

A close-up photograph of a garden scene. In the center, a vibrant red dahlia flower is in full bloom, with a honeybee perched on its yellow center. The background is filled with lush green foliage and other colorful flowers in shades of purple, orange, and pink, all slightly out of focus. The overall lighting is bright and natural, suggesting a sunny day.

*The Advocate  
of Truth*

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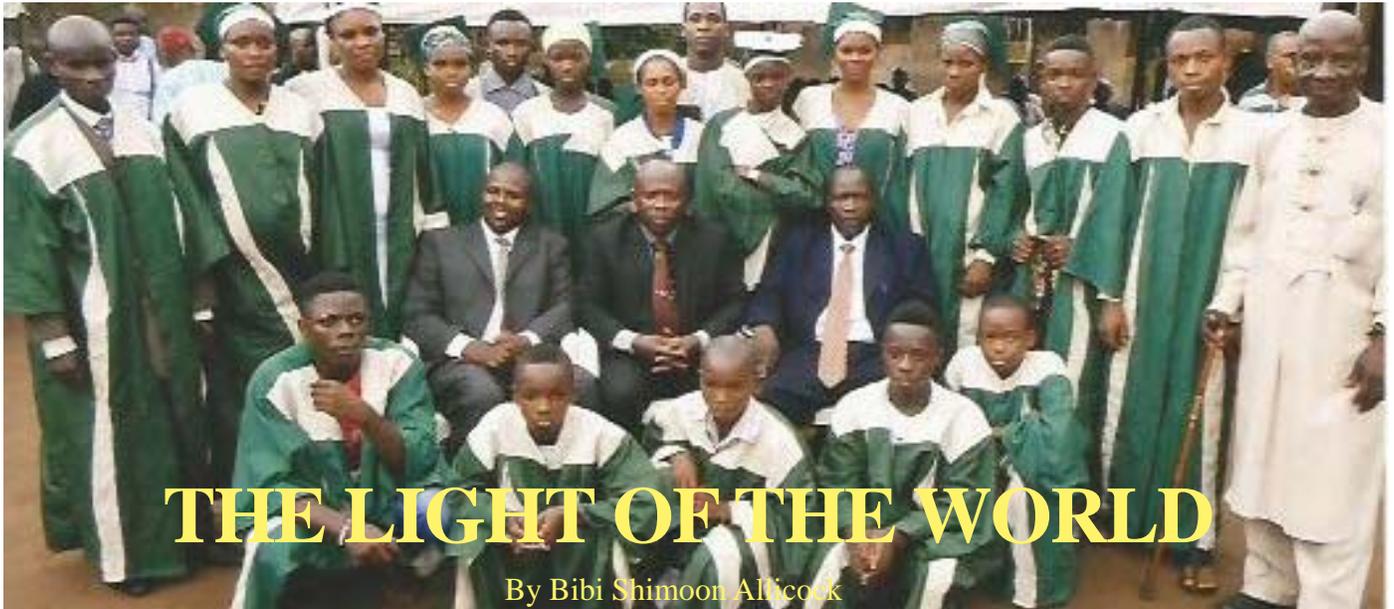
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# THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

By Bibi Shimon Allcock

“In the beginning was the Word (Jesus our Lord), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (John 1:1-5).

Once we believe in Him, we see that we will have life, and since the life was the light of men, we can be able to shine our lights so that others can see clearly, and be able to believe on Him also. Thus, they can partake of this special light. It is not artificial whereby it will only light for a time. It makes one wise in that it "...is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

At times, we believe as though it is artificial, because sometimes we can be so good and kind. Other times, we can't even see it fit to communicate one with another. This special light (which is Christ) within us is supposed to shine at all times so that we can be rich in good works and willing to communicate. At times, we don't know what is going on with a brother or sister, but instead we make an effort to find out. We just hear someone whisper something, and we carry on with that rather than make use of technology to get the truth of the matter. We just sit and cast judgment. Our Lord admonished, “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye

mete, it shall be measured to you again” (Matthew 7:1-2). “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). We are so quick to judge an individual! This causes more harm than good.

In the Gospel of John, we see that the scribes and Pharisees wanted to cast judgment on our Lord. “And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, **HE THAT IS WITHOUT SIN AMONG YOU, LET HIM FIRST CAST A STONE AT HER.** And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, **NEITHER DO I CONDEMN THEE: GO, AND SIN NO MORE**” (John 8:3-11).

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in

darkness, but shall have the light of life” (verse 12). Jesus is truly the light of the world for He condemns no one, but sheds His light abroad, that by His prayers even the dead were raised unto Him, the blind see, the lame walk, the dumb talk. He stated that He came to minister and not to be ministered unto. We see that He did it gracefully by preparing victuals for the fishers while they were fishing. “As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught” (John 21:9-10). “Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise” (verses 12-13).

In the Gospel of John, we see how Jesus handled the blind man’s situation nicely. “And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? JESUS ANSWERED, NEITHER HATH THIS MAN SINNED, NOR HIS PARENTS: BUT THAT THE WORKS OF GOD SHOULD BE MADE MANIFEST IN HIM. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. AS LONG AS I AM IN THE WORLD, I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD” (John 9:1-5).

In the first chapter of John, we read this about John, “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe” (John 1:6-7). “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (verses 10-11). He was not received because men loved darkness rather than light. Men love all illegal practices rather than obeying Almighty God.

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (John 3:19-21). Jesus had done so many miracles before them. “But though he had done

so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?” (John 12:37-38). The prophet Jeremiah recorded, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9). Only Almighty God can know it, because He answered the question of verse 9 by saying, “I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings” (verse 10). “As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool” (verse 11). The Psalmist declared, “...If riches increase, set not your heart upon them” (Psalm 62:10, last part).

