

The Advocate of Truth





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

It is published once a month on the fourth Monday of each month by The Church of God Publishing House, PO Box 328, Salem, West Virginia 26426. The magazine is mailed under the periodicals rate at the Post Office in Salem, West Virginia.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

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

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

POSTMASTER:

Please send address changes to:

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

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**Volume LXVI Number 1
June 27, 2016
The Advocate of Truth
USPS 542-940**

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Zechariah, Chapter 3

THE BRANCH

By Moises Torres M.

In Zechariah, chapter 3, two visions were given to the prophet. One is about Joshua the high priest. And the other is about the Branch. Let us consider first the one about the high priest.

“And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by. And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by” (Zechariah 3:1-7).

After the Babylonian exile, the Persian kings, according to the commandment of God, allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, and the city, and the wall, that had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and his armies. But also the religious system of the Jews had been degraded and had to be rebuilt and cleansed. In this vision, Joshua the high priest, with his “filthy garments,”

represents the spiritual state of Israel in those days after the exile, and Satan was there to resist him.

The Lord rebuked Satan through the angel, and ordered the filthy garments of Joshua to be changed and he was clothed with a clean raiment, and a mitre was set upon his head. This was an opportunity from the Lord to Israel to be cleansed and purified before God through the restoration of the priesthood in the person of Joshua, son of Josedech (see Haggai 1:1). Joshua became the first high priest of Israel after the Babylonian captivity. The mitre is the priestly crown of the high priests since the institution of Aaron as High Priest (see Exodus 29:3-6). The Lord gave to Israel the opportunity to vindicate and rebuild not only the material state of the nation, but also the spirituality they had lost. But the Lord knew they would not understand the intention of this priesthood, and that over the centuries, they would go astray, and fall into hypocrisy and fanaticism. This was the condition in which the Son of God found them in His first advent. Therefore, it was necessary that the Lord show them Zechariah’s vision about the Branch, who would have a perfect priesthood and take away the sins of the people.

The Branch, (Stem, Limb) Read Isaiah 11:1.

“Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his

neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree” (Zechariah 3:8-10).

The stone that was set before Joshua represented the Lord Jesus Christ, and the seven eyes, the seven spirits of God. “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth” (Revelation 5:6).

The sin of Israel would be removed in one day (see Zechariah 3:9), in that glorious day when the Lord shows Himself to His people in His return, and they, in the midst of their future affliction, acknowledge their sin of having pierced him.

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek

to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.” Read Zechariah 12:9-14.

These verses show that this vision would be for Israel, for the future, in his Lord’s return; and that only He, as the Branch, will be able to convert a whole nation and set it in its place in just one day.



WHAT IS A GOOD FATHER?

A Short Father’s Day Message

The day set aside in 2016 to honor fathers is June 19.

What is a father? A father is a parent and partner. What is a good father? A good father is a protector and provider. He also teaches about living in our world from a biblical perspective. A good father has a staggering responsibility

Many fathers fail as good fathers because they fail to realize their task. They think that paying the family bills and making everyday decisions is all that is required of them. But it simply does not work that way!

Why is a good father so vital? He is to steer or guide his family. When reading the Bible, we find that the family is not designed to be a loose or headless organization. God requires order. Ephesians 5:23 tells us, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as

Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.” Not only is a good father the head of the wife, but he is the head of the family.

But with the authority invested in a good father goes responsibility. A good father will focus on his responsibility, not his authority. No good father will throw his weight around and demand personal homage. He is to serve his family in a way pleasing to God.

The Bible mentions many godly men who really failed being good fathers. Eli failed to guide his sons into a walk with God, and his house came tumbling down around him. Solomon’s son was weak and foolish. This wisest of men really failed being a good father.

A good father builds in his children respect for authority and law, reference for God, a good attitude toward work, respect for human life, concern for one

another, and a sense of responsibility.

Let us mention one last important characteristic of a good father. A good father prays for and with his family. Someone has said, "Possibly the cause of more friction in family relationships, the cause of more failure in the home, and the cause of more defeat in the family is the prayerlessness of our parents.

Finally, let us direct a few words of thought to the children. Ephesians 6:1-3 says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long

on the earth." Let us emphasize the words "in the Lord". Many fathers fail to rear up their children practicing the previous attributes of a good father just mentioned. But that does not mean that all other fathers are really bad. Ephesians 6:1 gives us the truth that children must obey their parents "in the Lord". This means that children obey their father as long as he does not give a command that contradicts any commandment and/or righteous principle found in the Word of God.

--Bond Tennant



BE A FOCUSED CHILD OF GOD

By Bibi Shimon Allicock

Be a focused child of God, and do not question Almighty God's purposes. He made all things here for their own purpose. Take Creation as an example. He made various animals for various purposes, various plants for various purposes, and various people for various purposes. There are various animals and birds which can be taken for food. "Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing. These are the beasts which ye shall eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat, The hart, and the roebuck, and the fallow deer, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois. And every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws, and cheweth the cud among the beasts, that ye shall eat" (Deuteronomy 14:3-6). "These ye shall eat of all that are in the waters: all that have fins and scales shall ye eat: And whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye may not eat; it is unclean unto you" (verses 9-10). "Nevertheless these ye shall not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the cloven hoof; as the camel, and the hare, and the coney: for they chew the cud, but divide not the hoof; therefore they are unclean unto you. And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it is unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase" (verses 7-8). "Yet these may ye eat

of every flying creeping thing that goeth upon all four, which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth; Even these of them ye may eat; the locust after his kind, and the bald locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind. But all other flying creeping things, which have four feet, shall be an abomination unto you" (Leviticus 11:21-23).

