



THE ADVOCATE OF TRUTH



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Thanksgiving Day

By David DeLong

The Pilgrims were not the first ones to celebrate Thanksgiving Day in America. A group of 38 settlers from England came to this country on December 4, 1619. They arrived at Berkeley Plantation, on the James River, in Virginia. The settlers' charter required that this day of arrival be celebrated annually as thanksgiving to God. Though the day was not one of feasting, it was a religious time of thanks to the Lord.

The Pilgrims of Plymouth, Massachusetts are credited with observing the first Thanksgiving time in New England. After arriving in America in 1620, the Pilgrims experienced a devastating winter in which about half of their numbers died. In 1621, the Pilgrims anticipated a good crop of corn, though they had lesser crops of peas, barley, and wheat. In any case, governor William Bradford oversaw a 3 day festival to give thanks to God for His blessings.

The Pilgrims provided ducks, geese, turkeys, wild plums, leeks, corn bread, watercress, and other things to the feast. Some 90 Indians provided 5 deer to the gathering. The Thanksgiving festival was celebrated outdoors on large tables. It was attended by games and a military review. During the next years, Thanksgiving festivals were celebrated by the Pilgrims, but a traditional date for them was never set.

Other New England colonies eventually adopted the custom of Thanksgiving Day. President George Washington, in 1789, named November 26 as a national Thanksgiving Day. The Protestant Episcopal Church, also in 1789, proclaimed that the first Thursday of November would be an annual Thanksgiving Day.

Though, for a number of years, the country had no set

time for an annual day of thanksgiving, some of the individual States did. New York and Virginia, for example, had regular set times for a Thanksgiving holiday. Finally, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation, setting in 1863, the last Thursday in November as "a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father."

For 75 years, the Presidents following Lincoln proclaimed that Thanksgiving be on this last Thursday of November. President F.D. Roosevelt, however, issued the holiday to be a week earlier, but Congress set the date to be the fourth Thursday of November after 1941, as Thanksgiving Day, and also made it a federal holiday.

--The World Book Encyclopedia, T, pp. 229,230.

The Bible does not command us to have an annual Thanksgiving Day, but rather it instructs us to give thanksgiving to the Lord on a regular basis. Some have proposed that celebrating a harvest festival, such as Thanksgiving, is keeping a pagan day, such as Christmas, because pagans kept harvest festivals. What is the difference in the two "holidays"?

First, the Lord directs us, through the Bible, to give Him thanks (see, for instance, Psalm 136). Giving the Lord thanks on any, or every, day, week, month, year, or season is right, regardless of what the pagans did, or did not do. On the other hand, Christmas was never commanded by the Lord, but is an invention of man. Christmas, therefore, is honoring the traditions of those who invented it, including the pagan traditions of December 25th, the fir tree, yule log, mistletoe, etc., etc.

When the Lord gives us an opportunity to do something, we are safe. When man wants us to do something, we need to be wary.



PRINCIPLES AND REASONS

By: Moises Torres M.

THE VALUE OF THE LAW

1. Is the law of God of any value apart from faith?

THE LAW OF GOD HAS A VALUE IN ITSELF

NOTE: Believing or not in God does not make anyone free from the law, because a judgment has been established for all men, and judgments are based on the law. Apostle Paul emphasized on this, saying: “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, **we establish the law**” (Romans 3:31). “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

Romans 2:5: “But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God”.

Romans 2:11-15: “For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;”).

2. How Does David describe the law of God?

Psalm 19:7: “The law of the LORD *is* **perfect**, converting

the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple.”

Psalm 119:1: “Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.”

Psalm 119:72: “The law of thy mouth *is* better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.”

Psalm 119:142: “Thy righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness, **and thy law *is* the truth.**”

NOTE: The values of the law are: perfection, truth, love ... It is “**...better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.**”

“The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether. **More to be desired *are* they than gold, yea, than much fine gold:** sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: *and* in keeping of them *there is* great reward” (Psalm 19:8-11).

3. How did Paul get to know what sin is?

THROUGH THE LAW

NOTE: The knowledge of the law brings out sin, so the

law is very valuable. Apostle Paul argues on this, saying:

Romans 7:7-11: “What shall we say then? *Is the law sin?* God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: **for I had not known lust, except the law had said**, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin *was* dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*.”

