



The Heart

God's Hand

Abominations

Mercy

The Advocate of Truth



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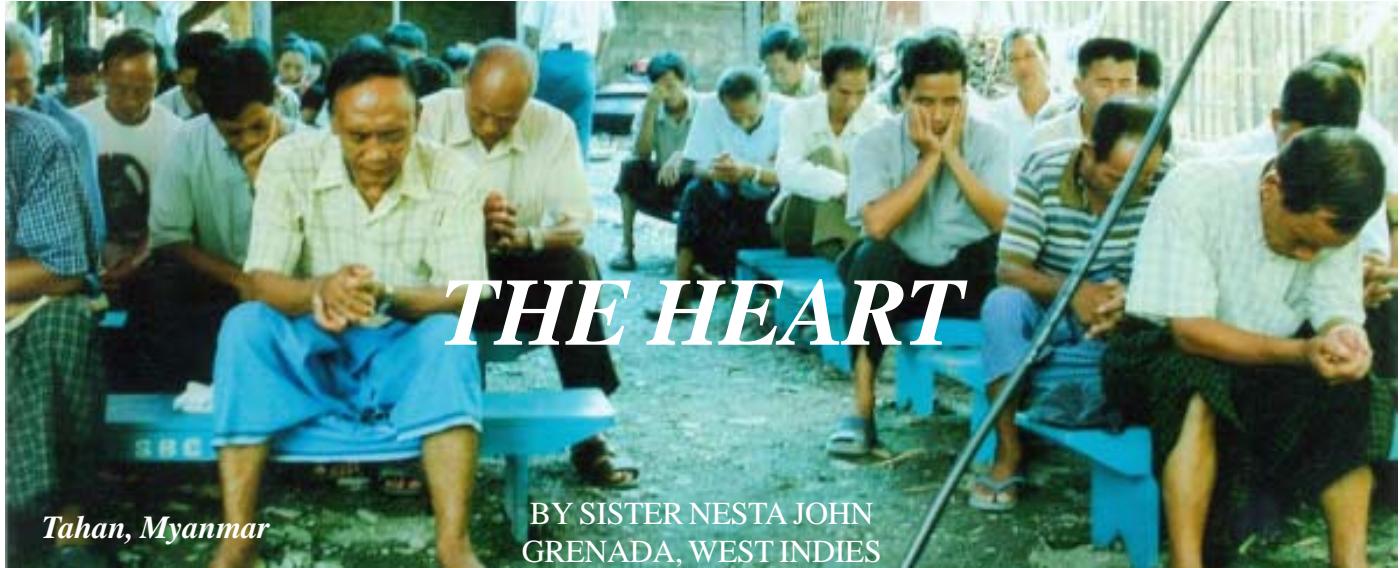
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THE HEART

Tahan, Myanmar

BY SISTER NESTA JOHN
GRENADE, WEST INDIES

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jeremiah 17:9-10). The Lord doesn't look on the countenance or the height of our stature. "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7). The heart is where our self-consciousness is. We can either have a good or a bad heart. As Christians, our hearts should always be pleasing and acceptable to God.

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repented me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (Genesis 6:5-8). The earth was corrupt and filled with violence because of the wicked hearts of man.

"...Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (verse 9). Therefore, the Lord commanded Noah to build an ark because He was going "...to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth

shall die" (verse 17). Noah obeyed the instructions of the Lord and built the ark exactly as he was told. He continued to obey the Lord by carrying himself and his family into the ark and every clean beast by sevens, both male and female, and every unclean beast by two, both male and female. Seven days later, the Lord caused it to rain forty days and forty nights, which brought a flood of waters upon the earth. "And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven..." (7:23). Only Noah remained alive and they that were with him in the ark. After such destruction, "...the LORD said in his heart..." that He would not "...curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth..." (8:21). Please read Genesis 6-8.

What does it profit to have an evil heart? An evil heart is very dangerous. Because the sentence of God is not speedily executed for an evil work, the heart of man is fully set to do evil. Madness is in the heart of man when they set to do evil. As Christians, we should always have a good heart. Deuteronomy 6:5-6 informs us, "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart." The law of God should be engraved on the table of our hearts which will therefore overshadow any evil works.

As was mentioned above, the law of God must be written

on the table of our hearts, but in all this, we must have a forgiving heart. A forgiving heart is very vital to Christians. The Lord's prayer is recited by each and every one of us. We ask the Lord to forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. When someone comes in humility to ask forgiveness, the Christian should be ready and willing to forgive. The heart can be opened or closed to forgiveness. Someone with an open heart has a forgiving spirit and receives correction. A closed heart shuts forgiveness out completely when an offense is committed. Where is the open heart? Jesus informs us in Mark 11:25-26, "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

Remember, God knows the heart.

Having an unforgiving heart can make you a prisoner to yourself because the hating emotion is playing within you, and it takes control of your thoughts, actions and words. When the forgiving spirit takes control, the Lord will then listen to your plea. There are times when we may be sick and wonder why the Lord has not healed us. The Bible informs us that we should "Confess your (our) faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). I don't think that anyone would like God to shut Himself out of his life. As Christians, we often do things to offend God in one way or another. When we realize that we have erred, we go to Him, and then He shows great mercy upon us. Once we go to Him humbly as a little child, He will forgive our sins. After acknowledging our trespasses, we ask the Lord to draw us closer to Him and give us a heart like His. We should have the same mind when someone comes to us to ask forgiveness. Does it matter what the person did to you in order to forgive him? That question is up to you to answer, but with God, it does not matter what you do or say. When you come to Him sincerely, He will forgive you wholeheartedly.

Action, action, action is the key after forgiveness. Let the individual know that he is back in grace with you. What sense does it make that after forgiving someone, you still have the feeling that he has offended you? To forgive, you have to get rid of all the things that the unforgiving spirit

may hold on to. Forget about your pride and do the right thing. Pride plays a big part in a person not having a forgiving spirit. Refusing to forgive is dangerous on your part when you do not forgive the person who offended you after he asks. Let us forgive each other and let our hearts be free as we worship the Lord together in spirit and truth.

Remember that nothing can be hid from God because He knows the heart inside out. He will know if the words "sorry" and "I forgive you" are sincere or not! We can't fool God anytime! Psalm 44:21 informs us that, "Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart."

Let us all ask the Lord to mold our hearts, transform and make them like His, so we can be better Christians for His soon coming kingdom. PLEASE don't let an unforgiving spirit lead you to destruction in the end. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

GOOD HEARTS

GRATEFUL for what the Lord is doing for you
OPENING the eyes of your hearts
OBEDIENT to the law of God
DELIGHTFUL in worshipping God
HONEST to others and yourself
EXAMINE the heart of the Lord and prove it at all times
APPLY your hearts unto wisdom
RENDER your hearts to the Lord
TRUTHFUL in your hearts at all times
SANCTIFY the Lord God in your heart

EVIL HEARTS

ENVY the striving of others
VERY dishonest
I AM filled with pride
LOVE is not part of me
HATRED is my friend
EVERY step is danger
AGGRESSIVE to destroy

REMEMBER nothing beneficial
TRAMPLES the lives of others
SOW discord among brethren

FORGIVENESS

FAIN at all times to accept apologies
OBTAIN this friendship once again

READY to move one step forward
GIVE an honest heart to each other at all times
IMPLY oneness
VALUE the friendship of each other
EXHORT each other to good works
NOTICE the goodness of God
EDIFY one another spiritually
SEARCH the heart
SECURE your salvation

GOD'S PROVIDING HAND

BY SEPTIMUS JOHN
GRENADE, WEST INDIES



Hakhaly, Myanmar

The Lord had been gracious to His people from time to time, delivering them from many evils, defending them from many adversaries and supplying their needs through many famines and disasters. David said, “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. Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield” (Psalm 33:18-20).

