

The Advocate of Truth

Pledge of Allegiance

Our Christian Walk

*Greatness of Almighty
God*

A Blessed Man

The Hall of Faith

*Independence and
Dependence*



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

The Advocate of Truth is the official organ of The Church of God (7th Day) with headquarters at Salem, West Virginia.

It is published once a month on the fourth Monday of each month by The Advocate of Truth Press, Inc. PO Box 328, Salem, West Virginia 26426. Entered as Second Class Matter on January 22, 1990 (now periodicals) at the Post Office in Salem, West Virginia under the Postal Act of March 3, 1879. The magazine is mailed under the periodicals rate.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Your subscription is free. It is paid for by people who are concerned about the truth.

Your contributions are sincerely appreciated. You may request this periodical by sending your mailing address to this address.

POSTMASTER:

Please send address changes to:

**THE CHURCH OF GOD
PUBLISHING HOUSE**
P.O. Box 328
Salem, WV 26426-0328

Telephone: 304-782-1411
Fax: 304-782-2248

E-Mail: cogsevday@aol.com

Web site: www.churchofgod-7thday.org

Del DeLong

David DeLong

Bond Tennant.....Editorial Staff

Gary Mills Managing Editor

Ludina Mills.....Children's Page Editor

Volume LX II

Number 1

July 23, 2012

The Advocate of Truth

USPS 542-940

The 4th Of July And The Pledge Of Allegiance 3-4

Do we all strive to accomplish these principles of God?

Our Christian Walk 4-5

May we always walk in the ways of the Lord.

The Greatness of Almighty God 6-8

The Lord will still do for us what He has done for Israel.

A Blessed Man 8-9

Psalm 1 describes this person well.

The Hall Of Faith 10-13

Do you measure up to God's standard of faith?

Independence Versus Dependence 13

These two opposites can actually work together.

The Signs Of The Times 14-15

Sex changing treatments for children are on the rise; revisiting sainthood.

Questions And Answers 16-17

How could the Apostle Paul be a Roman and a Jew?

The Church Around The World 18-19

This month we look at India.

The Children's Pages 20-23

Sabbath School Lessons

A Story - "The Raft Rescue"

Games and Puzzles



The 4th Of July And The Pledge Of Allegiance

Bond Tennant

As we think about the 4th of July, which is called Independence Day, let us look at part of our Pledge of Allegiance.

America has been blessed in the history of the world. It has been blessed materially, scientifically, and educationally. An appropriate response to these blessings should be given to God. Let us now begin the portion of the Pledge of Allegiance:

“One nation, under God.”

It is proper to acknowledge God as the Sovereign Ruler over America. “Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin” (John 19:10-11). “Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding” (Daniel 2:20-21).

Children of God in any country have duties “under God” to their government. “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the

power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same” (Romans 13:1-3).

“With liberty...”

God has given man free will. The Bible respects the rights of individuals to choose their own course. Even God does not compel. “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15). “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).

“And justice for all.”

People in America have not always lived up to this ideal, but almost all confess this ideal with their mouths. God blesses a nation in which justice reigns.

God’s Word demands the practice of impartial justice. “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34). “But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream” (Amos 5:24). “Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and

to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:6-8).

In spite of receiving great blessings, America has committed great sins before God. The road of expansion coast to coast across the land was paved by committing murder and theft against the Indians.

A huge portion of the industrial revolution was built on the sweat and tears of exploited workers, particularly of the women and children.

Slavery was an abomination to the Lord. Continued discrimination toward certain people continues to be an abomination to Him.

Modern political wars, especially during the last few

years, and unjust foreign policy go contrary to the principals of holiness and compassion.

America has seen, and continues to see the perversion of justice by the courts, the abuse of power by executives, and immorality in the halls of congress. People of every political persuasion should denounce these sins.

Greed has influenced many Americans. They believe they can only succeed by accumulating wealth. However, true success is accomplished by service and humility.

As a nation, Americans proclaim as pillars of their nation the very principals which often call them into judgment. But they must work toward these goals.



Our Christian Walk

By Sister Maryane Charles

“Walk” in Scripture is used in many instances for our conversation, or manner of lifestyle. Romans 6:4 states, “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” See also Ephesians 4:1,7.

To walk with God is to have an acute uncanny sense of His presence, endeavoring above all else to please God, to live in sweet communion with Him. Enoch accomplished this. In Genesis 5:24 we read, “And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” The epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans states, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1). This is to say that our entire life has

to be synchronized according to the direction and leading of the Holy Spirit of God and His Word. We have to follow the leading and guidance of His counsel. God will not leave us alone. In Leviticus 26:12 we read, “And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.” God will be with us. In self we can do nothing, but we must pray and ask and invite Him to be with us in each moment of each day. Psalm 143:8 reads, “Cause me to hear thy loving kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.” If we or the Church set aside times of worship to God, we should try and be consistent with our observation and attendance of such.