NOTE: Paul acknowledged that it was through the law that he got to know what sin was. “I had not known sin, but by the law.” He also recognized that the commandment, *ordained* to life, is death to those who walk out of it. “For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death.”

4. What is the result of complying with the law of God?

JUSTIFICATION!

Romans 2:13: “(For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.”

NOTE: Complying with the moral law of God justifies us before Him and puts us in agreement with his will and nature. His commandments are ordained to life, that we are free from sin and death.

5. What do sinners invalidate?

I John 3:4: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”

6. What does sin beget?

DEATH!

James 1:15: “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth

forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, **bringeth forth** death.”

NOTE: Sin begets death. And death being begotten may get be to born (in death), if sin is not stopped and aborted.

7. What else is said about the law of God?

Romans 7:12: “Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.”

8. Does grace avoid the keeping of the law?

IN NO WAY!

Romans 6:1-2 “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? **God forbid**. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

NOTE: No person may abide or grow in God’s grace, if sin is there in the middle. The believer must keep the commandments of God to keep himself in the grace or favor of God. “What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? **God forbid**.” (Romans 6:15).

9. Does the law save?

IT IS GOD WHO SAVES AND FORGIVES SINS

NOTE: There is not power in the law to save or destroy. The law is an instrument of God to teach man what sin is, but mercy, hope, and salvation come directly from God.

10. Does faith put aside the observance of the law of God?

NOT IN ANY WAY, “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.” (Romans 3:31).

NOTE: Grace and faith do not put aside the law of God; on the contrary, the keeping of the law is required to be under the grace of God.

11. Is the law of God a spiritual law?

Yes, it is because it comes from God. "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:14).

NOTE: God is Spirit, so His law is a spiritual law, and we need the Spirit of God in our lives to understand it and be able to keep it.

12. What else does James say about the law?

James 1:25: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

James 2:8: "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well".

13. Are the commandments linked together as just one?

YES, ALL OF THEM MAKE UP JUST ONE LAW. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law" (James 2:10-11).

14. Should anyone take the place of the law?

NO, BECAUSE WE CANNOT JUDGE THE LAW, BUT THE LAW TO US.

James 4:11-12: "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, **thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge**. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: **who art thou that judgest another?**"

Matthew 7:1-2: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

NOTE: A common expression in our time is, "Here, I am the law." This is a human tendency to take the place of the law to judge and rule others. James says that, "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?"



"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? (II Corinthians 13:5).

Self-examination, or self-study, is difficult for one to accomplish. After all, most people dislike looking at one's own weakness and faults. Self-examination may also reveal one's strength.

When one is examined by others, they can only judge by what they see. "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7).

Another's evaluation is usually prejudiced by his own ideas based on his own personal convictions or opinions. Someone else, with all good intentions, may be right or wrong in his judgment.

For the child of God, self-examination must include his prayer life, convictions, testimony, commitment to God and relationship to God. The child of God must have a clean and clear conscience void of offence before God. There is a need of constant vigilance. We are in the world, but not of the world. One can be so taken up in this present world until he fails to recognize himself unless he regularly weighs himself by God's Word.

The moment of truth will come for everyone. Then it will not make any difference what others may do or say. It will depend on the truth!

FOCUS ON THE PRIZE

By Bibi Shimoon Allicock



The prize is salvation or everlasting life. And to top it all off, there is a place where we will be dwelling if we are obedient and live a pleasing and acceptable life unto Almighty God. “And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass” (Revelation 21:16-21). Can anyone fathom what it would be like to live in a CITY OF GOLD?

In the world today, some people just have some material things which they think give them comfort or makes them comfortable, and they behave haughty and puffed up. Thus, the Prophet Isaiah does witness that. “The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves. Say ye to the righteous, **THAT IT SHALL BE WELL WITH HIM: FOR THEY SHALL EAT THE FRUIT OF THEIR DOINGS.** Woe unto the wicked! it

shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him” (Isaiah 3:9-11).

“The LORD standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people. The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts. Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, The rings, and nose jewels, The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the cringing pins, The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails. And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty” (Isaiah 3:13-24).

We must understand that Almighty God is no respecter of persons. “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35).

Also He is not interested in our position and possessions. In the Book of Matthew, we can clearly see how the Lord dealt with the rich, young man. “And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; BUT WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? 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. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, FOR MY NAME’S SAKE, SHALL RECEIVE AN HUNDREDFOLD, AND SHALL INHERIT EVERLASTING LIFE. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first” (Matthew 19:16-30).

