

# *The Advocate of Truth*

*Love and  
Marriage*

*The Real  
World*

*Obedience  
and Faith*

*The  
Millennium*

"He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow" (**Psalm 147:16 - 18**).





# *ON LOVE AND MARRIAGE*

*BY BOND TENNANT*

The family was invited to attend the wedding of a dear sister. We accepted the invitation. Unfortunately, circumstances did not permit us to attend. We regretted not being able to witness the exchange of vows between the bride and groom.

This started me thinking about love and marriage. Of course, all say that love between the two who would marry is necessary. There is an old song which goes something like this, "Love and marriage, love and marriage, go together like a horse and carriage." This is necessary because God ordained it that way! Many couples who consider marriage do not know what love is! In America, one of every two marriages ends in divorce!

In this country, we have what are called "Reality Shows" on television. One of these shows is called *The Bachelor*. While reading the Houston Chronicle, I read a commentary about this show which I believe hits the spot. I would like to share it with you. Here it is:

*The Bachelor* is a sad example of the definition of love, by Joe Parle.

My wife and I have wasted valuable time Monday nights watching "The Bachelor". A fantastic quote by "spanteacher" on The Emmanus Road blog (on HoustonBelief.com) summarized how I felt about the experience, "I watch and trash 'The Bachelor', too. It's like a wreck on I - 10--I know I shouldn't look, but I do."

(Someone) wrote a blogpost titled "Love about *The Bachelor*" from the perspective of a single Catholic female. I'm writing from the perspective of a married Protestant male. However, our conclusions are very similar:

The show is a sad example of how the world defines love.

For those of you who are not aware, the star of the reality television show, single dad Jason Mesnick, surprised everyone in the season finale when he originally chose Melissa Rycroft only to dump her for runner-up Molly Malaney after it didn't work out.

All of this was revealed on national television.

Mesnick claims that the requirement to reveal this on television was part of his contract because he could not speak to her in person. Rycroft's disappointed response was to remind Jason on his choice and to ask him why he chose not to fight for the relationship. Mesnick replied that they were not right for each other.

As an American culture, we put way too much emphasis on romance and not enough on covenant. As usual, we want the pleasures of sex and marriage without the sacrifice of commitment and covenant obligation.

We speak of commitment but do not focus on the fact that marriage is ultimately designed to be a covenant between man, woman, and God. That covenant is generally initiated by a vow to love the other person for better or for worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part, so help us God.

Most people enter that covenant saying the words but secretly hoping for "better" and "not quite as good," "perhaps a small cold" and "health," "in riches" and "upper middle class income," "until we fall out of love for each other." This covenant is intended to represent the mystery of the eternal love that Christ has for the church.

For Mesnick, as communication in the relationship

got difficult, he decided it might be best to explore his options. My dad once told me that when we fall in love it is normally with a figment of our own imagination: We imagine this person is everything that we ever dreamed of having without noticing too many faults.

In marriage, we learn what the person is really like. The test of marriage is to learn to let go of the figment of our own imagination and fall in love with the person we married.

I do not blame Mesnick for choosing not to enter into a marriage that was destined for failure. I question why he would ask one woman to enter that covenant when by his own admission he loved someone else at the same time.

I once heard from the late Don Raunikar that our current dating system better prepares people for divorce than marriage because our culture has decided that when things get difficult in a relationship it is time to get out. Perhaps that is part of the reason why the divorce rate in the United States is so high.

For most Americans, marriage is just another form of dating but you just change your name and then go to court to undo the mistake.

People look forward to the white dress, cake and event without really considering the seriousness of the covenant. Every aspect of the traditional marriage ceremony was designed to symbolize the seriousness of this covenant.

The husband-to-be enters the wedding first as evidence of his role as the covenant initiator. The woman comes in a white dress indicating her purity (no, she did

not spend the night in the fantasy suite before the wedding). The man, too, is expected to demonstrate such purity prior to marriage.

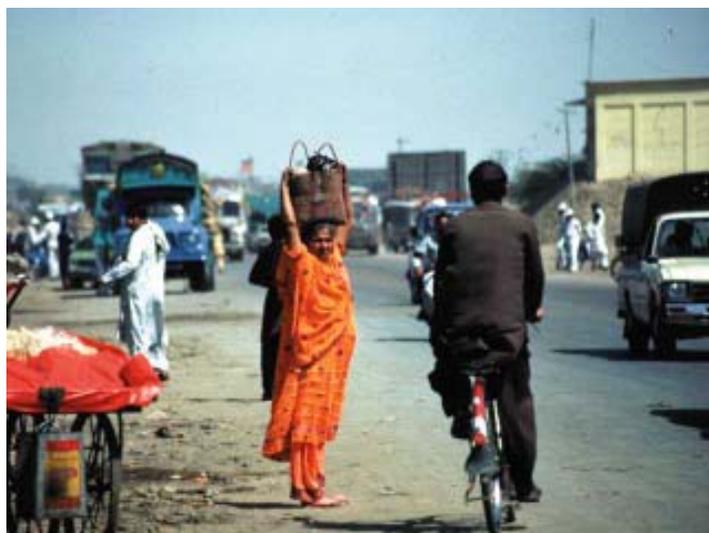
Wedding guests are not there so they can bring cool gifts. They are there to serve as witnesses of the covenant. If anyone has a question about what was done that day, they have witnesses to hold them accountable to their promises to each other, and most notable, God.

The sign of the marriage covenant is the ring. The seal of the wedding covenant is the sexual intercourse. Because the seal of the covenant is sexual intercourse, it should only belong to the two people who are making the covenant.

That is what makes *The Bachelor* such a troubling proposition. How does dating 25 different women in a short period of time possibly prepare someone for a life-long commitment? Perhaps that is why so many bachelor relationships never lasted after the show ended.

I'm thankful that I pursued my wife alone and will love her forever, forsaking all others. My covenant with her and God is to love her no matter what until I die. Should she turn out to be the worst person ever (thankfully she is not) or physically incapable of meeting my needs, or should she make me so poor I have to give up everything I have, I am still permanently married to her until my death or hers.

The passionate pursuit of the one we love shouldn't end in marriage: it should begin in marriage. May God guide all of us to love in the same way for His glory.



## BE PREPARED: THE TIME IS AT HAND

By Sandra Noel  
Grenada, West Indies

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your

Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of

the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:42-44).