In Genesis 17:1 we see that the Lord appeared to

Abram, “And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.” Just as from our father Abraham (see Galatians 3:6-9), the Lord desires the same thing from us and states in Ephesians that the gifts that were given to the apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers are, “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12-13).

Earlier, Romans 8:1 was quoted stating that we should not walk in the flesh but in the Spirit. If for some reason we are tempted and we stray from the right path, Isaiah 30:21 informs us, “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.” Oftentimes we hear the still small voice encouraging us to stay on the right path, but we don’t always listen. Whether it be from family members, friends, or colleagues, God will deliver the message through His ministers. We are as the children of Israel in Jeremiah 44:16 who said, “As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee.” Can you imagine that? The people had reached such an unparalleled level of obstinacy that they did not make any excuse and say I cannot do this or that for this particular reason. “I cannot attend Church at this time because I have my own business to look after.” This was a total refusal and rebellion of the carnal mind to walk the way of God. Let not this mind be found in any of us. There will always be an excuse. Luke 9:59-62 reads, “And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” See also Luke 14:18-20.

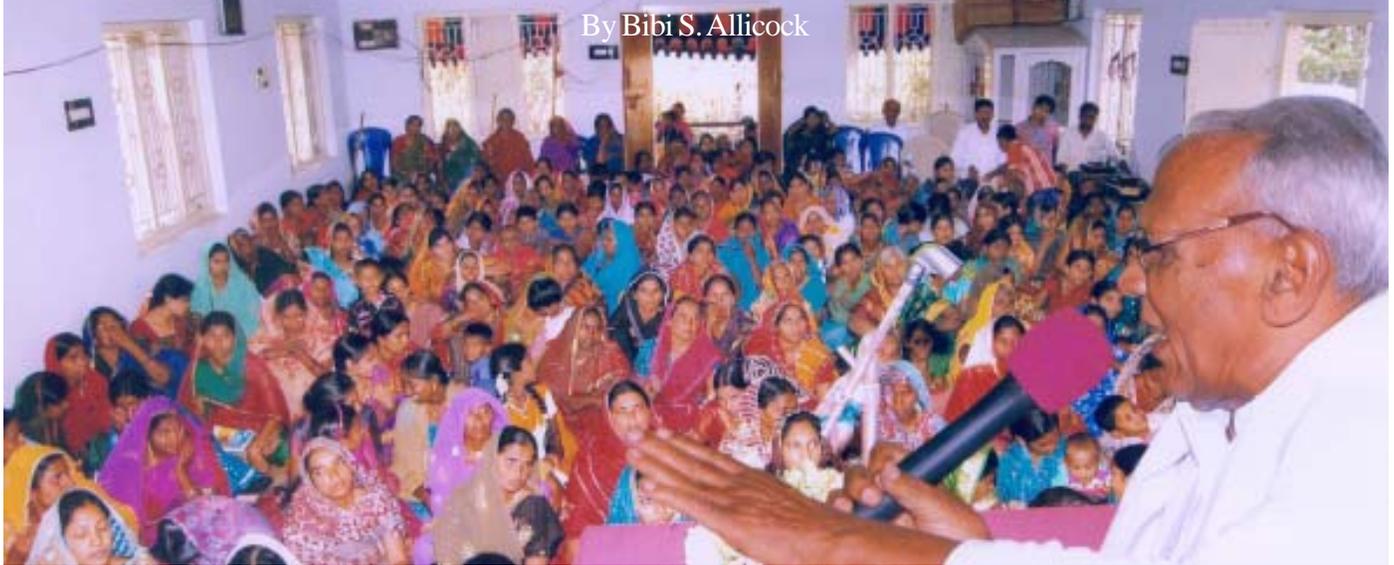
“Walk” in its literal term or form is one of the emotions and actions of the body taking you from one place to another. In Luke 24, we see a case in point of two disciples walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. “And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it

came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?” (verses 14-17). These men were literally walking, but their conversation also tells us that they walked with God. Let us be of the same disposition, that our Christian walk and manner of life can be such that Jesus will be able to join in and walk alongside at any given moment.



The Greatness Of Almighty God

By Bibi S. Allicock



“Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness” (Psalm 48:1). “Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world: Both low and high, rich and poor, together” (Psalm 49:1-2). “Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise him, O ye servants of the LORD” (Psalm 135:1). “Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant” (verse 3). “For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries” (verses 5-7).

In contrast, we see the futility of idols. “The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not” (verses 15-16). “They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat” (Psalm 115:5-7). “... they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good” (Jeremiah 10:5, last part). “They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them”

(Psalm 115:8). “Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit” (Jeremiah 17:7-8).

