

EXALTING **CHRIST** • EQUIPPING **BELIEVERS** • EVANGELIZING **THE WORLD**

CORNERSTONE

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IN THIS ISSUE:
Our Savior Lives!
The Dangers of Disobedience
The Snare of Human Tradition
...and more

TO YOU WHO **BELIEVE**, THIS **STONE** IS **PRECIOUS** • 1 PETER 2:7

“And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” 1 Cor. 15:49

One of the amazing things to me when perusing family portraits is the clear resemblance that children have to their parents. In many cases, it can be clearly seen that “the apple has not fallen far from the tree.” It is even more amazing when this resemblance skips over a generation and is apparent between grandparents and grandchildren. It truly is remarkable! Once, when looking at an early picture of my grandmother (circa 1920), I actually thought I was looking at a photo of my sister when she was a young girl wearing an out-of-fashion dress. I was so convinced it was her that I had to ask other family members for clarification! With our finite knowledge of the intricacies of the human body, it underscores the truth of God’s Word and the accuracy of David’s testimony: *“For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” (Psa. 139:13-14 – NKJV).*

Bearing His Image

In writing to the church at Corinth, Paul takes up a detailed explanation of the resurrection of the believer. In chapter 15, he outlines through the Spirit the certainty, significance, manner, meaning, and mystery of the resurrection. As the portion crescendos, he makes this incredible statement: *“And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Cor. 14:49).* Incredible indeed to think that one day we shall be like Him. Paul said the same thing to the Roman Christians when he declared: *“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”* The Word of God declares without question that we shall bear His likeness. The difference however between our earthly father and our heavenly Father is that in the spiritual realm it is progressive and takes time – a long time – and it will not be fully complete until we reach glory and receive our resurrection bodies. Paul was confident about it (Phil. 1:6), told the Philippians that they should be eagerly anticipating it (Phil. 3:20-21), and travailed over it when the process had been short-circuited in the lives of the Galatians (Gal. 4:19).

What is this future resemblance supposed to look like, anyway? Nothing in the Bible tells us exactly what it will be like. John gives us only a hint when he says that it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, only that when we shall see Him, *“we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is” (1 Jn. 3:2-3).* Whether that resembles His post resurrection body as He appeared to His disciples is hard to say, but a lot has been written by those guessing with sanctified imagination. It will be one of those “things” that we will understand “farther along” in the by and by.

Walking as He Walked

Until then however, we are to strive with His help to be like Him while we are walking in this world. We are to *“walk as He walked” (1 Jn. 2:6)* and demonstrate the same love and grace He exhibited. Disciples were first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:26), literally “Christ ones”, smaller living stones that come from the larger Living Stone, who are to resemble the One they came from, 1 Peter 2:4-5. We are also to bear fruit to the glory of the Father just as He bore fruit and did those things that were pleasing in His sight.

Buds, Blossoms and Bearing Fruit

In Number 17, we have a tremendous picture of this truth of the importance of “family” resemblance, after the rebellion of Korah and the concerted effort on his part and others to demean and undermine the authority of properly-appointed leadership (elders take note!). Moses was instructed by the Lord to take the rod or staff for each of the tribes of Israel and put them into the tabernacle of meeting. Interestingly, Aaron’s name was to be put in place of Levi’s name, (Num. 17:1-4). On the next day, when Moses went into the tabernacle, there was Aaron’s rod which was the only one which had sprouted, put forth buds, produced blossoms, and yielded ripe almonds. It was validation and the divine seal of approval that he was God’s choice for high priest and meant to silence the critics and anyone who feigned to think that they were the voice of authority and His mouthpiece. It is also a wonderful OT picture of our Lord Jesus who was in a sense like that rod, a dead branch that came back to life and bore fruit, a picture of first fruits and His glorious resurrection. In this, we too, are to be like our Lord Jesus, who are planted in the likeness of His resurrection in order to bear fruit - much fruit (Jn. 15:8) to the glory of the Father. For us, it is progressive, a process, (for some, a *really* long process) in which we first sprout, then bud, blossom, and bear fruit to varying degrees until at last we reach the finish line and are fully complete, our journey leading to full conformity to our Savior (1 Cor. 1:30). It is at that time that it can be truly be said: *“Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).* The work that His goodness began, the arm of His strength will complete and what He started, will be finished and we shall be with Him and like Him for all eternity.

In this issue, PT Tan reminds us of our Savior’s glorious resurrection as witnessed by Mary Magdalene, the first person to whom He appeared, and often called the “apostle to the apostles.” Brother Keyser highlights the “Dangers of Disobedience” in his study of two OT kings, Rehoboam and Jereboam, while Paul Young helps us to ponder the “Greatness of Our God.” In our new column, “Foundations of the Faith”, Mark Swaim lays out for us the first of two parts of an orderly presentation on the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, while Bob Brown explains the fruit of one man’s passionate service to establish a NT church in the heart of the Deep South. Tim McNeal rounds things out for us with His fine piece that describes the rejoicing that comes when a person is reconciled to the Lord. Enjoy and be encouraged – we serve a Risen Savior! •



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by Mark Kolchin

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OUR SAVIOR LIVES!

Mary at the Mercy Seat

Mary Magdalene received the honor of being the first person the Lord appeared to after His resurrection.

She was one of the women who followed the Lord Jesus as he went about His itinerant ministry. These women ministered to the Lord and His disciples out of their own substance (Lk. 8:3). Though Christ performed miracles to feed others, He depended upon others to feed Him, especially the sisters who travelled with Him. Most of the time, they remained in the background. But this did not mean they were unimportant or unappreciated by the Lord.

Several Marys are mentioned in the gospels. Mary Magdalene was the one of whom the Lord cast out seven demons (Lk. 8:2). She together with the other ladies accompanied the Lord to Jerusalem, indeed to the very end. At least four Marys were present at the crucifixion: Mary the mother of the Lord; Mary the wife of Cleopas; Mary the mother of James; and Mary Magdalene (Mt. 27:56; Jn. 19:25).

On resurrection morning, the ladies informed the disciples about the empty tomb which led Peter and John to run to the tomb. John being younger, outran Peter. Though arriving first, he remained outside. The huge stone was rolled away, not for the Lord's benefit but for their benefit and ours so that we can know that it was empty. Peter went in first and then John. They then went "home". But Mary Magdalene lingered on. She was distraught and downcast not finding the body to anoint for she and the other ladies had come with prepared spices. But did she have reason to weep? She would have had real reason to weep if she had found the dead body of the Lord Jesus! She and all of us would be of all people most miserable (1 Cor. 15:19).

She stooped and looked into the tomb. Why did Mary look into the tomb again? To make doubly sure? Her devotion and love of the Lord was stronger than the rational mind. Then she saw two angels, one at the head and at the foot of where the Lord's body had lain. The angels were there previously but hidden from their eyes. Oftentimes we fail to see and therefore miss the invisible things of God (Heb. 1:14).

They asked, "Why weepest thou?" She answered, "Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him." She turned back and saw the Lord standing there but did not recognize Him. Her heart was still grief-stricken and would not be satisfied until she found her Lord. No one else could fill that longing in her heart. Not even mighty angels.

Now, the Lord Himself asked her, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" Mary "supposing Him to be the gardener" asked if He had removed Him, and said she would take the body away. How could she, a woman, be strong enough to carry the body of the Lord away, we may rationally ask? Her heart was obviously stronger than her body. She just made the proposal in faith. Her statement showed the condition of her longing heart and thus demonstrated her love for the Lord. Perhaps this explains a great deal why the Lord appeared to her first. Why did Mary not recognize the Lord at first? Sometimes we do not see or recognize the Divine because we are not expecting to see anything.