David is speaking here with great confidence and assurance, for he had seen the delivering hand of God on many occasions, especially while hiding from Saul in the mountain regions. “The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied” (Psalm 37:18-19).

Elijah likewise was miraculously fed by ravens for quite a while during the three and a half years of famine that

occurred in Israel during his time. “And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook” (I Kings 17:1-6). Our God knows just how to look after the needs of those who put their trust and confidence in Him. In times of trouble, we, like David, may boldly say, “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not

want” (Psalm 23:1).

After he drank of the brook Cherith, the Lord directed Elijah to go to Zarephath where he would find a widow woman who would feed him until the end of the famine. “And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah” (I Kings 17:7-16).

So Elijah the Tishbite was well taken care of first by the ravens, then by the widow woman. This shows that the Lord is able to take care of His own under any circumstances. All we need to do is to exercise faith and trust as we put our safe keeping in the hands of our Creator.

The famine which occurred in Egypt during the time of Joseph did cover the entire known world, and so Jacob had to reach beyond and travel beyond his borders to find food for survival. The land of Egypt, therefore, was the only place where food was available, and so the children of Israel, Jacob’s offspring, went there to buy corn. Joseph, who was then a ruler in Egypt, recognized

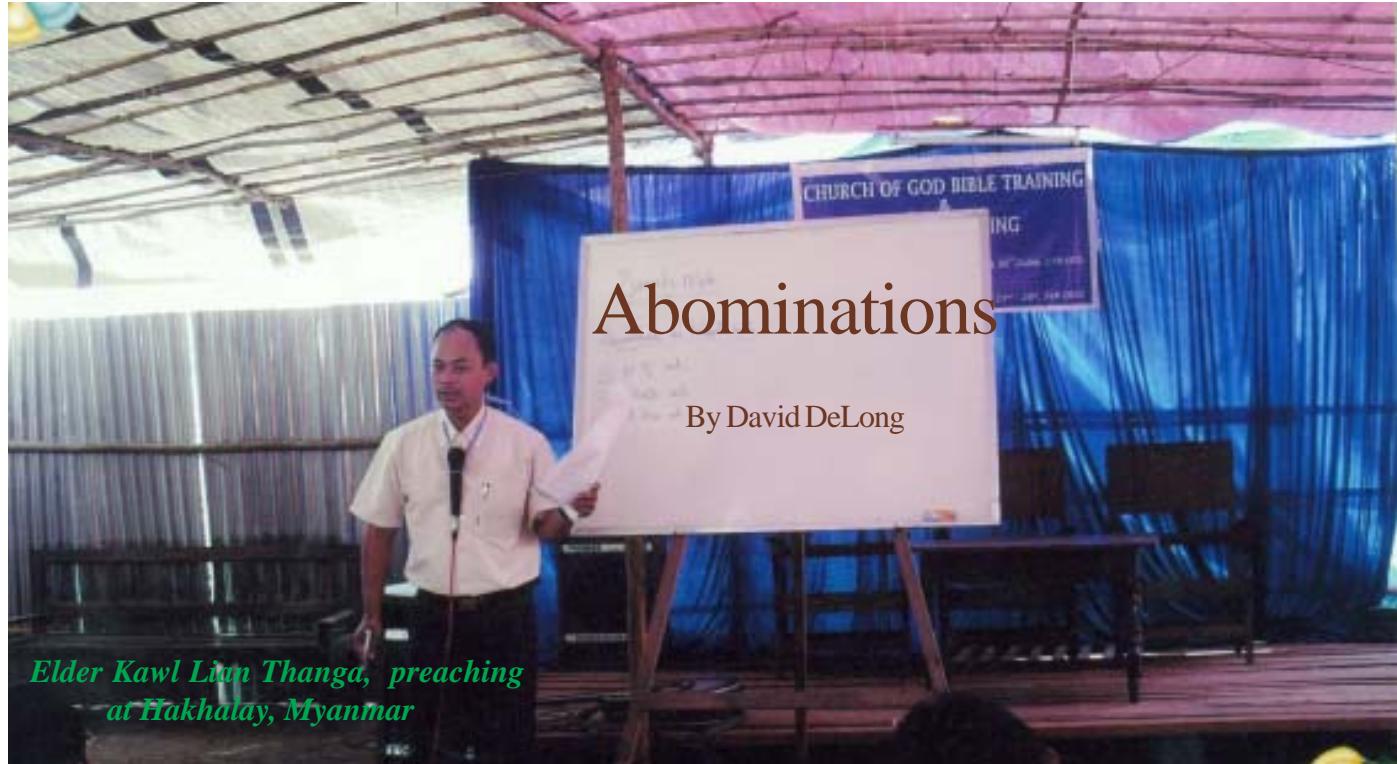
them, and so a place of safe keeping was provided for them in Egypt. “And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle” (Genesis 47:5-6). Instead of having to spend money to buy corn, Israel ate freely for the remainder of the famine. The God we serve is indeed omnipotent. There has never been any like Him before, neither will there ever be any like unto Him. There is no limit to His power, and we should be very happy to be under His providing hands.

On leaving the land of Egypt to travel to the land of Canaan, the promised land, the Israelites had to spend forty years in the wilderness. This was a place where there was no food and water for survival. There God proved Himself to be all sufficient for His people once again by providing them with all that was necessary for their sustenance. “Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldst not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not” (Nehemiah 9:20-21).

Matthew 6:25-33 shows us how loving and gracious our heavenly Father can be to those of us who put our faith and confidence (trust) in Him. “Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." God is not a man that He should lie. Therefore, in these times of economic hardship everywhere, let us put all our faith, confidence and trust in Him. Earthly friends may prove untrue, doubts and fears assail, one still loves

and cares for you, Jesus never fails. Philippians 4:6-7 says, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Psalm 84:11 tells us, "... no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."



*Elder Kaw Lian Thanga, preaching
at Hakkalay, Myanmar*

We know that the Lord hates sin, which results whenever His holy Law is broken (see I John 3:4). Sin is always an aberration of God's perfect, moral standard, and the result of sin is always one of damage, hurt, or the loss of life to those involved. Sin can be individual, or collective, as in the case of national sin. It can have varying degrees of sinfulness, varying degrees of punishment, and its tendencies are inherited from parents to children (see Luke 12:47,48; Luke 20:46,47; John 19:11; Romans 5:18,19). Finally, all sin will cause a person to come to complete destruction in the lake of fire, unless he or she is covered by the *only* remedy--the blood of Christ (see Matthew 10:28; Hebrews 9:12-14).

