

**The Advocate
of Truth**



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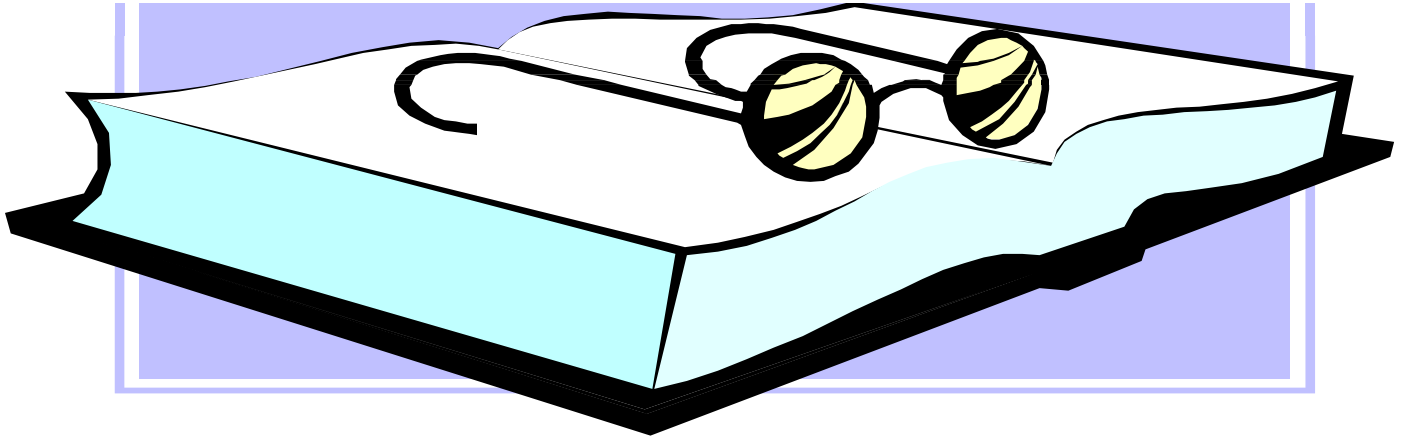
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ABOUT THE TRUTH

"Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding" (Proverbs 23:23).

Truth is a quality or state of being true; fidelity; constancy; that which conforms to fact or reality; that which is or is characterized by being in accord with what is, or has been, or must be: as seek the truth.

Jesus said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Truth is an established principle that is a sound principle. It has been said that, "When all evidence converges upon a proposition and all essential doubt is removed, it is then said to be the truth." Jesus also said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). In John 14:6, He said, "...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." The Bible is truth printed. Jesus Christ is truth personified.

Truth is an agreement with reality. Truth is one of the essential perfections of God. In Him "...is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). Christ is the truth, and He is "...the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." (Hebrews 13:8).

Truth is the girdle which binds all the virtues and graces of God together. Let us give an example. The flower vase is truth, and the many flowers which the vase holds together constitute the graces of God and the virtues in one compact unit.

Truth is the crown of all human excellency. No one likes a liar!

Truth has the Scriptures as its record. "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

Truth has Jesus as its prince. He is the Prince of Truth.

Truth shows a state of sin to be a state of error. "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? (Ezekiel 18:23).

Truth in its proper state is a state of grace. Millions have died for it!

Truth unknown is value unknown. The following is an example. An escapee from a mental institution got to his strong box and filled his pockets with ten dollar bills. He then ran to a busy street corner and shouted, "I'll give you ten dollars for a coat button." Men twisted coat buttons off and sold them at ten dollars each. A siren sounded, and a police patrol wagon picked up the man and rushed him back to the asylum. He had no sense of value because he was crazy!

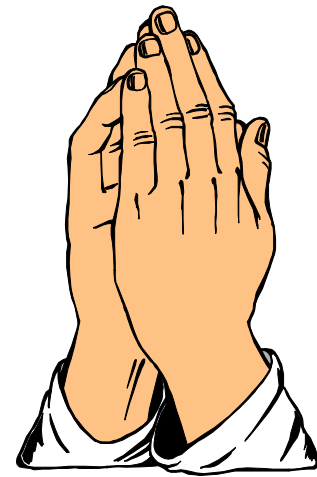
Truth is being sold for pleasure, greed, worldiness, lust, and carnality. That is why the crazy man gave ten dollars for a coat button. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). What does truth cost? Let us ask the rich young ruler of Mark 10:17-22.

How can truth be sold? What is the result of selling truth? Esau sold it for a mess of pottage. Judas sold it for thirty pieces of silver. Many are selling it today by trying to gain the world. In the end, they will lose their own souls (lives).

Contributed

GIVE OF THE BEST TO THE MASTER

By Bibi Shimoon Allicock



Many times we murmur when we have to do the things of the Lord, but when we do the things that please us, it is no great deal. We know that we are saved to become instruments for saving others, yet we find it hard to spread the Word of God. We must realize that when we are on our various jobs, we get paid. However, when we work for the Lord He pays us double. In my own life, I have proved it over and over again. The more we invest in the Lord's work, the more we gain. We gain physically and spiritually!

Let us consider the parable of the talents: "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler

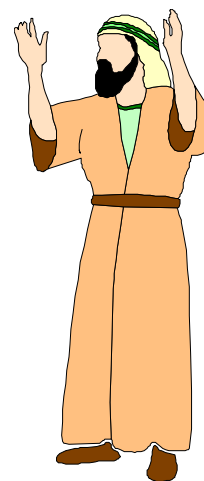
over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Though oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:14-30).

We must be very careful to make our calling and election sure by giving our best to the Master. We can not take chances. If we cannot preach like Paul and Silas did, we still are able to do some things which please our Lord. For example, we can visit a prisoner in prison or a sick person in the hospital. Perhaps we may be able to give someone a glass of water or feed and clothe a stranger. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand,

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matthew 25:31-36).

"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he

say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:37-46).