Gideon adhered to the words of Almighty God. The Lord had told him to “throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it” (Judges 6:25, last part). “Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him” (verse 27, first part). “And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down” (verse 28, first part). “And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon, the son of Joash hath done this thing” (verse 29, last part). “Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it. And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar” (verses 30-31).

Thus, Baal couldn’t plead for himself, but Almighty God continued to show forth His greatness as Gideon

proved Him. “And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew of the fleece, a bowl full of water. And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground” (verses 36-40).

There are so many great and marvelous things that the Lord has done. It might take eternity for us to fathom His greatness. Let us take a good look at what He did for the children of Israel when the Egyptians pursued after them. “But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baal-zephon. And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD” (Exodus 14:9-10). “And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward” (verse 15). “And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace” (verses 13-14). “And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued, and went in

after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians” (verses 19-25). “And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; their remained not so much as one of them” (verses 27-28). “Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses” (verses 30-31).

As the Lord did for the Israelites, He can and will also do for us. He told them, “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD” (Isaiah 54:17).

Isaiah admonished that no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. Therefore, God’s words stand forever, and He is no respecter of persons. He can and will do anything to protect His people as they live according to His will. In the book of Acts we read, “Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quarternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter (Passover) to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door

kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he

had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished. But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place" (Acts 12:1-17). Amen.

A Blessed Man

Bond Tennant



“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind

driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish” (Psalm 1).

A blessed man has both negative and positive aspects.

First, let us examine his negative aspects.

There are some things he will not do. It is not because

the law and judgment dares him to do them, but because he has better things to do. He has hatred for the ways and things that are enmity against God. He knows the following three verses. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4). “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come” (II Timothy 3:1). “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:6-7).

He does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. He knows “...the way of the ungodly shall perish” (Psalm 1:6). He keeps out of it. The counsel of the ungodly leads to the broad road of destruction. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5). He does not walk in earthly wisdom. “Happy (blessed) is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding” (Proverbs 3:13). “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding” (Proverbs 4:7).

He does not stand in the way of sinners. The ungodly man does not consider God. Sinners are those who deliberately transgress against God. Christians are more at home with other Christians. Children of God do not hinder sinners in their quest for Christ. Christ is “...the light of the world” (John 9:5). “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:7).

He does not sit in the seat of the scornful. Many times those who walk in the counsel of the ungodly will end up in the seat of the scornful. There is no promotion beyond this. The scornful walk after their lust.

Let us now consider his positive characteristics.

He is joyful. He has many blessings, but “...his delight is in the law of the LORD” (Psalm 1:2). The child of God not only gives up some things, but he enters into a happy experience with God and His Word. All who love God will find delight in His Word. Praying and reading God’s Word is more joyful than reading other literature.

He is thoughtful. “...In his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalm 1:2). “For the commandment is a

lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life” (Proverbs 6:23). In good times and bad, he makes the Word of God his counsel.

Proper meditation of God’s Word is needed for our physical health and peace of mind. “When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice” (Psalm 63:6-7).

He is hopeful. “...He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water...” (Psalm 1:3). He is full of expectation. Drought starves and stunts some things, but some are fully satisfied. He gets meat to eat that others know nothing about. “Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34).

He is fruitful. The fruit is according to the character of the tree. It is always in season. Grapes are not gathered from thorns. When one is filled with the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is manifested. “Ye shall know them by their fruits...” (Matthew 7:16). “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30). “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23).

He is beautiful. “...his leaf also shall not wither...” (Psalm 1:3). There is a connection between the root and the leaf. Dry roots will bring dry rot to the leaf. Men see the leaf. The root is well hidden under the ground. However, the hidden condition of the root may be judged by the outward condition of the leaf. Withered leaves are a sign of a withered life. It is the Spirit’s purpose to beautify us in the sight of our Creator.

He is successful. “...whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (verse 3). The fruit that the tree produces shall come to maturity. Our Lord could say, “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4). He has left us an example. “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (I John 2:6). “For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15). “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (I Peter 2:21).

Let us all strive to possess the positive characteristics of the blessed man.



The Hall of Faith

By David DeLong

There are a number of athletes listed in the Hall of Fame. They were inducted into it because of their great dedication, effort, and skills needed to be outstanding in their field of sports. I would like to suggest that a number of believers, listed in the Scriptures, may be thought of as being in a Hall of Faith. Others, in the pages of history, could also be included in this Hall of Faith. Let us examine this important topic and see if we might be included in this group as well.