Then the Lord called her name, "Mary." Knowing His voice she instantly recognized Him. That's how it will be when we eventually meet our Lord. How will we recognize Him Whom we have never met? He will call us by our name for the Good Shepherd, knows us individually (Jn. 10:3). We shall hear His voice and see the print of the nails in His hands (Jn. 10:4, 16, 27; 20:24-29; Lk. 24:40).¹ What a blissful moment that will be for each of us when we meet Him for the first time either in death or the rapture. Her tears turning to joy, she now clung to Him and would not want to let Him go (Jn. 20:17). The Lord certainly can be touched and later wanted to be touched by Thomas (Jn. 20:27).

It is significant that the Lord chose to appear first to Mary who lingered at the empty sepulcher. She would not give up in a seemingly hopeless situation. Her tears told the depth of her loss. The Lord knew what was in Mary's heart. Yes, He

knows every thought, emotion and word in us even before we utter or express our feelings (Ps. 139:1-4). Why then did the Lord not immediately reveal Himself to her? Because, He wanted to hear Mary express what she said.²

Let us pause for a moment here and study the scene. What a heavenly sight it was. Two angels, one on each side where the body had been. Does not this remind us of the type of the mercy seat in the Tabernacle? Is this not the fulfillment of the mercy seat which foreshadowed the reality which had just happened when Mary met the risen Lord at, what until that moment, was just a sepulcher? Mary was now in the holiest of all with her risen Lord.³

Mary was looking earnestly with a broken heart for her Lord and could not find Him. Her stream of tears told the story of her grief. Recall the words to Moses: "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the Mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim, which are upon the Ark of the testimony." (Ex. 25:22) In the immediate context of Exodus, these words were spoken to Moses and the Israelites. Prophetically they were spoken to Mary and to all of us who seek Him. The crucified risen Lord Jesus met her in the presence of the cherubim. Is this not the substance of the mercy seat of which the physical is the foreshadow? The risen Lord Himself Who was crucified is the Mercy Seat (Rom. 3:25). This is where He has appointed to meet with us and commune with us (Lk. 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25; Heb. 10:19-20). Let us choose to seek Him.

*Amidst us Our Beloved stands,
And bids us view His pierced hands;
Points to the wounded feet and side,
Blest emblems of the Crucified.*

*If now, with eyes defiled and dim,
We see the signs, but see not Him;
Oh, may His love the scales displace,
And bid us see Him face to face!⁴*

Endnotes:

1. Blind Frances J Crosby: "I shall know Him, I shall know Him, By the print of the nails in His hand."
2. Though we love our spouses and they know it; it is still good to express that love in words and action to confirm and reinforce it.
3. See Matthew Henry *Commentary on the Whole Bible (Complete)*, John 20:11-18.
4. Charles Haddon Spurgeon



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by **P. T. Tan**

No one is above the Lord. His word authoritatively directs every kind of people, and the dead small and great will one day be judged based on their response to it (Mt. 12:36; Jn. 5:24-30; Rev. 20:11-15). Even notable public figures are responsible to obey Him. 1 Kings 12-13 provide three incidents that show the folly of ignoring God's word.

Fathers and Sons

It is difficult to be the son of an illustrious father – especially when that father is the wisest man of antiquity (1 Ki. 4:29-34). Neither wisdom nor spirituality are inherited traits (Jn. 1:12-13); consequently, the challenge of succeeding Solomon should have motivated Rehoboam to petition God for wisdom as his father had (1 Ki. 3:4-15). Instead, he plunged ahead into a tense situation at Shechem, relying on his impetuous young counsellors and his own wobbly judgment.

The frequent site of momentous decisions in the Bible (e.g. Josh. 24 and Jn. 4), Shechem had associations that made it an inauspicious setting for negotiations with discontented subjects. Hall observes: “The very place puts Israel in mind of a rebellion. There Abimelech had raised up his treacherous usurpation over and against his brethren: there Gaal against Abimelech: there was Joseph sold by his brethren, as if the very soil had been stained with perfidiousness.”¹

Man Of Steel or Clay?

Rehoboam chose to begin his reign by brandishing a whip to his disgruntled citizenry. He should have adopted David's servant-leadership style, but his pride made him authoritarian, not conciliatory. One writer explains: “Rehoboam sees leadership in terms of rights rather than responsibilities; he is confrontational and arrogant, and he suffers the consequences. But those consequences are far-reaching and long-lasting, affecting thousands of people. A division is caused which became seemingly irreparable, which will only be healed by the Lord Himself at the outset of His earthly reign . . . How did it come about? One rather minor point in his estimation it would appear: he did not seek help from the Lord, either from the scriptures, nor from a prophet, nor through prayer. An amazing omission!”² Clearly he never learned his father's proverb: “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Prov. 15:1).

Rehoboam's conceit cost him the ten northern tribes; thereby, fulfilling the punishment that was prophesied in Solomon's days (1 Ki. 11:29-39). It also drove the rebellious leadership to complain of the emptiness of the Davidic covenant for them. Sadly, his haughtiness conveyed a wrong concept of an unmerciful God to the people. They mistook his lack of compassion as the official policy of David's God (1 Ki. 12:16). Similarly, unbiblical harshness still drives people away from the seed of David, the Lord Jesus Christ. Biblical oversight must reflect the meekness, holiness, and wisdom of the Church's Head (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

Despite this apparent catastrophe, God remained in control: “. . . the turn of events was from the Lord, that He might fulfill His word, which the Lord had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat” (1 Ki. 12:15). Davis remarks: “Is kingdom division a sad affair? Yes, but Yahweh had already predicted it and is here bringing his word to pass. Are Rehoboam and his favorites arrogant, cocky, and stupid? Probably. But verse 15 testifies that human hubris never catches Yahweh by surprise. He uses it. Big men (especially royal, arrogant ones) are simply little servants of Yahweh's word. Contrary to our fears, human stupidity is not running loose but is on the leash of God's sovereignty.”³

Jeroboam: The Industrious Fool

Seeing the poor quality of Judahite leadership, one expects better from Ephraim, but this was not so. Although he was an able manager of men, in spiritual matters Jeroboam was a disaster. His self-servingly cynical approach to governance led to idolatry becoming the national religion to bolster his regime's legitimacy. This is ironic, for the Lord promised to establish his kingdom, if he would obey

THE DAN DISOBE

WISDOMS OF DISOBEDIENCE

Him (1 Ki. 11:37-38). But as Henry comments: “. . . he would contrive ways and means, and sinful ones too, for his own safety. A practical disbelief of God’s all-sufficiency is at the bottom of all our treacherous departures from him.”⁴ Another adds that he “. . . turns away from orthodoxy, not because it is no longer true but because it is no longer useful. He does not find it false but fearful. You see his thinking then. He must hold on to ‘his’ kingdom, and, since he cannot simply trust Yahweh’s word for that, he must make himself secure. That is the stimulus here for false religion. *If you cannot trust God, you will use religion.* In Jeroboam’s case, what matters is not truth but position - his position.”⁵

Distorting the truth in this way leads to absurdities like the golden calves that Jeroboam enshrined at Dan and Bethel. He reverted to the ancient error of Israel’s initial idolatry at Sinai (Ex. 32), with the idea that if his people returned to the temple in Jerusalem, they would soon reconcile with their southern kinsmen. God’s promise of a lasting kingdom contingent on His obedience was abandoned in favor of a more “realistic” strategy - according to human thinking, at least. Thus, they “. . . *exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever . . .*” (Rom. 1:25).

The Prophet’s Obedience and Disobedience

The Lord sent an anonymous “man of God” to condemn Jeroboam’s apostate religion (1 Ki. 13:1-10). After foretelling its destruction almost three centuries later under Josiah, he was threatened with arrest, but the rebuking royal hand was shriveled even as it stretched forth to issue this command. At the king’s request, the prophet compassionately prayed for his healing. Jeroboam was thankful for this physical mercy, but the Almighty’s goodness did not lead him to repentance (1 Ki. 13:33-34; Rom. 2:4-5).

