

The Advocate of Truth

Blessings

*Separated or
Reconciled*

High Standard

*Battle of
Armageddon*



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Blessings From God

By Sister Nesta John

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:7-10). Sowing can be defined as the process of placing seeds in or on the ground for future growth. Reaping is the gathering of the products that were sown. Receiving God’s blessings in your life is by practicing the law of sowing and reaping. The more seeds that you plant, the greater the harvest. The Lord works great wonders in our lives for which we must be grateful. The best blessing that we can receive from God is the forgiveness of our sins. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Romans 4:7-8 tells us, “...Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”

Receiving blessings from God can only come by keeping His commandments. “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (I John 5:3). The Ten Commandments should be written on the fleshly tables of our hearts at all times. Many times God blesses us, and we don’t even recognize it. I guess we are looking for something great at all times, but it is a fact that the little things matter with God.

The soil that we will prepare for the seeds should be moist and rich. This means that the heart should be prepared to receive the good seeds that are about to be planted. Matthew 6:33 tells us, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” The moisture and the richness that the soil should have is seeking the kingdom of God first, and only by doing so can great blessings be added unto you.

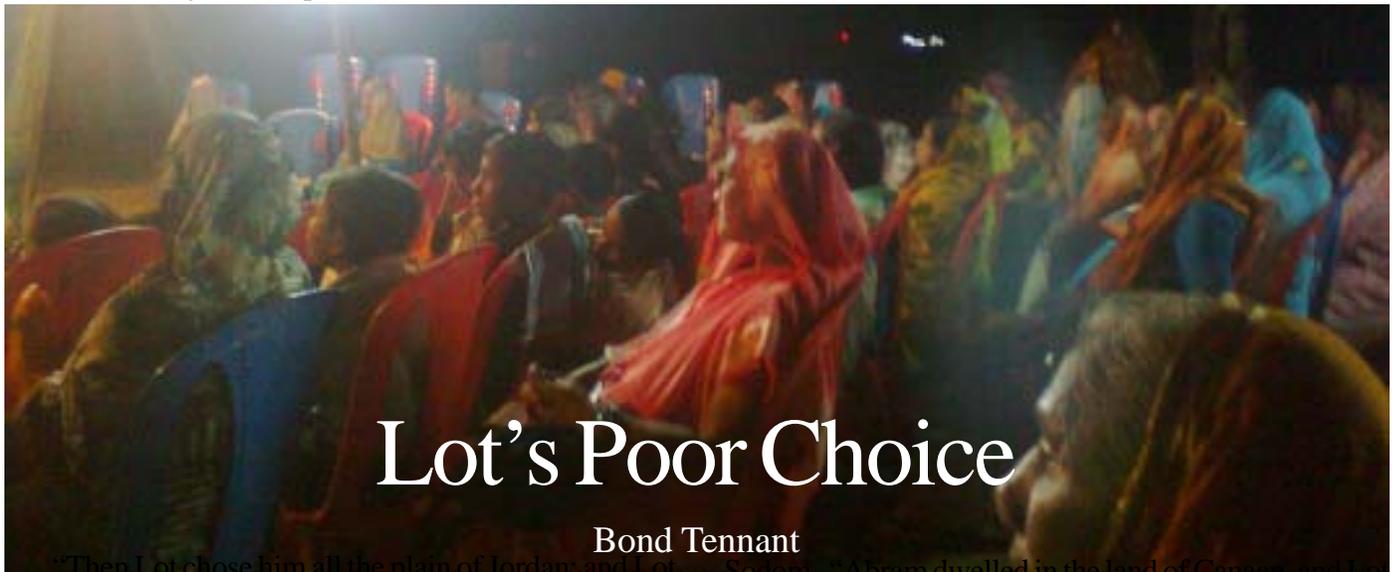
Some of the seeds that we can sow in the soil that is well prepared are: First, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10). Giving the Lord what is due to Him is vitally important to a Christian. We are considered thieves if we do not bring the Lord’s tithe into the storehouse. “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings” (verse 8). Blessings come with honesty.

Secondly, Matthew 7:7-8 tells us, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” These things only come around with the keeping of the Ten Commandments and believing. We must have faith in order to receive blessings from God. “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord” (James 1:6-7).

Thirdly, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:38). We should always be a cheerful giver, never with a heavy heart. Whosoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whosoever sows generously will also reap generously. Reaping the blessings from God is much better than being cursed by God. “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again” (Proverbs 19:17). The repayment, which is His blessings, will be greater than what you gave.

“Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt

find it after many days” (Ecclesiastes 11:1). “He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap” (verse 4). “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good” (verse 6). God takes care of all the seeds that we sow and transforms them into blessings for us. When we sow seeds into the soil, we must be sure that the soil is nurtured and watered in order that the seeds will bring forth the fruits. We as Christians should always be honest to ourselves and unto God, and we will receive a blessing if we faint not. **GOD BLESS YOU ALL.**



Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other” (Genesis 13:11). Lot chose the best, and Abraham took what was left!

Why did Lot make his poor choice? The chief element in determining his place in life seems to have been worldly advantage. He was not motivated by generosity, but selfishness. It is mean to take that which rightly belongs to another. Had Lot’s heart been right, he would not have ventured among the Sodomites. His aim may have been to convert them, but he came away without one convert.

The course of Lot’s poor choice was downward. We are to set our affections on things above, not things on the earth. “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2).

Joshua chose to serve the Lord (see Joshua 24:15). However, Lot pitched his tent toward the wicked city of

Sodom. “Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom” (Genesis 13:12).

