

# *The Advocate of Truth*

*Prosperity of  
the Wicked*

*Repentance  
and Baptism*

*The Soul and  
the Spirit*

*Seven Last  
Plagues*

*Covenant  
of Salt*



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**ABOUT THE COVER AND THE BACK: This photo was taken of the Kenai River in Alaska by Fawzia DeLong.**



# HOW TO DEAL WITH THE PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED

BY GARY MILLS

Asaph was one of the three chief musicians in Israel in the time of King David. This job was not just one of an entertainer, but rather was a high position in King David's court and he served as a minister to the Lord. Asaph wrote several songs (Psalms) that are recorded in the Bible. The first Psalm attributed to him is Psalm 73.

In Psalm 73, Asaph spoke of a problem troubling him that could easily have come from today. In Psalm 73:1-3 he writes, "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." While Asaph was grateful for all that God had bestowed upon Israel under King David, he had a hard time understanding why the wicked seemed to be prospering and having an easier time of it than those that were following the Lord. He continues in Psalm 73:5-9, "They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth." Asaph is especially frustrated when he sees those that do not honor and obey the Lord seeming to prosper. "And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." (Psalm 73:11-14.)

Asaph found the answer to this question that had been bothering him so much by turning to God for the answer. He writes in Psalm 73:16-20, "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image." Asaph realizes that he should not have worried about the prosperity of others in this carnal life. "Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee." (Psalm 73:21-22).

Asaph finishes his psalm by showing that by turning to God's care he can overcome the temptations of the wicked. "Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works." (Psalm 73:23-28).

It is easy to see how David drew strength from the songs of Asaph. They were as timely then as they are today and we should listen to their message.



# REPENTANCE AND BAPTISM

By Moises Torres Martinez

**The great commission by the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples after his resurrection was to preach the gospel to EVERY CREATURE.**

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).

It is through the preaching of the gospel that those in the world are invited to repent of their wicked works and sins in order to be reconciled with God and be restored to life. It is for this reason that men must repent to have the hope of being restored to eternal life that was lost since the beginning of the creation. And still we could say that it was Adam and Eve who were the ones that sinned and not us, but the Apostle Paul, speaking of the mercy of God with regard to this, said: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:23-24).

So EVERYONE of us were short of the glory of God (of that glory which is life), and because of this, the Lord commanded the gospel to be preached to EVERY creature because He wants everyone to repent and be reconciled with the Father who is in heaven. This was the reason that He was sent into the world, to reconcile the world with God. From the beginning of His preaching, Jesus preached REPENTANCE. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). His cousin, John the Baptist, also preached repentance. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"

(Matthew 3:1-2).

When the apostles began to preach, after they received the Holy Spirit, they preached REPENTANCE AND BAPTISM. After Peter told the people of Israel whom they had crucified, they were pricked in their heart and asked an important question: "...Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:37-38). Peter said these words to the people of Israel, but Jesus also commanded this to be preached to EVERY CREATURE. So the disciples of Jesus began to preach the gospel, and they spent their lives preaching repentance of dead works and proclaiming faith in God who raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead. In one of his greetings to the brethren of Ephesus, the Apostle Paul exhorts them with his own example: "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21).

Repentance should be confirmed by baptism. So it is necessary that first the person repents through the knowledge of the gospel and then believes that the Lord Jesus Christ died and was resurrected from the dead as it is told in the Holy Scriptures. That person should believe that God is merciful, and He can forgive his sins no matter how big they are. "...though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

The Lord Jesus was also baptized to leave us an example to follow and to comply with all justice (Luke 3:21-23). Therefore, it is necessary that the person who is go-

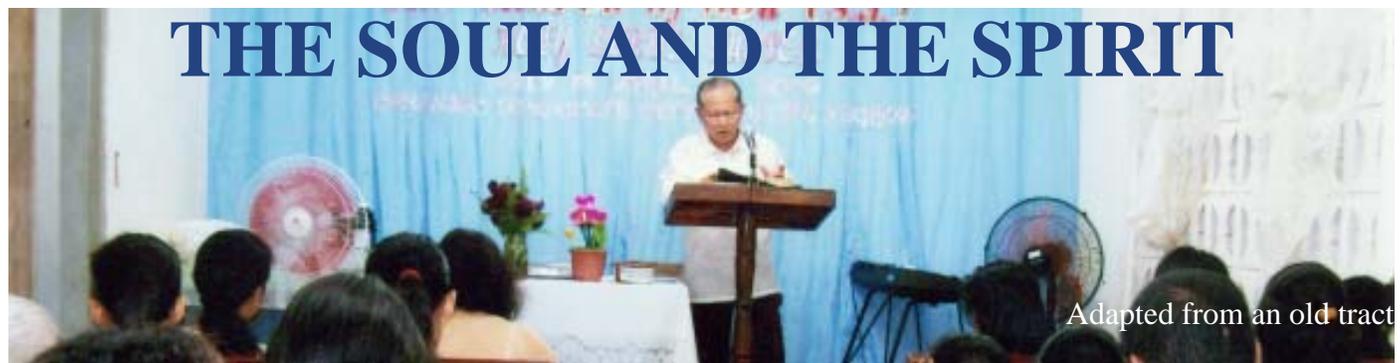
ing to get baptized be of sufficient age to recognize his sins, to repent and ask God for forgiveness in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The baptism of infants is not sanctioned by the Bible because an infant does not know what repentance means or of what he must repent.

Baptism comes from the Greek word "*baptizo*" which means to submerge. Biblically it is the symbol of burying a person in water confirming that he has died to sin and thereon will live a life worthy of eternal life. The baptized person will not sin anymore because he is now clean by the Word of God and by his profession of faith in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Why must we be baptized in the NAME of the Lord Jesus Christ?** It is because it was the Son of God who gave His life to show us that there is a resurrection of

the dead. When He offered Himself, He said: "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself..." (John 10:18). It was not the Father or the Holy Spirit who died on the cross at Calvary, but the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. 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).