In the Book of Luke, our Lord gave us an illustration of what could happen to us when our main focus is on material gain. “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which HE POSSESSETH. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought

within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: THEN WHOSE SHALL THOSE THINGS BE, WHICH THOU HAST PROVIDED? SO IS HE THAT LAYETH UP TREASURE FOR HIMSELF, AND IS NOT RICH TOWARD GOD” (Luke 12:15-21).

Brethren, and the world at large, we are not saying that we should not have material gain, but if riches increase, we should not set our hearts upon them. This means that we should not become haughty and proud, boasting “I own this” and “I own that.” “Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them. God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work” (Psalm 62:10-12). So we see that when we have riches and gain (but not by wicked practices) it is by the power of Almighty God.

“Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt BLESS THE LORD THY GOD FOR THE GOOD LAND WHICH HE HATH GIVEN THEE. BEWARE THAT THOU FORGET NOT THE LORD THY GOD, IN NOT KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS, AND HIS JUDGMENTS, AND HIS STATUTES, WHICH I COMMAND THEE THIS DAY: Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; THEN THINE HEART BE LIFTED UP, AND THOU FORGET THE LORD THY GOD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house

of bondage; Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; AND THOU SAY IN THINE HEART, MY POWER AND THE MIGHT OF MINE HAND HATH GOTTEN ME THIS WEALTH. But thou shalt remember THE LORD THY GOD: FOR IT IS HE THAT GIVETH THEE POWER TO GET WEALTH, THAT HE MAY ESTABLISH HIS COVENANT WHICH HE SWARE UNTO THY FATHERS, AS IT IS THIS DAY. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; BECAUSE YE WOULD NOT BE OBEDIENT UNTO THE VOICE OF THE LORD YOUR GOD” (Deuteronomy 8:6-20).

Many people may say that this is for the Israelites only, but He is the same God, yesterday, today and for evermore. So what He did for them He will do for us also, when we are obedient unto Him, and do what He tells us to do in His holy Word. Our brother Peter encouraged us when he wrote, “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (I Peter 2:11-12). “Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God” (verses 17-20). “Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he

might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (I Peter 3:16-18).

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you” (Philippians 4:8-9). “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14). Amen.



“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the LORD, so walk ye in him; Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving” (Colossians 2:6-7).

There is something about sorrow and trials which elicits a greater degree of thankfulness than is often true with respect to the pleasantries of life. This is especially true of children of God, some who have been bedridden for years, and having suffered many agonies, are often more appreciative of God’s grace than those whom the Lord permits to serve him under more normal circumstances. Perhaps their experiences have caused them to depend more fully upon the Lord, and they have lived closer to Him because they are conscious of their need for His help. Many of God’s servants, particularly those whom the Lord used to write the Bible, were men who endured much hardship. However, their hearts seemed always filled with thankfulness for the blessing that God caused to fall upon them. The Apostle Paul is an example. Few followers of Jesus have suffered more than did Paul, yet there is no word of complaint in all of his writings. His suffering was brought on almost altogether by his faithfulness in serving the Lord. This was in keeping with the message the Lord instructed Ananias to give Paul at the time of his conversion. “For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for

my name's sake" (Acts 9:16).

Paul accepted this commission and zealously devoted himself to a course of faithfulness in the service of the Lord. This brought upon him an almost continuous impact of suffering and trials that could well nigh snuff out his life, but he continued unwaveringly in the narrow way of sacrifice and suffering. He did this with a heart filled with thankfulness because he knew, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Corinthians 4:17).

It was Paul's faithfulness to the Divine call to suffer



The will of the Lord is to give blessings. And, in some measure, everyone shares in these wonderful blessings. All have received life from the Lord; they are fed by His provisions; they enjoy the blessings of sunshine and rain; and they share in many more of God's blessings which He abundantly bestows upon the earth. However, many people cannot receive all of God's blessings, which only His people are given to enjoy. And because God is a giver of blessings, He expects His children to give blessings to others as well. In fact, in Romans 12:14 the Lord wants His people to: "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not."

Yes, the Lord is a giver of blessings. It has ever been so. Even during the Creation week He put His blessing upon the creatures as well as man. In Genesis 1:27-28 we read: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (see also verses 21-22).

