



The Advocate of Truth



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The Lord's Supper Service will be on March 22, 2016 after sundown. This is on Tuesday evening (Roman time).

NEW WINE

By Moises Torres M.

“But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:29).

The Lord’s Supper, which was instituted by our Lord Himself, is partaken on the night at the appointed time by the children of God who come together around the Lord’s table to ANNOUNCE HIS DEATH. As children of God, we have the privilege to celebrate and commemorate the death of our Saviour.

In that day in His kingdom, there will be a NEW WINE that the Lord will drink with us. That new nourishment will no longer represent freedom from sin, or a physical redemption. It will be a NEW energy, bread and a new wine, which will celebrate the triumph of Jesus and the saints. In that day in His kingdom, it won’t be another supper to observe His death, but it will be a supper of triumph and rejoicing. It will be a supper to announce the final victory of the Lamb of God and of His church. It will be a supper for the marriage of the Lamb.

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready” (Revelation 19:7).

“And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God” (Revelation 19:9).

Yes, the saints, who are the children of God, are invited to the marriage of the Lamb in the holy city which is the New Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, let us participate today of the bread and wine of the sacrifice of our Lord with great joy, and one day we, with Him, will celebrate the victory with new wine in His kingdom.

“But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved” (Luke 5:38).

PREPARATION FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER

By Mario Cantu

We come to another close of a year and enter, on the 14th day of a new spiritual year, March 22. This day will gather God’s children to the Lord’s Supper, an event for which we should all be in preparation.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:1-2).

To present ourself in readiness with the love of Christ for the Lord’s Supper, we need to show our respect to God, ministers and the congregation. Christ sent His disciples to a house and prepared for the Lord’s Supper. Let us also demonstrate our readiness with the same example our Lord gives us.

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are

weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (I Corinthians 11: 23 - 32).

Beloved brethren, we are taught to show our true offering with a loving heart. This is a command of Christ given to us. God gave His Son's flesh and blood for you.

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51).

I send my greetings with peace and love in the name of Christ Jesus our Savior and thank God for His many blessings. I will continue to pray for each and everyone. Take care and God Bless.



PRINCIPLES AND REASONS

The Firstborn

By Moises Torres M.

1. Why did Jacob seek the birthright from Esau, his brother?

BECAUSE THE BIRTHRIGHT HAS BLESSINGS AND PRIVILEGES

NOTE: We know that Edom is Esau, the brother of Jacob. His name was changed to Edom when he sold his birthright for a red pottage dish.

GENESIS 25:29-34: "And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he *was* faint: And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red *pottage*; for I *am* faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I *am* at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised *his* birthright."

Later, with the birthright, Jacob claimed and received the blessing of the firstborn from his father Isaac, which

was greater than the one pronounced to Esau.

2. What were the benefits or blessings of the firstborn?

NOTE: Older sons, or firstborn, were the successors of their fathers in families. They received a special paternal blessing and a greater legacy than other sons (see Deuteronomy 21:15-17). They took the place of honor at banquets and special events of the family. This privilege was not extended to slaves or concubines' sons. "And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country" (Genesis 25:5-6).

There are some exceptions in the Bible where the firstborn such as Manasseh, Esau, and Reuben lost their birthright for offenses or serious misconduct, and were supplanted by Ephraim, Jacob, and Judah, who were not firstborn. Another case is also David, who was not a

firstborn and came to have the primacy as king.

3. Who officiated in the priesthood from the beginning?

THE FIRSTBORN HAD ALSO THAT RIGHT

Since the beginning, the office of the priesthood in every family belonged to the oldest son. Therefore, the firstborn were destined to be priests. But, when the Melchizedek Priesthood was interrupted and the time and sacrifice services took over to worship God, then it was required an exclusive group of men dedicated to this ministry and the primitive office of the firstborn was then given to the Levites. For this reason it was ordained that both the firstborn of men and animals were redeemed.

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, And I, behold, **I have taken the Levites** from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine; Because all the firstborn *are* mine; **for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel**, both man and beast: mine shall they be: *I am* the LORD” (Numbers 3:11-13; see also 8:14-18)).

NUMBERS 3:41: “And thou shalt take the Levites for me (*I am* the LORD) instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel; and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the children of Israel.”

NOTE: God “redeemed” (rescued) the firstborn of Israel by the blood of the lambs so they did not see death in Egypt. Later, when the Levitical Priesthood took place, the Levites took the place of all the firstborn of Israel, and they came to be firstborn, and therefore the priests of the people.

4. Why did the Lord give this exclusive place to the firstborn to be priests?

FOR THE FIRSTBORN ARE THE FIRST STRENGTH OF MAN, ANIMALS, AND NATURE.

NOTE: It is not easy to describe the joy parents feel when they know their first child is born. Their happiness and joy is great, because they know his love, his youth, and

strength, are giving the first fruits. Similarly, God is glad of all the firstborn. God is not a static God, but a God that is always moving, creating, producing, etc. And the first fruits of his crops are a cause to rejoice; they are the blessings of man’s hard work. Therefore, He ordered to have festivals and assemblies to present the first fruits and bring thank offerings for them. Following this order, parents should introduce their children when they are born, and bring offerings to God in gratitude.

The Firstborn are declared in the Bible as the first strength of man. (Please Read Psalm 105:36; 78:51; Genesis 49:3; Deuteronomy 21:15-17). Therefore, when God killed the firstborn of the Egyptians, He wounded them in their strength, in their offspring.

5. What did God let Pharaoh know about Israel?

“And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel *is* my son, *even* my firstborn.” (Exodus 4:22). Israel was God’s representative, God’s priest before nations.

6. In addition to humility and obedience, what was one of the things that pleased God of Abel’s offering? THAT HIS OFFERING WAS TAKEN FROM THE FIRSTBORN.

“And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering” (Genesis 4:4).

7. What offering did God give in propitiation for the sins of the world?

HE OFFERED HIS FIRSTBORN

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Colossians 1:15: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.”