The above command tells us to be ever watchful because we know not the day nor the hour when the Son of man will appear.

Dear readers, let us pause for a moment and look around us to see the fulfillment of the prophecies before our eyes. We must be careful in our manner of living. We must try to always walk in the straight and narrow way which leads to life eternal. We are also called to be children of the day and not of the night. "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (I Thessalonians 5:6-7). Our lives must be shining examples and reflect our Saviour in this dark and evil world. We must "Be sober, be vigilant; because your (our) adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). If we all continue to watch and pray, the coming of our Lord will not find us unprepared.

The Apostle Paul exhorted the Corinthian brethren to "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (I Corinthians 16:13). This exhortation is for us likewise. We must remain watchful, knowing if we faint not on the way a crown of righteousness is laid up for us (II Timothy 4:8). We need not harden our hearts nor fall into slumberiness but keep looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

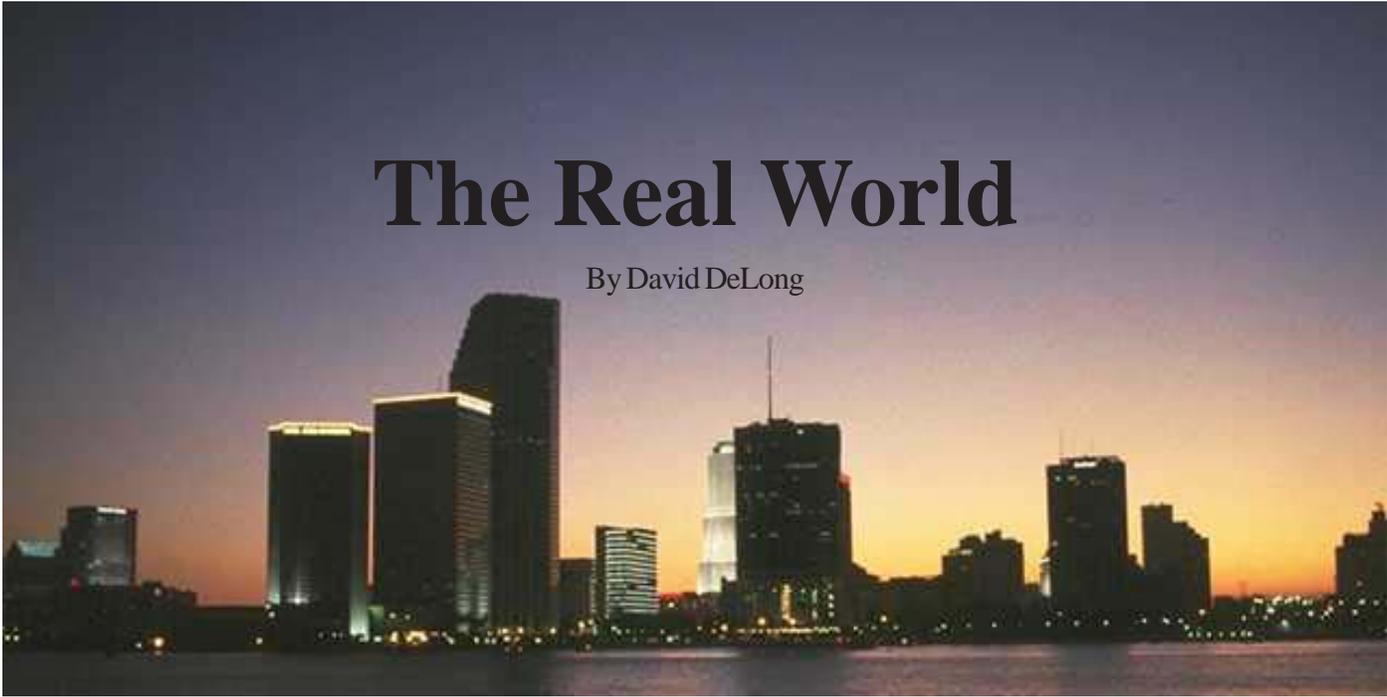
Let us consider the parable of the ten virgins: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while

they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 25:1-13). When the cry of the bridegroom is made, we must be ready. "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:11-14).

Today men's hearts are fearful because of wars and commotions that face this world. Jesus said, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matthew 24:6-8). He also 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. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:25-28).

We must continue to watch and be ready so in the end we will hear, "...Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21). In our spiritual race, only finishers will be declared winners.

I pray that we will all be willing to examine and adjust our lives with the aid of the Holy Spirit so we can remain sober and vigilant. "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:37).



# The Real World

By David DeLong

Many people believe that the "real world" is composed of those who live in a "dog-eat-dog" society. It is the nice guys, they feel, who come in last. They have been deceived by Satan into thinking that the way to survive is by taking advantage of as many other people as possible. When presented with the subject of God and eternity, all that may come to their minds is a group of little cherubs floating on clouds and playing harps all day. The tragedy of this is that even some "believers" have bought into this philosophy.

The real world, however, is made up of only this: God's will, His Word, and His way. Anything in opposition to these three objectives is a counterfeit, is fake, and is unreal. I am not talking here about the Hindu concepts of reality and unreality. Hinduism teaches that everything in the material world is only an illusion (called "maya"), and is therefore unreal. The Bible (God's Word) does not teach that the material world is unreal, but that it is only temporal. We read in II Corinthians 4:18, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Concerning temporal things, the Apostle Paul warns, "And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away" (I Corinthians 7:31). The Apostle John added to this thought by writing, "And

the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:17). So we can see, then, that doing God's will, whether in this life, or in eternity, is the realm of the real world.

Jesus made it plain that the kingdom of God (the real world if you will) is present, in a spiritual sense, on the earth today. "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20,21). We are now a part of this kingdom, spiritually, when we have a *change of heart* by repentance and baptism (see Acts 2:38). Later, when Christ comes again, we can only continue to be a part of this kingdom by a *change of body*, which the Lord will provide. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (I Corinthians 15:50). The real world, therefore, involves the victory of the spiritual nature over the fleshly nature (see also Romans 6:1-13; 7:18-25).

The real world is comprised only of what is truth. Anyone deviating from the truth does not live in the real world. That is why those who subscribe to false doctrines or beliefs, speak lies, and perpetuate other fallacies will be excluded from God's kingdom. We read in Revelation

21:7,8, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

An overcomer is one who, with the Lord's help, continually rids himself of all that is false and strives to live only in the real world. A large part of being an overcomer is obeying the Lord in all things, including the keeping of His commandments. John wrote, "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. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and who-soever loveth and maketh a lie" (Revelation 22:14,15).