There are various plants which can be taken for food. Some are used as medication, some are used for feeding cattle, and some are poisonous and are very detrimental unto us.

Some animals can be very detrimental unto us also like the ones of prey, which some animals are used as scavengers to clean up the earth. We see what the Lord did with the legion of devils that came out from a man who was dwelling among the tombs. "And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. (For he had commanded

the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked” (Luke 8:26-33). That is why we have to be obedient and adhere to the words of the Almighty God concerning the clean and unclean law, and we do have to know what are clean for us to eat.

Let us consider mankind. We are all unique in our own way. “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true

holiness” (Ephesians 4:11-24).

“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you” (verses 25-32). In verse eighteen, if we study it keenly and understand it, we find that if someone is not living a life which is pleasing and acceptable unto Almighty God, he is deemed as an alien.

In the book of Judges, we see that Gideon was called by Almighty God to lead the Israelite army into battle, that the Midianites and the Amalekites should not prevail against them, because they were already afflicting them. This happened because “...the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years” (Judges 6:1). “And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it” (Judges 6:2-5).

When the Israelites could not take the affliction any longer, they remembered Almighty God and cried out unto Him. “And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD. And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites, That the

LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land; And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice” (verses 6-10).

We see in verses nine and ten that Almighty God reminded them that they obeyed not His voice, so He delivered them unto their enemies. He did just as He said. “Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God. Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you” (Joshua 23:11-16).

At times when we are called to do a thing, we doubt Almighty God like doubting Thomas. “But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his

side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you” (John 20:24-26).

Although our Lord was not in His physical body, He knew of Thomas’ doubt because He was risen with a spiritual body whereby He could go and come as He liked, pleasing His Father. Since He is our Lord, He knows everything about us even the things that we ourselves do not know. “Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (verses 27-29).

Also Gideon was in doubt when an angel came unto him. “And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites” (Judges 6:12-13). Not realizing that the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Midianites because of their stiffneckedness, Gideon asked for signs that God really did call him. All the signs were granted unto him. Almighty God selected a few people from the army to fight the battle, to let the Israelites understand that it is He (Almighty God) who will be really fighting the battle. “And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me” (Judges 7:2). There were three sets of people who could be found in the army.

One set, which were twenty two thousand were fearful and afraid, going because this was war and they had no choice since they were in the army. Thus the Lord tried them by telling Gideon to “...proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand” (verse 3).

The second set, which were nine thousand, seven

hundred were lackadaisical in that they were not focused as good soldiers. They were present there because they were in the army also as the first set. "And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place" (verses 4-7). We see that those who bowed down upon their knees to drink failed the test. The three hundred, which were the third set, were focused because they drank water lapping like a dog. This made them good soldiers.

Let us be focused on our prize which is everlasting life. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (verse 3). "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (verse 2). "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:11-14). We must realize that the words of Almighty God state "many be called, but few chosen" (Matthew

20:16, last part). "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3). Amen.

The End of All Things

Daniel Cruz

A warning has always resonated for this world. It has often times been given by God's chosen men to herald this cry. In many ways and instances God has shown compassion towards His creation by allowing them to continue in their ways and ignoring the things that are to come. As we have approached another time and generation upon the Earth, the same warning is being spoken today. What causes man to ignore God and even more so to continue in a sinful manner? Now, we cannot excuse ourselves from things as children of God. We have obligations and commitments towards God that must be adhered to. If not, then we are subject to the same penalty and outcome of the Wrath of God. I Peter 4:7 reads: "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

From the beginning God has always warned mankind of the enemy and the deceptive manner that he works and for us to be diligent in seeking out The Lord. I Peter 5:8 warns us: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Does this enemy seek those following him or who are contrary to God? To be in the grasp of a roaring (hungry) lion is merciless. He seeks only to rip apart and completely destroy the life of his prey. Those contrary to Satan's ways are the enemy of him and he is seeking to have the Believer of God and His Truths turn from the freedom in Christ and follow his

ways. We find refuge from the enemy by remaining faithful to God's Word and helping those who are in the clutches of the enemy. We must warn mankind of the Great Destruction that is to come for those who are found without the proper wedding garments. I Timothy 4:16 exhorts: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

The Word of God cannot apply to others if not to ourselves. Psalm 37:30-32 reads: "The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide. The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him." The enemy is waiting for us to slip up and then he will seek that small window of opportunity to pull us away from the Lord and devour us with sin. We must not be overtaken, and understand that vigilance in all things is crucial in our walk. We cannot live our lives and not apply God's Word to us. It can lead to misunderstanding and misguidance and thus lead us to living a deceptive life. This will put us in danger of The Judgment that is to come.

Let us find solace and joy in God's Word and how it shows us our errors and corrects us to walk boldly in these last days. We find in Matthew 25:13, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." As these virgins knew to make preparations they put aside the warning of the Bridegroom, and when He arrived only half were ready. What happened to the other 5 was tragic and they missed the opportunity of a lifetime. As we see the times coming to its close, let us become more vigilant to the signs and warnings of The Lord. Let us be found ready and always waiting for the glorious coming of our Saviour. AMEN.