Matthew 1:25: “And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS”.

Luke 2: 7: “And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn”.

NOTE: The Lord Jesus was God’s firstborn, as well as

Mary's. Therefore He had the right to become a Priest, the Priest of the most high God, after the order of Melchizedek. "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he *was* the priest of the most high God" (Genesis 14:18). Probably Melchizedek was also a firstborn.

Hebrews 5:5-6: "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another *place*, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec".

NOTE: As a firstborn and priest, Jesus had to offer a sacrifice of reconciliation (a peace offering) between God and men. He shed his precious blood to redeem mankind. A priest is an intermediary between God and men.

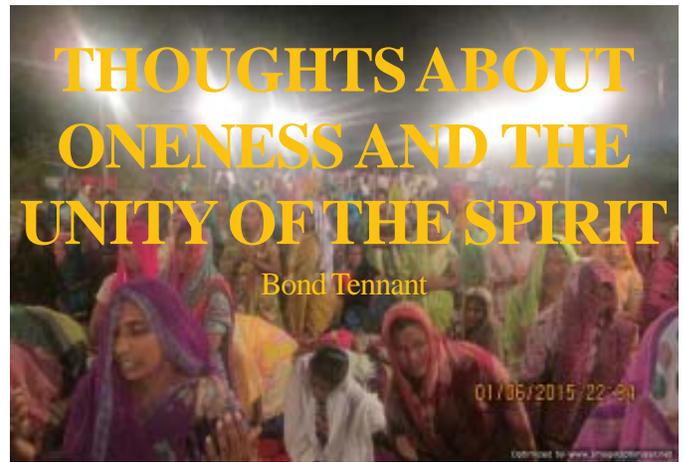
8. Why does Scripture say that we are come unto the general assembly and church of the firstborn? BECAUSE WE ALSO BECAME FIRSTBORN IN JESUS

Hebrews 12:22-24: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, **To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven,** and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel."

NOTE: Every believer is made a "Firstborn" in the faith of the Lord Jesus, just as He is a Firstborn. And as the firstborn took the place of the priests in the Old Testament, now the church is the body of priests of God in the New Testament: "**And hath made us kings and priests** unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 1:6; see also 5:10).

"But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Peter 2:9).

NOTE: As we are redeemed from this world by the Blood of the Lamb, then it is meaningful we are the "firstborn" of God in this dispensation, just as the children of Israel were the firstborn redeemed by the sign of the blood of the lamb in Egypt.



"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me...I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:21, 23).

Let us study the important subject of oneness with God, with Jesus and with the brethren. Jesus prayed the night before His crucifixion that His followers, which includes us, would have oneness with each other and with Him, just as He was one with His Father. It is clear that He was not speaking of oneness of person or identity, but oneness of purpose and character. Jesus had said earlier that evening, "my Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). We know that Jesus, as our Master, is above His footstep followers in rank. This is stated by the Apostle Paul who wrote, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:18). There is no thought in our study of this subject which would lead us to believe in a literal interpretation of oneness between God, His Son Jesus, and those for whom Jesus prayed--His footstep followers.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). An important part of our learning to have the mind of Christ is to understand the spirit of oneness and unity which He and the Father have. We then must seek to apply the principles which govern their oneness

to ourselves. One of the chief evidences of oneness with God and His Son, Christ Jesus, is the degree to which we have oneness with our brethren. In the fourth chapter of Ephesians, the Apostle Paul gives us counsel concerning oneness and unity among children of God. He states, "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2-3).

We see that Paul makes it clear that oneness, peace, and harmony among the brethren are possible only where there exists an attitude of lowliness and meekness. He states that these are to be mingled with longsuffering. This enables us to bear with the imperfections of one another because we love them as fellow members of the body of Christ. Paul calls this blessed harmony among the brethren "unity of the Spirit." There can be no unity of the Spirit when these elements of Christ-like character are lacking. On the other hand, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering and love cannot, apart from other considerations, produce the unity of the Spirit of which the Apostle Paul speaks.

In addition to these important elements of character, they must be practiced upon the basis of the knowledge of the fact that "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:4-6). We gather from these verses that true oneness in Christ is based upon a unity of fundamental knowledge. It is not difficult to realize this! Any group of people whose aims and efforts are akin will find themselves drawn together in a common cause. This same principle holds true in the Church of God.

Let us all heed Paul's admonition to "keep the unity of the Spirit."



REFLECTIONS FROM A WHEELCHAIR

by Betty Whetstone

*I've so much for which I am grateful
As my mind thinks back over the years;
The help I could offer to others--
The sunshine, the laughter,...and tears.*

*For the privilege of living in a country
That was given by God's loving hand;
Like His promise to Abraham,
It is surely a good, promised land.*

*The hard work that has been upon me
I could do, when my back was still strong;
The blessings of just staying busy,
The God to whom I belong.*

*I'm grateful to Him for His goodness,
And giving me all this to please;
The child in my arms to cherish,
The two playing 'round 'bout my knees.*

*And now I have nothing to leave them
Except the poems about the roads that I've
trod;
And the message I leave in the poems
That reflects the love of my God.*



OUR CALLING

By Bibi Shimon Allicock

To make our calling and election sure, we must have the criteria to make it into the kingdom. “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Peter 1:10-11). So we have to do the necessary things in order to be there, such as having the fruit of the Spirit. We must show LOVE and have COMPASSION one for another. Our Lord said, “For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE MY BRETHREN, YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME” (Matthew 25:35-40). JOY in serving Jesus means that you take great pride in the things that are done in the NAME OF Jesus. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest” (Ecclesiastes 9:10). “Go thy way, eat thy bread with JOY, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for GOD now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the

wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun” (verses 7-9).

