

The Advocate of Truth

The Three Baptisms

Pergamos

Taking on Duties

The Lord's Side



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PERGAMOS

By Moises Torres M.



“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth” (Revelation 2:12-13).

These verses describe the praise of the Lord to the church in Pergamos. The Lord encouraged them and emphasized their works, even though He knew that this group of brethren dwelt where the seat of Satan was.

Pergamos was one of the great centers of paganism in Asia. There was a magnificent temple in the city built in Zeus’ honor. But Pergamos (scroll, or citadel in Greek) was recognized as the official center for worshipping the emperors of Asia.

In 29 B.C., there was built a temple there in honor of Augustus Caesar. Later on, another temple was built in honor of Trajan, who lived from 53-117 A.D., and was emperor from 98-117 A.D. Trajan could have lived during the time that the book of Revelation was written. The city was called “the guardian of the temple”.

In the West, Rome became the center of Satan’s activities, and Pergamos became the center of satanic activities in the East. This is why the Lord emphasized the place where His children live, saying: “where Satan’s seat is”. The word seat means “throne”. Satan could have governed over the pagans in Pergamos, but he could

not govern over the Church.

Following the reading about the message to the church in Pergamos, the Lord points out some things. He tells them, “But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication” (verse 14).

We already know that Balaam could not accomplish his commitment to curse the children of Israel. However, he started a new strategy to seduce the Israelites to commit fornication with the daughters of Moab and to eat things sacrificed to idols.

Numbers 25:1-4 records the following: “And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel.”

The children of Israel fell into worshipping the idols of Moab, through the women of Moab. To make it go no further, the anger of the Lord exterminated 24 thousand Israelites for such a sin. (Please read up to verse 9). That is why Balaam’s acts are mentioned by our Lord in

His message to the church in Pergamos. There were some people there who were teaching people to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.

Another thing that the Lord highlighted to the Church in Pergamos was, "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate" (verse 15). Probably this sect practiced immoral and heretical things. Some comments from the first church historians say that the Nicolaitans were a sect of the Gnostics, who taught the community of wives that adultery and fornication was something indifferent and that eating sacrificed things to idols was practically the same. It's also said that they mixed many pagan rites with Christian ceremonies. Augustine, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian broadly spoke and wrote about them. It is said that the Nicolaitans shared and exchanged their wives between each other without repulsion.

These practices are very common today. Many couples exchange their wives and husbands between each other as long as they want, and they induce other couples to do the same. The eating of things sacrificed to idols is very common also. The message to the Church in Pergamos is still the same message for the Church of God in our day in every part of the world. The Lord says, "WHICH THING I HATE." Hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.



Choose The Right Way

How can we praise the Creator?
By selecting the words that we use,
He says we have but to obey Him,
And not just any way we might choose.
He created the white clouds to please us,
Floating by on a sky of pure blue,
And every good thing you can think of
Was created especially for you.
Do you lift your eyes to the heaven
When a tiny bird bursts into song?
Are you constantly striving to do the right,
And withstanding the way that is wrong?
He gives us six days to labor,
The seventh day to honor Him
In a way that is right and true,
The Sabbath, to rest heart and limb.
After laboring, the way we trod,
Beginning at one, the first day of the week,
Number seven honors our God.
The day is to set an example
By our rest and to worship our King;
Many blessings come to those who do this
By knowing the peace it will bring.

--Betty Whetstone

The Lord's Side

Bond Tennant



“Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him” (Exodus 32:26).

Moses, one of the greatest leaders of all times, was on the mount with God. Aaron was in charge of Israel. Moses was gone forty days.

The problem was that Aaron yielded to pressure. The people rejected Moses' and God's way. No other way but gross sin would do for them! They danced naked around the golden calf and performed orgies. Today, the world is in the same condition, dancing around the golden calf of riches, glamour, and good times.

God told Moses to go down. On seeing the sight at the camp, Moses threw down the tables of the Commandments. Because the people were unworthy of the Commandments and God's mercy, Moses was not condemned for this act.

Moses condemned Aaron, and Aaron made excuses. First, he used an excuse as old as Creation which is blaming someone else. “Thou knowest the people.” He may have also thought, “I couldn't help it... My situation demanded it... I would have offended my friends by doing differently.”

The first excuse was bad. However, the second one was worse: “It just happened. I put gold in the fire, and out came a calf.” He made no mention of working with engraving tools. Moses did not answer Aaron. Instead,

he stood in the gate of the camp and called out, “Who is on the Lord's side?”

Let us now consider what it means to be on the Lord's side:

There are two sides, and this creates a conflict.

The Israelites knew that they must stand with Moses and God or against them. Conflict makes a demand on us. We must make a choice! “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24). “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils” (I Corinthians 10:21). In war, no one is neutral. This is true especially in religion. The world seems to be in a state of indecision or what some call “suspended animation.” God has a side, and Satan has a side. A choice must be made. We must not straddle the fence or walk in the middle of the road.

We must forsake the other side. “And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him” (Luke 5:11).

In Luke 14, Jesus said a person cannot be His disciple if...

- a. ... he hates not “his own life” (verse 26).
- b. ... he does not “bear his cross, and come after me” (verse 27).
- c. ... he forsakes not “all that he hath” (verse 33).

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24).

There is a spiritual conflict in which we must engage. The Levites knew what was expected of them. We are soldiers. “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (II Timothy 2:3).

“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Hebrews 2:10).