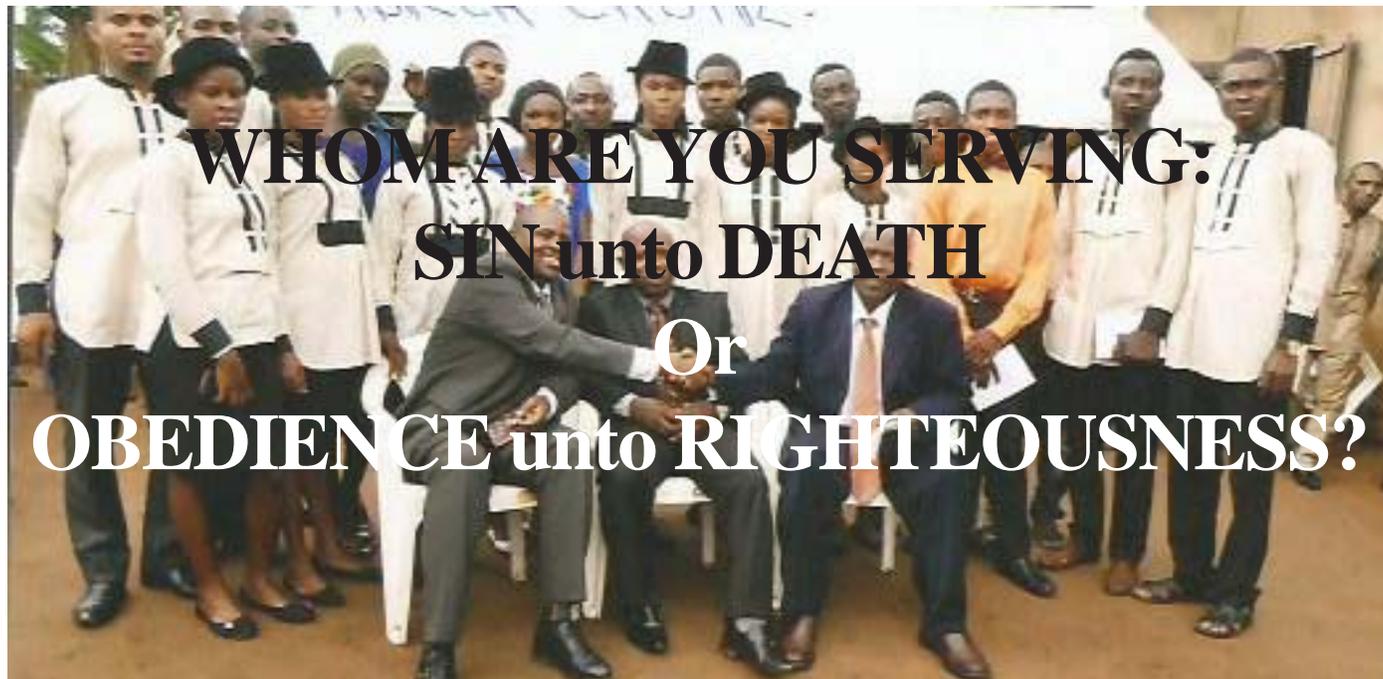
Our light should shine so much that by our lives we should be able to gain souls unto Almighty God. Our brother Paul was such a one that even in prison he could win souls for the Lord. There he met Onesimus, one of Philemon’s servants. As we study the Scriptures, we can see that this Onesimus was a deceiver, thief and (formerly) worthless slave unto Philemon. Paul’s light shone so much in the prison that he gained such a one as Onesimus, and he was very confident that Philemon would show forth brotherly love unto him and forgive him.

Paul wrote, “I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels” (Philemon 10-12). “Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord? If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides” (verses 16-19). “Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say” (verse 21). We see that Paul was confident that Philemon would receive Onesimus tenderly.

Let us all remember the golden rule, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you,

do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12). Let us conclude that our words must always be few, and we must weigh the matter before we utter perverse things. “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few” (Ecclesiastes 5:2).

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16).



“know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16)

In his letter to the Romans, Paul is showing that they are either servants of sin or servants of righteousness, depending on whom they served.

The source of sin is given in chapter 5:19: “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners” (first part). Then if you are disobedient to God’s Word and commandments, even in one point (see James 2:10), you are the servant of sin. “...for sin is the transgression of the law” (I John 3:4, last part).

Then if many were made sinners by one man’s disobedience, how shall many be made righteous, or servants of righteousness?

“...so by the obedience of ONE shall many be made righteous” (Romans 5:19, last part).

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more

abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (verses 20-21).

The grace of God by which we are saved through faith is a GIFT, and that gift is summed up in John 3:16. “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.”

Some will say that the grace of God was meted out to mankind because of sin, but “...shall we continue in sin, (or be servants of sin) that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, (obedience unto righteousness) live any longer therein?” (Romans 6:1-2)

To you who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ, and yielded yourselves as His servants unto righteousness, this question is directed: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (verse 3). If you are a baptized person, according to the Bible, then the admonition for righteous living and service is found in the next two verses:

“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 (in like manner) 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” (verses 4-5).

“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him” (verse 8). Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father and became the firstfruits of them that slept. Now to those who obey and serve Him, the Word says: “... afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming” (I Corinthians 15:23).

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members (of your body) as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin (servants of sin): but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments (servants) of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law (penalty for disobedience), but under grace. What then? shall we sin, (transgress the law – I John 3:4) because we are not under the law, but under grace? GOD FORBID” (Romans 6:12-15).

If you are not under the law, it is because you have quit transgressing it, violating it, and have become a keeper of the whole law (Ten Commandments), including the fourth commandment. You are not under the dispensation of the grace of God unless you are a keeper (doer) of the law of God. Jesus said in John 14:15, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” In Revelation 22:14, He said: “Blessed are they that DO his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

Paul said that after being made free from sin, or ceasing to be servants of sin, we become servants of righteousness. Also that he spoke after the manner of men because of the infirmity (weakness) of the flesh: “...for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” (Romans 6:19). “What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end

everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (verses 21-23).

Dear Reader, whom are you serving? What will be your reward? “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 (death); but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Galatians 6:7-8).

Paul in his instructions and directions to Titus said how servants of God should live. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to (for) ALL men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:11-14).



# Job, Chapter 38

Bond Tennant

In Job 38, the Lord reminded Job of some of the details connected with the creation of the earth. He asked, "...who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?" (Job 38:8-11) Seldom do we think of the marvels of the sea and the miracle working power of God in connection with the ebb and flow of the ocean's tides. We are told that the tides are controlled mostly by the gravitational pull of the moon. Just what does that mean? In school, we learned that Sir Isaac Newton discovered the laws of gravitation, but who framed the laws and implemented them? On occasion there are times when heavy winds locally increase the height of the tides a few feet. Then those living near the shore flee for their lives. Seldom do they realize that ordinarily they can dwell safely by the sea only because God has decreed, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shalt thy proud waves be stayed."

Next, Job was asked, "Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring (dawn) to know his place...?" (verse 12). We believe Job was rather a prominent man in his community, one who exercised considerable authority. However, he had no control over the rising of the sun. "Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days...?" Job knew that from the earliest days of his recollection the sun had risen and set without his having anything to do with it. He also knew that this was true of the generations before him. He knew that man at no time had any control over the movements of the sun, the moon, the stars, or the earth. This was far beyond the ability of man. It had to be the work of God!

"Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or

hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?" (verse 17). Men and women of all ages have tried to peer beyond death, to know what lies beyond the grave. Apart from the revelation given to us in the Word of God, which assures us of a resurrection of the dead, no one has found the answer. Just as the mystery of Creation is explainable only in the light of the fact that there is a supreme, intelligent Creator, so the desire for life after death becomes a genuine hope only because the One who created life has promised to restore the dead to life. The accounts in the Bible of various ones who were awakened from death are therefore proofs of the existence of God who created the heavens and the earth.

"Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof, That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof? Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great?" (verses 19-21). What is light, and what is darkness? We know that the light of day replaces the darkness of night, but where does one go when the other takes its place? God asked Job if he knew the dwelling place of light. Where did it stay while its place was occupied by darkness? This was by no means a foolish question! With all of our scientific knowledge, no one has been able to give an adequate definition of light or darkness. Like electricity, which we know exists, but cannot clearly define, so are light and darkness. God knows because He created them. God said, "...Let there be light: and there was light" (Genesis 1:3).

The LORD continued to question Job. He asked Job about a number of things which are described by unbelievers as the 'works of nature'. These are things which are frequently overlooked by those who believe in God as proof of His existence. Let us quote verses 25-29: "Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing

of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man; To satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth? Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew? Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?"

There is only one obvious answer to all of these questions. It is that there must be a supreme and intelligent Creator who designed and created water, and who also planned the means by which it would reach the ground and give life to vegetation. With pleasure, most of us have witnessed the revival of plants, or of grass, when water is provided. However, we may not realize that these are miracles which are made possible because all the elements involved were designed and made by God.

The arrangement by which the water created by God reaches the dry places is very marvelous. We know that it is by the evaporation of the water of the oceans and lakes, the moisture ascending to form clouds which are distributed over the land, and which by changes of temperature in the air currents, are caused to release their refreshing waters in the form of rain and snow. Reaching the earth, the water finds its way back into the oceans and lakes to continue the circle. Scientific instruments available today tell us how all this happens, but the real power, or forces, which contribute to make it possible are still unexplainable.

Next, God shifted the focus of His questions to Job from purely mundane things to the heavenly bodies. God asked Job, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? (verses 31-33).

The implied lesson in these questions is more striking today than it was to Job. Job was a wise man for his time. However, astronomical knowledge had not advanced to the degree now enjoyed. Calculations now made possible by powerful telescopes have revealed the minute accuracy of time and distances involved in the movement of the heavenly bodies, giving evidence that they are held in their course, and at constant speeds, by the power and design of a supreme intelligence

unexplainable by man.

Without going into detail as to the particular references to Pleiades, Orion, Mazzaroth, and Arcturus, the main point of the lesson is that neither Job nor we can possible change the course of a single planet, sun, or star, and we do not understand the governing forces which control 'the ordinances of heaven,' nor the manner in which their influences are felt in the earth. But God knows because He created both the heaven and the earth, and He designed their relationship to each other.

## FOOTSTEPS

By Betty Whetstone

*This road called life that we walk on  
Is paved with temptation and pitfalls,  
Causing us to stagger and stumble,  
And far too often, fall.*

*The stones are sharp that beset us,  
Well hidden 'neath the dust on the road;  
And the troubles we carry are heavy,  
And we sink 'neath the weight of the load.*

*But footsteps are always before us,  
Printed plain and deep in the sod;  
They were left for our help and guidance,  
To keep us in the footsteps of God.*

*There is only one time they grow faint--  
The prints growing light and dim;  
Washed out by His blood shed on the way  
To die and erase all our sins.*

*And when this mighty act He completed,  
Once again He became the I AM;  
But He left His steps to walk in,  
And never again will they grow dim.*



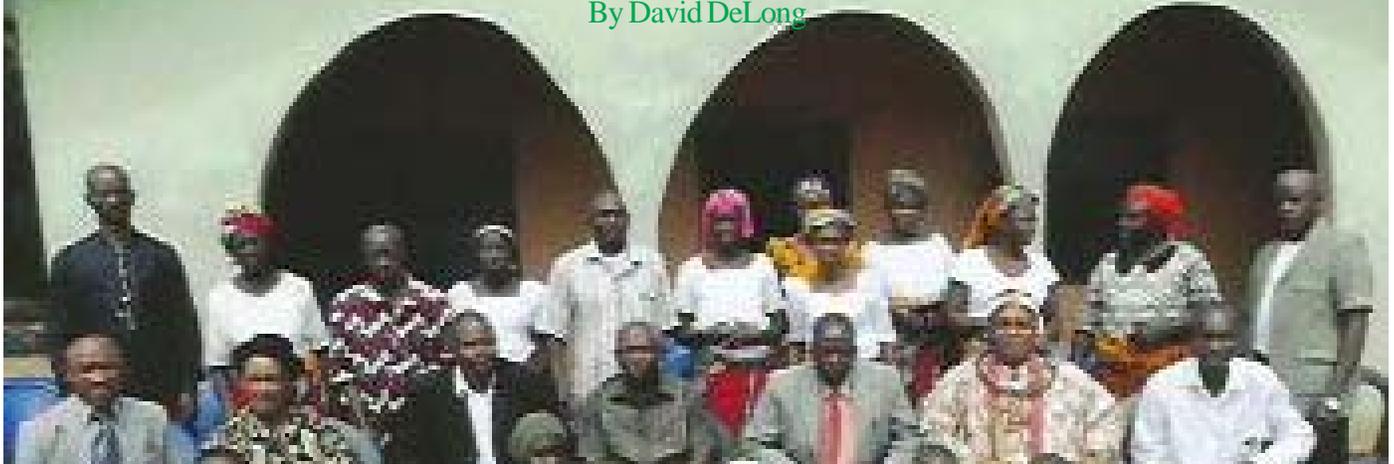
# A FEW ATTRIBUTES OF THE WORD OF GOD

- 1. It is a strong defense against sin.** “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Psalm 119:9). “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (verse 11).
- 2. It converts the soul.** “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple” (Psalm 19:7).
- 3. It enlightens our eyes.** “The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes” (Psalm 19:8).
- 4. It was written to give us hope.** “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).
- 5. It is the sword of the spirit, the God-provided primary offensive weapon against sin and evil.** “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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 6:10-12).
- 6. It is the delight of the godly man or woman, and their source of meditation day and night.** “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalm 1:1-2).
- 7. It is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, and is a thorough furnisher to all good works.** “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (II Timothy 3:16-17).
- 8. It is always present and near.** “But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach” (Romans 10:8).
- 9. It produces spiritual growth to salvation.** “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (I Peter 2:1-2).
- 10. It is our only source of knowledge about God and future life.** “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (II Peter 1:3).
- 11. It makes us clean.** “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3).
- 12. It makes us wise unto salvation.** “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (II Timothy 3:15).

--Compiled by Bond Tennant

# "Fools For Christ's Sake"

By David DeLong



The title of this article is a quote by the Apostle Paul. What did he mean by this saying? Obviously he wasn't referring to disciples being so obnoxious in their behavior that they were hurting the work of the Lord. Let us examine this statement of Paul in its context. He said in I Corinthians 4:9-17. "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church."