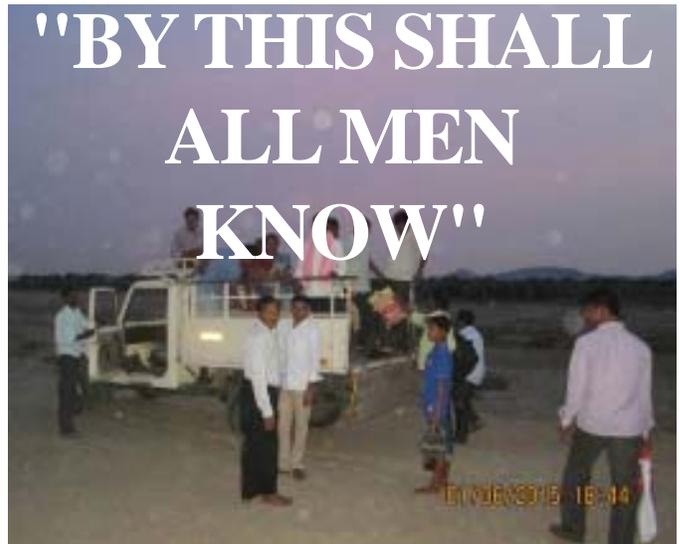
“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will REJOICE in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places...” (Habakkuk 3:17-19, first part). “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them” (Psalm 119:165). “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat SOLD HIS BIRTHRIGHT. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, HE WAS REJECTED: FOR HE FOUND NO PLACE OF REPENTANCE, THOUGH HE SOUGHT IT CAREFULLY WITH TEARS” (Hebrews 12:14-17). We must remember, “BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS: for they shall be called THE CHILDREN OF GOD” (Matthew 5:9). Our Lord told us, “PEACE I leave with you, MY PEACE I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

Since “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise,

as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that ALL SHOULD COME TO REPENTANCE (II Peter 3:9), we in turn should suffer long among ourselves. Our Brother Paul instructed Timothy to “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all LONGSUFFERING and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (II Timothy 4:2-5). In Ephesians 4:1-2, Paul recorded, “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.”

“Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was. But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Timothy 3:8-12).

We have seen how the patriarchs SUFFERED LONG in the things of Almighty God. So, let us “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. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in ONE BODY; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Colossians 3:12-17). Amen.



Many people of today profess Christ, and the majority of a community’s well respected populace attend church. There are so many different kinds of nominal Christians that one from a heathen land might wonder just what does constitute true Christianity. Is one whose dress and conversation are different from the world a true Christian? Not always. Is the Christian the one who always acts the kindest and is the most helpful to those in need? Again, sad but true, it is not always the case. Then perhaps a Christian is a person who reads the Bible and prays every day, the questioning one might muse. An earnest Christian should do all these things wholeheartedly, but they do not necessarily make him a true follower of Christ.

Let us turn to God’s Word, then, to learn how we may tell who are true Christians. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). This should be especially true of those who profess to stand on the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. There should be such profound love shown among this people that all men will know that they are Christ’s true disciples. The neighbors will know it, the curious onlookers will be able to see it, and those who are seeking the truth will most certainly recognize it.

The best way that I know to rightly impress a visitor in a church or meeting is to show him or her such love and friendliness that he will feel the very air permeated with the love of Christ. This can be done, too, because I have felt it. Often it is like a refreshing breeze on a very hot day. When a person can step from the careless, selfish world into the midst of a people who have the true and genuine love, he will readily respond to it and something

will be done for his soul--something that should count for eternity.

What else does God's Word teach about love? The love that is necessary for salvation, we find, is a love which must come from the inmost regions of the heart, or of one's emotional being. It must come from a Higher source. It is the same love, in a measure, that Christ had for the church, and for people. Think what a love this must be! We who are so prone to seek for ourselves and to consider our own welfare first, certainly have to be born-again creatures with a different heart and mind in order to possess this divine love. Then we will be willing to suffer long, if need be, in order to lead others to Christ. We will have no inclination to be proud or puffed up within ourselves, thinking that we are something.

No, nor will we be seeking our own. We cannot be idle in the performing of works if we are His true disciples, so it remains that we must be seeking others' welfare. What will be our motive when we attend church, for instance? Will we go to see as many people as we can and to hear as many interesting things as we can that they might have to tell? Or, if we should be an officer or a teacher, will we study and meditate how we can put our own selves and ideas across? Will we go to let others see our new clothes?

God forbid. Let us seek this love prayerfully and with our own hearts that we may be able to help someone else and especially those who are weak and to whom the way is new.



Take The Exam

By David DeLong

If a person hasn't been to the doctor's office in a while, it is a good idea to set up an appointment and have a general exam to see if everything is all right with one's health. The sooner the better it is to find out if any medications, or procedures, are needed to help in preserving good health. This is good advice even if a person has no known symptoms of possible disease. But, when known symptoms occur in the body, it is imperative that a check-up be done promptly. Many a life has been saved when a disease such as cancer is detected early and is operated upon in a timely manner.

So it is with a person's spiritual life. It is necessary to engage one's self in soul searching, from time to time, to see if there is anything that is not according to the Lord's will that is afflicting us. This is called self-judgment. The problem is that sometimes a person is afraid to do self-judgment for fear that something sinful may be found. I

must admit that I am rather nervous about going to see a doctor for a check-up. But, after I have done so I feel much relieved.

A person may feel the need to go to the doctor for a check-up, but it is the doctor who needs to make the proper diagnosis. Some people are hypochondriacs, thinking that every muscle twinge or body ache is life threatening. This can be true, spiritually, as well. I will address this situation in the next article.

Also, take the example of temptation in a person's life. Sometimes, when people are tempted to do wrong they feel that the temptation itself is a sin. This is not true. Being tempted with evil can make people feel guilty inside, but they have done nothing wrong at that point. James addressed this issue in his epistle, chapter one, verses 13-15. This reads: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil,

neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." We can see from this passage that "when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin". It is not being tempted with lust that is the sin. Only when a person acts upon that lust (in mind or body) does it become sin.