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (I Timothy 6:12).

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

It is a delusion for one to believe that when he is saved there will be only joy, happiness, singing, and so forth.

We must align ourselves with the few. Jesus stood alone. “And they all forsook him, and fled” (Mark 14:50). Elijah stood alone. The Apostle Paul said, “At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge” (II Timothy 4:16).

There are very few that go God’s way. This was true in Noah’s day, and it was also true in Lot’s day. In speaking of Jesus, John 6:66 tells us, “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”

“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:14). Most anyone will follow the crowds. But I Corinthians 1:27-29 says, “But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.”

“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Matthew 11:25)

Let us now list four advantages of being on the Lord’s side.

It is the honorable side. Moses was honorable. Proverbs 14:34 says, “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.” “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour” (I Thessalonians 4:3-4).

However, the Lord’s side is not honored by the world. The world hates “...those that are good” (II Timothy 3:3). Jesus said, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18). I John 3:13 tells us, “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.”

It is the strongest side. The strength of God was with Moses. “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).

“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (I John 4:4).

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Romans 8:37).

It is the happiest side. “Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD” (Psalm 144:15).

“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (I Peter 1:8). Paul and Silas “sang praises” at midnight (Acts 16:25).

“But none sayeth, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night” (Job 35:10).

It is the side that will eventually win. “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12).

The Apostle Paul said, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (II Timothy 4:7-8).

Jesus said, “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13).

Judgment came upon the Israelites who did not repent. Sin, or the devil’s side, pays off in death.

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

Are we on the Lord’s side?



The Three Baptisms

By David DeLong

The New Testament tells us of three baptisms: one by water, one by the Holy Spirit, and one by fire. In this article I wish to explain the significance of each one. However, before doing so I would like for us to see what baptism was like in the Old Testament. In I Corinthians 10:1-2 we read, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea". We see, then, that the baptism the Israelites partook of was unto Moses, and it happened when they were under the cloud which guided them by day, and when they passed through the Red Sea (see Exodus 13:21-22; 14:21-22).

Just preceding the ministry of Jesus we learn that John the Baptist performed baptisms in water for the purpose of repentance. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Matthew 3:1-3). The Apostle Paul explained more about John's baptism: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto

what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus" (Acts 19:1-4). Then, they were re-baptized into the Lord Jesus.

Now we come to John the Baptist's baptism of Jesus, Himself. We know that the Lord did this as an example because he had no sins to repent of. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:13-17).

For a while, John the Baptist and Jesus' disciples baptized at the same time. We find in John 3:22-23: "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized." We know it was Jesus' disciples who did the baptizing and not Jesus, Himself. John 4:1-2 reads: "When

therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)"'. The NASB, on verse 2, records: "(although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were)".

Water Baptism

So important is water baptism that Jesus said in Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." The Apostle Peter, comparing baptism with Noah and his family who were saved from the Flood, wrote: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:" (I Peter 3:21).

The doctrinal point of the Church of God, 7th day on baptism, reads: "Baptism is by immersion, for the remission of sins, typical of the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is performed in the name, Lord Jesus Christ. After immersion, hands should be laid on the candidate by the minister (or ministers) for the reception of the Holy Spirit." Let us now examine some of these facts related to baptism.

The Greek word for "baptism" is "baptisma", and it is from the word "baptizo", meaning to make fully wet (see Strong's Concordance). In other words when a person is baptized, he or she is to be fully immersed in water. This is why, after Jesus' baptism, He "went up straightway out of the water". He had gone into the Jordan River with John the Baptist, had been fully immersed (made fully wet), and then went up straightway out of the water. Jesus gave us the example of how baptism is to be done.

Baptism, by immersion in water, is the perfect illustration of Christ's burial and resurrection. Romans 6:3-7 informs us: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin."

Throughout the Book of Acts the apostles and disciples baptized people in Jesus' name. This should not seem strange since it is Jesus who provides our salvation by His death for us. For instance, we read in Acts 8:14-16: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)" In another instance in Acts we see people being baptized in the name of the Lord. "...Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days" (Acts 10:46-48).

The great importance of being baptized in Jesus' name is recorded for us in Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Colossians 1:17-19 puts it this way: "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 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. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell".

After a person has repented of sins, been immersed in water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, now he or she is ready to receive the Holy Spirit. This is done by the laying on of hands of the ministers. Peter taught the people in Acts 2:38 by this statement: "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."

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The second baptism is that of the Holy Spirit. After Jesus was raised from the dead we read about a conversation He had with some of His disciples. "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:21-22). Later, just before His ascension to heaven, Jesus instructed His disciples: "And, being assembled together with them, commanded them

that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:4-5).

We see the fulfillment of Jesus' commandment to His disciples in Acts 2:1-4. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Some claim that to have the baptism of the Holy Spirit means a person will always be able to speak in "tongues". We know from the Bible that this is not the case. I Corinthians 12:28-30 includes a number of questions, all of which are to be answered by "no". These verses read: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?"