Paul was referring to the apostles of his day, himself included, when he termed them fools for Christ's sake. However, he also wrote: "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me" (verse 16). So, Paul's desire was that the Corinthian brethren also follow his example in minis-

try. Paul compares the apostles' ministry with that of the Corinthians' ministry and the latter's appears to fall short. Why would Paul say that the apostles are fools for Christ's sake, but that the Corinthians are wise in Christ? This seems to be the perception that others had of the apostles of Christ as compared with the perception that others had of the Corinthians.

The Greek word for fools in this passage is *moros*, and it means dull or stupid, a blockhead, absurd, heedless. Were the apostles really being blockheads or stupid? To the perception of others, they were. Who would go hungry and thirsty, be naked, buffeted, homeless, work for their own living, be reviled, persecuted, defamed, be considered filth and offscouring, for the sake of ministry? For the sake of Christ, actually, Paul and his companions were doing those very things. The Corinthians looked wise, strong, and honorable to others. But they apparently only had a good image, and were not being effective for the Lord. Paul wrote that he did not want to shame them, but only to warn them.

Being a fool for Christ's sake means this: that one serves the Lord in every aspect of his or her life, doing the will of God by serving Him and others, not letting circumstances, hardships, or fear intimidate us, no matter how foolish we may look to others. Of course, one must do this in moderation. Here, in North America in wintertime, we get some dangerous blizzards and snowstorms. Taking our families to church in such situations could result in death on the highways. On the other hand, some are intimidated by the fear of looking like fools to others,

and, therefore, they won't use their talents for the Lord in ministry. Jesus didn't let the fear of man intimidate Him in service to God and others.

However, we must always remember that ministering to people is not our primary goal. We are called to serve the Lord, and serving others is only a part of that goal. In Matthew 22:35-40 Jesus emphasized our priorities: "Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Sometimes we may feel that one or two "needy" persons should be catered to, and we let the rest of the people go uncared for. This can lead us to exhaustion as these one or two persons demand 90% or more of our time. Even Jesus didn't allow this to happen. When He had ministered to a person, or even a community, He went on to other places, or people, to minister. For instance, in Mark 1:35-38 we find: "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth."

Being a fool for Christ's sake doesn't mean that we must automatically wear ourselves out in ministering to others, either. Jesus desired His disciples to take breaks in their ministering to others. "And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat" (Mark 6:30-31). We must do what the Lord wants us to do, no more and no less.

Paul wasn't concerned about how he appeared to others, as long as he felt he was doing the will of the Lord. He had such a zeal for Christ that at times it may even appear to us that he was a fanatic. However, being a fanatic for Christ is really saying that he was being a fool for

Christ's sake. Notice where such zeal brought him in his ministry at times. "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (II Corinthians 11:23-28).

One might think that the Apostle Paul was a rarity in his service to the Lord and others. Not so! The Bible is filled with believers who did their Lord's bidding with a zeal that is inspiring. Next, we look at the example of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego of not bowing down to the Babylonian king's image of gold. To get the full impact of these three men's zeal for the Lord, we print much of the story concerning them. "Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image: And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the

same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Daniel 3:8-18). We know the result of this dedication to the Lord by these three men. God, in His mercy, did deliver them from the effects of being thrown into the fiery furnace. The Lord is looking for such dedication by His people today. Are we willing to be fools for Christ's sake?

Think of Abraham, who was told by the Lord to offer his only son, Isaac, as a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains in the land of Moriah. "And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen" (Genesis 22:10-14).

Then there was a poor widow in Jesus' day. We may wonder how she made her living. However, her dedication to the Lord is even more of a wonder. We read of the incident in Mark 12:41-44: "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she

had, even all her living." We don't know if this poor widow even ate supper that night, or if she had breakfast the next morning. All we are told is that "she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." What dedication to the Lord!

We could mention Noah who tried to convert a wicked world, and Job who stayed faithful to the Lord in extremely adverse conditions. Hebrews, chapter 11 however, is a wonderful testimony to God's faithful people of old. "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (verses 32-40).

The zeal of these believers is amazing. For many of them, it seems, the works that God allowed them to do was all in a day's assignment, so to speak. It was a life of dedicated faith that made them ready to accept the challenges that came their way, and to be the overcomers in life that the Lord helped them to become. They were not your typical man or woman of the day. It wasn't their concern to be bothered by what others thought about their faithful lifestyles. They were concerned with one objective: to please their Lord in whatever way was needed. Paul and others were looked upon as fools for Christ's sake. But, when the Lord returns, how much better to be known by that term than to be called fools for our sake.



# How To Love

By David DeLong

The commandment of our Father, God and of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ is to love others. For instance, we are told in John 15:12-14, by Jesus: "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Also, the Apostle Paul wrote: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity (love), these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (I Corinthians 13:13). But, how does a person, for instance, "lay down his life for his friends"? We know that Jesus died for our sins and, in some extreme cases, certain believers have given their lives to save the lives of others. In one sense, however, Jesus laid His life down for His friends while He was still living. He did this by His wonderful example of service to others.

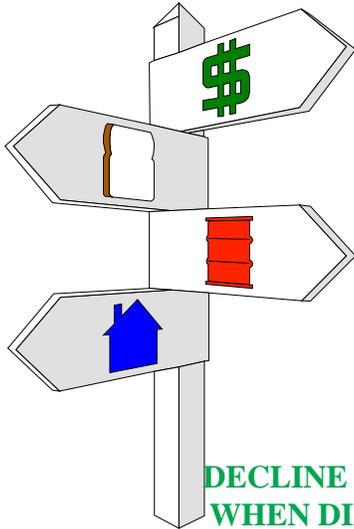
Love is an action word, and John wrote in I John 3:14-18: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

Someone once gave me a booklet containing the passage of I Corinthians 13:1-8 in 31 different translations so

that I could read a translation on love every day of the month. That is not needed, however. Just one translation of this passage is needed, but it still would be a good idea to read that passage every day of the month. The King James Version uses the word charity which is agape (love). This passage shows us how to really love. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."

That is the kind of love that Jesus showed to others. It is the kind of love that He expects His followers to display. Perhaps a word of encouragement to someone is all that is needed. Perhaps, like John wrote, sharing our goods with someone in need will show the love of God in our hearts. There is a tragic situation that exists in the world today. Jesus said: "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:12).

# THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES



## DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY WHEN DID IT BEGIN?

An article, entitled *Study: Christianity in U.S. faces decline 'across the board'* by Sarah Pulliam Bailey of the **Washington Post**, appeared in a recent issue of the **Houston Chronicle**. The following is that article:

“WASHINGTON –Christianity is on the decline in America, not just among younger generations or in certain regions of the country but across race, gender, education and geographic barriers.