The natural mind of man cannot fathom the spiritual mind of God.

## The natural mind of man cannot fathom the spiritual mind of God.

Only by God's Spirit can a person understand God's will through His Word. We are informed in I Corinthians 2:12,14-16: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God...But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

Let us now examine some of the things which seem right to the natural mind of man, but which are in opposition to God's way. In other words, let's compare man's "make-believe" world with the real world.

1.) *You only live once.* The justification for this philosophy seems to be that of hedonism, or the belief that the pursuit of pleasure should be the main aim of life. Tragically, God's people, Israel, had bought into this belief. In Isaiah 22, when the Assyrians (though it is thought that the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar may seem to fit portions of this passage better) laid seige to the city of Jerusalem, that the Jews, instead of repenting, went into a frenzy of feasting. We read: "And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts" (vss. 12-14).

The Lord's way is not to live for pleasure, but to live for Him. It is the way, first, of humbling ourselves and mourning for our sins; of repentance and weeping before the Lord; and then letting Him lift us up (see James 4:9,10). But when we do that, we can be assured of having the most rewarding, the most happy, of lives possible. And in the future, we can have life eternal. Psalm 16:11 promises, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Please see also John 17:3,13).

2.) *Take, and keep, all you can get.* Our Lord countered this fallacy when He proclaimed, "...Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). Furthermore, Jesus instructed His disciples to, "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" (vs. 33).

3.) *Strive to get rich.* Many people, even some christians, have this as a goal. Sometimes, being rich is a hidden desire which is fantasized in the person's mind. The rationale may go like this: "If I was only wealthy, think of all the good I could do with my money." This, however, is man's way of thinking. Proverbs 23:4 warns us, "Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom." Jesus taught

"...That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." And, "...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" (Matthew 19:23,24).

Riches, in themselves, are not sinful. Some of God's people have been blessed with great riches such as Abraham and King David in the Bible. But they did not seek to be rich. It was the Lord who chose to furnish them with riches. The problem comes when *we* decide that we want to be rich.

There is a very destructive teaching in the world of Christendom which states that it is God's will for every believer to be rich in material wealth. This is taught as a sign of God's favor upon the believer. However, I Timothy 6:8,9 states, "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." If the Lord does provide riches to a believer, he or she is held highly responsible for them (see vs. 17-19). Then, too, let us remember that every believer is truly rich in the spiritual blessings of the Lord (see James 2:5; Revelation 2:9).

4.) *Defend what is yours, including your rights.* This belief has a kernel of truth to it, especially since parents are to defend their children against harm, pastors are to defend their congregations against evil, and rulers are to defend their subjects against criminals (see Proverbs 6:20-23; Hebrews 13:17; Romans 13:3,4).

But notice what Jesus instructs His followers concerning their *personal* property and rights. "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also...Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" (Matthew 5:40,42). In Luke 6:30, He even says that if someone takes away our goods we are not to ask them back, (let alone go to the police to have them returned)!

Going back to Matthew 5, we read in verses 38 and 39, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." I don't believe that the Lord is teaching here that we should let someone bash our face in. He is possibly speaking in hyperbole, a figure of speech used to forcefully bring out a point. (Other examples of Jesus' use of hyperbole include: plucking out

one's right eye--Matthew 5:29; the beam in one's eye--7:3; swallowing a camel--23:24). I believe the point He is making is that we should never retaliate evil for evil, and there are even times when we should give up some of our possessions and rights for a righteous cause: the glorifying of God.

5.) *Look out for "number one."* One of the lies that has been perpetuated for generations says that there is no one else who will take care of you, so you must be the one to do so. It is true that one must work for a living and do other things necessary to provide for himself and his family. But Jesus made it very plain that our Father in heaven is the One who really does the providing. He said, "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?...Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:26,30-33).

Not only does the Lord provide what is necessary for His children, but He is the One who gives promotion in life to those whom He sees fit.

In fact, not only does the Lord provide what is necessary for His children, but He is the One who gives promotion in life to those whom He sees fit. Take, for instance, Joseph the son of Jacob who was in prison for at least two years. The Lord promoted him while he was in prison, and again when he was released from prison (see Genesis 39:20-41:44). Psalm 75:6,7 tells us, "For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another."

Therefore, we don't need to compete with others for job promotions nor for anything else. The Lord will exalt His followers at the proper time (see I Peter 5:6,7). Having this mind-set will free a believer to truly serve the Lord, not himself. The believer will also be able to heed the advice of the Apostle Paul to "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Philippians 2:4).

6.) *Don't get mad, get even.* Many people have spent years of their lives trying to avenge a wrong that was done to them. They may feel that relief will finally come to them if they can only "get back" at the person who did them the wrong. Yet, as these people may find out, gaining vengeance will still leave them bitter and empty inside. The Lord claims *all* vengeance as His. When speaking of His backsliding people in Deuteronomy 32:35, He proclaimed, "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste." (Please see also Hebrews 10:26-31).

Not only is this vengeance against those who sin against the Lord, it is also against those who would hurt others. Therefore, the Apostle Paul admonished believers: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head" (Romans 12:19,20).

7.) *Amass, or heap up, treasure for the future.* This is similar to "take, and keep, all you can get"; and "strive to get rich". However, the emphasis is more on the latter end of a person's life. Let it be noted here that it is not

wrong to plan for the future. Even some animals have been programmed by the Lord to store up for leaner times (see Proverbs 6:6-8; 30:25). The case being presented here is rather that of the condition of one's heart. We should never let finances be our security in life. The Lord is our "Rock" (see Deuteronomy 32:15).

Some people work hard in life, saving up abundantly for their retirement years, with the thought that they will live a life of leisure once retirement comes. This period of a believer's life, though, if health is not an issue, can and should be a very productive one in working for the Lord. There may be more time for giving Bible studies, writing articles, and doing other things for Him. Let us note what Jesus said about the person who "laid up" a lot of goods for the purpose of living for self. "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 12:19-21).

Those who live for the Lord are the ones who live in the real world and not in a counterfeit world of man's and Satan's making. Much of the real world is not understood by God's people now, but later it will become clear to them. I Corinthians 13:12 reads, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." Imagine being face-to-face with Jesus in eternity! That will be the real world. Imagine this wonderful situation: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4). That will be the real world.