Faith is of the utmost importance to the child of God. Without it, one cannot even be a child of God. We are saved by faith. The just shall live by faith. We are to walk by faith not by sight. (See Ephesians 2:8; Habakkuk 2:4; II Corinthians 5:7). Hebrews 11:6 reads: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Hebrews chapter 3 informs us that some of the children of Israel could not enter into the promised land because of their unbelief. "But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (verses 17-19). We are then admonished in chapter 4:1-2: "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise

being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."

There are at least three conditions concerning faith given in the Bible. One is a lack of faith. Even the Lord was hindered to a degree by a lack of peoples' faith. We read about this sad condition in Matthew 13:54-58. "And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

Mark 6:6 even tells us that Jesus "...marvelled because of their unbelief." His own disciples exhibited this woeful trait at times. "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen" (Mark 16:14).

Jesus compared a faithless generation to a perverse one. After a demon was not cast out of a boy we find, "Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me" (Matthew 17:17). The Lord admonished king Ahaz in Isaiah 7:9, "...If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established."

Just as bad as a lack of faith is wavering faith. James 1:5-8 informs us: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

Related to a lack of faith and wavering faith is dead faith. We read of this in James 2:17-20. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

Coming to a second condition concerning faith, little or weak faith, we should realize that this condition involves true faith. In Romans 14:1 we are told, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." This situation involved the eating of certain foods which some disciples were bothered by. The Apostle Paul concluded the chapter with this admonition: "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (verses 22-23).

A father who came to Jesus for help with his demon possessed son had weak faith. "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:23-24). Jesus could work with this individual because, though his faith was weak, it was genuine faith. It is only the one with no faith, wavering faith, or dead faith who is not honored by the Lord.

The Apostle Peter demonstrated little faith when he

went to Jesus walking on the water. "And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matthew 14:25-31).

There was an incident, in Matthew 9:28-29, when two blind men followed Jesus for healing. "And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you." They were of course healed of blindness. I believe that the same is true of us today. It is according to our faith that the Lord will bless us.

The third condition concerning faith is great faith. Proverbs 3:5-6 reads: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." It appears that very few in the Bible were commended for having great faith.

A Canaanite woman came to Jesus requesting that her daughter be healed of a vexing demon. "But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour" (Matthew 15:24-28).

In another situation we see that a centurion also had great faith. "And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy,

grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matthew 8:5-10).

Hebrews chapter 11 is noted for showing Bible characters who had great faith. We sometimes call it the faith chapter. Let us examine this chapter to see some who had this great faith and why they had it.

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh" (verse 4). We are told in chapter 4 of the book of Genesis that God had respect unto Abel and his offering but He did not have this respect towards Cain. It took faith on Abel's part to believe that God would receive or bless his offering. The same is true with us today. When we give of our tithes and offerings to the Lord, it takes faith on our part to do so. The natural mind believes that if we give to the Lord we won't have enough to live on.

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (verse 5). Enoch's life was pleasing to God. Apparently this was so in an increasingly wicked world--one that would soon be destroyed by the Flood. It takes faith to stand up for the Lord when multitudes around us are living godless lives. Sometimes we may feel alone.

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (verse 7). The situation of Noah's day came down to this: he and his family were the only ones on planet earth who were still following the Lord. It took great faith on Noah's part to obey the Lord in building the ark when he was told to do so. And we are here today because of that great faith.

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went...Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised" (verses 8,11). Would we go to a place not knowing where we were going? Would a sister today be willing to have a child at Sara's age of 90? We can see the great faith it took in both of them to obey God's will.

"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned" (verses 23-29).

The faith that Moses displayed was among the greatest listed in the Scriptures. He gave up his high position as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he chose to suffer with his people, and he left Egypt under circumstances which could have been harmful to him. He did this for the reward which he would receive from the Lord rather than for earthly gain. Moses was a person of great faith.

"And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 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" (Hebrews 11:32-38).

We can readily see why these heroes of the faith were included in this chapter 11. Does it appear that we may



Independence Day is celebrated to commemorate when America became a free nation. When the signers of the Declaration of Independence put their signatures upon this document, they were literally pledging their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.

There are times in the Christian's life when he or she must declare independence. As believers we must leave worldliness and anything that may come between us and our relationship with the Lord. In Revelation 18:4 the Lord admonishes his people through the Apostle John: "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." This refers to any of God's people involved to come out of the Babylonian system of Revelation 17.

The Apostle Paul warned the Corinthians to separate themselves from being "unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (II Corinthians 6:14, first part). In verses 17 and 18 he continues this thought: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Jesus tells us in Matthew 10:37-38 that nothing is to come before our relationship with Him. He said: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me:

not be of the same caliber of faith as these worthies? Let us remember that even if we have only little faith it can grow. The Lord will help us in our walk of faith. One of the greatest things that we can do to build our faith is to be constantly studying the Scriptures. Romans 10:17 informs us, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Independence Versus Dependence

By David DeLong

and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." Jesus must be first. We are to literally pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor to Him.