We mentioned earlier that the doctor is the one who must properly diagnose an illness. So, the Lord must be the judge of what sin is committed by us. I John 3:20-21 informs us: "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." Verse 20 appears to be saying that sometimes we may feel guilty (condemned) about something, but God knows if it is truly a sin. If we ask Him to help us with the situation, He will reveal to us if we have sinned, or if we are just feeling false guilt. If our heart doesn't condemn us then we have confidence toward God.

On the other hand, we may have actually committed an offense towards God or others, but it isn't realized that we have done so. David seemed concerned with this situation. He implored the Lord in Psalm 19:12-13: "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." Two types of sins are given here: those that are secret and those (presumptuous sins) that are done flagrantly. David didn't want to be guilty of either.

If we take the exam, and take a serious look into our heart, the Lord will reveal what is in there if we trust Him to be our Judge. David asked the Lord to judge him on several occasions. For example, we find in Psalm 35:23-24: "Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord. Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me." However, the Lord will not even judge us if we judge ourselves. I Corinthians 11:31 reveals to us: "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

So, whether we judge ourselves or ask the Lord to judge us, it is imperative that any sin in us be found early. Sin, like a disease, can fester in the body of Christ until it becomes lethal. For instance, Hebrews 12:14-15 warns us: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled". Sin, like a plague, can be contagious and many can therefore be afflicted.

If there is a problem between us and a brother or sister in the Church, then it is up to us to begin the process of solving the trouble. Sometimes, our brother is the one who trespasses against us. We are responsible to go to him to try to straighten things out (see Matthew 18:15-17). Sometimes, we are the one who has transgressed against our brother. It is still our responsibility to go to him to work things out (see Matthew 5:23-24). We may not feel like doing it; we may feel it is not fair for us to always be the one to go to our brother or sister when there is a problem between us. But, this is what the Lord says we need to do. And that is not all. James 5:16 instructs us to, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." We cannot force the other person to confess his or her faults to us when they have wronged us. Neither can we force them to pray for us. We can only confess our faults to them and pray for them. Some won't confess their faults to others unless the others confess their faults first. But, Jesus' way is one of true humility, and it takes great humbleness of mind to approach another and confess our wrongs to him or her.

Let us take the exam, not only at the time of the Lord's Supper service, but all throughout the year. Sin has a subtle way of coming into our lives and we need to be diligent to expose it and, by God's grace, get rid of it. None of us is too holy or mature in the Lord to let this examination be neglected. The sooner that the sin is excised, the sooner that the body of Christ will stay healthy. May the Lord grant us the will, the courage, and the insight to take the exam is my prayer for all!

Spiritual Hypochondriacs

By David DeLong

We have all probably known a hypochondriac at some time in our lives. Maybe we even are, or have been, a hypochondriac ourselves. The definition of hypochondria, according to Webster's Dictionary, is : "extreme depression of mind or spirits often centered on imaginary physical ailments." The key phrase here is "imaginary physical ailments." Usually the hypochondriac is tormented with all sorts of fears that he or she has some, or many, illnesses that could bring about their demise. Hypochondriacs feel that they have the symptoms to prove their imaginary illnesses. Practically every body ache is "proof" that they are on death's door. They try to diagnose their own symptoms as being potentially fatal. These people are sometimes irritating to be around because they are often gloomy and talk mostly about their own problems. However, it is even worse when a person is a "spiritual hypochondriac."

A spiritual hypochondriac's life is also based upon imaginary problems and the resulting fear and depression. This is the exact opposite of how the Lord taught His people to live. We are to live by faith. Anything that is not of faith is sin (see Romans 14:23). The person whose life is dominated with faith in the Lord is the most joyful, peaceful, and well adjusted person on earth. Hebrews 10:38-39 reads: "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." We will now look at some characteristics of the spiritual hypochondriac.

I knew a person, many years ago, whom I would call

a spiritual hypochondriac. Basically, it seems, he was trying to live his life by works, not faith. For one thing, he apparently had a lust problem, which is not different from what many men have. How he tried to handle the problem, though, was a bit radical. He tried, at times, to tear his eyes out of his eye sockets with his fingers. Now, the Lord Jesus did teach in Matthew 18:9: "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire." However, Jesus most likely meant this as a last resort, not the first thing that one needs to do. There are things a person can do to overcome lust. Much prayer and fasting will help a person overcome any sin.

I believe that Jesus meant exactly what He taught in the passage above. But, I also believe that there is no need for one to have to come to that point in his life where such extreme measures are necessary. As I mentioned, much prayer and fasting can overcome any problem a person has. Other faith measures will help overcome sin such as reading the Word of God, meditating upon it, and claiming its promises of victory. One can also sing praises to the Lord on a constant basis. Sin and praise cannot be on a person's mind at the same time. And, of course, one must flee temptation (see II Timothy 2:22).

Another problem this person had was to stand up in the congregation and confess to the whole local church the sinful thoughts he was having. This did not edify anyone, especially the young people whose minds were now being filled with such thoughts. The Bible teaches us to confess the faults we have committed to each other, not

to the whole congregation (see James 5:16).

A spiritual hypochondriac seems to be preoccupied with his or her sins to the point of believing that the Lord has not actually forgiven them when they repented. Somehow, they believe, their sins are greater than everyone else's, and therefore are too great to be forgiven. If that were true, these people would be in a special human category, outside of the realm of the Bible. Maybe they enjoy feeling "special", even if it is in a sin-can't-be-forgiven category. The Bible makes it very plain, with no personal exceptions, when it proclaims: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

If not actually obsessing with their sins, spiritual hypochondriacs may be struggling with a sense of guilt, even if it is a false sense. We should only feel guilty if we have committed sin--the transgressing of God's Laws (see 1 John 3:4). That guilt should then lead us to repenting of the sin. Then, we should not feel guilty any more for that sin. Some people, however, have a false sense of guilt. This type of guilt, many times, results from not living up to another person's standards. No sin has been committed, but the guilt still remains. Perhaps a person had unduly strict parents who did not express love for their child as they should have. This can create feelings in the child (even when grown up) to constantly try to fulfill the parents' standards, perhaps more so than God's standards. We need to honor our father and mother, not let them take the place of God for us.

