



# The Advocate of Truth

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## A GLASS OF WATER

By David Royer

The framework of this parable is repeated in multiple locations on the Internet, YouTube and Facebook with variations on the story and no original source. Here is my rendition:

*A young man went to the pastor of his church and said, "Pastor, I have decided not to attend this church anymore!" "Why?" the pastor asked.*

*"Because I see people on their phones, texting, playing games, etc. during the service; At our break time, I overheard one woman badmouthing another; I heard complaints about your fundraising campaign; That man over there gives a terrible testimony once out in public; At lunch, I overheard more gossiping about another member; some of these people are just not living right....they all are hypocrites!"*

*The Pastor became silent and then said, "OK... But can I ask you to do something for me before you make your final decision? Fill a glass with water and walk around the church three times. There is a catch; you must do this*

*without spilling a single drop of water on the floor."*

*The young man thought: "That will be super easy." And he walked around inside the church three times with his glass of water. When he had finished, he returned to the Pastor, saying: "I completed your request without spilling a drop!"*

*The Pastor asked him: "During your walk, did you see anybody on their phone?; hear any gossip or slander?; any complaints about the campaign?; was anybody living/doing wrong?" The young man answered: "Of course not, I did not see anything because I was focused on this glass of water, so that it would not spill".*

*Moral: When you come to church, you should be just that focused on God, so that you don't fail.*

What great advice. If I am focused on my faith, and personal growth in the Lord, I won't be so bothered about what other people do around me or against me. This story also emphasizes why Jesus said: "Follow me" (see John 8:12). He did not say follow other Christians. Do not let **your** relationship with God be determined by how others relate to God. Instead, let it be determined by how focused you are on what God wants of you and your strong desire to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

**CAUTION NOTE:** Keep in mind that Jesus called sinners and unbelievers to follow Him. It was an unconditional calling. He didn't even demand that they believe He was the Son of God. He knew that if they just followed and took a step in His direction, it would change them. There may be situations in our Church that the Pastor will need to correct: bad and even sinful behavior. He is trained to watch and deal with those issues.

# THE FOCUS OF A CHRISTIAN

## On what is your sight focused?

By Misael Torres

We usually use the word focus to refer to a way of observing and analyzing a particular situation. However, it can also be defined as the action to adjust an optical or visual mechanism with the objective of making it seen as an image with clarity. Maybe many, or some of us, require the use of glasses to be able to see our surroundings with sharpness and clarity, but what about our focus as Christians? This is something we have to analyze. Maybe we also have the need of an adjustment that will allow us to see with clarity the things that truly matter, things with great value. The world that we live in shows us perspectives and focuses that are more full of vanity every time.

Our society today lives in a permanent state of blindness and numbness, keeping its sight on global tendencies that supposedly state an adequate style of life, right for the actual men and women. However, the end of all these things is vanity. Things such as work, school, physical form, personal and professional achievements are the ones that keep this world unfocused on God. People do not realize that they are discarding the opportunity to live under the care and grace of God, and to achieve eternal life in the upcoming time as well.

As Christians, we have to be aware of not letting anything obstruct our sight. Within the church there could exist situations, ideas or life styles that will hinder and interfere with our purpose to serve the Lord. Maybe, without even noticing, we are also falling into the vanity of work, school or some of the many other tendencies that the world has.

We need to establish priorities. Of course, it is good to work and enjoy the fruit of our work. Also,

being prepared academically is of great value because that allows us to obtain and perfect many abilities that will let us serve the Lord in a better way, but we have to be careful that none of these or other similar situations which are abundant in this world cloud our vision and take away our life.

Children of God need to use this new mentality (the Holy Spirit) that the Father has given us to make intelligent decisions in our lives. This is not saying that we don't have to work nor put some effort in trying to be better academically, or to have better health, but we have to be careful that none of these things will absorb us in a way that we will lose focus and connection in the path of God.

The Apostle Paul said in his letter to the Colossians: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2). When we recognized our own sins and got baptized, we died to sin and put on Christ (our new life). Therefore, while being under this grace and time of opportunity, we should procure to search the things which are above, things that do not have an expiration date. The Lord Jesus Christ said: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness..." (Matthew 6:33). He knew the necessities that we all must have as human beings. Nevertheless, He came to show us, with His example of life, what should be our focus as true children of God.

Christ came to show us a different focus so we can apply it in our lives. He teaches us that it is better to live a life according to the will and teachings of

God, and fight to reach eternal life.

In order to reach our objective of serving the Lord and reaching eternal life, it is necessary to keep the target in our sight. If there is something that is clouding our focus as Christians, whatever the situation may be, we have to find a way to adjust our vision to see clearly our objective. Paul in his maturity understood what the focus of children of God should be. He rejected his own knowledge and everything that he could put his trust on in this flesh of earthly life. He had already understood that the things of the world were past, and he was looking forward. He was looking forward at the target which is the prize of "...the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).

The enemy is very sly and was able to plague the world of focus and perspectives of life that contradict the teachings of God. He uses every time a more subtle and sophisticated way to deceive the world and also try to unstable our lives as Christians. That is why we should fight to keep constant and without remorse before God. There may be many situations in which we don't pay attention and end up misbehaving, but we have to put ourselves in the hands of God just like David did. Psalm 119:37 says: "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way." King David asked God for protection. He was asking God to keep his eyes adjusted and focused in His path. David was sure that this would lead him to eternal life.

Without a doubt, the time in which we live is very complex, dangerous and oppressive. Our global society shows us everywhere clear symptoms of spiritual blindness and is unfocused towards the things of God. Nevertheless, it is also a time of opportunity for Christians. The world and its ideas are about to collapse. The corruption of its heart and estrangement from God will only take them to lose their opportunity to reach eternal life. As children of God, we have to be focused, conscious and sober so nothing will take us away from the path that the Lord has drawn for us. Now is the time to adjust our sight!