The percentage of adults who describe themselves as Christians dropped by nearly eight percentage points in just seven years to about 71 percent, according to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center.

“It’s remarkably widespread,” said Alan Copperman, director of religion research for the Pew Research Center. “The country is becoming less religious as a whole, and it’s happening across the board.”

At the same time, the share of those who are not affiliated with a religion has jumped from 16 percent to about 23 percent in the same time period. The trend follows a pattern found earlier in the American Religious Identification Survey, which found that in 1990, 86 percent of American adults identified as Christians, compared with 76 percent in 2008.

Pew estimates there are about 5 million fewer mainline Protestants than there were in 2007. About 10 percent of the U.S. population says it was raised in the mainline Protestant tradition, while 6 percent have converted to mainline Protestantism. Evangelical Protestants have experienced less decline, due to their net positive retention rate. For every person who has left evangelical Protestantism after growing up, 1.2 have switched to join.

And people in older generations are increasingly

*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.*

disavowing organized religion. Among baby boomers, 17 percent identify as a religious “none,” up from 14 percent in 2007.

The Pew survey was conducted between June and September of 2014.”

### Comment

While browsing through some old files of **The Advocate of Truth**, I came across an article entitled *A Nation Forgot God*. It was printed in the October 30, 1967 **Advocate of Truth**. This article confirms that the decline of Christianity in the U.S. is not recent. Following is a condensed rendering of the auricle:

“It took place in the Twentieth Century. Here is what happened:

Prayers were outlawed in public schools. Bible teaching was not allowed in classrooms. Few were keeping the Sabbath Day holy. Prayer meetings were being ruled out, and prayer at home was neglected. Parents, as well as children, were not taught the truth of God’s Holy Word – the Bible. The church was exchanged for sports, and church services were not attended because of a one-eyed monster in the home called Television.

The Bible was exchanged for cheap paperbacked trash. Serious indeed was the situation. A nation had forgotten God. The hymn, “Nothing But the Blood of Jesus,” was torn out of hymn books because blood was gory and unsightly. The hymn, “Nearer My God To Thee,” was a silly song because some clergymen claimed that “God was Dead!”

Truly a nation once “under God” had forgotten God.

No longer was “In God we trust” the motto of this nation. For you see, even these words were stripped from the walls of the Federal buildings in Washington. How pitiful the situation! Supposedly educated schools were shouting we do not need to be law abiding citizens.

We want to do what we want and do not want anyone telling us what to do.

In this sin-drenched nation of mass murders, riots, arsons, lootings, rapes, gang fightings, bombings, wife-swapping, immorality, alcoholism, strikes, beatnicks, hippies, bloody massacres, demonstrations, dope addicts and peddlers, crime amuck, pornography galore, rebellion, world-wide hatred – while leaders are shouting, “Laws must be obeyed” – the LAW OF GOD is being mocked and shunned. And speaking of laws, the blessed Word of God declares this infallible truth, “And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?” (Deuteronomy 4:8).

And after blessing this nation with prosperity unspeakable, the tears of our Almighty Eternal Creator cry out unto our ears, “O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me” (Micah 6:3).

Why now, pray tell me, does this nation now have crime increasing six and one-half times as fast as the population? Why is moral decay spreading? The answer is simple. This nation has forgotten her God. No prayers are prayed at the United Nations assembly meetings.

Why is there one murder every forty minutes? One assault every three minutes? One rape every thirty-five minutes? One robbery every seven minutes? One burglary every forty seconds? One auto theft every two minutes?

In the last twenty years, population has increased 33 percent. But look: Crime has increased 228 percent. Why? The answer can be found in the words of Jedidiah Morse (father of Samuel Morse) who died in 1826. Before his death he declared these words of truth, “Whenever the pillars of Christianity shall be overthrown, our present form of democratic government, and all the blessings which flow from them, must fall with them.”

### **LIVES MATTER**

You no doubt have been taking in the furor caused by policemen shooting and killing black men while trying to arrest them. The slogan, Black Lives Matter, has become very famous. Would it not be correct to say that ALL LIVES MATTER in God’s sight?

### **LITTLE KNOWN SYNDROME**

I read in a newspaper article that the World Health Organization downplayed a syndrome called Middle East Respiratory Syndrome which spread in South Korea. I

have never heard of that syndrome.

Much disease and sickness plague mankind in these last days, and disease and sickness can strike anywhere and at any time. Mass travel has made the spread of disease and sickness more possible.

There will be no disease or sickness in the Kingdom of God. “And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity” (Isaiah 33:24).

### **ECONOMIC ALERTS**

About five years ago, there was an economic expert who sponsored an advertisement on television to the effect that an economic crisis would soon appear which could affect the way we rear our children, travel, invest our money, and go about our daily business. That economic alert has not yet come to pass! At the time of this column, there is a former member of congress who is sponsoring the same type of alert. No doubt, these things will happen in the United States in the future, but we do not know when!

### **NEW LAWS**

I saw on television that the advancement of modern technology has made it necessary for officials to make new laws in order to handle some aspects of it, such as where drones are allowed to fly and what is considered spying by a video, camera, or cell phone photograph.

### **HEAT WAVES AND DROUGHT**

There have been some heat waves in different parts of the earth. Just recently in Pakistan, there was a heat wave. The temperature hit 113 degrees, and many people died. Droughts have left their mark across the United States. I read that drought conditions now cover 22 percent of the land used in U.S. corn production and 18 percent of soybean land. This is in keeping of the prophecy given by Jesus in Matthew 24.

### **NEW DRUG**

There is a new man made drug on the street now. It is called alpha-PVP. It is commonly called flakka. It originates from China. It is an inexpensive narcotic that causes exaggerated strength and dangerous hallucinations.

### **PLUTO**

Scientists have discovered many features of Pluto. They have come to the conclusion that Pluto is actually a planet with several features of earth. It was once thought that Pluto was not a planet. That is what I was taught in school. However, modern and up to date scientists are finding out more true facts about God’s great creation!

# BIBLE

## Study



# Questions and Answers

**Question:** Was Elijah carried to heaven by a fiery chariot?

**Answer:** The Bible clearly states that Elijah was not carried away to heaven by a fiery chariot but by a whirlwind. “And it came to pass, as they [Elijah and Elisha] still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (II Kings 2:11).

In the Old Testament, both the fiery chariot and the whirlwind are associated with the presence of God. But the fiery chariot in the passage was not sent to carry Elijah to heaven. Its purpose was to separate Elijah, whose work on earth was ended, from his disciple Elisha, whose ministry was just beginning.

**Question:** Why do you think that the Bible contains the evil deeds of some good men as well as the evil deeds of evil men?