I WAS BLIND OF LOVE

by Gloria D. Ygay

***Jesus my Lord, I already know,
Your love to us overflows;
You came to Earth not for the righteous,
But for sinners to repent.***

***You shed Your blood for the lost ones,
I was blind of love to You;
Blind of the Truth but You still love me
so.***

Thanks alone is not enough

***To pay You in return;
You died on Calvary for my sins,
Crowned with thorns.
Jesus my Lord, now I know***

***Your love to us overflows;
You cleansed me, too, and made me
whole,
You gave Your hand to me and set me free
For living everyday.***

***Thanks alone is not enough to pay
You in return;
You died on Calvary for my sins,
Crowned with thorns.***





The Remnant

By David DeLong

The Lord has always had a remnant of people who remained faithful to Him and His truth, no matter the consequences to themselves. The Lord would prefer, I believe, if everyone in the world would be faithful to Him, but that will never be the case. Only a remnant has ever decided that living for God and His truth is worth the effort, tribulation, sorrows, and sometimes the martyrdom that comes from serving Him. These few people have experienced the love and joy of the Lord in their lives and have returned that love to Him. Nothing will make them turn away from Him, and God loves these disciples greatly. Be very grateful to the Lord if you are accounted among this faithful Remnant.

Another term sometimes used for the Remnant is God's Elect, and I will be using these terms, at times, interchangeably. A Remnant is found in Genesis 7:23 where Noah and those with him in the ark were the only remaining ones 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; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."

The Remnant, in every period of history, has always been small. Jesus termed His followers as a little flock. In Luke 12:32 He said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Conditions will be so bad before the Lord comes again, that Jesus was prompted to declare, "...Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). In at least one case, that of Noah, the Remnant has come down through one person or family. At another time, though it was thought that the Remnant came

down through one person, the Lord still had a little group which was faithful to Him. This was the case with Elijah. I Kings 19:14-18 instructs us of Elijah's conversation with the Lord: "And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."

We saw in the passage above the Remnant of Israel in the days of Elijah. They consisted of those who refused to bow down to Baal and refused to kiss him. During the captivities of Israel and Judah, such individuals as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego, Esther, and Mordecai made up the Remnant. At the return, men such as Ezra and Nehemiah were a part of the Remnant or Election of God. At the time of Christ, John the Baptist, Simeon, Anna, and other disciples were in this group. In fact, 144,000 of Israel eventually made up the Remnant and Election of God. The Apostle Paul, himself a member of the Israelite Remnant/Election, wrote this in Romans 11:5: "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

The 144,000 of Israel were actually the firstfruits of

Christ's ministry. Revelation 14:1-5 informs us: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."

We mentioned above that the 144,000 of the tribes of Israel were a part of God's Elect. The rest of Israel was blinded to the truth. A chance was given for Gentile believers to become a part of God's Elect. We read about this situation in Romans 11:7-11. "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them: Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back alway. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy."

We see a glimpse of this happening in the Book of Acts, where the Apostle Paul preached to some Jews who rejected his message. So, he turned to the Gentiles who did accept his preaching. Chapter 28, verses 23-28 shows Paul at Rome speaking to both Jews and Gentiles. "And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken (possibly a part of the 144,000), and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had

spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."

Romans 11 speaks of a time when the children of Israel will be given a chance once again to be a part of God's Remnant. Verses 23-25 reads: "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

Zechariah 13:8-9 tells of the time in the future when some in Israel will turn to the Lord. We read: "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God." Then God's Elect will be both Jew and Gentile.

The Lord Jesus taught about God's great care for His Elect in the Parable of the unjust Judge. This is found in Luke 18:1-8. In verses 7-8 Jesus taught: "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily..." The Lord not only avenges His Elect but He also justifies them through Christ. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8:33-34).

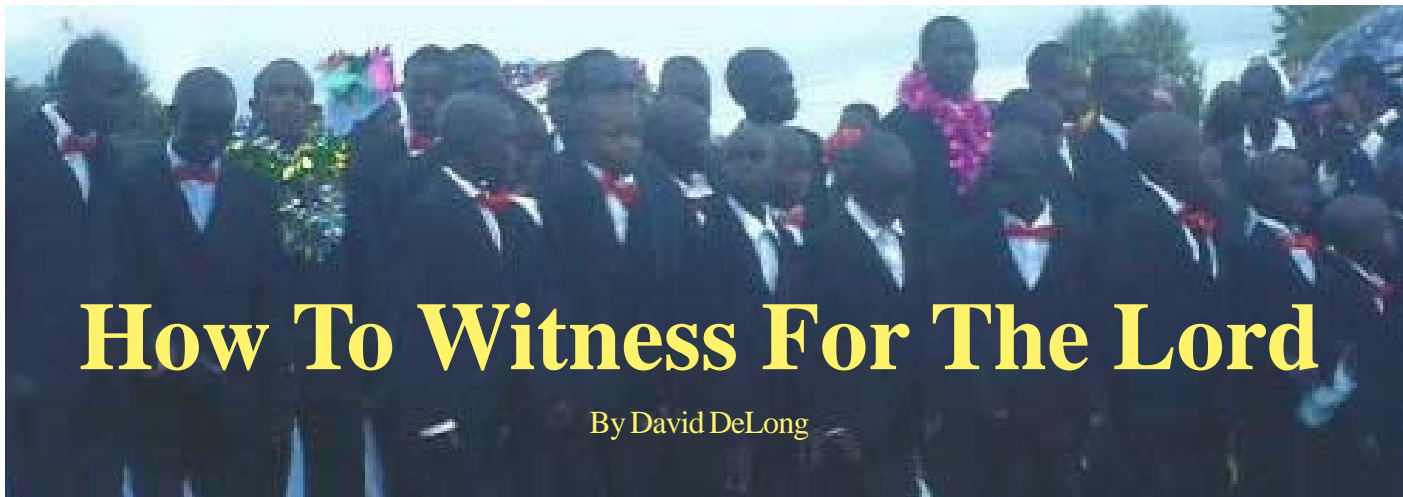
As being a part of God's Elect today, we must act the role and, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Colossians 3:12-13). In other words, we must truly be the Elect of the Lord, and not just claim to be. Following the example of our Lord Jesus proves us to be among His Elect because Jesus was Himself Elect of God (see I Peter 2:6).

