought us to the point of consecrating our lives to the Lord, and the many changes that have taken place in us since we first believed? We who are striving to walk in the steps of Jesus were drawn to the Lord in the first place by an appreciation of the fact that Christ died for our sins. If we were ever to come into God's favor, we had to recognize this fact. After we decided to accept our Lord's invitation to follow Him, we began to know and appreciate the fact that Adam was created perfect, that he had sinned willfully. Therefore, the sentence of death was pronounced upon him. We understood that this sentence meant Adam's extinction and that this sentence applied not only to Adam but also to us.

To us the knowledge of the ransom was truly wonderful. The perfect man Christ Jesus took Adam's place in death by making it possible for the condemnation to be lifted from Adam and all his offspring. The full realization then came that salvation is not just for us but for every human being that has ever drawn the breath of life.

The experiences that we encounter have a very definite purpose as we attempt to live the Christ Life. The Apostle Paul expressed it in this manner, "*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the*

knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample" (Philippians 3:8-17). In Galatians 4:19 we read, "*My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.*" (Italics mine).

What question can we ask ourselves that will bring us face to face with the real issue as we consider these things? What is the Christ Life? We are commanded to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Let us consider this admonition in

Matthew 16:24, “*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*” We must find out what Jesus did if we would walk in His footsteps and pattern our lives after His. As He served His Father, how did He spend His strength and life?

We have a prophecy concerning Jesus and His mission in Isaiah 61:1-3. The prophecy reads, “*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.*” As we consider this great prophecy, we find that Jesus was to spend his ministry in making a proclamation of the kingdom. He applied this prophecy to himself in Luke 4:18-19, “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*” Even the miracles of raising the dead and healing the sick were illustrations of the kingdom and the blessings that are possible for the people when the kingdom is established. Jesus left His place of glory and honor in the heavenlies and became the greatest servant the world has ever known.

We become more acutely aware of our own imperfections as we attempt to live the Christ Life. We cannot perform perfectly! On the other hand, we see the perfection of Christ. We now realize how thankful we are for the provision of the robe of Christ’s righteousness. We are righteous because of this in God’s sight. It is because of the righteousness of Christ that we can fulfill the requirement of having clean hands and a pure heart. But also let us keep in mind that the Lord expects that we attain to perfection of intention, or will. In His mercy, our Lord accounts the perfection of intention for the deed. We receive many experiences in conjunction with our

activity in the Lord’s work. Our Lord uses these experiences to help us grow up into Christ and be conformed to His image.

In His spiritual mind, Jesus, our forerunner was conformed to the image of His Father. Hebrews 2:10 states, “*For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*” “*Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*” (Hebrews 5:8-9). Jesus said in John 14:9, “*... Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?*” From this verse, we conclude that the mental and moral characteristics of Jesus were the same as those of the Father.

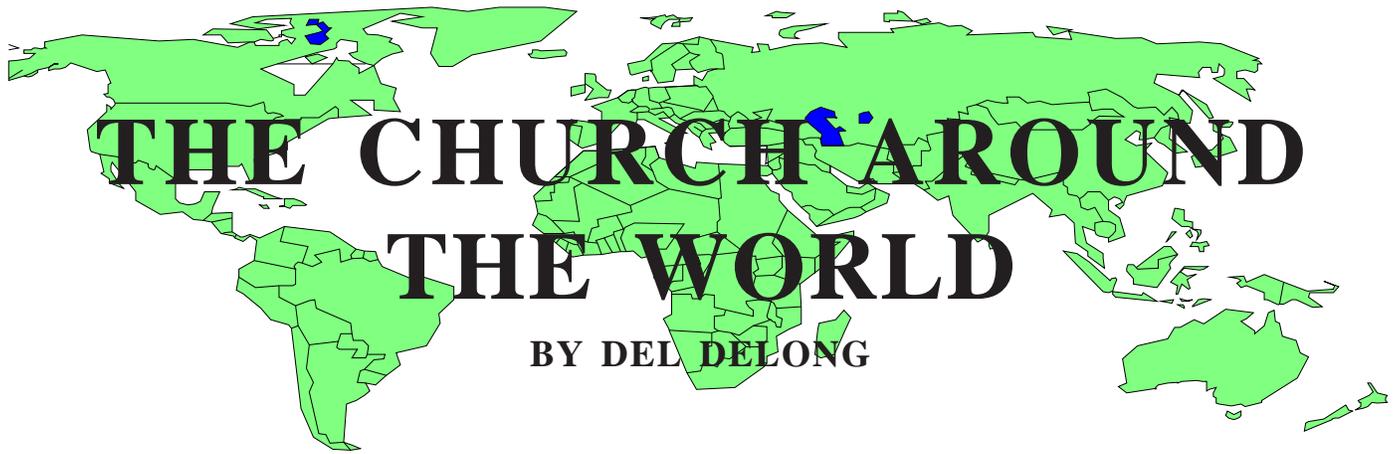
Our experiences incurred in the Lord’s work are related with those of Jesus. The Apostle Peter records, “*For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently?...For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps*” (I Peter 2:19-21). This is really living the Christ Life.