In the real world to come, there will be no soldiers, no firemen, no policemen, no undertakers, no pollution control, no doctors, no repairmen. There will, however, be lots of praise to God and to the Lamb, Jesus Christ. Only God's will, His Word, and His way will be fulfilled. That is why Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "...Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). And that is why we need a renewing of our minds now (please see Romans 12:2), so that we will not be "conformed to this world" but rather we will be accustomed to living in the real world, now, and in the ages to come.

# Lessons In Jonah

By Errol Noel



Jonah was a prophet of the Lord who was commissioned by God to go to the city of Nineveh to preach to them about the life they were living, because it was displeasing to God. Jonah 1:1,2 reads, "Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me."

Jonah was **DISOBEDIENT** and he proceeded to flee from the face of God and the commission given him (see Jonah 1:3). He took a ship going to Tarshish instead of obeying God and going to Nineveh as he was instructed. Being a prophet of the Lord, Jonah should have known or understood what David understood about hiding or fleeing from the presence of God. Psalm 139:7-12 states, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead, me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

The Lord God had determined that He would preserve Jonah's life. Jonah must go voluntarily to Nineveh, so in Jonah 1:17, the Lord prepared a great fish to swallow him up. "...And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." In Matt. 12:40, Jesus referred to the fish as a whale: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man

be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Jonah was pressured or tested in the fish's belly for three days and three nights. He referred to his ordeal in the fish's belly as **AFFLICTION**. Jonah 2:2 declares, "And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD,..."

It was the affliction that drew Jonah towards the very God he had just disobeyed. So he **PRAYED** from the fish's belly. Jonah 2:1-9 reads: "Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD."

In his prayer, Jonah acknowledged his disobedience, and promised to offer sacrifices, etc. This placed him in the realm of repentance. God heard him in chapter 2:10

and **DELIVERED** him. "And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land."

In chapter 3:1-3, Jonah is being **RE-COMMISSIONED** to do the same task he ran away from, and now he must go voluntarily. His message was only eight words, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown", but it was very **POWERFUL** (see Jonah 3:4-9), because the hearts of the people--royalty to peasants--were touched. The King ordered that all men and beasts should fast and be covered in sackcloth. They should cry mightily unto God, repent and pray, peradventure God's anger would be turned away, and it was. The Lord repented of the evil/destruction that he said he was bringing on Nineveh.

As a result of the withdrawal of the judgment on Nineveh, Jonah felt **PERPLEXED** (Jonah 4:1-11). He

was **ANGRY** with God and was vocal in expressing his thoughts about why he ran away in the first place. He told God in his prayer, "...for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil." He further asked God to take his life, saying, it was better for him to die than to live. In all this, God did not **FORSAKE** Jonah. He taught him another valuable lesson, to "care for or love another."

We should take heed to the lessons that Jonah was taught, knowing that the ways of God are past finding out, and his thoughts are higher than our thoughts. God expressed his love for us (John 3:16), when he gave his only begotten Son to die in our place that we can have life.

# OBEDIENCE and FAITH

By Sister Nesta John



"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom 5:19). It's a blessing if we all obey the commandments of the Lord our God which He commanded us this day, and a curse if we don't abide by His words. "Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway" (Deuteronomy 11:1).

Christ, Himself, set the example of obedience to the Father's will. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8,9). If we don't

obey, by keeping the Lord's commandments, we can't say that we know God.

Saul was rejected by the Lord because he did not obey the words which the Lord commanded him. He did what he thought was best and lost the position as king. The Israelites were blessed when they obeyed God, and were cursed when they disobeyed. "...Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Samuel 15:22). Vengeance will be taken on them that don't obey "...the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (II Thessalonians 1:8, 9).

We now shift over to the subject of faith which is very important in our Christian journey. We may ask ourselves, "what is faith?" Heb 11:1 informs us, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Also we learn, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (verse 6). Furthermore, we read, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (verse 8).

We should endeavor to have great faith, as it is written about in Matthew 9:20-22 concerning the woman which was diseased with an issue of blood for twelve years. "For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." And as she touched Him, Jesus

perceived that virtue left Him. "And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace" (Luke 8:48).

The twelve apostles had faith in order to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out devils. We should all have more faith because we are now to live by it. Hebrews 12:2 reads, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Faith is a part of obedience, and faith without works is dead. It is invisible, whereas obedience is visible, which can be seen in the practice of our daily lives.

Obedience to God's will must be expressed in order to have faith in Christ.



This question is on the mind of many believers. What about those who didn't hear the gospel? Or those who perished before they accepted the LORD?

Some wonder, *will there be a time in the future when those who didn't follow Jesus could come to know Him?* And if this is the case, are the Scriptures silent on the subject? Or, do they speak of such an opportunity?

Recently it was suggested to me that Isaiah 66:18 speaks of a time when non-Christians will be alive during the millennium—a future 1000 years when Christ will reign on earth. This verse reads, "For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory."

Does this verse actually describe a time when an unbeliever will get a chance to know Jesus? It does speak of "all nations and tongues" being gathered.

To put this Scripture into its proper time context, please read the verses around it. For example, let's examine Isaiah 66:15: "For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire." This is the warring phase of Jesus' return. This subject is covered in the church tract titled "The Second Coming of Jesus" which can be ordered free from the Church Publishing House.

During the warring phase, Jesus returns to the earth to set up His kingdom for a 1000 year reign. The nations alive at the time of His coming have leaders and armies that think they can make war with Jesus to prevent His return. Imagine how well the nations are armed with nuclear explosives and other weapons of destruction! Revelation 17:14 teaches us, "These shall make war with the Lamb,

and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

The LORD overcomes the armies of the nations. (We see this war described in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39.)

There will be survivors of this great war. Zechariah 14:3-5 explains: "Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee."

Note that when the LORD returns, the saints are with Him. These are the saints who are resurrected towards the end of the Gentile age. I Corinthians 15:50-52 reads, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

A remnant of Israel and a remnant of other nations will constitute the survivors of the nations and tongues referred to in Isaiah 66:18.

At this time, the New Jerusalem will descend to hover just above the earth. It will not touch the earth since the earth is still unclean. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:7). The river that flows out from God's throne will heal the nations. Those who are not resurrected at this time are still in the flesh.