Sin can be so detestable, so loathsome to God that, in some places in Scripture, He actually calls it an abomination. A good definition for "abominations" can be found in Ezekiel 5:11, where the Lord is angry with Israel for defil-

ing His sanctuary. We read, "Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity." In this case, the "detestable things" were idols brought into God's house (see Ezekiel 8:5-18).

In the book of Ezekiel, chapter 8, Ezekiel is shown, by the Lord, the great abominations that the children of Israel were committing. We read in verses 5,6: "Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry. He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn

thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations.”

Ezekiel was then led to a door in the wall of the temple, which he entered. Verses 10 and 11 inform us: “So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about. And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up.”

Here Ezekiel saw “seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel” in the act of idol worship. These seventy may have been the descendants of the “seventy” elders which were with Moses in the wilderness (see Exodus 24:1,9; Numbers 11:16,17,24,25). In any event, they appear to have been leaders among the children of Israel. Jaazaniah was a ringleader of this group, and if he was the son of the Shaphan who helped Josiah in his reforms (see II Kings 22:3-7), then we can see how far Israel had fallen.

The reason for this abominable idolatry was that these leaders believed the Lord didn’t see them, and that He had forsaken the earth (see verse 12). Then, in verses 13,14 we find: “He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD’S house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.”

Tammuz was a god which has been traced from a deity of the Sumerians (apparently the people who had settled in the “land of Shinar”; see Genesis 10:10; 11:2). Nimrod, therefore, would presumably have been one of the original supporters of this idolatrous worship. In fact, Nimrod, himself, has been associated with the pagan gods of Baal (Belus), Tammuz, Adonis, Bacchus, Osiris, and Orion. Now, many of these gods were traditionally associated with a violent death, including Tammuz. It has been recorded in history that Nimrod, likely, was killed by the patriarch, Shem, who was living at the time of Nimrod. Thus, when the Israelite women were “weeping for Tammuz”, they were, in effect, weeping for the wicked, fallen Babylonian leader, Nimrod, who had been deified. But there is more to the story.

The original god, from whom Tammuz was descended, had a sister goddess named Inanna-Ishtar. The word, and festival, of Easter come from the goddess Ishtar. The

worship which resulted from the original Sumerian god was similar to the worship of the Canaanite god Baal (who, as we have seen, was also associated with Nimrod). But, more of this later. Could the idolatrous worship of the Israelites in Ezekiel chapter 8, be associated with an Easter service? Let’s continue in verses 15,16.

“Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD’S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.”

These individuals were apparently priests since they were near the altar in the temple. It is possible, though only conjecture, that they represented one from each of the 24 orders of the priests (see I Chronicles 24), plus the high priest. Not only was the weeping for Tammuz associated with an early Easter celebration--(the sister of the Sumerian god, Inanna-Ishtar, was believed by the pagans to try to resurrect her dead brother)--but some of the Israelites were actually involved in a sort of “sunrise service” since they were worshipping the sun toward the east!

To gain a further understanding of the beginnings of Easter as recorded in the Bible, we now turn to the book of Judges, chapter 2. In verses 11,13 we read, “And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim (the plural of Baal)...And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth” (the plural of Ashtoreth). Baal was regarded as the sun god, while Ashtoreth was regarded as the moon goddess.

In the ancient Syrian, Assyrian, and Greek cultures Ashtoreth was known as Astarte, “the woman that made towers”. Some historical writers see in this title a reference to Semiramis who, along with Cush and Nimrod, would have been instrumental in the building of the tower of Babel. (Semiramis, according to history, was the mother of Nimrod.) Therefore, it appears that the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth was, in reality, the worship of the deified Cush/Nimrod and Semiramis.

Now, in Babylonia (ancient Sumer or the land of Shinar), Ashtoreth/Astarte was known as Ishtar which, as we have previously seen, was the goddess from which Easter was derived. Ishtar was the goddess of love and war. Prostitution was done in her name, as was human

sacrifice. In Canaan she became a moon goddess and the consort of Baal. Tragically, even Solomon supported her worship.

We read about this sad story in I Kings 11:5-9: “For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice.” So, we can see that among the gods and goddesses that Solomon went after, one of them was Ashtoreth/(Ishtar). (See also II Kings 23:13).

Ishtar was known as “the queen of heaven”, and was worshipped by the Israelites as such (see Jeremiah 44:17-19). We can even, perhaps, discern an early custom of the giving of what would become “hot cross buns” in Jeremiah 7:18. “The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.”

Bel and Astarte were introduced into Britain, and were worshipped by the Druids, known as “priests of the groves”. Here, the worship of Astarte began the religious festivals of Easter, in April, which was called “Easter-Monath”. The festival of Beltane was celebrated on May first. The custom of Lent was borrowed from the Babylonian goddess, as was the custom of using dyed eggs. (The above material was mostly taken from “The Two Babylons”, by Alexander Hislop; “The Wycliffe Bible Commentary”; and, “The King James Bible”).

These pagan practices have since been adopted into many churches, and congregations today try to “christianize” them in their Easter services, including their sunrise services. The trouble is, it didn’t work when ancient Israel tried to combine pagan practices with the temple worship, and it can’t work today when churches incorporate these practices into their worship, either. God takes offense whenever His true form of worship is tampered with (see John 4:23,24; Matthew 15:9). Paganism

is still an abomination to the Lord.

But Easter and other mixed forms of worship are not the only abominations that the Lord warns against. We see, for example, in Proverbs 6:16-19: “These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.”

Why does the Lord hate these seven sins so much? Very possibly because they are among the most damaging of sins to ourselves and others. Notice how they strike at the core of the Ten Commandments, including deception, murder, and bearing false witness. These abominations are particularly associated with Satan’s character. He was lifted up with pride (see Isaiah 14:13,14; I Timothy 3:6); he is a liar, a false witness, and a murderer (see John 8:44); he devises wicked imaginations and is swift in committing mischief (see Job 1:7; I Peter 5:8); and, he loves to sow discord among brethren (see Revelation 12:9,10).

So precious is God’s Law to Him, that we read in Proverbs 28:9, “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.” We know that God’s main character trait is love, and that love fulfills the law (see I John 3:16; 4:8; Romans 13:8-10). Therefore, the opposite of God’s character--the breaking of His Law--is truly an abomination to Him. Ezekiel 18:10-13 informs us of the consequence of this action: “If he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things, And that doeth not any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour’s wife, Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination, Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.”

Leviticus 18:1-30 lists a number of sexual sins including incest, adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality, which the Egyptians and the Canaanites had likely been involved with (see verse 3). Then the Lord warned the Israelites, “Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were

committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the LORD your God.” We may cringe at some of the abominations listed here in Leviticus, and yet, with the rise of the Internet and other media, practically anything imaginable can be viewed today.

