

The Advocate of Truth

*The I Am's
of The
Apostle Paul*

*God's
Covenant*

*The Reign
of Christ*

As the deer pants for the cool spring water, so pant I after Thy TRUTH.



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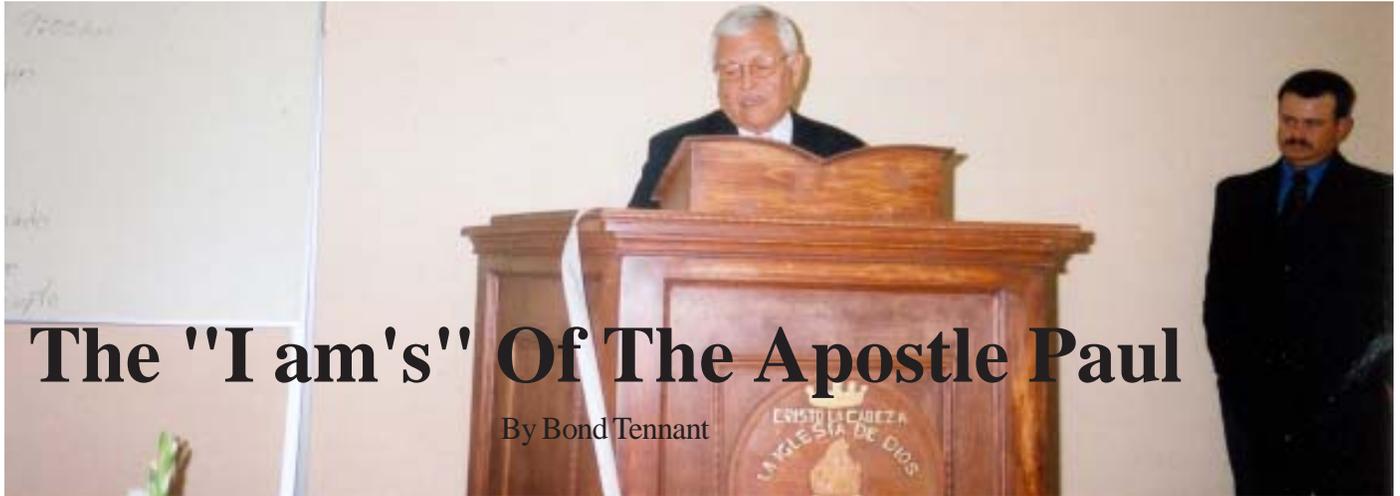
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The "I am's" Of The Apostle Paul

By Bond Tennant

The "I am's" of the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans give us glimpses into the workings of his inner being. They are, as it were, a spiritual biography.

I AM CARNAL. "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:14).

Being carnal (fleshly, sensual), he was sold under sin. He realized that the law was spiritual and dealt with his spirit rather than with his actions.

His spirit being carnal, he could not fulfill a spiritual law. So he was sold. He found himself enslaved to sin, a helpless enemy to the righteous will of God.

Such is our state by nature.

I AM WRETCHED. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24).

When by the light of God's Word we discover our true state in His sight, it is enough to make us the most wretched creatures on earth.

It is only when we do become wretched that we cry out, "Who shall deliver me?"

I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

This is said by the one who has experienced the saving power of God as revealed in the gospel of Christ. "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:57).

The salvation from God through Christ is both a victory and a transformation. "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 accept-

able, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:2).

The victory and transformation means that we are delivered from the power of Satan and from the love of sin.

I AM DEBTOR BOTH TO THE GREEKS, AND TO THE BARBARIANS. "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise" (Romans 1:14).

Now that Paul had received salvation through the grace of God, he became a debtor to the unsaved, whether they were Greeks or barbarians, wise or unwise.

Every child of God is a steward of the manifold grace of God. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (I Peter 4:10).

Have we paid our debt to those who know not Christ by giving them the gospel, or, like unfaithful stewards, are we selfishly using our Master's goods?

I AM READY TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO YOU AT ROME ALSO. "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Roman also" (Romans 1:15).

Paul was prepared to pay this debt, even to the Romans, and that at any cost. Rome was the "graveyard of ministers."

This should be the constant attitude of the heart toward the God of our salvation.

We should be ready for whatever the King may appoint. Like soldiers, we should be always and entirely at the disposal of Him who has chosen us.

The way to be ready for great things is to be always

ready for the little things!

I AM PERSUADED THAT NEITHER DEATH NOR LIFE... "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

Here the apostle unveils to us in his deep, unalterable conviction concerning the unchanging love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. This is a prime necessity for the joy and comfort of a child of God.

Let us be always ready to please God, and we will all the more readily be persuaded of the inseparable and abiding love of God," ...for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Timothy 1:12).

I AM THE APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES. "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office" (Romans 11:13).

He received his work from the Lord, and he knew it!

What are you and I? Do we know what definite work the Lord has committed to us?

Let us pray, "...Lord, what wilt thou have me to do...?" (Acts 9:6)

I AM SURE THAT, WHEN I COME UNTO YOU... "...I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:29).

It is a great blessing to be assured that when we go in God's name, we go in God's power and in the fullness of Christ.

Although Paul went to Rome in chains, he nevertheless went in the fullness of the blessing.

Nothing can hinder our usefulness as children of God but sin. This blessed assurance ought to characterize every minister of the gospel.

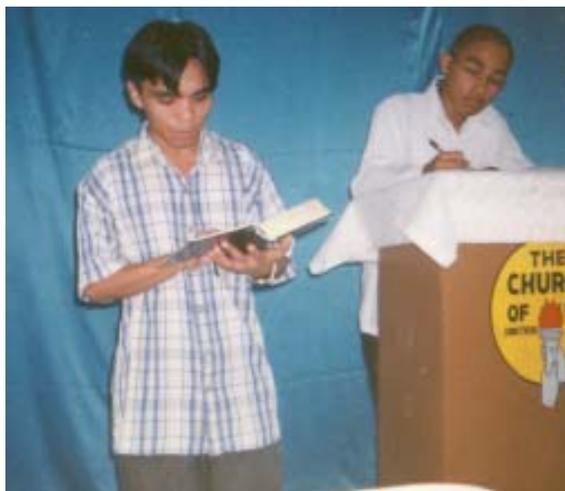
I AM GLAD ON YOUR BEHALF... "For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil" (Romans 16:19).

This gladness sprang up in the heart of the apostle because of the obedience of others to the truth of God.

The closeness of our fellowship with Christ may be tested by the depth and intensity of our sadness, or gladness, at the disobedience, or obedience, of others to the call of God.