Also, at this time, the law of the LORD will become worldwide. It starts in Jerusalem and flows out through the saints to the heathen, who do not know the fame or glory of the LORD (see Isaiah 66:19). We read in Isaiah 2:3, "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of

the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." Please read the rest of chapter 2.

Let us now examine Psalm 149. Verse 1 informs us, "...Sing unto the LORD a new song..." This could be referring to the resurrected saints into the New Jerusalem (see Revelation 15:1-3). Verse 4 reads, "...he will beautify the meek with salvation." This may be a reference to the redeemed in the millennium, especially since verses 6-9 appear to refer to this time. "Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword (the Word of God) in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD."

So the saints go out from the New Jerusalem and bring the law of GOD to the far-reaching Isles of the earth without Satan (who will be bound, see Revelation 20:1-3) to distract anyone. The nations and tongues referred to in Isaiah 66 are future peoples.

Let's remember Jesus' warning from John 10:1: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." This speaks of the entry into the New Jerusalem which can only be entered through Jesus. In verse 7 Jesus proclaimed, "I am the door of the sheep."

In Acts 3:2 we read that the lame man was laid at the gate of the temple which was called "Beautiful". Isaiah 4:2 refers to "the branch of the LORD" (a name of Jesus) as "beautiful". Will the Lord Jesus enter at one of the gates of the New Jerusalem with HIS saints? And will this gate be the same one as foreshadowed in the temple on earth? If that is the case, what an appropriate name for this gate-- "Beautiful"--and what an appropriate name for the Lord Jesus, the Branch-- "Beautiful".

This is the sure way that the sheep enter into the sheepfold. The sheep don't know the way without the Shepherd leading them with HIS voice, HIS rod, and HIS staff. Let us make our calling and election sure, so that we will be resurrected when Jesus returns, and spend that 1000 year reign with him in the millennium.



# 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.*

## RELIGION IS DRIVING PEOPLE AWAY FROM GOD

by Leonard Pitts, Jr.

We are losing our religion. That is the startling conclusion of a new study, the American Religious Identification Society, conducted by researchers at Trinity College of Hartford, Conn. The poll of more than 54,000 American adults found a sharp erosion in the number of people claiming religious affiliation.

A few highlights:

The number of people who call themselves Christian is 76 percent, down 10 percentage points since 1990.

Thirty percent of married couples did not have a religious ceremony.

Better than one in four Americans do not expect a religious funeral.

It is important to reiterate that we are talking about overall percentages. In raw numbers, there are actually about 22 million more Christians now than in 1990.

Still, the trend is clear, particularly as illustrated in one telling statistic: in 1990, 8.2 percent (about 14 million) of us said "none" when asked to specify their religion. Last year, 15 percent (34 million) did.

Some have suggested our loss of faith is due to increased diversity, mobility and immigration. I'm sure there's something to that, but I tend to think the most important

cause is simpler: Religion has become an ugly thing.

People of faith usually respond to that ugliness--by which I mean a seemingly endless cycle of scandal, controversy, hypocrisy, violence and TV preachers saying idiotic things--in one of two ways. Either they defend it (making them part of the problem) or they regard it as a series of isolated, albeit unfortunate, episodes. But irreligious people do neither.

And people of faith should ask themselves: What is the cumulative effect upon outside observers of Jim and Tammy Faye Baker living like lords on the largesse of the poor, multiplied by Jimmy Swaggart's pornography addiction, plus Eric Rudolph bombing Olympians and gays in the name of God, plus Muslims hijacking airplanes in the name of God, multiplied by the church that kicked out some members because they voted Democrat, divided by people caterwauling on courthouse steps as a rock bearing the Ten Commandments was removed, multiplied by the square root of Catholic priests preying on little boys while the church looked on and did nothing, multiplied by Muslims rioting over cartoons, plus the ongoing demonization of gay men and lesbians, divided by all those "traditional values" coalitions and "family values" councils that try to bully public schools into becoming worship houses, with morning prayers and science lessons from the book of Genesis?

Then subtract selflessness, service, sacrifice, holiness and hope.

Do the math, and I bet you'll draw the same conclusion the researchers did.

Who can be surprised if the sheer absurdity, fundamentalism cruelty and ungodly hypocrisy that have characterized so much "religion" in the past 30 years have driven people away?

If all I know of God were what I had seen in the headlines, I would not be eager to make His acquaintance. I am thankful I know more, including that God and religion are not synonymous.

God is, for the faithful at least, the sovereign Creator of all creation. Religion is what men and women put in place, ostensibly to worship and serve Him.

Too often, though, religion worships and serves that which has nothing to do with Him, worships money and serves politics, worships charisma and serves ego, worships intolerance and serves self.

The ARIS survey should serve as a wake-up call to organized religion. It continues in this manner at the risk of irrelevance. I am reminded of a line from the movie *O God*, with George Burns as the deity and John Denver as the grocery-store manager reluctantly recruited to spread the Word.

"I don't even go to church," says the manager.  
And God says, "Neither do I."

From The Houston Chronicle

## Comment

The title of the above commentary is not quite true. People are driven away from God because they do not seek God in the right manner. The eyes of many only look upon and imitate what they see in the world.

The writer brings forth some very good points. He writes, "If all I knew about God were what I had seen in the headlines, I would not be eager to make his acquaintance. I am thankful I know more." Sincere children of God do know more about God by reading His Word, the Bible, and imitating His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is true that God and religion are not synonymous. Man has put in place many things, contrived in his imaginations, to serve Him.

Let us forget about religion. Let us read and study God's Word, and put our faith and trust in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ!

## *Bad Economy Is Hurting The Collection Plate*

*by Annysa Johnson  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

Milwaukee - For weeks now, Matt McCarron has been unable to go to Sunday Mass. A lifelong Catholic, he's often found solace in prayer. And through youth, he tries to give faithfully for the needs of the church, \$20 a week when he was employed full time.

McCarron, 19, lost his job as a machinist last month and is back at the Milwaukee - area pizza joint where he worked in high school. He moved in with his parents to save money.

"I just feel let down," said McCarron, who'd prayed that God would spare his job and is embarrassed that he can't support the church the way he'd like. "I'm not sure I can afford even \$5. I hate that feeling."

Like McCarron, many people of faith are struggling, spiritually and financially as the economy continues to unravel.

The tragedy, faith leaders say, is that as the collection baskets thin out, congregations are seeing their costs increasing, investment income declining and the needs of their communities growing exponentially.