If that were the end, what an uplifting instance of truth triumphing over falsehood this would be! Unfortunately, the man of God ignored his orders not to eat or drink in this territory (1 Ki. 13:11-32). He declined the unequal yoke of Jeroboam’s table, but fell for the false “revelation” of an older, local prophet; consequently, he was executed by a divinely sent lion.

God’s Word Does It All

The lesson of these three tragic examples is that God’s Word must be obeyed. He controls history, and the rise and fall of political rulers and spiritual leaders occurs by His direction. If such figures need to obey the Lord’s Word, how much more do we? The Scriptures are our Creator and Savior’s revealed will for us. “*Buy the truth, and do not sell it, Also wisdom and instruction and understanding.*” (Prov. 23:23). •

Endnotes:

1. Joseph Hall, *Works*, Vol. 2. (Oxford: The University Press, 1863), p. 4.
2. Bryan Charles, *Day by Day: Pictures and Parables*, ed. John Bennett. (Fareham, UK: Precious Seed, 2009), p. 55.
3. Dale Ralph Davis, *1 Kings*. (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2002), p. 129. [Italics original.]
4. Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), p. 499.
5. Davis, p. 139. [Italics original.]



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by Keith Keyser

GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS *Lamentations 3:23*

From My Room

Marylou Boyd as told to the Editor

I grew up in Haworth, NJ, a quiet suburban community located near the New York border. We were a typical family who lived in a comfortable, good-sized home with a spacious back yard. We were also a church-going family and my father Harold Cundall made a respectable living working for ATT. However, in July of 1944, my father was diagnosed with tuberculosis and sent away to recover in a TB sanitarium in Lake Kushaqua, NY in the Adirondacks. Little did we realize that he would remain there for the next two years and three months. As a family, the question would naturally arise, "How will we survive with our father no longer working and providing for us?" As a young girl of 15, I knew enough about life that it was a major cause for concern for my mother and family. But to make matters worse, when the doctors came to our house to examine us the following month, they discovered that I had a shadow on my lung. Tuberculosis is never healed, only arrested, and because of that they ordered mandatory bed rest for me for an indefinite period of time in my home.

My everyday routine was simple: a two-hour treatment from 10 AM to noon, time out for lunch, and then another one from 1 to 3 PM, lying motionless flat on my bed. This would go on for more than ten months. I was only allowed to get up from my bed to utilize the bathroom. My mother would bring me three meals a day and leave them with me and go immediately downstairs so that her health was not jeopardized. It could have been a very depressing and discouraging experience. But the Lord was with me and I made the most of it. Even though I ate by myself, I never felt alone and used my time in the best way I could. I would listen to the radio and keep up with the latest news and sports programs of the day. I would play my record player and memorized words and music all day long. One time, I made a balsam airplane, using a large piece of plywood as a table top where I did all my work. I read every mystery book that was ever printed. And from my bed, I would look out from my third-floor window and watch the clouds and weather or carry on a conversation with the

neighborhood kids who came by to chat from below. I was happy, busy, and content and I never complained. The Lord was good to me and it was a good reminder that we don't need a lot of things to make us happy – the Lord is our portion.

One of the things I loved to do was to write. I wrote regularly to my father in the sanitarium. I would also write to my cousin in the Marines and to other friends and family. My greatest enjoyment I had however was writing to someone that I had never met. Before I was confined, we had a pen pal writing assignment in our school in which the whole class was given the name and address of a person who lived somewhere else in the country. I wrote to a boy by the name of Aubrey. At first, I never heard back from him, and when I did it was only on occasion. But when I was recovering in my room, I began

writing to him again on a more regular basis. I had a lot of time on my hands and I wrote many, many times hoping

for the time when we could actually meet face to face. My writing to him never stopped and in the spring of 1945, after more than 10 months in "solitary,"

I was released to resume normal activities. I kept writing to Aubrey while he served in our nation's military. When he had a three-day pass in December, 1945, we met for the very first time and fell in love, although that process had already begun through the mail. We later married and raised a family of two daughters here in Haworth, where we lived until his home call on January 1, 2016.

During that time of testing in my life, I learned the very valuable lesson that "in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11). The Lord faithfully provided for us during this time in our family history. I also learned that despite the hardships that all of us may go through, that the Lord can bring good out of it as He did in my situation, by providing me with a husband through a friendship that was cultivated from my room. •



The Christian's great source of rejoicing is God's grace, which reconciles us to God. Reconciliation is when God brings sinful man into a perfect, eternal, and harmonious relationship with Himself. Paul writes to the Romans, contrasting man's attempt to become righteous through his own efforts with God's way of faith (Rom. 3:28). Righteousness is gained through faith in the One who was sentenced for our offenses and raised for our justification (Rom. 4:25). Through Christ's death we have been reconciled to God (Rom. 5:10-11). We are no longer in Adam but by the grace of God are now in Christ.

Calvary's hill. Weak in our sins, still "yet sinners," He died in our place (Rom. 5:6, 8).

This brings us to the next "much more" (Rom. 5:9). Not only justified in the past, we will also never face God's wrath in the future. This is eternal security. Since I stand on the grounds of Christ shed blood shed for my sin, I'll never see God's wrath (Rom. 5:9). This is part of God's great reconciliation. I am eternally accepted. In Christ I am brought to a place of perfect peace and eternal harmony with God. My salvation is secured, not only by Christ's past work but also by His present "saved by His life" (Rom.

RECONCILED AND *Rejoicing*



In reconciliation we now have peace with God (Rom. 5:1). The Lord Jesus is our peace and we have been translated into His kingdom (Col. 1:3) and accepted by God as Christ is accepted (Eph. 1:6). In reconciliation we are standing in grace (Rom. 5:2), as opposed to standing in our self-efforts or worth. Now we come to the "not only so" (Rom. 5:3), which emphasizes God's great plan of bringing many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10). Adam's fall turns out to be God's way of doing "much more" to bring Himself glory. This is why we can glory in tribulation knowing God is developing Christ-like character in vessels of clay which will ultimately be in heaven (Rom. 5:3). We are not going through these troubles alone and the Holy Spirit floods our hearts with the knowledge of God's infinite love for us. How? He does this by bringing to our minds God's ultimate and eternal expression of love to us found in the suffering Savior on

5:10). Hence, we don't rejoice or boast in ourselves, but only rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ who has brought us to this perfect, eternal reconciliation with the living God (Rom. 5:11). •



Tim McNeal has been commended to the Lord's work from Lake Charles Bible Chapel since 1988. He is involved with evangelism, Bible teaching and encouraging small assemblies to "strengthen the things that remain". He and his wife Liz have nine children and attend Bluegrass Bible fellowship in Richmond Kentucky.

by **Tim McNeal**

FOUNDATIONS

of the faith

THE PERSON & WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Work of the Holy Spirit Today

From the first chapter of Genesis (Gen. 1:2), to the final chapter of Revelation (Rev. 22:17), we read about the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. He is described as a Person, having intelligence (Isa. 11:2; 1 Cor. 2:10-11), emotions (Isa. 63:10; Eph 4:30), and a will (1 Cor. 12:11; Acts 16:6-7). He is a member of the one, triune God, and as such, is eternal (Heb. 9:14), omniscient (1 Cor. 2:10-12), omnipresent (Ps. 139:7-13), and omnipotent (Lk. 1:35; Rom. 15:19).

He was active in creation (Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; 33:4), at work in men (2 Sam. 23:2; Neh. 9:30), and strove to turn Israel from sin (Isa. 63:10-11). He was active in the incarnation (Lk. 1:35) and in the life of Christ (Lk. 4:14; Acts 10:38). The Scriptures were written by men who were inspired and guided by Him to write what God wanted humanity to know (2 Pet. 1:20-21; 2 Tim. 3:16). Today, we have the complete, written Word of God. Everything God wanted to communicate to man can be found within its pages. So much could be written about the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and in the life of Christ. But what about today?