REPENTANCE

When Jesus was about thirty years of age, He began His ministry, and His opening message was: "... The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). If one will study New Testament history, he will find that Jesus, John the Baptist, and the Apostles of Christ preached repentance as of paramount importance.

Many modern preachers never say "repent," for that is deeper than they want. A prerequisite to repentance, however, is acknowledgment. As long as one does not acknowledge that he is a sinner, you cannot expect that he will repent. This is the trouble with many so-called morally good people. "Why shall we repent? Are we not all right? Who can say that we are so bad?" are some of their evasions. But no one can claim that he has never sinned.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for

that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12).

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). By repentance is meant a sorrow and regret for sins committed in the past, and this leads to a change from past evils. Genuine repentance means more than joining a church by one's confession of faith. Many people are deceived into thinking that repentance is merely a change from the false doctrine to the true. This is only a turning from darkness to light, but not from the power of Satan to God. Read Acts 26:18. One can accept all the doctrines, prophecies, and truths of the Bible and still be under the power of Satan as long as his heart is still unregenerate. Head religion alone is insufficient to save anyone. The heart must be changed, and the head in most cases will come along all right. True worship consists of worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth. "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).

It often so happens that when a preacher comes to a new place to hold protracted meetings, that some of those who attend will become convinced that what he preaches is truth. They can easily see that their own beliefs were wrong. And when this certain evangelist has preached all the doctrines that he feels are necessary for his new prospects to accept, he finally makes a call for membership or baptism. Many of his listeners have been persuaded that what he preached was truth, and so what shall they do but join his church. All that he asked of them was to accept the new doctrine, but what about a change of heart? Who is to blame if these people have deceived themselves into thinking that they can get by with mere head knowledge and still finally be lost because they had no personal experience of forgiveness of former sins? Is not this one to blame who never told them the real foundation for a Christian life? To have a personal experience with the Lord, to know when one's sins are forgiven, and to feel the power of God come into one's life, is more than accepting new doctrines or shaking the hand of a preacher. It means that one will humble himself, get on his knees, and "pray earnestly" according to the following:

"Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil" (Joel 2:12-13).

Godly sorrow worketh repentance. "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (II Corinthians 7:9-10). There are two kinds of sorrow, a godly and a worldly. The former leads to life, and the latter to death. To illustrate: A man steals a car and gets by with it for a long time, but is finally nabbed by a policeman. This man may be very sorry that he was caught. He may not be sorry in the least because of his sin, but just because he was caught. Such sorrow is of no use. On the other hand, if this same man were never caught by a policeman, yet finally became very sorry for the sin he had committed, and is led to repentance, he will restore the

car to its rightful owner, confess his guilt, and pay for the damages. Such sorrow which leads to repentance brings forth life.

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).

CONFESSION AND RESTITUTION

It is sad to see how lightly conversions are regarded today. This present generation, in professing Christianity, has departed a long, long way from the pure gospel of the early days, which was the power of God unto salvation. One can see very few genuine repentances and conversions nowadays. Very few are humble and penitent enough to get down upon their knees and confess their past sins to their Creator who would be willing to forgive.

God at one time said that His Spirit would not always strive with men. Because man has grieved and rejected the pleading of the Holy Spirit so much, is evidently the reason why so few really have a spiritual experience with God. The Holy Spirit at one time worked mightily in the life of the psalmist David, and not until he confessed his guilt did he have peace. Listen to his testimony.

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Psalm 32:1-5).

After a person acknowledges that he is a sinner and sees the lost condition he is in, he will confess his sins if he is in earnest about being saved. Not only is it necessary to confess sins to God who is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse from all unrighteousness: but confession and restitution must also be made to man where wrongs have been committed. Our Master said, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the

altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23-24).

That many people need to make restoration in order to be saved may further be seen from the following: "Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die" (Ezekiel

33:14-15).

You will remember the story of Zacchaeus, chief among the publicans, how he climbed the sycamore tree in his endeavor to see Jesus, and then was asked to come down, for Jesus wished to abide in his house that day. At his home, Zacchaeus made a confession, and promised to make restitution wherein he had taken anything by false accusation. And upon that Jesus said, "...This day is salvation come to this house..." (Luke 19:9).

Excerpts from an old tract



FOOLISH THOUGHTS

By Bond Tennant

God said in Proverbs 24:9, "The thought of foolishness is sin..." In Proverbs 15:26, He declared: "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: but the words of the pure are pleasant words." "The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit" (Proverbs 12:5). It matters to God and concerns Him what we think and what we ponder in our hearts. "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity" (Psalm 94:11). There is one thing of which we can be assured...God knows!

Naaman thought Elisha would show special respect to his person and to his position. "But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper" (II Kings 5:11). He had papers of identification and recommendation from the king. He had traveled a long way, but he made mistakes!

1. His first mistake: He was not acquainted with the ways of God's prophets and assumed he would get preferential treatment. However all men look alike to God's

appointed ministers. There is no "respect of persons."

2. His second mistake: Why must he dip into old muddy Jordan? The rivers back home were better, he reasoned. But God had given direction for the remedy, and He would not change it.

3. His third mistake: He thought that he could pay for God's blessings.

Read the account of Naaman in II Kings 5. God says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Foolish thoughts can lead to detrimental action. Samson's father-in-law presumed Samson hated his wife, so he gave her to another man. "And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: is not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her" (Judges 15:2). Samson refused. He knew what he wanted. He tied the tails of 300 foxes together and burned the fields

of the Philistines. In turn, the Philistines burned his wife and her father with fire. This was foolishness! Read Judges 15:1-6.

Sometimes the troubling and perplexing problems we have can be settled in the sanctuary of God. Asaph, the writer of Psalm 73, could not understand why the wicked prospered and the righteous suffered. In verses 2 and 3, he declared, "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." In verses 16 and 17, he declares, "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end." The discussion among our brothers and sisters while in church may answer many of the questions that we have. Read in Psalm 73:1-17.