Question: Who divided the books of the Bible into chapters and verses?

Answer: The original Bibles had no chapters and verses. The chapters were divided into their present form by Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1225 A.D. The chapters were divided into verses by the Paris printer, Robert Stephens, in 1551 A.D.

Question: Should one be ashamed to be persecuted for righteousness sake?

Answer: No! I Peter 4:16 tells us, “*Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.*” We also read this in II Timothy 3:12: “*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*”



Myanmar

Some members of the Church in Myanmar are opening boxes of clothing sent to them from the Church in Salem.





LESSON I

DEATH OF MOSES

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 34.

Golden Text: Deuteronomy 34:7 (first part).

“And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died....”

1. What did the Lord instruct Moses to do? Deuteronomy 32:48-50.
2. Why was this to be? Deuteronomy 32:51-52.
3. When Moses went up into the mountains, what did the Lord show him? Deuteronomy 34:1-3.
4. What land was he able to see? Deuteronomy 34:4.
5. Did Moses die on the mountain as God had said? Deuteronomy 34:5.
6. Where was Moses buried, and was this burial site marked? Deuteronomy 34:6.
7. Was Moses still strong and well till his death? Deuteronomy 34:7.
8. How long did the children of Israel weep for Moses? Deuteronomy 34:8.
9. What new leader took over the work of Moses? Deuteronomy 34:9.
10. Was there ever again a prophet such as Moses? Deuteronomy 34:10.

“...thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

LESSON II

THE TWO SPIES AND RAHAB

Scripture Reading: Joshua 2:1-11.

Golden Text: Joshua 2:1 (first part).

“And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho...”

NOTE: Moses, the great leader of Israel, is now dead, and God has appointed Joshua to lead in his place. As our lesson starts today, Joshua sends two spies to Jericho to spy out the land.

1. Where did the two spies lodge for the night in Jericho? Joshua 2:1.
2. Did the king of Jericho find out the spies were in the city? Joshua 2:2.
3. What did the king say to Rahab? Joshua 2:3.
4. Did Rahab tell the king the men were there? What did she do? Joshua 2:4-6.
5. Did the king believe what Rahab said to him? Joshua 2:7.
6. Did Rahab tell the spies why she had hidden them from the king? Joshua 2:9-11.

NOTE: Rahab had heard of the miracles performed on behalf of Israel and was convinced Israel’s God was the true God.

LESSON III

THE TWO SPIES AND RAHAB
(CONTINUED)

Scripture Reading: Joshua 2:12-24.

Golden Text: Joshua 2:15.

“Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.”

NOTE: We last learned that Rahab hid the two spies

from the king and his soldiers. We will now learn how the spies escape and the promises they make.

1. What promise did Rahab ask the spies to make? Joshua 2:12-13.
2. Did the men make her the promise? Joshua 2:14.
3. How did Rahab help the men escape? Joshua 2:15.
4. What did the spies tell Rahab to do so they would know her home and spare it? Joshua 2:18-19.
5. Where did the spies go after they left Rahab's house, and how long were they there? Joshua 2:22.
6. What did the spies tell Joshua on their return? Joshua 2:23-24.

NOTE: With Rahab's help, the spies were able to report back to Joshua. Rahab's faith also saved her life as we will learn in a future lesson. Rahab later married an Israelite and became an ancestress of Boaz, David and Christ.

LESSON IV

CROSSING THE JORDAN

Scripture Reading: Joshua 3:1-17.

Golden Text: Joshua 3:17 (last part).

“...and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.”

NOTE: Remember in our last lesson the two spies came back with a good report that truly the Lord had delivered the land into their hands for the people of that country were all frightened of them. In our lesson today, another miracle happened.

1. Beside what river did Joshua and all the children of Israel camp? Joshua 3:1.
2. After three days what happened? Joshua 3:2-3.

3. Why were the people told to sanctify or purify themselves? Joshua 3:5.
4. Who was to go before the people? Joshua 3:6.
5. What did the Lord tell Joshua? Joshua 3:7-8.
6. What did Joshua tell the children of Israel? Joshua 3:9-13.
7. What happened as the people moved forward to cross the Jordan? Joshua 3:14-17.

NOTE: When the ark stood at the water's edge, the river rose up in a great lap or wall around the city of Adam, which was 16 miles north of where they were to cross. Below, all the river bed was dry enough to walk on. This was the time of year when the Jordan overflowed all its banks so the miracle was all the more wonderful.

8. When the children of Israel first started on their journey from Egypt, almost the same thing happened. Can you tell about it? Exodus 14:21-22.

THE LITTLE BIRDS

By Vivian G. Ross

Some birds who spent the summer
 Flying round my house,
 Have gone away this winter
 To the warm and sunny South.
 It seems they got together
 And flew away from here,
 They won't be coming back again
 Till spring comes back, I fear.
 But I will put some crumbs out
 For those who did not go,
 And they will not be hungry
 Even in the snow.



HOW JANICE HELPED

By Arlene West Krenz

Janice sat with her elbows propped on the window sill and looked outside. There was a soft blanket of snow on the ground. Lawn, trees and shrubs had been changed overnight into a wonderland of glittering and glistening white fluff.