Jesus said, "...I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe..." (John 11:15).

What kind of spiritual autobiography would we write?



God's Covenant

By David DeLong

A covenant is a solemn, binding agreement between two parties, whereby each party pledges to fulfill certain requirements (including the keeping of promises or laws), and each receives certain benefits. There may also be witnesses to the making of the covenant. Also, there are at least several aspects of covenant observance which are

given in the Bible which include: that of cutting; that of a shared meal; and that of salt. We will examine each of these aspects shortly.

A covenant is all about a relationship between the parties involved, and this is of utmost importance to God. Therefore, this relationship is sometimes referred to as

"covenant relationship." The Lord has been involved, in some way, in a covenant relationship with mankind since the latter's creation. However, this covenant has had various conditions placed upon it according to the times and the situations involved. The Lord refers to this covenant, in a number of places in Scripture, as "my covenant".

Someone may be asking at this point, "Didn't the Lord make at least *two* covenants that we read about in the Bible--the Old Covenant with Israel, and the New Covenant with Christians?" There is some truth to this question, especially because we have the Bible divided up into the Old Testament, and the New Testament. But, I believe there is much more involved in the answer to this question. Let's examine why.

God's covenant with man seems always to have been based upon the keeping of His holy law, the Ten Commandments. We know that the Ten Commandments were not given as the *official law code* until they were written by the finger of God at Mount Sinai. However, these ten laws, as principles, appear to be in force even from the creation of Adam and Eve. Notice what Romans 5, verses 12 and 13 tell us. "Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law."

Even though God's law was not officially given, as we said, until Sinai, when that law was written on tables of stone, its decrees were meant, for all time--past, present, and future--to emphasize the severity of sin. We read in Romans 7:12,13: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."

Concerning Adam, we are told: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16,17). Within this command, there are implications of at least several of the Ten Commandments. For instance, if Adam and Eve had obeyed God, they would have been putting Him first, and thus they would have had "...no other gods

before me" (Exodus 20:3). They also would have obeyed the principle to "Honour thy father..." (vs. 12). Likewise, they would have obeyed the principle of "Thou shalt not kill" ("murder", vs. 13). When our first parents neglected to heed God's warning of: "...for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die", they not only brought the death sentence upon themselves, but also upon the whole human race. Thus they, in effect, killed themselves and others. Other principles of the Ten Commandments may be contained within God's original command, too, but these three examples are enough for us to see the point.

Right from the start, then, we can see God's covenant with Adam and Eve. If they would be obedient unto their Father's command, they would receive the benefit of eternal life, and they would be able to have an unbroken fellowship with Him. However, they broke that covenant.

I believe, thankfully, that the Lord restored His covenant relationship with these disobedient ones because we read, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21). This apparently shows to us that the Lord used the covenant aspect of "*cutting*", since He applied the "coats of skins", from an animal or animals, to clothe them. This act may also symbolize the righteousness that God would impute to all His children through the blood of Christ. Certainly, we can see the prophetic provision that God would fulfill in sending Christ to gain the victory over Satan in Genesis 3:15. Here we are told, "And I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Furthermore, we are told in I Corinthians 15:22, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

After "...righteous Abel..." (Matthew 23:35) was murdered by his brother Cain, God's covenant relationship was continued through the line of Adam and Eve's son Seth. This, presumably, was because Seth's line contained godly persons. For instance, in Genesis 4:26 we find, "And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD." Also, within the line of Seth we see such godly men as Enoch (vss. 21-24), and Noah.

The Lord then established His covenant with Noah. We see this in the words of Genesis 6:18: "But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark,

thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee." This was because, "...Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (vs.8). Hebrews 11:7 informs us, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

Later, the Lord established His covenant with Abram (Abraham). It was a custom, in biblical times, for a person to cut a sacrificial animal (or animals) into halves. In making a covenant with the Lord, the person would then pass between these sections of the sacrifice (see Jeremiah 34:18,19). Thus, we see a similar situation with Abraham when the Lord made a covenant with him, except for one major difference.

We read about this situation in Genesis 15: 9,10,17,18. "And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not...And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

The major difference, as we mentioned above, seems to be that the Father in heaven, and His Son, are the Persons who passed between the pieces. The "smoking furnace" could well represent God, who "...is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29). The "burning lamp" could represent Jesus, who is "...come a light into the world..." (John 12:46). It would appear, then, that God and Jesus both entered into this covenant made with Abraham, which, by the way, also involved the covenant aspect of cutting. (The Lord expanded upon His covenant with Abraham in Genesis 17:1-14, adding an additional aspect of cutting, that of circumcision.)

In Genesis 18:1 and 2, we read: "And the LORD appeared unto him (Abraham) in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground."

Two of these men were apparently the two angels which came to visit Lot in the city of Sodom (compare 18:22 and 19:1). The third man was apparently a theophany of the Lord Jesus who appeared to Abraham under His Father's name, the LORD (YHWH). These three men then ate a meal that Abraham provided for them in chapter 18:3-8. This, therefore, may be to be the "meal" aspect of the covenant that the Lord entered into with Abraham.

After the meal, the Lord then spoke of this covenant and Abraham's faithful obedience which partly made the covenant possible. "And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (vss. 17-19).

The Lord had declared that He would also establish His covenant with Abraham's son, Isaac (see 17:21). Later still, God established His covenant with Isaac's son, Jacob (see Genesis 28:13,14). In a physical sense, this covenant involved the inheriting of the land of Canaan (see Psalm 105:6-11). But in a spiritual sense, this covenant was through Christ, and it involved salvation and other blessings (see Galatians 3:16-29). At this point, also, the Lord's covenant seems to divide into two courses, each course going through one of Jacob's sons: Levi and Judah. These two courses seem to correspond with what is termed the Old Covenant, and the New Covenant. Let us first follow the course of the covenant through Jacob's son, Levi.

In Exodus 2:1 and 2, we read: "And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months." This child, of course, was Moses (see vs. 10). He had a brother named Aaron.

Verses 11-22 relate the story of Moses, as a grown man, identifying himself with his brethren, the children of Israel, who were in bondage to the Egyptians. In verses 23 and 24 we find: "And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and

their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob."

Later, God spoke to Moses about this covenant, which had both a physical aspect to it as well as a spiritual one. We find the story in Exodus 6:2-7. "And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."

After the Lord, through the leadership of Moses, had delivered the children of Israel from the Egyptian bondage, He brought them to Mount Sinai. Then, He gave them instructions about His covenant with them. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine" (Exodus 19:5). In the next verse, we read about God's intention to make the nation of Israel "...a kingdom of priests..." However, the people sinned in making a golden calf (see 32:1-6). The Levites chose to be faithful to the Lord, and even executed judgment upon their sinful brethren (see vss. 26-28).