Let us consider the result of Lot’s poor choice in choosing his dwelling place. He lost his friend, Abraham. Abraham was called the Friend of God. “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God” (James 2:23).

He lost his wealth. It was all consumed in Sodom. He was glad to escape with his life.

He lost his influence with his neighbors and family.

He lost the presence of God. Only two of the three who visited Abraham came to Lot, and they wanted to tarry in the streets. “And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with

his face toward the ground; And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night" (Genesis 19:1-2).

He lost his honor. In his drunken revelry, he lay with his two daughters and became the father of the Moabites and Ammonites. "And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us

make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day" (Genesis 19:30-38).

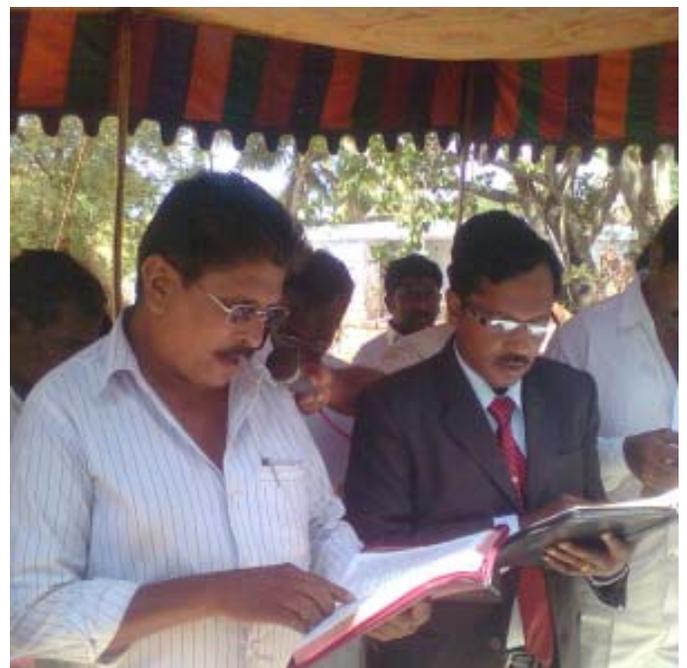
Let us note that it is important that we choose the right work, the right residence, and the right companions. It is important that we have a personal knowledge of God. Lot got his religion secondhand. He went with Abraham. Abraham followed God, and Lot followed Abraham!

From his poor choice, Lot got a lot, but he had to pay for it by suffering a lot. Let us ask God to give us wisdom in making the necessary choices in our lives.

SEPARATED OR RECONCILED

By Fred Hardman

Have we been separated from God? Isaiah 59:1-2 states plainly, "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." In I John 3:4, we find out what sin is. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law:



for sin is the transgression of the law." Yes, we can be separated from God by our sins and not keeping HIS commandments. Please turn to Exodus 20:2-17, and read God's Law, THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. We cannot choose which commandments we want to keep because they are ALL necessary to follow. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). The

Bible is full of instruction in what God wants His true servants to do so they will not be separated from Him.

If a person is separated from God, reconciliation must be made. How is this done? "... Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Romans 3:23-25). It is vital that a person repent of his sins and take the next step of baptism. The process comes through the blood of Jesus and the love of God. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: Yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Romans 5:6-11). We are justified and given atonement only through the sacrifice of the blood of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.

A gift comes with this process. "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:15-18). The world, or those separated, cannot receive the gift of the Holy Spirit because they do not know him. But with reconciliation, the gift of the Holy Spirit is given to you.

There are significant results from this process that we will not want to miss. Please read Romans 8:11 carefully: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth

in you." We will be raised from the dead when we have the Spirit within us.

When will this rising occur? Study carefully the following Scriptures so you will not miss the timing of this event. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (I Corinthians 15:24). "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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:51-57). "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (I Thessalonians 4:13). "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (verses 16-17). Did you discern the timing of this rising to eternal life? The Scriptures say it happens at the trumpet sound when Jesus comes to call His saints from the grave. Jesus is calling all at the time of His return to earth and not one by one. This includes both those still in their graves and those still alive, and is a one time event.

There is much to study and a need for clear and complete understanding in all of these scriptural passages. Heed the concluding words of Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."



A High Standard Of Conduct

When God calls us, He calls us out of the worldly ways. He wants people for eternity who are willing to give up any and everything that is contrary to Him. He has prepared many wonderful things for the future, things far beyond what our human minds can grasp. He has to a certain extent revealed them to us by His Spirit, and this should be an incentive to every one who professes the name of Christ to live a holy, consecrated life at all times. God gave up a great deal for us, and He expects us to set our standard of conduct high. In fact, He has set the example for us to follow.

There are those in the world who try to sanctify themselves and set their own standard of righteousness, and in so doing they forget to be holy. There once was a preacher who said that there is such a thing as an ‘unholy’ Christian. Christian means Christ-like. This same preacher said that we can be saved without being sanctified and that we can be sanctified without being holy. But if we fail to be both sanctified and holy, we are not Christians, and if we are not Christians, we will not be saved when Christ comes again. “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

We should not try to get by with as low a standard

as we can, but seek to reach as high a standard as possible. “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” (Hebrews 12:2). A group of young people once asked if it was wrong to go to parties. That is a question that is hard to answer by “yes” or “no.” They were given the following rule to follow, which is also a good rule for all of us. “If you are invited to a party, and you feel that you want to go, when you get there, push the door open so you can see inside. If you think from the things you see going on that Christ would be there, perhaps it will be all right for you to go in. If, however, you see things going on in which you feel Christ would not take part, you had better close the door right softly and slip home without letting anyone see you.