At this point I would like to be bold, since *no one* is immune from what I am about to write. Pornography is very easy to obtain today, whether on the Internet, cable or satellite T.V., or in book or magazine form. Sexual sins are still an abomination to God, today, as they were in ancient Israel’s time. He will punish people who are involved in such sins, including adultery and fornication, as well as pornography. A time is yet to come when the seven last plagues will be poured out upon unrepentant people who are involved with such sins (see Revelation 9:20,21).

The Lord outlines more abominations in Deuteronomy 18:9-14: “When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.”

Two types of abominations are given in the above passage. First, making one’s “...son or his daughter to pass through the fire...” This, of course, was child sacrifice, and was committed along with idol worship, including that of Molech. It was an extreme form of child abuse. Today, child abuse is rampant, whether it be sexual abuse, abortion, or other kinds, involving physical or verbal abuse. Children are relatively helpless, and God cannot tolerate such abominations being perpetrated upon them (see Matthew 18:6).

The second type of abomination has to do with a person being involved in any kind of occultic practices. The NASB version of the Bible defines some of these practices. It reads: “...one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist,

or one who calls up the dead” (verses 10,11). Occultic practices can be seen in a wide variety of settings, including so-called “innocent” practices such as reading Harry Potter books; consulting one’s horoscope; using ouija boards and tarot cards; watching comedy shows such as “Bewitched”; and observing Halloween and Easter. In *any* form, God calls occultic practices an abomination.

Many times, people who take a stand against those things just mentioned, will be ridiculed as being judgmental, law-bound, or misapplying Bible verses to such things. The argument will go something like this: “Well, in ancient times the people were actually worshipping idols, committing human sacrifice, and doing other abominable practices. When someone celebrates Halloween today, or watches a comedy about witches on T.V., they are not doing anything wrong, but only having a fun time.”

Let’s analyze this line of reasoning. We know that according to criminal law, a person who drives a getaway car in a robbery could be *just as* guilty as the person who robs a bank. The driver may argue that he committed no actual robbery. He was simply driving a car to transport a robber. This argument would not hold up in any court of law. He could be sentenced like the one who had committed the robbery. Why? Because he *sanctioned* the robbery just as if he had committed it.

When a person celebrates Easter, for example, he or she is actually sanctioning (possibly without even knowing it) what took place in “Easter” services long ago. This included the worshipping of Ishtar, along with her attempts, apparently, to resurrect her dead brother. Now, celebrating the resurrection of Christ and having sunrise services; then calling *this* Easter is only masking the pagan origin of the festival. What’s worse is that the holiness of Christ’s resurrection is being mixed in with the abominations mentioned above.

The Apostle Peter acknowledged the dilemma that christians of his day were in when they came out of worldly practices. “For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you” (I Peter 4:3,4).

Cheating and deceit are practices that the Lord cannot tolerate. He warned the Israelites: “Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Thou

shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the LORD thy God" (Deuteronomy 25:13-16). Proverbs says the same thing. "A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight" (verse 1; See also Proverbs 20:23; Micah 6:10,11).

Some of the Israelites had been cheating others by using wrong weights in their business practices. Cheating seems to be very widespread outside of the christian realm. School kids cheating on tests, merchants cheating in business, citizens cheating on taxes, spouses cheating on their mates, all seem to point to this conclusion. Even more sad is the fact that some, calling themselves by the name of Christ, are doing the same thing.

Many people erroneously use Bible verses to teach that what was once unclean food, such as swine's flesh, has now been cleansed. Nowhere in the New Testament, including Matthew 15:1-20, and Acts 10:1-28, is there an authorization for such a teaching. (You may request the tract, "Did Jesus Cleanse All Things?" from the Church of God Publishing House for a more in-depth study of this topic). God called it an abomination concerning the eating of such creatures (see Leviticus 11:10-13,20,23,41-43).

Isaiah chapter 66 prophesies of a time, yet to come, when the Lord will come to earth, bringing judgment upon sinful people. Notice verses 15-18: "For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD. For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory."

Not only are various sins regarded by the Lord as abominations, but so are they who commit such sins. Examples include the "foward" ("devious", see Proverbs 3:31,32); the way and thoughts of the wicked (see Prov-

erbs 15:9,26); the "sacrifice of the wicked" (see Proverbs 21:27); and a "fool" (a person who doesn't believe in God, see Psalm 14:1; 53:1).

There are many in the world who profess to know God, but they don't live for Him. Titus 1:15,16 describes this situation: "...but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." In many cases these people want to be justified before men, as Jesus said. "And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15).

Neither an abominable person, nor any one who works an abomination, will have any part in God's kingdom. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death...And there shall in no wise enter into it (the new Jerusalem) any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:7,8,27).

Sin, many times, does not overtake a person in all of its detestable nature. Rather, it works little by little as the poem below shows.

Sin, at first, may feel so fine,
It lures us by attraction;
The taste is sweet, like honey wine,
And gives some satisfaction;
But then sets in a slow decline,
When footing slips a fraction;
Until we soon begin to pine,
Then, find this sin that's out of line,
Is candy flavored strychnine--
And puts us out of action.

In conclusion, may I suggest that an abomination is like: "a-bomb-in-a-nation", which is ready to explode. Whether set off by an individual, or by a nation, that bomb is ticking away until God's judgment finally falls. May we pray for the Lord to defuse this bomb as people come to Him in repentance.

A CERTAIN MAN (FATHER)

A FATHER'S DAY THOUGHT

BY BOND TENNANT

"And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. 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. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that vary hour" (Matthew 17:14-18).

The father had a problem. He had a child who was medically out of control. Many children of today are out of control. Alcohol, drugs, peer pressure and fear are some reasons for this. A prototype of such children is the prodigal son.

The father was in a humbled posture. He had been humbled by the problem. He was humbling himself now before the Lord.

The father's simple plea was, "have mercy on my son." This reminds us of the publican's prayer. "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13). May this cry arise often!

Jesus said, "Bring him to me." Parents often turn to Jesus only as the final resort. The father first had taken his son to the disciples. Fortunately, it was not too late.

The Scripture says the child was cured. The salvation of a child brings joy. The prodigal's father was overjoyed. Parents must first come to Jesus to be saved. Then they must bring their children to Jesus for salvation.



MERCY

BY
MARIO CANTU

Mercy is a very passionate and comforting word. Today, people hear the word, mercy, but really don't know what it means and why it is needed. Mercy is used many times in the Bible so that man may learn to train his heart to be compassionate to his neighbor. Mercy is about how you forgive even though there was no wrong done on your part.

Mercy is love, pity, comfort and compassion which

glows with tender inward emotions. Jesus displayed all the characteristics of mercy. Many times sin surrounded him, but He never condemned nor had a grudge against anyone. Please read Isaiah 55:6-8.

We fail and commit many trespasses against our neighbors because we do not have mercy. We are not remorseful and do not obey God's commandments. Jesus understands the lack of mercy that may be in our hearts.

"And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick" (Matthew 9:10-12).

Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees the necessity of mercy. He asked them why they questioned His disciples and why they questioned Him when he ate with publicans and sinners. We see the failure of the Pharisees to show mercy. They needed to show mercy instead of worrying about sacrifices.