He Restrains The Wickedness Of Men (2 Thess. 2:7)

Laws help restrain people from doing wrong. Without laws, there would be anarchy. Parents restrain children from getting out of control. Without parents, or lacking a parental figure, children would be left to their own devices. The Holy Spirit acts in a similar fashion. His presence in this world restrains the wickedness of men.

He Convicts People Of Sin (Jn. 16:7-11)

The Word of God is unlike any book. It is a living and powerful Book (Heb. 4:12). When read, the Spirit of God can use it to change a life and drive the sword of conviction into a complacent soul. He is working to make Scripture clear, the truth that mankind is lost and dead in sin, but that through Christ people can be saved and escape the judgment to come. For many, the message is but a shallow truth, never striking the heart with a deep sense of guilt and despair. To others the Spirit's work brings about true conviction of mankind's entrapment and bondage to sin.

He Points To Christ And Glorifies Him (Jn. 15:26; 16:14)

Why does the Holy Spirit point to Christ? Because Christ is the One who can save us from sin. Thus, He bears witness to Christ. He does not point to Himself nor to His power. He seeks the glory of the Savior and points people to the Mediator between God and man, the Light of the world, the Redeemer of men.

He Gives Life (Titus 3:4-5; Jn. 3:3; 6:63)

The Word of God is active in regeneration (1 Pet 1:23; Jas. 1:18). The Holy Spirit uses it to bring conviction of sin and point sinners to the Savior. Salvation is not brought about by the will of man, nor by the will of the flesh, nor by physical birth (Jn. 1:13). Jesus said, *“unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,”* (Jn. 3:3). Salvation is not accomplished by praying a prayer, nor by baptism, nor by church membership. It is not a reformation of the heart, but a complete transformation. It is the Spirit who breathes spiritual life, so that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). This regeneration is brought about by the Spirit of God, bringing new life to a sinner who was dead in sin (Jn. 3:5-6, 8).

THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES EVERY BELIEVER SOMETHING TO DO. HE DISTRIBUTES SPIRITUAL GIFTS SO EACH BELIEVER CAN BE INVOLVED IN BUILDING UP, BINDING UP, AND BEAUTIFYING THE BODY OF CHRIST.

He Indwells (1 Cor. 6:19; Jn. 14:16-17; 2 Tim. 1:14)

He is a gift from God indwelling every believer (Acts 10:44-45; 15:8; Rom. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5). He indwells even young, immature believers as noted in Corinth (1 Cor. 3:3, 16; 6:19). Paul writes that if the Holy Spirit does not indwell someone, they are not Christ's (Rom. 8:9).

He Baptizes (1 Cor. 12:13)

The baptism of the Holy Spirit places believers into the body of Christ, and it happens at salvation. It is mentioned four times in the Acts of the Apostles. First, on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 11:15-16), when the promised Holy Spirit came, baptized and filled the disciples (Acts 2:1-4). With boldness, Peter preached the resurrection of Jesus who now had been made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36) and many came to faith in Christ and were added to their number.

It happened a second time (Acts 8) when Philip preached the gospel in Samaria, and saw many saved. After some time, Peter and John came from Jerusalem and laid hands on the new converts (Acts 8:14-17) so they would receive the Holy Spirit. This was necessary as historically there was animosity between the Jews and Samaritans that caused the Samaritans

to reject Jewish authority over them. But now God was breaking down the barrier; Jews and Samaritans were now one in Christ.

It happened a third time (Acts 10) when Cornelius, a Gentile, was told by an angel to call for Peter, who came and found a house full of Gentiles ready to hear the word of the Lord. Peter preached; the Gentiles received the gospel; and the Holy Spirit fell on them (Acts 10:44). Now Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles were one in Christ, part of one body. This was astonishing and caused quite a stir among Jewish believers.

It happened a fourth time (Acts 19) in Ephesus, where Paul found disciples of John. Paul preached Christ upon whom they believed and were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. After Paul laid hands on them (a sign that they were publicly cutting ties with Israel), the Holy Spirit came upon them. Years later, Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12:13, commenting on what happened in those early days, *“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”*

He Seals (Eph. 1:13; 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5)

The Father has sealed every believer with the Holy Spirit, securing and guaranteeing the believer's redemption. Since no one is more powerful than God the believer's seal can never be broken nor can we lose our salvation.

He Gives The Believer Gifts (1 Cor. 12:7-11; Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:3-13; 1 Pet. 4:7-11)

The Holy Spirit gives every believer something to do. He distributes spiritual gifts so each believer can be involved in building up, binding up, and beautifying the body of Christ. Some gifts were only for the apostolic era and ceased at the end of that period. Others remain and today are distributed by the Holy Spirit to believers upon their conversion. No one possesses all the gifts. This is why believers need one another. The gifts are distributed so the body of Christ will learn to work and function together under the headship of Christ.

To be continued in our next issue •



Mark Swaim and his wife Tami were commended to the work of the Lord in 1997 from the assembly in Palisades Park, NJ. They served in Poland for 11 years, where Mark was active preaching and teaching the Word of God. Since 2009, Mark has returned to Poland numerous times. He has also traveled in recent years to Portugal, engaging in an itinerant teaching ministry and establishing intensive Bible study programs. Mark and Tami have 5 boys and 1 girl and fellowship at Monterey Chapel in Leola, PA.

by Mark Swaim

THE SNARE OF HUMAN TRADITION

Whether we like to admit to it or not, we all are prone to mindless rout in much of what we do. From our morning routine, to matters of hygiene and dress, we act habitually. How many of us sit in the same pew or park our vehicles in the same spot each Sunday? It is easier to do what we have always done rather than rethink what is customary.

While such habits are not necessarily wrong, we should be aware that this ingrained tendency can create unprofitable traditions that adversely affect the local church. Church tradition (i.e., speaking of apostolic truth; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14) must be obeyed, but for the good of our local churches we should spurn humanly-devised customs.

A Biblical Example

King Saul's actions in 1 Samuel 14 illustrate the damaging nature of man-made rules. The Philistines were threatening Israel with an enormous army. Israel's army was small and only Saul and Jonathan had swords. The Lord used brave Jonathan and his armor bearer to defeat a Philistine garrison and instigate a great victory for Israel. Unfortunately, self-focused Saul diminished God's blessing by uttering a rash oath. He placed a curse on anyone eating before evening to better permit him to avenge *himself* of *his* enemies (1 Sam. 14:24). Jonathan rightly recognized that the Philistines were the *Lord's* enemy (1 Sam. 14:12), but Saul wanted to vindicate himself of *his* enemies to preserve *his* own honor. Saul's rash vow was crafted in pride, as shown by his willingness later to sacrifice the man of faith (his own son) to save face.

Saul's rule caused the Lord's people to suffer in two ways. First, the loss of God's blessing occurred because of the reduced agility of famished Jewish soldiers. The soldiers deserved sustenance while battling the enemy (Deut. 25:4). Additionally, while Saul was wasting time casting lots to see who had broken his decree, the Philistines were able to further retreat. Second, Saul's tradition displaced the importance of observing God's Law and led God's people into sin. In the evening, Saul's men quickly killed the animals to eat their flesh without letting them bleed-out first, as per the Law. Saul's tradition reduced God's blessing to His people, eventually led them into sin, and put God-ordained authority (Saul) to public shame.