Christ should always be our example, and if we doubt at any time, we should give Him the benefit of the doubt and refrain until we are certain it is right. We cannot set too high a standard because perfection cannot be improved upon. Let us strive to be perfect.

--Adapted From An Old Sabbath School Lesson

TEMPERANCE

By Sister Angel Francis

Having temperance as a part of the fruit of the Spirit is very important for a child of God. Temperance can be defined as being moderate in all things. To our knowledge as children of God, we must add temperance. We can display temperance once we practice the other fruit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23.

When Jesus resisted the devil and had fasted forty days and forty nights, He displayed temperance as the Word of God states that "...every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things..." (I Corinthians 9:25). It also states that the aged men are to be sober, grave and temperate (see Titus 2:2). Our temper and emotions can also be controlled by meekness. As children of God, we ought to be temperate with each other.

Moses was temperate with the children of Israel. They were stubborn, ungrateful and disobedient, and they murmured against God before the people (see Numbers 20:2-5). After he said, "...must we fetch you water...?" he struck the rock twice. They also turned their backs against God, on the mount, when Moses went to receive the Ten Commandments. They commanded Aaron to make them a golden calf. He was pushed to the limit, but yet God gave him the strength to carry on, but he still lost his place to enter the promised land because of this stubborn generation of people.

As Christians, we should be able to have self-control. We may be pushed to a certain level when our temper is being tested, and if not controlled it can hurt others. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness" (II Peter 1:5-6). Let us, as Christians, try our best to portray temperance in our daily lives, which will make us better children for Christ's soon coming kingdom.

PRAYER

By Brother Degel Francis

"Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people" (Isaiah 56:7).

Prayer can be defined as supplication or petition between a person and God, or to seek or solicit help from God the Father for any reason. To please God, we must have an intercessor. This is the Lord Jesus Christ who takes away our sins.

Question: For whom should we pray?

Answer: It is often said that we should keep our friends close and our enemies closer. So we should pray for our friends as well as our enemies according to Matthew 5:44. "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." For if we only pray for those who do well unto us, what reward have we? So in all this, let us do as the Word of God says in Matthew 5:48, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Wherefore, brethren, let us love our enemies, and let us love our friends. Let us love each other even as our Father in heaven loves us.

Question: Should we love the earthly things of this world?

Answer: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15). I couldn't agree more. Why? We should not pray for the things of this world, but it is more important to pray for more of the Holy Spirit. II Thessalonians 2:7 states, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth

will let, until he be taken out of the way.” So brethren, let us not cling to the things of this world, but let us pray for wisdom, understanding and more of the Holy Spirit so that we may cling to the holy Scriptures, not just to read, but to understand. We should make what the Bible says a part in all our daily lives, in order that we may live and reign in God’s holy kingdom forever and ever. Amen.

You Must Reinvent Your Life!

A different thought

GOODNESS

Goodness doesn’t sit still and watch its fellow men get oppressed by others.

Goodness is forgiving all wrongs that were done.

Goodness is generous to the less fortunate without a spectacle of reproach.

Goodness lifts up those who have fallen in shame.

Goodness is loving and not given to wrath.

Goodness is virtuous and doesn’t go astray from God’s commands.

Goodness is understanding and knows that all choices have consequences.

Goodness is peaceful and doesn’t hold any grudge whatsoever.

Goodness is kind, generous and shows benevolence and love to others.

Goodness is all these and more, and it should be found in a child of God.

--By Brother Tegel Francis

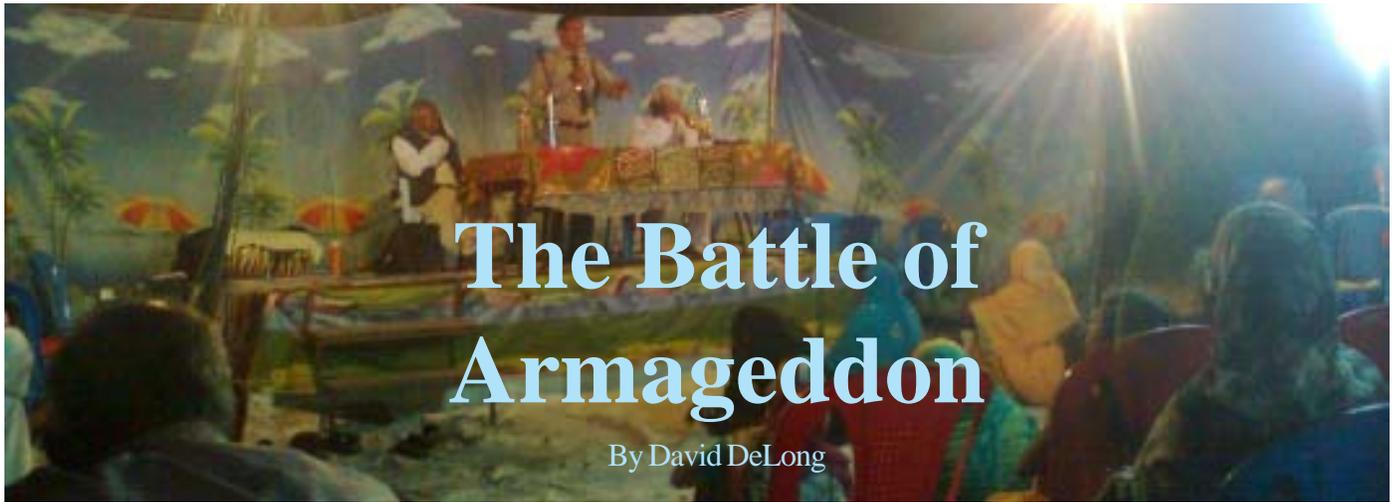
We have heard much about the poor performance of the economy. Jobs and careers are scarce, and many people have no work. We are told by some that in order to find another job or career, one should change his occupation or career by going back to school for training in a different line of work or field. When one does that, he is said to have reinvented himself.

