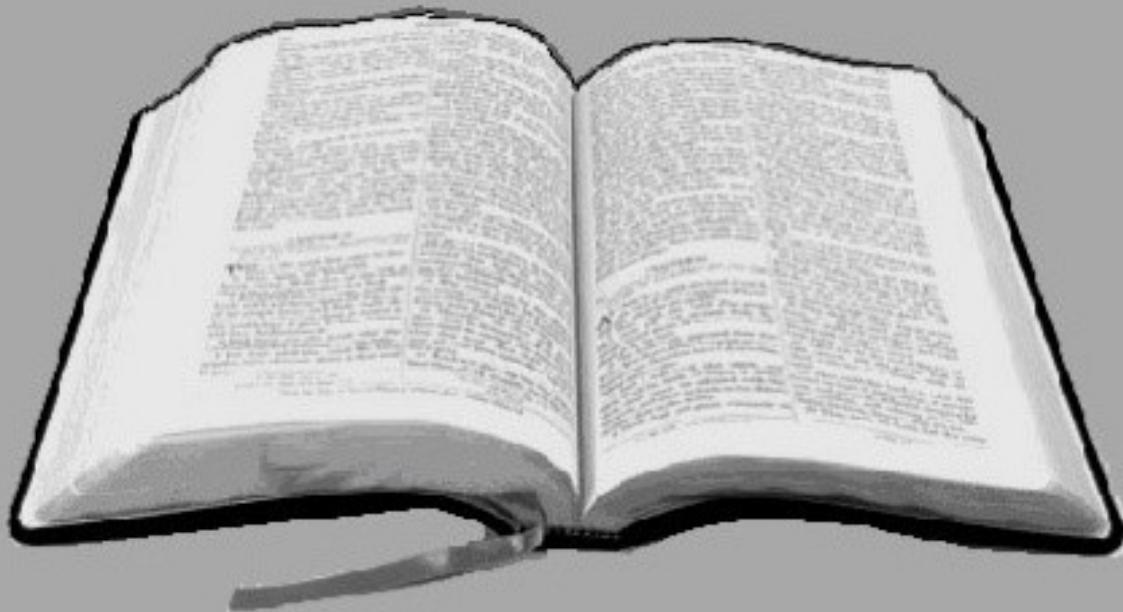


Wisdom

The Wisdom of Solomon, Jesus,
and Others: Categorized from
the Holy Bible

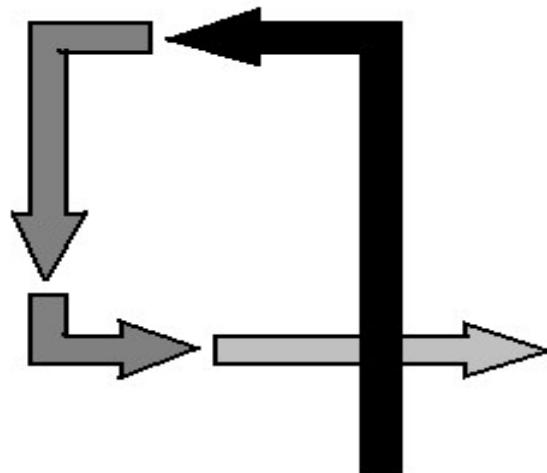
(Formerly titled: Two Wrongs Don't Make a Right, but Three Lefts Do!)



Harold A. Lerch, Sr.
Word to the World Ministries

Wisdom

Formerly: Two Wrongs Don't
Make a Right, but Three Lefts Do!



THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON AND JESUS
CATEGORIZED AND EXCERPTED FROM THE
HOLY BIBLE

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Wisdom
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Author

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

(2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

The author, Harold A. Lerch, Sr., is a graduate of the Pennsylvania State University, College of Engineering, and is a Professional Engineer. He is employed in construction administration and management for a major private-industry corporation. Prior, he was Special Projects Manager for the same corporation, specializing in food manufacturing and material handling.

Harold and his wife, Jeanne, reside near Middleburg, Pa., USA.

OTHER BOOKS BY HAROLD A. LERCH

Did God Really Say That? Fairfax, Virginia, Xulon Press, 2002, is about our loving Creator and his timeless commandments.

God's People, God's Plan, Fairfax, Virginia, Xulon Press, 2002, proclaims Messiah Jesus to God's Chosen People.

Word to the World Ministries

The author is founder of Word to the World Ministries, www.word2world.com, an organization that publishes and distributes complimentary witnessing resources.

Word to the World Ministries



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Mission Statement

Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;

(Deuteronomy 7:9).

The author's overall concern is for the salvation of lost souls. God has provided The Way to all- to all that will accept His grace and Jesus Christ, Messiah and LORD. This book has been written to proclaim that wisdom is from God, and is useful for all who obey His commandments, study His Word, and seek the wisdom that only He can give.

God is Creator. He owns us. He alone has the right to give commandments and judge us. God's master plan was redirected because of our sinful ways. His plan for us into eternity is that we follow His Son, the Messiah, who has already come as the Redeemer of sins for all time. Jesus will return to conquer Satan and all our enemies. We who accept Him as our Redeemer will abide with the Conqueror forever.

The author donates portions of the proceeds of his book sales to evangelical and humanitarian ministries.

Dedication

An old man's grandchildren are his crowning glory. A child's glory is his father. (Proverbs 17:6).

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. (Exodus 20:12).

I dedicate this book to Jeanne, my wife of the past one-third century, who suffers through my episodes lacking wisdom. Jeanne's gifts to me include Harold, Jr., and Joanne, who in turn gave me Mariah, Christian, Drew, Kylee Jane, and Shelly. Blessings upon blessings! Jeanne is my best friend.

I wish to honor my parents, the late Mrs. Pearl Lerch and Ralph H. Lerch. Without my parents' prayers and direction, my soul might be lost.

Mrs. Ruby S. Harmon loves the LORD and has encouraged and critiqued my writings, as well as contributed research material. She and the late Louis Albert Harmon are the parents of my wonderful wife.

My belief is that wisdom is gained by experience. Some, like me, perhaps require more experience than others, more "whacks with a two-by-four." I have been astounded with some of the wisdom Harold, Jr. and Joanne have shown early in life. There are apparently attributes for the wise, and aptitudes to learn quickly. Television personality Andy Griffith, as Andy Taylor on *The Andy Griffith Show* once remarked, "Some's got it, and some ain't."



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

O Give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.

(Psalms 105:1-2).

Jesus Christ, our LORD, Savior, and Creator.

Thank you, Mom, for teaching me the scriptures and in the ways of the LORD. I would be so proud if I could say that I measured up to Mom and Dad!

My uncle, Edwin M. Lerch, has contributed scripture to prior books and instructed me simply, “Keep writing.”

Thank you Jeanne for the moral support you gave your husband while he was (yet again) glued to a computer writing a book.

I thank my son-in-law Dillon, who kept me in custom-built computers of increasing capabilities throughout all of my writings. Otherwise I would most likely still be struggling with the first book.

My son and daughter, Harold and Joanne, and son-in-law Dylan, have been supportive of my writing efforts and have been encouraging to me to go forward with this work. I am not a self-promoter, but they all have been the driving force in getting my material into readers’ hands.

Norman S. Rich and David Pearce are contemporaries who have confirmed that wisdom is not a lost blessing.



Foreword

The Lord is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness. And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure. (Isaiah 33:5-6).

I remember as a child being awestruck at the intelligence of adults. I thought grown-ups knew just about everything. I took their words as serious and meaningful. At age 7 I attended my first major league baseball game with my father, a friend, and his son. At one point my father said to the other man, “I could hit a ball out of here.” That got my attention. Then he added, “A golf ball.” I was undaunted, that looked like a mile to me, and I took that gag as an important disclosure.

Of course later I learned the difference between a serious statement and a joke, much to the dismay of my teachers. But I remained captivated by the wisdom recorded in the Bible. “Cut the child in half,” and “Render unto Caesar,” for examples.

This led to the book you are about to read. A wise man before my time stated, “Two wrongs don’t make a right” to which I added a bit of twisted of wisdom, “But three lefts do.” I think that came to me after I crashed my bicycle. The front fork was bent backward so that I could not turn right, but I could accomplish the same result by circling left. Anyway, I thought that would make a great title for a book. All I needed was a subject. Humor!

I settled on allowing myself to insert comedy among wisdom. After all, two wrongs don’t make a right, so the title does suggest wisdom. Solomon asked for and received wisdom, but who is wiser than God?

Thus, you are about to read copious wisdom from God as recorded by Solomon and stated by Jesus, and whatever editorializing I can do without counteracting their good judgment.

The scripture texts in this book were painstakingly chosen from the version most clearly defining the intent and meaning of the verse. When possible, the Authorized (King James) text was used due to the beauty of that language and of some of the familiar passages. What can be more beautiful than these words in any language?

²⁸Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30).

¹Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. ⁴And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. ⁵Thomas saith unto him, LORD, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? ⁶Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (Matthew 14:1-6)



Introduction

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. Revelation 1:7

Sometimes I gaze at my computer and am amazed at what this little metal and plastic box with metal and plastic parts can do. Because of this technology, all on this earth will be able to see Jesus come again in glory- King Jesus, Christ the Messiah! Previously during the past 2000 years, verse Revelation 1:7 (above) must have astounded and baffled both believer and scoffer alike.