Let us take the example of the people of Israel. Even after being the chosen people and blessed by God, they took their sight away from justice and the

faith that God had shown them by His Son Jesus Christ, and they even crucified Him!

They couldn't see Christ even when He did so many miracles and signs before them. They had their eyes focused on empty morals and material burdens, earthly things that belong to this world. They forgot the important things such as justice, mercy and faith.

At this time, we have to be careful not to take our sight away from the path of the Lord. Let us keep our life focused on the target. If there is someone or something which clouds our vision, let us fight knowing that we have Christ on our side!

Paul registers in his writings to the Corinthians a lesson for us. He finalized his lecture saying: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). It is time to take a look at our objective and not fall. If we decide to follow Christ, we should do it with real strength and vocation. Let's stand and not fall.

In conclusion, let us remember the words of the Apostle Peter who said: "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" (I Peter 4:7).

## Being Slow To Wrath

We read in Proverbs 14:29: "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." We are living in an angry world today. Just consider how prevalent road rage is. In some cases people are actually killing other people because of road rage.

We need to be very careful that wrath does not infect our lives, especially so toward our brethren. Jesus warned us in Matthew 5:21-22: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

There are many things which can bring us anger, but there are also many things for which we can give God praise. Let us be emphasizing the giving of praise to the Lord and we will be much less angry at the things of life.

# The Truth As We Know It

Daniel Cruz

The idea that conspiracies exist has become a thing of intrigue, mysteriousness, and deception that can lead to ideas and thoughts that fascinate some and lead to a belief that can carry us away from the Truth. Webster's defines a conspiracy as "a theory that explains an event or set of circumstances as the result of a secret plot by usually powerful conspirators." These theories can lead one astray and lose focus on reality. There are many ideas, philosophies, and thoughts that can lead to a theory that may be conceivable to man and, without researching, may sound ideal and plausible. However, God warned us of these things and asks us to refrain from accepting these things in our lives and seek Him wholeheartedly. "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23). God seeks a believer who will be admonished by Him and seeks to do His will in these last days. So, how is it that many go astray or compromise the Truth?

To answer this question we must refer to Abraham, a great obedient man in the sight of God. He conspired to lie to Pharaoh to save himself from imminent death. Genesis 12:11-12: "And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive." Abraham was concerned for his life and involved Sarai in his plot to deceive. "Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee" (vs.13).

Can we say that obedience and faith was lacking in Abram at this time? "Yes!" Some could say that he was perceptive to ask her to do such things, for he had been asked of the Lord to leave his family and go to a land that was promised to him by God. Conspiring to tell a lie only

revealed the truth. God relied on Abraham to trust Him and spoke only truth to Abraham. He required the same from Abraham. When man denies God's truths he applies his own method which leads to reasoning and thoughts of himself. This leads to denial and allows other deities to take the place of God's promises and truths. Where do we slip up or when do we accept false doctrines?

Brethren, the answer is found in Ephesians 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." We contend with our own flesh and either we give in to its desires or acknowledge our weakness and ask God to help us wrestle the spiritual wickedness. Can we accept that without God's help, we will be able to defeat this darkness? Our life experiences should be evident that we need His help. God needs us to be overcomers and remember His promises to us. Colossians 2:18: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." This is a warning that man will create a pretty picture and believe it is of God. However, God will reveal things to His faithful followers and strengthens them in the Word and truths.

Let us not falter or seek out other doctrines or words of admiration. God confirms in our spirit that He will contend with those things that will draw us astray. Isaiah 55:6: "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near". We are given a time limit and we do not know when God will no longer hear our cries. The return of His Son will be soon. Let us hold fast and ground ourselves in the Truth while it is still allowed. God loves his Creation and is allowing those who know Him to remain in His truth. Let us not fall victim to the things that may entice and pull us from God's loving and safe arms.

# THOUGHTS CONCERNING THE LORD'S PRAYER

Bond Tennant

Jesus gave His disciples and us a model prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. We call it the Lord's prayer. Let us examine some of its features. God's name is hallowed in great reverence in the opening of this prayer.

The first petition is: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (verse 10). We know that this is God's plan. In the hearts and minds of God's people, the promise of the kingdom is the golden thread woven throughout the Bible. Our request does not suggest that we are intending to motivate God or tell Him when it should be established, but that we look forward to the time of its establishment because we wish for an end of sin and death.

The second request of this prayer is, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). The real meaning of this request is for spiritual food. In another place, Jesus said that He is the "bread of life," of which we must partake in order to live. "I am that bread of life" (John 6:48). "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (verse 51). He then explained what eating of the bread of life really signifies: "It is the spirit that quickeneth (makes alive); the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (verse 63). Therefore, when we pray for our daily bread, we are asking for a better understanding of His word through the Holy Spirit.

Concerning our request for the Holy Spirit, Jesus said: "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he

give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11: 9-13).

In this prayer, we are told to ask forgiveness. "...Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). God has made every necessary provision for the forgiveness of our sins. He sent His only begotten Son, who died and subsequently appeared in the presence of God for us. Please read John 3:16; Hebrews 9:24; I Peter 3:18. However, the heavenly Father has attached a provision to this arrangement. We must demonstrate the same mercy and forgiveness toward others--especially to our brethren--that He has demonstrated toward us. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

The final petition of this prayer is, "...Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil..." (Matthew 6:13). We are fully aware of Satan's power and how hopeless we would be if we were left alone to combat his superior abilities. "Evil" carries the thought of "evil one," or Satan. Jesus instructed us to pray for deliverance from the evil one and not to permit him by trial or temptation to overwhelm us and cause us to fall.