Thinking, worrying or becoming anxious about things in our Heavenly Father's care displeases Him. "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:25-34). Thinking worrying and anxious thoughts shows a lack of trust. It is futile! "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" (verse 27) The remedy is found in verse 33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Man says, "I have plenty of meat for this year and

cattle in the pen to supply meat for next year" ...but after that, what?

It is foolish thinking to plan against and war against Christ and the church. "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities" (Acts 26:9-11). Saul, whose name was changed to Paul, thought that it was his duty to persecute the saints of the Church of God. "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:1-4). Later Paul said, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (I Timothy 1:12-13). Jesus told Peter that the gates of hell (hades) shall not prevail against His church (Matthew 16:18).

It is foolish thinking to think that money can buy the gifts of God. "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. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the

sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:14-22). Simon was like some today who think that anything can be bought with enough money! The laying on of hands of those to receive the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit) by the apostles was an imparted power. It was not a psychological trick or a hocus-pocus, no wand-waving performance, but the Power of God!

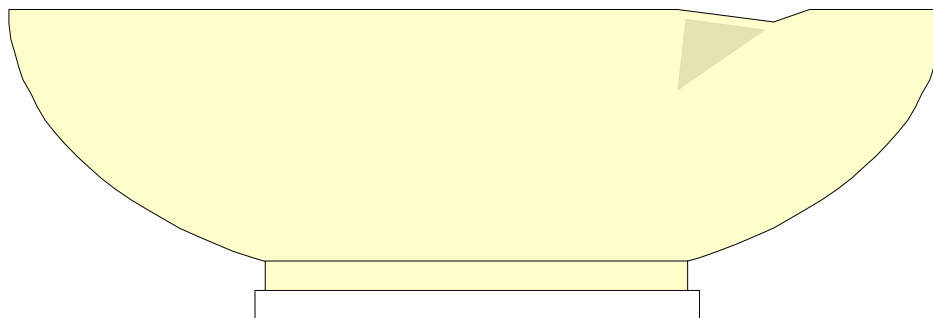
It is foolish in thinking to leave God out of our plans. "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:16-21). Six times in three verses this certain rich man used the personal pronoun I. "What shall I do? ...I have no room...This will I do: I will pull down my barns...I will bestow all...I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods..." (verses 17-19). God's answer to his foolish thinking was, "... Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (verse 20).

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6).

Let us always be on guard not to entertain foolish thoughts. Foolish thoughts do not please God!

THE WOODEN BOWL



A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step faltered. The family ate together at the table.

But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the tablecloth.

The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess. "We must do something about father," said the son. "I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor." So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner. There, Grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner. Since Grandfather had broken

a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl!

When the family glanced in Grandfather's direction, sometimes he had a tear in his eye as he sat alone. Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled food.

The four-year-old watched it all in silence. One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making?" Just as sweetly, the boy responded, "Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food in when I grow up." The four-year-old smiled and went back to work.

The words so struck the parents that they were speechless. The tears started to stream down their cheeks. Though

no word was spoken, both knew what must be done.

That evening, the husband took Gandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table. For the remainder of his days he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth soiled.

On a positive note, I've learned that, no matter what happens, how bad it seems today, life goes on, and it will be better tomorrow.

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles four things: a rainy day, the elderly, lost luggage, and a tight schedule.

I've learned that, regardless of the relationship with your parents, you'll miss them when they're gone from your life.

I've learned that making a "living" is not the same thing as making a "life."

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a

catcher's mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back.

I've learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you. But if you focus on your family, your friends, the needs of others, your work, and doing the very best you can, happiness will find you.

I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision.

I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one.

I've learned that every day, you should reach out and touch someone.

People love that human touch - holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back.

I've learned that I still have a lot to learn!

Don't walk in front of me, I may not follow.

Don't walk behind me, I may not lead.

Just walk beside me and by my friend.

Adapted from the Internet

TBC TODAY - ISRAEL AND ISLAM

MUSLIMS ERUPT OVER TEMPLE MOUNT EXCAVATIONS (EXCERPTS)

BY JULIE STAHL, CNSNEWS.COM
JERUSALEM BUREAU CHIEF
FEBRUARY 7, 2007

The Muslim world is upset about archeological excavations around Jerusalem's Temple Mount because they fear it will disprove their claim that Jews never inhabited the Holy Land before 1948, an Israeli expert on Arabic matters said here.

Islamic leaders, on Tuesday, urged Palestinians and Muslims across the region to rally against Israel to prevent damage to the Al-Aksa mosque, the third holiest site in

Islam, which is located on the Temple Mount.

The calls for violence came as archeologists continued what they call "rescue" excavations, which are taking place about 50 meters (163 feet) outside the Temple Mount compound. The rescue work is part of a plan to build a new footbridge to be used by non-Muslims entering the Temple Mount.

The Temple Mount, known to Muslims as Haram al-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary), was the site of two successive Jewish Temples built during biblical times and is currently the site of important Islamic shrines.

The most holy site in Judaism, it is one of the main points of contention in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and has been a flash point for Palestinian violence in the past.

Some Muslims claim that all of Jewish history was concocted after 1948 just to validate Jewish claims to the land and the city. They are afraid that if there is digging around the Temple Mount, the archeologists will find evidence that the Jews were here 2,000 years ago and that would mean that Jerusalem was and should be the Israeli Capital, Kedar said.

The Muslims came to Jerusalem in the 7th Century. For

them, everything before that - whether Christian or Jewish - is irrelevant. Claims based on previous ownership have lost their validity. Islam did not come to live side by side with Christianity and Judaism. It came to replace it and to build on its ruins, Kedar said.

This is why they are so "vociferous" in their complaints about the Temple Mount, he said.

Dr. Gieon Avni, director of the Excavations and Surveys Department of the Israel Antiquities Authority, told journalists at the site on Tuesday that the excavations "by no means touch or endanger the Temple Mount."

The Berean Call

From the Internet

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CONGREGATION TO BE GOOD LISTENERS



REPRINTED
FROM THE FEBRUARY 9, 1959
ADVOCATE OF TRUTH



There are various ways of listening to a sermon, not all of them good.