During the past 50 years, 2-1/2% of 2000 years, we could know that the world could see Jesus come by way of television. In the latter parts of that time, we have been able to broadcast live around the world by use of satellites. Now with our laptops, satellite phones with integrated digital cameras, and Internet, it takes no imagination at all to know how all can see Jesus come again.

God commanded us to subdue the earth. We are doing it, and technology is leading the way. We are “smart,” at least compared to the past few millennia, but let us not confuse “smart” with “wise.”

Wisdom comes with age and experience. One can be so lucky with the amount of “smarts” God gives him; but, he is not truly blessed until he knows how to use it- WISDOM.



Part I: Wisdom and the Old Testament.



If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

James 1:5



Chapter 1. Wisdom and Biblical Proverbs



And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof. 1 Kings 3:24-27 LVB.

And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment. 1 Kings 3:28 LVB.

INTRODUCTION

I was very young when I first learned the Bible lesson of King Solomon and the baby. The account, recorded for us in 1 Kings 3:16-28, is of two mothers. One mother's baby died, and she tried to steal the child of the other. Obscure to me in my early years was the fact that the women were prostitutes. Perhaps neither was very honest. When King Solomon suggested cutting the child

in two to satisfy both mothers, only the true, loving mother protested the impending harm to the child. I was quite overcome with this show of wisdom, but even more impressed that, as told earlier in the same biblical chapter, that Solomon chose wisdom when God offered him his choice of any gift. This choice pleased God. Solomon had gone to a holy place in Gibeon to make a sacrifice unto God:

In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. (1 Kings 3:5 LVB).

Solomon's choice:

And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days. (1 Kings 3:8-14).

Solomon later himself wrote, Getting wisdom is the most important thing you can do! And with your wisdom, develop common sense and good judgment. (Proverbs 4:7 LVB).

GOD'S WISDOM

God's wisdom mystifies me at times because I have a fallible human mind that absolutely cannot fathom perfect wisdom.

Note that the choice of words in the previous sentence, "fallible human mind" is a redundancy, as are the words "perfect wisdom." I did not choose those words merely because I am a bad writer, but to demonstrate the problem with my thought pattern and lack of logic in understanding God.

Man's wisdom is quite fallible. We learn when we are quite young, "You can't judge a book by its cover." Well that's great, but the first thing you learn when you are about to publish a book is, "If you want to sell it, don't skimp on the cover- make sure it's in full color."

Back to God's wisdom: Why did God not fashion a perfect creation? One that would not ultimately end in sin and sickness. Answer: He did make a perfect creation. Then why sin and death? Man was created perfect, but with free will. Following are passages Solomon wrote about God's wisdom, even calling God "Wisdom."

¹⁴I, Wisdom, give good advice and common sense. Because of my strength, kings reign in power, and rulers make just laws. ¹⁷I love all who love me. Those who search for me shall surely find me.

¹⁸Unending riches, honor, justice and righteousness are mine to distribute. ¹⁹My gifts are better than the purest gold or sterling silver! ²⁰My paths are those of justice and right. ²¹Those who love and follow me are indeed wealthy. I fill their treasuries. ²²The Lord formed me in the beginning, before

he created anything else. ²³From ages past, I am. I existed before the earth began. ²⁴I lived before the oceans were created, before the springs bubbled forth their waters onto the earth; ²⁵before the mountains and the hills were made. ²⁶Yes, I was born before God made the earth and fields, and the first handfuls of soil. ²⁷I was there when he established the heavens and formed the great springs in the depths of the oceans. I was there when he set the limits of the seas and gave them his instructions not to spread beyond their boundaries. I was there when he made the blueprint for the earth and oceans. ³⁰I was the craftsman at his side. I was his constant delight, rejoicing always in his presence. ³¹And how happy I was with what he created--his wide world and all his family of mankind! (Proverbs 8:14, 17-27, 30-31 LVB).

The Lord's wisdom founded the earth; his understanding established all the universe and space. (Proverbs 3:19 LVB).

WISDOM: THE GIFT OF CHOICE

Solomon could have chosen riches. I have always remembered his choice over what many of us might have taken instead, money. Yogi Berra may well say that when Solomon asked for wisdom, he showed he had it before he got it. Why is wisdom important to us and to God? Further, why did God show surprise when Solomon chose wisdom? We are told that God has foreknowledge. Would He know that Solomon was going to choose wisdom?

Consider this. You teach your child all of the ways of polite society. At a function with the entire family, your child gets into the age-old situation of having to select from the last two pieces of dessert offered to him and a friend. Aha, you have covered this one. Your child selects the small piece, just as you knew he would. You are so very proud of him and tell him so. Same thing.

Following are some of the reasons why God grants us wisdom:

⁴I want to make the simple-minded wise!" he said. I want to warn young men about some problems they will face. ⁵I want those already wise to become the wiser and become leaders by exploring the depths of meaning in these nuggets of truth. ⁷How does a man become wise? The first step is to trust and reverence the Lord! Only fools refuse to be taught. Listen to your father and mother. What you learn from them will stand you in good stead; it will gain you many honors. (Proverbs 1:4-5, 7 LVB).

⁶For the Lord grants wisdom! His every word is a treasure of knowledge and understanding. ⁷He grants good sense to the godly--his saints. He is their shield, protecting them and guarding their pathway. ⁹He shows how to distinguish right from wrong, how to find the right decision every time. ¹⁰For wisdom and truth will enter the very center of your being, filling your life with joy. (Proverbs 2: 6-7, 9-10 LVB).

¹³The man who knows right from wrong and has good judgment and common sense is happier than the man who is immensely rich! For such wisdom is far more valuable than precious jewels. Nothing else compares with it. ¹⁶Wisdom gives a long, good life, and riches, honor, pleasure, and peace. ¹⁸Wisdom is a tree of life to those who eat her fruit; happy is the man who keeps on eating it. ²¹Have two goals: wisdom--that is, knowing and doing right--and common sense. Don't let them slip away, ²²for they fill you with living energy, and bring you honor and respect. ²³They keep you safe from defeat and disaster and from stumbling off the trail. ²⁴With them on guard you can sleep without fear; you need not be afraid of disaster or the plots of wicked men, for the Lord is with you; he protects you. (Proverbs 3:13, 16, 18, 21-24 LVB).

For the value of wisdom is far above rubies; nothing can be compared with it. Wisdom and good judgment live together, for wisdom knows where to discover knowledge and understanding. (Proverbs 8:11-12 LVB).

⁹Teach a wise man, and he will be the wiser; teach a good man, and he will learn more.

¹²Wisdom is its own reward (Proverbs 9:9, 12 LVB).

Everyone admires a man with good sense, but a man with a warped mind is despised. (Proverbs 12:8 LVB).

The wise man looks ahead. The fool attempts to fool himself and won't face facts. (Proverbs 14:8 LVB).

¹⁵Only a simpleton believes everything he's told! A prudent man understands the need for proof.

¹⁶A wise man is cautious and avoids danger; a fool plunges ahead with great confidence.

¹⁸The simpleton is crowned with folly; the wise man is crowned with knowledge.

²⁹A wise man controls his temper. He knows that anger causes mistakes. ³⁰A relaxed attitude lengthens a man's life; jealousy rots it away.

³³Wisdom is enshrined in the hearts of men of common sense, but it must shout loudly before fools will hear it. (Proverbs 14: 15-16, 18, 29-30, 33 LVB).

⁹We should make plans--counting on God to direct us. (Knowing by faith that God will lead us.)

¹⁶How much better is wisdom than gold, and understanding than silver! (Proverbs 16:9, 16 LVB).

Good sense is far more valuable than gold or precious jewels. (Proverbs 20:15 LVB).

The wise man conquers the strong man and levels his defenses. (Proverbs 21:22 LVB).

A wise man is mightier than a strong man. Wisdom is mightier than strength. (Proverbs 24:5 LVB).

WISDOM & FRIENDS

It takes a lot of effort to be a good friend. In fact any relationship needs lots of work, be it husband-wife, parent-child, boss-employee, or teacher-student. To be a friend, you have to be a friend first. To be a good friend, you have to be a better friend.

At my father's funeral service, the pastor stated one simple sentence very clearly and with emphasis, "Ralph Lerch was kind." In my father's case, "kind" was a big and important word because those four letters summarized how he lived his life for God. Everyone liked my father. He was a friend to others first, and was rich in friendship in return.

A friendly discussion is as stimulating as the sparks that fly when iron strikes iron. (Proverbs 27:17 LVB).

A mirror reflects a man's face, but what he is really like is shown by the kind of friends he chooses. (Proverbs 27:19 LVB).

MATURITY AND WISDOM



The beauty of old men is the gray head. Proverbs 20:29b.

An episode of the Waltons presented a situation in which Grandpa went to an immigrant family to give the middle-aged father some needed advice. The father was being a bit stubborn until his wife convinced him to heed Grandpa, “Listen to him, he is older.” Everyone gets wiser with age, a blessing that accompanies white hair.

At age 52, sometimes I surprise myself with “wise” thoughts I think. Since I am getting to the age when most people are younger than me, many do come to me for advice. I spew forth the words that come from my experience, and the young person thanks me and departs. I reflect on what I just said for a moment and think, “Cool.”