Some scholars believe that the rest of the words in Matthew 6:13, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever," are not found in the older manuscripts of the New Testament. Also, they do not appear in Jesus' answer to His disciples when they requested, "Lord, teach us to pray". Please read Luke 11:1-4.

*Dandy Designs*  
**ICE: THE INCREDIBLE TOOL OF  
GOD**

Ice is a critical blessing that we often take for granted. You probably even get angry with it if you live in a place where ice on the ground or roadway can be a threat to your travel safety. Ice is a very useful and vital item in the design of planet Earth. Ice stores water and allows some of our major rivers to exist. The Ganges, Indus, Hwang Ho, and Yangtze rivers, plus all the Canadian rivers feeding Lake Winnipeg get their water from ice stored in winter and melted in the spring and summer. Some 80 cubic kilometers of meltwater feeds the rivers of Europe and the Middle East. Most of California gets its water in the same way. In Job 38:22 (NIV) God challenges Job with, "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow?" Stored snow is one of the tools God has used to provide for humans on a planet where shortages of water can be catastrophic.

In addition to storing water, ice molds and shapes the surface of the earth and produces soil for agriculture. The odd shape of the water molecule, which is V-shaped, means that when water freezes it will expand in volume instead of contracting as you would expect. When ice forms, the geometry of the water molecule locks in the molecules so that the hydrogen/oxygen bond expands due to the geometry involved. The force of this expansion is enormous--enough to crack rocks and move boulders. When put under pressure, ice behaves as a fluid, and this is what allows glaciers to move. Glaciers are a major sculptor of many mountains and land surfaces, including most of North America.

It is the design of the water molecule that allows us to enjoy so many benefits of ice. Great wisdom and intelligence is built into this seemingly minor part of our existence, which is an incredible tool of God.

--From *Does God Exist?*

## IMPOSSIBLE THINGS

By Moises Torres M.

In this article we analyze several "impossible" things mentioned in the Bible.

**It is impossible that a good tree bring forth evil fruit and vice versa.**

"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:16-20).

"Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit" (Matthew 12:33).

**NOTE:** Using these practical "impossible" things, Jesus pointed out hypocrisy. He also said: "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matthew 5:37).

**Let us read what James says about another "impossible".**

"Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh." (James 3:11-12).

**It was impossible for the law to do the job by itself.**

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (Romans 8:3).

**NOTE:** The law was weak because of the flesh. So, it was impossible for the law to achieve man's obedience to the law of God. So God sent his own Son to condemn sin in His flesh by his profession of faith through obedience.

**It was impossible for death to hold the Lord Jesus:** "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:22-24).

**So, it will be impossible for death to hold the saints.** "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 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 8:10-11). So, if we have the Spirit (mind) of Christ in us, it will be impossible for death to hold us as children of God" (Romans 8:10-11).

**It is impossible for those who fall away to be renewed again.**

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:4-6).

**Without faith it is impossible to please God.**

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

**It is impossible for God to lie.**

"And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swear by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:" (Hebrews 6:11-17).

"That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:" (Hebrews 6:18).

**NOTE:** Hope on His promises, and swearing by Himself are those two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie. He swore by His own name.

## The New Covenant

By David DeLong

A remarkable passage of Scripture is found in Hebrews 9:15-17. This passage reads: "And for this cause he (Jesus) is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."

These words from the Bible tell us that the testator (Jesus) of the new testament (covenant) had to die before the terms of the New Covenant could come into force. While He was alive the terms of the New Covenant were yet to be ratified.

Now, let us review another passage of Scripture: Galatians 3:15: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto." This remarkable verse informs us that a covenant, even if it is just a man's covenant, once it is confirmed, cannot have anything added to, or taken away from, it.

We know this to be true of a person's will, which is a contract, or covenant, regarding the person's estate after death. The terms of the covenant are made, of course, during the person's lifetime. After the person dies nothing can be added to, or taken away from, the terms of the contract. The Scriptures are telling us the same thing about the terms of the New Covenant.

Jesus, of course, could only set the terms of the New Covenant during the course of His lifetime. His death upon the cross ratified the Covenant, and nothing could be added to, or taken away from, the terms of that Covenant after His death. Please think about the implications of this. A few years, or so, after Jesus' death a form of Christianity, called Gnostic Christianity, began to take shape within some congregations. Both Paul and John warned the true believers about this (see Acts 20:28-31; I John 2:18-19; 4:1-6). These Gnostic Christians claimed to have received new light after Jesus went back to heaven.

They believed that part of this new knowledge, for instance, involved the changing of worship from the seventh day Sabbath to Sunday. But, remember, after Jesus' death on the cross which ratified the New Covenant, nothing could be added to, or taken away from, the terms of the New Covenant. Some also believed that swine's flesh and other unclean meats were now made clean to consume. But, we know that this is also untrue. Peter, probably the closest of Jesus' disciples, refuted this argument. But more on that, later.

Let us look at some of the things that were ratified under the New Covenant. Remember, Jesus set the terms for the New Covenant while He was alive on earth. Therefore, these terms could not change after His death. So, we look to the Gospels to see what Jesus set up during His life. First, I would like to mention the Ten Commandments. When a rich, young ruler came to Jesus he asked a question: "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me

good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 19:16-19).

Did Jesus teach about the seventh day Sabbath? Yes. In Mark 2:27-28 He said that the Sabbath was made for man (i.e. mankind). In Matthew 12:1-8 Jesus taught what was lawful to do on the Sabbath. "At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day."