So every person has to go through this process of repentance and baptism to be reconciled with God and have the right to eternal life. "**The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance**" (II Peter 3:9).



## THE SOUL

It is taught by almost all Christian groups that every human being born into this world is a possessor of immortality and must live eternally somewhere--either in heaven or in hell. They admit that the body dies and returns to the earth from whence it came, but will say that the soul is immortal and can suffer torment in hell or enjoy pleasure in heaven after death, depending upon the conduct of the body while it lived here on earth. We have searched the Scriptures for many years, but we have never found anything to indicate that the soul can live and function after the body is dead.

"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). Here we find what it took to make a living soul. Notice it does not say he became an immortal soul. We know to take away the thing that made man a living soul would make him a

dead soul. Seeing, then, that the soul is made alive by the breath of life, we shall show that it is not immortal, but subject to death.

"Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). The Lord is not speaking of the common death of all men. A man can save his soul by turning away from all wickedness. "Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive" (Ezekiel 18:27).

Here the Lord is not speaking of this mortal life, but of the eternal life, as many wicked people live the mortal life to a ripe old age. However, there is something to do in order to save our souls from death eternal.

"Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their

soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine" (Psalm 33:18-19). "For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling" (Psalm 116:8).

A soul can be saved from death. "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:20).

Christ's soul made an offering for sin and poured out unto death. "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand" (Isaiah 53:10). "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (verse 12).

His soul was sorrowful unto death. "Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me" (Matthew 26:38).

The soul can be destroyed. Our Lord said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

We see from the preceding text that the soul is not an immortal part of man, but it is subject to death and destruction. The word "immortal" is found only one time in the Word of God, and it is applied to God: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (I Timothy 1:17).

God the Father, and Christ the Son, only have immortality at the present time, and it is conditional to us: "Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen" (I Timothy 6:15-16).

Man is mortal. "Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker? (Job 4:17) "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Romans 6:12). "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal

must put on immortality" (I Corinthians 15:53). If we were naturally possessed with immortality, we could not put it on in the resurrection. Therefore, man is mortal, soul and body.

## THE SPIRIT

Some will say that the soul and body of man are mortal, but that the spirit of man is the part that is eternal, immortal, and lives and functions with all the feeling and mind of the human being, either in heaven, or hell after the person is dead. We shall examine this hypothesis.

We find that there is a spirit in man, but this does not give understanding. "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8).

The spirit gives man life. "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4).

No man has power to retain the spirit in the day of death. "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it" (Ecclesiastes 8:8).

The spirit of both righteous and wicked returns to God who gave it; and they return to the dust as it says, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). The spirit does not retain the feeling and mind, neither does it suffer torment or praise God. The spirit mentioned in the preceding texts is only the spirit of life. The Holy Spirit is different, and is only given to the righteous.

In Proverbs 20:27, we are told that the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord: "The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly." So the candle of the Lord is the spirit of man. Job had it. "When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness" (Job 29:3). This candle or spirit is not eternal, but it can be put out with the wicked. "Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness" (Proverbs 20:20). "The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out" (Proverbs 13:9). "Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him" (Job 18:5-6).

As the spirit of man will be put out with him, we know

that it is not an immortal spirit that lives and thinks on after death. If everyone was naturally possessed of immortality, the wicked would have eternal life the same as the righteous, and would not perish even though there never would be a resurrection of the dead. However, we read in I John 3:15, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding

in him." The Apostle Paul said, "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (I Corinthians 15:16-18).

This alone proves that immortality and a resurrection to everlasting life depend on obedience in this life.



# *Revelation: Is This a Book of Mysteries?*

## *Part 4 - The Seven Last Plagues*

*By Del DeLong*

In the last installment, we discussed the Seven Seals (see part 3 in the September Advocate 2007). After the seventh seal is removed, and the saints are resurrected safely residing in the New Jerusalem which hovers above the earth, there is silence in the heavens for the space of about one half an hour. "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour" (Revelation 8:1). The angels knew that something spectacular was about to happen--something forboding and terrible.

The residents on the earth, who were not a part of the resurrection, had no idea of what was about to happen. They had been hiding from God, as we saw during the time of the sixth seal found in Revelation 6:15. "What is next" must be their thoughts. Little did they know that seven last plagues would soon be poured out upon the earth.

The trumpets would sound and the vials would be poured upon the face of the earth. The trumpets are found in Revelation 8-11, and the vials are found in Revelation 16. We will be switching back and forth between these chapters to get a better understanding of the Seven Last Plagues for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

The Saints will not be affected by these horrible

plagues, because they will be above the earth on a sea of glass known as the New Jerusalem. "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass having the harps of God" (Revelation 15:2). The city will be made of pure gold and it will appear clear as glass. Gold in its purest state is clear. The New Jerusalem will appear as a sea of glass, because it is so immense. We are told in Psalm 91: 7-10: "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thy eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation: There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."

"And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should *offer it* with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense *which* came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And

the angel took the censer and filled it with fire of the altar: and cast *it* into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound" (Revelation 8:2-6). The angels are ready, and the trumpets will next sound. When a trumpet sounds, a vial will be poured out upon the earth.

## The First Plague

"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up" (Revelation 8:7). It is hard to imagine the devastation this plague will bring. No more grass is left and the fire will be beyond belief. Let us see how this is described when the vial is poured out in Revelation 16:1-2. "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image." The huge fire brought with it this terrible sore upon those who had followed the ways of the beast and had received his mark. The mark of the beast is "blasphemy", which are actions against God's commandments and the truth of His Word.

God sends out a clear warning to all His people. This can be found in Revelation 18:4. "...Come out of her (Babylon) my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." By doing the works of Satan, an individual takes on the mark of the beast--the workings of Babylon, which is blasphemy against God.