Or, traditions of men may be causing the problem. Some folks know the truth about not keeping Sunday for the Sabbath, not keeping the pagan festivals of Christmas, Easter, or Halloween, or not eating unclean meats such as pork. But, they don't want to "offend" other people, or feel like an oddball, so they conform to man's traditions rather than observing the truth of God's Word. The honor of men is more important to them than the honor of God. Jesus had this to say about such people: "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John 5:44).

Spiritual hypochondriacs are filled with doubt. They may feel so worthless that they believe the Lord won't do anything for them. The problem with this, however, is that it is a self-fulfilling prophecy. In the book of James we learn: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that

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

The greatest problem with spiritual hypochondriacs is probably not what they do to themselves, but rather the influence they can have on others. Not only is this person a ripe candidate for getting involved with a cult or other false-believing denomination, but also others may be duped into doing the same thing. All people, ultimately, want to be loved, accepted, and to feel good about themselves. The group which does this the most effectively to spiritual hypochondriacs is the group which most likely will receive their membership.

Spiritual hypochondriacs may actually try to find fault in others so that they can make themselves feel better. By finding fault with other brothers and sisters in Christ they, temporarily, take the focus off their own problems, fears, and doubts. Sometimes, such persons feel that they have been called of the Lord to be "prophets" or "prophetesses" to straighten out everyone else.

How can we help such a person? The spiritual hypochondriac is being afflicted by the devil to the point of losing faith completely in the Lord. Such a person is then lost, spiritually, because he or she can only be saved by faith. Praying for these people, and rebuking the devil in the name of Christ, is a first step we can take in helping them. However, we must have the Lord's leading in such cases, and we must be right with the Lord ourselves, as well as strengthened by His Spirit. Notice what Acts 19:13-16 tells us: "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." Another way of helping the spiritual hypochondriac is to encourage him or her with words of faith from the Scriptures whenever they speak words of doubt or discouragement.



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.

CONTINUE TO THINK ABOUT THIS

The following thoughts have been put forth in a previous Signs Of The Times. However, I believe that it is important to keep them in mind. These thoughts give a preview on why the world is now in such a mess.

Man now lives in an environment that is hugely different from that of just a few years ago, thanks to modern technology and globalization. Without a doubt, one of the largest contributing factors to this is the ability of people, individuals and groups alike, to instantly communicate with each other and have access to every conceivable type of information. For many, this ability is literally “in the palm of their hands.”

I heard that the number of mobile communication devices in the world now exceeds 7.5 billion. They say that this is nearly 3 percent greater than the world population, which is estimated presently at 7.3 billion. I understand that it is calculated that the number of mobile devices in use is increasing by more than ten per second, thus multiplying at a rate five times faster than the earth’s population. I understand that when the number of mobile phones first exceeded the world’s population, which was approximately a year ago, a prominent executive in the financial business noted that no other technology has impacted us like the mobile phone. He said that it is the fastest growing manmade phenomenon ever.

Many might think that such an explosion of communication in a relative short period, and the... seemingly unlimited information and knowledge, would result in greater progress toward the solving of the world’s many problems. However, it is clear that these developments have had an opposite effect. God, through

the prophet Daniel, foretold this when He told Daniel, “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (Daniel 12:4).

The “smallness” of our world today makes it imperative that the solutions to problems be global in nature. This is because nations and people in all the corners of the earth are impacted by events and troubles in all other parts of the earth. Many authorities go as far to claim that now our difficulties are so complex that the only real solution is a one-world government. However, now this is not feasible because of the existing fragmentation of the political, economic, religious, and social aspects of our world, and generally selfish motivations, have rendered this solution virtually impossible for now.

The world is being pulled in so many directions that it lacks stability and a firm objective. Many worldly people feel that the future is really uncertain. They “reel to and fro” because they do not know where man is heading. The Scriptures are very clear in their predictions of conditions in the earth today. God has known of the present conditions in the earth ages in advance, but He also has the solution.

DEMOCRACY IN MYANMAR?

There was an election in Myanmar last year. The following is an article taken from the Houston Chronicle.

Despite election loss, army
to retain clout in Myanmar
Sun Kyl’s opposition party must work
Within pro-military political structure
ASSOCIATED PRESS
Yangon, Myanmar

Myanmar's military-backed ruling party appeared set Tuesday for an overwhelming electoral defeat, but a victory by Aung San Sun Kyi's opposition National League for Democracy party would not mean the end of military involvement in the nation's politics. Far from it.

The military, which took power in a 1962 coup and brutally suppressed several pro-democracy uprisings during its rule, gave way to a nominally civilian-elected government in 2011 – with strings attached.

Aside from installing retired senior officers in its proxy political party to fill Cabinet posts, the army granted itself constitutional powers that enshrine its influence over the government no matter who is elected.

Right now, though, the focus is on the stunning, if not yet official, victory of Sun Kyi's party over the ruling Union Solidarity and Development Party in Sunday's elections.

In an interview Tuesday with the BBC, Sun kyie said her party expects to win 75 percent of the contested seats in the 644-member, two-chamber Parliament.

It staked its claim even though the government's Union Election Commission had announced results for only 88 lower house seats by Tuesday afternoon, with 78 going to the NLD and five going to the ruling party.

"The NLD's big victory is best seen as the first step of a negotiation that is going to play out in the coming weeks and months between the elected power of the NLD, and entrenched constitutionally guaranteed military power," said Phil Robertson, deputy director of the Asia division of New York-based Human Rights Watch.