There is a spiritual thought to the subject of reinvention. It has to do with your life. Here is the thought. One is born into sin at birth. Therefore, we possibly can say that one’s first occupation is that of being a sinner. But in order to become a child of God, one must be converted and acquire a spiritual understanding.

How can one do that? The answer is found in Acts 2:38 which reads, “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” After one has done that, he has reinvented himself from his old nature of sinning to that of new nature which is pleasing to God.

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)” (Ephesians 2:1-5).

--Bond Tennant



The Battle of Armageddon

By David DeLong

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Revelation 16:12-16).

During the time of the seven last plagues when the sixth angel, issuing the sixth plague, pours his vial upon the river Euphrates, Earth begins to enter the momentous event known as the Battle of Armageddon. Three unclean spirits, resembling frogs, prepare the way for this great battle. One unclean spirit comes out of the mouth of the dragon (Satan), and the other two come out of the mouths of the beast and the false prophet (see Revelation 12:9; 13:1-18, compare with 19:19-20). Satan, the beast, and the false prophet will be proclaiming false doctrines and lies and working miracles, which will be performed by the unclean spirits (devils), to deceive the whole unbelieving world (see 13:8,11-15). In the above text, the Lord makes a plea that we watch and keep our garments (live righteously) so that we will not be deceived by these events.

When the three devils mentioned above gather the kings of the earth to this battle, there will be an army of 200,000,000 soldiers assembled. Notice what Revela-

tion 9:13-16 declares: "And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them."

Revelation 14:17-20 informs us that this "army of the horsemen" will be involved in a horribly bloody war. We read: "And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." A furlong is about 220 yards. Sixteen hundred furlongs, therefore, is 200 miles. Imagine blood up to the horse bridles for 200 miles! This is the warring phase of Christ's second coming.

We get a view of this battle in Revelation 19:11-21. Verses 11-16 informs us what happens when Christ returns at His warring phase. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on

his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Jesus is represented as riding upon a white horse. The armies in heaven include the saints, who have been previously resurrected, following their Master upon white horses. Out of Jesus' mouth goes a sharp sword (probably representing His Word--see Hebrews 4:12) with which He smites the nations. Again, we see reference to the winepress of God's wrath, as we saw from Revelation 14. At this time, Jesus is King of kings, and Lord of Lords, as He is about to take over the rulership of the earth.

Verses 17-21 shows us who fights against Jesus at this time. "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

Not only will there be a great amount of blood during the Battle of Armageddon, but there also will be many bodies that the birds will feast upon at this time. We will discuss more of this aspect of the battle, later. The beast will apparently be a worldwide governmental system led by an especially wicked individual (possibly the "man of

sin" of II Thessalonians 2:3-10). He will lead the kings of the earth, and their armies, in an effort to fight against Jesus and the saints that come with Him. This being, along with the false prophet, will be cast into the lake of fire. The rest of the armies that followed them will then be destroyed by the Lord.

Isaiah, chapter 34, presents to us another view, it appears, of this great battle. Verses 1-10 reads: "Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness. For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever."

When Jesus returns to fight, His people Israel will be given a chance to be redeemed. Joel 2:11-12, 18-20 tells us: "And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it? Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning... Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people. Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall

be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen: But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things."

The Battle of Armageddon will be fought in Israel in a great valley known by several names. Joel 3:1-2,9-16 sums it up in this way: "For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land...Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel."

A number of the children of Israel will actually come to repentance at this time. Zechariah 12:2-3,8-11 informs of this. "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it...In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will

pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon."

Zechariah 14:1-7 gives additional information. "Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. 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. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light."

In Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39, we read of a battle which, in some respects, sounds like the Battle of Armageddon. This is the Battle of Gog and Magog. According to Revelation 20:7-9, the Battle of Gog and Magog will be fought after the Millennium. In chapter 38:1-4, we read of the ringleader in this battle who will come against Israel. "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords." Gog is "the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal" in the land of Magog. Meshech and

Tubal are believed to be the cities of Moscow and Tobolsk (see the Scofield Bible note on Ezekiel 38). Therefore, Gog would be referring to the chief prince of the land of Russia.

In verses 5-7, we find that various other nations will join Gog in coming against the land of Israel. However, the Lord, as we have already learned, will fight against them. Verses 8,10-12 reads: "After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them...Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land."

We notice here that Gog and his army of nations will try to conquer the land of Israel when she is resting safely in unwalled villages. This will be "in the latter years". First Thessalonians 5:1-3 is a very interesting text. It reads: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." This passage may have reference to a time when Israel is in peace and safety, and then the armies of the world come against her at the Battle of Armageddon. However, Israel will definitely be in peace and safety when the nations, at the Battle of Gog and Magog, come against her.

Ezekiel 38:18-23 informs us: "And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall

shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD."

Let us continue these thoughts in chapter 39. Verses 1-4 records: "Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel: And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured."