In fact, speaking in tongues is not for believers at all but, rather, it is for unbelievers. We are told this specifically in I Corinthians 14:22: "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not:..." This was the purpose of the disciples speaking in tongues on the day of Pentecost. The tongues were a sign for the Jews at Jerusalem. "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language" (Acts 2:5-6). As a result, about 3,000 people were baptized (see verse 41).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit serves a number of purposes. First, and foremost, it is what causes a person to receive eternal life. Romans 8:9,11,14 informs us: "...Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his....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...For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The indwelling Spirit is the guarantee of the believer's life to come. Ephesians 1:12-14 says: "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

Another purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is for signs and wonders to be performed in the church. We have already seen that speaking in tongues (languages) is one of those signs. Other signs and wonders include: Peter healing the lame man through faith in Jesus (Acts 3:1-6; 4:8-10); Peter's shadow overshadowing some of the sick (Acts 5:15); Philip's special transport (Acts 8:39-40); Peter's trance (Acts 10:9-10); Prophets prophesying (Acts 11:27-30; 13:1-2); God's miracles through Paul (Acts 19:11-12); Paul's survival of a viper's bite (Acts 28:1-5). Signs and wonders are still operating in God's Church today.

We need boldness in our lives to be able to speak the Word of God and to witness to others about the Lord. We see that the early disciples also needed boldness. After Peter and John had been threatened by the chief priests and elders they came back to the other disciples and gave their report. We read in Acts 4:31, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

The Holy Spirit will give a disciple strength in adversity. Stephen received such strength. When the Jews were about to stone him for his testimony, we find: "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God...And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:55-56,59).

Others who received strength in adversity included Paul, who was stoned (Acts 14:19-20), and Paul and Silas who were whipped and put in prison. Of this latter incident we read: "And when they had laid many stripes

upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them" (Acts 16:23-25).

Finally, we need the baptism of the Spirit for holy living. I Corinthians 12:13 teaches us, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." And Romans 8:10 adds, "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

Baptism by Fire

Water baptism makes one ready for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This, in turn, makes one ready for the baptism by fire. John the Baptist, when referring to Jesus, made this comment: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11). Jesus, Himself, spoke about a baptism that He would have to partake of. He was already baptized with water and the Holy Spirit. So, what was this other baptism that He referred to?

We find the reference to this baptism in Matthew 20:20-23: "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father."

This baptism appears to be the great suffering that Jesus would have to go through to provide mankind with salvation. Jesus' disciples will also have to endure some of that suffering as well. Indeed, Peter wrote about the fiery trial to come upon the children of God. "Beloved, think it not

strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (I Peter 4:12-19).

Sometimes it is our faith which must stand up to trials. Again, Peter wrote: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:6-7).

Jesus also associated His baptism of suffering with the divisions that will take place in families for His sake. Luke 12:49-53 informs us: "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law."

Another type of trial by fire is the trying of a person's works which the Lord will accomplish through judgment. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay,

stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (I Corinthians 3:11-15).

The last baptism by fire that we will consider in this

article is that which will come upon those who refuse water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. After John the Baptist told how Jesus "shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire", he immediately added: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12).



As we are given responsibilities in this world, we see that it requires more of our time and energy to ensure that we can carry out those tasks assigned to us. Our employer, or overseer, will give us these responsibilities accordingly and with merit for the ability we show on our jobs. So, how can this be reflective of God? What responsibilities can God give us to show that we are worthy of doing the works in His vineyard?

As we grow in the Church we must understand that a government has been established by the Lord to ensure that all matters are handled in accordance with God's chosen, and that those over the flock are seeking God's help in the matters pertaining to the body. We read in Ephesians 4:11-12: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

Ezekiel 34:8-9 informs us: "As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because

there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD". God had instructed those over the congregation to attend to that which was given to them. Verse 10 adds: "Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them."

Consequences are evident, and when God gives duties to an anointed servant he is required to attend to the fold. A pastor in the Church of God cannot be high minded, cannot boast, or impose his will upon the body. He must be given instructions by God and seek the well being of the Church. It is truly a privilege to do the Lord's work and to see all good things come from the shepherd to be done to the honor and glory of God.

The congregation must be aware of the duties of a

pastor and know that God has blessed the man who seeks the Father's will. We often find ourselves questioning the conduct or decisions that a pastor must make. We find in James 2:18: "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." A pastor's good intent and works that he performs will only give God glory, and thus the works will flourish and show how well pleased the Lord is with the man who does his Father's will.

What duties do we share with the ministry that reflect upon God's true Church? You may think that a title given to a brother is inherited through the local church. However, positions in the Church of God are not passed down from generation to generation. They are given to men who are willingly seeking the Father's will. I Corinthians 2:12-13 teaches us: "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. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

God chooses men through the Holy Spirit to guide us and give gifts to edify the body. Children of God must understand and adhere to the government of the Church and respect that which God has given. A minister must be both a king and priest to be able to guide the Church properly. A local congregation must be attentive to the local pastor's duties and be supportive of the work of the Lord. Let us continue to study and be a body that functions for the Kingdom to come.



Have you ever bought a lottery ticket, hoping to cash in on the millions of dollars to be possibly gained? Many people do, and that is the reason why the lottery gets to be so big. We have all probably thought, at some point, just what we would do with the money if we did strike it rich. Imagine what we could do for our families and the Church and the cause of Christ. But then we read in the Bible some sobering texts which tends to plant our feet back upon the earth.

Now, the Bible does not teach that it is wrong or a sin to be rich. For instance, we read of Abram, "And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (Genesis 13:1-2). Did

you catch that? Abram was very rich in material goods. No, it is not wrong to be rich, but we are warned in the Bible about our attitude concerning riches.