Don't be a criticizing listener. Don't listen with the English teacher's ear, alert to all the mistakes, errors of grammar, awkward gestures, slips of speech, poor illustrations, a clumsy tongue or a falter in thought. Of course, a minister should not make these errors, or if he has a bad performance habit he should work at overcoming it. If you are a good friend of the preacher and if he will take your suggestions kindly, then he will be grateful when you call his attention to such things. But don't load up with his mistakes and unload them all at the family dinner table.

Don't be a heresy hound. The Pharisees were; they attended all Jesus' preaching services faithfully, but they

were there only to catch Him "in his talk." To be sure, you should be on your guard against folly and falsehood from the pulpit no less than elsewhere. But to listen for heresy is to listen as the Pharisees did, in vain.

Don't be a sermon-fitter, looking the congregation over in your mind to see a person for whom it must have been meant. Maybe it was meant for you. A seller of hats may say when a new shipment comes in, "That would look darling on Mrs. X," but a listener to sermons has no business trying to match them with different people. If the sermon does not fit you, don't try to make it fit someone else.

Don't be a sermon-taster, a score sheet listener, comparing one sermon with another, this minister with that, as

if you were a judge in a sermon contest. Don't listen with the dilettantes' mind, savoring chiefly the literary flavor of a sermon, rating sermons by their color and polish.

Remember that the object of a sermon isn't to sharpen your critical faculties or even your power of literary appreciation. The aim is to leave you a better person, or at least set you on the Lord to becoming a better person. If you do not agree with this, or insist that it is not possible, then of course no sermon is likely to do you any good at all. But if you do sincerely wish to be a better person, that is, if you wish to grow in the grace of God and in the knowledge and likeness of Jesus, then the sermon can help you if you help by listening.

Listen with a mind prepared by prayer and expectation. If you have already been through sessions of Bible study, if you have taken your part in the worship and the prayers, you will be the more ready for a sermon. Come with your mind "at leisure from itself."

Listen with a sympathetic mind. Realize what the minister is trying to do. If he has a handicap, don't laugh at him. Pray for him. Think for a moment of the sermon as he thinks of it; this may be the highpoint in his week's life and thought, and he hopes it will be yours.

Listen with a humble mind. You may be the preacher's superior in many ways, but in spiritual life, in insight into God's will for men, he may be your superior. The aim of his sermon is not to shoot at you from a pedestal, but to speak in the Name of God. Recognize your human need of God, your need of His forgiveness and His Power. When the search light is thrown on your soul, don't be like a mirror instantly reflecting it off toward someone else's eye. Let the light search your own heart.

Listen with an open mind. Don't insist that the preacher always agree with you, and remember, too, that there is no rule in the church compelling anyone to agree with the preacher. Still it will be poor preaching which does not sometimes blast the floor out from under your notion counter, crash into your prejudices, dare you to open your eyes. Don't stiffen up and resist new ideas. If all a sermon did were to pat you gently on your pet prejudices it would not be much good to you. To disturb your complacency is one of the functions of a true sermon; but it will not do this if you slam your mind's door in the preacher's face.

One sure way of insuring that you will listen to a sermon is to help make it. If you are a faithful Bible student and a thoughtful Christian, you will often suggest to the

minister ideas or problems which you would like to hear him deal with in sermons. Indeed, it is by contact with people as well as with the Word that the best sermons are born. When you listen to one of your seed thoughts blossoming into a sermon, you will have a thrill all your own.

Above all, listen with prayer. Begin the week before. Pray during the sermon, too - for him; for all who hear; for yourself.

No sermon does quite what the preacher had hoped. But a sermon conceived in prayer and hope, heard in an atmosphere of prayer, meeting open, sympathetic, humble, corporative minds, will be as seed sown on soil watered by the Spirit, springing up into life manyfold.

In The Upper Room

Jesus' great love for His disciples is clearly revealed by the record of His association with them in the "upper room" the night before He was crucified. Here, He instituted the memorial of His death, asking His disciples to eat the unleavened bread and drink the cup containing the "fruit of the vine," which, He said, represented His broken body and shed blood. "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" (Matthew 26:26-29).

It was in the upper room that Jesus washed His disciples feet, thus teaching them a lesson in humility. "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" (John 13:4-5). It was also in the upper room that Jesus revealed to the eleven that Judas would betray him. Please read John 13:21-30. There, in the upper room, Peter

avowed his willingness to lay down his life for Jesus. However, Jesus foretold that Peter would deny Him. "Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice" (verses 36-38).

One of the remarkable things Jesus said to His apostles in the upper room was that they would be able to do the same miraculous works as they had seen Him do. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12).

Jesus made many wonderful promises to His apostles while with them in the upper room that night. One of them was, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (verses 13-14). The implication is that those who make requests in Jesus' name would be in full harmony with Him and His teachings, therefore their requests would be in harmony with God's will. This was a wonderful assurance for Jesus to give to those who were soon to go out into the world to be His ambassadors.

Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Enlarging upon this He said, "...if a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (verses 15, 23). This is another reassuring promise, but again with a condition attached to it- "If ye love me, keep my commandments." We can imagine that in later years the fulfillment of this promise was a wonderful blessing to the apostles who would go out into the world.

Jesus knew that the success of the apostles' ministry would require that they also love one another. Jesus said, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Jesus' love for His disciples was so great that He gladly laid down His life for them, and He expected His disciples to be willing to lay down their lives for one another. Jesus also realized that the world would not be friendly to His disciples even as it was not friendly to Him. Jesus said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye

were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (verses 18-19). On this point, Jesus explained further, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

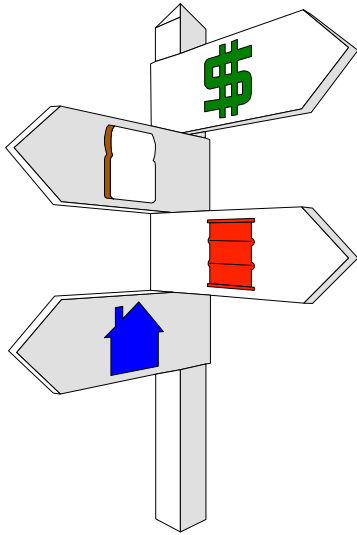
Jesus was liberal in His assurances to His apostles that they could depend upon Him and upon His Father to be with them in their experiences. The reality of these promises depended upon the degree of faith with which they were able to lay hold upon. If they believed fully, they would have complete rest of mind and heart. Indeed Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

The last thing that Jesus did in the upper room that night was to pray for His apostles and for all who would believe on Him through their word. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (John 17:20). It was a wonderful prayer. He said to his Father: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them" (verses 9-10).