A Practical Evaluation

One of the beautiful aspects of Church truth is that local assemblies adhering to Scripture and following the New Testament (NT) pattern will still be diverse in practice. While such diversity is expected, the challenge for each assembly is to continually review its practices to ensure humanism is not displacing Christ's headship. Let us think through three reasons for such an evaluation:

First, realizing our tendency to traditionalize things we should be careful about judging others for having differing meeting formats. A statement such as, “You are not a NT assembly unless you have a Sunday evening Gospel meeting and mid-week prayer meeting” cannot be supported by Scripture. Each assembly should review and adjust accordingly as to what format/schedule best accommodates the needs of those in fellowship. For example, if a number of the saints live at a distance, it may make sense to have all the meetings of the Church at one time and then gather in small

THE NEXT GENERATION OF BELIEVERS NEEDS TO SEE THE REAL THING, NOT EMPTY FORMALITY. AS CHILDREN OF GOD, WE MUST CONTINUALLY “PROVE WHAT IS THAT GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT WILL OF GOD” (ROM. 12:2).

groups at several locales during the week. Additionally, although the believers in the NT all gathered in one place to hear God’s word taught (1 Cor. 14:23), it may be helpful to have a special program if a number of unsaved children were visiting the assembly on Sunday.

Second, realizing our tendency to slide into ritualistic worship we should continually evaluate if what we are doing is scriptural or practically necessary, as opposed to a developed tradition. It was once suggested that our assembly should be covering the emblems after they were passed at the Lord’s Supper. When I asked why? The response was, “We do it at our church to show completeness.” There is nothing wrong with covering the emblems with a cloth, but to say it is wrong not to – is wrong. Covering the emblems to keep the flies away would be a practical reason for doing so, but adding a symbolic meaning to such a practice forges a tradition.

There are certain practices that we all do, that may be permissible, but we become uncomfortable if they are not observed. Examples for the Lord’s Supper would include: the placement of emblems on the table, opening/closing the meeting the same way, the procedure for taking/passing the emblems, the use of a preferred hymnal or one Bible version, standing or sitting on cue, or the wearing of formal attire. On the latter point, we should remember that the Lord is present and presides over all meetings of the church, not just the Lord’s Supper.

Third, we should realize that we often develop unbiblical terminology which leads us into traditions. For example, when examining Scripture, we find that “worship” is not used as an adjective (e.g., “worship leader”). The few nouns that are rendered “worship” do not directly relate to the believer’s worship, but there are an abundance of verbs in the NT confirming that “worship” is something that we do. It does not describe what we have done for God, nor does it describe who we are (i.e., titles belong to the Lord not His servants)! It is the pagan that works to *induce or force* worship (Dan. 3), but the Holy Spirit leads believers in joyful worship without regard to meeting labels. The moment we begin to worship our worship it ceases to be what God appreciates!

A sister once informed me that she was only going to cover her head during the “worship meeting” (a wrong reference to the Lord’s Supper). Embracing unbiblical terminology had caused her to put a premium on one church meeting over another, which she thought justified her revision of the headship practice commanded in Scripture.

Incidentally, the same verses that state *the what* also tell us *when* headship is to be observed (1 Cor. 11:5-7): whenever we are in God’s intimate presence to speak to Him in prayer or He is speaking to us through His Word. At such times, there should be the visible salute to His authority and glory (as a respectful soldier salutes a higher ranking officer). Paul speaks of Creation Order in 1 Corinthians 1:2-16, and then switches specifically to Church Order in verses 17-34 to address the local church gathering for the Lord’s Supper. Sadly, many traditions have developed to constrain the *what* and the *when* of the headship practice to something other than what Scripture states.

Take the Challenge

It is our nature to want to slide through life as carefree as possible; this propensity prompts many mindless routines. In these wicked days we cannot afford to quench the Holy Spirit through vain religiosity. The next generation of believers needs to see the real thing, not empty formality. As children of God, we must continually “*prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*” (Rom. 12:2). Seeing that human traditions often limit God’s blessing and lead us into sin, we should verify that our church practices are honoring the Lord and not ourselves. May the Lord help us all to spot those pride-appealing traditions that would hinder us from experiencing the fuller joy of the Lord. •



Warren Henderson is a full-time worker living in northeast Kansas. He is involved in writing, evangelism, and Bible teaching. Currently, he is pioneering a new assembly in Ottawa, Kansas.

by Warren Henderson

Report: What Can One Person Accomplish For God?

Work in Slidell, Louisiana

As I opened a book from my library to research a message, I saw this inscription on the inside front cover: "To Bob ... with Love in Christ, Bonnie." Instantly, my mind flashed back 40 years and I began to think of my friend and sister in Christ, and her love for a relatively new believer and his wife. I remembered how the Lord had used her to plant the work here in Slidell, Louisiana and how it all traced back to Bonnie making obedience to biblical principles the priority in her life. She believed these principles were one of life's non-negotiables. Where would Slidell Bible Chapel be today if it wasn't for her, and others like her that chose to faithfully follow the biblical pattern. Bonnie went home to be with her Lord and Savior many years ago, but today the work still prospers.

Bonnie was a young lady from the Atlanta, Georgia area. While attending a denominational church there, she trusted Christ as her Savior. Later coming to understand New Testament church truths, she came into fellowship in an Atlanta area assembly. In late 1971 she was offered a job in the local hospital in Slidell, Louisiana, a bedroom community just east of New Orleans. Desiring to continue to fellowship in an assembly, she called a full-time worker in New Orleans, named Vernon Schlieff, who assured her that there was an assembly meeting in the area and encouraged her to take the job.

In February, 1972, Bonnie moved from Georgia to Slidell. There she faithfully commuted each week to meet with the believers at Lake Park Chapel in Belle Chasse, Louisiana. In the spring of 1973, a local lady was hospitalized in Slidell. Bonnie and her found that they had a mutual interest in the Lord Jesus Christ and a mutual disillusionment with man-made organizations and the traditions of denominationalism. Consequently, upon her release from the hospital, she and eventually her husband joined Bonnie in faithfully commuting to Lake Park Chapel each week. There they met and got to know Vernon and Gladys Schlieff as well as other believers. In this assembly, New Testament principles were taught and practiced. It became obvious to them that the Holy Spirit had brought Bonnie to them and that He had been leading them out of denominationalism and into the truths of his New Testament patterned church. In faithfulness to these teachings, they and Bonnie became convinced that God's will was to establish a New Testament patterned assembly in Slidell.

In the Fall of 1973, home Bible Studies began in the couple's home in Slidell. These studies included "What the Bible Teaches," "Christ Loved the Church," "The Gospel of John," as well as other biblical books, Emmaus Correspondence Courses, and teaching on New Testament church truths. These subjects were expounded methodically verse by verse, primarily by Vernon Schlieff with the help of a couple of other

brethren from Lake Park Chapel. The Bible Study grew, and over the next two years, the original three believers were joined by the couple's two children, growing eventually to a total of 15. In 1975 they began praying for a chapel building. The new building was purchased in the "Old Town / Brugier" subdivision of Slidell. Only minor alterations were needed to remove a breakfast bar and install a partition wall and 55 padded theater seats removed from the local Spanish storefront meeting hall. A small pulpit and communion table finished off the auditorium. Behind the partition wall was a little kitchen. The other half of the building consisted of two Sunday School classrooms, a nursery, and a bathroom. In August 1975, the first meeting was held in the new chapel building. Ministry was provided by Vernon and others from Lake Park Chapel. Bonnie, the couple with two children, plus one other couple made up the fellowship. Two other couples along with two singles attended sporadically.

In 1977 JoAnne, I and our three girls moved to Slidell and joined in the work. In 1978, Bertley and Adilie Englade from Lake Park Chapel began coming on Sunday mornings to play the recently purchased piano. A year later the Englades moved to Slidell to help in the work. Over these and the following years people came and went, but the work moved ahead. An annual Bible Conference was begun, various outreaches were established, and the elders of Lake Park Chapel assisted in helping to recognize elders.

In 1985, JoAnne and I were commended to the service of the Lord and negotiations began on a new facility. The sale became final the following year. As the assembly moved to the new facility, it also moved to a new heart and mind. Up to this point we had just prayed that the Lord would bring people in to build the work. As a corporate body, we now committed ourselves to also go out into the world to reach the lost for Christ.