When the former military junta oversaw the drafting of the 2008 constitution, he said, "they built a political structure that keeps Aung San Sun Kyi out of the presidency and locks in their influence and prerogatives – with things like 25 percent of the seats reserved for the military, the 75 percent approval bar to amend the constitution, no legislative scrutiny of military budgets, and ensuring only military men can lead the most powerful ministries, like defense, home affairs and border affairs."

"So even with the people behind her, Aung San Sun Kyi will face problems – because if she tries to force her way with the military, it will be like banging her head against the wall," Robertson said.

Comment

Under the conditions described in this article, there can be no democracy in Myanmar. In a genuine democracy, all officials are elected, and no seats can be

reserved for those with preconceived notions and who does not consider the will of the people.

Let us pray for all of those who live in oppressed countries.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE VISITED

It has been announced in the newspapers and in the news media that domestic violence is on the increase in the U.S. Just what constitutes domestic violence? When people think of domestic violence, they picture a battered woman (or sometimes a man) who has been physically abused. Just because a partner is not beaten up, battered or bruised does not mean he or she is not being abused. Several men and women may suffer from what is called emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is often minimized or overlooked even by the one who is being abused.

Abusers may use a variety of tactics. An abuser may need to feel that he or she is in charge of the relationship. He or she may make all the decisions for the family, and tell you what to do, and expect you to obey without question.

An abuser may use humiliation and make you to feel bad about yourself or defective in some way. This erodes your self-esteem.

In order to increase your dependence, he or she may cut you off from the outside world. The abuser might even keep you from seeing family or friends.

An emotional abuser may not actually be aware that he or she is an emotional abuser. He or she may give the excuse that he or she had a bad day at work or at home. Then the person may take it out on the partner.

God is not pleased with those who display domestic violence and/or emotional abuse. One cannot be a child of God by doing these things!

YEMEN CYCLONE

Last year there was a rare tropical cyclone called Chapala which caused heavy flooding in southern Yemen.

This country was already hurting. The lack of available food, fuel and medical supplies had reached alarming levels months before the cyclone. There was a virtual blockade of the country imposed by a coalition of mostly Arab countries led by Saudi Arabia.

The doctor who heads the Yemen operations for Doctors Without Borders said that the whole country was in dire need of medicine and medical supplies.

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: We know that Mary was the mother of Jesus. In what ways was Mary's life an example for us today?

ANSWER: 1. Every believer should have a faith similar to Mary's. Each day let us pray, "...Behold the {servant} of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).

2. Mary valued her commitment to God far above others' opinions. Rather than hesitate to accept the angel's commission because of what others might think, she chose God's will. It is not what people think of us that counts but God's assessment.

3. Mary did not understand fully the import of Jesus' teachings. She had been visited by an angel telling her to name her son Jesus. She had also been told that the Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God" (see Luke 1:35). We should not be surprised if we don't understand the plan God has for us.

4. Mary's life reveals wisdom. Mary remembered the wise men's words and "...pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19). After finding the boy Jesus in the temple debating with the elders, Mary "...kept all these sayings in her heart" (verse 51). There are special incidents that we may not fully understand. Like Mary, we should store them in our hearts until God provides further insights.

5. Mary kept herself sexually pure. Before marriage, in fact until after the birth of Jesus, Mary had no sexual

relations with her husband. She continued to be a faithful wife to Joseph. God's best for every man and woman is to live a sexually pure life.

QUESTION: In what book of the Bible can I find a prophecy which tells of a time coming when the nations will actually disarm, and when they will learn war no more?

ANSWER: The answer to your question is the book called Micah. "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it" (Micah 4:1-4).

QUESTION: Is the Sabbath still a requirement for the people of God? If it is, why must it be observed?

ANSWER: God set the seventh day (Saturday) as a day of rest from the very beginning (see Genesis 2:2-3) The

Sabbath is a special day for God and His people forever. It is a blessed and holy day set aside for rest and worship.

Sabbath observance is an important part of the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 20:8-11). This fourth commandment is one of the most significant of all commandments, explained in greater detail than most of the other commandments.

The commandment to observe the Sabbath day is still in effect just as the other commandments of God are (see Matthew 5:17-19).

The Bible says the command to observe the Sabbath day is a “perpetual covenant” (Exodus 31:16). Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary defines perpetual as “continuing forever; everlasting, unceasing, eternal.” The requirement to observe the Sabbath did not end with the Old Testament. The requirement to observe the Sabbath as a holy day of rest and worship is still in effect.

God promises a special blessing for His people if they observe the Sabbath. We are missing God’s blessing if we are not observing His holy Sabbath. Return to God’s Sabbath, and you will experience His favor and success in His ways.

The Bible very emphatically states in several places that the Sabbath is a day of rest. It is a time for God’s people to cease from their labor; to take a break; to be still before God; to rest and wait on Him in a special way. See Exodus 20:9-10; Exodus 31:15; Leviticus 16:31; Jeremiah 17:21-24.

The Sabbath should not be a day of worldly pleasure. It is a day to worship God. Sabbath observance is a distinguishing mark of God’s people. It is a sign between God and His people indicating our special relationship to Him (Exodus 31:17).

Those who observe the Sabbath show they are a special, holy and sanctified people, set aside for God. They enter into God’s REST. “For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people

of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his” (Hebrews 4:4-10).

God clearly and definitely tells us in His Word to observe the Sabbath on the seventh day – Saturday (not Sunday). “But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God...” (Exodus 20:10).

The practice of observing the Sabbath on Sunday has no Scriptural basis. It is not from God. Religious Sunday observance is a pagan practice which had its beginning in Babylon. Sunday was called “The day of the sun” – “Dies Solis.” The worship of God on Sunday was incorporated into the Roman Church by Constantine around 321 A.D. through the “Edict of Constantine.” This was done to appease the pagan element in the official Roman State Church. It is a pagan practice from heathen Babylon implemented by a man and not by God. Apostate Christianity has distorted God’s ways by changing the Sabbath from the seventh day to Sunday.