On the seventh day He pronounced a blessing upon

and die with Christ that led to his imprisonment in Rome where the exhortation to thankfulness found in Colossians 2:6-7 was written. His whole epistle to the church at Colosse expresses love and thankfulness to the Lord for the riches of Divine grace that had been bestowed upon him. One would think that Paul would make considerable mention of his trying experiences as a prisoner in Rome when writing such a letter. However, Paul lived above his circumstances, as all children of God should do. Only once, in almost the last words of his letter, does he mention his trials. Even then he simply says, "...Remember my bonds..." (Colossians 4:18).

Blessings

By David DeLong

this day as well as rested upon it. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made" (Genesis 2:1-3).

After the great Flood, the Lord gave His blessing upon Noah and his sons. "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Genesis 9:1). Some time later, in the days of Abram, the Priest-King Melchizedek blessed both Abram and God Himself. "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all" (Genesis 14:18-20). So, Melchizedek knew of God's principle of giving a blessing to others.

Even before Melchizedek's blessing to Abram, God had already given His blessing to the Patriarch. We see this in Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram,

Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

The Lord not only gave His blessing to Abram (Abraham), but also to Sarah, his wife: "And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her" (Genesis 17:15-16). God also extended a blessing to Abraham's son Ishmael (see Genesis 17:20); and extended His covenant to Abraham's son Isaac, with a blessing (see Genesis 17:21; 25:11). Later, Jacob was blessed (see Genesis 32:24-26; 35:9) and he was given the Abrahamic covenant (see Genesis 28:3-4). Jacob blessed Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, as well as his own sons (see Genesis 48:9-20; 49:1-28).

Centuries later, when the 12 tribes of Israel were in the Wilderness, God gave instructions on how Aaron was to bless them. We find in Numbers 6:22-27: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them."

When the children of Israel were to come into the Promised Land, the Lord conditionally promised to continue to bless them: "Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers: And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee. Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will

lay them upon all them that hate thee. And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee" (Deuteronomy 7:12-16).

Not only were the children of Israel to conditionally receive blessings from the Lord, but they were to bless the Lord for all of His blessings. In Deuteronomy 8:6-14 we learn: "Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage". To bless the Lord means to praise Him or give Him glory. "I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Psalm 34:1).

Notice how David blessed the Lord for all His goodness. "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed" (Psalm 103:1-6).

In the land of Canaan, the Israelites were to set up great stones, plaister them with plaister, and write upon them the words of the law to bring either blessings or curses for obedience/disobedience to that law. In Deuteronomy 27:1-3,12 we read: "And Moses with the

elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day. And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster: And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee... These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin".

Furthermore, we learn of the blessings to Israel for obedience to the law. "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the LORD shall

make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them: And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them" (Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

Please observe the example of a man named Jabez. He really wanted the blessing of the Lord in his life. We should follow his example. In I Chronicles 4:9-10 we can see how the Lord felt about this man: "And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested."

Not only did the Lord bless the seventh day Sabbath at the end of Creation week, but He blesses everyone who keeps His Sabbath day holy as well. In Isaiah 56:2 we learn: "Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil." As a matter of fact, one must keep all of God's Commandments to be blessed and able to enter into the New Jerusalem: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14). Psalm 119:1-3 is very emphatic about keeping God's Law. Here we learn: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways."

The Lord will bless those who help the less fortunate. David wrote: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness" (Psalm 41:1-3). Jesus also taught the people about the poor. "Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor

thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:12-14).

Furthermore, Jesus taught that a person is blessed for a number of things in the Lord's service. Matthew 5:2-12 (the Beatitudes) lists some of them. A person is blessed for being poor in spirit; for mourning; for being meek; for hungering and thirsting after righteousness; for being merciful; for being pure in heart; for being peacemakers; for being persecuted for righteousness' sake; for being reviled, persecuted, and lied about for Jesus' sake.

Jesus was in the habit of blessing children. Mark 10:13-16 records one such event. "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

The Lord brings great blessings when a person pays tithes to Him. Malachi 3:10 bears this out: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Proverbs 10:22 tells us: "The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."

The book of Revelation assures us that there will be a blessing to the person in the first resurrection. "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 20:6). This person will also share a part in the blessing of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. "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).