Continuing in verses 9-12, we learn that the children of Israel will then clean up the refuse that is left after the Lord destroys this great army from the north. "And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years: So that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord GOD. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: and it shall stop the noses of the passengers: and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it The valley of Hamongog. And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land."

Both battles, 1,000 years apart, will be a glorious time for the saints of God who are with Jesus and watch their Lord fight against the kings of the earth which come against Jerusalem. Let us watch, therefore, and keep our garments spotless.



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.

Presbyterian congregation welcomes dogs, which minister views as part of the family **By Jeff Gottlieb** Los Angeles Times (MCT)

LOS ANGELES – As the Presbyterian service was about to start, one of the congregants was being disruptive, making a spectacle of himself once again on a Sunday. But that’s what other members of the Los Angeles church have come to expect.

At Covenant Presbyterian Church in the city’s Westchester neighborhood, dogs like Mr. Bobby are welcome congregants at the Sunday night services, where howling and sudden bouts of scratching may interrupt prayers, and the collection plate holds treats for poodles and golden retrievers alike. And the Rev. Tom Eggebeen said he fully understands if some of the congregants need to step outside now and again.

The idea behind the service, Eggebeen said, was to make it more comfortable for people to attend the church, which has 120 members, discounting up to a dozen dogs that generally attend services. Cats and other animals are not permitted, perhaps out of a belief that of God’s many creatures, dogs probably need more ministering.

“The heart of the whole thing has been to provide a worship service for the entire family, including the four-footed friends. Their pets are very, very important to them and virtually comprise a member of the family,” he

said. “I wouldn’t be in a pulpit on Sunday mornings and say, ‘Leave your children home.’”

More than a gimmick or an effort to build attendance, the dog services are part of a growing movement by churches to recognize the emotional bond between humans and their pets.

Animal blessings, memorial services and grief counseling for the loss of a pet are increasingly common in many denominations.

Covenant is not alone in allowing dogs in church. Underwood Hills Presbyterian Church in Omaha has been holding its Paws for Prayers service since December 2008, but it is ending the program because of dwindling attendance, both human and animal.

Underwood Hills Pastor Becky Balestri said she had gotten more jokes than objections, such as people wondering whether the gathering song was “How Much is That Doggie in the Window.”

Laura Hobgood-Oster, a professor of religion and environmental studies at Southwestern University in Texas, said that the annual blessing of animals in churches has been going on for several decades.

She said dogs began attending a small number of churches only three or four years ago, but she has found a 19th century newspaper article from a small Texas town that noted well-trained dogs going to church.

Eggebeen said he has received no reaction from the Presbyterian leadership.

“If we were sacrificing chickens, then the hierarchy might respond, but essentially Presbyterian congregations have a great deal of latitude,” he said.

Though he has received cards and letters from around the country congratulating him on the dog service, he also has received “some really hateful things.”

A writer on a religious website blasted Eggebeen, saying people like him “promulgate a false Gospel.”

“The first step into church membership or the reason for attending a church service should be conviction and not comfort,” he wrote. “If you suddenly feel called to hear the Word of God because Fido can sing along, then reconsider the purpose of your trip.”

--The Bulletin

Comment

Bringing dogs to church no doubt does make some congregants comfortable. But these people have what we may call a “feel good” religion. The writer on the religious website who blasted Eggebeen is correct. The bringing of dogs to church does not admonish anyone or convict anyone of sin. Attending church just to be comfortable is a vain exercise.

Let us repeat the words of the writer on the religious website: “The first step into church membership or the reason for attending a church service should be conviction and not comfort.” He also wrote: “If you suddenly feel called to hear the Word of God because Fido can come along, then reconsider the purpose of your trip.” His words sum it up very well!

Personal Again Thinking About Cyber Threats

In II Timothy 3:1 we read, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.” The word “perilous” means to be grievous, violent and difficult to deal with. One of the many things which make these days perilous are **Cyber Threats!**

The highly technical world in which we live is run by computers. The term “**cyber**” is relative new. It is associated with the use of computers and the Internet. It

describes those things that pertain to the age of information. In reference to the time of the end, God told Daniel, “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (Daniel 12:4). The cyber world is just one result of this increase in knowledge. Computers and the Internet are becoming an essential part of everyday life. They are used to store information, to process data, to send and receive messages, and to act as a social link.

The role that computers now play in the world has stimulated criminal activity. Also terrorists are using this technology to attack their targets. They depend upon computer information systems and programs. Their intent is to create violence in some form. The transformation of terrorists' activity from the previous methods to the new electronic method is one of the greatest threats to modern society. This is true for all levels--the regional, national and international. There is much that must be done to combat this type of criminal activity.

This type of transnational crime, made possible by the use of computers and telecommunications systems, is designed to create maximum fear, confusion and uncertainty. One goal of the cyber terrorists is to shut down critical national infrastructure systems such as energy, transportation and government operations.

Cyber-terrorists may be able to coerce, or intimidate, a certain government or its people to conform to a particular political, or social ideology. Just recently, the U.S. Department of Defense and intelligence agencies have become more aware of cyber incidents that involve certain foreign governments. Attempts have been made to retrieve classified information through computer networks in certain countries.

Efforts are being made to combat the increasing threat of cyber terrorism in the United States. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) labels terrorism as “the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.” The U.S. Department of State defines terrorism as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups, or clandestine agents.”

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: I Corinthians 13:13 tells us that charity is greater than faith and hope. Why do you think this is so?