The Lord later chose the tribe of Levi to minister before Him as assistants to Aaron and his sons in the Levitical priesthood (see Numbers 3:5-16; 8:5-20). From this time forth, until the death of Jesus, this covenant would be associated with the Levitical priesthood. This involved the shedding of designated animal blood. Concerning Moses we read: "And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And

Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words" (Exodus 24:7,8; see also Hebrews 9:18-22). In this, we can see the covenant aspect of cutting. (The Israelites also shared in a sacred meal when they partook of the Passover. See Numbers 9:1-3).

The Ten Commandments, written by the finger of God on Mount Sinai, were the basis for this covenant. Before the Israelites received their inheritance of land, Moses spoke unto them about God's care and provisions for them in the wilderness. When he reminded the people of God's covenant with them, we read in Deuteronomy 4:13, "And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone." (See also Exodus 34:10,28). These two tables of stone were placed in the ark of the testimony (or covenant--see Deuteronomy 10:1-5; Exodus 25:22; Hebrews 9:4; Revelation 11:19).

Many people believe that this covenant was between God and the children of Israel only. Therefore, they believe that the Ten Commandments were only for Israel. Nothing could be further from the truth. Actually, Israel was mankind's *representative* for receiving this law from the hand of God. Please notice carefully what Romans 3 says about the subject. Verses 9-18 refer to various sins that people commit, including lying, cursing, shedding blood, etc. In other words, these sins involve the breaking of God's Ten Commandment law. Now, let us see what verse 19 says. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." This verse implies that everyone in the world has broken God's holy law, which is His standard of righteousness, and the basis for His covenant.

That the the non-Israelite (stranger) could be a part of this covenant is referred to in Isaiah 56:6,7. "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be

called an house of prayer for all people."

However, only the Lord Jesus, who was also mankind's representative, obeyed this covenant law perfectly. This brings us to the course of the covenant through Jacob's son, Judah. In a prophecy relating to Christ, we find in Genesis 49:10, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Christ, as future King and Lawgiver, came through the line of Judah (see Hebrews 7:14). In fact, He came through the line of David, who also was of the tribe of Judah. Concerning a prophecy about David (and also about Christ), we read: "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah" (Psalm 89:34-37).

A question may now come to mind. Why, apparently, was the covenant divided between these two lines, that of Levi and that of Judah? I believe we can get an answer to that question by turning to the book of Hebrews, chapter 8. In verses 7-9 we read: "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord."

These verses imply that the first covenant (that through the Levitical system) was not "faultless". However, the covenant, itself, was *not* the problem. Notice carefully the first part of verse 8 which says, "For finding fault with them..." In other words, it was the people who did not live up to the standard of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. Also, notice the last part of verse 9, "...because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord." The complete fault was with the people, not with the covenant. But let us not judge the Israelites for breaking God's covenant, because none of us have kept it perfectly, either. Please remember that the children of Israel received God's law as mankind's repre-

sentative (see Romans 3:9-19,20).

At least two things were needed so that people could be renewed to God's covenant. First, a Champion had to come forth, as mankind's representative, to fulfill the conditions of the covenant. This Champion, of course, was the Lord Jesus Christ. He said in Matthew 5:17,19: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill...Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." The Lord Jesus kept God's law and He admonished others to do so as well. Later, He died for our sins so that we could escape the "death penalty" for having disobeyed God's law.

The second thing that was needed to renew people to God's covenant was a new mind and heart in them so that they could obey His law. Hebrews 8:10 says, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." (Please see also Jeremiah 31:31-33).

The covenant through Levi failed, not because of the covenant, itself, but because the people failed in keeping that covenant. The covenant through Judah (in essence the Abrahamic covenant--see Galatians 3:17,18), was a success because Christ kept God's law perfectly. He creates new minds and new hearts in His followers so that they can also keep God's law. (These two covenants are described in Galatians 4:22-31). In short, it appears that the "old" covenant was (and still is?) man's failed attempt to keep God's law, versus the "new" covenant, which was Christ's success in keeping that law, and imputing His righteousness to His believers (see Romans 4:5-8). This imputed righteousness was made effective through His "...blood of the new testament..." (Matthew 26:28).

We enter into the New Covenant, which Christ has provided for us, by receiving Him as our Lord, and applying His sacrificial blood to our lives by repenting of our sins and being baptized in His name. (See John 1:12; Romans 10:8-13; Acts 2:38; 22:16). We continue in that covenant by living according to His words and example, including the Ten Commandments. (See John 12:46-50;

I John 2: 3-6). The entering into God's covenant, then, is through the covenant aspect of cutting--Christ's shed blood for us, and, symbolically, through our repentance of sin which is "...circumcision...of the heart..." (Romans 3:29). We renew that covenant each year by partaking of the Lord's Supper, which is the covenant aspect of sharing a meal with our Lord and our brethren.

Oh, and let's not forget the covenant aspect of "salt" (Numbers 18:19). Believers are now "...the salt of the earth..." (Matthew 5:13). They must try to persuade others to enter God's covenant. Let's try our best, for the Lord's wish is to, "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice" (Psalm 50:5).



Many opinions are prevalent among the religious followers of Christ as to the nature of His reign. Some teach that He shall never rule upon this earth. Others teach that He shall come for His saints, take them to heaven, and then, after an interval of 1,000 years, come back to the earth to reign with His people. Others teach that Christ is now reigning, and that His rule is, and shall continue to be purely spiritual. As all cannot be right, for they differ one from the other, we turn to the Scriptures for the answer, knowing that the Holy Spirit has caused the truth on this subject to be recorded by the holy men of God in the pages of His divine Word.

In the second chapter of Daniel, the history of the world is outlined in that wonderful prophecy from the day of Daniel unto the age of eternity. One who desires to know the course of the nations can be enlightened from this blessed prophecy.

In this chapter, a vision of a great metallic image is brought to view which, it is explained, portrays in advance the coming earthly kingdoms having worldwide dominion. Beginning with the then existing kingdom of Babylon, it is shown that four kingdoms shall have dominion, followed by an extended division of the fourth into ten subkingdoms of an inferior quality. As far as pertains to earthly dominions and the rulership of many, this is the end. How-

ever, as we continue to read of the vision, and the explanation therefore, we are given to understand that, while these ten kingdoms are still in existence, the God of heaven shall set up another kingdom, which shall take the place of the ten, and shall begin to grow at that time, and continue to increase until it fills the whole earth. That this kingdom is surely coming even as the Lord has caused it to be recorded, we cannot doubt, inasmuch as we know by history that the four earthly kingdoms have come. This kingdom shall be called the kingdom of God, for it has been written likewise by the infallible Spirit of God.