Blessed is the Man

By Pat Evans

**Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord,
For the truth shall set him free;
Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord,
And if you trust in Him, you will see.**

**Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord,
For fear is the beginning of wisdom;
Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord
Who is gracious and full of compassion.**

**Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord
Of whom we ask for forgiveness of sins;
Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord,
And keeps His commandments to the
very end.**

**Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord,
And then humbly becomes His servant;
Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord,
And lives his life according to the Lord's
covenants.**

**Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord
Who hears our prayers and supplica-
tions;
Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord
Who will return to rule over all the na-
tions.**

**Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord,
Who has applied the lessons he has
learned;
Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord,
And who is ready, awaiting Christ's
return.**



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.

MIGRANT DANGER

I heard from a reliable source that the migrants coming to the United States illegally, especially those from the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, still face danger from smugglers and other predators. Let us pray for those individuals.

FLINT WATER CRISIS

We have heard about the iron in Flint Michigan's water supply. It seems like those in authority knew about this before reporting it. It was determined that one reason for not fixing the problem sooner was to save money. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:10).

One good thing did come from this issue. The EPA is studying water in the United States more thoroughly according to a newspaper headline.

DISAPPOINTMENT

We remember when Obama was elected president many thought that he would heal politics and be good for the country. But the world was just coming out of a great recession, and the recovery in this country was going very slowly. Besides that, the country was caught up in political gridlock.

The following is a portion of an article called *Obama couldn't heal politics like many hoped* taken from the **Houston Chronicle: "Worse, not better"**

Barring an unexpected change in the country, the political legacy of the 44th president will be that he left office with the atmosphere in the United States in worse shape than when he was elected.

That failure is all the more disappointing, Democrats and Republicans say, because he raised expectations so high. "He clearly thought – and he was entirely wrong – that he could transform politics in America," said George Edwards, a presidential scholar at Texas A&M University. "It was naive to think he could bridge this divide."

Before he was even sworn into office, Obama proclaimed that his successful election itself had altered American politics. "Change has come to America," he said the day he was elected president.

Now entering his final months in office, Obama acknowledges that he was not able to "fix our politics."

"It's one of the few regrets of my presidency – that the rancor and suspicion between the parties has gotten worse instead of better," Obama said in his final State of the Union address in January. "There's no doubt a president with the gifts of Lincoln or Roosevelt might have better bridged the divide, and I guarantee I'll keep trying to be better so long as I hold this office."

Comment

The lesson all of us should learn from the above article is not to put trust and faith in what a man may say he can do. Circumstances may alter his plans and promises.

"Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Proverbs 27:1).

**“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed”
(Romans 13:11).**

SOMETHING ABOUT WHICH TO THINK

Jesus said, “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken” (Luke 21:25-26). He also said, “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (verse 28).

The words above, which are Jesus’ words, describe a world troubled to its very depths. Are these words spoken by Jesus being fulfilled today? Yes, they are! What trend in the world do we see from Jesus’ words? Jesus did not foresee a time of peace and serenity. He did not foresee a time of peaceful cooperation between nations and universal goodwill. He foresaw just the opposite! His prophecy is just on the money! Life is crowded with more peril for more people than ever before!

A Bible scholar pointed out that, in its original form, the word distress has the meaning of being completely hemmed in, and the word for perplexity has the meaning of without a passage. Taken together, these two words reveal world problems and complexities from which even the wisest of the world are unable to solve and find a solution! We cannot look around and not be reminded of the words of Jesus when He said, “...there shall be signs in the sun, . . . moon, . . . stars; and upon the earth distress of nations. . .”

Terrorism is in every part of the earth! Our cities experience crime by night and day. Morals have plunged to such a low depth that guilt no longer exists! Dangerous drug use has become so prevalent that experts no longer know how to cope with the situation! Again and again we are reminded of Jesus’ words, “...there shall be signs. . .” There cannot be any question as to Jesus’ words when He said, “Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth...” Jesus said, “And now I have told you before it come to

pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe” (John 14:29).

There can be no question about the future! The time of our redemption draws nearer and nearer. The first phase of Christ’s coming is rapidly approaching. Are we preparing for it as fast as it is approaching? Our days for spiritual growth are passing quickly as more and more of the prophecies pertaining to the end are being fulfilled.

Let us not allow doubts and discouragements threaten us. Let us remember the words of Jesus which are even now being fulfilled. Just as surely as we see the fear and perplexity, we shall see “...the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory” (Luke 21:27).

If...

By David DeLong

If a person comes my way
Holding out a beggar's hand;
Will I ignore her pleas,
And ignore Christ's command?