ANSWER: Charity is defined as “Christian love of one’s fellow men.” Therefore, according to I Corinthians 13:13, charity, or love, is of greater importance than faith and hope. Even if we were able to move mountains with our faith, we are nothing. We may even die because of our faith, but without love it would profit us absolutely nothing. Peter, teaching the followers of Christ, said, “...above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (I Peter 4:8).

Those we truly love are foremost in our minds. We are concerned with their health. We want happiness and the very best things in life for them. We do not covet their good fortune; rather, we rejoice with them. We do not flaunt our possessions or intelligence before them to create jealousy. Rather, we accept our blessings humbly and thankfully, remembering that all good gifts come from God. We share these blessings with our loved ones. We see only their qualities, and exercise much patience toward their weakness.

For example, a brother, or a sister member of the church is suddenly enveloped in a scandal. Part of the accusations are true. Much more has been added in the retelling of the story. The burden of his, or her, sin seems more than he can bear. He decides to give up the cause

of Christ as a hopeless undertaking for him. The worldly way is to push the erring one on his downward course by placing more temptations before him. A Christian will not make an occasion of his mistake to continue the gossip. Rather, he will meditate and pray about it. Then, with the help of other devout ones, he will plan a way to lift and restore the fallen one. How different the way of the Lord, (the way of charity) and that of the world.

Those we love we will endeavor to save by love rather than by derogatory remarks, by teaching them the gospel of Christ, which is a gospel of love. This ambition will be realized only by much hard work, patience, prayer, and sacrifice.

If this unselfish love were practiced throughout the household of faith, how strong and how wonderful would be the Christian way of life, and how many souls would be won for our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!

In the last days the love of many will grow cold. “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:12). But the Lord’s disciples will be known because of their love for one another. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (I John 4:20) “And above all these things put on charity,

which is the bond of perfectness” (Colossians 3:14).

QUESTION: Why must we put Christ first?

ANSWER: When Christ is first, everything else seems to fall into its rightful place, but when He is not first, everything else is out of place. Then confusion reigns. There is an established order for all things, ordained by God and utterly inexorable. To neglect this spells frustration and futility, and to recognize and embrace it spells life, freedom and happiness!

There is a great deal of confusion as to this matter of what comes first. One says, “My health comes first”; another, “My family comes first”; still another, “Education is of primary importance,” or marriage, or business. Others make pleasure, or politics, or society, or church, or club, or friends their chief concern.

But God has spoken, and He has told us that to be in proper alignment with Himself, with ourselves, with the world, and with society, there is a set and fixed order. God’s order is, Christ first because He gave Him to be the head over all things to the church. He is Lord of all. “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:18). He must be the first in our affections, first in our planning, first in our motives, first in our desires, first in our homes, first in our lives, first in our pleasures, first in our business, first in our work, first in our play. When this is the order, all is well, come what may.

It is so also in salvation. You are admitted through Jesus Christ. In forgiveness, in peace, in power, in holiness, in service, in study, in meditation, in prayer, in testimony. Jesus Christ is the entrance-way into the fullness of each of these. Without Him at the entrance, none of these becomes ours. If one knows Christ, life comes into correct adjustment. Life becomes beautiful, purposeful, useful, beneficent, radiant, joyous, rich, sweet, pure. When He is given first place in the heart and life, then God is glorified, Christ is exalted, and the Holy Spirit is honored. Then, also, the church is enriched, the world is blessed, and souls are guided aright.

Putting Christ first has brought eternal blessing and fame to multitudes who should otherwise have perished in misery and obscurity. There have, no doubt, been seemingly fine lives lived without Christ, but watch them

through to the end. Some of the most tragic wails of futility and despair have come from the dying lips of many of earth’s most brilliant unbelievers. And some of the bitterest expressions of disappointment have come from believers who failed to give the precious Saviour the first place.

No, the life is never right until He is first, the home is out of order until He is first, the nation is doomed unless He is King, the world is lost until He is King of kings and Lord of lords!

QUESTION: What is meant by the term “Cosmological Argument?”

ANSWER: The Cosmological Argument is an argument for God’s existence, apart from the Bible, rooted in His creation. This argument is that every effect must have an adequate cause. The universe is an effect. Therefore, reason demands that whatever caused the universe must be greater than the universe. That cause is God! Hebrews 3:4 tells us that “...every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.”

QUESTION: What is the difference between everlasting torment and everlasting punishment?

ANSWER: Torment implies conscious punishment. The wicked will be everlastingly punished by being deprived of existence on any plane of life.

QUESTION: When were angels created?

ANSWER: The evidence supports the view that angels were created some time prior to the creation of the earth. Job 38:7 makes reference to the “sons of God” singing at the time the earth was created. The term “sons of God” is used elsewhere in Job in reference to angels. “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them” (Job 1:6). “Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD” (Job 2:1).



India





New church dedication service

LESSON I

MOSES PRAYS FOR GOD'S PRESENCE

Scripture Reading: Exodus 33:12-23.

Golden Text: Exodus 33:20.

“And he said, Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me, and live.”

1. What did Moses request of the Lord in Exodus 33:12-13?
2. Did the Lord grant his request? Exodus 33:14.
3. Did Moses desire to do anything without the presence of the Lord? Exodus 33:15-16.
4. Did the Lord know Moses, and had he found favor in the sight of the Lord? Exodus 33:17.
5. What did Moses ask of the Lord in Exodus 33:18?
6. Did the Lord promise Moses to proclaim His name before him? Exodus 33:19.
7. Could Moses look upon the face of the Lord? Why? Exodus 33:20.
8. What further did the Lord tell Moses in Exodus 33:21-23.