That there is no interval of 1,000 years following the destruction of these kingdoms of this world before the kingdom of God begins to function here on earth, we may readily perceive as we take heed to that which is recorded in this chapter, which reads: "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Daniel 2:34-35).

That this part of the vision symbolized the destruction

of the earthly ruling kingdoms by the kingdom of God, which in turn shall increase until it is world wide in extent, we really understand from the explanation which was given by the Lord unto Daniel, who declared: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (verse 44).

Just as the coming kingdom, which shall be set up by God shall destroy the now existing earthly kingdoms, so does the vision foretell that the kingdom of God shall cover the territory over which they have dominion. That means it shall cover the whole earth. This transfer of dominion from the earthly kingdoms to that of God is foretold also in the Revelation, where it is recorded: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

God through His Son, the Lord Jesus, shall rule throughout the earth, even as it was foretold of Him by the prophet, saying: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:6-7).

At the annunciation by the angel Gabriel unto the virgin Mary: "...for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:30-33).

Can words be more explicit than these, which declare that Jesus shall sit upon David's throne? David's throne was not in heaven, but upon earth. Of that day, when Christ shall sit upon David's throne, it is written: "And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one" (Zechariah 14:9). Please read this entire chapter to better

understand this subject.

Concerning that wonderful and blessed rule of Christ over the peoples of this earth, it is written: "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment" (Isaiah 32:1). This clearly sets forth the joint reign of the saints of Christ with Him in His glorious rule on His father David's throne, which was spoken of by Jesus Himself in these words unto His faithful apostles: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28).

This age of regeneration, or restitution (Acts 3:21), is that spoken of as the millennium, or the thousand year reign of Christ and the saints, and brought to view in the 20th chapter of Revelation, in these words: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years...Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4 and 6).

Plainly this sets forth that this rule shall be at a time when there shall be thrones for those saints to reign upon with Christ, and work for which the true priests of God shall serve, and that it is here upon earth we cannot doubt when we read these words concerning the kings and priests of Christ: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou (speaking of Christ, the Lamb of God) art worthy...for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10).

That this reign cannot be a spiritual one, nor can it be interpreted as meaning the saints shall rule in heaven, we also understand from the prophecy by Daniel in which the Lord has declared: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven,

shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions (there shall be but one dominion after the thousand year reign of Christ) shall serve and obey him" (Daniel 7:27).

Just as Christ shall be Lord over all the earth during that wonderful restitution age, so shall the saints reign with Him, having rule over the nations which are upon the earth. These words make the precious promise up to the overcomer in this life: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Revelation 2:26-27).

Just as we overcome, remaining faithful unto God, using our talent, as He has given unto us, so shall we have a part in that blessed reign according to His promise. We shall reap as we have sown. The servant who by wise and diligent service, has gained the Master ten talents, or ten pounds, He shall reward accordingly, saying unto such a one: "...Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities" (Luke 19:17).

Not one of God's precious promises shall fail! Not one of the saints shall miss his reward. According to our faithfulness, and qualifications, so shall be the reward. He that is faithful in a little shall receive of the joys of the Lord there in that soon coming kingdom.

Adapted from an old tract



BAPTISM AND THE CUP OF THE LORD

By Moises Torres M.

"...Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?..." (Matthew 20:22).

We know that our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist when He was about 30 years old. Read Luke 3:21-23. But later He declared, "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50).

Did our Lord mean to say that he would be baptized in water again? No, of course not. He was not to be immersed in water again. He was announcing another kind of baptism that must continue until His death.

Later, when the mother of the sons of Zebedee asked Him if her two sons may sit, one on His right hand, and

the other on His left in His kingdom, the Lord said: "...Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?..." (Matthew 20:22). In His response, the Lord was referring to the magnitude involved in this other baptism, even the giving of His life for mankind. It is the same for us today. We must understand that our baptism in water is only the beginning, or the entrance to a baptism that must continue until the last of our days.

John the Baptist said of Jesus: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11). When we come forth from the water, we receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands

by the presbytery. Then begins our baptism of Spirit and fire which we endure every day of our lives.

The Lord suffered many trials and temptations, and He said: "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?" (Luke 12:49). Our Lord Jesus was submitted to this baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire. To us, He not only gave us the example of baptism in water but also of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire, exemplifying it every day of His life until His death.

In our baptism in water, we're immersed in it only a few seconds. In our baptism of the Holy Spirit, we are covered by the Holy Spirit of God every day, so consequently we are baptized, or immersed in it every day. Our Lord culminated His baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire

with His death. One of our hymns says: "THE BITTER CUP HE DRANK." His disciples would drink of the same cup as well, and would be baptized with the same baptism (Matthew 20:23).

After more than 2,000 years since the early church began, we also as disciples of the same Lord Jesus Christ must be sure that we are covered or immersed by the protection of the Holy Spirit, drinking of the same cup of sacrifice and having the same baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9).

SOME OF THE RESULTS FOR INTERFERRING WITH GOD'S PROPHETIC PLAN

Dell Stout

We are told in Revelation 22:18-19 that any one adding to God's prophetic plan ("these things") that God would add unto him of the plagues written in the Book, and that any one that takes away would be taken from the book of life. These are very fearsome and awe-inspiring words. They are words that are not to be taken lightly. However, it seems as if the United States of America (here-in-after referred to as USA has done precisely that.

In Genesis 15:18; 17:6-7; 28:13-15; Psalm 89:34; Jeremiah 23:3; Ezekiel 12:14 God set up his covenant with Abram (Abraham), Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants and promised to bring them back from where He scattered them into the land of Israel that He gave them in the covenant. Thus the current day Israelites have a God-given deed to the land they live on since they are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

An omission is just as important, in fact, sometimes more important, than what is included. In this case it is the omission of Ishmael from the lineage of Abraham. He is not included in this God-given land. Thus it is only Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants that have the God-given deed, not Ishmael and his descendants.

Starting in 1991 the USA started the idea of a Palestinian state along side of Israel, thus adding Ishmael into the covenant. Well guess what? The USA began to be plagued with hurricanes, tornado outbreaks, severe weather, like the recent ice storm that inundated the East coast cutting power off from a million or so people; as well as economic chaos, like the current stock market upheavals. One can check world events and you will find one of these judgments poured out upon the USA within 72 hours of each time that the USA pressured Israel to give up land for so called peace, and that the judgments would get more severe as time went on.