If a person's being beaten
While a crowd of people stare;
Will I pray for fearless courage,
And help with loving care?

If someone's on the sidewalk
Without a proper bed;
Will I take that someone home,
Making sure he's warm and fed?

If a person goes to prison
For awful crimes he's done;
Will I visit him for Christ,
Or, is he easier to shun?

If I am only acting
As most other people do;
Will I be serving Christ
From His perfect point of view?

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Will you please write something about the work and transportation available in Jesus' day?

ANSWER: Yes, we will.

Farming was the major industry in the land during that time. This was a very difficult way in which to make a living. Except for a few fertile valleys and plains, most of the available land was either desert or rocky hills with poor soil. To make matters worse, relatively little rain fell during the summer growing season. Farmers had to depend heavily upon irrigating their fields with wintertime rain they had collected and stored in cisterns or ponds. Water was in such short supply. Therefore, they relied upon hardy crops that didn't require much water. These crops included spelt, a type of wheat. They also grew olives, grapes, dates, lentils and figs.

In Galilee, Jesus' home region, fishing was another important part of the economy. Important also were the tradespeople. These included potters, weavers, blacksmiths, shoemakers, tentmakers and carpenters. Tradesmen usually worked in small workshops on the first floor of their homes because there were no factories in those days.

Let us now turn our thoughts to available transportation in Jesus' day. There were local roads. In addition, four main highways connected various parts of the region. However, in Jesus time, it is unlikely that any of these

roads were paved, which made traveling difficult. Most people traveled by foot. The luckier ones rode on a donkey or horse. That meant that travelers were limited to covering at best, 25 to 30 miles a day.

Today, when we order products from distant suppliers, we can get them in a few days. In the first century, it was costly. It was slow. It took much labor to transport goods overland by donkey, mule, wagon or camel. Boats were also used. A 261/2-foot-long craft was found by Archaeologists. It was large enough to accommodate 15 people. It could have been used for fishing and transporting goods.

QUESTION: Will you please comment about the witch of Endor and how she is an example for today?

ANSWER: The story of the witch of Endor is found in I Samuel 28:5-25. We know little of the "witch" of Endor, who really was not a witch but a medium. She had contact with a familiar spirit. It is not certain that she was a Hebrew. During the conquest, Endor was a Canaanite stronghold that the Israelites were not able to possess. The city did lie in Israelite-controlled territory. Saul, in obedience to Deuteronomy 18's condemnation of occult practices of every kind, had set out to exterminate all mediums and spiritists.

However, when the Philistines invaded Israel, and every

attempt of Saul to seek counsel from the Lord was refused, the desperate king demanded that his servants find him a medium. When one was located at Endor, Saul went there in disguise to consult with the demon that was her spirit contact.

The woman was reluctant to conduct a séance for the disguised Saul. When promised immunity, she did as asked. Even then, when "Samuel" appeared, the woman "cried with a loud voice." Her reaction showed that the spirit that appeared was not the familiar spirit she had called upon, but supposedly "Samuel" himself, who then informed Saul that he was destined to die in the upcoming battle with the Philistines.

Saul was weak from hunger and shock. He then fainted. The woman encouraged him to eat. Saul and his servants then left.

Like others dedicated to the occult, this woman had linked her future to evil forces. Despite the campaign Saul had launched to exterminate such persons, the medium of Endor had been unable to break the spiritual bonds that held her. She had lived in fear of exposure, yet was addicted to the relationship that had been established.

What a tragic life this medium must have lived, knowing that her spiritual addiction was wrong, fearing that her secret might be discovered, and yet unwilling or not able to rid herself of the demonic.

Let us not be confused by television ads for psychic hot lines, or respond to magazine ads or articles with phone numbers that lure readers to consult a "friend" with supposed spiritual powers. It's not surprising that so many lonely people, desolate teens, or desperate single parents respond to these appealing but deceptive promotions. **BUT LET'S NOT BE AMONG THEM!**

When we need guidance, let us turn to God and caring friends.

QUESTION: Do you think that "What would Jesus do" is the only standard for Christian conduct and practice?

ANSWER: It certainly is! And it is really the only standard! We read in I John 2:6, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

The standard of living is Jesus Himself. Our Lord Jesus gave to His disciples a new law including the old but going far beyond it. That new law was this, "...That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34). If we would study the life of Jesus and see what He did under the circumstances in which He lived when here on earth, we, under the Spirit's teaching, can decide what He would do if He were in our circumstances today. The question for the Christian is not "What do other Christians do?" or "What do other Christians tell me to do?" but "What would Jesus have me to do, and what would Jesus Himself do?"