First of all, as it was with Abram, we must let the Lord make us rich in goods if He so chooses. Proverbs 10:22 informs us: "The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." In fact, the Lord is more interested in our seeking His ways than in our getting riches. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold" (Proverbs 22:1). In Proverbs 23:4 we are specifically admonished, "Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom." The Apostle Paul wrote that if we have our necessities met, such as food and clothes, we should be

Riches

By David DeLong

content (see I Timothy 6:8).

Why is it that the Lord is not so interested in having His children be blessed with material riches? Jesus testified in Matthew 19:23-24: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Furthermore, He said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

Paul also recognized this heart principle. He warned, "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. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (I Timothy 6:9-11).

Solomon had the right attitude concerning riches. When the Lord came to him in a dream and told Solomon to ask of Him a gift, Solomon asked "an understanding heart" to judge God's people. In response to this pleasing request the Lord answered Solomon favorably: "And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days" (I Kings 3:11-14).

Paul has words of wisdom for the person who does gain riches. He said to Timothy: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in

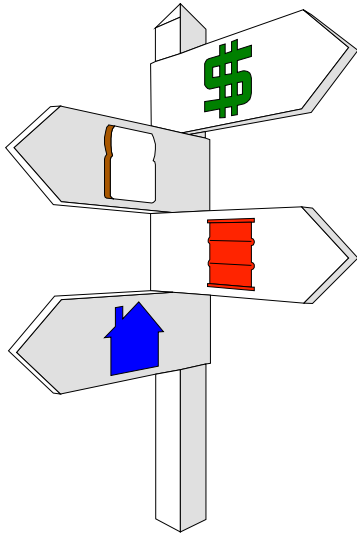
uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate" (I Timothy 6:17-18). And Jeremiah wrote: "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

The Psalmist David knew that riches are not the goal. He warned: "Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them" (Psalm 62:10). David's son, Solomon, wrote that it is wisdom which one should seek after. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her" (Proverbs 3:13-18).

Agur had a very balanced approach to the subject of riches. In Proverbs 30:7-9 he taught: "Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." This thought echos that of Paul's, that if our necessities are met that should be enough.

Jesus admonishes us by His Word: "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" (Luke 16:11). Those true riches are only found in the Lord. Paul testified: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8).

So, is it wrong for you to buy a lottery ticket? That's not for me to answer. Perhaps you should ask your Father.



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.

Long-Term Unemployment In America

All segments of society in America are in disarray. This includes the economy. This column has featured articles about the economy many times. The poor economy will continue to be one of the signs of the times until Jesus returns.

There appeared an article in the business section of the *Houston Chronicle*, dated April 25, about the long-term unemployment in America. Here is the article:

Congress Warned About Long-Term Jobless

MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

Washington – Long-term unemployment has become a national emergency that requires new and creative steps if it's to be reversed before it does permanent damage, several high-profile economists warned Congress on Wednesday.

Testifying before the Joint Economic Committee, the economists who've served Democratic and Republican presidents, said the elevated percentage of long-term unemployed people among those counted as jobless underscored deeper problems in the labor market.

"The labor force participation rate is the lowest in 35 years, and the figure of about 11.7 million Americans officially out of work doesn't capture the 102 million working age Americans without jobs – about 41.5 percent of all potentially available workers," said Keith Hall, who until last year was commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"The long-term unemployment rate underestimates the number of long-term jobless," said Hall, who is now a researcher at George Mason University's Mercatus

Center.

Because so many workers have disengaged completely from the job market, Hall explained, the unemployment rate has gone down without significantly reducing joblessness.

Officially, workers out of a job for six months or longer numbered 4.6 million in March, or just below 40 percent of the 11.7 million Americans counted as unemployed. More than 1 in 4 of them have been out of work for a year or longer.

The average unemployed person who eventually left the workforce in 2007 spent about nine weeks looking for a job before giving up, Hall testified. That period had grown to more than 21 weeks in 2011, just six weeks short of meeting the criteria for being considered long-term unemployed.

"By dropping out of the workforce, these former workers are making the participation rate shrink and are making the long-term unemployment numbers look much better than they are," he said.

To be considered unemployed, a person must have had no job of any sort for six months, must want to work, be readily available, and send out resumes and contact employers or employment agencies.

"Workers who land part-time or temporary jobs – 7.6 million of them in March – also skew the long-term unemployment numbers, making them appear better than they are," Hall said.

An economic adviser to the last three Republican presidential candidates, Kevin Hassen, labeled the stubbornly high rate of long-term unemployment a national

emergency.

Comment

There are more reasons for many people to be unemployed longtime today than a few short years ago. There are less manual labor jobs for the disadvantaged person because of his being misplaced by high-tech labor-saving machinery. Also, in order to stay in the labor force, many people must continue their education in their present career or line of work and even may have to change their career or line of work which takes much time.

Women Are Primary Bread Winners

I saw in the newspaper that the primary bread winner in 40 percent of American households are women. That in itself is alright if it cannot be helped. The trouble comes when one talks about equality for women. There are several activists which take up this cause. It seems that the facts are that many women are paid less for doing the same work that is done by men. This is not good for an economy which is struggling!

Democracy In Trouble?

A well respected columnist wrote a column entitled **Concerns that democracy is in trouble.** The following are some excerpts from his column:

“We know that American politics are dysfunctional. But after a week of scandal obsession during which the nation’s capital and the media virtually ignored the problems most voters cared about – jobs, incomes, growth, opportunity, education – it’s worth asking if there is something especially flawed about our democracy.