¹Young men, listen to me as you would to your father. Listen, and grow wise, for I speak the truth--do not turn away. ³For I, too, was once a son, tenderly loved by my mother as an only child, and the companion of my father. ⁴He told me never to forget his words. If you follow them, he said, you will have a long and happy life. ⁵Learn to be wise, he said, and develop good judgment and common sense! I cannot overemphasize this point. (Proverbs 4:1, 3-5 LVB).

White hair is a crown of glory and is seen most among the godly. (Proverbs 16:31 LVB).

The glory of young men is their strength; of old men, their experience. (Proverbs 20:29 LVB).

In the past, haven't I been right? Then believe what I am telling you now, and share it with others. (Proverbs 22:20 LVB).

The godly pray for those who long to kill them. After the counter-attacks to terror began in Fall 2001, I was humbled by mature wisdom. As I was on fire wishing swift justice on the terrorists and feeling no remorse for their souls, my mother told me she was praying that they (Bin Laden, et al) would receive Jesus as Savior. Mom had a wiser solution than did I. (Proverbs 29:10 LVB).

Every word of God proves true. He defends all who come to him for protection. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you, and you be found a liar. O God, I beg two favors from you before I die: First, help me never to tell a lie. Second, give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs! For if I grow rich, I may become content without God. And if I am too poor, I may steal, and thus insult God's holy name. (Proverbs 30:5-9 LVB, the messages of Agur, son of Jakeh addressed to Ithiel and Ucal).

There is a right time for everything:

A time to be born; A time to die; A time to plant; A time to harvest;
A time to kill; A time to heal; A time to destroy; A time to rebuild;
A time to cry; A time to laugh; A time to grieve; A time to dance;
A time for scattering stones; A time for gathering stones; A time to hug; A time not to hug;
A time to find; A time to lose; A time for keeping; A time for throwing away;
A time to tear; A time to repair; A time to be quiet; A time to speak up;
A time for loving; A time for hating; A time for war; A time for peace.
(Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 LVB)

To be wise is as good as being rich; in fact, it is better. You can get anything by either wisdom or money, but being wise has many advantages. (Ecclesiastes 7:11-12).

This, too, I carefully explored--that godly and wise men are in God's will; no one knows whether he will favor them or not. All is chance! The same providence confronts everyone, whether good or bad, religious or irreligious, profane or godly. It seems so unfair, that one fate comes to all. That is why men are not more careful to be good, but instead choose their own mad course, for they have no hope--there is nothing but death ahead anyway. There is hope only for the living. "It is better to be a live dog than a dead lion!" For the living at least know that they will die! But the dead know nothing; they don't even have their memories. Whatever they did in their lifetimes--loving, hating, envying--is long gone, and they have no part in anything here on earth any more.

So go ahead, eat, drink, and be merry, for it makes no difference to God! Wear fine clothes--with a dash of cologne! Live happily with the woman you love through the fleeting days of life, for the wife God gives you is your best reward down here for all your earthly toil. Whatever you do, do well, for in death, where you are going, there is no working or planning, or knowing, or understanding. Again I looked throughout the earth and saw that the swiftest person does not always win the race, nor the strongest man the battle, and that wise men are often poor, and skillful men are not necessarily famous; but it is all by chance, by happening to be at the right place at the right time. (Ecclesiastes 9:1-11 LVB).

¹⁰A dull axe requires great strength; be wise and sharpen the blade.

¹⁸Laziness lets the roof leak, and soon the rafters begin to rot. (Ecclesiastes 10:10, 18 LVB).

It's not the knowledge you have, it's knowing where or from whom to get the knowledge you need.
(David Pearce)

TEACHING OTHERS

It seems that most people enjoy teaching others. It is a privilege to do so when one has attained knowledge that another has not yet found. That does not mean, of course, that the teacher knows everything, or more about everything than the student; but, most people do have at least one thing that they know how to do better than most others. The old man next door might appear feeble, but he also might know everything there is to know about fly-tying great lures for native trout.

I recall my first meeting with a certain consultant. He was rather down to earth like me, and as he spoke about drawing on my experiences and others, as well as his, to work toward the answer to our situation, he said something along the simplistic that I would use, "You know what you know, and I know what I know." That comment was directed toward two people with the same education and work backgrounds. Even so, these two would have different experiences. They

would have solved different problems throughout their careers, and therefore would have different knowledge and expertise.

Here is what King Solomon wrote:

If you rebuke a mocker, you will only get a smart retort; yes, he will snarl at you. So don't bother with him; he will only hate you for trying to help him. But a wise man, when rebuked, will love you all the more. (Proverbs 9:7 LVB).

¹³Men with common sense are admired as counselors; those without it are beaten as servants.

¹⁴A wise man holds his tongue. Only a fool blurts out everything he knows; that only leads to sorrow and trouble.

²⁰When a good man speaks, he is worth listening to, but the words of fools are a dime a dozen. ²¹A godly man gives good advice, but a rebel is destroyed by lack of common sense. (Proverbs 10:13-14, 20-21 LVB).

¹⁴The advice of a wise man refreshes like water from a mountain spring. Those accepting it become aware of the pitfalls on ahead.

¹⁵A man with good sense is appreciated. A treacherous man must walk a rocky road.

¹⁶A wise man thinks ahead; a fool doesn't, and even brags about it!

²⁰Be with wise men and become wise. Be with evil men and become evil. (Proverbs 13:14-16, 20 LVB).

¹A gentle answer turns away wrath, but harsh words cause quarrels.

²A wise teacher makes learning a joy; a rebellious teacher spouts foolishness.

⁴Gentle words cause life and health; griping brings discouragement.

⁷Only the good can give good advice. Rebels can't.

²³Everyone enjoys giving good advice, and how wonderful it is to be able to say the right thing at the right time! (Proverbs 15:1-2, 4, 7, 23 LVB).

The wise man is known by his common sense, and a pleasant teacher is the best. (Proverbs 16:21 LVB).

A rebuke to a man of common sense is more effective than a hundred lashes on the back of a rebel. (Proverbs 17:10 LVB).

Ability to give wise advice satisfies like a good meal! (Proverbs 18:20 LVB).

Timely advice is as lovely as gold apples in a silver basket. (Proverbs 25:11 LVB).

Yanking a dog's ears is no more foolish than interfering in an argument that isn't any of your business. (Proverbs 26:17 LVB).

Friendly suggestions are as pleasant as perfume. (Proverbs 27:9 LVB).

LEARNING, DISCUSSING

It is enjoyable to learn new ideas, facts, interesting history, or anything one does not already know (otherwise it wouldn't be learning). The Discovery Channel, History Channel, and The

Learning Channel are my favorite places on the cable dial when I have time to watch television. I am even learning to keep my mouth closed for longer periods, thus allowing words, unimpeded, to reach my auditory system for processing and storing.

Even when learning, we must remember that teachers are fallible, and just because you heard it on TV, it is not necessarily true. One needs to learn when to question the “facts.” (A good test for me is- if it is without God or anti-God, it probably “ain’t so.”)

The wise man is glad to be instructed, but a self-sufficient fool falls flat on his face. (Proverbs 10:8 LVB).

¹To learn, you must want to be taught. To refuse reproof is stupid.

¹⁵A fool thinks he needs no advice, but a wise man listens to others. (Proverbs 12:1, 15 LVB).

The intelligent man is always open to new ideas. In fact, he looks for them. (Proverbs 18:15 LVB).

²⁰Get all the advice you can and be wise the rest of your life

²⁷Stop listening to teaching that contradicts what you know is right. (Proverbs 19:20, 27 LVB).

Don't go ahead with your plans without the advice of others; don't go to war until they agree. (Proverbs 20:18 LVB).

Don't refuse to accept criticism; get all the help you can. (Proverbs 23:12 LVB).

My son, honey whets the appetite, and so does wisdom! When you enjoy becoming wise, there is hope for you! A bright future lies ahead! (Proverbs 24:13 LVB).

It is a badge of honor to accept valid criticism. (Proverbs 25:12 LVB).

SENSIBLE PERSONS

I know many sensible persons: all of them think like me. (Imagine that!) We have had sensible presidents administrating the greatest country in the world, and all of them have been the same political party as me. I do not know if that is coincidence or not, but the poorest presidents have all been from that other party. Beyond my comprehension, half of Americans think the other guys are sensible.

Sensibility goes beyond politics. Sometimes we call it “common sense.” The preceding paragraph is really about prejudice, not sense. It depends upon one's bias. At any rate, sensible persons are those with the same bias as you, and are to whom you turn for wisdom. These persons tend to be the source from which you select your friends.

Never abandon a friend--either yours or your father's. Then you won't need to go to a distant relative for help in your time of need. (Proverbs 20:10 LVB).

¹¹My son, how happy I will be if you turn out to be sensible! It will be a public honor to me. (Proverbs LVB).

¹²A sensible man watches for problems ahead and prepares to meet them. The simpleton never looks, and suffers the consequences. (Proverbs 27:11, 12 LVB).

The good man knows the poor man's rights; the godless don't care. (Proverbs 29:7 LVB).

A wise, sensible man prepares for the future. How are you doing with planning for your children's education expenses, or perhaps your retirement plans? There is life beyond retirement, and eternal life for those who plan for it. Have you made plans for an eternal home?