## The Second Plague

" And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood:

And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed" (Revelation 8:8-9). Let us see how this is described as a vial that is poured out. " And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea: and it became *as* the blood of a dead *man*: and every living soul died in the sea" (Revelation 16:3). We can see once again the unimaginable devastation that happens on earth. One third of the creatures in the sea will die and every person on a ship or in the water will die. Blood is very repulsive to many people, so when one third of the sea turns to blood it will become intolerable to many people who are left on the earth. The stench of all the dead creatures will be truly great.

## The Third Plague

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters: And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter" (Revelation 8:10-11). This comes to earth in the form of a burning meteor which looked like a star and affects the drinking water and the rivers. Water is so vital to life, so this plague will cause extreme suffering, and many will die.

Let us look at the vial description of this plague. "And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments" (Revelation 16:4-7).

All these plagues represent the wrath of God that He pours out on unrepentant mankind who will not and have not accepted Jesus as their

personal Saviour and do not follow God's Word. Mankind is given plenty of warning, but many will not listen; so they will have to endure this wrath that God will pour out on the earth after Jesus returns.

## The Fourth Plague

"And the fourth angel sounded and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it and the night likewise" (Revelation 8:12). Total darkness for parts of the day and night would be terrifying to many. The amounts of pollution in the air would make breathing very difficult during this time. How is this time described as a vial? "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory" (Revelation 16:8-9).

Not only were there periods of darkness, but when the sun was out, it scorched men with great heat. With no electricity available, it would be difficult to escape the severe temperatures. Did anyone ask for forgiveness during this time. The resounding answer is NO. They actually blasphemed God for their torment.

## The Three Woes

"And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound" (Revelation 8:13)!

After the first four plagues, an angel flies through the heavens sounding an ominous warning. The words given are WOE, WOE, WOE. He is telling everyone that the next three plagues will be much more severe than the previous four which the people on the earth have

already endured. Each plague is presented as a great WOE. Men's hearts remain unwaivering and the wicked seem to be more defiant than ever. Even though a warning of the devastation about to come, the wicked are entrenched in their defiance to God.

This is the attitude of many on earth today. God gives them His commandments, yet they ignore them and turn to their own ways. Some have a form of godliness, but they do it on their own terms. The ways of this world and the influence of Babylon (ungodly teachings) turn people away from God's commandments and the truth of His Word.

We have a textbook which gives God's will to us. It is our job to prove all things through His Holy Word, The Bible. Satan will entice many with wonderful words of untruth, which to the unsuspecting sound like the true way to follow. There are ministers which proclaim they are speaking God's Word, but when their words are held up to the light of the Bible, they dim in comparison; because they are just not true. Satan deceives in this manner. He will mix truth with untruth and present his concoctions as God's will toward man. That is why we see the warning to God's people, those who truly want to walk in God's way and not their own. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues", which are devastating indeed.

In the next installment, we will explore the three terrible woes, who are they poured out upon, and the extreme events that will occur during this time period.

We, as children of God, must make our calling and election sure, so we can be a part in the first resurrection and escape the horrific seven last plagues. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

May God bless you as you study His Word!

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# *A Message To The Body, The Church of God*

*By Tim Buechner*

In the month of March, we participated in the dedication of a church building here in San Antonio. In the month of April we celebrated the Lord's Supper together. Both of these events remind me of and emphasize the fact that the Church of God is a Body. The Church is not an individual member, nor an individual congregation in a city or state, nor an individual group in a country. It is a Body of individual members that spans the world. See I Corinthians 12:12-14.

The power of the Body, through the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father, can be fully realized when the Body is strong and healthy. The whole is certainly greater than the sum of the individual parts! When we are united together for a single purpose, cause or goal, we are powerful.

The power to produce results spans many areas from the power to produce healing in prayer (James 5:16-17), the power to send the Gospel Truth to different parts of

the world, or the power to provide the material needs (like buildings) when we are faithful and obedient in tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:8-12).

We should never forget that we are members of a powerful Body! We are never alone and stranded by ourselves, even if we do not live in a place where there is a Church or other members. We are the Church of God, the Body of Christ.

Here in San Antonio, we recognize these facts and thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, for the powerful Body we belong to. The faithfulness, obedience, and power of the Body has enabled the purchase of the building that we dedicated to God's work. Without the Body, this would not have been possible for the members in San Antonio to accomplish alone.

So, thank you for your prayers, support, and faithfulness. I pray you had a wonderful Lord's Supper. Remember, we are the Body!



## Covenant of Salt

By David DeLong

In Leviticus chapter 2, verses 1,11,13, the Lord instructed the Israelites: "And when any will offer a meat ("meal", margin) -offering unto the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon...No meat-offering, which ye shall bring unto the the LORD, shall be made with leaven: for

ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the LORD made by fire...And every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt."

This passage of Scripture makes it plain that the children of Israel were to follow a prescribed formula when offering meat-offerings unto the Lord. Oil was to be poured upon the fine flour, possibly symbolizing the Holy Spirit's presence and power that is to be with God's people. Frankincense was to be put upon it, possibly symbolizing the prayers of God's people (see Psalm 141:2). No leaven nor any honey was to accompany the oblation. However, salt was commanded by the Lord to be with every meat-offering. In fact, the salt in the offering constituted, or symbolized, "...the covenant of thy God..."

Also, the heave-offering, which was to be Aaron's and his son's and daughter's by a statute, was given to them by the Lord as a covenant of salt. Notice Numbers 18:19: "All the heave-offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee (Aaron), and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it is a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee."

When the Lord gave the kingdom of Israel to David and his sons, it was done by a covenant of salt. We read of this in II Chronicles 13. Abijah, who was David's great-grandson, became king over Judah on the death of his father, Rehoboam. Jeroboam was already king over the northern tribes of Israel. Abijah went to war with Jeroboam with half of the number of soldiers that the latter had: four hundred thousand to eight hundred thousand.

Listen to what Abijah told Jeroboam: "And Abijah stood up upon mount Zemaraim, which is in mount Ephraim, and said, Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel; Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?" (See verses 4,5).