Our circumstances certainly have their own particular disabilities: a radicalization of conservative politics, over-the-top mistrust of President Obama on the right, high-tech gerrymandering in the House, and a Senate snarled by non-constitutional super-majority requirements.

Still, while it may not be much of a comfort, the democratic distemper is not a peculiarly American phenomenon. Across most of the democratic world, there is an impatience bordering on exhaustion with electoral systems and political classes.”

“Earlier this month, the Transatlantic Academy, a global partnership of think tanks led by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, issued 'The Democratic Disconnect' a sober report by a group of distinguished academics.

“Democracy is in trouble,” the report begins. “The collective engagement of a concerned citizenship for the public good – the bedrock of a healthy democracy – is eroding. Democratic governments often seem crippled in their capacity to deliver what their people want and need. They are neither as responsive nor as accountable as they need to be in an era of hard choices and rising nondemocratic powers. There is widespread concern about apparent declining rates of voter participation and about the alienation or disaffection of citizens from the political process.”

"In Europe," the authors noted, “there is fear that the distance between ordinary citizens and the politicians and bureaucrats in Brussels compromises democratic legitimacy.” (End of excerpts).

Comment

There is nothing wrong with the Democratic form of government. It is in trouble because the majority of the inhabitants no longer recognize the true God, and they do not even try to keep His commandments. Everyone seems to be out for himself and the leaders will not compromise to reach a suitable settlement. Human nature has taken over the minds of those who were at one time reasonable and honorable.

Yes, democracy is in trouble, and the dictatorships are also in trouble. God has pronounced doom upon all human government. All human government will end just before the Kingdom of God is established on the earth. It will be a dictatorship, but all who become enlightened and turn from their wicked ways will be blessed.

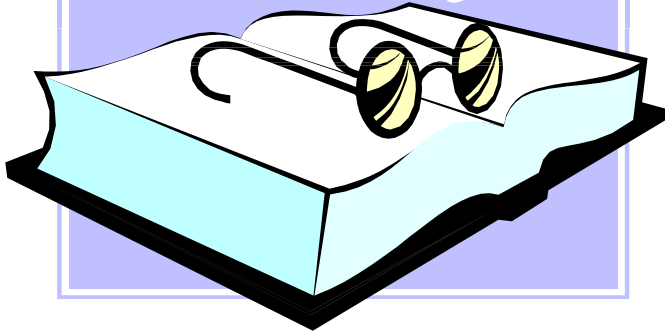
When taking a short ride through the neighborhood, I see several signs that read, “Pray for our nation.” God’s Word has foretold the nature of the people in all countries, included the United States, during these last days. Therefore, it does no good for a person to pray for a nation or country. People can pray for other people. Let us not pray for any nation or country here on earth. Let us pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

Natural Disasters

I read in the newspapers about the many wildfires, tornados, storms and hurricanes that have taken place and the threat of future disasters, but I also read that funding for rebuilding has been drastically cut.

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Why cannot Pantheism, the belief that everything is God, be creditable?

ANSWER: Pantheism is really atheism. If everything is God, then nothing is God because the very term has lost any meaning. Pantheism creates many contradictions. God would be the emptiness of a vacuum as well as the substance of matter. God would be sickness as well as health. He would be death as well as life and evil as well as good. If the universe itself is God, then there would be no outside reference point from which it can be evaluated and given purpose and significance. Man could do nothing to improve his status.

QUESTION: Was the Apostle Paul a bachelor?

ANSWER: Paul was probably not a bachelor, but a widower. It is true that he did not have a wife during his apostolic ministry. Previously he had been a member of the Sanhedrin, and its membership was confined to married men. Whether Paul was a bachelor or not is not important. The vital point to remember is that Paul was a fully authorized apostle of Christ.

QUESTION: Do you think that we can possess the same state of holiness that was possessed by Adam and Eve before they fell?

ANSWER: Holiness is not the correct word to describe the state of Adam and Eve before the fall. They were innocent, but they had not been tested. It is impossible for one who knows what sin is to come into the state of Adam and Eve before they fell.

QUESTION: Will you please comment on astrology in the Bible? I am informed that it is forbidden for children of God. How does God speak to us through the stars?

ANSWER: A careful study of astrology will show that a person cannot take any stock in astrology if he believes the Bible. Young's Analytical Concordance refers to only one passage that mentions those we think of today as astrologers. The reference is Isaiah 47:13. Let us quote part of the verse 14 also: "Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them." A reading of the context shows that astrology is classed along with idolatry and enchantments and sorceries, and that God has no use for it.

The reference to astrologers in the Book of Daniel will doubtless come to the reader's mind. The more accurate translation of the Revised Version uses the word "enchanter" in all of these references. The Authorized Version does, however, show clearly what the Bible students of King James' time thought about astrologers, for they classed them with the magicians and soothsayers, and all are shown to have no power to reveal the mysteries of God.

In contrast, we have the words of the inspired prophet Daniel to show the effect that "...there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known ... what shall be in the latter days..." (Daniel 2:28).

The fact that God in His Word associates astrologers with sorcerers and soothsayers justifies us in turning to Micah 5:12 and the first part of verse 13 for His attitude

toward such, “And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers: Thy graven images also will I cut off.”

Let us now consider some of the ways God does speak to us through the stars in contrast to the false messages that the astrologers offer.

1. To all who love to gaze into the glorious beauties of the starry heavens, they speak of God, the infinite Creator. It was a message that the stars brought to David and which he recorded for us in so many of the Psalms. The Nineteenth Psalm is one such. It opens with the words: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge” (verses 1-2).