Furthermore, Jesus taught about the Sabbath in Matthew 12:9-12: "And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days."

Did Jesus approve of tithing, or paying 10% of a person's income to God by giving it to the Church? Yes. In Matthew 23:23 He said to some scribes and Pharisees: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave

the other undone."

Did Jesus set up a memorial for His death by observing the Lord's Supper at the same time as the Passover, which He became? Yes. In Matthew 26:26-29 we find: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives."

The Lord Jesus taught us to wash one another's feet before partaking of the emblems of His body and blood. In John chapter 13, verses 4-5 we learn: "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." Then we learn in verses 12-17: "So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Did Jesus cleanse unclean meats, like pork, during His lifetime? No. in Matthew 15 we find Jesus confronting scribes and Pharisees about the matter of washing one's hands before eating. "Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by

me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Matthew 15:1-6).

We see here nothing about the subject of cleansing unclean meats, but about the subject of washing one's hands before eating. Jesus then spoke to the crowd and later explained His parable to the disciples. "And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man" (verses 10-20).

When Jesus said, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man" He was speaking to answer the issue of eating without washing one's hands. Many people have read far too much into this issue. He was not even remotely addressing the issue of cleansing pork. This was not on any of the peoples' minds, including Jesus' mind. Jesus was speaking about heart issues which defile a person. He concluded His discourse with the statement: "but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."

If Jesus had cleansed pork and other unclean meats at this time, Peter would have probably been the first to recognize it. But, notice Peter's declaration many years after Jesus had ascended back to heaven. In Acts chapter 10, verse 14, after seeing a sheet from heaven containing many different kinds of animals, Peter declared: "...Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean." Peter was recognizing that many of the animals in the sheet were still unclean. Therefore, the eating

of unclean meats was never ratified by Jesus under the New Covenant.

Did Jesus teach us about baptism and the way that it should be done? Yes. He even gave us an example of how it should be done. In Matthew 3:13-17 we find: "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." Jesus was totally immersed in the Jordan River, and was not sprinkled as some may have imagined. The phrase, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water" shows this.

There are other things that Jesus set up under the New Covenant that we must follow. Let us be diligent to study these things, from the Gospels, and to follow our Lord and Savior, Jesus, as He has given us an example.

# Being Christ's Sheep

By David DeLong

In the tenth chapter of John, verses 1-16, Jesus lays out the relationship that He has with His people whom He calls sheep. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be

saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

A true sheep must enter the sheepfold through the door. If a person tries to enter the sheepfold by climbing up some other way, he or she is a thief and a robber. So says

the Lord Jesus. Even Jesus, Himself, entered into the sheepfold through the door. It was the Father in heaven (the Porter) who opened the door for Jesus to enter. Jesus became the door to the sheepfold, and it is through Him that the true sheep enter in. The sheep then hear His voice and the Shepherd calls them by name. He then leads the sheep.

The sheep enter the sheepfold (the Church, or family of God) the same way that Jesus entered: through baptism. We find the Lord Jesus being baptized by John the Baptist in the Gospels. For instance, Matthew 3:13-17 informs us: "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."

When we are baptized, and thus enter the sheepfold, we must be baptized in Jesus' name because Jesus is the door to the sheepfold. And like as the Spirit of God descended upon Jesus, we too must receive the Holy Spirit after we are baptized. We find this pattern in Acts 8:14-17: "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.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

When the sheep follow the Shepherd they are imitating the life of the Lord Jesus. I John 2:4-6 tells us: "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

So, following the Lord Jesus is walking in His footsteps.

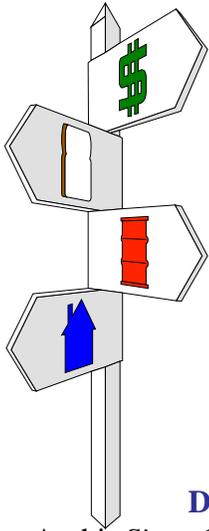
A stranger the sheep will not follow. This includes anyone who is not Jesus. Those who follow after men invariably also follow after wrong doctrines and beliefs which are contrary to the Scriptures. Hearing the Shepherd's voice involves following all the teachings of Jesus for us whether those teachings are commandments or not. For instance, Jesus said in John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." This includes the commandments of Jesus, but it also involves all of His teachings, all of His words to us. A good example of this is Jesus' teaching about the Sabbath. In Mark 2:27 He said: "...The sabbath was made for man..." There is no commandment here to keep the Sabbath, but the clear inference is that if we are a part of mankind we had better keep the Sabbath. This is an example of keeping the words of the Lord for us.

A person can only be saved by entering the door (Jesus) through belief, repentance, the waters of baptism, and receiving the Holy Spirit. Then he or she finds pasture in the pages of the Bible which is the nourishment of the believer. Though the thief (Satan) "cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy", Jesus came to bring life and life "more abundantly".

Jesus, the good Shepherd, came to give His life for the sheep, but the hireling (the shepherd who is over the sheep only for money) flees when the wolf comes and the sheep are scattered.

Jesus was addressing the Jews who believed on Him at this time. But He also said: "...other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." These "other sheep", I believe, were the Gentile believers who would be added to the Church of God. The Apostle Paul emphasized this concept of one fold, or one church, or one body in Ephesians 4:4, when he wrote: "There is one body..."

Being a part of Christ's sheep, then, involves being in that one fold, that one body of believers, who hear their Shepherd's voice and who follow Him wherever He may lead them, even away from the false teachings of men.