If we do not stop this pressure on Israel and repent, it is likely that the USA will no longer be a world power. However, Scripture tells us that ALL nations--which includes the USA--will come against Jerusalem in the end times.

We should pray for our country in these times that the people would wake up and turn from their replacement theology that says Israel is no longer part of anything, having been broken off and the Gentiles grafted in, and replaced by the current church. Again I say pray; and make sure of our own standing first of all.

THE TRIUMPH OF ZACCHAEUS

Contributed

"And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:1-10).

Here is one of the most outstanding conversions in all history. It represents a triumph seldom seen in that day or in this day. This man Zacchaeus had gained great riches by crooked methods in a wicked business. After a confrontation with Jesus Christ, he set everything straight in his life. How did this happen? Four things give us the explanation.

Zacchaeus had a great desire to meet Christ, and he acted upon it. "And he sought to see Jesus who he was..." (Luke 19:3). He had heard about Jesus, His miracles, and His compassion. Christ was perhaps the major part of the day-to-day conversation. "And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts" (Matthew 8:34). "On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord" (John 12:12-13). Some praised Him, and some sent Him away.

Zacchaeus had many difficulties, but he overcame every one of them. He was "chief among publicans" (tax collectors). This was the worst job of all! "...and he was rich" (Luke 19:2). He was selling his soul for honor and money. "...he was little of stature" (Luke 19:3). In this he was physically handicapped. A multitude of people were in the way, "...and [he] could not [see Jesus] for the press..." (Luke 19:3). He overcame all difficulties and had joyful forgiveness and fellowship in his confrontation with Jesus. The woman with an issue of blood, "When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment" (Mark 5:27). For all who want to meet Jesus, a way will be opened. A way was opened for Nicodemus (John 3:1-8) and for the blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52).

Zacchaeus heard a great call and responded promptly. "And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully" (Luke 19:6). It has been said that procrastination is the thief of time. "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts...)" (Hebrews 3:7-8). God called Abraham to slay Issac, his son of promise. "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him" (Genesis 22:3).

Zacchaeus had a great change of heart and showed it. "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8). Notice that he called Jesus "Lord" and vowed to restore to those he had defrauded.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). A true child of God no longer walks "...according to the course of this world..." (Ephesians 2:2). Receiving Jesus joyfully is evidence of a change of heart and attitude.



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.

MIAMI-BASED MINISTER A RELIGIOUS LIGHTNING ROD

**But Theology of Human Perfection, Prosperity and
Absence of Sin Draws Flock**

By Tara Dooley

Houston Chronicle

In some circles, it's the mark of the beast, the sign of the devil, an omen of doom.

On Miriam Chapman's wrist, the "666" tattoo is a sign of her faith.

"It is not the number of the devil," the 20-year-old Houston resident said. "The devil was destroyed...It's a sign. It's love that God has upon his children."

Chapman's inspiration for the tattoo came from a Miami-based religious leader with a home in Sugar Land, Jose Luis de Jesus Miranda. He calls himself the Anti-christ, an attention-grabbing term that does not mean he considers himself the devil, but rather a true Christian, he says.

Indeed, for de Jesus--who admits to a teenage history of heroin addiction and crime--there is no devil. And far from embodying evil, de Jesus has declared himself a reincarnation of the spirit of Jesus.

His followers agree, and they have attached to his Spanish-language ministry, Ministerio Internacional Creciendo en Gracia, or Growing in Grace International Ministry. Many have embraced him as "the Man Christ Jesus" or, affectionately, Papi, or daddy.

"I don't see him as a person who has a deficiency," said Hugo Aguilar, a 33-year-old Houston follower of the ministry. "I see him as an instrument of God."

De Jesus and his ministry have grabbed headlines and airtime with provocative actions such as picketing the offices of the Catholic Archdiocese of Miami and holding demonstrations in countries including Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

Recently, the President of El Salvador issued a statement declaring de Jesus unwelcome in the country. The governments of Guatemala and Honduras have taken similar actions.

For followers, the ministry offers a spiritual alternative to traditional Christian churches. Some of de Jesus' believers come from evangelical and Pentecostal traditions.

Though de Jesus' claims are unusual to traditional ears, he is not unique, said Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo, Professor Emeritus at Brooklyn College and co-author of *Recognizing the Latino Resurgence in U.S. Religion*. Throughout history, some believers have declared themselves divine and preachers of the true Gospel, he said.

With exponential growth of Hispanic communities in the United States, the varieties and opportunities for religious expression in Spanish have multiplied, he said.

"The different churches each fill a niche," Stevens-Arroyo said. "There is a niche for the gospel of prosperity, there is a niche for Pentecostals who are trying to rehabilitate drug addicts, and there is a niche for Catholics who want to send their kids to Catholic school."

In Houston, de Jesus' followers gather Wednesdays and Sundays in a rented office in a southwest Houston strip center.

Attendance at services is not required of the faithful. But on a recent Sunday about 40 people trickled into the darkened room, parents with children taking over the back rows of folding chairs with diaper bags and baby carriers. Many greet each other with "You are blessed."

The focus of the service is the screen at the front of the room. The weekly messages are delivered from ministry headquarters, a center that seats about 600 in Miami. In the United States, the service is broadcast over the Internet. It also travels the Internet to centers in Latin America, though about 16 countries receive the message on TV stations.

Everyone hears the same message. And there is no room for regional or personal interpretation.

"The difference between our ministry and the other religions is that even though they have the same name, they talk differently, they teach different theology," said Rafael Encarnacion, the ministry's bishop of the United States.

De Jesus, 61, founded the ministry in 1986 in Puerto Rico, his home. He moved its headquarters to Miami in 1988. The Sugar Land home was a gift from a follower, a ministry spokeswoman said. Because of his busy schedule, de Jesus has spent about 12 days here since he received the house nine months ago.

In addition to Houston, the ministry has 35 meeting centers in 12 states from New York to California. Internationally, it operates in 26 countries, including Venezuela, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Cuba.

The exact number of de Jesus followers is hard to pinpoint, since there are no membership rolls and weekly attendance is not required. Encarnacion will only say thousands.

"There is no way for us to know," he said.

"Our congregation through the Internet, it is impossible to count," he added.

The theology veers from standard Christian doctrine.

His teachings follow the outline of the Christian story of Jesus, but emphasize the resurrection and stories and writings that come from the Bible's letters of Paul, for example.

As de Jesus' followers see it, other Christian churches have missed the point by focusing on teachings and rituals from the Bible stories that depict Jesus' life--an approach that should have been discarded after the resurrection, said Pastor Boris Martinez, who oversees the ministry's Houston chapter.