2. The stars show how insignificant man is, and teach him humility. In Psalm 8:3-5, we have this thought coupled with the glory God has bestowed upon those who receive it, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.”

3. The stars speak of Christ. There are at least three ways in which the stars point us to our Saviour Jesus Christ.

1. A star in a wonderful way pointed to Him at His birth and then disappeared for the wise men from the East when they arrived in Bethlehem.

2. The morning star, or “day star” points to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, which will herald a new day for the new Kingdom of the world. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (II Peter 1:19).

3. A study of the solar system points to the Lord Jesus by means of a splendid analogy. The Babylonian theory that the earth is the center of the universe (also a Roman Catholic doctrine until the 19th century) as long as it was held, made it impossible for man to reach out with his mind and vision to find out anything about the infinite greatness of God’s creation. Similarly the self-centered life cannot conceive of God’s infinite greatness and power. The true conception of the sun-centered system speaks of Christ “the Sun of Righteousness” who, when

recognized as the center of a life, opens up new vistas of greatness and wonder never known before. The Reformation from Catholicism broke the evil idea of world (self) centered and allows us to be Christ centered. Knowing the Lord Jesus is like the new theory of the science of astronomy which opened the way to the discovery of all wonders and of the vast magnitude of God’s universe.

QUESTION: Why did Jesus speak in parables?

ANSWER: “And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?” (Matthew 13:10) They wanted to know why Jesus did not just tell them the facts.

Jesus could have replied in many ways, but He chose to make a point that we would never have guessed. “He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given” (verse 11). In other words, you have knowledge they do not have because you want knowledge and listen. They get only the story form because they do not thirst after knowledge as you do. They could understand if they really wanted to know, but some are even hostile against My teaching.

In a sense, the parable was a means of choosing whom He wanted to teach based on their response. It was a means of separating those who really wanted to know from those who were uncaring, or even opposed.

Why didn’t the multitudes understand as easily as His disciples? Quoting from the prophet Isaiah, He gave the real reason. “Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which sayeth, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Mathew 13:13-15). Why did they lack perception? They lacked the interest, the appetite, and for that reason the knowledge. To Jesus’ disciples, He said, “But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear” (verse 16). Jesus’ disciples were eager learners, and they took in every one of the words of Jesus.



Myanmar

A church service is being conducted by our brothers and sisters in Myanmar.





A youth program is being presented.



Work is being performed on one of the churches.

LESSON I

THE FURNISHINGS FOR THE TEMPLE

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 4:1-22.

Golden Text: II Chronicles 4:19.

“And Solomon made all the vessels that were for the house of God, the golden altar also, and the tables whereon the shewbread was set.”

NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned how the temple itself was built, and out of what kind of materials it was made. Now we shall see what furnishings will be on the inside of the temple.

1. Out of what material was the altar made? II Chronicles 4:1.
2. Describe the molten sea in II Chronicles 4:2-5.
3. For what purpose was the molten sea built? II Chronicles 4:6.
4. Where were the ten candlesticks and ten tables placed? II Chronicles 4:7-8.
5. What did Hiram make for the temple? II Chronicles 4:11-16.
6. Did Solomon make all the vessels for the house of God? Out of what material did he make the candlesticks, lamps and tongs? II Chronicles 4:18-21.
7. What else was made of pure gold? II Chronicles 4:22.

LESSON II

INDUCTION OF THE ARK INTO THE ORACLE

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 5:1-14.

Golden Text: II Chronicles 5:4.

“And all the elders of Israel came; and the Levites took up the ark.”

NOTE: We have studied about the actual building of the temple and about the furnishings which are inside. The cost of building this temple is variously estimated to equal from two to five billions of dollars in our money. The temple was built by 30,000 Jews and 153,600 Canaanites. It took seven and one-half years to build it. The ark of God is now ready to be placed in the temple.

1. What did Solomon bring in the house of the Lord in II Chronicles 5:1?
2. For what purpose did Solomon assemble the elders of Israel? II Chronicles 5:2.
3. During what month was this assembly, and for what purpose did they meet? II Chronicles 5:3-5.
4. What did King Solomon and the congregation of Israel sacrifice to the Lord? II Chronicles 5:6.
5. The priests brought in the ark of the covenant, and where was it placed in the house? Is it there to this day? II Chronicles 5:7-9.
6. What was in the ark? II Chronicles 5:10.
7. How did the priests and the people praise God in II Chronicles 5:11-13?
8. What filled the house of God at this time? II Chronicles 5:14.

LESSON III

GOD APPEARS TO SOLOMON

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 7:1-22.

Golden Text: II Chronicles 7:12.

“And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice.”

1. When King Solomon's prayer was finished, what

happened to the burnt offering, and what filled the house? II Chronicles 7:1.

2. Why could the priests not enter into the house of the Lord? II Chronicles 7:2.

3. What did the children of Israel do when they saw how the fire came down? II Chronicles 7:3.

4. Did the king and all the people offer sacrifices? What did King Solomon offer for a sacrifice? II Chronicles 7:4-5.

5. What did the Levites do in II Chronicles 7:6?

6. How many days did Solomon and all Israel keep the feast, and what did they do on the eighth day? II Chronicles 7:8-9.

7. What promise did the Lord make to Solomon and His people if they would humble themselves and turn from their wicked ways? II Chronicles 7:12-18.