## *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.*

### **DURING THIS TIME**

As this *Signs Of The Times* is being written, there are two prominent issues that stand out in the news. Immigration is now on the forefront. President Trump has purposed that a high wall be built on the border between Mexico and the United States to deter those from Central American countries entering the United States illegally. He does not seem to be able to get the allocated funds that are needed for building it. During his campaign, he said that Mexico will pay for the wall, but Mexico will not pay for the wall. The immigration issue is now so confusing. There is no clear cut policy, and congress is unable to pass any immigration bills that might ease the situation. There have been three bills introduced in the congress, but all three went down in defeat.

President Trump made an executive order that involved a zero tolerance policy which resulted in separating mothers and their children. That caused much more confusion and anguish. The children were sent to many places throughout the country, some thousands of miles away. The living conditions for these children were mostly deplorable. President Trump received much criticism for this policy even among members of his own party. Therefore, he backed off by signing an order that the children and their parents would no longer be separated. There is now the problem of trying to reunite the children with their parents. This is most difficult because the officials have not kept a dependable record as to where the children were sent.

Hot in the news is the meeting between President Trump and chairman Kim of North Korea. The meeting was in Singapore. The topic of discussion was to be the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. The meeting

did not last long, but President Trump said that chairman Kim was cordial and on his wave length. There was discussion, but no great movements were agreed upon. However, the joint military exercises of the United States and South Korea that take place every year were delayed. Denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is a long way from being a reality. In the meeting, it seems as though chairman Kim received some of the things he wanted, and the United States gave much. South Korea was very surprised to know that the joint military exercises were delayed.

### **SOME THINGS ABOUT WHICH TO THINK**

It seems like the English speaking nations, such as the United States and England, are on the decline in influencing the world. Will this continue?

There is a moral and cultural problem in this country. This is sad but true! Consider the lack of morals in United States politics.

The United States will completely become a post Christian nation in values and morals.

Australia is very much stable. Will Australia lose its stability and encounter many new problems?

### **SECURITY WHILE DRIVING**

We must depend on our automobiles to arrive at our work if we do not have public transportation or wish to use it if we have it! Is car technology safe by itself?

Following is a condensed article, *Is car technology giving us a false sense of security*, which appeared in **USA Today**:

SAN FRANCISCO – On a busy stretch of highway somewhere, a driver is gazing out the window, hands on her lap, feet off the pedals. Such driver-assisted motoring, a midpoint on the journey to fully self-driving cars, uses radar and cameras to help a car steer, brake and even change lanes. As such features emerge in less-expensive cars, a vexing question looms: Automakers from Tesla to Nissan caution that their tech must be monitored, but can humans be trusted to do so?

“These systems are designed not only for ideal environments like good weather and clear lane markings but also for rational behavior, and humans are predictably irrational,” says Bryan Reimer, a research scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who specializes in self-driving tech. “The question is, does the automation work so well and require so little of you that in essence, a

new safety problem is created while solving for another?"

Two deadly crashes spotlighted such concerns. A month ago, an Uber self-driving car killed a pedestrian in Arizona despite having a driver at the wheel who was supposed to monitor the vehicle. The incident ignited debate over whether testing autonomous cars in public is appropriate.

A week later, a Tesla Model X in autopilot mode slammed into a concrete highway divider in Mountain View, Calif., killing driver Walter Huang. Huang's family sued Tesla, but the company says Huang repeatedly ignored prompts to retake control of the wheel.

As litigators skirmish over assigning blame, some experts wonder whether such features encourage drivers to take more risks than the technology can handle.

### **Comment**

This article tells things the real way things are. Drivers, whether in a conventional or self-driving automobile, must be aware of both the road and the function of the car. While driving, one must not be distracted by texting or talking on the telephone.

I know a sister who was involved in an accident that was not her fault. She was sideswiped by another vehicle driven by a person who is believed to have been texting while driving.

### **TRUMP AND PUTIN**

In the news now, there is a summit planned between President Trump and President Putin of Russia. Just what beneficial agreements can be reached in such a summit, no one knows. Both Trump and Putin have their own agenda. There can be no concord between the two.

### **SUPREME COURT JUSTICE**

Now President Trump is about to select a person which can take the place of a retiring justice on the United States Supreme Court. He has interviewed several persons so far. This will be his second appointment to the court. His selection must be voted upon in the Senate.

### **SUICIDE CLAIMS**

I see in a newspaper article that suicide claims more Americans than car accidents or opioids. The article states that suicide claims nearly 45,000 lives a year. Suicide rates in the USA have risen nearly 30 percent since 1999 according to a report released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

### **GUILT FREE GOSPEL?**

We may call it a prosperity and/or feel good gospel.

A newspaper article said that the pastor had made himself the embodiment of a GUILT-FREE gospel. I am writing about a minister of a large megachurch in Houston. A newspaper article featured the pastor and founding of his church. His father, who was a regular minister, was the original pastor of the church. Now his son, who is now pastor, has become world famous as a GUILT-FREE gospel minister. He just preaches on how God loves us and the blessings He wants us to have. He does not mention anything about the things that God requires of us.

### **Comment**

There is no such gospel as a GUILT-FREE gospel! Guilt plays an important role in the overall make up of the gospel. All are guilty of sin because of the disobedience of our first father, Adam. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, came to earth to set men free from their guilt by the shedding of His own blood.

### **PRESENT GASOLINE PRICES**

Many have received a tax-cut boost. However, at this date gasoline prices are eating into that tax-cut boost. The price of regular unleaded gasoline has now risen from \$2.34 to \$2.84 a gallon.

### **JOURNALISTS BEWARE**

It is not the best time in the world to be a journalist. Although the killings of journalists are rare, many see a rising threat.