God's Elect must live by faith and acknowledge the truth, as we see in Titus 1:1: "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness". They must be sanctified unto obedience and through the blood of Christ (see I Peter 1:2). The Elect, or Remnant, must be keeping the commandments of God. We see this in Revelation 12:17: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The Lord, through the Prophet Joel made a prophecy, at least partly fulfilled in Acts Chapter 2, which reads: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my

spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call" (Joel 2:28-32). The Remnant mentioned here appears to be made up of both Jews and Gentiles because the fulfillment passage of Joel's prophecy in Acts 2 reads: "...whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (verse 21).

The Lord has always had a Remnant, or Elect people, to bring glory to His name. So it was before the people of Israel existed, during their appointed time, during the time of the Gentiles (including now), and in the future when Israelites and Gentiles shall together be serving the Lord. The questions that must be raised now are this: am I a part of God's Elect group, or Remnant? Am I willing to face persecution or tribulation for the sake of the Lord, and remain faithful to Him even unto death? Am I living as one of the Elect, keeping the commandments of God and having the faith, or testimony, of Jesus? We must all heed the exhortation of the Apostle Peter in his second epistle, Chapter 1, verse 10: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall".



How To Witness For The Lord

By David DeLong

Like everything else that we do in life, witnessing for the Lord is a given responsibility. However, it is also an art that needs to be learned and practiced. One of the greatest reasons that we were put upon the earth is to

give testimony to others about the awesomeness of the Lord. Psalm 96:1-3 tells us: "O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth. Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from

day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people."

First, we must always witness about the Lord to others with our lifestyle. In other words we must walk the walk as well as talk the talk. Probably nothing will turn a person off to our witness quicker than for them to see us not living up to what we say. This is actually hypocrisy, and the Lord will not even accept us in such a situation. A hymn that we sing says: "I would be true, for there are those who trust me". People sometimes watch us intently to see if we are genuine believers.

Another thing that we should do is cultivate close relationships with others. This can be with a good friend, a close neighbor, and especially with our family members. This type of relationship will make it far easier for the person to receive our message than someone who is a casual friend or acquaintance. The reason is obvious: people trust us if the relationship is open and honest.

Something that every follower of Christ needs in his or her life is boldness to proclaim the Word of the Lord. I repeat this for emphasis: every follower of Christ needs boldness to proclaim the Word of the Lord. Even the Apostle Paul knew that he needed this boldness in his life. He wrote in Ephesians 6:18-20: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

The Apostle Peter counselled that one should always be prepared to testify to others about the hope in him. He wrote: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15). A good place to begin here is with the story of your own personal conversion experience. People may argue with you about many things you tell them, but they cannot argue against your own personal testimony.

When the Lord gives us chances to witness to others, we should make sure that we don't miss any opportunity to do so. Paul was careful about this. He testified in Acts 20:26-27: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

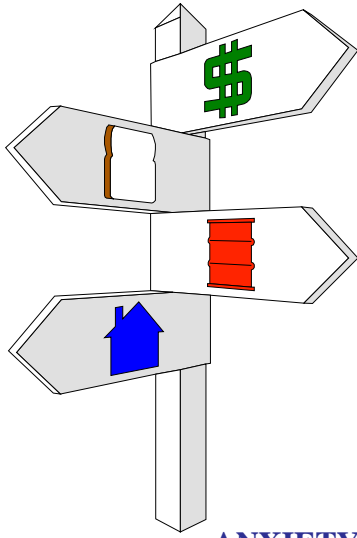
All believers must confess Christ with their mouths. This is definitely shown to us in Romans 10:9-10. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." If you have never confessed to someone that Christ is your Lord, then you should seek out an opportunity to do so. Jesus said most solemnly that if you are ashamed of Him and His words that He will also be ashamed of you when He comes again (see Mark 8:38).

There are numerous ways to witness for the Lord, and we must do so with all of the gifts and talents that the Lord has given to us personally. Not everyone is called to be an ordained minister or an evangelist, but to those who have been called for this ministry Paul wrote to Timothy: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine...But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (II Timothy 4:1-2,5).

Witnessing to others can be done through teaching as well as preaching. If the Lord has given you the gift of teaching then take this up with your pastor so that you can work with him in the church. Sisters, this is for you as well. There are many avenues for you to express your gift of teaching in the church, such as through womens' groups, childrens' classes, and the like.

If you have a talent for writing I encourage you to use this talent for the Lord. We will even consider an article or poem to be placed in the Advocate of Truth. There are many musicians in the Church of God who are using their talents for the glory of God. If you feel called to be one of them, but are afraid to perform before people, ask the Lord to give you boldness such as Paul asked. Maybe you're good with kid's stories. There's a place for you in the Lord's service. In fact, there's a place for everyone!