For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16. Be a wise man and build your house upon this rock.

Sometimes eternity comes earlier than we expect. At my age, I have lived about 70% of my normal life expectancy, yet there are obituaries of men younger than me nearly every day. It is why we buy life insurance to protect our families. How about protecting yourself and preparing for your eternity.

Here is the way to eternal life:

- *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Romans 6:23.
- *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.* Ephesians 2:8-9.
- *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* John 14:1-3.

Pray these words, “Dear Father in Heaven, I know I am a sinner and have sinned against you. I am sorry for my sins and sinful nature, and ask that you will forgive me. I accept Jesus now as my Savior who shed His blood for me. I give my life to you and will strive to live for you. Thank you, LORD, for saving my soul. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”



Chapter 2. Wisdom and God



For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death. Psalms 48:14

TRUST GOD

As what our consultant said is true, “You know what you know, and I know what I know,” there is one who knows everything. Not only that, He, God, is infallible. The word “infallible” of course means He cannot be wrong. It is wise to believe Him, wise to trust Him, and wise to heed Him. Synonyms for infallible include perfect, foolproof, reliable, failsafe, and flawless. No man is any of those. One might say that all wisdom is from God’s word, the Bible.

If you want favor with both God and man, and a reputation for good judgment and common sense, then trust the Lord completely; don’t ever trust yourself. (Proverbs 3:4 LVB).

If anyone respects and fears God, he will hate evil. For wisdom hates pride, arrogance, corruption and deceit of every kind. (Proverbs 8:13 LVB).

We toss the coin, but it is the Lord who controls its decision. (Proverbs 16:33 LVB).

¹⁰The Lord is a strong fortress. The godly run to him and are safe.

¹⁴A man's courage can sustain his broken body, but when courage dies, what hope is left?

²⁴There are ``friends" who pretend to be friends, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18:10, 14, 24 LVB).

Since the Lord is directing our steps, why try to understand everything that happens along the way? (Proverbs 20:24 LVB).

The wicked will finally lose; the righteous will finally win. (Proverbs 21:18 LVB).

It is God's privilege to conceal things, and the king's privilege to discover and invent. You cannot understand the height of heaven, the size of the earth, or all that goes on in the king's mind! (Trust God even when you don't understand.) (Proverbs 25:2 LVB).

Fear of man is a dangerous trap, but to trust in God means safety. (Proverbs 29:25 LVB).

LIVE FOR GOD

A wise soldier heeds every command of his fallible superior. A wise gangster (oxymoron, I know) heeds the “boss” (that is *really* life or death, but only carnal), and a wise man or woman heeds God (quality of life on earth, spiritual, and eternal life).

I cannot understand how we can defy a perfect God. He told us, “Thou shalt not kill,” then we rationalize that abortion is okay- as if it is not really a life. In fact, our view of most of God’s laws have been warped by our lusting- mankind is playing God.

Listen to a wise man, Solomon, as God placed these thoughts in his mind:

In everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success. (Proverbs 3:6 LVB).

But the good man walks along in the ever-brightening light of God's favor; the dawn gives way to morning splendor, while the evil man gropes and stumbles in the dark. (Proverbs 4:18-19 LVB).

³The Lord will not let a good man starve to death, nor will he let the wicked man's riches continue forever.

²⁷Reverence for God adds hours to each day; so how can the wicked expect a long, good life? (Proverbs 10:3, 27 LVB).

²⁷If you search for good you will find God's favor; if you search for evil you will find his curse.

²⁸Trust in your money and down you go! Trust in God and flourish as a tree! (Proverbs 11:27, 28 LVB).

²⁶Reverence for God gives a man deep strength; his children have a place of refuge and security.

²⁷Reverence for the Lord is a fountain of life; its waters keep a man from death. (Proverbs 14:26-27 LVB).

³The Lord is watching everywhere and keeps his eye on both the evil and the good. (Proverbs LVB).

³³Humility and reverence for the Lord will make you both wise and honored. (Proverbs 15:3, 33 LVB).

¹We can make our plans, but the final outcome is in God's hands.

³Commit your work to the Lord, then it will succeed.

⁴The Lord has made everything for his own purposes--even the wicked, for punishment.

⁶Iniquity is atoned for by mercy and truth; evil is avoided by reverence for God.

⁷When a man is trying to please God, God makes even his worst enemies to be at peace with him.

¹⁷The path of the godly leads away from evil; he who follows that path is safe.

²⁰God blesses those who obey him; happy the man who puts his trust in the Lord.

²⁵Before every man there lies a wide and pleasant road he thinks is right, but it ends in death. (Proverbs 16:1, 3-4, 6-7, 17, 20, 25 LVB).

The Lord despises those who say that bad is good, and good is bad. (Proverbs 17:15 LVB).

¹⁶Keep the commandments and keep your life; despising them means death.

²³Reverence for God gives life, happiness, and protection from harm. (Proverbs 19:16, 23 LVB).

True humility and respect for the Lord lead a man to riches, honor and long life. (Proverbs 22:4 LVB).

If a godly man compromises with the wicked, it is like polluting a fountain or muddying a spring. Just as it is harmful to eat too much honey, so also it is bad for men to think about all the honors they deserve! (Proverbs 25:26-27 LVB).

God's will is revealed to us in His word. He speaks to us when we are in prayer. We have to dial in to the right channel to hear God speak to us, to know His will, and to receive wisdom from Him.

GOD'S BLESSINGS

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6:33

God loves us and wants the best for us including eternal life with Him; but He gave us the choice to follow Him or reject him. *He, Shaddai (the Almighty), is far beyond our reach. Supreme in power, in equity, excelling in saving justice, yet no oppressor,* (Job 37:23 NJB). If you want to be blessed by God, you need to be in a position or place where He can bless you- not in a lewd club, for an extreme example.

Imagine you are a teenager in a situation where you need to ask your father for some money. Further imagine that all you need to do is telephone and say to your father, "Dad, I'm putting this guy on the phone so you can give him your credit card number." Now imagine that the phone has video capability and your father can see where you are. That would greatly restrict how often you ask Dad for help, right?

God can see you, too. Before you ask for blessings, think about how you are living your life. In one interpretation of the Prayer of Jabez, the author suggests that we ask God to bless us because He wants to bless us, yet is waiting for us to ask. I have been so blessed with gifts from God (that I have not asked for) that I would feel selfish to ask for more. A better interpretation of the Prayer of Jabez in my opinion is to ask to be blessed spiritually with more chances to live for and witness for God.

The Lord's blessing is our greatest wealth. All our work adds nothing to it! (Proverbs 10:22 LVB).

³²The godly have a refuge when they die, but the wicked are crushed by their sins.

³⁴Godliness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. (Proverbs 14:32, 34 LVB).

Silver and gold are purified by fire, but God purifies hearts. (Proverbs 17:3 LVB).

The man who finds a wife finds a good thing; she is a blessing to him from the Lord. (Proverbs 18:22 LVB).

A father can give his sons homes and riches, but only the Lord can give them understanding wives. (Proverbs 19:14 LVB).

The greatest blessing from God is the gift of His Son:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16). Salvation from our sins is for anyone who will accept God's gift. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (John 1:12).

To accept Jesus as your Savior and receive the blessing of Eternal Life, pray: "Dear Father in Heaven, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins. I repent and ask that you will forgive me. I accept Jesus as my Savior. From this day forward I will strive to live for Him. Dear LORD Jesus, please come into my heart. Amen."



Chapter 3. Wisdom and Money



But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.
1 Timothy 6:6-7.

MONEY & BUSINESS

Poor Jabez! All he did as far as we know is pray one prayer a few thousand years ago, and now I am picking on him without even knowing his circumstances. The book you are reading will not be as popular as books about his prayer, where riches and blessings are promised. The prayer of Jabez from the Old Testament is contradictory to the New Testament teachings of Christ about “the bread of life” and “thirst no more.” Also, “daily bread,” not stores of riches. I repeat that I have a bit of trouble asking God to bless me when all I deserve is eternal punishment.

God does offer some help for us toward success. One might not choose to strive toward riches, but there is no wisdom in working hard with a goal of poverty either. Surely our Heavenly father wants us to excel as much as we earthly fathers want our sons and daughters to succeed:

Develop your business first before building your house. (Proverbs 24:27 LVB).

Riches can disappear fast. And the king's crown doesn't stay in his family forever--so watch your business interests closely. Know the state of your flocks and your herds; 25. then there will be lamb's wool enough for clothing, and goat's milk enough for food for all your household after the hay is harvested, and the new crop appears, and the mountain grasses are gathered in. (Proverbs 27:23 LVB).

He who loves money shall never have enough. The foolishness of thinking that wealth brings happiness! The more you have, the more you spend, right up to the limits of your income, so what is the advantage of wealth--except perhaps to watch it as it runs through your fingers! (Ecclesiastes 5:10-11)

WORK ETHICS

Nothing worthwhile is easy. Most get-rich-quick schemes either result in failure or land one in prison. God's plan for us after the Fall of Man (first sin) was that nothing would be easy for us: *I have placed a curse upon the soil. All your life you will struggle to extract a living from it. It will grow thorns and thistles for you, and you shall eat its grasses. All your life you will sweat to master it, until your dying day. Then you will return to the ground from which you came. For you were made from the ground, and to the ground you will return.* (Genesis 3:17b-19 LVB). We are to "subdue the earth," so we must learn to work hard, to "plan our work and work our plan," and all that.