LESSON II

THE TABLES OF STONE RESTORED

Scripture Reading: Exodus 34:1-14.

Golden Text: Exodus 34:1 (first part).

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first...”

NOTE: A few lessons ago we studied about the tables of stone on which the Lord had written the Ten Commandments. When Moses brought them down from

the mount, he saw the people worshipping a golden calf. He was so disappointed with the people and hurt that he broke the two tables of stone on which God had written the commandments for them to follow. Now, we are going to see these were restored to the people.

1. What did the Lord tell Moses to do and when was he to come up into the mount? Exodus 34:1-2.
2. Was anyone to come with Moses? Were the flocks or herds to feed before the mount at this particular time? Exodus 34:3.
3. What did Moses do in Exodus 34:4?
4. How did the Lord appear unto Moses? What did He proclaim unto Moses? Exodus 34:5-7.
5. What did Moses do and ask at this time? Exodus 34:8-9.
6. What was the covenant which the Lord made with Israel? Exodus 34:10-13.
7. Were they to worship any other God? What other name was used for God in Exodus 34:14?

LESSON III

MOSES' FACE SHONE

Scripture Reading: Exodus 34:28-35.

Golden Text: Exodus 34:35 (first part).

“And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone...”

NOTE: Moses went up unto Mount Sinai to get the second copy of the Ten Commandments and had been talking with the Lord. Moses now returns and comes down from the mount.

1. How many days did Moses stay on the mount with the Lord? Exodus 34:28. Moses did not have any food or water during this time.

2. When Moses came down from the mount, what did he carry and how did he look? Exodus 34:29.
3. What did Moses do, and who came to see him? Exodus 34:31.
4. Did the children of Israel come close to Moses, and what were they told? Exodus 34:32.
5. What did Moses do when he finished speaking with them? Exodus 34:33.
6. When did Moses take the veil off? Exodus 34:34-35.

5. Did Aaron then admit they had sinned? Numbers 12:11.
6. Did Aaron want Miriam healed, and did Moses ask the Lord for her healing? Numbers 12:12-13.
7. What did the Lord say concerning Miriam? Numbers 12:14.
8. How long was Miriam shut out of the camp? Numbers 12:15.

NOTE: Sometimes we say things against our ministers or helpers in the church. Do you think this angers the Lord now as it did then?

LESSON IV

MIRIAM HEALED OF LEPROSY

Scripture Reading: Numbers 12.

Golden Text: Numbers 12:13.

“And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.”

NOTE: The children of Israel are still on their journey to the promised land as our lesson starts today.

1. Who spoke against Moses and for what reason? Numbers 12:1-2.

NOTE: Miriam was the sister of Moses, and she did not like it because Moses' wife was an Ethiopian. You may remember studying about Miriam in our earlier lessons. She was the little girl who ran to tell her mother when Pharaoh's daughter found Moses in the bulrushes.

2. What sort of person was Moses? Numbers 12:3.
3. The Lord spoke to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, and what did He say? Numbers 12:4-8.
4. The Lord was angry with Aaron and Miriam. What did the Lord cause to come on Miriam? Numbers 12:9-10.

THE BIBLE

There's a Book we call the Bible,
It is God's own blessed Word;
You will find between its covers
Words the like you've never heard.

When we read it we are hearing
God's one voice, so sweet and pure;
And His promises He always
Keeps, for they are true and sure.

Let us read it, and obey it,
Then our lives will give Him praise;
It will help us in our trials,
As for God we spend our days.

When you are angry,
Pretend you're a bird;
Sing just a little,
But don't say a word.

THE TWINS' PEACE PACT

Ken and Ben Miller were so worked up that night that they could not go to sleep right away. All day, off and on, they had quarreled over the chemistry outfit that Aunt Betty had given them "to have between them", as if things "between" people were any fun at all!

Because they were still awake, they overheard what Mother said to Father in the next room. "I always supposed that twins - twin brothers especially - would be particularly loving, but our boys certainly are not. My nerves are on edge because of their continual squabbling. I wish we had a big boy and a little boy. Instead of twin boys, I'd prefer girls."

"Well, they must stop their fighting. We should discover something to do about it," said Father.

After that the twins lay very still. What made them feel bad, so bad they couldn't sleep for so very long, was that Mother didn't like twin boys. Mother would rather have girls!

The next morning Jim Dale came across the street to play with the twins. His sister Lily came too. She always tagged after Jim, but the twins didn't mind. She was a nice girl. But this morning no one was having much fun. At last Jim asked, "What's the matter with you fellows? Have you lost your best friend?"

"Well, yes." Ken tried to grin.

"Mother doesn't like us!" said Ben, coming to the point at once.

There was a shocked silence.

Then Lily asked, "Is it you she does not like, or some of your ways?"

"Why-" Ken thought a minute. "It's our ways, I guess."

"We quarrel quite a bit," put in Ben.

"Mother thinks we don't love each other," went on Ken. "But we do, really. It's just that Ben won't share what's given to both of us."

"Neither will Ken!" broke in Ben. "Not only that, but Ken shirks all the chores and errands off onto me."

"I don't either! You're always slipping away when there are dishes to do."

"Smarty! You-"

"If you're going to quarrel now, I'm going home," threatened Lily.

"We're not exactly quarreling," said Ken. "But we'll stop. Don't go, Lily!"

"But you see how exasperating Ken can be," Ben told her.

Ken opened his mouth and shut it again. He saw that Lily was going to say something.

"It seems to me," as Lily put on her grown-up air, "that what you boys need is a peace pact."