8. If they turned away from God and forsook His commandments to worship other gods, what would be the result? II Chronicles 7:19-22.

LESSON IV

THE GREATNESS OF SOLOMON

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 8:1-18.

Golden Text: II Chronicles 8:10.

“And these were the chief of king Solomon’s officers, even two hundred and fifty, that bare rule over the people.”

NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned how the glory of God filled the temple and how the people worshipped and offered burnt offerings. The Lord promised many blessings to the people of Israel if they would keep His commandments. If they did not obey Him, He said He would cast the house which they had built out of His sight. Now we are going to study about how great Solomon

was in his kingdom.

1. Twenty years after Solomon built the house of the Lord, what happened? II Chronicles 8:1-2.

2. Name some of the places that Solomon built. What did he make the people who were left of the Hittites and the Amorites do? II Chronicles 8:4-8.

3. Who were his men of war? How many officers ruled over the people? II Chronicles 8:9-10.

4. Who did Solomon bring up out of the city of David? II Chronicles 8:11.

5. Did Solomon still offer burnt offerings unto the Lord? II Chronicles 8:12-13.

6. Whom did he appoint, and what were their duties? II Chronicles 8:14-15.

7. Was the house of the Lord now perfected? II Chronicles 8:16.

8. What did Hiram send to Solomon in II Chronicles 8:18?

King Solomon used God’s blessing

In a most unselfish way.

He built a holy temple

Where all could worship and pray.

“Great is thy faithfulness!”

King Solomon prayed,

God kept His promise,

For Solomon obeyed.

“Great is thy faithfulness!”

I sing to the Lord:

For He is my Shepherd,

And he keeps His Word.

What more could I want

Than to serve Him each day,

For He leads me to blessings

When I follow His way.

JUST IN TIME

Dennis was camping with his aunt and uncle. They had a trailer house parked near a beautiful lake in the mountains. Right now, Aunt Molly was taking a nap, and Uncle Dan had gone for a boat ride with another man.

Dennis wanted to find an especially nice fern for his Mother, who was home in the city. He looked among the vines and flowers beside the shady trail along the creek. He had found a lovely maidenhair fern, and was getting ready to lift it carefully from the ground when he heard a child's shrill cry.

Jumping to his feet, Dennis raced up the path until he found two little girls crying loudly. "What's the matter?" he called. "Are you hurt? Did a snake bite you?" Both girls shook their heads and pointed to the creek.

Dennis ran close to the water and looked where they were pointing. There was a little boy in a deep hole! He was splashing and splashing, but his head soon went under the water. Dennis tried to reach him as he came up again, but the child was too far out.

Dennis looked for a long stick, but there was none to be found. He tried to break a branch from a tree, but it was green and would not snap. He felt in his pocket for his knife, but remembered he had left it in the trailer house after peeling an apple that morning. He closed his eyes and prayed, "Dear Jesus, please help me to know what to do."

He seized the green branch again and tugged with all his might. The branch did not break off, but it pulled loose from the limb. He held it out toward the little boy, but the little fellow's head had gone out of sight again.

Oh, how Dennis wished that he had learned to swim and dive. He wasn't sure what to do. He knew that he must get help immediately. There were only a few people camped near the lake, and most of them were out in their boats. Then Dennis thought of the short cut to the lake. He ran as fast as she could and prayed that Jesus would help him get someone's attention, so they could save the boy.

The boats were way out in the water. When Dennis got to the shore, he waved his arms and shouted, "Help! Help!"

Two men saw him, and their boat made the spray fly as it raced toward him. Dennis told them a little boy was drowning in the creek, and one man jumped out of the boat and ran as fast as he could toward the creek. The other man pulled the boat out of the sand and ran, too. The first man was the little boy's Father, but Dennis did not know it then.

Dennis' legs were so tired now that he could not run fast. He only trotted along behind. He prayed all the way to the creek. Again, he asked Jesus to please keep the little boy alive until the men could get there.

When Dennis reached the creek, he saw that the boy was out on the ground. The first man was breathing into his mouth. After quite a while, he began to cry. Then Dennis knelt down in the damp leaves and vines and thanked God for His help and mercy.

Everyone in camp thought Dennis was a hero. The little boy's father told him that they had reached his son just in time. Another minute would have been too late. He thanked Dennis and tried to give him some money, but Dennis wouldn't accept it.

Aunt Molly and Uncle Dan both hugged their nephew tightly. They were proud of him.

Dennis was worried about one thing though. When he got home, he asked Mother about it.

"Mother, was it right to pray while I was running?" he asked. "I didn't have time to kneel down."

"Jesus is always ready to listen when we talk to Him, no matter where we are or what we are doing," answered Mother. "I am glad that you remembered to ask Jesus for help."

"I would never forget Jesus," answered Dennis. "He is the first one I think of when there is trouble. Our Sabbath School teacher helped us hunt all the verses in Psalms that tell us how God helps.

"One verse says, 'God is ... a very present help in trouble.' Another one says, 'he is our help and our shield.' Then one says, 'our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.' Aren't those good verses?"

"They surely are," Mother said. "I am glad that you have learned about God's love and protection."