Jeroboam would not hear the message that Abijah delivered to him, but rather ambushed the men of Judah. When they cried unto the Lord, along with the blowing of trumpets by the priests, God smote the men of Israel and caused the army of Abijah to win the battle. Five hundred thousand of the men of Israel were slain. Later, the Lord struck Jeroboam so that he died. Our Father in heaven took His covenant of salt very seriously.

In a number of places in Scripture the Lord used salt as a symbol of the covenant that He enters into with His

people. Let us now look at some other passages in the Bible that may refer to various aspects of this covenant of salt.

God's covenant brings health and restoration to those who are benefitted by it. We find in II Kings chapter 2 a situation in which the water and land, apparently around the city of Jericho, were not usable. Verses 19-22 tell us: "And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren. And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake."

The breaking of God's covenant may bring judgment to those who commit this offense. We know from Genesis 19 that God rained fire and brimstone upon the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah for their great trespasses against Him. Two angels, which had been sent by the Lord to destroy these cities, also helped Lot, his wife, and his two daughters to escape from this destruction. Verse 17 informs us: "And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he (apparently one of the angels) said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

After Lot pleaded with the angels to let him and his family flee to the city of Zoar instead of the mountain, we read in verses 24-26: "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."

Two judgments took place in this passage--that upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding area, and that upon Lot's wife. She, at least, must have known of God's covenant with Abraham which gave blessings also to Abraham's family, including Lot and his household. But the pull of her past life in Sodom was still great, apparently, and she disobeyed God's instruction to not

look back. Perhaps her turning into a pillar of salt was God's solemn "picture lesson" of the broken covenant with her Lord.

In any event, Jesus used this scenario to warn his disciples to be ready for His return. In Luke 17:28-30,32, the Lord said: "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed...Remember Lot's wife."

In Judges chapter 9, we read of a situation concerning a son of Jerubbaal (Gideon) whose name was Abimelech. He murdered 70 of his brothers, and it appears that only the youngest son of Jerubbaal, Jotham, was left alive because he hid himself. Later, the men of Shechem and the house of Millo made Abimelech king. Jotham proclaimed a parable to the men of Shechem, after which "...God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem..." (vs. 23). A couple of battles or so took place, at which point we read, "And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that was therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt" (vs. 45). Later, Abimelech was killed.

It is interesting that the Lord used this incident as a judgment upon the wickedness of those involved. Abimelech, in rendering punishment upon the inhabitants of Shechem, apparently tried to make the destruction of the city more complete by sowing it with salt. Thus he may have unknowingly showed the horrible consequences that can accompany the breaking of God's covenant. At the least, he and the other murderers of Jerubbaal's sons were judged by the Lord.

The Patriarch Job makes an interesting statement in Job chapter 6, the first part of verse 6: "Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt?" It is a fact that food is sometimes more palatable when salt is added to it for flavoring. Life is also more satisfying when we enter into God's covenant and live our lives for Him. That covenant is like the salt which adds "flavor" to our existence. Certainly we can agree with the Psalmist in Psalm 34:8: "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

In the New Testament, our Lord seems to make a direct correlation between His followers, and this covenant of salt. He said in Matthew 5:13, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." As long as the Lord's disciples (those who are in accord with Acts 2:38) are in keeping with His covenant (which is the Ten Commandments--please see Deuteronomy 4:13; Romans 3:19), then they "are the salt of the earth." Through disobedience, however, they can lose that covenant relationship and be like salt which has lost its savour. In other words, they become good for nothing and are to be cast out. Even men will lose respect for them and will tread them under foot.

Jesus made reference to this covenant of salt in a very personal way in Mark 9:49. Here He proclaimed, "For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." This, very probably, refers to the trials and sufferings that every follower of the Lord Jesus will have to go through. *None* is exempt. In fact, even nonbelievers have a fiery situation facing them. It is called "hell fire" ("gehenna", see vs. 47), where they will be utterly consumed. Continuing in verse 50 Jesus exhorted, "Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." Here we can see that God's covenant extends to good relationships with His people as well.

Even a believer's speech needs to be in accord with the Lord's covenant. A person's words show a lot about what is in his or her heart (see James 3:8-12). Untruths, foolish jestings, gossipings, and the like have no place in a follower of our Lord Jesus. The Apostle Paul admonished, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:6).

Salt is a very interesting substance, and a number of its properties make it an apt symbol for God's covenant. For instance, we know that salt is a compound made up of sodium chloride. Ingested individually, sodium and chlorine can be harmful to a person. However, when combined together as salt, they can be beneficial.

God's covenant has two aspects pertaining to His standard of righteousness, the Ten Commandments. We read in Proverbs 16:6, "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged..." Truth alone cannot give us life. All of us have sinned against God's truth which leads to death (see Romans 6:23a). Also, mercy alone cannot save us. Mercy, without truth, leads to permissiveness which also leads to ruin. But when combined, mercy and truth purge iniquity, and this does lead to life.

Salt is also a preservative. If it is applied to certain foods, they can last a long time without spoiling. So too, those who are truly "the salt of the earth" will help to keep society from decaying by their examples and witness. Believers need to take a stand against the corruption which surrounds them. It has been said, "All that it takes for evil to succeed is for Christians to do nothing."

We mentioned earlier that salt adds flavor to food, suggesting that God's covenant is like salt which allows us to "taste and see that the LORD is good." Salt also makes a person thirsty. It has been shown that the serving of pretzels in an establishment that sells beverages can cause an increase of the beverages to be sold. A proper relationship with the Lord will cause us to "...hunger and thirst after righteousness..." (Matthew 5:6), and will cause us (and others) to thirst for the Lord, Himself (please see Psalm 42:1,2).