"We, in 20 years, are trying to change the minds of the world that has been convinced for 2,000 years," he said.

According to de Jesus, there is no sin and people are perfect in God's eyes. The goal of believers is also to see themselves and others as perfect. There's crime in the world, of course, and followers are encouraged to steer clear of behavior harmful to themselves or others.

"In our flesh we make mistakes, but God Himself, He doesn't see you in your flesh. He sees you in your spirit," said 24 year-old. Yorneglia Bruda, who considers this teaching one of the main attractions of the ministry.

The ministry also emphasizes predestination summarized in its slogan: Saved Always Saved, or in Spanish Salvo Siempre Salvo.

The group shares Christian prosperity theology--the idea that God wants you to prosper financially and rewards generosity, often to the church, generously. Followers are encouraged to tithe the standard ten percent to the ministry, Martinez said.

That may be the only ritual of church-going the ministry follows. There are no rituals of baptism, laying on of hands, marriage or death, Martinez said.

The approach has offered a switch from feeling like a "slave to religion," said Chapman, whose childhood religious experience was in a Pentecostal church. Religion, in her previous experience, "makes you feel horrible, and it makes you feel like you are captive, because if you do something wrong you feel like you are going to hell," she said. In contrast, she said, de Jesus' teachings give her a sense of peace.

She knows the 666 on her wrist may raise eyebrows, but it also gets conversation started.

"This is a way we will teach other people," she said. "They can believe or not believe."

Comment

This is a case of extreme deception. The gentleman listed in the above article is just one of the many false prophets which have appeared. All of the principle teachings of this group are in opposition to God's Word. How can he claim to be the reincarnation of Jesus and teach just the opposite of what Jesus taught? II Timothy 3:13 tells us, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." The deception set forth by this man could hardly be much worse.

Yes, there seems to be a niche for everyone except for those who obey God and keep His commandments. Children of God do not need a niche because they have the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: How can we prove the authority of the New Testament?

ANSWER: **First**, the New Testament consistently understates even the most amazing miracles. This stands in contrast to the way fabricators and distorters of history often sensationalize their stories.

There are several false "gospels" written about Jesus that claim to be detailed accounts of His early life. Each is filled with numerous "miracles" that are completely out of character with the Jesus of the Bible.

Although the New Testament contains a strong undertone of the supernatural, it is completely consistent and believable. If the writers had fabricated the miracles to authenticate their writings, they would probably have overdone it.

Jesus never performed miracles for His own benefit, for sensation, or to satisfy the curiosity of the crowd. His supernatural deeds were always based on the needs of the people. It is interesting to note that the enemies of Jesus never denied His miracles. Instead, they claimed He had performed them by the power of the devil.

Second, the New Testament faithfully portrays disagreements, sins, and inconsistencies in the lives of biblical people. All the charges against Christ are carefully recorded. No attempt is made to soft-sell us on Jesus.

We see Him in the light of His skeptical countrymen. This is not the kind of fictional work which fabricators usually leave us.

Third, a strong proof of historical accuracy are the differences--not contradictions--in many of the Gospel accounts. There is enough variation in the accounts to prove that the writers did not get together to establish their stories. Yet they agree in so much that it is obvious to any honest critic that they were independent narrators of the events as they occurred.

Fourth, the reality and truth of the claims of Christ were accepted by His contemporaries. This is not true about lives of the founders of the other major religions. In all cases, the supernatural feats of these men (such as those of Buddha) are not found in the writings of their contemporaries. They were added hundreds of years later.

In the New Testament, the writers knew Jesus personally. They saw Him subject to all human limitations, and even after He suffered the shameful death of a common criminal, they were convinced He had risen from the dead.

The New Testament teachings came from those who were closest to knowing the truth--not from people generations later who could be deceived by the fog of time.

Fifth, the narratives in the Gospels and Acts are so

full of local color and details that they could never have been invented. It is obvious that the writers were either eyewitnesses to the events they described, or that they based their accounts on the reports of those who were circulated during the same period in which they were written. Therefore, many names, places, and events could easily have been laughed out of existence if indeed they had not been true. The historical accuracy of those books has often been questioned, but their truthfulness has been established many times over by archaeology and modern investigations.

Sixth, the New Testament is consistent in its message. In so many religions, the teachings of the founders are often completely inconsistent with their lives. This is true of Buddhism, Islam, and Taoism, among others. But the New Testament stands in sharp contrast to them because it is one logical whole. The works of Christ do not deny His teachings, and the Epistles agree with the teachings of the Gospels. It all holds together beautifully, even miraculously, when we consider so many writers were involved.

QUESTION: We know that during the millennium the saints will have glorified bodies and rule and reign with Christ. This means that the saints with glorified bodies will be mingling and ministering to other people with natural bodies. How can that be so?

ANSWER: We may not know how anything can be, but that this kind of thing is not impossible may be seen from the fact that the risen and glorified Christ did that very thing during the forty days of many infallible proofs between His resurrection and ascension.

We must never mind the "how" of these things. God can do great things, and we can depend upon Him to do whatever He undertakes.

QUESTION: Is there any Scripture that states that fermented wine should not be used at the Lord's Supper?

ANSWER: Yes there is. In Exodus 12:20 we read, "Ye shall eat NOTHING leavened..." (emphasis ours). Now some people say eating is different from drinking. This is just trying to justify man's ideas again. The verse earlier states: "Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses..." Surely that statement has nothing to do

with eating and drinking. This is part of Moses' Law and does not affect children of God today. But there shall be no leavening found at the Lord's Table at Communion time. Please read I Corinthians 5:6-8 and Galatians 5:9.

QUESTION: Is it always safe to follow our conscience?

ANSWER: Conscience is not always right and is therefore an unsafe guide. The Scriptures speak of an evil conscience (Hebrews 10:22); a weak and defiled conscience (I Corinthians 8:7-12); and a "conscience seared with a hot iron" (I Timothy 4:2); as well as of a purged conscience (Hebrews 9:14); a pure conscience (I Timothy 3:9; II Timothy 1:3); a good conscience (I Timothy 1:5, 19; I Peter 3:16, 21) and a conscience void of offense (Acts 24:16).

From these Scriptures, we can see that the conscience is variable and therefore untrustworthy. It is only when it is enlightened and sensitive to the Word of God that conscience may be safely followed.

QUESTION: What is the meaning of the phrase, "The Canticles"?

ANSWER: It is the name sometimes applied to the Song of Solomon.

QUESTION: What is the Septuagint?