"We're trying to give more biblically," Patrick Mack of Grafton, Wis., said. His family had tithed 10 percent for years but had become disillusioned by what they saw as the churches' emphasis on their buildings rather than people--at a time when their family struggled with the rising cost of living. So they began giving directly to people in need, including a family whose baby had been seriously ill, he said.

Excerpted from the Houston Chronicle

## Comment

We are commanded to tithe our income no matter how the economy performs. The tithe is to be brought into God's storehouse and used for the work of the ministry--not given to just anyone in need. What is given above the tithe is an offering, and it may vary according to the circumstances of the person or family.

# BIBLE

## Study



# Questions and Answers

**Question:** How may I determine if a spirit is of God?

**Answer:** First, let us quote I John 4:1-3, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: And this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

Why are Scriptures such as these so often misunderstood by members of God's church? The answer generally can be traced to a lack of diligence on the part of the individual concerning the studying of the Word, and accepting it for what it says. Very often people are led astray because they do not refer to all the scriptures which related to a certain subject. We are constantly admonished to "Prove all things..." (I Thessalonians 5:21)--not just blindly accept the teachings of any person. Again in Ephesians 5:10, we are told, "*Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.*" These instructions are very important in our christian walk because many false prophets and teachers are gone out into the world, and are deceiving many with their lies.

What is a true test for determining whether a spirit is of God? The Word says, "*Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.*" By

looking at this verse superficially and merely looking at what appears on the surface, it is commonly taught that a person only needs to verbally state that Jesus was born as a flesh and blood baby and lived as a physical being upon this earth, and that qualifies this person as having the Spirit of God. However, this reasoning is soon proven erroneous in the light of other Scriptures. We know that evil spirits were acquainted with Jesus' existence and called Him by name, but that did not mean that they were of God's Spirit or members of His body. Carefully note the following Scriptures. "*And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?*" (Matthew 8:28-29) "*And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God*" (Mark 1:23-24). "*And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God*" (Mark 3:11).

Now, just exactly what does it mean by the phrase, "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh"? It certainly does not mean what is generally taught by many. This should be evident from the preceding Scriptures. What John is actually referring to appears to be an argument against Gnostic teachings. Some believed in two separate manifesta-

tions of Jesus Christ. Jesus, they believed, was the man who came in the flesh, but He was an inferior manifestation and His teachings were doubted. Christ, to them, was the spiritual manifestation, and His later New Testament teachings were accepted. John wrote, however, that it was "Jesus Christ who is come in the flesh". He is one Person, He is spiritual, and all of His teachings are to be accepted.

When people are truly converted and become new creatures in Christ, Jesus comes and dwells in these fleshy bodies, setting up His abode in our temples of flesh. Because He is living within us, we then have the capability of living the perfect life without sin, in complete obedience to the Laws of God, just as Jesus did when He was on the earth in His physical body. This does not mean just a partial change either, because it is not possible to serve two masters. Just because a person gives up smoking, drinking or drugs, does not mean that he has been converted. If a person does not repent of all his past sins, does not come completely out of Egypt, he is still under the control of Satan. Satan is always willing to bargain with a person and allow him to come out of some of his awful sinful ways, just as Pharaoh was willing to bargain with Moses in hopes of getting him to settle for less than a full three days journey out of Egypt.

The true test of which spirit is in control of a person is not determined by what a person says, but by what he does. This is clearly stated in Matthew 7:20-21, "*Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*" A further witness is found in Mark 7:6-7, "*He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*"

There are many who profess they are Christians, but that does not really make it so. Many merely take His name for the sake of vanity. Unless one's words are backed up with godly actions, they do not meet the strict qualifications of being a Christian. Being a Christian means that we are to be Christ-like, and the main attribute of His life was absolute obedience to His Father's will (Law). People will talk about how great their love is for God, but

they are not willing to obey God. In the Scriptures we find out what really proves whether a person loves God, and it is not by vain words spoken with the lips, or by the singing of gospel hymns, or shouting many words of praise, or speaking many prayers; but rather it is a matter of living an obedient life. This is pleasing in His sight. To obey is better than sacrifice, and the Father is very well pleased when we are willing to prove our love for Him "By Keeping His Commandments".

Since John was the apostle who was most loved by Jesus, he has appropriately given us most of the answers concerning what constitutes true LOVE. The answer is found in such verses as the following: "*If ye love me, keep my commandments*" (John 14:15). "*He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me*" (John 14:21-24). "*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked*" (I John 2:3-6). All of these Scriptures teach the very same truth: by keeping all of God's commandments, we are proving our love for Almighty God, our Savior and Redeemer. Anyone who teaches contrary to the pure Word is not teaching truth, and no lie is of the TRUTH. Disobedience is sin, and "*He that committeth sin is of the devil...*", but "*...He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous*" (I John 3:8,7).

There is a Day of Judgment in everyone's future when we all shall stand before the great Judge and be judged by the "Word of God," so we had better make absolutely certain that we are living in accordance with His every instruction today, not man's tradition. No excuse will suffice in that final day of justice and judgment.



## *Myanmar*





**LESSON I****FAITH - OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE**

**Scripture Reading: Hebrews 11:1-13.**

**Golden Text: Hebrews 11:6 (first part).**

**"But without faith it is impossible to please him."**

1. What is faith? Hebrews 11:1. What does the word "Faith" mean to you?
2. How does faith come to us? Romans 10:17.
3. Why is faith so important? Hebrews 11:6.
4. We must have more than just faith, for we are told that even the devils believe that there is one God and tremble. What else, then, must accompany our faith? James 2:14-20.

NOTE: Your works are a result of your faith. Because of our "faith", we will want to be doers.

5. What will faith produce in our lives? (a) Hope, Romans 5:2; (b) Joy, I Peter 1:8; (c) Peace, Romans 15:13; (d) Confidence, Isaiah 28:16; I Peter 2:6.
6. What three young people exercised great faith, and what was the outcome? Daniel 3:14, 16-17, 26-27. Can you name one other Bible character who exercised faith?

NOTE: Faith is the basis upon which God performs all His promises. Often fear instead of faith seizes the heart of God's children. If Satan can weaken a child of God by doubt and fear, he has won a battle. Do not let Satan win, EXERCISE YOUR FAITH!