We remember the shooting that killed five people June 28 at the **Capital Gazette**. This underscores the fact that journalism is getting more dangerous. One news report suggested that the rise has coincided with an increase in public attacks on the news media, many stemming from President Donald Trump, who has called the media the "enemy of the people." Trump frequently vilifies media outlets such as **The New York Times** and CNN and has tweeted insults at individual reporters.

A news statement reported that while international reporting in conflict zones or authoritarian countries has always been risky, journalist deaths in the United States have been uncommon. But the **Capital Gazette** shooting capitulated the U.S. to the spot of third most dangerous country for journalists, behind only Syria and Afghanistan, according to the non-profit Committee to Protect Journalists.

In the wake of the **Capital Gazette** shooting, newsrooms across the country have increased their security.

## SAD STATE OF AFFAIRS

There have been many school and church shootings in different places in this country. This causes a desire for armed security at these facilities. This ought not to be in a civilized country.

## SUPPORT FOR DEATH PENALTY

I read that the support for the death penalty has plummeted to its lowest level in four and a half decades. The rejection of the death penalty stands opposed to God's Word.

## INTERNATIONAL VISITS TO THE UNITED STATES

The number of international visits to the United States has dipped in the past year. This drop translates to a loss of \$4.6B spent in the U.S. economy.

## MEXICO'S TOURISM INDUSTRY

Mexico has seen a rise in violence. This has caused their tourism to suffer.

## ABOUT TARIFFS

President Trump has not yet carried out his threat to impose tariffs. If he does impose these tariffs, some analysts contend it will harm economy and automakers.



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**QUESTION:** Will you please comment on God's love and justice in relationship to the false conception of hell?

**ANSWER:** Why do so many people have a false conception of hell? It is because they fail to understand God's purpose for putting man on this earth!

God's purpose for man is to develop holy and righteous character which will make him fit to receive eternal life. God created man from the dust of the ground, subject to death, so that if he failed to develop righteous character, he could be released from his misery by death!

God has no desire to torture or torment anyone. God is love. Read I John 4:8. He created man mortal for his own good. He will condemn no one because of ignorance. He will see to it that every single human can ultimately learn the truth and have a real chance for salvation. If God had granted eternal life to those who persistently rebel and fail to develop right character, they would simply bring misery upon themselves as well as others all the time.

Certainly the kindest thing God can do, for all involved, is not to allow such a rebel to continue living. God will simply put the rebellious to death. He will not torture them forever!

God is also a God of justice. The obedient will be given the gift of eternal life. The disobedient must be given the wages they have earned. The final or second death--eternal death in the lake of fire--will be the penalty their own sins have incurred.

This truth should inspire no reasonable fear such as the pagan doctrine of eternal hell fire has caused to so many innocent people. On the other hand, the lake of fire should stand as a FEARFUL WARNING to all who know God's truth and refuse to obey it!

Only those who obey God's Word and follow His Son will inherit eternal life. See John 3:16. All others who willfully live in disobedience will die the second death. These are the two alternatives God places before each of us--eternal life on the one hand, and death in the lake of fire on the other.

The idea of an ever-burning "hell" is clearly a pagan myth of an over-burning. It is merely a fable that has crept into professing Christianity. But the lake of fire, the one of which Christ spoke, will be very real! It will consume the wicked, reducing them to mere ashes.

Let us strive for the gift of eternal life. Then we will not have to pay the penalty of eternal death which is extinction in the lake of fire.

**QUESTION:** What are some duties of the saints during these last days?

**ANSWER:** An important question arises concerning the duty of the saints during these last days just before they are caught up to be on the Sea of Glass. Read Revelation 15. They will tell the world, "...Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). This is a call to come out of Babylon. Babylon (confusion) has caused all the trouble in the world. Some of the saints who once preached this warning message have fallen by the wayside and (perhaps without knowing it) have joined the ranks of Babylon. They still may keep the Commandments of God. Of course, we are speaking of the Ten Commandments. However, they have joined forces with Babylon when it comes to such things as speaking in tongues and the keeping of the Lord's Supper according to the Hebrew calendar. We may know of groups that take in various members, and some of them even become leaders, but look the other way when they disobey their Doctrinal Points. The raising of swine to sell for food is a good example of this. Such a group that allows this is in Babylon.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27). Every leader and member who does not obey God's Word is a blemish in the Church of God!

Let us continue to consider the duty of the saints during these last days. Their next duty, after telling those who will listen to come out of Babylon, is to proclaim the hope for the world in the coming Kingdom of God which will be on earth. However, another question may arise as to how the saints should act toward this present evil world. The Apostle Paul wrote, "But godliness with contentment is great gain" (I Timothy 6:6). Though this has always been true, it has a double force in the days in which we

live. There never was a time when dissatisfaction was so widespread. However, there never was a time when men enjoyed so many favors and blessings. However, both the rich and the poor are discontented. This is because the desires of a selfish and depraved heart know no bounds. We can see the whole world madly pushing and driving and clutching after wealth. Only a few are successful, and the remainder are envious and soured because they are not the fortunate ones.

The saint will take no part in that struggle. To do so is to become involved in Babylon! His vow is that he will strive and grasp for a higher and heavenly prize. He is weaned from earthly ambitions. He labors not for earthly things, except to provide things decent and needful.

The saint has contentment with his godliness, not because he has no ambition, but because his ambition is turned heavenward and absorbed in the effort to lay up treasure in heaven and to be rich toward God.

We would urge the saints to abandon the strife of greed and vainglory, and to strive for the higher riches and the peace they do afford. They are reminded of the Apostle's words: "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 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. 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 6:6-12).

By probing and inflaming wounds and wrongs, the saint will do injury to those he should be helping and blessing. The troubles of these days give many opportunity for preaching good tidings such as has been seldom afforded.