As the little girl sat looking out at the beautiful white world, she saw some little brown birds hopping about pecking and scratching busily on the snow. They didn't seem to find anything to eat.

"Mother," asked Janice, "What do the birds eat when it is so cold and everything is covered with snow?"

"They eat most any kind of seeds or fruit they can find," Mother answered from her chair beside the fireplace. "God provides for them as He does for His other little creatures."

"Does God ever need any help in caring for the little birds, Mother?" Janice asked. "Those little birds can't seem to find anything to eat. They look so cold and hungry."

"Yes, I think He likes to have help," Mother said as she put aside her sewing and came to stand beside Janice.

They watched the little birds hopping over the snow. "They do look as if they need something to eat," Mother said. "Suppose we go out into the kitchen to see what we can find." Mother and Janice looked around in the kitchen. They wondered what a hungry bird might eat besides bread crumbs.

"I know!" exclaimed Janice. "I'll go get my bird book. It tells what to feed the birds." She ran out of the room and returned with the book. Then she and Mother looked through its colorful pages. Between the lovely pictures were many interesting things about the different kinds of birds. It told how to make friends with the birds by feeding them at a feeding tray.

"Here it is, Mother," said Janice as she turned a page. "It says that cracked corn, cracked wheat, bread and cracker crumbs, nut meats, sunflower seeds, oats, canary seeds, celery tops, apples, and suet are all things that the birds like to eat."

Mother looked through the cupboards. "Here is some bread to make into crumbs, and some nut meats and suet," she said. They put the crumbs, broken nut meats and suet into a pie tin and then took them out and scattered them over the snow. Hurrying back inside, they sat down to watch.

It wasn't long before one of the birds ventured down to investigate the good things that had been spread on the snow. He pecked at the bread crumbs to see what they were. Then he began eating. The other birds soon flew down to join their friend on the snow. It didn't take them long to discover he had found something good to eat. Soon they were all busily eating the food.

"Oh, they were hungry, Mother!" said Janice as they watched the crumbs disappear. "I'm glad that we had something to give them. May we feed them every day until the snow melts away?"

"Yes, dear," answered Mother as she smoothed her little daughter's hair. "We will be helping God if we help His little birds. I am glad that we may help Him, aren't you?"

"Oh, yes!" said Janice. She watched the birds finish the last of the food and fly to the warmth and protection of a tall fir tree. "It makes me feel happy inside. I like to be God's helper. I'm going to help Him in every way that I can."

RIVERS OF THE BIBLE

Unscramble the following words to make names of rivers found in the Bible.

Use the list and Bible text to help you.
Each one is used once.

- PHARPAR (II KINGS 5:12)
- GIHON (GENESIS 2:13)
- CHERITH (I KINGS 17:3)
- PISON (GENESIS 2:11)
- JABBOK (GENESIS 32:22)
- KIDRON (II SAMUEL 15:23)
- HIDDEKEL (GENESIS 2:14)
- EUPHRATES (DEUTERONOMY 11:24)
- JORDAN (MATTHEW 3:13)
- ULAI (DANIEL 8:2)

- RAP HARP _____
- PINSO _____
- H SUET PEAR _____
- I LA U _____
- DID HE KEL _____
- HITCHER _____
- NO RID K _____
- JAR NOD _____
- HOG IN _____
- BOB JAK _____

Follow the instructions for each name to find out why Jacob sent his ten sons to Egypt. Put those letters in the blanks below.

- JUDAH Circle the 5th letter
- ASHER Circle the last two letters
- LEVI Circle the 2nd and 4th letters
- ISSACHAR Circle the 2nd and 5th letters
- SIMEON Circle the "O"
- REUBEN Circle the 1st letter
- DAN Circle the last letter
- BENJAMIN Circle the last two letters
- ZEBULUN Circle the 2nd letter

- GAD Circle the first letter
- JOSEPH Circle the fifth letter
- NAPHTALI Circle the "T"

"T _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ Y _ _ _ .

In the Bible, older people would give advice to young people, just as they do today. Look up the Bible verses below and describe who was handing out advice and what he or she said.

Advice From:

To:

1. Joshua 23:1-2,6
2. I Chronicles 28:20
3. I Timothy 1:1,18-19; 2:1
4. James 1:1,22
5. II Peter 1:1,5-8

CIRCLE PUZZLE

Starting at the dot move clockwise around the circle and write every other letter to discover the message.



MESSAGE: "...-----
-----"

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THE SABBATH DAY

By Sister Destiny Benjamin

S - Sanctified, set apart for holy use

A - Awake, arise with alleluias, day of rest is here

B - Balm of rest for the weary and heavy laden

B - Build up tonic and toner for all believers

*A - Adorn in modesty with God's armour, ye His
saints*

*T - Thanksgiving unto the Lord for His goodness
and mercies*

H - Holiness unto the Lord for He alone is worthy

D - Daystar arises in hearts rejoicing

A - Admonish in admiration the Lord's Day of rest

Y - Ye worship Him always in spirit and in truth