**LESSON II****GOD CARES FOR US**

**Scripture Reading: Psalm 23; John 10:11,14.**

**Golden Text: Psalm 100:3.**

**"Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that**

**hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."**

1. What does a shepherd do? Ezekiel 34:12 (first part).
2. Who was the famous shepherd boy that is said to have written portions of the book of Psalms? I Samuel 17:15, 34-35.
3. Who did David say was his Shepherd? Psalm 23:1.
4. Who said he was the "good shepherd"? John 10:11,14. What was this Shepherd willing to do for his sheep? Did he actually do this?
5. Who did God say were His sheep? Ezekiel 34:31.
6. Where was David's Shepherd leading him? Psalm 23:3.
7. Why did David say he would fear no evil? Psalm 23:4.

**LESSON III****LIGHT**

**Scripture Reading: I John 1:1-10.**

**Golden Text: I John 1:5.**

**"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."**

1. What does the Apostle John declare God to be? I John 1:5.
2. What did Jesus declare Himself to be? John 8:12.
3. What effect did the coming of Jesus have upon those who sat in darkness? Matthew 4:16.
4. What is necessary for men to do to walk in the light of Jesus? John 12:46.
5. What is the fate of those who do not believe in this light, and why? John 3:18-19.

6. Some love light and accept it while others hate light and reject it. Why is this so? John 3:20-21.

7. Why do men stumble and fall when they turn to travel life's road alone? John 11:10.

8. What two wonderful blessings will we receive if we walk in the light? I John 1:6-7.

9. How is the path of righteousness defined, and where will it finally lead? Proverbs 4:18.

NOTE: The Bible, the Word of God, is also called light. See Psalm 119:105. This means that it is free from error. It is truth and righteousness. It is able to light the way for all those who believe and follow it. We can turn this light, the Bible, upon us and see just what we are. Jesus is the light upon which we should keep our eyes fixed to the end. He will guide us safely through. Are you following Him?

**LESSON IV**

**TO KNOW GOD IS TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS**

Scripture Reading: I John 2:1-15.

Golden Text: I John 2:3.

"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."

1. Who is the propitiation for our sins? I John 2:2.

NOTE: The word "propitiate" means "to cause to be favorably disposed: appease; conciliate." What do you think it means when we say "he is the propitiation for our sins"?

2. What is Jesus called in I John 2:1?

NOTE: "Advocate" means "one who pleads for another."

3. How do we know that we know Jesus? I John 2:3.

4. What is said of him that saith I know him and keeps not his commandments? I John 2:4.

5. In whom is the love of God perfected? I John 2:5.

6. Did Jesus write any new commandments? I John 2:7.

7. What is a result of a love for the world, and what is the result for the love of God? I John 2:15-17.

**SOME BIBLE FIRSTS**

1. Who organized the first Community Chest?  
(Genesis 41:47-49; 54-57)
2. What was the name of the first skyscraper?  
(Genesis 11:4-9)
3. Who rode in the first submarine?  
(Jonah 1:17)
4. When was the first blackout recorded in the Bible?  
(Exodus 10:21-23)
5. When was the first smoke screen used to protect God's people and hide them from their enemies?  
(Exodus 14:19-24)

**Some Bible Firsts Answers:**

1. Joseph.
2. Babel.
3. Jonah.
4. In Egypt just before the Israelites left the land.
5. When the Israelites left Egypt and were encamped at the Red Sea.

**HAVING FUN!**

By Fern Row Casebeer  
 Hi, there! Please come and play with us,  
 We're having lots of fun.  
 We'll share our playthings with you all;  
 Come on! Hurry up! Run!  
 We play out here 'most every day  
 Right in our own back yard.  
 Don't have to watch for cars, you see,  
 So we play very hard.  
 We're just as happy as can be;  
 I'm sure you see our smile;  
 So come on over, all of you,  
 And play with us awhile.



"JANIE AND THE INSTRUCTIONS"  
by Mary Brandeberry

Janie was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Smith. She was a child of God and had come to Jesus when she was thirteen years old. Her parents also were believers and loved God.

It was February 11, and the week before she had had her 14th birthday. Aunt Meg and Uncle Tom had given her an angora sweater. With the sweater there was a set of instructions on how to take care of it so that it would wear longer. Janie had learned to follow instructions and was very careful with her things, as she always read the directions on everything and did just as they said. But Sally, her girl friend, was careless and never followed rules. She had washed a white blouse in hot water without taking off the red ribbon and had used a harsh soap. The blouse shrank, and the color of the red ribbon ran onto the blouse. That was the way Sally did everything, she never read the directions. Janie thought Sally was very stupid and careless. Secretly, she did not like to be seen with Sally at all.

The day before they had a fuss because Sally wanted to try on Janie's bracelet, and instead of opening the catch right she had tried to use force and broke it. Janie had stamped her foot and cried out, "Oh you stupid and careless girl! I never want to see you again! Do not come near me again!" Sally's eyes had been full of pain and hurt. She had wept and said how sorry she was, and that she knew it was stupid but could not help it. Janie turned her back on her and ran home. She felt she was justified. Sally did not deserve nice things or nice girl friends, thought Janie, yet she had this guilty feeling. Well, why should she feel guilty! Now the day was ruined. Everything she did was meaningless, and before the supper dishes were done, she felt so hateful, she knew she would not be able to pray before bedtime. Every time she thought of Sally, she wanted to slap her. Mother saw something wrong and at

last asked Janie the trouble, but Janie did not want to tell because she felt that Mother would blame her, but at last Mother heard the truth. She said, "I am not going to scold you honey, but I do want to reason with you. You hate Sally because she does not follow instructions. Is that right?" "Yes!" said Janie. "Really Mother, she just will not listen to me when I try to tell her. She is stupid." "Yes, she is, but you are foolish too," said Mother. "What!" said Janie, "Why Mother! You know I always follow instructions, I really do!" "No," said Mother, "You do not. You are God's creation. He is your Maker. His Spirit is in you, and He has forgiven your sins through the blood of Jesus. You are a new creation, and He has given a set of instructions, so that you can get the most out of your new life, and also give the most. You should not have such a guilty feeling as you have now. That is what keeps you from being able to pray." "A set of instructions, what?" asked Janie with deep interest. Mother said, "The Ten Commandments. You repeat them every Sabbath. They are the moral law, and they show what sin is. The law points back to the love and character of God your Father." "Oh!" said Janie, "Oh! I never thought of them as instructions, but I cannot help the way I feel. I just cannot!" "Yes, you can if you follow the instructions. Jesus said to love God first. If you want to have a close friendship with her, follow God's rules, love her, and do good to her when she is careless with you. Pick out her good points, and tell her of them. Make her feel at ease and an equal with you. Compliment her on the things she does better than you, and ask her to help you do as good. In exchange, help her in her weak points, and because you follow the rules, you really will love her. Love begets understanding, for God is love and as His creation there is no other way to express ourselves rightly, for love is the fulfilling of the law."