With the new building, we also gained a child care facility which was reorganized as a chapel ministry, consisting of 3 teachers and 43 children, comprised of infants and grades N2 through K5. Every child received a quality education, daily gospel lesson, and memory verse. In 1993, Slidell Christian Academy was established enabling the day care to deal with child care, and the school to take the rest. JoAnne directed the day care and I was the principal of the school. One grade was added to the school each year until in 2000, the day care took children from 8 weeks old through 3 years old, and the school took Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8. In 2010 Lee & Sharon Sandifer were commended to the service of the Lord, and in 2014 Lee took over as principal of the school. In December of 2017 Mandy Skiles took over directing the day care.

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Human beings are clearly designed to enjoy the blessing of love, both by showing love and by being loved. If we felt totally unloved then we would wonder whether life was worth living. Love is very important to us and is expressed in the close relationships of marriage, family and friendship. Life loses a great deal of meaning if we have no bonding with others. Yet where did the need for love and relationships come from and why do they develop? Atheism and evolution offer no solution because in the fight for the survival of the fittest, love which sacrifices for others is considered inexplicable. Yet if we were created in the image of God, we have an explanation as God is both loving and relational.

God's Greatness

*"The Christian Church confesses ... that God is the Incomprehensible One, but also ... that He can be known and that knowledge of Him is an absolute requisite unto salvation."*¹ *"It is evident that we need more than a theoretical knowledge of God. Yet we can know God only as He reveals Himself to us in the Scriptures, and we cannot know the Scriptures until we are willing to be changed by them."*² So we can have academic knowledge of God and that is useful, but ultimately we need personal knowledge of God as an experience in our lives. We can never fully understand God because as finite human beings we cannot exhaustively understand all there is to know about the infinite God. We need to grow in our knowledge of God and His ways, and as we respond positively to the light we already possess, He willingly gives us more light.

The Trinity

Christianity is a monotheistic faith as we believe in and worship one God. Yet God is Trinitarian and not Unitarian, which means He is not one person but three persons. Thus, we come to the doctrine of the Trinity. *"The doctrine of the trinity is, in its last analysis a deep mystery that cannot be fathomed by the finite mind. That it is taught in Scripture, however, there can be no reasonable doubt. It is a doctrine to be believed even though it cannot be thoroughly understood."*³ Billy Graham has written, "When I first began to study the Bible

*years ago, the doctrine of the Trinity was one of the most complex problems I had to encounter. I have never fully resolved it, for it contains an aspect of mystery. Though I do not fully understand it to this day, I accept it as a revelation of God."*⁴ This doctrine of the Trinity is defined as follows, "God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God."

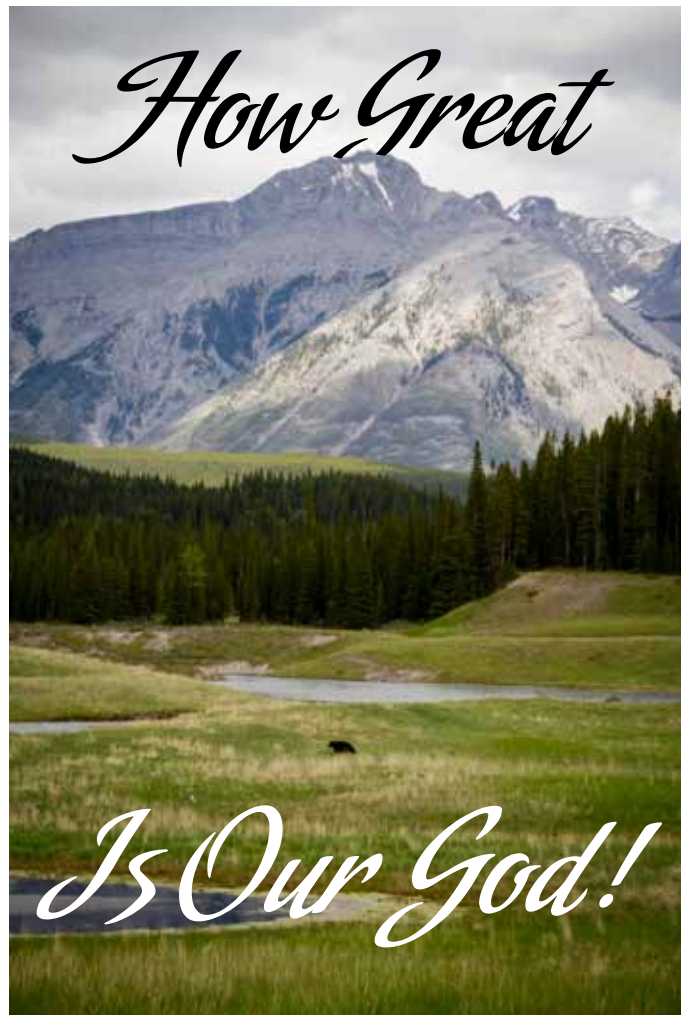
The actual word "trinity," though not found in the Bible, stems from the Latin word "trinitas," which means threeness, tri-unity, or three-in-oneness. It is used to summarize the teaching of Scripture that God is three persons, yet one God. This is progressively revealed throughout the Bible and finds its fullest expression in the New Testament.

In the Old Testament this truth is not so much declared openly as intimated in the following ways. Firstly, in Genesis 1:1, the word for God is not a singular or dual word but a plural word and would suggest very strongly that there is the plurality of persons in the Godhead. Secondly, we have the famous "us" passages where the plural personal pronouns are used of deity (Gen. 1:26; 11:7; Isa. 6:8). It is also interesting to note that the seraphim around the throne of God in Isaiah 6 chanted the words, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts." The triple use of the word holy would suggest the Trinity of God. Thirdly, there are the theophanies or Christophanies that were pre-incarnation appearances of the Lord (Gen. 16, 18).

It is in the New Testament that the truth of the Trinity is more clearly revealed. It is here

that we read of the great evidence for the deity of both the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The baptismal commission indicates the Trinity where we are required to baptize in one Name but three Persons. *"Go ye therefore and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."* (Mt. 28:19). It is wonderfully summarized in 1 John 5:7, *"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one."*

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When we consider the Trinity, we must remember that God is three distinct Persons. For example, the Father is not the Son. In the same way the Father is not the Holy Spirit and the Son is not the Holy Spirit. These distinctions are witnessed in John 1:1, 1 John 2:1, Hebrews 7:25, John 14:26, and Romans 8:27. We must also remember that each of these three distinct persons is fully God. Clearly the Father is God, but so is the Son and this is demonstrated in such great chapters as John 1, Colossians 1, and Hebrews 1. It is also evident that the Holy Spirit is revealed as God in the Scriptures. He has divine attributes (Heb. 9:14; Ps. 139:7, 1 Cor. 2:10) and is actually called by the name of God in Acts 5:3-4. He also does the work of God such as creation (Job 33:4), regeneration (Jn. 3:5), and resurrection (Rom. 8:11). These works, by their very nature, can only be performed by God. Thus, we see that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not only distinct but each one is fully God.

Only One God

However, we must note strongly that Scripture is abundantly clear that there is only one God. The three different persons of the Trinity are one not only in purpose and in agreement on what they think, but they are also one in essence, one in their essential nature. In other words, God is only one Being. There are not three Gods. There is only one God.⁶ *"I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God"* (Isa. 45:5). Also, Paul writes, *"There is one God"* (1 Tim. 2:5), while James confirms it by writing, *"You believe that*

God is one; you do well" (Jas. 2:19).