He continued: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (verses 15-18).

Jesus further prayed, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." And further "...hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (verses 21, 23). Jesus not only desired that His heavenly Father's love be shared with His apostles and those who would believe on Him through their word, but He also wanted them to share His glory. He prayed: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (verse 24).

Following this prayer, Jesus and His disciples left the upper room, walking out of the city, across the brook Cedron, to the Garden of Gethsemane.



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.

FEELING ALONE? YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE

**Most Americans are close to only 2 people,
poll finds**

**by Ely Portillo
Knight Riddler Tribune News**

WASHINGTON - Americans, who shocked pollsters in 1986 when they said they had only three close friends, today say they have just two. And the number who say they've no one to discuss important matters with has doubled to 1 in 4, according to a nationwide survey to be released today.

It found that men and women of every race, age and education level reported fewer intimate friends than the same survey turned up in 1985.

Their remaining confidants were more likely to be members of their nuclear family than in 1985, according to the study, but intimacy within families was down, too. The findings are reported in the June issue of the *American Sociological Review*.

Weakening the bonds of friendship, which other studies affirm, have far-reaching effects. Among them: fewer people to turn to for help in crises such as Hurricane Katrina, fewer watchdogs to deter neighborhood crime, fewer visitors for hospital patients and few participants in

community groups. The decline, which was greatest in estimates of the number of friends outside the family, also puts added pressure on spouses, families and counselors.

"People are isolated in their own families," said Laurie Thoner, a therapist in Annapolis, Md., since the 1980s. "I definitely agree that there's less support for people."

Study co-author Lynn Smith-Lovin, a sociologist at Duke University in Durham, N.C., called the sharp declines startling. She added: "You don't usually expect major features of social life to change very much from year to year or even decade to decade."

One explanation for friendship's decline is that adults are working longer hours and socializing less. That includes women who, when they were homemakers, tended to have strong community networks.

In addition, commutes are longer, and television viewing and computer use are up. Add to the factor, Smith-Lovin said, may have been confusion among some of those polled on how to count e-mail friendships.

Impact on storm victims

As connections to neighbors and social clubs decline, Smith-Lovin said, "From a social point of view it means you've got more people isolated in a small network of people who are just like them."

She speculated that social isolation may have made hurricane Katrina worse. "The people who were seen sitting on roofs after Katrina hit were probably people with-

out close ties to someone with a car to get them out," she said.

"She's right," said Bob Howard, spokesman for the American Red Cross' Hurricane Relief Project.

"People that had friends and family were probably most likely to evacuate," he said.

Even before Katrina, Red Cross volunteering- an effort for which friends often are recruiters and in which friendships sustain membership - was down from 1.3 million volunteers in 1996 to 820,000 last year, spokeswoman Marietta Basel said.

Society pays the price

Robert Putnam, the author of *Bowling Alone*, the 2000 best-seller on declining American civic life, said people pay a price when bonds of friendship weaken. "Communities that have tighter social networks have lower crime ... and less corruption and more effective government and less tax evasion," he said.

The Duke-Arizona research team's findings are based on questions that they added to one of the nation's classic attitude polls, the General Social Survey, which the University of Chicago's national Opinion Research Center has conducted every two years since 1972.

In the face-to-face survey, 1,467 people - a nationally representative sample - were asked to count and describe all the people with whom they'd discussed matters important to them in the past six months.

The question asked in 2004 was the same as that asked in 1985, although the term "discussed" may have led some recent respondents to omit friendships sustained by e-mail, Smith-Lovin admitted.

"But if you need someone to pick up your kid from the daycare center because you're stuck at work, you can't e-mail someone in New York," she said.

COMMENT

Because many are going about doing their own thing and trying to make a living, they have little time to develop a genuine interest in others.

No doubt there are many people who feel alone in other countries also.

A HIGH STANDARD OF CONDUCT

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1).

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

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

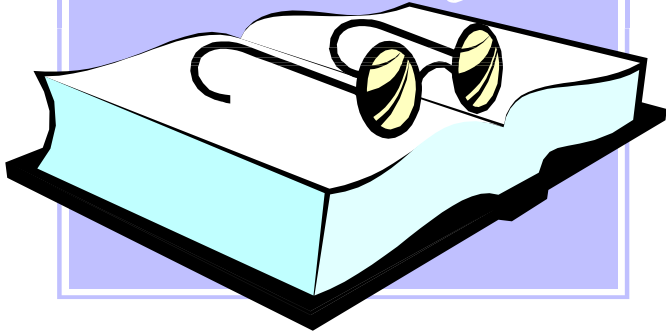
We should not try to get by with as low a standard as we can, but seek to reach as high a standard as possible. "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith..." (Hebrews 12:2). I was once asked by a group of young people if it was wrong to go to parties. That is a question that is hard to answer by "yes" or "no" so I gave them this rule to follow, which is also a good rule for all of us. "If you are invited to a party and feel that you want to go, when you get there, push the door open so you can see inside. If you think from the things you see going on that Christ would be there, perhaps it will be all right for you to go on in. If, however, you see things going on which you feel Christ would not take part in, you had better close the door right softly and go home without letting anyone see you."

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

From an old Sabbath School lesson

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

Question: How can resentments be overcome?