Some people say that we should rest and worship God on Sunday instead of Saturday because Christ was resurrected on Sunday. But this reveals another error. The Bible tells us that Jesus was resurrected on the Sabbath (seventh day), not on Sunday. Please read Matthew 28:1-8.

Jesus kept the Sabbath. Jesus disregarded and even purposely broke the superficial, religious and legalistic observance of manmade rules regarding the Sabbath as practiced by the scribes and Pharisees, but He observed God’s holy day of rest and worship in spirit and truth. Jesus and His disciples observed the Sabbath day on the seventh day. Please see Luke 23:56.

Some might say that the Sabbath law and practice has been cancelled in the New Testament because we are now living under grace instead of law. However, the moral laws of God are still in effect (see Matthew 5:17-20). Jesus and His disciples, including the Apostle Paul, observed the Sabbath. No place in the New Testament is there one word to indicate the command to observe the Sabbath has been revoked. The Sabbath should continue to be an important part of our life and testimony.

Look up for yourself all the Bible references on the Sabbath using the internet or a complete Bible concordance. Read what the Bible says on this important subject and follow its clear and unchanging instructions instead of the distortions of manmade religion.



India, Part 2

A testimonial being given by some of the brethren in a church service in India.





An open air church service being attended by some of our brothers and sisters in India.



LESSON I

HONESTY

Scripture Reading: Acts 4:32-37; 5:1-11.

Golden Text: Acts 5:4 (last part).

Golden Text: "...why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

1. What do we find the believers doing in Acts 4:32-35?
2. Name three things we learn about Barnabas. Acts 4:36-37.
3. What husband and wife sold their possession, kept part back, and laid the rest at the apostles' feet? Acts 5:1-2.
4. What did Peter say Ananias had done, and to whom did he do it? Acts 5:3-4.
5. What happened to Ananias after he heard the word of Peter? Acts 5:5.
6. How much time passed before Sapphira came to Peter? Acts 5:7.
7. What did Peter then ask Sapphira, and what was her reply? Acts 5:8.
8. What was Peter's reply, and what then happened to Sapphira? Acts 5:9-10.
9. How did the people react when they heard what had happened to Ananias and Sapphira? Acts 5:11.

LESSON II

SIMON THE SORCERER

Scripture Reading: Acts 8:9-25.

Golden Text: Acts 8:17.

"Then laid they their hands on them, and they received

the Holy Ghost."

1. Who was Simon? Acts 8:9.

NOTE: Sorcery is another name for magic.

2. How did the people of Samaria feel about Simon? Acts 8:10-11.
3. What happened to change the views of the people? Acts 8:12.
4. What did Simon do in Acts 8:13?
5. Who was sent to Samaria? Acts 8:14.
6. For what did Peter and John pray? Acts 8:15-17.
7. When Simon saw what happened after the laying on of hands, what did he offer Peter and John? Why? Acts 8:18-19.
8. What did Peter tell Simon to do? Acts 8:20-23.
9. What did Simon then ask Peter to do? Acts 8:24.

LESSON III

SAUL SEES A LIGHT

Scripture Reading: Acts 9:1-9.

Golden Text: Acts 9:6 (first part).

"And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?..."

1. What did Saul start out to do? Acts 9:1-2.

NOTE: Saul was sincere in his attack against God's people. Though wrong, he believed these people were God's enemies.

2. What did Saul see as he journeyed towards Damascus? Acts 9:3.

3. As he fell to the earth, what did he hear? Acts 9:4.
4. What did Saul say to Jesus? Acts 9:5.
5. What did Jesus then tell him to do? Acts 9:6.
6. Why did the men with Saul have to lead him, and what was his condition during the first three days? Acts 9:8-9.



A PRAYER

I need Jesus in the morning
 So I'll start the day aright;
 I need Jesus as my Helper,
 Till I go to bed at night.
 Helping me, helping me
 Not to do wrong;
 Jesus is helping me
 All the day long.

TENS

1. What name is given to the calamities that overtook a nation which persecuted the Hebrews? Exodus 10
2. What group of maidens went to meet a bridegroom? Matthew 25:1-14
3. What famous laws were given to Moses on Mount Sinai? Exodus 20
4. What ten men were cured of a vile disease by Jesus at the entrance to a certain village? Luke 17:12
5. Jacob had twelve sons, but he only sent ten down to Egypt to buy corn. Where were the other two? Genesis 45:4
6. Who pleaded with God to save a city if "even ten righteous" should be found there? Genesis 18:32
7. What man said to his wife, who wanted a child: "Am I not better to thee than ten sons"? I Samuel 1:8
8. In what parable is one man told to give his money "unto him which hath ten _____"? Matthew 25:28
9. What man complained that his wages had been changed ten times? Genesis 31:7
10. Who begged to be allowed to eat pulse and drink water for ten days instead of the wine and meat which King Nebuchadnezzar ordered? Daniel 1:3-21.

LESSON IV

SAUL AT DAMASCUS

Scripture Reading: Acts 9:10-19.

Golden Text: Acts 9:16.

“For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.”

1. What was the name of the disciple at Damascus to whom the Lord spoke in a vision? Acts 9:10.
2. What kind of man was this disciple? Acts 22:12.
3. What did the Lord tell Ananias to do in Acts 9:11-12?
4. What reports had Ananias heard of Paul? Acts 9:13-14.
5. What did the Lord say about Saul to make Ananias change his mind? Acts 9:15-16.
6. Name the two things that were to happen as a result of Ananias' visit? Acts 9:17.
7. What immediately happened to Saul when Ananias put his hands on him, and what did Saul then do? Acts 9:18-19.

NOTE: We will now refer to Saul as Paul (see Acts 13:9). Paul was three days without his sight. Perhaps it was necessary for Paul to lose his sight in order that he could “see” more clearly.



A KIND UNCLE

Lot was a man who had many sheep and goats and many servants to take care of all his animals. He lived near his uncle, who also had many sheep and goats and many servants to take care of them. You have already heard about his kind uncle whose name was Abraham. Abraham and Lot needed many fields of green grass to feed all their animals.