Take a lesson from the ants, you lazy fellow. Learn from their ways and be wise! For though they have no king to make them work, yet they labor hard all summer, gathering food for the winter. But you--all you do is sleep. When will you wake up? "Let me sleep a little longer!" Sure, just a little more! And as you sleep, poverty creeps upon you like a robber and destroys you; want attacks you in full armor. (Proverbs 6:6-11 LVB).

⁴Lazy men are soon poor; hard workers get rich.

⁵A wise youth makes hay while the sun shines, but what a shame to see a lad who sleeps away his hour of opportunity. (Proverbs 10:4-5 LVB).

It is better to get your hands dirty--and eat, than to be too proud to work--and starve. (Proverbs 12:9 LVB).

Lazy people want much but get little, while the diligent are prospering. (Proverbs 13:4 LVB).

⁸A little, gained honestly, is better than great wealth gotten by dishonest means.

¹¹The Lord demands fairness in every business deal. He established this principle.

²⁶Hunger is good--if it makes you work to satisfy it!

²Idle hands are the devil's workshop; idle lips are his mouthpiece. (Proverbs 16:8, 11, 26-27 LVB).

³A man may ruin his chances by his own foolishness and then blame it on the Lord!

¹⁵A lazy man sleeps soundly--and he goes hungry! (Proverbs 19:3, 15 LVB).

⁴If you won't plow in the cold, you won't eat at the harvest.

¹³If you love sleep, you will end in poverty. Stay awake, work hard, and there will be plenty to eat! (Proverbs 20:4, 13 LVB).

⁵Steady plodding brings prosperity; hasty speculation brings poverty.

²⁵The lazy man longs for many things but his hands refuse to work. He is greedy to get, while the godly love to give! (Proverbs 21:5, 25 LVB).

A prudent man foresees the difficulties ahead and prepares for them; the simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences. (Proverbs 22:3 LVB).

Any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts. (Proverbs 24:3 LVB).

A faithful employee is as refreshing as a cool day in the hot summertime. (Proverbs 25:13 LVB).

I urge you to be a faithful worker. Your employer deserves to get what he pays for, after all the risk of business is his. Your honesty and fruitfulness are testimony to your relationship with God. Also, it is your employer that will reward you. Do not look to God to hand you success.

“One’s altitude is measured by his attitude.” Norman S. Rich.

A RICH MAN

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Matthew 6:24.

I don’t have too much to share about rich men because I lack the first hand experience of being one, and give too much away to become one. I have known rich men. I know that one of them donated millions of dollars to wonderful causes before he died. There is no doubt about his gifts because his family’s name is on buildings all over the region.

I know another rich man. He has also contributed millions to many worthwhile and humanitarian causes. His philanthropy is a bit harder to identify. Much of his giving is done low key or anonymously. His name is not on anything. He is a fine gentleman. His motivation for giving has nothing to do with establishing the honor of his families’ name, but rather the legacy of healing the sick, feeding the poor, and teaching those who thirst for knowledge.

The rich man's wealth is his only strength. The poor man's poverty is his only curse. (Proverbs 10:15 LVB).

¹¹The rich man thinks of his wealth as an impregnable defense, a high wall of safety. What a dreamer! ²³The poor man pleads and the rich man answers with insults. (Proverbs 18:11, 23 LVB).

The rich and the poor are alike before the Lord who made them all. (Proverbs 12:2 LVB).

¹¹Rich men are conceited, but their real poverty is evident to the poor.

²¹Giving preferred treatment to rich people is a clear case of selling one's soul for a piece of bread. (Proverbs 28:11, 21 LVB).

^{16b}One came and said unto (Jesus), Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? ^{17b}but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

²⁰The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up:

what lack I yet? ²¹Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast,

and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

²²But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. ²³Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you,

That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

²⁵When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? ²⁶But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

(From Matthew 19:16b-17b, 20-26).

THE SELFISH

¹⁹Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: ²⁰But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: ²¹For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Matthew 6:19-21.

Following are all of the positive points that the Bible tells us of selfish people:

- a) ?
- b) ??
- c) ???

Did you enjoy those positive points of selfishness? Here are other biblical lines of reasoning on the same subject:

²⁴It is possible to give away and become richer! It is also possible to hold on too tightly and lose everything. Yes, the liberal man shall be rich! By watering others, he waters himself.

²⁶People curse the man who holds his grain for higher prices, but they bless the man who sells it to them in their time of need. (Proverbs 11:24, 26 LVB).

The selfish man quarrels against every sound principle of conduct by demanding his own way. (Proverbs 18:1 LVB).

The selfish never held a good position in the Bible or with Jesus. Think for a moment of each of the Ten Commandments and the word “selfish.” Do you see why selfishness is not a good thing?

THE POOR (IN GOLD)

⁴¹And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. ⁴²And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. ⁴³And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: ⁴⁴For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living. (Mark 12:41-44)

If you asked, “How far is it from here to there,” and someone answered, “eleven,” what would that tell you? “Eleven what? Eleven rockways. What is a rockway? Oh, a big rock weighs a hundred pounds or more.”

So how much money is “rich,” and how little is “poor?” It depends on the yardstick, er, rockway stick.

Who or what on earth is a better judge of people than people? Dogs! So let us use dogs as a measuring stick. That is not to mean that someone with an expensive dog is rich, and a mutt is poor- in fact the judging in this example is the other way around.

Go to a “poor” man’s house. Try to break in. See how fiercely the dog defends his master.

After you are healed and your stitches closed, return to the house and observe the man and his dog from a distance. I guarantee that you will see a dog overjoyed to be with his master. Perhaps the carpet, if any, is old and torn. Perhaps the dog food is the inexpensive brand. You will see a dog that is happy because his master is there.

Repeat all this at a “rich” man’s house. The results should be the same, all love and care being equal. God not only recognizes this, but that often the rich man, who is no better than the poor man, often oppresses the poor.

Anyone who oppresses the poor is insulting God who made them. To help the poor is to honor God. (Proverbs 14:31 LVB).

The Lord destroys the possessions of the proud but cares for widows. (Proverbs 15:25 LVB).

Better poor and humble than proud and rich. (Proverbs 16:19 LVB).

Mocking the poor is mocking the God who made them. He will punish those who rejoice at others' misfortunes. (Proverbs 17:5 LVB).

⁷A poor man's own brothers turn away from him in embarrassment; how much more his friends! He calls after them, but they are gone.

¹⁷When you help the poor you are lending to the Lord--and he pays wonderful interest on your loan! (Proverbs 19:7, 17 LVB).

He who shuts his ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in his own time of need. (Proverbs 21:13 LVB).

²The rich and the poor are alike before the Lord who made them all.

⁷Just as the rich rule the poor, so the borrower is servant to the lender.

⁹Happy is the generous man, the one who feeds the poor.

²²Don't rob the poor and sick! For the Lord is their defender. If you injure them he will punish you. (Proverbs 22:2, 7, 9, 22 LVB).

If you give to the poor, your needs will be supplied! But a curse upon those who close their eyes to poverty. (Proverbs 28:27 LVB).

I have at times pondered what it would be like to get a job with less stress (and less pay) and live a less expensive lifestyle. Would I be happier? It is not within my power to set up experiments along this line and try different degrees of rich & poor, and I am not certain what it would prove, anyway; but, I can tell you that the more successful I have become over the years, the more I have experienced debilitating migraines.

LOANS & SCHEMES

We are far better not to be involved with anyone's money but our own. Of course that is nearly impossible as there are not more than a few that can buy a house or a car without taking a loan. Loans at banks are the norm, but sometimes we make the mistake of borrowing from Dad, or the boss, or a friend. The only thing worse might be as the lender in this scenario. That often makes you a two-time loser. Solomon even knew about this even when houses were of sticks and

mud and before there were credit cards, cars, and car payments.

Don't withhold repayment of your debts. Don't say "some other time," if you can pay now. (Proverbs 3:27 LVB).

Son, if you endorse a note for someone you hardly know, guaranteeing his debt, you are in serious trouble. You may have trapped yourself by your agreement. Quick! Get out of it if you possibly can! Swallow your pride; don't let embarrassment stand in the way. Go and beg to have your name erased. Don't put it off. Do it now. Don't rest until you do. (Proverbs 6:1-4 LVB).

¹⁶It is risky to make loans to strangers!

¹⁷Some men enjoy cheating, but the cake they buy with such ill-gotten gain will turn to gravel in their mouths.

²¹Quick wealth is not a blessing in the end.

²⁷A man's conscience is the Lord's searchlight exposing his hidden motives. (Proverbs 20:16-17, 21, 27 LVB).

We can justify our every deed but God looks at our motives. (Proverbs 21:2 LVB).

⁴Don't weary yourself trying to get rich. Why waste your time? For riches can disappear as though they had the wings of a bird!

⁶Don't associate with evil men; don't long for their favors and gifts. Their kindness is a trick; they want to use you as their pawn. The delicious food they serve will turn sour in your stomach and you will vomit it, and have to take back your words of appreciation for their "kindness."

¹⁰Don't steal the land of defenseless orphans by moving their ancient boundary marks, for their Redeemer is strong; he himself will accuse you. (Proverbs 23:4, 6, 10 LVB).