Answer: The dictionary defines resentment as "the feeling of displeasure or indignation at something regarded as an injury or insult, or against the author or source of it." That is quite a definition! There is a lot of resentment around today. We can find it in every place on earth. It is even in the churches. We would think that the places where you are to study the fruit of the Spirit in, resentment would be dispelled. But such is not the case.

Why do we resent people? We resent them because of our own lust and our own egotism. Resentment is breaking one of the commandments. We know what happens to commandment-breakers, don't we? We expect the world to revolve around us. We want everyone to cater to our whims. We order all things as we would have them. We expect friends and relatives always to be careful of our tender feelings and always to do the things our way. Whether or not we are willing to admit it, resentment grows out of our own willfulness. It is an indication of a warped perspective.

Resentment can be very dangerous. Long indulged in, and keeping it bottled up inside for a period often becomes a basic character trait, and makes your face become ugly and your words spiteful. It will motivate every action of our lives and every reaction to our experiences. Everything in our lives becomes colored with negativism.

When our minds are filled with resentment, they will drive out our intellectual satisfactions and will stop our creativity and cause complete loss of all the fruit of the Spirit.

When our hearts become full of this awful trait, it will shut a door against all love, filial, and other. It will turn us against the truth and the gifts of the Lord. Peace will be gone. When it permeates the heart, it endangers our very salvation by stunting spiritual growth and the locking out of the Word of God.

Harboring resentment is the cause of many physical illnesses. It can bring on chronic ills and all sorts of functional disorders. It can also aggravate any organic illness and make it hard to cure. Now then, if resentment is such a threat to our health and happiness and to successful living, why do we continue to harbor and hold on to it? Perhaps for the same reason that we hold on to any other bad habit, because we are willful and covetous. We want to have our own way. We want to force everything around us into our own pattern, to feed our egos.

Now what must we do about these parasites that do so easily beset us? First of all, let us look at James 4:1-10: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your

lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

Then we must look at ourselves and see the ugliness that has spread upon our faces. James 1:22-24 says: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass (mirror): For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." So look at yourself. Admit that your resentment is disfiguring your features. Then find out what you are resenting and why. Next, reorient yourself in your environment and try to develop an out-going attitude to replace the inward turning that fosters resentment. We must take full responsibility for ourselves and try to grow out of the emotional dependence that is at the bottom of resentment. Instead of expecting others to take the responsibility for our comfort and happiness, we must take some of theirs and all of ours.

In short, we must climb out of our stage of arrested emotional development of which resentment is a symptom and grow toward maturity. When we face reality and stop making childish demands on other people, we learn to think first of the comfort of others instead of jealously guarding our own. When we develop the kind of humility that comes from knowing our place in the world, the kind of humility that Jesus preached, we shall be happier and healthier, more creative and closer to our Savior.

Finally, we must realize that it is much easier to resolve to be different than it is actually to change. The only way to change habitual attitudes and reactions toward experiences is to substitute a positive thought or action for each negative thought or action every time one intrudes itself. Here are some examples that will help us as

we pray for the Lord to take away this vile habit of resentment:

1. When an old resentment over someone's selfishness comes to mind, immediately do something unselfish for him or her, something you would not ordinarily be expected to do.

2. When your critical habit causes a negative thought to blossom, think of something good about the person you have criticized and concentrate on the good.

3. Try to give a person you resent credit for good intentions instead of assuming that his or her intentions are selfish or vile.

4. Pray for the one you resent.

5. Bless the one you resent and wish for him all the happiness and love you desire for yourself.

6. Try to remember that no action nor omission of another can hurt you unless you want it to or you let it.

7. Learn to let go of the people who you have been accustomed to make willful demands, and leave them to God. Try to remember that other adults are responsible to God, not to you.

8. In general, overcome resentment by focusing on its opposite - love. When a resentful thought comes into your mind, deliberately put a covering thought in its place. As the Apostle Paul says, "Do not render evil for good, but good for evil."

9. Learn to forgive as you hope to be forgiven when you are thoughtless or inconsiderate. Forgive the person you resent, and then forget the hurt. Do not wear your heart on your sleeve. Tuck it away, and put the Lord Jesus in it. This will build in you "Christ, the hope of glory."

10. Finally, do not try to do it all by yourself. Ask God to help you. When you fail, ask the Lord to forgive you. Then start over again. Forgive yourself and say: "Dear Lord, help me to be what you want me to be!"

Question: I have heard that baptism took the place of circumcision. I do not believe this is so as there is no record in the New Testament of a child being baptized. Am I correct?

Answer: You are correct! There is no relationship between circumcision and baptism, except that both are a symbol of death to the flesh. Baptism has the added significance of being resurrected from death as our Lord Jesus Christ was resurrected. Baptism for infants is totally unscriptural!



India

The following photographs show the Lord's Supper service held in Brahmanapally, India this year.





LESSON I

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Scripture Reading: Matthew 2:1-11.

Golden Text: Matthew 2:2.

"...Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

NOTE: We are going to start studying the New Testament and the life of Jesus Christ. In this first lesson, we will learn about Jesus' birth. In the first chapter of Matthew, you can read about the generations from Abram to Jesus and also about Jesus' parents Mary and Joseph.

1. Where was Jesus born, and who was the king at this time? Matthew 2:1.
2. Who had seen His star? Matthew 2:2.
3. What did the king do when he heard about the birth of Jesus? Matthew 2:3-4.
4. What did the chief priests and scribes tell him? Matthew 2:5-6.
5. What else did the king want to know? Matthew 2:7.
6. What did he tell the wise men to do? Matthew 2:8.
7. What did the wise men do? Matthew 2:9-10.
8. What did they do when they saw the baby Jesus, and what did they bring him? Matthew 2:11.

LESSON II

PROTECTING BABY JESUS

Scripture Reading: Matthew 2:12-23.

Golden Text: Matthew 2:12.

"And being warned of God in a dream that they

should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way."