There are times when we must not declare independence, however. The Lord cautions us to be in an attitude of submission to Him and to other believers. Romans 6:13 reads: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

In Ephesians 5:21 the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus with these words: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." It is not just some that must submit to others. We all need to be in an attitude of submission to our brothers and sisters in Christ, "in the fear of God." This is God's will for believers.

In conclusion let us read from I Peter 5:5 where the Apostle Peter wrote: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." May the Lord help us to declare independence from wrong things, and to declare our dependence upon Him and His Word.



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.

Sex-changing treatments for children on the rise ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO – A small but growing number of teens and even younger children who think they were born the wrong sex are getting support from parents and from doctors who give them sex-changing treatments, according to reports in the medical journal *Pediatrics*.

It's an issue that raises ethical questions, and some experts urge caution in treating children with puberty-blocking drugs and hormones.

An 8 year-old second-grader in Los Angeles is a typical patient. Born a girl, the child announced at 18 months, "I a boy" and has stuck with that belief. The family was shocked but now refers to the child as a boy and is watching for the first signs of puberty to begin treatment, his mother told *The Associated Press*.

Pediatricians need to know these kids exist and deserve treatment, said Dr. Norman Spack, author of one of three reports published Monday and director of one of the nation's first gender identity medical clinics, at Children's Hospital Boston.

"If you open the doors, these are the kids who come. They're out there. They're in your practices," Spack said in an interview.

Switching gender roles and occasionally pretending to be the opposite sex is common in young children. But these kids are different. They feel certain they were born with the wrong bodies.

Some are labeled with "gender identity disorder," a psychiatric diagnosis. But Spack is among doctors who think that's a misnomer. Emerging research suggests they may have brain differences more similar to the opposite sex.

Spack said by some estimates, 1 in 10,000 children has the condition.

Offering sex-changing treatment to kids younger than 18 raises ethical concerns, and their parents' motives need to be closely examined, said Dr. Margaret Moon, a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics' bioethics committee. She was not involved in any of the reports.

Some kids may get a psychiatric diagnosis when they are just hugely uncomfortable with narrowly defined gender roles; some may be gay and are coerced into treatment by parents more comfortable with a sex change than having a homosexual child, said Moon, who teaches at the Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics.

It's harmful "to have an irreversible treatment too early," Moon said.

Doctors who provide the treatment say withholding it would be more harmful.

These children sometimes resort to self-mutilation to try to change their anatomy; the other two journal reports note that some face verbal and physical abuse and are prone to stress, depression and suicide attempts. Spack said those problems typically disappear in kids who've had treatment and are allowed to live as the opposite sex.

Guidelines from the Endocrine Society endorse transgender hormone treatment but say it should not be given before puberty begins. At that point, the guidelines recommend puberty-blocking drugs until age 16, then lifelong sex-changing hormones with monitoring for potential health risks. Mental health professionals should

be involved in the process, the guidelines say.

Houston Chronicle

Comment

Would not the changing one's sex be blasphemy to God? Truly, this practice of having sex-changing treatments is truly a sign of our times brought about by the "god of this world" who is Satan. Sex-changing is a product of warped minds.

Psalms 100:3 tells us, "Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."

What right then does a person have to determine his or her sex? One would not think that an 18-month-old child would have the ability to decide her sex. The adults who want to be the opposite sex defy God and do not wish to fulfill the role for which He created them, and they do not retain God in their knowledge. See Romans 1:28.

Revisiting Sainthood

I read of a mass held by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston that was held last year. It was a Mass of Thanksgiving for Pope John Paul II. As featured before in this column, John Paul II was a candidate for sainthood. I have not been keeping up on whether he achieved beautification or not. I would suppose that he is now a saint.

Of course, John Paul II is dead (and was dead when being considered for sainthood). We know that a dead person in no way can become a saint! One of the conditions for becoming a saint in the Roman Catholic Church is that the person must perform certified miracles which John Paul II is said to have done in the book, *The Miracle of Karol*, which gave an example of an elderly woman being healed after praying to John Paul II. The book also told of a boy ten days old being healed. John Paul II was dead when the prayers were made.

We know that John Paul II and the other dead cannot perform miracles because they are unconscious in their graves and know nothing. "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten" (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

In II Thessalonians 2:9 we read, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." The miracles attributed to John

Paul II, who was dead, may be considered lying wonders just as the appearance of the Virgin Mary at various places and on various objects.

B.T.

Are You Really Hooked On Jesus?

I saw a church advertisement displaying the motto, "Get hooked on Jesus, and become fishers of men." Getting hooked on Jesus means more than just showing one's emotions and constantly talking about Him as many do these days.