The Trinity makes us realize why God is love as there has always existed a loving relationship between the members of the Trinity. It is from that relationship of love that we find ourselves needing love and companionship. If God were Unitarian, He would never have loved anyone and would not have experienced relationship. So, we reflect His character as we demonstrate love and enjoy relationships with those who are near and dear to us. •

Endnotes:

1. *Systematic Theology*, Louis Berkhoff
2. *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, John Montgomery Boice
3. *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*, William Evans
4. *The Holy Spirit*, Billy Graham
5. *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem
6. *Ibid.*



Paul Young is married to Alison and has been in full-time service for the Lord for 38 years. He was formerly a school teacher. He is based in South Wales, UK and ministers the Word of God both throughout the UK and in many countries around the world. He has been involved in radio ministry and has authored 14 books, most recently Faith Alone (Hebrews 11).

by Paul Young

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The Lord has brought us through some unimaginably tough times. In 2005 we survived a direct hit by Hurricane Katrina which resulted in the destruction of about 80% of our town and two of our four chapel buildings. As well, most of the homes of our families had to be rebuilt. In all, the city lost about one-half of its population. Then in 2010 the explosion of the off-shore exploration oil rig "Deep Water Horizon" shut down all our offshore oil industry, and the resulting oil spill shut down most of our fishing industry. But despite this the Lord has been faithful. We are slowly coming back to where we were before the hurricane, and while we are smaller, the meeting has never been stronger or more joyful.

Today a small but enthusiastic group meets for Sunday and Wednesday assembly meetings. Other chapel activities include men's and ladies' in-depth Bible Studies, AWANA Club, and campouts and other fun activities. We also visit a local nursing home every Sunday afternoon. Gospel tracts and "Our Daily Bread" booklets are distributed around town in hospitals and the local Crisis Pregnancy Help Center. The elders also provide discipleship classes and biblical counseling sessions. On any given day, 60-80 mostly unsaved children from infant through Grade 8, receive the gospel and a first-rate college preparatory education at Slidell Christian Academy and

Lolli-Pop Ranch Christian Pre-School & Day Care. All these efforts are driven by the chapel's heart to reach lost souls for Christ which results in roughly 8 to 16 professions each year. Hundreds of lives have been touched and changed because 40 years ago one young lady thought that faithful obedience to God's Word was a non-negotiable. Think of what the Lord could do with your life! •



Bob was saved while serving in the US Navy in November of 1975. He and his wife JoAnne were commended to the Lord's Work in July of 1985. They make their home in Slidell, Louisiana where Bob is an Elder at Slidell Bible Chapel. Bob serves mostly in an Evangelistic and Teaching Ministry. They feel the Lord has called them to what is primarily a pioneering work, laboring to plant New Testament Assemblies and to build up and encourage existing ones in the "Deep South" and beyond as the Lord leads.

by Robert R. (Bob) Brown

ISSUES *and* ANSWERS

"Search The Scriptures..." John 5:39

Doubtful Things; Part 1

Throughout church history believers have asked, "should a Christian partake in this or that activity?" These questions concern gray areas, choices that believers make in their personal lives that Scripture does not call sin or specifically mention.

In Romans 14 Paul compares a believer who was weak in the faith with one who was mature. The weaker one had speculative ethics over things of minor importance feeling they must observe certain days and avoid certain foods. This was an issue in the early church where some Jewish believers were hesitant to eat foods which were forbidden under the Mosaic Law and felt they must still respect the Sabbath (vv. 1-2, 5). Food was also an issue for some Gentile believers (1 Cor. 8; 10:23-33). Saved out of idolatry, they were appalled at the thought of eating meat that had been offered to one of their former idols and then sold in the marketplace. On the other hand, Gentile believers who were strong in faith understood that although certain foods may have been used in idolatrous rituals, the food in itself was not evil. Similarly, mature Jewish believers now understood that the Mosaic Law was no longer their rule of life. In this section God's Word maps out some key guidelines to help believers make decisions about inconsequential things today and still accept other Christians who think differently.

The first principle is that Christ has warmly received both the strong and the weak believer and welcomes them to come into His presence (vv.1-3; Rom. 15:7; Heb. 4:16). Therefore, we must not reject one whom He has received. Further, each believer is identified with Him so when we receive another believer we are also receiving Christ (Mt. 10:40). Moreover, it is heart-warming that the Father lovingly welcomes us in the same manner as He does His Son (Phm. 1:17). Therefore, weaker believers must be embraced as they are (v. 1) because *"fellowship among Christians is not to be based on everyone's agreement on disputable questions."*¹ Our personal convictions on secondary matters should not become a test of fellowship.

John Heading writes, *"Christian love bears with men just as they are found and seeks their development without stumbling."*² Our reception of the weak means treating them with kindness and love without any thought of arguing with them to change their opinions (v. 1). Likewise, weaker believers should never quarrel

with others in an attempt to convince them of their viewpoints. In disagreeing on some non-essentials there can still be happy fellowship because *"unity does not require uniformity."*

It is possible to outwardly accept another believer but nonetheless maintain a wrong attitude towards them (v. 3). Those who enjoy their liberty in Christ must take care not to mock, despise or hold contempt for those who feel the need to follow a set of do's and don'ts. Those with a weak conscience must take care that they do not become critical of those who do not feel bound to their self-imposed list of right behaviour. Since God has received them both, they should mutually receive one another.

The second principle is that both in life and death Christ is our Lord and Master (vv. 4, 7-12). In the working world, supervisors are responsible to evaluate their own employees work. It would be inappropriate for them to assess one who worked for another manager. Similarly, Christ is our sole arbiter, not other believers. He alone has the capability to righteously appraise us. When the strong shows contempt for the weak or the weak judges the strong they are usurping Christ's responsibility. Instead we must entrust ourselves and others to God's grace (Rom. 5:2; 2 Cor. 12:9; 2 Pet. 1:3) recognizing that we shall all appear before Christ to give account. •

Endnotes

1. Zondervan NASB Study Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), electronic version
2. John Heading, *Acts: A Study in New Testament Christianity* (Kansas City, KS: Walterick Publishers, 1995), vol. 2: p. 189

If you have a question for this column please submit it to gferrier@cornerstonemagazine.org



George Ferrier is a commended full-time worker who fellowships at Bridlewood Bible Chapel in Ottawa, ON. In addition to itinerant preaching and teaching in North America and overseas, he is a regular contributor to Choice Cleanings Calendar. He is on the board of Cornerstone Magazine Inc. and also serves as assistant editor.

by George Ferrier

News & Notices



CMML NY Regional Conference

March 8 - 9, 2019

Northgate Bible Chapel, Rochester, NY

The invited speakers are Jonathan Hayes (Niger) and Thomas Schetelich (Maryland). CMML will host a special Youth Night before the conference on Friday March 8 at 7:30 p.m. at Northgate Bible Chapel. The sessions on March 9 are from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm and lunch will be served. They request registration no later than March 4. For more information see CMML.us/rochester2019 or contact them at 732-449-8880 x106 or ccfritchey@cmml.us

Know The Word Men's Conference

March 16, 2019 • 9:30am-3pm

Kenilworth Gospel Chapel, Kenilworth, NJ

Alexander Kurian (Texas) and Brian Gunning (Canada) are the scheduled speakers for a special tri-state area spring men's conference. The theme will be: "Rise Up O Men of God!", a call to take the higher path with Christ. There is no charge for this conference but emailing Know the Word would be appreciated for planning purposes. Contact Mark Kolchin at knowtheword@gmail.com or write Know the Word P.O. Box 305 Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734.

Shining Lights Youth Retreat

March 22 - 24, 2019

Grace Gospel Chapel, Allentown, PA

We are pleased to invite you to our 4th annual retreat! The speaker is Richie Benitez, and as always, the cost is free! For more information contact Abbi Bull at retreat@gracegospel.us or 484.719.1411. To register visit www.gracegospel.us/register

Cornerstone Conference

March 30, 2019 • 10:30am-3:30pm

Woodside Chapel, Fanwood, NJ

Make your plans now to attend Cornerstone Magazine's first conference! The speakers will be David Dunlap (Fla) and Mark Kolchin (NJ). The topic is: "So Great Salvation: God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility" and will take a biblical look at God's call to salvation and man's response to it. A lunch meal will be served. For more information and to indicate your plan to attend, please email George Ferrier gferrier@cornerstonemagazine.org.