Salt is a cleansing agent; it will disinfect and purify. Many a woman has rubbed salt onto a cutting board, especially after meat has been cut on it, to kill the germs. Sometimes a salt solution is rubbed into a wound to kill the germs and help the swelling to go down. Though this is beneficial to the wound, there can be a stinging sensation which accompanies the application of the salt. So, too, in the Body of Christ "germs" such as prejudice, strife, envy, factions, etc. can enter through a wound that has been opened up. By obeying Jesus' words to "have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another" this wound can be healed.

Another property that salt has is that of melting ice. How thankful some of us are when the salt trucks scatter salt on the highways to melt the icy build-ups in winter-time. Thankfully, too, the followers of Jesus can help to melt the "icy" attitudes of those around them. Proverbs

15:1 informs us, "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." Praise the Lord that barriers can be brought down, hurt feelings can be healed, and coldness and hard-heartedness can be softened. Actually, only the Lord can melt people's hearts, but we can bring people to the Lord. When attitudes soften, conversions can be made.

Salt, interestingly enough, can even make a type of battery. When salt is added to water, a current of electricity can be discharged through a wire inserted into the solution so that a lightbulb can glow. God's people can share the Holy Spirit with others by the laying on of hands for healing and the help needed from the Lord to overcome problems.

Now, can there be too much salt present in a person's body? The answer, of course, is *yes*. The results of this condition we call hypertension, or high blood pressure. Some in the Body of Christ may display misguided zeal. This can be shown through judging others, having a critical, self-righteous attitude, or a "holier than thou" feeling. This can cause great tension in the church. In fact, too much salt can be poisonous, as was referred to earlier by the sowing of salt in the city of Shechem.

A salt crystal is hard, has a high melting point, is made of ions (atoms with a charge) in a highly ordered pattern, and is surrounded by ions of opposite charge. Doesn't that sound like a disciple of Jesus? A disciple must endure to the end, suffer persecutions without giving in, be charged by the Holy Spirit, live a disciplined life, and is surrounded by other disciples with different talents.

In ancient Israel, I am told, it was a custom for a man and a woman about to be married to exchange salt from their separate containers into a common container. Since neither party was able to remove the salt from the common container that was originally his or hers, then neither were they to break their covenant of marriage with each other. What a wonderful way to view God's covenant of salt with His people!

Salt can lose its savour, and Christians can lose sight of the Saviour. Our savour, then, is presenting the Saviour to the world. May we ever be true to our calling as "the salt of the earth."



# 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.*

## SOME BELIEVE HIGHWAY LEADS TO HOLINESS

**Believers find link between Bible verse, I-35**

**By Anna M. Tinsley  
McClatchy Newspaper**

**FORT WORTH--**They call it the Highway of Holiness.

About 1,500 miles of pavement, stretching from Laredo to northern Minnesota, best known as Interstate 35.

Some churchgoers and religious leaders believe the interstate has a holy destiny, and many are trying to make sure it is reached.

"We're using I-35 as a springboard to get America praying," said Steve Hill, pastor of the Heartland World Ministries Church in Las Colinas, a Dallas suburb. "We're trying to set this nation on fire for God."

So he said he and others are praying for safer neighborhoods. For people who live near the highway. For adult establishments near the highway.

And for the soul of every person in the world, whether

or not they are near I-35, and the land around it, because of a passage in the Old Testament from the book of Isaiah-35:8.

"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness..." the verse begins.

When Cindy Jacobs read Isaiah 35, she kept thinking Isaiah 35, Interstate 35, Isaiah 35.

And she wondered.

"We felt like I-35 could be the road they were talking about," said Jacobs, a self-proclaimed prophet who with her husband co-founded Generals International, based in Red Oak, south of Dallas. "And we thought, wouldn't it be great if there was a revival of faith?"

So earlier this year they kicked off a 35-day nationwide prayer effort--Light the Highway--setting up 24-hour prayer rooms in at least a dozen cities, meeting with churches, holding "purity sieges" outside nightclubs, offering street evangelism, even praying as they drove on the road.

The Heartland World Ministries Church, one of several churches that participated in the effort, knocked on 8,000 doors in Las Colinas, talking to people about God, Hill said.

"We believe in the power of prayer, but we also believe in putting feet to the prayer," Hill said.

Televangelist Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcast Network recently aired a segment on this effort.

Robertson weighed in on the effort, saying it would

be wonderful if it did spur a reformation.

"Traffic's heavy on this busy interstate, but it's nothing compared to what's happening on the side of the road," he said. "Wouldn't that be wonderful ... cut a line right down the middle of America and let it spread to both coasts."

The churches involved in the effort indicate that the real effort is just beginning.

"We want everyone who drives on (I-35) or lives near it to have a fresh encounter with Jesus Christ and feel His love and power," said Joe Oden, a Heartland evangelist. "We would like to see everyone in America touched by God. We are just focusing on one area."

Jacob said she expects to see results.

"We want a holy nation," she said. "Prayer works."

The Houston Chronicle

### COMMENT

Isaiah 35:8 is speaking about a highway during the millennium. It is not a prophecy that will be fulfilled in this age. In no way will driving or living near this highway cause anyone to have a fresh encounter with our Lord Jesus Christ. The promotion of this highway is nothing but a gimmick.

## PRAYER STATIONS POPPING UP AND AROUND TOWN

**KSBJ Launches  
Program That Offers Prayers to Anyone**

**By Richard Vara  
Houston Chronicle**

"God listens" is more than just a catchy motto for contemporary Christian radio station KSBJ (89.3 FM).

The station has launched six local "prayer stations" staffed by volunteers willing to pray with any interested passers-by.

"Ultimately we would love to see as many as 1,000

prayer stations throughout the city of Houston," said Kim Kossie, KSBJ community relations director. "We are talking parks, hospitals, jailhouses, courthouses, schoolhouses. Wherever there are people, we want them to see prayer stations."

Kossie dreams of having churches, groups, classes and other organizations volunteer to launch and staff new stations.

But for now, the six stations have been open only for a few hours on last week's National day of Prayer. Matthew De Hoyos, a maintenance engineer, heard about the prayer station on the radio and strolled to downtown's Market Square during lunch.