It is fine to show one's emotions at times when speaking of Jesus. It is true that "there is something about the name of Jesus" which are the words of an old song. However, the real proof of being hooked on Jesus is in keeping the commandments and doing the things which He commanded us. "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46) "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:8).

If you are not keeping the commandments and living the way that Jesus commanded, you are not hooked on Jesus. You are deceiving yourself. You are hooked on the world!

B.T.

A Point Of Fact

It is a fact that all human plans and devices meant to bring peace and harmony to the world are failing. We see that the prophecies reveal that such plans will continue to fail.

Even much of the Christian world believes that the peace and goodwill foretold in the Bible, in connection with the birth of Jesus, must be brought about by human efforts. Many years ago, then President Eisenhower referred to the message of "peace on earth" and "goodwill toward men." He said that these will continue to be but empty words unless "we" get busy and do something about it.

For over two thousand years, men and women have been trying to fulfill the angel's peace message to the shepherds but have failed. We do not know why anyone should think the people will now be able to do any better when conditions in the world are much more perilous (dangerous) than ever before. See II Timothy 3:1.



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: How could the Apostle Paul be a Roman and also a Jew?

ANSWER: Roman citizenship was bought and sold at high prices in the reign of Claudius. Paul, born a Jew, also inherited the rights of a Roman citizen at his birth, either by the purchase of citizenship by some ancestor or as a reward granted to his father or grandfather for services to the state. The rights of citizenship, freedom to be considered equal to Romans, was sometimes granted to whole provinces and cities, and frequently to families. In the latter case, it was transmitted from father to son in the direct line.

QUESTION: Can those who laugh at children of God be made to believe?

ANSWER: It is impossible to make any one believe the Gospel. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the duty of children of God to testify to them and pray for them. The results must be left to God.

QUESTION: How can one keep himself in the love of God?

ANSWER: One can keep himself in the love of God by keeping His commandments. This is brought out in John

15:10, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

QUESTION: Are the teachings of Christ unchangeable?

ANSWER: Yes, His teachings are unchangeable! Consider the following:

A great philosopher once said that man's three great questions are these: What can I know? What ought I to do? For what can I hope? Christ as a teacher answers all three questions. Man can know God because he can know Christ who reveals Him. His duty is to do the will of God: and he can hope for life everlasting.

As a teacher, as one who answers life's great questions, Christ never changes. This is in contrast to all other teachers. Human systems come and go: the applauded science of today may be the jest of tomorrow. But Christ abides the same. One of the striking things about the teachings of Jesus is that you cannot think of one saying of His that has been rendered obsolete by the passage of time. "**Blessed are the pure in heart.**" "**Seek ye first the kingdom of God.**" "**Judge not, that ye be not judged.**" "**Love one another.**" Which of these sayings is out of date or obsolete today? What Jesus taught on the shores of Galilee or on the banks of the

Jordan He teaches today on the banks of the Thames or the Ohio. What He taught in the streets of Jericho or Capernaum or Jerusalem He teaches today in the streets of London and New York and Pittsburgh, Cebu, Hyderabad, Port Harcourt, and Chicago. As a teacher He has stood successfully that severest of all tests and that free of all error – time.

What Christ said about God, the soul, sin, and heaven is ever the same and ever true. As long as the heart has passions, as long as life has woes, as long as man has hopes, the words of Christ will speak to his soul. Nothing that has transpired, nothing that has been done, or said, or taught, or discovered in the centuries which have passed since Jesus spake to man on the shores of the Sea of Galilee has raised the slightest question as to the truth of that utterance of His, **“Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.”** He towers over the wrecks of time. He is Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end of wisdom and knowledge, and He alone has the keys of death and hell (the grave).

QUESTION: Will you please quote a few verses of Scripture which prove that God has order and government in His church?

ANSWER: Yes, we will. The following are just four of these verses. There are many more!

1. “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (I Corinthians 12:28).
2. “... he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Romans 12:8).
3. “Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you” (Hebrews 13:24).
4. “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine” (I Timothy 5:17).

QUESTION: Do you believe that drawing up a prenuptial contract before being married is a God-honoring thing to do?

ANSWER: A sure sign of the shaky state of today’s marriages is the popularity of prenuptial contracts. Before a couple becomes married, they can have their lawyers draw up an agreement setting out the details on division of property, visitation of offspring, alimony, and so forth, in the event of a divorce. Such contracts are upheld in many states. Participants are mostly previously divorced persons who have money, property and business interests they wish to protect. “They’ve been burned once, and now they want it all spelled out on a piece of paper,” said Lester Wallman of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers.

Love and concern for one’s mate is the backbone of a lasting marriage. “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself” (Ephesians 5:28). “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband” (verse 33).