Central Florida Bible Conference

April 6, 2019 • 9:30am - 3:15pm

Hiawassa Bible Chapel,

1900 North Hawassee Road, Orlando, FL

In the will of the Lord the assemblies in Central Florida will host another conference. The invited speaker is Steve Price (KS). For more information contact Joseph Jeremiah at jere8301@gmail.com or 352.227.9471.

Greenwood Hills Spring & Early Summer Events

Looking for spiritual encouragement in the spring or early summer? Greenwood Hills has some great opportunities for you and your family.

April 12 - 14 Couples Retreat Weekend

A weekend dedicated to married couples

May 24 - 27 Memorial Day Conference

A family Bible conference

June 21 - 29 Summit Week

A week for young adults 16+

June 29 - July 2 ALIVE

A weekend for young people ages 12 - 15

To register or obtain more information, contact Martain Ferguson at martain@greenwoodhills.net or 866.861.1373 or go to GreenwoodHills.net

Tavistock Conference

Sat, April 13, 2019 • 9:30am - 4:30pm

Tavistock Mennonite Church,
131 Wettlaufer St., Tavistock, ON

Invited speakers are Dave Robins on the topic of Prayer and the Prayer Meeting and Dr. Steve Price on the topic of Headship, Headcovering, When, Where? For more information contact Mike Bastiaansen at leonab@explornet.ca or 519.475.4528

Toronto Easter Bible Conference

April 19 - 20, 2019

Port Credit Secondary School

70 Mineola Rd. E., Mississauga, ON

Presented by the Toronto area assemblies. Invited speakers are Keith Keyser and Nathan Griffiths. Each day begins at 1:30 pm. and a light supper will be provided both days. Child Care will be provided for children up to 11 years of age. For more information please contact George McCann at mccann.geoann@gmail.com.

75th Annual Bible Conference

May 4 - 5, 2019

Lake Park Chapel, 201 Schlieff Dr., Belle Casse, LA

Invited speaker is Dr. Caleb Trent from Lawrence, KS. Come join them for a spiritually refreshing weekend in God's Word. Meetings begin on Saturday May 4 at 3:30 pm. For more information contact Ray Cummings by mail at 103 Dickson Dr., Belle Chasse, LA 70037 or by phone at 504.239.7068 and 504.393.7083 or by email at lakeparkchapel@att.net.

Ontario Worker's & Elder's Conference

May 9 - 11, 2019

Guelph Conference Centre, Guelph, ON

The theme for this year's conference is "Standing for God in a Godless World" (Dan. 3:18). The primary speakers are David Dunlap and Warren Henderson. The conference also includes seminar times, missionary reports, and a panel discussion. For further information contact George McCann at mccann.geoann@gmail.com.

Annual Spring Conference

May 17 - 19, 2019

Claremont Bible Chapel, Southern California

The speakers, Lord willing, will be Chris Schroeder and Steve Price. For further information contact Mark Stratton at 909.952.5251 or Stratton_m@sbcglobal.net.

Camp Iroquoia 2019 Winter & Spring Retreats

Skeet Retreat (May 17 - 18, 2019)

The cost is \$80 if registered and paid in full the Friday before the retreat, and \$100 if registered after that date. This rate applies for most weekend retreats. Please see the individual retreat pages at iroquoia.org/retreats or email them at registrar@iroquoia.org for more info.

Memorial Day Weekend Bible Conference

May 25 - 26, 2019

Bethany Gospel Chapel,
242 Clark St., Worcester, MA

This 64th annual Bible Conference begins on Saturday at 3:00pm and concludes on Lord's Day at 2:00pm. The invited speaker is George Ferrier (ON). For more information contact Jens Braaten at 860.928.4755 or jens@steinhogger.com.

IBF Family Conference

July 3 - 7, 2019

Indiana Wesleyan University
Marion, Indiana

The theme is "Elijah: Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary God" - Elijah was a man with a nature like ours - James 5:17 (NASB).

Invited speakers are John Kurian, Keith Keyser, and Christian Ramirez. More details to follow about the VBS, children's meeting, youth sessions, workshops, and evening sessions. Online registration at www.ibfus.org will begin around mid-May and will be open until a couple of days prior to the start of the conference. Those who desire to be volunteers may complete the survey on the website. If you have any questions regarding the conference, please email info@ibfus.org. They request your prayer for this conference.

A Week at Willowbank (Bermuda)

Sept 16 - 22, 2019

Willowbank, a well-known establishment on the island of Bermuda has reopened its doors and is available to guest groups.

Bob Neff Tours (Lancaster, PA) is partnering with Know the Word Ministries to arrange a fellowship tour and conference at this popular seaside resort. Flight originates from Philadelphia Int. Airport. Arrangements can also be made from other airport locations, as needed. Speaker: Mark Kolchin. For more info, email knowtheword@gmail.com or contact Neff Tours directly to register at 800.848.1492 (www.bobnefftours.com)

Bible Lands Study Tour to Israel

Nov 4 - 13, 2019

The Bible Lands Study Tour is designed to aid spiritual growth while visiting the most beautiful land on earth. No wonder the Lord calls it His Land! Rex Trogdon is customizing a study guide for all participants to prepare for the tour. The Study Guide will be their personal Travel Journal as they enjoy a ten day "Bible conference on location." Contact Rex Trogdon at 704.516.4825 or rextrogdon@me.com to request your brochure.

Israel Tour

February 24 - March 9, 2020

We have tentatively set aside dates for our next Israel trip which is a teaching tour of the Biblical sites that we come across in our travels. We will also visit the Assembly in Nazareth and share the Breaking of Bread together. Final pricing is being determined as well as the port of departure. Look for more information in the months ahead. For more information contact Steve Allan at turkeysteve@yahoo.com or 636.744.5723.

Camp Resident Staff Needed

Verdugo Pines Bible Camp located in Southern California is searching for a couple or individual that have a desire to serve the Lord in the Christian Camping Industry. With a heart to "do whatever it takes" to facilitate Christ Honoring Guests. This paid, full-time position must be viewed "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" ministry. Please contact John Bourbonmais at PapaJohn@VerdugoPines.org or 760.249.3532.

Church Truth Lessons

Robert Saunders (Ocala Bible Chapel, FL) has put together a comprehensive lesson set (Word documents & mp3) on NT Church principles. Each lesson contains Scripture references in support of the topics being studied. If you wish to receive the set by email contact Robert at b2saun63@yahoo.com. They are also available at the chapel website: ocalabiblechapel.net.

Book Offer: "New-Song Singing"

Scripture urges believers to "sing a new song" to the Lord. This book explains and contrasts the difference between repetitive and routine corporate worship with the robust, fresh, and creative praise that God desires. It provides varied, concrete, and rich examples of what "new-song singing" looks like. Copies available by contacting the author David Brauch, an elder from the Wauwatosa Bible Chapel in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin by mail at 6084 Imperial Drive, Waunakee, WI 53597 or by email at dfandjrbrauch@gmail.com. Price incl. postage: \$11.60 USA; \$18.50 Canada.

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And is it so? We shall be like Thy Son!

Is this the grace which He for us has won?
Father of glory, thought beyond all thought,
In glory, to His own blest likeness brought.

O Jesus Lord, who loved us like to Thee?
Fruit of Thy work, with Thee, too, there to see
Thy glory, Lord, while endless ages roll,
Thy saints the prize and travail of Thy soul.

Yet it must be, Thy love had not its rest
Were Thy redeemed not with Thee fully blest;
That love that gives not as the world, but shares
All it possesses with its loved co-heirs.

Nor we alone, Thy loved ones all, complete
In glory round Thee there with joy shall meet,
All like Thee, for Thy glory like Thee, Lord,
Object supreme of all, by all adored.

Hymn Lyrics: John Nelson Darby & Music: George William Warren