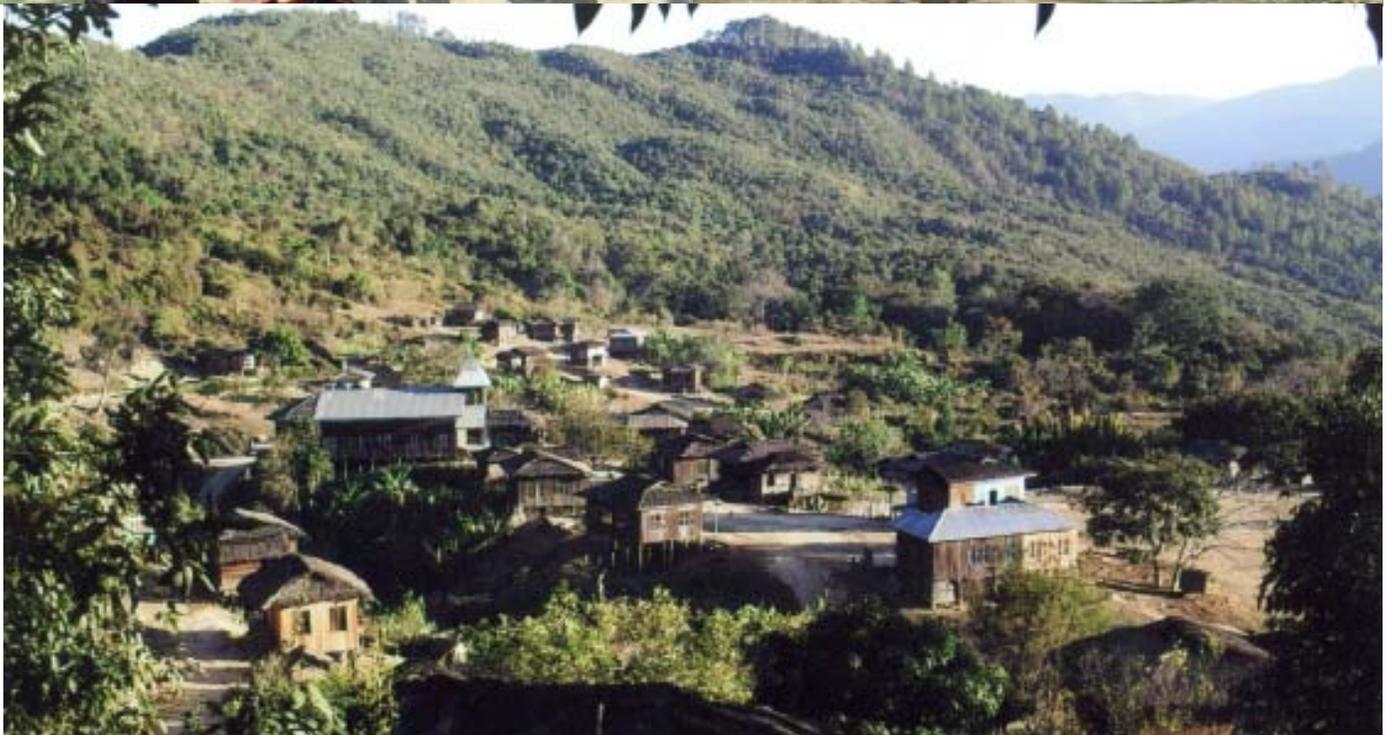
ANSWER: The word "septuagint" is from the Latin septuaginta, meaning "seventy"; and it is the name of a Greek version of the Old Testament books made between 280 and 130 B.C. It contains also the apocryphal.

QUESTION: How can a Christian keep himself in the love of God (Jude 21)?

ANSWER: We are kept in the love of God by obedience. This is emphasized in John 15:10: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love".



Myanmar





LESSON I**PAUL IS SENT TO ROME**

Scripture Reading: Acts 27:1-20.

Golden Text: Revelation 21:7.

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

1. Who was Julius, and what was his duty? Acts 27:1.
 2. Tell of the different places Paul sailed to on his trip to Italy? Acts 27:1-8.
- NOTE:** You may want to use a Bible map to follow the trail that Paul took.
3. What did Paul say concerning this voyage? Acts 27:9-10.
 4. To whom did the centurion listen? Acts 27:11.
 5. What decision was made by the centurion and why? Acts 27:12-13.
 6. What does Euroclydon mean? Acts 27:14.

NOTE: God uses nature to show His power. Think about two incidents when God used the elements of nature (wind, rain, etc.) to change events.

7. What was the result of this wind? Acts 27:15-17.
8. Was the water rough for the second and third days? Acts 27:20.

NOTE: Paul gave a warning to which no one listened. We too are given a warning by our Heavenly Father. Please read Revelation 21:7-8. Listen to God's warning!

LESSON II**THE SHIPWRECK**

Scripture Reading: Acts 27:21-44.

Golden Text: Acts 27:22 (first half).

"And now I exhort you to be of good cheer."

1. Paul reminded the men that they should have listened to him about staying in Crete. What does he now tell them? Acts 27:21-22.
2. Who came to Paul in the night, and what was said to him? Acts 27:23-24.
3. What happened on the fourteenth night? Acts 27:27-30.
4. What words did Paul speak to the men? Did they obey? Acts 27:31-32.
5. What did Paul ask the other men to do, and did they listen to his words this time? Were they still afraid? Acts 27:33-36.
6. How many were aboard the ship? Acts 27:37.
7. Describe what took place after they ate and saw land? Acts 27:38-41.
8. What did the soldiers want to do to Paul and the other prisoners? Why? Acts 27:42.
9. What did the centurion command them to do? Acts 27:43-44.

LESSON III**THE VIPER'S BITE**

Scripture Reading: Acts 28:1-15.

Golden Text: Acts 28:5.

"And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt

no harm."

1. To what island did the men escape? Acts 28:1.
2. What kind of people were on this island? Acts 28:2.
3. What happened to Paul as he gathered sticks for the fire? Acts 28:3.
4. What did the barbarians of the island think about Paul when the viper bit him? Acts 28:4.
5. Did the viper's bite harm Paul? Acts 28:5.
6. What did the people think of Paul when they saw that he was not harmed? Acts 28:6.
7. Who was Publius, and what did Paul do for him? Acts 28:7-8.
8. What did Paul do for the people, and what did the people do for him and the sailors? Acts 28:9-10.
9. Within three months the ship was ready to sail. Tell of the places the ship stopped at before it arrived at Rome. Acts 28:11-15.

LESSON IV

PAUL'S ARRIVAL IN ROME

Scripture Reading: Acts 28:16-31.

Golden Text: Acts 28:31.

"Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

1. When the ship arrived in Rome, where were the prisoners taken, and what became of Paul? Acts 28:16.
2. What did Paul do when three days had passed?

Acts 28:17.

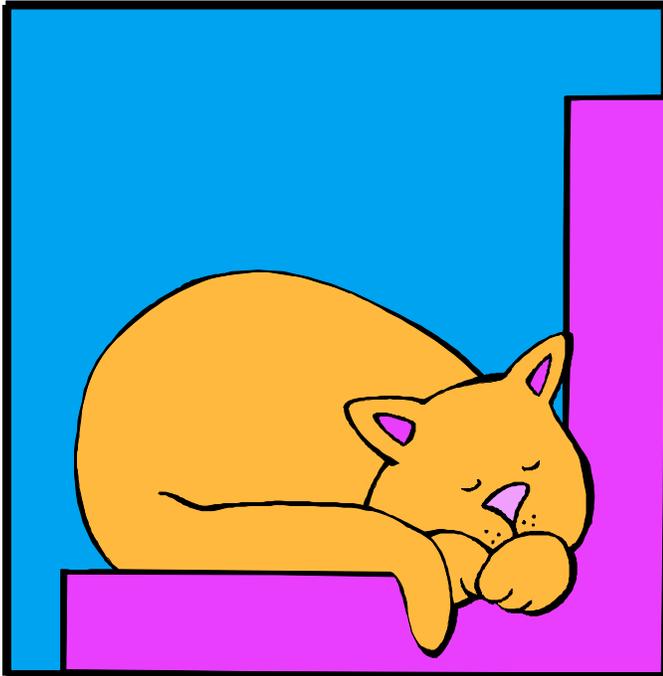
3. What did Paul say to the Chief of the Jews in Acts 28:18-20?
4. Had the Chief of the Jews in Rome received any word about Paul, or had anyone spoken against him? Acts 28:21.
5. Did the people want to hear Paul's words about Jesus? Acts 28:22-23.
6. Did some of the Jews believe what Paul spoke? Acts 28:24.
7. What words did Paul leave with the men? Acts 28:26-28.
8. How long did Paul dwell in Rome, and was he a prisoner during this time? Acts 28:30-31.

NOTE: As we close this study of Paul, let us remember our mission--to preach the kingdom of God (in word and deed by our example) and teach those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence.

To find a message about forgiveness, cross out the letters of the alphabet in order. The remaining letters spell out the verse found in Matthew 6:15.

ABBUTCDIFEYEFMGFORGIVETH
NOTMENJKTHEIRLMTRESPA
SSESNNEITHEROPQWILLRS
YOURTFATHERUVFORGIVEX
YYOURZTREPASSES.

" _ _ _ _ _ , _ _ _ _ _
_ _ _ _ _ ,
_ _ _ _ _ ."



MOTHER KNOWS BEST

by Nellie M. Stewart

Larry was visiting his grandmother. Across the street lived a little boy Larry's age. Larry wanted to go and play with him, but Grandma had said, "Don't ever cross the street unless a grown-up is with you. There are many cars on this street, and they go very fast."

Larry stood at the gate and looked across the street. "I am a big boy," he thought. "I can look both ways when I cross the street. If I look both ways and there are no cars coming, I should be all right crossing the street."

He stood at the gate and thought about this. It seemed to him he should be allowed to cross the street whenever he wanted to. But he did not try to go across the street because his grandmother had said he shouldn't.

He sighed and turned back to where Goldie, the big yellow cat, was laying in the sun with her five small kittens about her. One kitten was yellow and

black, and he kept running off from his mother and then running back to her. Watching the black and yellow kitten, Larry laughed. "If you don't watch out, you'll get lost!" Larry said to the kitten. But the kitten was jumping after a butterfly and did not pay any attention to him.

The butterfly flew down on a pink flower, and the kitten ran after it. The butterfly flew up, and the kitten followed it. Suddenly, the kitten ran right out of the yard and onto the road. And there, coming down the street, was a car!

"Come back!" Larry shouted. "Come back, quick! You'll get run over! Come back, come back!"

But the little kitten did not seem to know which was the right way back! He just stood there and looked around.

Larry shouted again. "Come back, come back! Kitty, come back!"

Suddenly, the big yellow mother cat ran out into the street. She picked the kitten up in her mouth and carried him back to the yard. She put him gently down on the grass and then lay down again. The other kittens ran around her. The little black-and-yellow kitten ran around her. He didn't even know he had almost been run over!

"You had better stay here in your own yard, and stay out of that street!" Larry scolded him. "If your mother hadn't been watching out for you, you might have gotten hurt!"

Across the street a little boy called out to Larry. He said "Hello, Larry! Can you come over and play?"

Larry looked across at the boy. He looked at the street. There were no cars coming just then. But he said, "I'll ask my grandmother. I can't go across the street alone."

He looked at the mother cat with all her kittens around her. "Mothers know what is best for their children," he said to the little black-and-yellow kitten, who was lying beside his mother quietly now. "That's why God made mothers--so children would have someone to take care of them."

Then Larry went inside the house to find his grandmother.

God sent a flood that covered the land and mountain-tops. The only survivors were Noah, his family and all the animals aboard the ark. Over a year after the flood began, the water level dropped and Noah touched down on dry land. His family and the animals were the only creatures on earth! What was Noah's message?



Use this chart to decode Noah's message.



A=14



N=16



14 20 20

21 22 14 21

B=28

O=19



23 14 24

25 26 27 20

C=31

P=11

D=18

Q=30



22 14 24

28 25 25 16

E=25



R=35



18 25 24 21 35 19 34 25 18

F=32

S=24

G=10

T=21

10 19 18

22 14 24

H=22



U=13



10 27 26 25 16



I=27

V=26

J=33

W=23

15 14 16 12 27 16 18

14

K=12

X=17

L=20

Y=34

16 25 23

24 21 14 35 21

M=15

Z=29



Parables of Jesus

By David DeLong

The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain
Of mustard seed sown in a field;
The smallest of seeds, yet it gives great gain,
When full growth it does attain,
(It lodges birds from sun and rain,)
So awesome is its yield.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto treasure,
Hid in a field, and is found;
A man, once again, hides this treasure,
He sells all he has for its pleasure,
A joy that he has without measure,
And then buys up that ground.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a man,
A merchant seeking goodly pearls;
He finds one, rare, with his searching scan,
He gives for the pearl all he can,
To gain it is his constant plan,
A plan which soon unfurls.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a net
That was cast into the Sea;
It took all fish that it could get,
And when the tally was all set,
They sorted all the fish, and let
The final outcome be.