All of God's people must be a witness for Him wherever they are--in church, at work, at school, in the home, in society at large. We need to take every opportunity to witness, and to do so with every gift and talent we possess. May God give us the boldness to do so!



ANXIETY INCREASING

The following article, by Jason Horowitz, with the New York Times, appeared in the Houston Chronicle. It is entitled Trump or no, anxiety on rise. It has been excerpted.

The handsome Washington townhouse where Wayne Hickory practices orthodontics is a landmark of terrorism in America.

In 1919, an anarchist exploded a bomb at, then, what was the home of the attorney general. The failed assassination set off a wave of violent raids on radicals, communists and leftists, and the deportation without due process of hundreds of innocent European immigrants – a high point of hysteria in an era known as the first Red Scare.

“Maybe there is something to learn from history,” Hickory said in a sitting room that now contains advertising for invisible braces.

But asked about Donald Trump’s call to ban Muslims from entering the United States, Hickory said that, as implausible as it was, the proposal had prompted a necessary discussion about whether travelers from countries fraught with Islamic extremism should receive increased scrutiny. “Perhaps”, he said, “the line needs to be drawn a little bit more severely.”

An existential fear of foreign infiltration, unfamiliar minorities and terrorist attacks is not a new feeling in America. Neither is the nativist, if at times innovative, language Trump has mastered on his way leading the Republican primary race.

But interviews this week with dozens of American voters, even those who do not support Trump and reject

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.

his ban as an indecent proposal, make clear that their anxiety is on the rise in a more fearful climate than at any time since the attacks of September 11, 2001. From the Capitol to the campaign trail, from Trump’s childhood neighborhood to the suburbs near the Islamic State-inspired killing of 14 people in San Bernardino, Calif., voters acknowledged, almost despite themselves, the gnawing sense of insecurity that has fueled Trump’s vision and presidential appeal.

People are seeing things, and saying things. Carol Shapire, 75, a vehement critic of Trump from Rockaway, New Jersey, recalled with some embarrassment her surveillance of an apparently Middle Eastern man wearing a “Taliban hat” and photographing the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree on the day of the attack in Paris.

“The tree wasn’t lighted,” she said, making her wonder why the man would be taking pictures. “And then he put his hands in his pockets and walked off very fast, and it made me uncomfortable.”

Critics of Trump in Jamaica Estates, Queens, where he grew up, had fewer reservations about expressing their fear of Muslims.

They ‘kill people’.

“Terrorists can do so many things...to get into this country,” said Leonidez Galan, 66, who was drawn closer to Trump and away from his previous choice, Jeb Bush, when Trump called to ban Muslim immigrants from the United States. Expressing fear of the women in hijabs who walked the neighborhood’s curved streets, he said of Muslims, “They come in and kill people.”

Some in the neighborhood who voted for President Barack Obama and planned to support Hillary Clinton nevertheless said they admired Trump’s machismo and shared his concern that, as Andrew Baker, 53, put it, “Muslims are more dangerous.”

Echoes of that notion reverberated on the campaign trail and at the events of candidates who condemned Trump's harsh language. Often it seemed that older voters were bothered most by the attack in San Bernardino and more sympathetic to Trump's proposals.

"I just feel we have enough illegal people in our country, and there's no jobs for them," said Beverly Lee, 78, of Brookline, New Hampshire. She said she thought the ban was a good idea.

COMMENT - Webster's New World Dictionary defines anxiety as "a state of being uneasy, apprehensive, concern about a possible future event."

Politics aside, we do live in a time of great anxiety. There are many things in society which can cause a person, who is not rooted and grounded in God's Word, to experience anxiety.

As a matter of fact, as more people, even those who may not have known all the truth but once believed in God and lived a decent life, lose their conviction anxiety increases. Many are giving up on righteous living, and they are doing Satan's bidding. This is one reason that we live in perilous times which is a sign that we are living in the last days. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (II Timothy 3:1). For a list of the works which cause these perilous times, let us quote verses 2-5: "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." Verse 5 is really telling us not to let such men cause us to be anxious or fearful.

Fear is a word which is related to being anxious. Many may worry (be anxious) about their financial situation. One may have a family situation that causes anxiety. Man-made disasters, such as earthquakes, can cause anxiety. These things can cause fear (anxiety) to those who do not know our Lord.

Jesus spoke to His disciples on the subject of anxiety. He told them, "Therefore take no thought (do not be anxious), 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. Take therefore no thought (do not be anxious) for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:31-34). Also read verses 25-30.

FISH SCARCITY PROBLEM

I read that fish to eat are becoming in short supply because the waterways are being contaminated at a fast pace. This not only causes fish lovers to do without, but it also causes fishermen to lose their life's work!