Many times we see man fail to show mercy because he lacks love for his neighbor and for Jesus Christ and His teachings.

Know and believe that God is merciful! Both He and His Son, Jesus, are merciful. Jesus taught many people to have mercy. He healed the blind, lunatics, lepers, lame, and removed devils from many people. Please read Matthew 9:27; 15:22; Mark 5:18-19; Luke 17:12-13. He had so much love, compassion and pity in His heart for so many, and He expected nothing in return.

Why is it that we who are Christians and say we believe in Jesus Christ find it hard to actually forgive? Instead of holding grudges we need to face the facts and simply forgive with the same love that Jesus had. Jesus loved and forgave with no strings attached.

Please read Luke 6:27-36. How do you apply these verses to your life? Do you retaliate or do you obey Jesus and do good to them that hate you? Do you love your enemies? Do you bless them that curse you? Do you turn the other cheek?

We are always in need of mercy. If we repent, He forgives us of our sin. We should be thankful to God for His mercy.

God shows great mercy when He forgives us. Can we not show the same mercy to forgive our neighbor?

When we correct each other with mercy, we are on the righteous path. We must communicate with the same mind that Jesus had. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). God knows we are not perfect, but we must continue to mature ourselves in the Word of God.

Man's law and justice show little mercy. The Apostle Paul would go out of his way to settle wrong among the

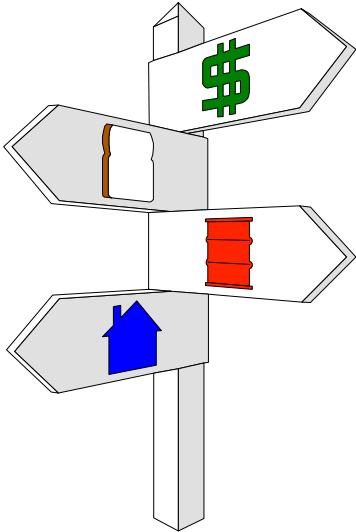
brethren. He simply pointed out the wrong and corrected them as a merciful brother. Paul wanted the spiritual law to correct wrongs. This was recognized by the brethren who heard God's Word.

Where is our prayer and fasting when it comes to sickness, trials and tribulation? Paul prayed much, and he knew that the civil law of man was harsh. That is why he told the brethren to settle disputes among each other. We have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit so we may be merciful toward each other, because we have spiritual understanding. We are here to save but not to condemn. "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren" (I Corinthians 6:1-8).

We need to read and follow the Scriptures to know Jesus and his testimony. "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). Mercy toward others is in great need, so that we can find it when we need it. Please read Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31; Galatians 5:14.

Thank God that love may be found in our brethren. When an error becomes a stumblingblock it may be corrected by the spiritual Word, and a soul is saved. We must remind ourselves never to hurt our neighbor. Let us be compassionate as Jesus was to everyone, and great will be our reward. We as Christians must have spiritual love one toward another. Mercy is great when you show it to your brethren and neighbor.

Let's remember when The Lord's Supper time comes that we are not worthy to partake of the emblems if there is wrong in our hearts. Let's pray for the mercy of God to be in our presence at this time.



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.

GRAFFITI GANGS TURN VIOLENT IN L.A. TO DEFEND THEIR WORK

Four killed so far in tagging battles among
rival crews

By Thomas Watkins
Associated Press

Los Angeles - One man was stabbed. Another was shot in the chest. A six-year-old boy was temporarily blinded when he was spray-painted in the face.

And they were the lucky ones among those who have run afoul of graffiti "crews" or gangs. Over the past 2 ½ years in Southern California, three people have been killed after trying to stop graffiti vandals in the act. A fourth was shot to death after rival graffiti crews converged on a Los Angeles park for a fight. The victim, a 16-year-old boy, was in a crowd of onlookers.

"We have seen a marked increase in these graffiti-tagging gangs taking to weapons and fighting to protect their walls, their territory, their name," said Los Angeles County sheriff's Lt. Robert Rifkin.

Los Angeles County has battled graffiti for decades, spending \$30 million a year to paint over or clean up the emblems, names and other images spray-painted on store walls, concrete-lined riverbeds, rail lines, phone booths, buses, even police cars.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a law Wednesday requiring convicted graffiti vandals to remove their scrawl.

For some taggers, protecting their work is akin to defending their names and their honor.

"If we see someone calling the police, then we target them," said Mario Garcia, 20, who describes himself as a former tagger trying to become a professional artist. "You are trying to stop me from what I live, what I believe in and what I breathe? We are not going to let no one get in the way."

Workers who remove the graffiti say they take caution if they find a crew at work. They wait until the taggers leave before cleaning up.

"We won't say anything to them," said Rogelio Flores, whose company Graffiti Busters contracts with Los Angeles to blast away the markings with high-pressure hoses. "We don't know what kind of weapons they have."

Police tell residents to resist the urge to confront graffiti crews.

"It's not worth the risk," Rifkin said. "Take a deep breath, back-off and call law enforcement."

Some of the violence has been between rival crews, which are increasingly acting like street gangs. And some of the bloodshed has involved real street gangs that mark their turf with their names or emblems. But some of the

victims have been innocents.

In an attack last month, two youths spray-painted the face and body of the six-year-old boy who spotted them scribbling gang signs on a wall near Compton. The boy recovered from chemical burns to his eyes.

Artist Dartagnan Curiel, 31, said he used to scrawl graffiti and grew sick of the violence. He now paints murals with positive messages to protest bloodshed in his neighborhood and to encourage vandals to lay down their arms.

"Why would you want to put spray paint on a kid's face?" he says. "We live in the same community. We are in this hellhole together."

The Houston Chronicle

Comment

The child of God is not surprised by the behavior of the graffiti gangs. He understands that such behavior must be and become more increased in these last days because God's Word records this to be true. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Timothy 3:1-5).

Perilous times means dangerous times. The graffiti gangs are dangerous. While maybe not being a child of God, Dartagnan Curiel did turn away!

3 MALAYSIAN CHURCHES BOMBED IN 'ALLAH' FIGHT

Court clears Christians to use term for God, too

Associated Press

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia - Religious tensions in Muslim-majority Malaysia turned violent Friday with firebomb attacks on three churches following a court

decision that allows Christians to translate God as Allah.

"Allah is only for us," said a poster waved at one of at least two protesters outside mosques in Kuala Lumpur on Friday, the Muslim holy day.

Many Muslims are angry about a December 31 High Court decision overturning a government ban on Roman Catholics' using "Allah" for God in the Malay-language edition of their main newspaper, "The Herald."

The ruling also applies to the ban's broader applications such as Malay-language Bibles, 10,000 copies of which were recently seized by authorities because they translated God as Allah.

"We will not allow the word Allah to be inscribed in your churches," a protester shouted over a loudspeaker at the Kampung Bahjru mosque.

The Herald says its Malay edition is read mainly by Christian indigenous tribes in the remote states of Sabah and Sarawak.