**Answer:** It is because the Bible records things as they are. In the Bible, there is no attempt to hide the weaknesses of those who served God. Those shortcomings were reprov'd and their virtues and faithfulness commended. This, then, becomes a good lesson to us.

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

“Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted” (I Corinthians 10:6).

**Question:** Will you please comment on why it is necessary to receive the Holy Spirit?

**Answer:** The Apostle Paul asked certain disciples in Ephesus, “...**Have ye received the Holy Ghost (Spirit) since ye believed?** The disciples answered honestly: “**And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost (Spirit)**” (see Acts 19:1-2). It was a life and death question. Without the Holy Spirit in you, you cannot be resurrected to meet Jesus and have your body changed from flesh into Spirit. “**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**” (Romans 8:11).

A holy person truly must be a reformed (converted) person. We may reform and live moral lives, but such is not true righteousness. All reformed persons, who live moral lives, are not holy. A saint is more than a reformed person. He is transformed, made over, inside and out, really a new creature in Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul said in II Corinthians 5:17: “**Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**”

It is impossible for a reformed man or woman, by personal power alone, to experience this truth expressed by the Apostle Paul, for without the receipt of the Holy Spirit from God the Father, no one can comprehend the truth of all things becoming new unto the Father. Being merely reformed, and without the Holy Spirit dwelling within, the fleshly nature being the stronger (because we are born in sin), the evil will predominate and overcome the good, though one would sincerely desire to do good.

This truth is expressed clearly by Brother Paul in his epistle to the Romans in these words: **“...Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”** Why is this? **“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.”** Can we then, without the Holy Spirit, obey and worship the Father in Spirit and in truth? NO! The answer is clear: **“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God”** (Romans 8:9, 5, 7, 8).

It is without doubt necessary for one who wills to obey the Father to **“...be filled with the Spirit”** (Ephesians 5:18). It is a direct command of the Scriptures! Many, not knowing the importance of the Holy Spirit in the life of the follower of Jesus, are like the disciples in Ephesus who asked Paul, by saying: **“We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost”** (Acts 19:2). Others have not hearkened unto the admonition of the Apostle John to **“...TRY THE SPIRITS WHETHER THEY ARE OF GOD...”** (I John 4:1). There is truly the one Holy Spirit which comes from God, and there are the evil spirits which are not of Him, but come from our adversary. There is only one way to know the genuine from the counterfeit, and that is an adequate knowledge of the Bible.

The prophet Isaiah gives the trial by which we shall know the spirits. He says: **“...when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them”** (Isaiah 8:19-20).

There are many who lay claim to the Holy Spirit, and yet there are many deceived, simply because they do not try the spirits. Some say that God has given “tongues” as

a sign of the receipt of the Holy Spirit, or baptism, and hence rest confidently upon this as a proof of the genuine filling of the Spirit, not realizing that “tongues” can be counterfeited as well as other parts of the truth.

It is without a doubt a truth that speaking in tongues (i.e., in other languages) accompanied the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Bible times. But this in no way is proof whenever a man, or woman, speaks in another language (or tongue), or utters a sound unintelligible to others, that such is a given sign of God, without a doubt, showing that the speaker has received the Holy Spirit. Many false prophets are gone out into the world, the apostle said, and we must try them, not by a tongue, but by the Word of God. **“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them”** (Isaiah 8:20).

The Apostle Paul warned that, at the last days, many would be deceived by evil spirits and follow doctrines of Satan. He said: **“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils”** (I Timothy 4:1). Should we not then try the spirits? Shall we believe every spirit, or shall we examine them? Surely we should scrutinize them, but how? Not by tongues, which can be counterfeited by men, or by evil spirits, but by the Word of God, by the Law of God, and by the testimony of Jesus, all which are TRUTH.

**Question:** What do you think causes God to hear our prayers?

**Answer:** Let us first think about what causes God not to hear our prayers. It is not our position or achievement in this world! It is not our fine sounding words! It is not our wealth of goods or our prominent social standing! It is not our good appearance and abilities! It is not the honors we have earned in this world!

Will our works of charity catch His attention? Proverbs 15:29 records, “The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.” The prophet Isaiah says it from the other side. “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” (Isaiah 59:1-2). Our being righteous is the answer.