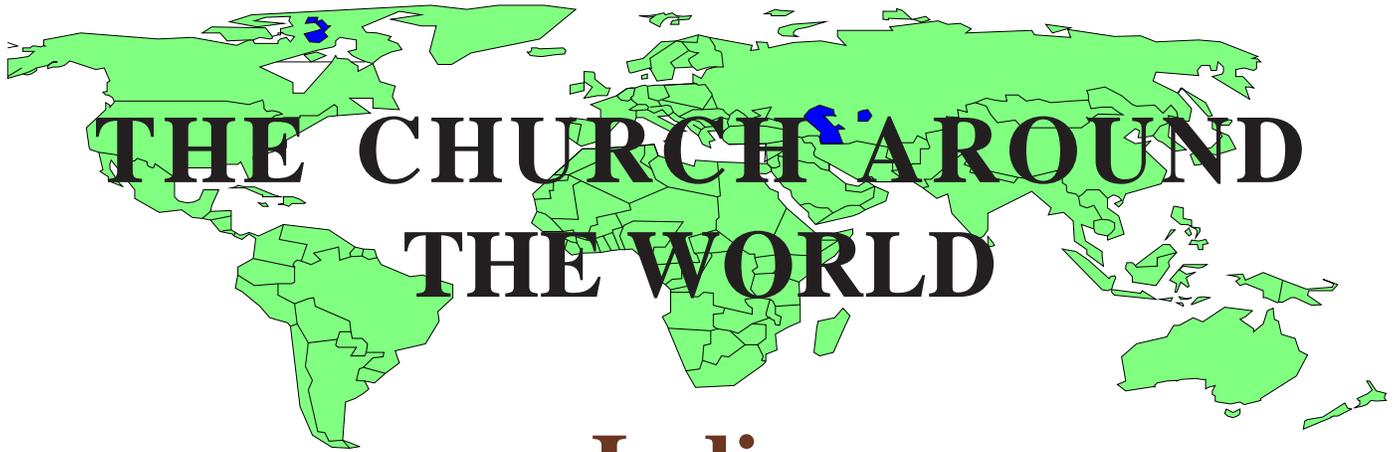
QUESTION: What is the true sense of the saying, "It rains on the just and on the unjust?"

ANSWER: Today, the saying. "It rains on the just and on the unjust," suggests that all people, both good and bad, experience the victories and misfortunes of life. In the Bible, the sense of this saying is really the reverse. Rain is taken to be a sign of good fortune, not bad.

This saying comes from Matthew 5:45 which is part of the Sermon on the Mount. Let us quote Matthew 5:44-45: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father, which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." We can see that the context here is blessing others and doing good to them, no matter what their merits may be.

QUESTION: I believe that God is all-seeing and all-knowing. However, I wonder what He said to Adam in the Garden of Eden, "Where are you"? Didn't He already know where Adam was?

ANSWER: Yes, God knew where Adam was! But in dealing with us God comes down to our level and deals with us the way we deal with each other. The Bible is written in our language. Jesus' parables used illustrations that came from the daily lives of the people of His time.



India

On July 24, 2016, the Church in Mookamamid Village dedicated a new roof with asbestos cement sheets and a cement floor. Other churches attended the dedication.





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 decisions were 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 part).

“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.

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.

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?

ABBUTCDIFEYEFGRFORGIVETH
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" _____
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JEANNIE LEARNS ABOUT THANKSGIVING*By: Dorothy Walter*

It was Thanksgiving morning. Jeannie was helping Grandma in the kitchen. Or at least she was supposed to be helping. Right now she was standing still, holding the cup she was supposed to be wiping.

She looked out of the window at the gray day outside. Heavy clouds hung low, and the sky looked as if snow would start to fall any minute. A dry leaf went scooting across the yard ahead of the old, damp wind.

As Jeannie watched, a big wet tear landed on the cup which she was holding. In a moment another fell, and another. Jeannie wiped the back of her hand across her eyes. Grandma looked up. She saw a tear splash on the cup. "Here, now," she said smilingly. "You're supposed to be getting the cup dry, but you're making it wetter."