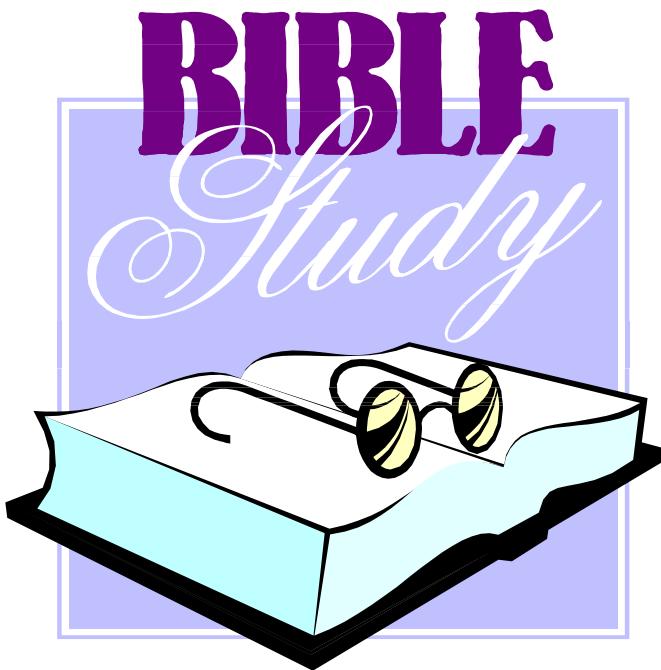
But the government contends that making Allah synonymous with God may confuse Muslims and ultimately mislead them into converting to Christianity, a punishable offense in Malaysia despite a constitution that guarantees freedom of religion.

It suggests using "Tuhan," but Christians say Tuhan is more like "Lord," and can't replace "Allah."

About 9 percent of Malaysia's 28 million people are Christian, including 800,000 Catholics, most of whom are ethnic Chinese or Indian. Muslims are 60 percent.

Comment

Why would the Roman Catholic Church even want to use the Muslim word "Allah" for God? That would be like calling Tom, Dick! Perhaps the Malaysian government is correct in saying that Allah may confuse the Muslims, and that is just what the Roman Catholic Church would like.



Bible Questions and Answers

QUESTION: What did Paul mean when he said that he bore the “marks of the Lord Jesus” in his body?

ANSWER: It was a practice to brand slaves with their owner’s initials. A slave by showing the brand proved to whom his service was due and that no one else had a claim upon him. The marks of the Lord Jesus which Paul bore as recorded in Galatians 6:17 were the scars received in his service. They were the marks of the rods with which he was beaten and the wounds he received in fighting with wild beasts. He showed them as evidence that he belonged to the Lord Jesus.

QUESTION: How can we believe that God exists?

ANSWER: We see the wonderful world, the universe, the solar system, the sun, the moon and stars in their regular order and design. From where did they come? All the visible things of this world surely prove the existence of an invisible, intelligent, and powerful being who we call God.

“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:19-20). “The heavens declare the

glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge” (Psalm 19:1-2).

QUESTION: What is the difference between a “manuscript” and a “version”?

ANSWER: A hand-lettered copy of an original book which would be in the original language is considered to be a “manuscript.” A “version” is a translation from a manuscript into a different language.

QUESTION: Who is the woman driven into the wilderness, as we read about her in Revelation 12:5-6, 13-17?

ANSWER: This woman is a great wonder in the atmospherical heavens (Revelation 12:1). It is the Church of True Believers. This Church brought forth the Son of God. This woman is in constant warfare with Satan who has been ejected from heaven as Jesus died on the cross and then was risen again from the tomb to be on the throne in heaven.

The Ecclesia of God is the woman, The Church of

God, the pillar and ground of the truth here on earth, until the man child will return and rule the nations with a rod of iron (verse 5).

QUESTION: Will you please name some of the things that Satan can do to children of God?

ANSWER: Satan and his host of demons are very active in seeking to harm children of God in various ways. Satan tempts children of God to sin and lie. "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:1-2). "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" (Acts 5:3).

Satan accuses and slanders children of God. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" (Revelation 12:10).

Satan hinders the work of children of God in every way he can, and he sows tares (weeds) among them. "But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us" (I Thessalonians 2:17-18). "He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares (weeds) are the children of the wicked one" (Matthew 13:37-38).

Satan seeks to wage war against children of God and oppose them with the ferociousness of a hungry lion. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8).

It is no wonder that our Lord found it so necessary to provide us with spiritual armour to protect us from Satan. Please read Ephesians 6:11-18.

QUESTION: What is the Spirit of Prophecy?

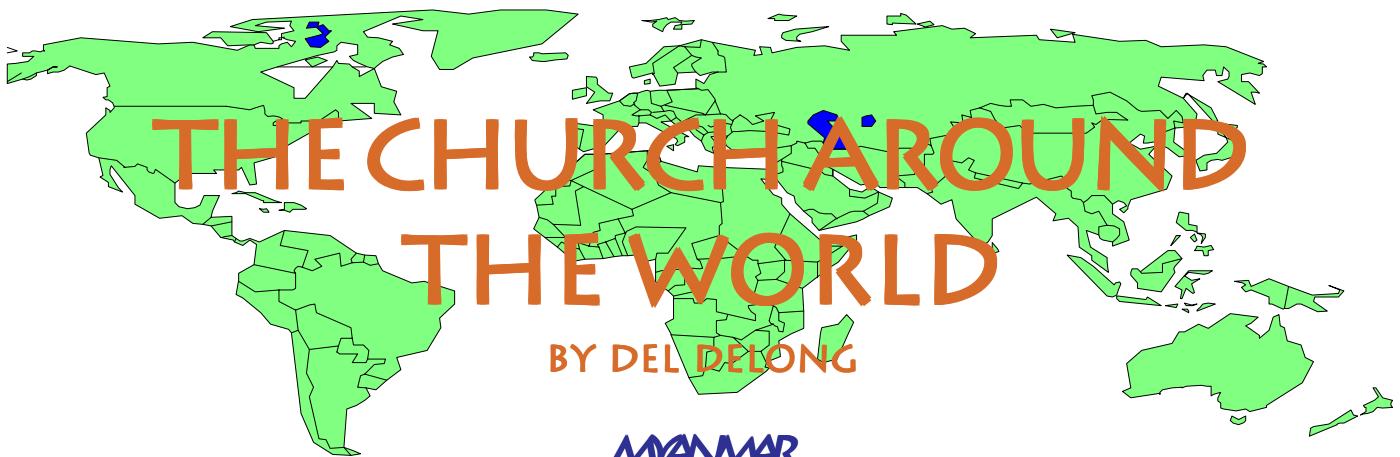
ANSWER: Your Bible says, "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10).

We have just read that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Let us see what the testimony of Jesus is. Jesus said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:39-40). In what is life? Jesus also said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

The Scriptures make our lives complete in pleasing God. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16-17). Must we add to or take away from the perfect Scriptures found in the Bible? "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

Therefore, who is our prophet today? Let us read Hebrews 1:1-3: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Christ is our prophet, and we must go by the Word which He has left, not adding to, and taking away nothing.