"I am going through some financial difficulties and need some prayers on that," De Hoyos said after a brief prayer session. "You can't go wrong with praying."

The stations are not permanent structures and are as simple as a table with a bright red sign. The routine calls for volunteers to hand out flyers that explain the station and offer prayer with anyone and for any intention.

"This is an opportunity for the church of Houston to come outside the walls of the church and literally be the Church Without Walls," Kossie said.

This is a place where you think everyone is in a hurry all the time and that surely no one was going to slow down for you to pray for them," Kossie said. But to her surprise, people stopped by the station regularly.

Prayer fills a need and a void many people have, she said.

"It gives you an opportunity to talk to a power that is greater than yourself," she said. "You just let it all out, and you have this sense of peace in knowing that, you know what, I don't have to handle this by myself."

All faiths are welcomed, she said, but no one is coerced.

Excerpted from *The Houston Chronicle*

### COMMENT

Having prayer stations seems like a good idea, but there is the danger that it can cheapen prayer by making it a public display. Also the volunteers may not know the real motive and heart condition of some for whom they pray. James said, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3).

# BIBLE

## Study



# Questions and Answers

**QUESTION:** Will you please comment on rightly dividing the word of truth?

**ANSWER:** The verse you refer to is found in II Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

We must recognize that the Bible is written to, or about, distinct different categories.

According to some peoples' view, everything from Genesis to Revelation is written to, or about, children of God.

No greater mistake could be made. The truth is, the Church (The Body of Christ) occupies a very restrained area of the Bible.

If all that is said directly about the Church and children of God was printed by itself, it would make a very small book. Not even all of the New Testament is directly written to, or about, the Church.

In his epistle to the church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul speaks of Jews (Israel), the Gentile (heathen) and the Church of God (The Body of Christ). "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God" (I Corinthians 10:32).

The Bible is written to, or about, one or the other of these groups. Sometimes in the same book there are words which belong to all of them, or have application to them, either as object or subject. Sometimes there are books

which belong to one group and rigidly exclude the others, either as subject or object. But this is not meant that all Scripture is not profitable for doctrine, reproof, or correction. For we are definitely told that all things which happened to the children of Israel, happened unto them that they might be examples to us. The experiences of Israel are typed full of instruction to us. And the whole Bible from cover to cover is intended for the profit and thoroughly furnishing a man of God unto all good works.

This is what the Apostle Paul taught his young friend Timothy. He wrote to Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God." How was Timothy to show that he was studying and willing to show himself approved? It was by "RIGHTLY DIVIDING the Word of Truth."

By "rightly dividing the word of truth," we will not pick out certain Scriptures that just suit us but rightly dividing it into the three groups (Jew, Gentile, Church of God) as it was addressed by men of God who wrote it. The Scriptures are addressed to one or the other of these three classes, and they have the priority of claim, and the truth must first be considered in the light of its original purpose and relation before its profit can be more extensively applied. A friend of mine may receive a letter intended exclusively for him: and yet, when he hands it to me to read, I may discover something quite necessary for me to know, some lessons and truths well enough for me to apply. But, even then, I would never dream of claiming that the letter was written to, or about me.

Each class, therefore, Jew, Gentile and the Church of God, is the primary subject or object of some particular form or accent of truth. We must recognize this classification in any endeavor we make toward the study of the Holy Scriptures.

We must inquire of each Scripture to whom it is written. This is the proper way to "rightly divide" the Word. We must give to each class the portion of truth belonging to it. We have no right to take truth from one class and give it to another. To do so is as much an act of stealing as it would be to go into a man's house and rob his coat, and then wear it as if it were your own. And yet, this kind of robbery has been carried on in the most extensive way by ministers and teachers and lay-leaders of the Word. It is sad, but true, that even ministers who stress the keeping of the commandments of God are breaking the eighth one, "Thou shalt not steal," by using Scriptures pertaining only to Israel for the Church of God. In no case has this been more marked than in relation to the promises of Israel. Entire sections, chapters and passages have been taken bodily from the Jew and transferred with compunction to the Church of God and Christians.

It is a common thing for some people to take Scripture which speaks of the time when Israel shall be the head and no longer the tail of nations, when the city of Jerusalem shall be exalted, etc. and apply it to themselves. They take all these verses and claim them as prophecy of their church. Time and time again we hear ministers from the radio and pulpits claim they are the Israelites and they will be exalted and will rule over all the nations. They take the literal city of Jerusalem to mean their church. They say all the Caucasian Christians are Israel, and then some will call themselves Spiritual Israelites.

There is not a single verse of Scripture to corroborate such claims. The Jew is never called a Christian any more than an Israelite can be called a Christian. If an Israelite repents and accepts Jesus, he becomes a child of God. If a heathen repents and accepts Jesus, he too becomes a child of God. Mount Zion cannot be called the Body of Christ any more than Bunker Hill can be called the Church of God. The Scriptures tell us that when we come to Christ, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

Out of this robbery a whole system of theology lives, and moves, and thrives, finding its sustenance in the plun-

der it has obtained by taking from Israel the promises which were so solemnly given to them, and to Israel alone.

His servants are His workmen. We are working in His vineyard. We must study because the Scriptures were given to us. We must also rightly divide the word of truth.

**QUESTION:** The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." In what ways can one be ashamed of the gospel?

**ANSWER:** To be "ashamed of the gospel" covers a number of attitudes from being totally embarrassed by it to thinking one can improve upon it a bit to make it more acceptable.

One example of the former is the claim of a minister and author that the teaching regarding Christ's paying the full penalty for the sins of mankind through His substitutionary death on the cross is irrelevant and viewed as "a form of cosmic child abuse."

More subtle examples include trying to make the gospel seem less exclusive and the denying of the consequences for rejecting the gospel such as the wrath of God and the Lake of Fire.

**QUESTION:** In Hebrews 11:32, we read of Samson having obtained a good report. We also know that Samson committed suicide. What about people today who are not in their right mind and take their own life?