"Like the United Nations!" her brother chimed in.

"But how can we have one?" asked Ben.

"Let's work it out together, proposed Lily." "You twins get us a pencil and some paper."

For the next half hour, the four were busy with their tablets and pencils. Then they all compared notes. Ken and Ben almost came to blows over some of the "peace provisions," but they quieted down when Lily threatened to "walk out."

When everyone's suggestions had been discussed and written down, Lily took all the papers home for big brother Ned to copy on his computer.

Ned made two copies. "One is for you to post in your own room," Lily told the twins, "and one is for your parents. As Ned says, your father and your mother will help you keep your pact."

"As if we couldn't keep it without any help!" sniffed Ken.

"Thinks he knows it all, Ned does," grumbled Ben.

"Still, there is that way of looking at it," conceded Ken. "We have not done very well by ourselves."

"That's so. We haven't." Ben was unexpectedly meek.

"Now you've got to sign it," Lily prompted, "but read it first. Always read a document before putting your signature to it."

The twins bent over and read:

"We, the Miller twins, Kenneth and Benjamin, do solemnly agree to the following peace provisions:

"I. Neither of us shall lay claim to any possession that we own in common. If said possession is something we cannot use together, we shall take turns.

"II. Each of us shall remember to take his turn washing and wiping the dishes.

"III. Each shall do his area of the chores and errands and not try to shirk them onto the other.

"IV. Each shall respond immediately to a parent request, even if it is his brother's turn to do what is asked. (Such matters shall be settled between us, without annoyance to parents.)

"V. Each shall try to respect the other's rights and possessions and bear with the other's faults, always remembering that one's twin is one's twin, no matter how he acts up."

"Pretty good," commented the twins in chorus. Feeling quite grown up, they signed both copies of the agreement. Then Jim and Lily signed their names under "Witnessed by."

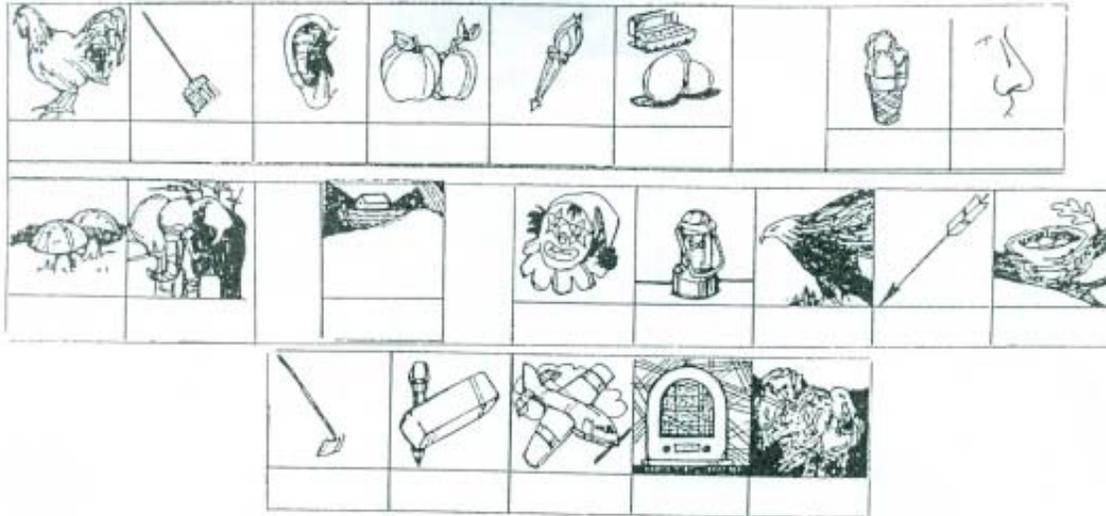
That night, before they went to sleep, the twins heard Mother read the "peace pact" aloud to Father. They hoped Father wouldn't laugh at it.

Father didn't laugh. He just said, "That is fine. We must help them keep it."

Mother agreed, and replied, "Aren't twin boys the dearest things in the world?"

--Winta M. Armstrong

This is a prayer from one of the Psalms.
 To discover what it is, take the first letter of each object pictured
 and put it in the blank space below the picture.



Jesus chose twelve disciples and gave them each the power to heal.
 He instructed them to preach the Kingdom of God.
 These particular twelve men were also known as apostles.
 To find out the meaning of the word "apostles" use this special chart to decode the following.

6	W	20	Q	7	H	3	O
	9	A	11	E	16	O	
21	Y		1	T	17	U	22
	14	N	15	T	8	O	
4	S		18	T	23	R	24
	19	B	2	H	12	S	
13	E		10	R	25	V	5

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

12 13 14 15 16 17 18

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Autumn Leaves

By David DeLong

**Crimson are the Maple leaves
When the Fall brings frost;
Colder weather sometimes grieves,
But beauty has its cost.**

**Yellow are the Birch's leaves
So gorgeous to behold;
Shimmering sunlight on the sheaves,
Each leaf, a piece of gold.**

**Russet are the red Oak leaves
Against an azure sky;
A tapestry the Lord God weaves,
His love, the reason why.**

**Purple are the Ash tree leaves
Of royalty, well-dressed;
The color of a monarch's sleeves
He wears with cape and vest.**

**Orange are the Beechwood leaves,
And when the breezes blow--
A happy sigh soon huffs and heaves
Upon its ebb and flow.**

**Brown are finally all the leaves,
Rattling crisp and dry;
When the wind their sum bereaves,
They wave a sad "good-bye".**