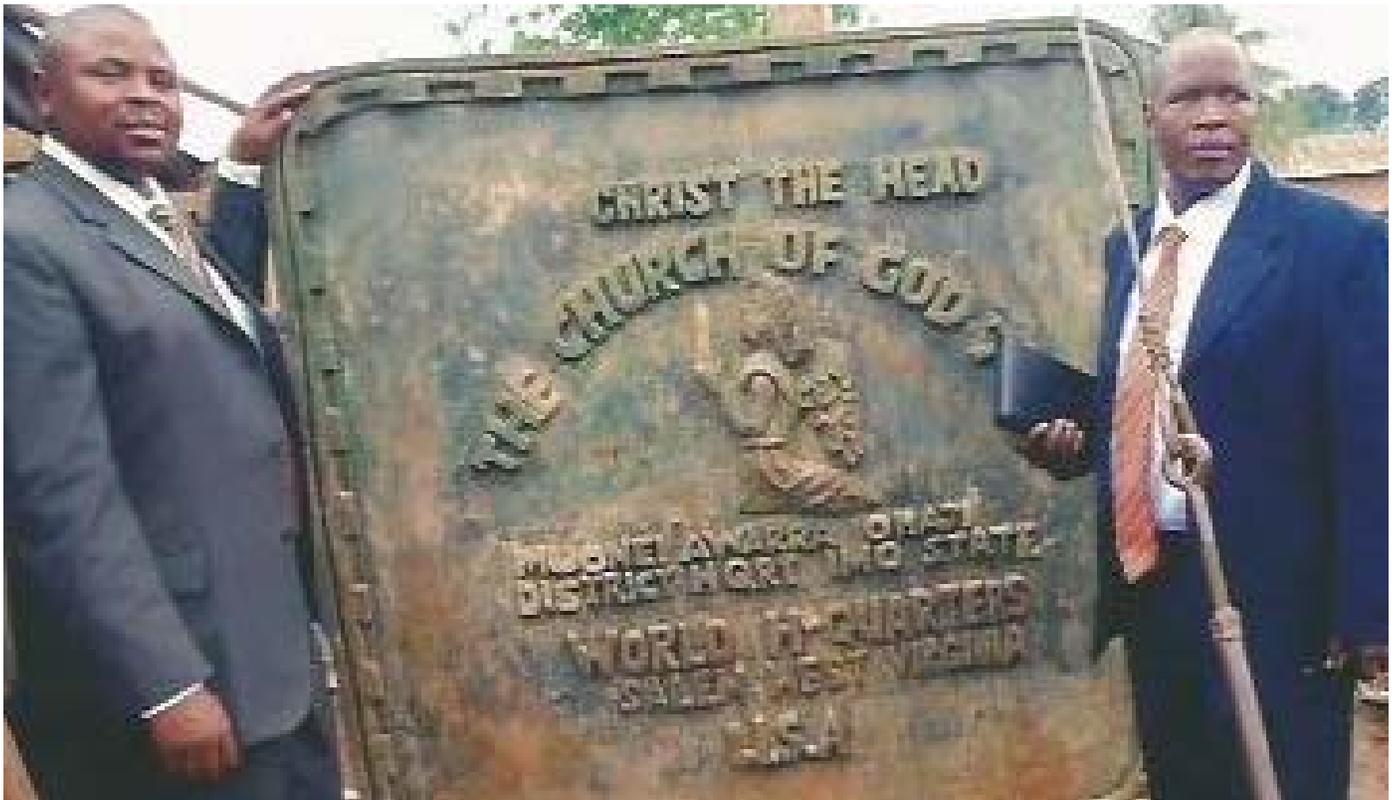
## Kenya

**Apostle Henry Miroro (right) greeting other elders during a Church of God meeting.**





**The Church Choir.**



**Elder Joseph Rono and Apostle Henry Miroro standing by the Church of God sign.**

LESSON I

TRIBUTE TO GOD AND CAESAR

Scripture Reading: Mark 12:13-17

Golden Text: Mark 12:17.

“And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s...”

1. Who came to see Jesus, and why did they come? Mark 12:13.
2. What question did the Pharisees ask Christ? Mark 12:14.
3. Did Christ know what was in their hearts? Mark 12:15 (first part).
4. What did He ask them to bring to Him? Mark 12:15 (last line).
5. What question did He ask them? Mark 12:16 (first part).
6. What was their answer? Mark 12:16 (last part).
7. What was Christ’s answer? Mark 12:17.

NOTE: “Caesar” in this lesson represents the state. As long as we live in this world, we must pay taxes in order to keep the affairs of the state operating. We may not want to pay taxes, but it is our obligation to the state. However, our first duty is to God. God should come first in all things.

LESSON II

THE WIDOW’S MITE

Scripture Reading: Mark 12:41-44.

Golden Text: Mark 12:44.

“For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.”

1. Where was Jesus sitting at this time? Mark 12:41 (first

- line).
2. What was He watching? Mark 12:41 (second line).
3. Did the rich give to the treasury? Mark 12:41 (last line).
4. Who came to the treasury? Mark 12:42 (first part).
5. How much did she put in? Mark 12:42 (last part).
6. What did Christ say concerning the widow? Mark 12:43.
7. Why did he say this? Mark 12:44.

NOTE: When we give to the Lord, we do not have to be rich. Whatever we have to give, we should give willingly. There are many people in the world who have a lot of money, but who give very little to God, while others may be like the widow of our lesson and give all they have. God does not expect us to give all our money. But we should try to follow the example of the poor widow and receive God’s blessing.

LESSON III

SOME SIGNS OF CHRIST’S COMING

Scripture Reading: Mark 13:3-10.

Golden Text: Mark 13:7.

“And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet.”

1. Where was Jesus sitting this time? Mark 13:3 (first part).
2. Who came to Him and asked Him questions? Mark 13:3 (last part).
3. What questions did they ask Him? Mark 13:4.
4. What did He warn them about? Mark 13:5.

- 5. Would anyone come in His name? Mark 13:6 (first part).
- 6. What would they do? Mark 13:6 (last part).
- 7. Should we be frightened when we hear of war? Mark 13:7.
- 8. What must first be done before Jesus comes? Mark 13:10.
- 9. Is it possible to tell the exact time that Jesus will come, and what should we do? Mark 13:33.

NOTE: You can also read Matthew 24 for this same lesson to study. Jesus is coming back to earth some day, and we should all be ready to meet Him. Therefore, we should study the Bible more and more each day to be ready to meet the Lord when He comes.

**LESSON IV**

**TEN VIRGINS**

Scripture Reading: Matthew 25:1-13.

Golden Text: Matthew 25:2.

“And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.”

- 1. In Matthew 25:1, what does Jesus say the kingdom of heaven will be likened unto?
- 2. How many of the virgins were wise, and how many were foolish? Matthew 25:2.
- 3. What did the foolish virgins do, and what did the wise do? Matthew 25:3-4.
- 4. What did the ten virgins do while waiting for the bridegroom, and what happened at midnight? Matthew 25:5-6.
- 5. What did all the ten virgins do in Matthew 25:7?
- 6. What did the five foolish ones say to the five wise ones, and what did the wise reply? Matthew 25:8-9.

- 7. What happened while the five foolish virgins went to buy oil? Matthew 25:10-11.
- 8. What did the Lord say to the foolish virgins when they returned? Matthew 25:12.
- 9. Do we know when Jesus will return? What are we to do? Matthew 25:13.

NOTE: We should always watch and be ready for the Lord’s return. He comes like a bridegroom for his bride. Do not be like the five foolish virgins who were not ready. Will you be ready to receive your reward?

“Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 25:13).

**WHO KILLED THEM?**

- 1. Who killed John the Baptist?
- 2. Who killed Abel?
- 3. Who killed Stephen?
- 4. Who killed Peter?
- 5. Who killed Jezebel?
- 6. Who killed Haman?
- 7. Who killed Absalom?
- 8. Who killed Goliath?
- 9. Who killed Naboth?
- 10. Who killed James?

**CROSS OUT THE S’S**

In each line - write the other letters in the spaces at the side. What is the message?

SSSKSESSESSP \_ \_ \_ \_  
 ASSWSSSSASYSS \_ \_ \_ \_  
 SSSSFRSSSOMSS \_ \_ \_ \_  
 SESVSISLSSSSS \_ \_ \_ \_

Answer Key for Buried Treasure: 1. G 2. F 3. C 4. I  
 5. H 6. A 7. B 8. J 9. E 10. N

# "THE COVER- UP"

By Olive Branch



Ricky was looking for a different target. That morning, he had cut a small fork from one of the trees and made himself a slingshot. He had shot at bottles, cans, and various targets, but now he was looking for something that was new and challenging to test his skill. His eyes began to twinkle when he noticed his mother's ornament in the flower bed. Mother had made it last winter in ceramics class and was proud of it. It was a little girl, holding a watering pot, as if she were watering the flowers. Ricky did not want to break it, but he thought it would be fun to put a rock between the girl's watering pot and her sun bonnet.

Choosing a good-sized rock, Ricky put it in the slingshot, took careful aim, pulled back on the elastic bands, and let the rock fly. It sailed inches away from the watering pot. Ricky chuckled. He was getting to be quite a shot.