THE CHURCH AROUND THE WORLD

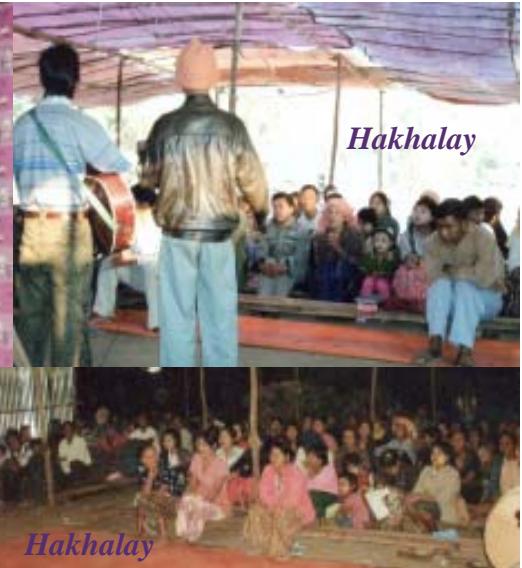
BY DEL DELONG

MYANMAR





*Children singing from
the Khampat Church*



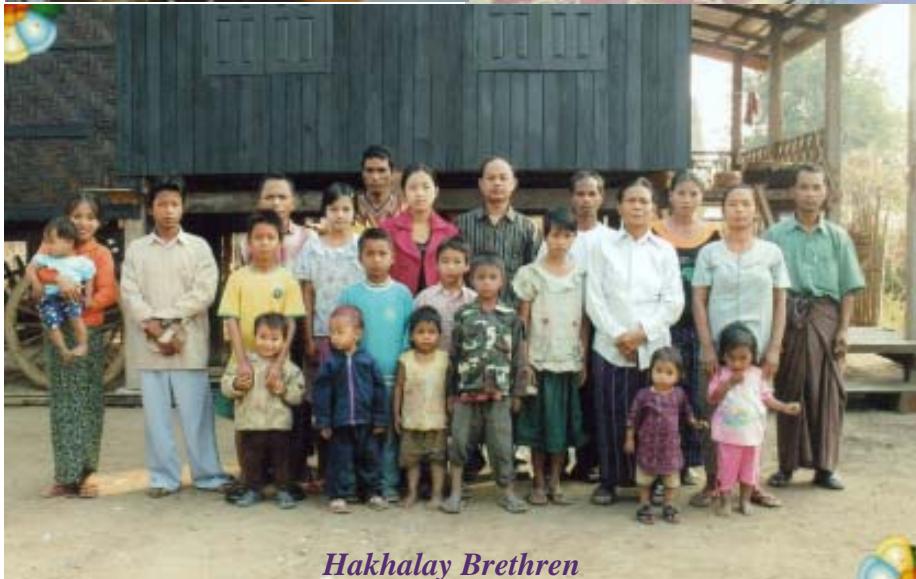
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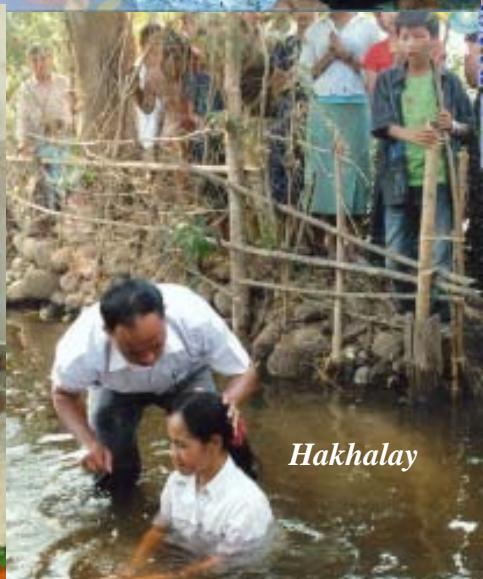
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*Brethren
from Chin Hill*



Hakhalay Brethren



Hakhalay

LESSON I**ABRAHAM AND HIS FAMILY**

Scripture Reading: Genesis 15:1-18.

Golden Text: Genesis 15:6.

“And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”

1. How many children did Abram have at the time of our Scripture reading? Genesis 15:2.

2. What did the Lord show to Abram? Genesis 15:5.

3. Did Abram believe everything the Lord told him? Genesis 15:6.

4. What did God promise Abram? Genesis 15:18; 17:4-8.

NOTE: The word covenant means a mutual agreement between two or more parties.

5. What is the name of Abram's first son? Genesis 17:18.

6. What is the name of Abram's second son? Genesis 21:3.

7. What does the Apostle Paul say of Abram's family? Galatians 4:22-23.

8. Who were some of Abram's descendants? Matthew 1:1-2.

LESSON II**SODOM AND GOMORRAH (PART 1)**

Scripture Reading: Genesis 18:1-8; 16-33.

Golden Text: Genesis 18:22.

“And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.”

1. How many men came to visit Abram one hot day? Genesis 18:1-3.

2. Was Abram a good host? Genesis 18:4-6.

3. What did Abram set before the Lord to eat? Genesis 18:7-8.

4. After eating the sumptuous meal, what did Abram's guests do? Genesis 18:16.

5. Did the Lord tell Abram why He was visiting the city of Sodom. Genesis 18:20-21.

6. What wonderful testimony did the Lord say of Abram? Genesis 18:19.

NOTE: Boys and girls, this truly is a wonderful statement made by the Lord about what Abram would do. Does He know when you are obedient too? Live that the Lord can also say about you that you will always be obedient to the laws of God.

7. When Abram heard of the Lord's mission, what did he say? Genesis 18:23-24.

8. In what manner did the Lord answer Abram? Genesis 18:26.

9. From fifty righteous souls down to what number would the Lord spare the city of Sodom? Genesis 18:32-33.

LESSON III**SODOM AND GOMORRAH (PART II)**

Scripture Reading: Genesis 19:1-3; 12-29.

Golden Text: Genesis 19:24.

“Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven.”

The Children's Page

1. From last week's lesson you learned why the Lord came and visited Abram. Tell us the reason again.
2. Who did God send to the city of Sodom to meet Lot? Genesis 19:1.
3. What did Lot say to the two angels in Genesis 19:2-3?
4. What did the angels tell Lot to do and why? Genesis 19:12-13.
5. What happened when Lot talked to his sons in law? Genesis 19:14.
6. What other special instruction did they give Lot's family, and did all of them obey it? Genesis 19:24-26.
7. What special purpose did God have in destroying the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah? II Peter 2:6; Luke 17:28-30.

NOTE: The cities were destroyed as an example of what will eventually happen to the wicked people of today.

LESSON IV

GOD'S TEST FOR ABRAHAM

Scripture Reading: Genesis 22:1-19.

Golden Text: Genesis 22:18.

"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

1. What was God's test for Abraham? Genesis 22:1-2.
2. What did Abraham do the next morning? Genesis 22:3.
3. What did Isaac ask his father, and what did Abraham answer back? Genesis 22:7-8.
4. Was Abraham going to sacrifice Isaac? Genesis 22:9-10.