MARIJUANA USE

The following is an article entitled *Marijuana Use Expands* which appeared in **Does God Exist?**

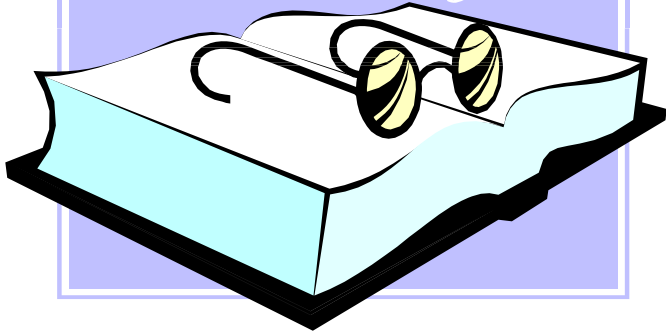
"In the June 2015 issue of *National Geographic* is a 25-page article on marijuana, primarily emphasizing the potential beneficial use of the drug. There is no question that there are chemicals in marijuana that can have positive use in some treatment programs. Cannabidiol (CBD) in various forms can be used to treat seizures and has no psychoactive effect on humans. Tetahydrocannabinol (THD) has been studied in some detail and has been shown to treat many disorders including glaucoma, Crohn's disease, Tourette's syndrome, and asthma. What is unfortunate is that all like plant material, marijuana can be misused and is destructive when used as a recreational drug. THC has been shown to alter the growth of the brain in young people. It can produce anxiety attacks and trigger schizophrenia. The smoke of the plant can have devastating long-term effects on the lungs. AAA reports a 50 percent increase in the involvement of marijuana in weekend drivers since 2007. God has given humankind many materials that can be used to improve our lives. When we misuse these materials--be it alcohol, or marijuana, or other plant materials--they can bring tragic consequences."

COMMENT - Many people today use marijuana for recreational purposes. Consider one of the doctrines of The Church of God. It states "**Partaking of and use of intoxicating liquors, alcoholic stimulants, narcotics, tobacco and any habit forming drug is contrary to the nature of man. Man's body is the Temple of God.**"

The misuse of habit forming drugs that harm the body by so many people is a Sign of the Times! Please read I Corinthians 6:19 and I Corinthians 3:16-17.

BIBLE

Study



QUESTION: What does the Book of Deuteronomy contain?

ANSWER: The Book of Deuteronomy, as its name implies, consists largely of the repetition of important features of the Law given to Israel by God at the hand of Moses. This repetition appears mainly as admonitions to faithfulness given by Moses in three discourses which are recorded in the book. Deuteronomy also contains the recording of some of Israel's experiences during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy also contains prophecies pertaining to the promised Deliverer of mankind from sin and death. One of these is recorded in Deuteronomy 18:18-19. It reads: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." In the New Testament, this is indicated to be a prophecy of the coming Messiah.

Question: What does the word "Bible" mean, and how did it come into English?

Answer: The word "Bible" means book, and it came into English from the Greek and Latin **biblos**, book (from

Questions and Answers

the city of Byblos, where the best writing materials were produced). Ancient books were written on papyrus which was writing material made from tall bamboo-like grasses, or vellum made of parched animal skins.

QUESTION: Is it important to know the will of God?

ANSWER: Yes, it is! The will of God is of paramount importance as is demonstrated by the following Scriptures. "And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother" (Mark 3:33-35). "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). Mark reveals that Jesus esteemed the will of God above any earthly tie or relationship. In John, as we have seen, Jesus is quoted as saying that he came to do the will of God who had sent Him! In Psalm 40:7-8, we find a prophecy concerning Jesus which expresses his heartfelt motivation. "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." The Apostle Paul expressed this same thought of submission to and supreme respect for God's will in Colossians 1:9-10. "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the

Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

The universal law which applies to all intelligent creation and which expresses God’s will is recorded in Deuteronomy 13:3 and Luke 10:25-28. “Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” “And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.” To a perfect one such as our Lord Jesus Christ, this all-comprehensive law would not require any amplification whatever. However, now God is dealing with very imperfect people. Therefore, he has broken down this law into a number of “do’s” and “don’ts” for our benefit. Therefore, we can gain an understanding from the Bible of what our heavenly Father expects our conduct to be. It contains rules which govern all our various relationships while in the flesh – first with God Himself; second, respecting our consecration; thirdly, our interdependence on our brethren; fourth, our bond with the truth; and fifth, our relationship present and future with mankind in general.

Our First Duty Toward God

Let us consider these all-important rules in the order given. First and foremost, God’s expressed will for us who are mortal is that we must love Him supremely, and give Him our complete obedience. Consider Luke 10:27 again.

Our Consecration Vows

With God’s will concerning our vows of consecration, there are significant aspects to this subject. But only some of the key facets of this subject can be mentioned in our limited space. We are to consider consecration to be our “reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). It is essential to keep our (fleshly) bodies under (I Corinthians 9:26-27). We are told to put on the “whole armour of God” (Ephesians 6:13-17). We are admonished to “add to your faith” (II Peter 1:5-9). “Study” is necessary (II Timothy 2:15). James and Peter explain that if we “Resist

the devil” he will flee from us (I Peter 5:8-9; James 4:7). Obedience is better than sacrifice (I Samuel 15:22). We are invited to surrender our hearts (Proverbs 23:26). Finally in I Corinthians 11:31, we are told that if we “judge ourselves” we shall “not be judged.” We must persist in following these admonitions faithfully until death!

Concern And Love For The Brethren

Let us consider the third rule which has to do with our relationship with the brethren. The final judgment of whether we are worthy of life will depend largely on how we feel about the brethren, and how we faithfully attend to their spiritual and natural needs. The Apostle Paul speaks of ministering to the material needs of the saints in II Corinthians 9:1-2. “For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.” On this subject, the instructions are many. The following Scriptures are recommended reading on this subject. Romans 12:5-16; I Thessalonians 5:11-16, 22; Ephesians 4:1-5; Hebrews 10:23-25 and I Peter 1:22.