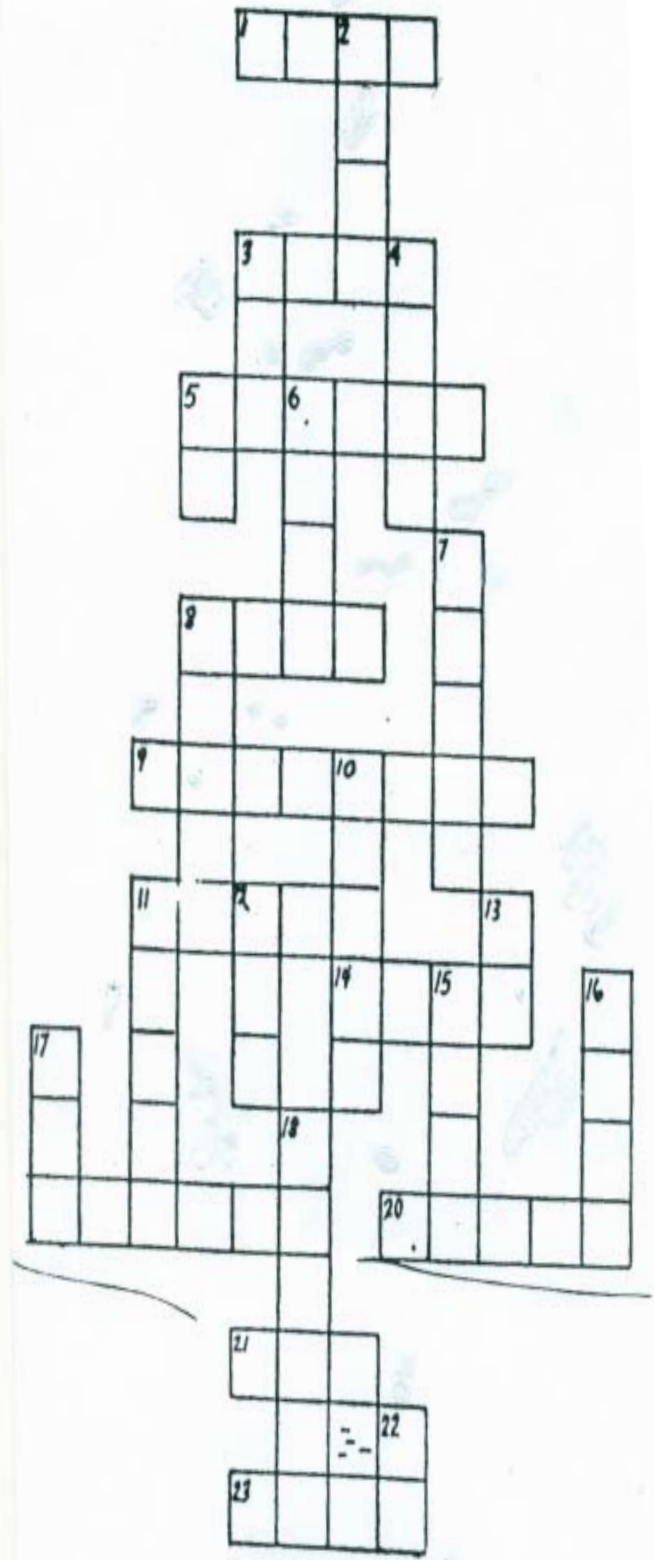
**TREES OF THE BIBLE
BIBLE PUZZLE**

DOWN

- 2. "Tree of knowledge of good and ____" (Genesis 2:17).
- 3. "I will ____ thee all" (Matthew 18:26).
- 4. "Hills shall flow with ____" (Joel 3:18).
- 5. "With ____ disciples" (Luke 22:11).
- 6. "The ____ descended" (Matthew 7:25).
- 7. "Unto ____ good work" (II Timothy 2:21).
- 8. "Thou shalt ____ thy vineyard" (Leviticus 25:3).
- 10. "Shall seek me ____" (Proverbs 1:28).
- 11. "And they ____ fields" (Micah 2:2).
- 12. "Ye shall not eat of it, lest ye ____" (Genesis 3:3).
- 13. "____ every tree of the garden" (Genesis 2:16).
- 15. "Talked with ____" (Genesis 4:8).
- 16. "A tree to be desired to ____ one wise" (Genesis 3:6).
- 17. I shall not find ____" (II Corinthians 12:20).
- 18. "Blessed by thy ____" (I Samuel 25:33).
- 22. "And ____ even, when the sun did set" (Mark 1:32).

ACROSS

- 1. "And the ____ yielded fruit" (Genesis 1:12).
- 3. "And their ____ trees" (Ezekiel 40:22).
- 5. "And he stood among the ____ trees" (Zechariah 1:8).
- 9. "Over against the ____ trees" (II Samuel 5:23).
- 11. "The highest branch of the high ____" (Ezekiel 17:22).
- 14. "His ____ also shall not wither" (Psalm 1:3).
- 19. "A grain of ____ seed" (Matthew 13:31).
- 20. "Thine ____ tree" (Deuteronomy 24:20).
- 21. "The ____ trees are her house" (Psalm 104:17).
- 23. "The whole earth is at ____" (Isaiah 14:7).



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Heaven's Prince

By David DeLong

*Scourged, spit upon, slapped, and jeered,
Heaven's Prince--the most revered.*

*Loved and honored, by some men praised,
Condemned by more, they had Him raised*

*Upon a cross, to let Him die,
God's only Son, so pure and high.*

*Thousands of tongues do sing and pray,
But, millions more now muted stay.*

*Are you among the silenced throng?
Or, do you voice His praise in song?
And do you now to Him belong?*