Sabbath School Lessons

5. What did the Lord do to help Abraham and Isaac? Genesis 22:11-13.
6. What did the Lord promise to Abraham for obeying him? Genesis 22:16-18.
7. This story is one of the classic examples in the Bible of having faith to do what God tells you. This means also doing work to show your faithfulness. James 2:17-24; Hebrews 11:17.
8. Who else offered His Son as a sacrifice so that the world might be saved? John 3:16.

MY DADDY WILL COME BACK

By Gladys Best

My Daddy said he'd have to go away from us awhile:
But he'd be back before too long, he told me with a smile.

I hurried 'round and helped him pack:
I put in nice, clean clothes,
The Bible and some papers good for him to read, I chose.

He said that I could go with him to watch him take the plane.
Because he had to hurry so, he'd fly, much time to gain.

And so we waited for the time that we should say good-by,
And then he got into the plane to sail the heavens high.

I stood and watched the airplane rise into the snowy cloud.
"He told me he would come again." I said but half aloud.

Our Jesus went into the sky in clouds of white one day.
His followers stood by and watched in much this very way.

And Jesus told them He would come again to take them home.
Then they should live forever with Him and never have to roam.



FIRST DAY OF VACATION

By Katherine Blake

It was the first day of vacation. Bert thought about it all during breakfast.

"No school today," he said to himself. "All day long to have fun."

After breakfast, Bert got his bicycle from the garage. He tinkered with it for a while. At last, he was satisfied with the way it worked.

"Mom," he called, "I'm going over to Terry's. Is that all right?"

Mother agreed, and Bert rode happily down the street to play with Terry.

Terry was in the back yard. "Hi!" he called as Bert rode around the house. "You're just in time to help me work on my rabbit pens."

"Not me," said Bert. "This is vacation. I'm going to loaf and have fun all day." He watched Terry for a while. Terry wasn't much of a carpenter. Bert reached for the

hammer. "Here, let me nail it for you. You're getting it all crooked."

Terry gave a sigh of relief. "I've got ten thumbs when it comes to building things."

"I can show you some tricks that Dad taught me," Bert suggested. "It's mostly in knowing how."

Before long the rabbit pen was nicely repaired. "You did a good job," Terry said.

"Aw, that's nothing," Bert replied. "I like to build things." He looked up at the sun. "I think I've got time to play some more before lunch. Let's go over to Bill's place."

Terry got his bike. They rode along together. "Vacation time is swell, isn't it?" Terry commented.

"Yes," Bert agreed. "I'm not going to do a thing but loaf and have fun this whole vacation." Just then he saw Bill busily pushing the lawn mower. "Hey, Bill! What are you pushing that thing for? Don't you know it's vacation?"

Bill mopped his face with his arm. "Vacation's a good time to get things done," said Bill. "Now Dad won't have to do it after he comes home from the office at night. I can help with things like this."

"But vacation is for fun," argued Bert.

"Helping Dad so he has time to play with me is fun," said Bill. He gave the mower a big push. "When I get through, Mom is taking me swimming at the lake."

"If we helped, would she take us, too?" Bert asked.

Bill grinned. "I thought that would get you. The rake is over there."

Terry beat Bert to the rake. "You get the lawn cart," he said. "I'll rake up the grass cuttings."

"Somebody has to trim the edges," reminded Bill.

With three boys working, it did not take long to finish mowing and raking the lawn.

"What time is it?" Bert asked.

"It isn't anywhere near lunchtime," said Terry. "If that's what you're worrying about. Let's see if we can go swimming with Bill," said Terry.

"Hurry," Bill called after them. "The sooner we get started, the longer we can stay."

Soon the boys were back with their bathing trunks. "Now for the lake," said Bert. "That's fun, and lots of it."

When they reached the lake, the boys were disappointed to find a sign saying, "BEACH CLOSED -

NO SWIMMING."

"That's strange," said Bill. "The beach was open yesterday. I wonder what's the matter."

"Let's go see," said Terry.

The three boys walked down to the beach. They could see the owner busily raking the top few inches of the sand into huge piles.

"Oh, hello boys," he greeted them. "No swimming today. Didn't you see my sign?"

"What are you doing?" Bert asked.

"Some mischievous boys broke bottles all over the sand last night, so that it is dangerous to walk on. Before I can open the beach, I have to scrape up all this sand that might have pieces of glass in it."

"Do you have any more tools?" Bert asked.

The owner pointed to a shed near the edge of the beach. "There are some of these big hoes in there. They work fine. But are you sure you want to help? It's hard work, you know."

The boys ran to get the hoes. "We want to swim," Bert called back.

With the boys helping, it didn't take long to clear the beach of the broken glass. The boys had a fine swim after their hard work. The water was refreshing.

By the time they were through with their swim, it was lunchtime. Bill's mother took the boys home.

"Did you have a good time this morning?" Bert's mother asked him.

Bert slid into his chair at the table. He nodded. "I was certainly busy. I helped Terry fix his rabbit pens. Then Terry and I helped Bill mow and rake his lawn. After that, all three of us helped Mr. George clean up the beach."

"I'll say you were busy," Bert's brother exclaimed. "I thought you weren't going to do anything but have fun during vacation."

"I'm not," said Bert. But his eyes widened with surprise as he did some thinking. "You know something?" he said. "I worked most of the morning. But it was fun. I guess it isn't so much the work but the way you go at it that counts. All play and no work wouldn't be much fun after all."

MUSIC

1. Who played the harp to soothe King Saul?
2. With what instrument did seven priests before the ark terrify the people of a city?
3. Who was the father of all musicians?
4. Is the organ mentioned in the Bible? Yes or No.
5. What instrument did Miriam play at the time of rejoining after the children of Israel had crossed the Red Sea safely?
6. What is "The Magnificent"?
7. What choir sang at the birth of Jesus?
8. What great oratorio was written concerning the items between the Old and New Testaments?
9. What musical instrument has heard before Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai?
10. What people could not sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

ADD AND SUBTRACT

1. Start with the height in cubits of the wall around the Holy City. (Revelation 21:17)
2. Add the number of large fish caught by Peter when he lowered the net at the request of Jesus. (John 21:11)
3. Add the number of years it took to build Solomon's house. (I Kings 7:1)
4. Subtract the age of Joshua at death. (Joshua 24:29)
5. Add the number of skilled singers under David. (I Chronicles 25:7)
6. Subtract the years of illness of the man healed at the pool of Bethesda. (John 5:5)
7. Result: The period in years of the judges of Israel. (Acts 13:20)

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The Father's Arm

By David DeLong

We work at places for our pay
Like factory or farm;
Now take some time alone and pray,
Rest on the Father's arm.

Or, perhaps, it is your wish
To leave all worldly charm;
You've taken all the world can dish,
Rest on the Father's arm.

Come to the place of quietness,
Where nothing can bring harm;
Exchange your cares for His caress,
Rest on the Father's arm.

His strength can calm your fervent fears,
Till you have no alarm;
And this can last throughout the years,
Just rest upon His arm.