Respect For The Truth

Our fourth rule has to do with God’s will regarding our association with the truth which He has revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. Let us keep in mind that this is a sacred trust that we have received from God! A few of the outstanding instructions are now mentioned. “O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles” (Psalm 43:3). “Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Proverbs 23:23). “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

QUESTION: How many children did Abraham have, and what were their names?

ANSWER: Abraham had eight children. Their names were Isaac by Sarah; Ishmael by Hagar; Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, Shuah by Keturah. Read Genesis 16:16; 21:2-3; 25:1-2, 3.



Kenya

A wedding in progress in Kenya.





Escorting the Bride to the stage ground.



At the wedding.

LESSON I

THE FIRST TRIP CONTINUES

Scripture Reading: Acts 14:19-28.

Golden Text: Acts 14:22.

"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

NOTE: We have been studying about Paul and Barnabas and their missionary journey. We will now continue to study about the places they travel and the people they meet. Do not forget to use your Bible maps to find these different cities.

1. Who came from Antioch and Iconium, and what happened to Paul? Acts 14:19.
2. Where did Barnabas and Paul travel to after leaving Lystra? Acts 14:20.
3. After they had preached the gospel to that city, where did these two men return? Acts 14:21.
4. What did Paul tell them to continue in to enter into the kingdom of God? Acts 14:22.
5. What did Paul and Barnabas do in Acts 14:23? Explain in your own words why you think it was necessary for them to do these acts.
6. Tell where the brethren then sailed. Acts 14:24-26.
7. When Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch (Syria), what did they tell to the disciples gathered there? Acts 14:27-28.

NOTE: You learned from one of your questions that Paul and Barnabas went back to the very cities where they had been persecuted. What love they must have had for their brethren. They knew they might meet the same fate as when they first arrived, but the reward would be far greater and worth any persecution they must suffer.

LESSON II

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Scripture Reading: Acts 15:36-41; 16:1-15.

Golden Text: Acts 16:5.

"And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily."

1. Paul asked Barnabas to return to the cities that they first visited. Who did Barnabas wish to take along on their second journey? Acts 15:36-37.
2. Did Paul want Mark to go with them? Acts 15:38.
3. Who did Barnabas and Paul choose to make their separate trips with, and to where did they sail? Acts 15:39-41.
4. Who did Paul meet on his journey, and who were his parents? Acts 16:1-2.
5. Were churches being established at this time? Acts 16:5.
6. To what lands were Paul and Silas not able to go? Acts 16:6-8.
7. What vision did Paul see, and did he take heed of this vision? Acts 16:9-12.
8. Where did Paul and Silas go on the Sabbath, and to whom did they speak? Acts 16:13.
9. Tell about the woman they met. Was she baptized? Acts 16:14-15.

LESSON III

A DEMON CAST OUT

Scripture Reading: Acts 16:16-40.

Golden Text: Acts 16:25.

"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them."

1. Who met Paul and Silas, and what was her occupation? Acts 16:16.

NOTE: Divination and soothsaying are when someone predicts the future or tells secrets by using magic.

2. What did Paul say to the spirit? Acts 16:18.

3. Tell what happened to Paul and Silas because of this deed. Acts 16:19-24.

4. What did Paul and Silas do while in prison? Acts 16:25.

5. What happened while Paul and Silas were in prison? Acts 16:26-27.

6. What did Paul say to the jailer, and what did the jailer do and say? Acts 16:28-30.

7. Paul and Silas told the jailer to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ". What did the jailer then do that same night? Acts 16:31-34.

8. Explain in your own words what happened in Acts 16:35-40.

LESSON IV

PAUL AT THESSALONICA

Scripture Reading: Acts 17:1-14.

Golden Text: Acts 17:11.

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

1. Paul and Silas now enter a synagogue in Thessalonica. What three points did Paul talk about in the synagogue? Acts 17:1-3.

2. Who believed and listened to Paul? Acts 17:4.

3. What happened in verses 5-9 of Acts 17?

4. What did the brethren then do to Paul and Silas? Acts 17:10.

5. Paul and Silas are now in Berea. How did the people here compare to those in Thessalonica? Acts 17:11.

6. What was the result of Paul and Silas's presence in Berea? Acts 17:12.

7. What did the Jews of Thessalonica do in Berea? Acts 17:13.

8. Who remained in Berea? Acts 17:14.

PERGA

Perga was a town in Pamphylia, and under the Romans was the capital of the province. The word Perga means "doubtless citadel or burg." Paul and Barnabas visited the town on the first missionary journey, both as they went and returned. It was on the right bank of the river Kestros. Nearby was a well-known temple of the goddess Artemis, who was known as the queen of Perga.

Unscramble the letters to find out what objects Gideon used to fight the Midianites.

IHTPERC _____

RCTOH _____

MRETTUP _____

Answers to Character Builders:

- 1. gratitude 2. temperance 3. compassion 4. patience 5. kindness 6. ambition 7. unselfishness 8. friendly 9. charity 10. faith 11. loyalty 12. joy 13. honesty 14. modest 15. purity 16. content



A BEAUTIFUL LIFE

By Sherry James

Rosie stomped her foot and crossed her arms. "I'm mad," she said.

Grandmother sat in her big, plump chair and pulled out her needlework. "Come", she said, "pick out a yarn for me."

Rosie's little hands dug in the yarn box until she found a thick, red piece that was coarse and hard.

Grandmother smiled, "Thank you, my child. Go clean your room."