"We cannot let Satan rule our life, for he uses the emotions of hate, lust, fear and strife. God created us to use love, faith, peace and joy. If you follow these rules, you will be able to pray with a clear conscience. You can then be sure that God will answer." It was a long talk Mother gave, and Janie had never before seen things so clearly.

"Oh, how stupid I have been, Oh, help me pray that God will forgive me and that I may be able to tell Sally how much I love her!" And that is just what Janie did.

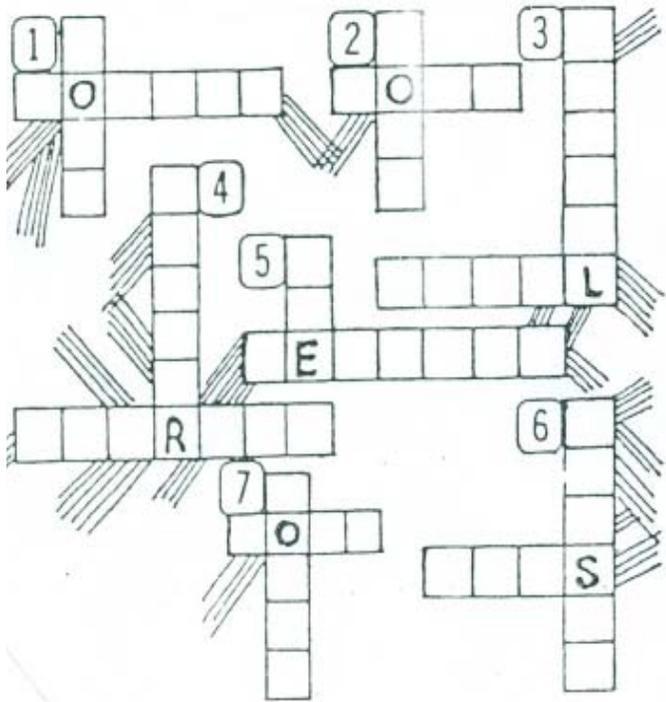
**WHO AM I?**

God often uses His smallest creatures to help or in some way influence His people.

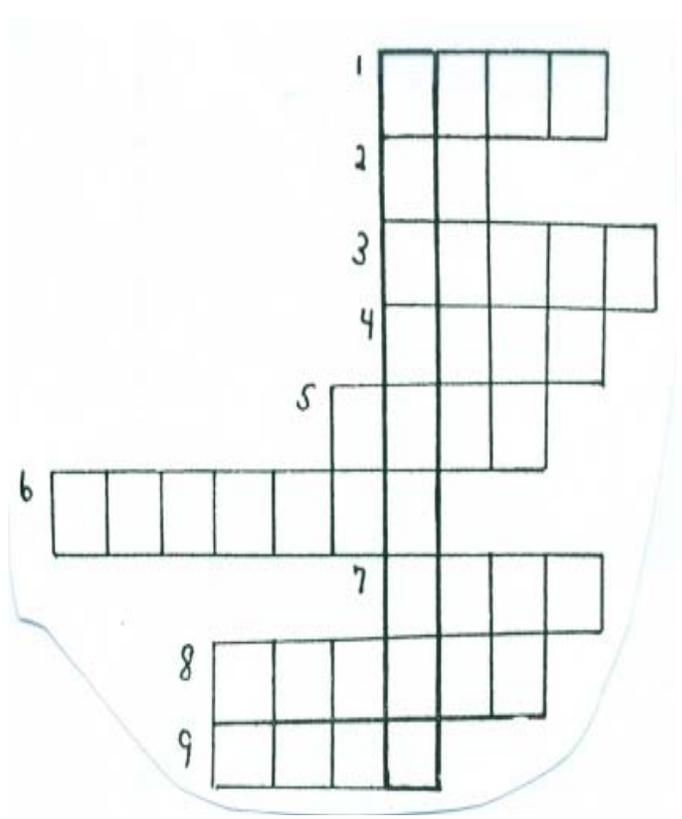
In the puzzle below, the vertical squares are to be filled with the name of someone mentioned in the Bible and represented by the blank in the clues.

The horizontal squares are to be filled with the name of the little creature that influenced that person. The clues are spoken by these creatures.

1. ....the Baptist used me for food. (Mark 1:6).
2. I brought ..... a welcome sign of land. (Genesis 8:11).
3. God fed the children of ..... with me. (Numbers 11:30, 32).
4. I may be small, but our heavenly ..... knows when I fall. (Matthew 10:29).
5. I tempted ..... in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:1).
6. The strong man, .... ate our sweet food. (Judges 14:7-9).
7. I ate the plant that gave ..... shade. (Jonah 4:6-7).



**IF YOU WERE ANOTHER PERSON, WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A FRIEND OF YOURSELF?**



**PETER'S OCCUPATION**

The answers to these questions can be found in Acts 2:1-21. Put the answers in the correct boxes above. If your answers are correct, Peter's occupation will appear in the heavy squares.

1. What were the cloven tongues like?
2. What gave them utterance?
3. What men were dwelling in Jerusalem?
4. What did Paul say they should do to his words?
5. What prophet did Peter mention?
6. What will God do to His Spirit in the last days?
7. What will the old men do?
8. What will the sun be turned into?
9. What will be turned into blood?

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## God's Garden

By David DeLong

Plants of green, with blossoms gold,  
And vines with fruit so laden;  
Bring joy to farmers, scarce untold,  
When their eyes these things behold,  
Whether man, or maiden.

What work to water and do weeding,  
Underneath a burning sun;  
The same is at the time of seeding,  
But, when farmers' kids are feeding,  
Toil has turned to fun.

So it is in God's Own garden,  
As He sees His children growing;  
Sadness comes when life-soils harden,  
Joy returns when God gives pardon,  
After His Own "hoeing".

And when God's children sup with Him,  
Some day all troubles will be past;  
No eyes, by tears, shall ever dim,  
They'll be among the cherubim,  
And fruit they bear shall last.