One day their servants began to quarrel. "Take your sheep to another field," one servant would growl. "We came to this place first."

"I will not," said the other servant. "This land is as much ours as it is yours."

The quarreling grew worse and worse, because, you see, there really wasn't enough grass for all the animals of both men in that same place.

Finally, Abraham heard how the servants were fighting among themselves. "This is not right," he said. He went to talk to Lot. "We do not want our servants quarreling," he said in his kind way. "And we belong to the same family. We should love each other."

"You are right," said Lot. "But what can we do about it?"



The two men walked to the top of a nearby hill. They could see far, far in that direction, and far, far in this direction. That way they could see a river with green, thick grass growing all around it. The other way they could see hills where the grass was not so green nor so thick. "See," said Abraham, "here is the whole land before us. We must move farther apart. If you want to go one way, then I will go the other. You may choose."

Lot did not say, "Oh, no, Uncle, you are older. God said this land was to be yours. You choose first." Lot did not think what was the kind thing to do. He looked back at the hills. The grass there did not look so green nor so thick. He looked down at the river where the thick green grass was growing all around. "I will take all the land by the river," said the selfish Lot.

Some of us would have said, "Oh, Lot, that is all the best for yourself! Let me have some of the good land." But Abraham did not say that. He was willing to let Lot have the best land. He wanted to be as kind as he could be. So he took his animals and his servants and his tents and lived among the hills, while Lot went down to live by the river. With which man do you think God was more pleased? Which man do you think was happier? see Genesis 13:2-13.

THE SECRET

I met God in the garden
 When the day was at its best,
 And His presence came like sunrise,
 And a glory filled my breast.
 All day long He stayed with me,
 And we sailed in perfect calmness
 O'er a very troubled sea.
 So I think I know the secret,
 Learned from many a troubled way--
 You must seek Him in the morning,
 If you want Him through the day.

-Ralph Cushman

*What is the missing letter in each sentence?
When you have found them all, put them in the
numbered spaces below.
It is a word Paul often used.*

1. Paul taught that we must _ elieve.
2. Should _ ll try to be more like Jesus every day.
3. Paul had great faith becuase he _ rayed every day.
4. The idol worshipers went to the _ emple of Diana.
5. We must not worship _ dols.
6. God wants us to _ erve Him.
7. Paul was the first _ issionary.

IMPORTANT WORD -----

APPLE - CROSSWORD PUZZLE

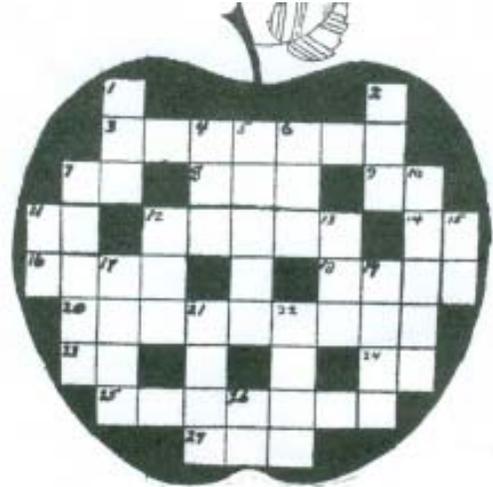
ACROSS-

3. Hagar's son, Genesis 16:11
7. The same as no. 11 down
8. A paddle for rowing
9. The 6th note of the diatonic scale
11. Abbreviation for "Anno Domini"
12. A town mentioned in Nehemiah 7:38
14. The subdominant of any major music scale
16. The name which Naomi accepted, Ruth 1:20
18. A Philistine city, I Samuel 17:4
20. An identifying name given Mary, Matthew 28:1
23. A prefix meaning the "before" or "in"
24. The first two letters of present indic. pl. of BE
25. The title for the king of Egypt, Exodus 2:5
27. The first three letters of the son of Shema, I Chronicles 2:44

DOWN -

1. A purpose
2. An English measure of 45 inches

4. A garden tool
5. Israel subsisted upon it for 40 years
6. One of Jether's sons, I Chronicles 7:38
7. A place on the border of Naphtali, Joshua 19:33
10. Coming along behind, Matthew 4:19
11. God is the great I _ _ _ _ , Exodus 3:14
12. To sink down
15. An exclamation



NATURE'S MELODY

How happy we should be that we can see and hear and feel and taste and smell. Today, we have a poem that was written by a blind man, Dr. Kallenbach, who was killed in an accident, November 16, 1946, before his poem was published.

*I cannot view the bloom upon the rose,
But oh, the scent is very dear to me,
And I can feel the cooling breeze that blows
Through pearl-tipped peaks of hills I cannot see.
I cannot see the wild birds on the wing,
But I can hear the swallows in the caves;
I hear the song that nature has to sing;
The gentle music of the rustling leaves.
I cannot see the children going by,
But I can hear their laughter as they pass;
I cannot see the sunset in the sky,
But I can feel the swaying of the grass.
I cannot see the moonlight on the sea,
But I can hear the waves beat on the shore;
I feast upon all nature's melody,
And thank my God and do not ask for more.*

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ONLY THOSE NAMES GIVEN

by Gloria Ygay

*Only those names given by the Father
To His begotten Son Jesus Christ
Shall have a part of His Kingdom to come
To be called sons and daughters of God.*

*Only those names given, it is written,
Blessed and called to be saints;
Little flock Jesus is feeding,
His protecting angels are watching.*

*Thank you dear, heavenly Father,
I am one of those chosen;
I was a sinner, ransomed and forgiven,
What a wonderful love, what a wonderful God!*

*Little flock, pleased of the Father above,
Only the name given, Church of God;
Gathered by Jesus, purchased by His blood,
Only that name given.*

*I was a sinner, ransomed and forgiven,
What a wonderful love, what a wonderful God;
Only the name given, Church of God.*