The next day at breakfast Rosie found the toy in the cereal box. She squealed with delight; "I'm a winner!"

Grandmother sat in her plump chair. "Come," she said, "give me a piece of yarn." Rosie pulled out a dark blue, smooth string. "Thank you, my child. Now go do your homework."

The phone rang and Rosie answered it. She ran into the living room where Grandmother sat in her chair. "I'm so excited," she said. "Daddy is coming home early."

"Go to the garden and pick some flowers for your Dad, but first hand me a piece of yarn." Rosie rolled the big pile around until she found a yarn with many colors like a rainbow.

After dinner, Grandmother listened to the laughter in the house. "Come to me, Rosie. Get me a yarn." Rosie chose a bright pink, satin piece that matched her dress.

The doorbell rang. It was the neighbor needing

Daddy's help with his car. Rosie laid down on the couch. Little tears fell on the cushion. "I'm so lonely," she said.

"Sit with me, my child," Grandmother said.

Rosie sat in her Grandmother's lap in the big, plump chair until the tears dried up. "Pull out another yarn and then go feed your puppy," Grandmother said. Rosie picked a fuzzy yarn the same color as Grandmother's hair.

At bedtime Grandmother, Rosie and Daddy said prayers together thanking God for tomorrow was Rosie's birthday. They also prayed for each friend who would attend. "Do you think we'll have balloons?" Rosie asked.

"Yes," Grandmother said. "What color yarn do you want for the balloons?"

Rosie smiled. "Yellow. That's my favorite."

At the party Grandmother sat in her big, plump chair and gave Rosie a present: a plump pillow. Colorful pieces of yarn were stitched together to make a picture of trees and a road. "Do you remember this red yarn?" she asked.

"Yes," said Rosie. "That's the day I was mad, but now it looks beautiful."

Grandmother pointed to the blue and black yarn. "Do you remember these?" Rosie nodded.

Daddy ran his finger over the rainbow and pink yarn. "This was a good day," Rosie giggled.

Rosie stroked the gray piece. "I love this one, Grandmother."

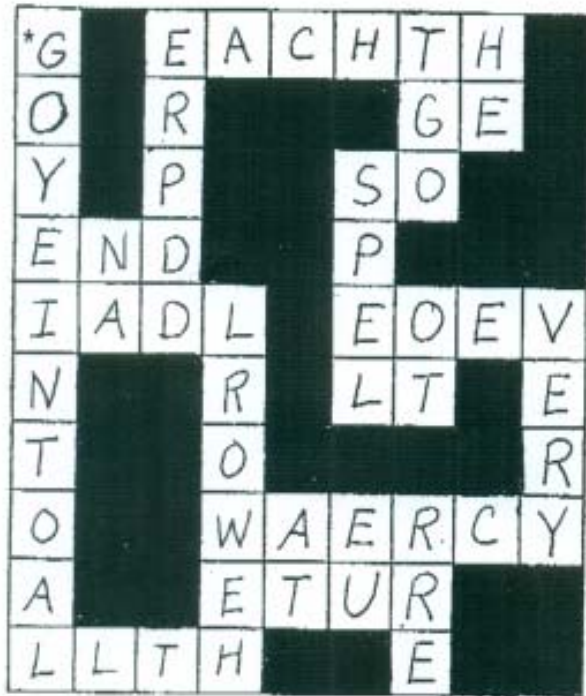
Grandmother's eyes twinkled as she touched the yellow yarn. "And I love this one."

The kids peeked over the plump chair to see the pretty pillow. "What's it for?" They asked.

Rosie hugged the pillow. "To remind me that every day whether it's good or bad, I have a beautiful life."



Jesus ascended into heaven in a cloud. He gave some instructions before leaving. Start at the * and find the message. If you need help look up Mark 16:15.



MY DAD

When I see my father smile,
 I'm happy as can be
 To know he is a gift from God
 Sent down to earth for me.
 When I see his big, strong hands
 So rough from honest toil,
 I know my heart to him will be
 Always true and loyal.
 When I hear his tender voice
 With words so wise and kind,
 In my heart I give deep thanks
 To God, that Dad is mine!

CHARACTER BUILDERS

The scrambled words below are character builders or qualities that we should all try to have. See how many you can solve.

1. Teguairt d
2. Petneeamer
3. Somaspeoin
4. Tenapiec
5. Dsiknns
6. Tnoabmii
7. Felhessnassiun
8. Ydnlrif
9. Iayhter
10. Tahif
11. Ylolyta
12. Oyj
13. Syohetn
14. Smdtoe
15. Ryupti
16. Tnonetc

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A CONVERSATION WITH GOD

*You want to do "WHAT" on the weekend?
God, is this what you say?
For me that would be quite impossible,
There is so much to do every day.
My week days are all filled with labor,
In a job, that I work at for pay
To feed and shelter my family,
Barely having the time just to pray.
I must catch up on all of the housework,
I cook, I bake, scrub and sew;
There is no other time I can do this,
It's the job of a mother, you know.
And now I must go do the yard work,
Though I am so tired I yawn;
I know I must honor and worship you, God,
But can't I do it while mowing the lawn?
But God, you still say I must honor Your day,
Give my thought and my time just to you;
This law's in effect and must always be so,
It helps me to ever be true.
So, Sabbath I'll keep, and its blessings I'll reap
right up to my rest 'neath the sod;
Not the things we just say, but the things that we do
Will earn our rewards from God.*

Betty Whetstone