1. Why didn't the wise men return to Herod? Matthew 2:12.
2. What did the angel of the Lord tell Joseph? Matthew 2:13.
3. What did Herod do when he found out the wise men had mocked him? Matthew 2:16.
4. How long did Joseph stay in Egypt with the young child Jesus and His mother? Matthew 2:14-15.
5. What happened after Herod died? Matthew 2:19-21.
6. What did Joseph find out when he arrived in Israel? Matthew 2:22.
7. Where did he go then, and why did he go there? Matthew 2:23.

LESSON III

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:40-52.

Golden Text: Luke 2:52.

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

1. In what way did Jesus grow? Luke 2:40, 52.
2. Where did Jesus go with Joseph and His mother when He was twelve years old? Luke 2:41-42.
3. What happened when Joseph and Mary were returning home? Luke 2:43.
4. Where did they look for Jesus? Luke 2:44-45.
5. When they returned, where did they find Jesus, and

what was He doing? Luke 2:46-47.

6. What did his mother say to Him? Luke 2:48.

7. What was His answer? Luke 2:49.

LESSON IV

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Scripture Reading: Matthew 3:1-12.

Golden Text: Matthew 3:1.

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea."

NOTE: We will now study about a man called John the Baptist. He was called this because he baptized many people in his time. We do not want to confuse him with John, one of the disciples.

1. What great preacher told the world that Jesus had come? Matthew 3:1.

2. What did John the Baptist preach? Matthew 3:2.

3. What did God want John to do? Matthew 3:3 (first part).

NOTE: What is repentance? It means to be sorry for sin and to ask for forgiveness.

4. What did John the Baptist wear and eat? Matthew 3:4.

5. John lived in the wilderness of Judaea. Where did the people come from to see him, and where were they baptized? Matthew 3:5-6.

6. Who also came to see John the Baptist, and what did he say to them? Matthew 3:7-10.

7. Some people believed that John the Baptist was Christ. What was his response to them? Luke 3:15-16; Matthew 3:11.

WORD SCRAMBLE

Unscramble these words about how Jesus grew. (For help look in Luke 2:40-52).

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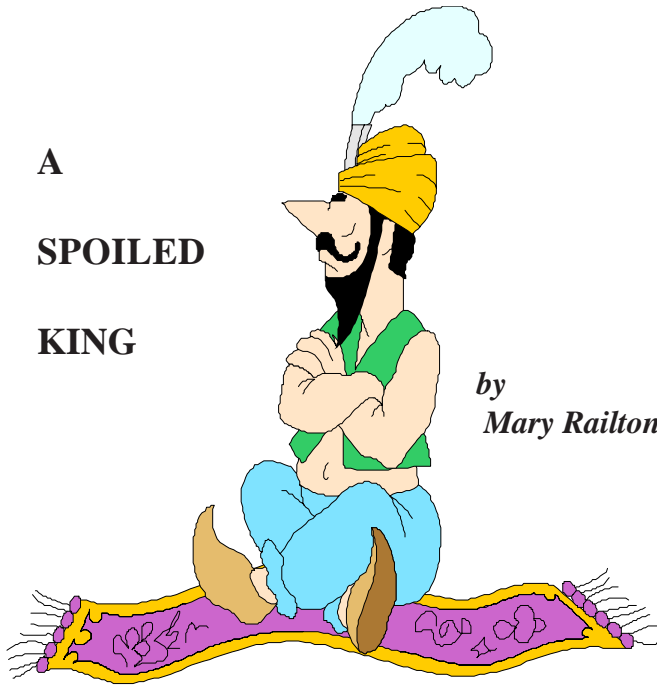
FOR PAGE TWENTY THREE - ANSWERS TO SHEPHERDS -

1. Amos
2. Judah
3. Abel
4. Joseph
5. Rachel
6. Moses
7. Israel
8. David
9. Jesus

WHO ARE THESE MEN?

1. He built a boat when the world was new and led in the animals, two by two.
2. This one man's descendants, God promised, should be like the stars in the sky or the sands of the sea.
3. He stood alone in the lion's cave, and promised Jehovah, strong to save.
4. Mysterious writing on the wall. And foretold the kingdom's certain fall.
5. He stilled a storm on Galilee, and He said to Matthew, "Follow me."
6. When his mood was black and his voice was sharp, young David could soothe him with his harp.
7. He was not a prophet, a king nor a sage -He simply lived to a very great age.
8. He dipped in the river - one-two-three- and found it a cure for his leprosy.

**A
SPOILED
KING**



You know of boys and girls who are "spoiled." Our story is about a man who was a "spoiled" king. Ahab's palace was in Samaria, for he was king over Israel. He often looked out of his window at the beautiful vineyard beside his palace. The fruit looked good to eat, and he wished he could walk into the vineyard and eat all he wanted.

As he looked at the fruit, he thought to himself, "I want that vineyard. Why can't I have it? I will talk to Naboth about it and offer to buy it from him."

He offered Naboth, the owner, a vineyard somewhere else, or money equal to the value of it. Naboth replied, "Sir that vineyard has been in my family for generations. I would not have the heart to sell it."

Ahab walked slowly back to his room overlooking the vineyard. He was angry and sullen because he could not have what he wanted. He lay on his bed, covered his face, and even refused food when it was brought to him.

Jezebel, his wife, heard of his pouting and came to his room. "Ahab, why are you so angry that you will not eat?"

"I want that vineyard outside my window. I asked Naboth to give it to me, but he won't," whined Ahab.

Jezebel laughed within herself at his childishness, but spoke, "Are you king of Israel? Get off your bed and

behave yourself. If you want that vineyard, I will see that you get it."

She wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the elders of the city who were over Naboth. "Proclaim a feast in your city. Set Naboth in a conspicuous place among the people, and seat two sons of Belial near him. Have them bear witness against him, saying, 'you have cursed God and the king.' Then take him out and stone him to death."

How cruel Jezebel was to take the life of an innocent man to please the "spoiled" Ahab. She used the sons of Belial to do the wicked task, for Belial was a wooden God whom she made everyone worship. She knew the priests of Belial would do as she asked, for if they did not she would have them killed also.