**ANSWER:** You have asked a question that only the Lord can answer. We know from the many passages concerning the goodness and mercy of God that He does not want to have any person to be lost and damned forever. He will save such as should be saved (Acts 2:47). He is able to save every individual (Hebrews 5:7-9; 7:25).

The Lord is able to look into the heart of the person who has committed suicide. We cannot do this. But if a person is resurrected, it will be to give him his first chance to know the fame and the glory of the Lord. He will have the chance to go through the steps of salvation as every saint did during the millennium.



## *The Philippines*

*These photos were taken at the time of the Lord's Supper.*





**LESSON I****PAUL'S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY****Scripture Reading: I Timothy 1:1-20.****Golden Text: I Timothy 1:2.****"Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord."**

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

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

**LESSON II****PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS TO TIMOTHY****Scripture Reading: II Timothy 2:1-26.****Golden Text: II Timothy 2:1.****"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace****that is in Christ Jesus."**

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

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

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

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

**LESSON III****SOMETHING OF GREAT PRICE****Scripture Reading: I Timothy 2:1-6; 6:1-11.****Golden Text: I Timothy 2:2 (last part).****"That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."**

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

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

3. There are two things we should do to have strength in the Lord. What are they? Isaiah 30:15.
4. How are the words of wise men heard? Ecclesiastes 9:17.
5. Would the Lord have us to pray for kings and for those who have the rule over us? Why? I Timothy 2:2-3.
6. If we are to learn of Jesus, what should we do? Matthew 11:29.
7. From what should we withdraw? I Timothy 6:5.
8. Who will inherit and live on the new earth? Matthew 5:5.

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

LESSON IV

SHARING OUR FAITH

Scripture Reading: Philemon 1.  
Golden Text: Proverbs 19:20.

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

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

1. How did Paul address Philemon? Philemon 1:1.
2. To whom else did Paul address this letter? Philemon 1:2.
3. Tell what kind of a person Philemon was? Philemon 1:5-7.
4. Who was Paul writing about in Philemon 1:10.

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

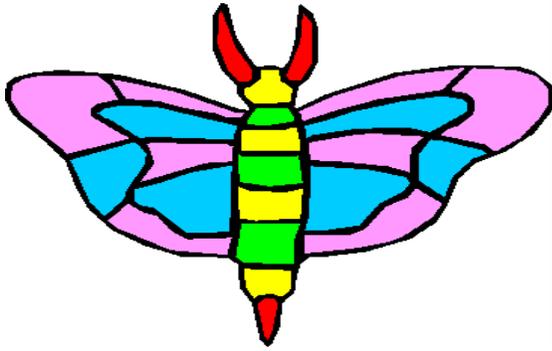
5. How did Paul ask Philemon to receive Onesimus? Philemon 1:16-17.
6. What did Paul say he would do if Onesimus owed anything? Philemon 1:18-19.
7. Was Paul confident that Philemon would forgive Onesimus? Philemon 1:21.

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

TWELVE DISCIPLES

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

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



## He Picked Me

By Sherry James

"Why are you staring in your cocoon?" Cassandra the caterpillar asked.

"I'm reading a message from God," said Bella the butterfly. "I've been chosen for a special task."

Cassandra stretched up tall and clapped her hands. "How exciting! I can't wait to hear about your adventure."

Through the long grass of the meadow Bella flew. Six ladybugs sat on bright red flowers with yellow star centers. They were sipping sweet smelling nectar. "Join us for a scrumptious meal," they said.

Bella's throat felt dry and the nectar looked so good. She cleared her throat with determination. "I'm on a mission for the Lord. I'll be back soon."

"Congratulations," they squealed. "We can't wait to hear about your adventures."

Over the pond Bella soared. Five tiny brown frogs napped between beautiful pink flowers. The frogs stretched and sang to Bella. "Rest with us on these lovely petals."

The dark green lilly pads would be a nice place to rest thought Bella. She did feel a bit tired. Bella stopped flying and floated down for a landing. All of a sudden one of the frogs stuck out his tongue looking to grab her. Bella jerked and flew up just in time.

"You naughty frog! I'm on a mission for the Lord. I won't stop to rest with you."

Under the tree branches Bella flew. Four yellow spotted lizards bounced on creamy mushroom tops. "Come jump with us," they yelled.

Bouncing was Bella's favorite game. It was tempting

to stop and play. Bella took a big breath, "I need to work first. I'm on a mission for the Lord."

"Good for you," they said. "We can't wait to hear about your adventures."

Beside a long bridge Bella sprinted. Three red ants were carrying big green leaves across. "Can you help us carry more leaves?" they asked. "We're helping a friend build a new house."

Bella thought about her mission and their mission. Both seemed like good jobs, but if she stopped to help the ants, she wouldn't have enough time for her own task. "I'm sorry I can't help you," she said. "I'm on a mission for the Lord, too; and I can't spare the time."

The ants became very angry. One threw a rock at Bella. "You're being selfish," they cried.

Bella felt very sad. Maybe she misunderstood the message in the cocoon. Perhaps she should have helped the ants. Bella's wings slowed drifting her around the barn.

Two horses kicked and jumped for joy. "We're so glad to see you, Bella."

Bella was surprised they remembered her name. She had only been this way once before. She stopped to sit on the railing.

"Don't stop now," they said. "You're on a mission for the Lord."

Bella felt encouraged to continue. She waved goodbye. "Thank you, my friends."

With renewed determination Bella flew next to the bird bath, above the sleeping cat and beneath the porch. There she found Katie with fresh tears on her cheeks.

Bella landed carefully on Katie's tightly folded hands. Bella opened and closed her wings very slowly two times. Katie smiled and Bella jumped into the air performing a spiral dance for the little girl. Katie held out her hand and Bella landed again.

"Thank you God," the little girl whispered.

Katie quickly ran inside the house. "Mom! God sent me a butterfly. He's answering my prayer."