The saint must have no sympathy with the arrogant desires and endeavors of any class. His utterance should be calm and moderate and for peace when principle is not at stake. The saint knows that this is the Lord's battle. So far as politics or social questions are concerned, he has no real solution other than that predicted in the Word of God.



These are pictures of a camp meeting in Goma





**LESSON I**

**THE MURRAIN OF BEASTS  
AND PLAGUE OF BOILS**

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 9:1-12.**

**Golden Text: Exodus 9:6 (last part).**

**"...and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one."**

1. The Lord has again told Moses to go unto Pharaoh and tell him to let his people go. What will the Lord do to the cattle of the land if Pharaoh refuses to obey? Exodus 9:1-3.

*NOTE: Murrain means plague.*

2. Would the cattle of the children of Israel die also? Exodus 9:4.

3. What time did the Lord set for this thing to happen, and did the children of Israel lose any cattle? Exodus 9:5-6.

4. Pharaoh's heart still was hardened. What did the Lord instruct Moses and Aaron to do? Exodus 9:8-9.

5. Did Moses sprinkle the ashes as the Lord told him to? What happened to man and beast? Exodus 9:10.

6. Was the boil upon the magicians? Exodus 9:11.

7. Did Pharaoh let the children of Israel go after this plague? Exodus 9:12.

**LESSON II**

**THE PLAGUE OF HAIL**

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 9:13-35.**

**Golden Text: Exodus 9:24.**

**"So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation."**

1. Some of the Egyptians feared God. What did they do, and what did the Egyptians that did not listen to God do? Exodus 9:20-21.

2. What did the Lord tell Moses to do, and what was to happen when he did this? Exodus 9:22.

3. What did God send with the hail? Exodus 9:23-24.

4. Where did the hail fall, and did it affect the children of Israel? Exodus 9:25-26.

5. Pharaoh sends for Moses and Aaron. What did he tell them? Exodus 9:27-28.

6. What then did Moses tell Pharaoh he would do about the hail? Did it stop? Exodus 9:29-30, 33.

7. What crops did the hail destroy, and which ones were not hurt? Exodus 9:31-32.

8. When the rain, hail and thunder stopped, what did Pharaoh do? Exodus 9:34-35.

**LESSON III**

**THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS**

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 10:1-20.**

**Golden Text: Exodus 10:4.**

**"Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast:"**

1. Why did God harden Pharaoh's heart, and what was Moses to tell his sons? Exodus 10:1-2.

2. What did Moses and Aaron say unto Pharaoh? Exodus 10:3-4.

3. Describe what the next plague would be like. Exodus 10:5-6.

4. What did Pharaoh's servants say unto him? Exodus 10:7.

*NOTE: Pharaoh talks to Moses and Aaron about letting the men go. But when they discuss that young and old, sons and daughters are to also go, Pharaoh refuses to let them go. Exodus 10:8-11.*

- 5. Did the Lord cause the locusts to come upon the land of Egypt? Exodus 10:12-14. From what direction did they come?
- 6. What did the locusts do to the land? Exodus 10:15.
- 7. What did Pharaoh say to Moses and Aaron when the locusts were in Egypt? Exodus 10:16-17.
- 8. Did the Lord take the locusts away? What did He do to Pharaoh? Exodus 10:19-20.

**LESSON IV**

**THE PLAGUE OF DARKNESS**

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 10:21-29.**

**Golden Text: Exodus 10:22 (last part).**

**"...and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:"**

- 1. Why did the Lord tell Moses to stretch out his hand toward heaven? Exodus 10:21.
  - 2. How long did the darkness last, and could the Egyptians do anything during this time? Exodus 10:22-23.
- NOTE: The children of Israel had light in their dwellings.*
- 3. What did Pharaoh tell Moses he could do and not do? Exodus 10:24.
  - 4. What did Moses tell Pharaoh that they had to take with them, and what were these things to be used for? Exodus 10:25-26.
  - 5. Did Pharaoh agree to let the children of Israel go? Exodus 10:27.

- 6. What did Pharaoh finally tell Moses to do? Exodus 10:28.
- 7. What was Moses' response to Pharaoh? Exodus 10:29.

**GENERAL QUESTIONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT**

- 1. What high priest stopped a plague by swinging a censer between the living and the dead? Numbers 16:46-50.
- 2. What nation was saved by using moldy bread and worn-out shoes? Joshua 9:11-27.
- 3. Upon what mountain did Noah's ark finally come to rest? Genesis 8:4.
- 4. How was the bunch of grapes carried from Canaan to the children of Israel in the desert? Numbers 13:23.
- 5. What men were slain because they could not pronounce the letter "H"? Judges 12:6.
- 6. What great general was cured because he obeyed the advice of a little slave girl? II Kings 5:1-4.
- 7. What king asked a witch to help him out of his troubles? I Samuel 28:7-8.
- 8. Who put his hand on the ark of the covenant to steady it? I Chronicles 13:9-10.
- 9. Who wrestled all night without knowing whom he was wrestling with? Genesis 32:24-29.
- 10. Who played he was a madman to escape from his enemies? I Samuel 21:12-15.
- 11. What two cities were used to mark the north and south borders of Israel? I Samuel 3:20.
- 12. Who heard a voice coming out of a whirlwind? Job 38:1.



## THE WIDOW'S FIRE

In the mountains that rise beyond the campus and buildings of the University of Colorado at Boulder, there was once a town with the odd name of Oradelfen. During the gold boom, many pioneers from the East settled in Oradelfen in their search for wealth lying hidden in the ground. Some came out poor and went home rich, for there were gold strikes at the poor Man Mine and the Golconda Mine.