The feast was proclaimed, Naboth was placed in a conspicuous place before the people and the "sons of Belial" cried out, "Naboth has cursed God and the king."

Jezebel walked proudly to Ahab's room and said, "Naboth has been stoned and is now dead. Now, go! Take possession of the vineyard which he refused to sell and you want so badly."

Ahab rose from his bed and put on his costly robes. He walked through the vineyard, proudly displaying his ownership of it. Ahab watched a man walking slowly towards him, until he recognized Elijah, the Prophet of the Lord. He wondered if Elijah had heard of this wicked plot.

Elijah stood before Ahab and sternly spoke, "Have you killed Naboth, and now take everything that belonged to him? Ahab, how wicked can you be? Behold, the Lord is about to bring evil upon you, for He has said, 'in the place where Naboth was killed shall Ahab be killed. And all his family shall die. Jezebel will be eaten by dogs for the wickedness!'" And so it was!

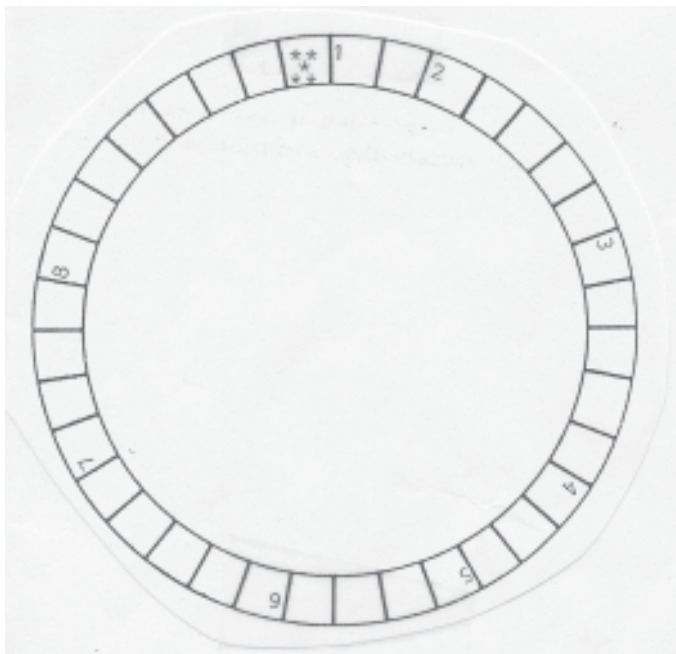
Are You Spoiled?

If it meant killing people to get what they wanted, Ahab and Jezebel calmly did it. It is not good to be "spoiled." Whenever you feel sorry for yourself because you cannot have something, think about Ahab and remember what happened to him and his wife for their wickedness.

CIRCLE PUZZLE

Start with number 1 and go around the circle filling in the names of Bible women. The last letter of each word is the beginning of the next one. Use the clues below to help you.

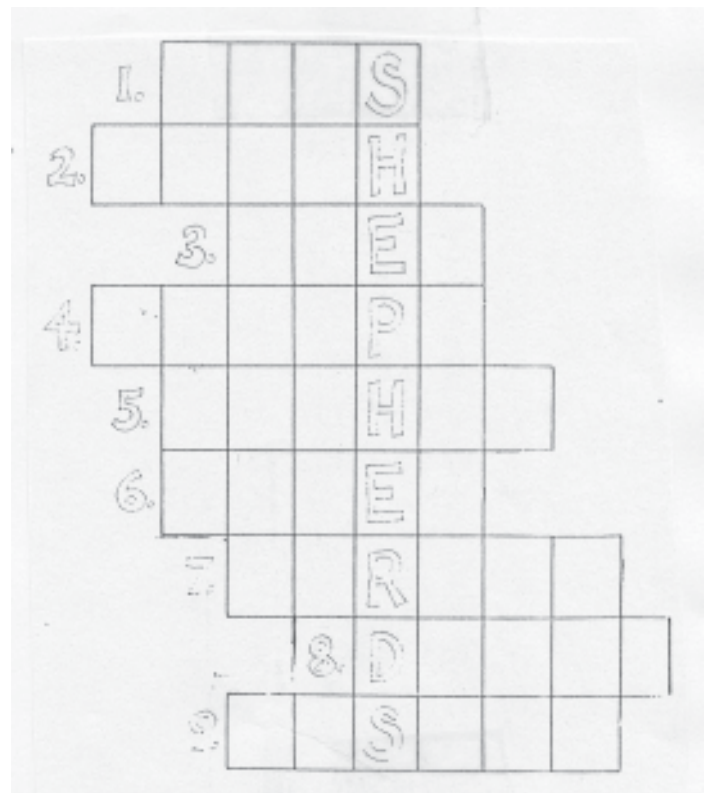
1. The first woman in the Bible and wife to Adam. Genesis 3:20.
2. A beautiful Jewish maiden that became Queen and helped the people. Esther 5:3.
3. The wife of Jacob and the mother of Joseph and Benjamin. Genesis 29:18.
4. A woman of great faith and grandmother of Timothy. II Timothy 1:5.
5. The wife of Abraham and mother of Isaac. Genesis 21:2.
6. The wife of Elkanah and mother of Samuel. I Samuel 1:20.
7. A handmaid of Sarah and mother of Ishmael. Genesis 16:8.
8. The wife of Isaac and mother of Jacob and Esau. Genesis 24:67.



SHEPHERDS

Fill in the names of some shepherds from the Bible.

1. Who was a prophet, and one of the books of the Bible was named after him.
2. He is the 4th son of Jacob.
3. Who was the first shepherd recorded in the Bible?
4. Who had a coat of many colors.
5. She met Jacob at the well.
6. He saw a burning bush.
7. His name was Jacob, but God changed it to -?
8. Who said: "the Lord is my shepherd?"
9. He is the Good Shepherd.



Answers to Who Are These Men?

1. Noah
2. Abraham
3. Daniel
4. Belshazzar
5. Jesus
6. Saul
7. Methuselah
8. Naaman

Proverbs 1:7-9

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

Proverbs 2:1-9

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.