When the individuals enter into marriage preoccupied with the idea of maintaining and protecting their own interest, they become, not lovers of their mates, but lovers of themselves, lovers of money having no natural affection as the Bible foretold. See II Timothy 3:2-3. Their prenuptial contracts may save their money and property but not their marriage.

QUESTION: What does the word “Canticles” denote?

ANSWER: “Canticles” is the name given in some Bibles for the Book of “Song of Songs” or “Song of Solomon.” Please read verse one.

QUESTION: Are parables and illustrations the same thing?

ANSWER: No, they are not! An illustration is given to reveal the truth, but a parable is meant to hide the truth from those who have heard the truth and have refused to obey it.



India

Elder Kanakarathnam is presenting God's Word to his congregation.



Photos of the footwashing and the emblems at the Lord's Supper service.



A baptismal service being conducted .



LESSON I

SAMUEL RECOGNIZED AS A PROPHET

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 3:1-21.

Golden Text: I Samuel 3:10.

“And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.”

NOTE: In our last session, we learned how the sons of Eli, the priest were very wicked. The Lord told Eli that his sons would die and that He would raise up a faithful priest that would do according to His way. We shall study now how Samuel became a prophet of the Lord.

1. When Samuel lay down to sleep who called Samuel? I Samuel 3:3-4.
2. What did Samuel do, and who did he think had called to him? I Samuel 3:5.
3. Who called to Samuel a second time, and did Samuel know yet who was calling him? I Samuel 3:6-7.
4. Did the Lord call Samuel the third time? I Samuel 3:8.
5. What did Eli advise Samuel to do after the Lord called the third time? I Samuel 3:9.
6. Samuel answered the Lord the next time he called. What did the Lord tell Samuel? I Samuel 3:10-14.
7. Samuel was afraid to tell Eli what the Lord had said to him. When Eli called Samuel to find out what the Lord had said, did Samuel tell him? I Samuel 3:16-18.
8. Did all Israel know that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord? I Samuel 3:19-20.

LESSON II

THE ARK CAPTURED BY THE PHILISTINES

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 4:1-22.

Golden Text: I Samuel 4:11.

"And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain."

NOTE: We learned in our last session how the Lord called Samuel and appeared to him through a vision. Samuel is now prophet and priest for Israel.

1. Israel went out to battle against the Philistines. How many were slain in this battle? I Samuel 4:1-2.
2. What did the leaders of Israel think would save them out of the hand of the enemy? I Samuel 4:3.
3. Did they bring the ark of the covenant into the camp? I Samuel 4:5.
4. When the Philistines heard their shouting, were they afraid, and what did they do? I Samuel 4:6-9.
5. Did the Philistines again fight Israel, and what happened to the ark of the covenant? I Samuel 4:10-11.
6. How old was Eli at that time? I Samuel 4:15.
7. When a messenger told Eli that his two sons had been killed and that the ark had been captured, what happened to Eli? I Samuel 4:17-18.
8. What happened to Phinehas' wife in I Samuel 4:19-20?
9. What was the name of her son, and what did this name mean? I Samuel 4:21-22.

LESSON III

**THE ARK OF GOD;
A CURSE TO THE PHILISTINES**

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 5:1-12.

Golden Text: I Samuel 5:6 (first part).

“But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod...”

NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned the Philistines captured the ark of God. We shall study now how God punished them for taking His ark.

1. Where did the Philistines take the ark after they captured it? I Samuel 5:1.
2. Into whose house did they take it, and who did it set by? I Samuel 5:2.

NOTE: Dagon was a God of the Philistines.

3. What did Dagon do before the ark of the Lord, and what happened to him? I Samuel 5:3-4.
4. How did the Lord punish the men of Ashdod? I Samuel 5:6.
5. When the men of Ashdod saw what was happening to them, what did they do with the ark? I Samuel 5:7-8.
6. What did God do then to the city of Gath? I Samuel 5:9.
7. Where did they take the ark then to try to escape punishment from God? I Samuel 5:10.
8. Did God bring destruction upon the city of Ekron? I Samuel 5:11-12

LESSON IV

THE PHILISTINES RETURN THE ARK

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 6:1-21.

Golden Text: I Samuel 6:8.

“And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go.”

NOTE: We learned in our last lesson how God smote the Philistines for taking the ark. Now let us study about the return of the ark and how those who were curious were smitten by God.

1. How long was the ark of the Lord in the hands of the Philistines? I Samuel 6:1.
2. The Philistines called for the priests to ask what they should do with the ark of the Lord. What did the priests tell them to do? I Samuel 6:2-3.
3. What was the trespass offering to consist of? I Samuel 6:7-8.
4. What were they to make to place the ark on? I Samuel 6:7-8.
5. What is said about the ark's trip to Beth-shemesh? I Samuel 6:9.
6. What did the people at Beth-shemesh do with the ark? I Samuel 6:15.
7. Did the Lord punish the men of Beth-shemesh? I Samuel 6:19-20.