But for the few who found gold, there were many who found nothing but sorrow and misery, like the widow we shall call Hattie Jones.

Larkin Jones, her husband, had been killed in a power blast, and the wife left with two small children, no money and poor health. She supported herself by taking in washing for the wives of prospectors and miners. But there were long periods when she was too ill to work, and then Hattie Jones would have no money to pay the rent for the ramshackle log cabin, or to buy food and firewood.

In the midst of all tribulations, however, Hattie Jones remained the staunchest Christian in Oradelfen. Hungry or cold or facing eviction, she was never known to falter in her faith. And this confidence in Providence she maintained in spite of constant ridicule from a neighbor called Bart Atkins.

Bart was the town atheist and quite proud of his heathenism. On every possible occasion, he would start a religious argument, and he seemed to take a persistent pleasure in pointing out to Hattie Jones that the God she prayed to seemed quite unconcerned about her distress.

"Do you expect He's going to perform a miracle just for you?" Bart would taunt the widow.

"Yes, I do," she told him. "He can soften the hardest hearts."

It was late autumn then, and the family needed fire-

wood, but Hattie had no money with which to buy it, and everybody in town was too busy digging for gold to chop down trees for the widow. One freezing morning she knelt down with her two children and prayed long and fervently for God to help her by sending some firewood.

Just outside the cabin window Bart Atkins stood listening.

"It's just a stinking shame," he uttered. "That trusting fool woman refuses to learn anything from experience...on her knees there now praying to empty air, that's all...I'll show her."

He started off down the road with grim determination on his face. But a curious neighbor stopped him..

"Where you headed for, Bart?"

"I'm going to prove to Hattie Jones once and for all there ain't no God," snapped the unbeliever. "He won't answer her prayer. He won't send her no firewood. So I'm getting her the firewood myself!"

Of course there are always different views about these matters. Some would argue it was only a coincidence, but for the rest of her life Hattie Jones insisted that God softened Bart Atkins' heart that morning, and she thought that was a greater miracle than she had dared to pray for. And she used to add:

"I'm thankful for the wood, too!"

That Bart did chop the wood for Hattie Jones is history.

The story comes from Helen Worden, whose mother was a little girl when it all happened in the the now vanished town of Oradelfe, Colorado.

### Answers to Letters and Names:

Any biblical names beginning with the required letters are correct. Among them are the following:

WOMEN: 1. Mary, Martha 2. Ruth, Rebekah 3. Jezebel, Jael 4. Eve, Esther 5. Hannah, Hagar 6. Sarah, Sapphira 7. Leah, Lois 8. Deborah, Dorcas 9. Priscilla, Phoebe 10. Bernice, Bath-sheba 11. Asenath, Abigail 12. Tamar, Tahpenes.

MEN: 1. Noah, Nicodemus 2. James, Joshua 3. Thomas, Timothy 4. Moses, Mark 5. Abel, Aaron 6. Samuel, Samson 7. Saniel, David 8. Paul, Philip 9. Reuben, Rehoboam 10. Elijah, Elisha 11. Zacchaeus, Zebedee 12. Cornelius, Cain

LETTERS AND NAMES!

Can you name two Bible folks whose names begin with each of the following letters? Perhaps you have two or one other name than the answer given. They are correct as long as they are names appearing in the Bible.

WOMEN:

- 1. M \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. R \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. J \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. E \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. H \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. S \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. I \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. D \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. P \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. B \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. A \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. T \_\_\_\_\_

MEN:

- 1. N \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. J \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. T \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. M \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. A \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. S \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. D \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. P \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. R \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. E \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. Z \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. C \_\_\_\_\_

Answers--General Questions From the Old Testament:  
1. Aaron 2. Hivites 3. mountains of Ararat 4. Bare it between two upon a staff 5. Ephraimites 6. Naaman 7. Saul 8. Uzza 9. Jacob 10. David 11. Dan and Beer-sheba 12. Job

BIBLE TREES



All of these are common trees, and they all grow somewhere in America. See if you can unscramble the letters without looking up the references.

LAPPE \_\_\_\_\_ Song of Solomon 2:3

NEPI \_\_\_\_\_ Isaiah 41:19

REDAC \_\_\_\_\_ Psalm 92:12

GIF \_\_\_\_\_ Micah 4:4

COME ROSY \_\_\_\_\_ Luke 19:4

LOW LIW \_\_\_\_\_ Leviticus 23:40

RIF \_\_\_\_\_ Isaiah 14:8

MELKHOC \_\_\_\_\_ Hosea 10:4

MAPL \_\_\_\_\_ Exodus 15:27

HAS \_\_\_\_\_ Isaiah 44:14

TEN CHUTS \_\_\_\_\_ Ezekiel 31:8

RUBY ELMR \_\_\_\_\_ I Chronicles 14:15

LAD ON M \_\_\_\_\_ Jeremiah 1:11

I LOVE \_\_\_\_\_ Revelation 11:4

CRYSEPS \_\_\_\_\_ Isaiah 44:14

KOA \_\_\_\_\_ Joshua 24:26

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## A FRIEND

I once was so deep in sorrow  
That I felt I was reaching the end;  
I needed someone I could count on,  
So, I hastened to seek out a friend.

"That's just too bad" he tells you,  
"But you have seen sorrow before;  
I'll give you a call in a day or two"  
And he ushered me right out the door!

But there is one Friend you can count on,  
And know He will always be there;  
He will never leave nor forsake you,  
And is always as close as a prayer.

He is never too tired or busy,  
And will always have time just for you;  
And God's promise is one you can count on,  
And you will always have Someone to count on,  
For His promise will always be true.

--Betty Whetstone