¹Don't brag about your plans for tomorrow--wait and see what happens.

²⁰Ambition and death are alike in this: neither is ever satisfied. (Proverbs 27:1, 20 LVB).

The man who wants to do right will get a rich reward. But the man who wants to get rich quick will quickly fail. (Proverbs 28:20 LVB).

SUCCESS

Work hard, and if you find success, accept it humbly. Do not take advantage. Some day the tables might turn. Never, never burn your bridges.

He who loves wisdom loves his own best interest and will be a success. (Proverbs 19:8 LVB).

GIFTS

But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. Matthew 6:3-4.

It is much fun to give gifts. My wife and I love to spoil the grandchildren. Everyone likes

to receive presents, too. We always suggest, “Don’t get us anything,” but in secret we enjoy getting maybe just one little thing. It is not selfishness; it is the fun of life’s little rewards.

A gift does wonders; it will bring you before men of importance! (Proverbs 18:6 LVB).

God has offered the gift of eternal life to everyone, rich or poor, Jew or Gentile. As with any gift, we must accept it. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God.* (John 1:12). This is a gift, non-dependent upon the size of one’s bank account. *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

To accept God’s gift of salvation, pray, “Dear Heavenly Father, I am a sinner and I have sinned against you. I am sorry for my sins and sinful nature. I repent of my sins and accept Jesus here and now as my Savior. Jesus, save me by your blood shed for me. Help me turn from my sins. I now give my life to you. In your name I pray, Jesus, Amen.”



Chapter 4. Wisdom and Sin



Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (Genesis 3:1).

TEMPTATION

“Wisdom and Sin” is the second oxymoron this far in the text. A more accurate, but lengthy chapter title would be “Biblical Wisdom versus Temptations of Sin.”

Have you ever been tempted to do good things? Well if you are, do them! An example of temptation to do good things is when you feel God leading you to put more cash in the collection plate than you had intended. In a word, temptation to do good things is “conviction.”

Sadly, we are more often tempted to be bad, as in breaking God’s Law’s and commandments. God does not tempt us. Temptation persuades us to take from the poor rather than give to the poor- do not listen to temptation!

³For the lips of a prostitute are as sweet as honey, and smooth flattery is her stock in trade. ⁴But afterwards only a bitter conscience is left to you, sharp as a double-edged sword. ⁵She leads you down to death and hell. ⁶For she does not know the path to life. She staggers down a crooked trail, and doesn’t even realize where it leads. ⁸Run from her! Don’t go near her house, ⁹lest you fall to her temptation and lose your honor, and give the remainder of your life to the cruel and merciless; ¹⁰lest strangers obtain your wealth, and you become a slave of foreigners. ¹¹Lest afterwards you groan in anguish and in shame.

¹⁸Be happy, yes, rejoice in the wife of your youth. ¹⁹Let her breasts and tender embrace satisfy you. Let her love alone fill you with delight. ²⁰Why delight yourself with prostitutes, embracing what isn’t yours? ²¹For God is closely watching you, and he weighs carefully everything you do. ²²The wicked man is doomed by his own sins; they are ropes that catch and hold him. (Proverbs 5:3-6, 8-11, 19-22 LVB).

A prostitute is loud and brash, and never has enough of lust and shame. She sits at the door of her house or stands at the street corners of the city, whispering to men going by, and to those minding their own business. “Come home with me,” she urges simpletons. “Stolen melons are the sweetest; stolen apples taste the best!” But they don’t realize that her former guests are now citizens of hell. (Proverbs 9:13-18 LVB).

ADULTERY

But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Matthew 5:28).

Leviticus chapters 18 and 20 are about as plain and specific as is possible on what constitutes adultery. The rest of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament do not look on it too kindly, either. Prostitution is “adultery for hire,” and goes hand-in-hand with drugs and disease. There has been much scoffing about the relevance of the laws from Leviticus in these modern days. I believe God’s laws are unchanging, but aside from that, adultery is one of the big no-nos of the Ten Commandments. I have not heard many scoff about the other nine laws.

Here is an interesting story from long ago.

I was looking out the window of my house one day, and saw a simple-minded lad, a young man lacking common sense, walking at twilight down the street to the house of this wayward girl, a prostitute. She approached him, saucy and pert, and dressed seductively. She was the brash, coarse type, seen often in the streets and markets, soliciting at every corner for men to be her lovers. She put her arms around him and kissed him, and with a saucy look she said, “I was just coming to look for you and here you are! Come home with me and I’ll fix you a wonderful dinner, and after that--well, my bed is spread with lovely, colored sheets of finest linen imported from Egypt, perfumed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. Come on, let’s take our fill of love until morning, for my husband is away on a long trip. He has taken a wallet full of money with him, and won’t return for several days.” So she seduced him with her pretty speech, her coaxing and her wheedling, until he yielded to her. He couldn’t resist her flattery. He followed her as an ox going to the butcher, or as a stag that is trapped, waiting to be killed with an arrow through its heart. He was as a bird flying into a snare, not knowing the fate awaiting it there. (Proverbs 7:6-23 LVB).

Excuses might even be found for a thief, if he steals when he is starving! But even so, he is fined seven times as much as he stole, though it may mean selling everything in his house to pay it back. But the man who commits adultery is an utter fool, for he destroys his own soul. (Proverbs 6:30-32 LVB).

HATRED/ANGER/OFFENSE

Adultery could be the ultimate act of hatred one could display against one’s spouse, neighbor, or friend. Aside from that, though, we often hear, “There is so much hate in the world today.”

My generation looked for peace and love in the 1960’s, and looked in vain. Peace comes only from God and Messiah Jesus. Hatred comes from all else. Long-term joy never accompanies sin.

To hide hatred is to be a liar; to slander is to be a fool. (Proverbs 10:18 LVB).

It is harder to win back the friendship of an offended brother than to capture a fortified city. His anger shuts you out like iron bars. (Proverbs 18:19 LVB).

As surely as a wind from the north brings cold, just as surely a retort causes anger! (Proverbs 25:23 LVB).

²⁰Fire goes out for lack of fuel, and tensions disappear when gossip stops. ²²Gossip is a dainty morsel eaten with great relish. (Proverbs 26:20, 22 LVB).

Never falsely accuse a man to his employer, lest he curse you for your sin. (Proverbs 30:10 LVB).

FLATTERY/GOSSIP

Can gossip be flattery? I mean, should you be flattered if someone thinks you are important enough to be made the subject of gossip? That's "two wrongs don't make a right." How about this? You should not mock, but "mockery is the sincerest form of flattery." That is it, three lefts make a right!

²⁸Flattery is a form of hatred and wounds cruelly. ²³Pretty words may hide a wicked heart, just as a pretty glaze covers a common clay pot. ²⁴A man with hate in his heart may sound pleasant enough, but don't believe him; for he is cursing you in his heart. Though he pretends to be so kind, his hatred will finally come to light for all to see. ²⁷The man who sets a trap for others will get caught in it himself. Roll a boulder down on someone, and it will roll back and crush you. (From Proverbs 26 LVB).

In the end, people appreciate frankness more than flattery. (Proverbs 28:23 LVB).

Flattery will not get you into Heaven. Can you imagine Eddie Haskell? "You look wonderful today, God. My that's a lovely crown Jesus is wearing, and the angels are so well-kempt." Eddie, turning to St. Peter continues, "Hey, Knucklehead, how 'bout tossing me the key to the city?"

There is only one way, that is to trust and obey: *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.* (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

The only way Eddie Haskell could get to the city is through Jesus: *And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.* (1 Timothy 1:14-15).

To accept God's gift of salvation, offered to us through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus, pray, "Dear Heavenly Father, I am a sinner and I have sinned against you. I am sorry for my sins and sinful nature. I repent of my sins and accept Jesus here and now as my Savior. Jesus, save me by your blood shed for me. Help me turn from my sins. I now give my life to you. In your name I pray, Jesus, Amen."



Chapter 5. Wisdom and Evil



The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight. Put them in fear, O Lord: that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Psalms 9:17-20.

EVILDOERS

The world tasted “evildoers” on September 11, 2001. Of course, it depends on one’s bias. Perhaps an Arab would consider me an evildoer. In that case, do not expect me to be tolerant of everyone, but I can say I am tolerant of many. Osama bin Laden and his camp of terrorists would say that I am an infidel.

Most of the civilized world despises evil and terrorism, regardless of bias. Most cultures allow the rest of the world to take pleasure in their ways. Some, particularly Christians, attempt to reveal the light of the world through love and humanitarian efforts. Only a fringe of Islam, a religion of 18% of the world population, believes they must terrorize and destabilize the other 82% by “evildoing.”

With all of the prejudices around the world, how do we truly know an evildoer from an evangelist? How dare I judge others? The answer is that I cannot judge others- the Bible tells me I cannot. It does seem to me that evangelistic and compassionate missionaries go about the world to spread love and kindness, often to become martyrs at the hands of those they are trying to show love. Others with missions enlist the gullible to go around the world and become “martyrs,”

spreading hate by blowing themselves up along with the innocent while their leaders hide in caves. So it seems to me that on one hand are those who are openly kindhearted, and on the other hand are sneaking cowards. Bias aside, which sounds like an evildoer to you?