He picked up another rock, fitted it into his slingshot, and sent it whizzing through the air. Ping! It hit the little figure squarely in the head. The pottery cracked; the head fell off in pieces. What was Ricky to do now?

Quickly, he looked around to see if anyone had witnessed his telling shot. No one was in sight. Stuffing his slingshot into his pocket, he picked up the broken pieces and the rest of the figure that was still standing and hurried out through the orchard. As fast as he could, Ricky pulled back some of the brush, threw the broken pieces to the bottom of the ditch, covered it all with dead leaves and brush. The evidence of what he had done was buried. He hoped his mother would think someone had stolen the figure.

He was putting on the last dead branch when he heard a slight noise and looked up to see his sister standing nearby. "Did you see anything?" Ricky asked quickly.

Minnie nodded her head. "I saw it all."

"You--you will not tell, will you?" Ricky asked hopefully.

"Well," Minnie drawled, "Maybe I will not tell. That depends on you."

Ricky walked slowly toward the house. What had Minnie meant? He did not want Mother to know what he had done, even if he had not meant to break her ornament. He would probably get the paddling of his life. But it would not be like Minnie not to tell.

Later Ricky heard Mother calling, "Minnie, go down to the garden and get some radishes for dinner."

"Ask Ricky, Mother," Minnie answered. "He will be glad to go."

"No, I will not," Ricky told her in a low voice. "I got radishes yesterday."

Minnie snickered. "Remember what I saw, Ricky?"

"O.K., I will go," Ricky agreed wearily. So this was to be the price she would charge for not telling!

Shortly after Ricky returned from the garden, he heard Mother calling again, "Minnie, run down to the hen house and get some eggs."

"You go, Ricky," Minnie said.

"I will not," Ricky answered. "It is not my turn."

Minnie smiled like she was pleased with herself. "Ricky", she reminded him, "If you do not--"

Reluctantly, he went for the eggs. For the next few days, Minnie enjoyed the power she had over her brother. He did not only his work, but hers, too, with the constant threat of her telling hanging over his head.

That was not the worst of it. Mother had been so busy she had not missed the broken ornament, but he knew he was doing wrong by trying to cover up what he had done. His heart felt heavy deep inside. He lost his appetite, and he had trouble sleeping at night. He had not really lied to his mother; however, he had tried to cover up what he had done. He knew God was not pleased with him. He remembered a Bible verse he had learned in Sabbath school: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper." He kept thinking about the verse all day. He knew that the brush he had put on the broken pottery did not really cover his sin.

Late in the afternoon Ricky went to his room. He took his Bible and turned to Proverbs 28:13 and read,

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper.” He knew that already. His heart was getting heavier and heavier. He read the verse, “but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

What would happen if he confessed to his mother? Maybe she would give him the whipping of his life, but he could not go on like this. Minnie would demand more and more pay for not telling, and his guilty conscience would get worse and worse.

Slowly, Ricky walked down to the dining room where Mother was sitting by the window, darning socks. He climbed up into her lap, put his arms around her neck and began to cry.

Mother put aside her mending and asked, "What is the matter, Ricky? I know something had been wrong with you for several days. Do you want to tell me about it?"

Slowly, Ricky confessed all about the slingshot and the broken pottery. Mother put her arms around him and patted him and kissed him. “You did wrong, Ricky,” she said, “But I am glad you came to me and told me the truth. I will forgive you, but you had better not play with the slingshot for awhile.”

Ricky took his slingshot from his pocket and gave it to his mother. He felt so much better after he had told her about it, but still there was a question in his mind. “Mother,” he asked, “do you think Jesus would forgive me too?”

“Oh for sure, Ricky. The Bible says, ‘If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ I forgave you and Jesus is more willing to forgive than I was, if you will confess to Him.”

Together they bowed their heads, and Ricky confessed his sin to God. When he left the dining room, he was feeling very happy.

Later, when Mother went to get supper, Ricky heard her calling, “Minnie, come and peel the potatoes for me.”

“You go, Ricky,” Minnie commanded. “I want to go play.”

“I will not go,” Ricky told her. “It is your turn.”

“If you do not go, I will tell,” Minnie threatened.

With a sigh of relief, Ricky said, “I have already told.” He put his hands in his pockets and started toward the barn, whistling as he went.

**BURIED TREASURE**

Here is a list of ten objects to find as quickly as you can. They are “buried” in Bible verses. Look up the “clues” given below and match them to the letter answers. Just to make it more interesting, there are some false clues.

1. A bell
2. A broken pitcher
3. Seven trumpets
4. A little boy’s coat
5. A leaf from an olive tree
6. A piece of money
7. Three baskets
8. A cloth
9. A harp
10. A cup
  - a. in a fish’s mouth (Matthew 17:27)
  - b. on a baker’s head (Genesis 40:16)
  - c. in the hands of seven priests (Joshua 6:13)
  - d. in a new cart (I Samuel 6:7-8)
  - e. hanging on a willow tree (Psalm 137:2)
  - f. at the fountain (Ecclesiastes 12:6)
  - g. sewed on the hem of a priest’s robe (Exodus 28:34)
  - h. in the mouth of a dove (Genesis 8:11)
  - i. in Solomon’s temple (I Kings 7:45)
  - j. over a candlestick (Numbers 4:9)
  - k. under a bushel basket (Matthew 5:15)
  - l. in the house of Samuel’s mother (I Samuel 2:18-19)
  - m. on the hand of the prodigal son (Luke 15:22)
  - n. in a sack of corn (Genesis 44:1-2)

**Answers to Who Killed Them?**

1. He was beheaded by the order of Herod (Mark 6:27).
2. His brother was Cain (Genesis 4:8).
3. He was stoned to death by the Jews (Acts 7:59).
4. He was crucified by the Romans.
5. She was thrown from her window by the eunuchs, at Jehu’s command (II Kings 9:33).
6. He was hanged by order of King Ahasuerus, on a gallows he had built for Mordecai (Esther 7:10).
7. He was struck with three darts by Joab, while he was hanging by the hair from an oak tree (II Samuel 18:14).
8. He was killed by David’s slingshot (I Samuel 17:49).
9. He was stoned to death by Jezebel’s orders (I Kings 21:13).
10. He was slain by the sword at Herod’s orders (Acts 12:2).

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## **The Journey**

Cielo T. Villanueva

I struggled much for my dream,  
All the paths are muddy and rocky, it seems.  
But I bravely take the challenge – a winner should, I claim,  
That if I fail and lose, there's no one to blame.  
Everything I planned, I put it all in prayer,  
Hoping for a good and positive answer,  
But if not, I know it all and see it clear,  
That only the best is the aim of my Holy Father.  
I used to live in a humble and thin living,  
Doing my best to refuse evil and the worldly things,  
Even how rough the street is, I continue walking,  
Patiently waiting for the abundance of the heavenly blessing.