Jeannie tried to giggle, as she knew Grandma was trying to cheer her up. But the giggle only turned into a sob. Grandma patted Jeannie on the back. "Try not to think about it, honey. Thinking about our troubles never helps. And sometimes it makes them look bigger than they really are."

"But I can't help thinking about it, Grandma. After all, today is Thanksgiving. And nothing is the way it ought to be." "I know," Grandma sympathized. "I wish the family could be together the way they usually are, but it couldn't be this year."

"I wish it weren't Thanksgiving," said Jeannie. That makes it worse. I wish today were just an ordinary day. Having Thanksgiving when you don't have anything to be thankful for is no fun at all."

Grandma looked surprised. "Nothing to be thankful for!" She exclaimed. "Why, Jeannie. You don't mean that."

"I do, too," Jeannie declared. She blinked hard to hold back the tears that were about to fall. "There won't be any company or anything. Only us."

"Is that what you think Thanksgiving is?" Grandma questioned. "Just a day for company and a big dinner?"

"We-e-e-ll" said Jeannie. "Isn't that mostly what it is? Of course we're supposed to be thankful on that day. But then you've got to have something to be thankful for." "And you don't?" asked Grandma.

Jeannie shook her head. "Not much, anyway."

Grandma didn't say anymore about that then, but Jeannie could see that she was still thinking about it.

When the dishes were done Grandma said. "Let's run over to the Monson's house for a minute. I want to take them something."

Jeannie ran to get her coat. When she was ready she found Grandma in the pantry packing a basket. She watched as Grandma put into the basket most of the things they had baked for their own Thanksgiving dinner.

"Grandma!" she exclaimed. "You're giving our dinner away. We won't have anything for dinner."

"We have plenty left," Grandma assured her. "See, there's another pie."

Jeannie had never been to the Monson home before. She had never seen such a poor home. There were no rugs on the floor. There was no nice furniture like Grandma's. The children were ragged and dirty. There were no good smells of cooking in the house.

When Grandma had given them the basket, the family thanked her again and again. They would have had no Thanksgiving dinner if Grandma had not brought the basket.

Jeannie thought about the Monsons all the way home. She wondered what it would be like to live in a home like that instead of her own pleasant one. She was glad for her home, even if she did have to be away from it this Thanksgiving because Daddy and Mother were on a business trip.

When they reached home Grandma hurried around getting dinner. She went to the cellar and brought up some home-canned string beans. She fixed some mashed potatoes and gravy. Homemade cottage cheese, fresh wholewheat bread and butter, milk, and pumpkin pie made the rest of the Thanksgiving dinner. But as she thought of the Monsons, Jeannie was sure she had never eaten such a delicious dinner. She tried to count how much she had and how little some others had. She knew that she had much to be thankful for.

When she finished the last of the pumpkin pie, she said shyly, "I think I've learned about Thanksgiving Grandma. Thanksgiving is more than just a day. It's a feeling inside of you isn't it?" She looked around the pleasant room. She thought about her home and the loving Father and Mother who would soon come for her. "It's a nice day after all," she said happily.



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
- B=28
- C=31
- D=18
- E=25
- F=32
- G=10
- H=22
- I=27
- J=33
- K=12
- L=20
- M=15
- N=16
- O=19
- P=11
- Q=30
- R=35
- S=24
- T=21
- U=13
- V=26
- W=23
- X=17
- Y=34
- Z=29



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14	20	20	21	22	14	21	
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22	14	24	28	25	25	16	
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18	25	24	21	35	19	34	25 18
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15	14	16	12	27	16	18	14
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16	25	23	24	21	14	35	21



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A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*I love to count all the blessings
It's our Father's great pleasure to give;
He rains down these blessings upon us,
And they're ours, as long as we live.
Do you ever thank Him for the heavens?
Such a beautiful shade of pure blue;
Or behold the sight of a rainbow
That He gave, as a promise, to you?
He gave us the beauty of nature,
And He holds it all close to His heart;
For His love marks the fall of a sparrow,
And He grieves as its life departs.
He provides the food on my table,
And He blesses each bite that I eat;
He smiles at my prayer of Thanksgiving,
That I offer, as I kneel at His feet.
My prayers are always the same, yet different,
There is so much to give thanks for each day;
His heart fills with love for His children,
And He smiles down on us when we pray.
It's His pleasure to give us His Kingdom,
Where we will never know sorrow or pain;
And there we can thank Him forever,
As we bask in the love of His reign.*

Betty Whetstone