Sheer joy rippled through Bella's heart. She was glad God picked her for this mission.

Bella flew out from beneath the porch, above the cat, next to the bird bath, around the barn, beside the bridge, under the branches, over the pond and through the meadow back to her home. There gathered together were all her friends eager to hear about her adventures.

**BIRDS OF THE BIBLE**

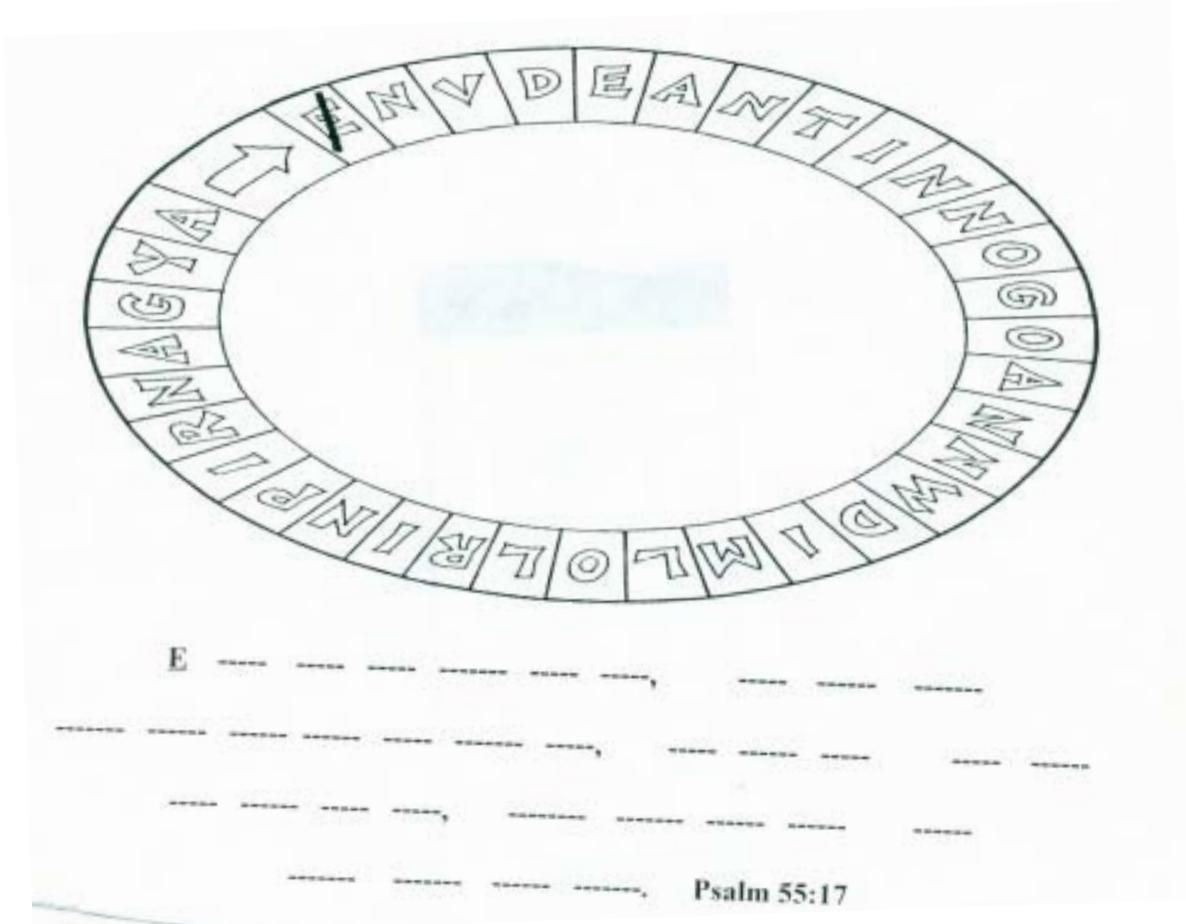
- I Kings 17:6 \_\_\_\_\_
- Genesis 8:7-8 \_\_\_\_\_
- Luke 13:34 \_\_\_\_\_
- Psalm 84:3 \_\_\_\_\_
- Isaiah 34:14 \_\_\_\_\_
- Luke 2:24 \_\_\_\_\_
- Job 39:13 \_\_\_\_\_
- Psalm 104:17 \_\_\_\_\_
- Isaiah 40:31 \_\_\_\_\_
- Matthew 10:29 \_\_\_\_\_
- Matthew 3:16 \_\_\_\_\_
- II Chronicles 9:21 \_\_\_\_\_
- Isaiah 34:15 \_\_\_\_\_
- I Samuel 26:20 \_\_\_\_\_
- Psalm 102:6 \_\_\_\_\_

**GOD'S CANDLES**

*I sat beside my window  
 One black and rainy night,  
 When suddenly I saw above  
 A tiny, twinkling light.  
 A little star with shining face  
 Peeked from behind a cloud.  
 Before long others came,  
 And soon there was a crowd.  
 They chased the stormy clouds away  
 Until the sky was bright.  
 Once more, God's little candles  
 Were the rulers of the night.*

*-Mildred Sallee*

*To find the hidden message, start at the arrow and go clock-wise around the oval.  
 Write every other letter on the blanks below.*



# *The Rushing Waters*

*By Del DeLong*

*The icy waters jumped and swirled,  
With purpose as they sped.  
Their destination, as they hurled -  
Was unknown as they fled.*

*Our lives are like this water's course,  
While on life's way we go -  
Do we like foolish waves speed on,  
Or do we with purpose know?*

*The way which leads us on to life -  
With Jesus, God's dear Son,  
And even though we feel much strife  
His guidance is the one!*

*Which turns our hectic lives around  
When all is said and done -  
Our path comes sure when we have found  
His truth, his love - we've won.*

*So like the rushing waters, we  
Must not succumb to them.  
When Jesus turns our path, we'll see  
Living water flow through Him.*