¹²Let me describe for you a worthless and a wicked man; first, he is a constant liar; he signals his true intentions to his friends with eyes and feet and fingers. ¹⁴He is always thinking up new schemes to swindle people. He stirs up trouble everywhere. ¹⁵But he will be destroyed suddenly, broken beyond hope of healing. ¹⁶For there are six things the Lord hates--no, seven: Haughtiness Lying Murdering Plotting evil Eagerness to do wrong a false witness Sowing discord among brothers. (Proverbs 6:12, 14-16 LVB).

¹⁸The evil man gets rich for the moment, but the good man's reward lasts forever.

²¹You can be very sure the evil man will not go unpunished forever. And you can also be very sure God will rescue the children of the godly. (Proverbs 11:18, 21 LVB).

⁵A good man's mind is filled with honest thoughts; an evil man's mind is crammed with lies.

⁶The wicked accuse; the godly defend.

⁷The wicked shall perish; the godly shall stand. (Proverbs 12:5-7 LVB).

The common bond of rebels is their guilt. The common bond of godly people is good will. Only the person involved can know his own bitterness or joy--no one else can really share it. (Proverbs 14:9-10 LVB).

A mocker stays away from wise men because he hates to be scolded. A wise man is hungry for truth, while the mocker feeds on trash. (Proverbs 15:12, 14 LVB).

Wickedness loves company--and leads others into sin. The wicked man stares into space with pursed lips, deep in thought, planning his evil deeds. (Proverbs 16:29-30 LVB).

²A wise slave will rule his master's wicked sons and share their estate.

⁴The wicked enjoy fellowship with others who are wicked; liars enjoy liars.

¹¹The wicked live for rebellion; they shall be severely punished.

²⁰An evil man is suspicious of everyone and tumbles into constant trouble. (Proverbs 17:2, 4, 11, 20 LVB).

⁴Pride, lust, and evil actions are all sin.

⁷Because the wicked are unfair, their violence boomerangs and destroys them.

⁸A man is known by his actions. An evil man lives an evil life; a good man lives a godly life.

¹⁵A good man loves justice, but it is a calamity to evil-doers.

²⁷God loathes the gifts of evil men, especially if they are trying to bribe him! (Proverbs 21:4, 7-8, 15, 27 LVB).

⁷Wisdom is too much for a rebel. He'll not be chosen as a counselor! 24-9. The rebel's schemes are sinful, and the mocker is the scourge of all mankind. 24-8. To plan evil is as wrong as doing it.

¹⁵O evil man, leave the upright man alone, and quit trying to cheat him out of his rights. Don't you know that this good man, though you trip him up seven times, will each time rise again? But one calamity is enough to lay you low. (Proverbs 24:7, 15 LVB).

¹⁰A curse on those who lead astray the godly. But men who encourage the upright to do good shall

be given a worthwhile reward.

¹²When the godly are successful, everyone is glad. When the wicked succeed, everyone is sad.

¹⁷A murderer's conscience will drive him into hell. Don't stop him!

²⁶A man is a fool to trust himself! But those who use God's wisdom are safe. (Proverbs 28:10, 12, 17, 26 LVB).

The good hate the badness of the wicked. The wicked hate the goodness of the good. (Proverbs 29:27 LVB).

FOOLS

I am thankful for fools. If it were not for fools, we wouldn't have stories like, "The foolish man built his house upon the sand," or songs like, "Fools Rush In." perhaps those statements are as sensible as being thankful for dirt so as to know the joy of being clean. To be more foolish, I thought when I was younger that I would be more appreciative of God if only I were a converted drunk, but since I knew God from my earliest times, I could not properly appreciate Him. I am so glad that God never said, "Thou fool, thou art now in despair so thine eyes may be opened." Instead, He waited for me.

A short-tempered man is a fool. He hates the man who is patient. (Proverbs 14:17 LVB).

²⁶The Lord hates the thoughts of the wicked but delights in kind words.

²⁸A good man thinks before he speaks; the evil man pours out his evil words without a thought.

³¹If you profit from constructive criticism you will be elected to the wise men's hall of fame. But to reject criticism is to harm yourself and your own best interests. (Proverbs 15:26, 28, 31 LVB).

²We can always ``prove" that we are right, but is the Lord convinced?

²²Wisdom is a fountain of life to those possessing it, but a fool's burden is his folly. (Proverbs 16:2, 22 LVB).

¹²It is safer to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool caught in his folly.

¹⁶It is senseless to pay tuition to educate a rebel who has no heart for truth.

²⁴Wisdom is the main pursuit of sensible men, but a fool's goals are at the ends of the earth! (Proverbs 17:12, 16, 24 LVB).

²A rebel doesn't care about the facts. All he wants to do is yell.

⁶A fool gets into constant fights. His mouth is his undoing! His words endanger him. (Proverbs 18:2, 6 LVB).

A short-tempered man must bear his own penalty; you can't do much to help him. If you try once you must try a dozen times! (Proverbs 19:19 LVB).

The rebel walks a thorny, treacherous road; the man who values his soul will stay away. (Proverbs 22:5 LVB).

⁶To trust a rebel to convey a message is as foolish as cutting off your feet and drinking poison!

⁷In the mouth of a fool a proverb becomes as useless as a paralyzed leg

⁹A rebel will misapply an illustration so that its point will no more be felt than a thorn in the hand of

a drunkard.

¹¹As a dog returns to his vomit, so a fool repeats his folly. (Proverbs 26:6, 7, 9, 11 LVB).

PRIDE & ENVY

And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. (Matthew 5:30).

My father was the king of gags and hilarious poetry. He used to tease, “It’s hard to be humble when you’re as great as me.” Some of it rubbed off on me, much to the dismay of friends and co-workers. I have learned through experience that it is best to be meek so that conceit does not interfere with the humor. In fact, I recently asked God for humility and wisdom. He said, “OK, you’re ugly and smart enough to know it.”

In reality, there is a lot of humility in my family. We tend not to be envious of others because we see the “haves” are not very happy, anyway.

Pride goes before destruction and haughtiness before a fall. (Proverbs 16:18 LVB).

Pride ends in destruction; humility ends in honor. (Proverbs 18:12 LVB).

Don’t envy the wicked. Don’t covet his riches. For the evil man has no future; his light will be snuffed out. (Proverbs 24:19 LVB).

Pride ends in a fall, while humility brings honor. (Proverbs 29:23 LVB).

LIQUOR

Did you ever see the liver of an alcoholic? Alcohol does not help much of the rest of the body, either.

Smoking is bad for your heart. Many smokers also drink. The two cancel each other out with respect to the heart, I guess.

Bottom line is that if you drink and smoke, when you die of cancer and liver failure, your heart will not be in it.

Wine gives false courage; hard liquor leads to brawls; what fools men are to let it master them, making them reel drunkenly down the street! (Proverbs 20:1 LVB).

Don’t let the sparkle and the smooth taste of strong wine deceive you. For in the end it bites like a poisonous serpent; it stings like an adder. (Proverbs 23:31-32 LVB).

EVIL DISGUISED AS RELIGION

¹²And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, ¹³And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the

house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. (Matthew 21:12-13).



²¹Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Matthew 7:21-23).

There are many bad habits that God warns us about. Only one is eternally fatal. That would be to turn your back on His Son: *And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* (Matthew 3:17).

Though God was pleased with His son, and loved him, He sent Him to die as a substitute for us: *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Why do I or any other care about your eternity? We love you because God loves you. *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* (2 Corinthians 5:20).

If you will accept God's gift of salvation, pray, "*Dear Father in Heaven, I know I am a sinner and confess my sins unto you. I believe in your Son Jesus and ask Him to enter my heart as LORD of my life. I wish to turn from my sins and accept Jesus as my savior. In Jesus' name I ask these things. Amen.*"



Chapter 6. Wisdom and Good Men



But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. Luke 10:33-34.

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. Matthew 6:31-33.

GOOD MEN

- “You ought to hire him. He’s a good man.”
- “Get George to help with the committee. He’s a good man.”
- “Add him to the team. He’s a good man.”

“Good man” can even apply to “bad man” so long as he is good at being bad. “We’re going to rob the noon stage. Get Lefty, Pete, and, oh yeah, Slim- he’s a good man.”

Make one of your goals to be a good man. If you are a woman, you might go for good woman instead.

In my mind, the mark of a good man or good woman is to be trustworthy and vigilant. This dependability is the trait that I appreciate the most in others. What good is smarts or haste if the guy is absent? And isn't the best compliment one can receive is to be called a "good man?" There is no joy in being despised.

Let us read what God inspired His famous wise man to write about "good men."

²⁸The hope of good men is eternal happiness; the hopes of evil men are all in vain.

²⁹God protects the upright but destroys the wicked.

³⁰The good shall never lose God's blessings, but the wicked shall lose everything. (Proverbs 10:28-30 LVB).

¹The Lord hates cheating and delights in honesty.

⁴Your riches won't help you on Judgment Day; only righteousness counts then.

⁷When an evil man dies, his hopes all perish, for they are based upon this earthly life.

⁸God rescues good men from danger while letting the wicked fall into it. (Proverbs 11:1, 4, 7-8 LVB).

The good man asks advice from friends; the wicked plunge ahead--and fall. (Proverbs 12:26 LVB).