A VERSE TO REMEMBER

**"In thee, O LORD,
do I put my trust,
let me never be put
to confusion."
Psalm 71:1**

THE RAFT RESCUE



“For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” John 5:20-24.

“Help! Help! Save me!” Todd screamed out the words as his homemade raft rushed down the swiftly moving river toward the falls. It had all started just a few minutes ago. Todd had gone down to the river’s edge to play on the raft he and his friends had built. It was tied to a sturdy elm tree on the river bank. Because the current was rough, the raft was never untied, but the boys used it as an imaginary “tub-boat on the Mississippi.” Unknown to Todd, the once thick rope had become badly frayed from rubbing on a rock. When he jumped on the raft to catch a frog that was sunning itself on the warm boards, the frayed

rope snapped, and the raft lunged out from the river’s edge and went pell-mell downstream.

“Oh, no!” Todd thought. “What am I going to do? I cannot swim well enough to reach the shore, and just two miles downstream the river plunges fifty feet over Drop-Off-Point.” For about a mile before the falls the river ran right next to the road. Thinking someone might see him, he waved his arms frantically and yelled loudly.

Todd’s father was driving home from work on that very road, and he looked out at the river. Upstream in the distance, he could see the raft spinning around, and he saw that someone was on it. Quickly stopping the car, he kicked off his shoes and headed for the river. Being a strong swimmer, he stroked toward the middle of the river and waited for the raft to reach him. How surprised he was to see his own son on it! Knowing he would never be able to stop the heavy raft, he called out, “Todd... jump! Jump! I will save you!”

Todd looked at the sturdy raft, then at his father in the swirling waters. He was not sure he wanted to leave the raft, but he knew it would mean sure death if he did not. As he leaped into the surging water, his father caught his arm. Slowly, and with strong, sure strokes, Todd’s father made it safely back to the shore, with Todd in tow.

Later, as they were drying off at home, Dad said, “You know, what I did for you today is sort of like what Jesus did for us. We were headed for sure death, and we could not save ourselves. Just as you had to trust me to save you when you jumped, so we had to be willing to ‘leap out’ by faith and trust the Lord to save us from our sins.”

HOW ABOUT YOU? Have you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ? If not, you are headed for trouble. God says you are a sinner, and sin brings death - eternal death. But Jesus suffered that death for you. Through Jesus, you can receive life - eternal life. Accept Him as your Savior today, before it is too late!

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

THE ARK OF THE FAITH

Fill in the blanks using the word clues. (If you need help, see Genesis 7:1-7 and 9:8-15). Then place the letters that are numbered in the proper places below. You will find the answer to two things Noah had which we should have also.

___ ___ 1 2 Builder of the ark (7:1).

___ 3 ___ 4 ___ Married women (7:7).

___ ___ 5 6 Water drops (7:4).

7 ___ ___ ___ ___ Fifty minus ten (7:4).

8 ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Animal (7:2).

9 ___ ___ 10 ___ ___ ___ 11 An agreement (9:9).

___ 12 ___ ___ ___ A sign (9:12).

___ 13 ___ 14 Rhymes with read (9:9).

___ ___ ___ ___ and ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
 7 1 3 11 2 12 8 4 14 5 13 6 9 10

GIDEON

The story of Gideon in the Bible has led to many other stories that have been told and might be told of other men who like to call themselves Gideons. The story of Gideon is found in the sixth and seventh chapters of the book of Judges in the Old Testament. Read the story, then choose from (a), (b), or © the words that will correctly finish the statements.

1. Gideon threshed (a) barley, (b) wheat, © rye by the winepress. (Judges 6:11)
2. The (a) man (b) angel © prophet of the Lord appeared unto him. (Judges 6:11)
3. Gideon said he was the (a) greatest (b) oldest, © least in his father's house. (Judges 6:15)
4. He put a (a) fleece of wool, (b) goat skin, © calf skin upon the ground. (Judges 6:36-40)
5. One of the enemy dreamed a (a) sword (b) cake of barley bread © a fig cake tumbled into their camp. (Judges 7:13)
6. Gideon's men blew their trumpets, broke their pitchers and held their (a) swords (b) shields © lamps in their hands. (Judges 7:20)
7. And they stood every man in this place round about the (a) camp (b) town © battlefield. (Judges 7:21)
8. All the (a) Egyptians (b) Midianites © Philistines fled. (Judges 7:22-23)

The Advocate of Truth
PO Box 328
Salem WV 26426-0328
Address Service Requested
Return Postage Guaranteed

Periodicals
Postage Paid At
Salem WV 26426-0328



And ye shall
know the truth,
and the truth
shall make you
free (John 8:32).