A good man hates lies; wicked men lie constantly and come to shame. (Proverbs 13:5 LVB).

⁴⁹Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. ⁵⁰And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us. (Luke 9:49-50).

SYMPATHY

Sympathy is a trait appreciated by others, but is also an act of learning within us. When you are sympathetic to someone else, you first go through a thought process of deciding how you would like to be treated, based on what you know, if you were in the shoes of that other person.

Sympathy is not limited to occasions associated with "sympathy cards." Sympathy is fellow-feeling and understanding, not just pity over the death of a loved one. Sympathy should be an emotion leading to actions of compassion toward another who is in an undesirable circumstance, and never an opportunity to take advantage of that person's vulnerability.

Being happy-go-lucky around a person whose heart is heavy is as bad as stealing his jacket in cold weather, or rubbing salt in his wounds. (Proverbs 25:20 LVB).

REWARD

²⁴(Jesus said) Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: ²⁵And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. ²⁶And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his

house upon the sand: ²⁷And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. (Matthew 7:24-27).

True reward has nothing to do with finances; for that kind of reward is never enough- there is no satisfaction. Do good things, and notice what feels rewarding to you. Then you will want to do more of these things. That will honor God and your family.

³But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

⁴That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. ⁶But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. (Matthew 6:3-4, 6).

Your own soul is nourished when you are kind; it is destroyed when you are cruel. (Proverbs 11:17 LVB).

Crooks are jealous of each other's loot, while good men long to help each other. (Proverbs 12:12 LVB).

FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN

Jesus tells us the foundation of true recompense:

Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied.

Blessed are you that weep now, for you shall laugh.

Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

But woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger. Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you, when all men speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt.

Give to every one who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again. And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish.

Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.

He also told them a parable: Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye, when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye. For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure produces evil; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. (Luke 6:20-45 RSV).

SELF-CONTROL

Self-control is the only control you can really control. Can you control anyone else? You maybe think you can, but you cannot control another's will. If you are not wise in dealing with others, eventually they will despise you, and they will rebel. Your control will be out-of-control.

Self-control means controlling the tongue! A quick retort can ruin everything. (Proverbs 13:3 LVB).

A man without self-control is as defenseless as a city with broken-down walls. (Proverbs 25:28 LVB).

LOVE

How many times have we heard the questions: "What is Love?" And "How do you define love?" The definition of love is the topic of copious sermons, television shows, school reports, books, and so forth. Some scripture is listed below, but the ultimate definition of love is to "send your son to die on a wooden cross to pay for the sins of all mankind, past, present, and after, who will accept Him.

Love forgets mistakes; nagging about them parts the best of friends. (Proverbs 17:9 LVB).

The Hebrew Bible and Love: Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord. (Leviticus 19:18). And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. (Deuteronomy 6:5). Jesus said, On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:40).

Jesus also said, ⁴⁴*But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;* ⁴⁵*That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.* ⁴⁶*For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?* (Matthew 5:44-46).

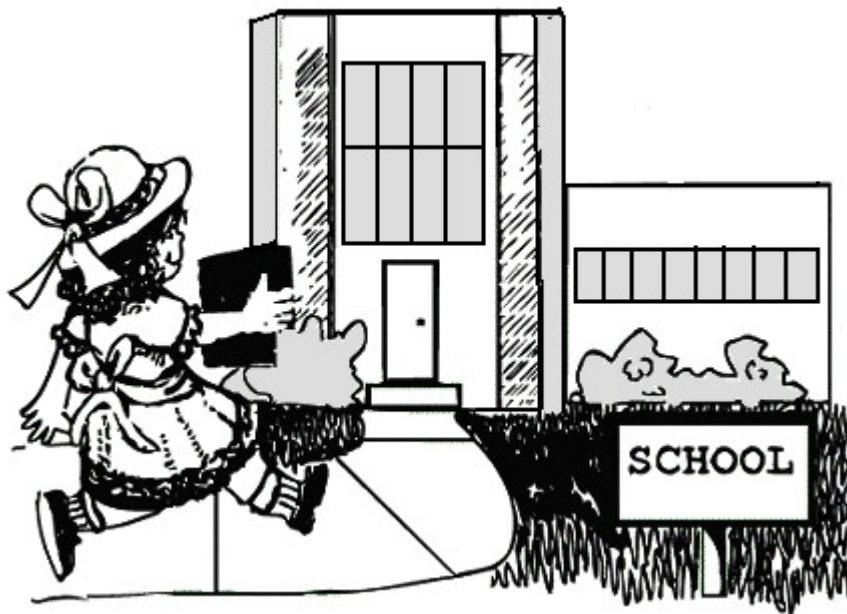
There can be many definitions of the word "love," but the supreme example is the willingness to give all one has for the welfare of the one he loves. Above all else would be the

willingness to give one's life for another. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* (John 3:16). Why would God do this? *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.* (John 3:17). Why would God give His son's life for us? Love! To what end? *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* (John 3:14-15, 18).

Please accept God's love for you. Bow your head and receive His Son as your Savior.



Chapter 7. Wisdom and Children



Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 19:14.

CHILDREN

Our future is in the hands of our children. Children start out with such innocence, but see the ills of the world all too soon. We must love our children and nurture them, if for nothing less than the future of humanity.

Most of us like kids, yet many children are abused. Why? People that dislike children were kids themselves once, so maybe they do not like themselves.

Solomon, in his wisdom, liked children. Jesus always accepted children. In fact, did anyone love children more than Jesus did?

A wise youth accepts his father's rebuke; a young mocker doesn't. (Proverbs 13:1 LVB).

⁵Only a fool despises his father's advice; a wise son considers each suggestion.

²⁰A sensible son gladdens his father. A rebellious son saddens his mother. (Proverbs 15:5, 20 LVB).

17-6. An old man's grandchildren are his crowning glory. A child's glory is his father. (Proverbs 17:6 LVB).

Was our Heavenly Father proud of His son? And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (Mark 1:11).

An old man glories in the affection of his grandchild for the remainder of his days. A child that is

scornful to an old man will regret it the remainder of his days. (Lerch 2:11).



Discipline your son in his early years while there is hope. If you don't you will ruin his life. (Proverbs 19:18 LVB).

The character of even a child can be known by the way he acts--whether what he does is pure and right. (Proverbs 20:11 LVB).

⁶Teach a child to choose the right path, and when he is older he will remain upon it.

¹⁵A youngster's heart is filled with rebellion, but punishment will drive it out of him. (Proverbs 22:6, 15 LVB).

¹³Don't fail to correct your children; discipline won't hurt them! They won't die if you use a stick on them! Punishment will keep them out of hell.

¹⁵**My son, how I will rejoice if you become a man of common sense. Yes, my heart will thrill to your thoughtful, wise words.** ²⁴The father of a godly man has cause for joy--what pleasure a wise son is! So give your parents joy!

¹⁹O my son, be wise and stay in God's paths; don't carouse with drunkards and gluttons, for they are on their way to poverty. And remember that too much sleep clothes a man with rags. ²²Listen to your father's advice and don't despise an old mother's experience.

²⁶O my son, trust my advice--stay away from prostitutes. For a prostitute is a deep and narrow grave. Like a robber, she waits for her victims as one after another become unfaithful to their wives. (Proverbs 23:13, 15 & 24, 19 & 22, 26 LVB).

My son, watch your step before the Lord and the king, and don't associate with radicals. For you will go down with them to sudden disaster, and who knows where it all will end? (Proverbs 24:21 LVB).

Open rebuke is better than hidden love! (Proverbs 27:5 LVB).

¹⁵Scolding and spanking a child helps him to learn. Left to himself, he brings shame to his mother.
¹⁷Discipline your son and he will give you happiness and peace of mind. ¹⁹Sometimes mere words are not enough--discipline is needed. For the words may not be heeded. (Proverbs 29:15, 17, 19 LVB).

And it is not for kings, O Lemuel, to drink wine and whiskey. For if they drink they may forget their duties and be unable to give justice to those who are oppressed. Hard liquor is for sick men at the brink of death, and wine for those in deep depression. Let them drink to forget their poverty and misery.

You should defend those who cannot help themselves. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice. (Proverbs 31:4-9).

Young man, it's wonderful to be young! Enjoy every minute of it! Do all you want to; take in everything, but realize that you must account to God for everything you do. So banish grief and pain, but remember that youth, with a whole life before it, can make serious mistakes. Don't let the excitement of being young cause you to forget about your Creator. Honor him in your youth before the evil years come--when you'll no longer enjoy living. It will be too late then to try to remember him, when the sun and light and moon and stars are dim to your old eyes, and there is no silver lining left among your clouds. For there will come a time when your limbs will tremble with age, and your strong legs will become weak, and your teeth will be too few to do their work, and there will be blindness, too. (Ecclesiastes 11:9-10, 12:1-3)

¹⁵And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, ¹⁶And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? (Matthew 21:15-16).

JESUS, CHILDREN, AND “BORN AGAIN”

Jesus so loved children and their innocence that His answers to questions about eternal life were answered using children as the example. Think of a young child's unquestioning devotion to his parents. We must take God in the same way. We cannot know His reasons for why things are as they are sometimes, but we must trust and obey.

¹At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? ²And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, ³And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. (Matthew 18:1-5).

What about the term “born again?” It is a phrase that is mocked by those who do not understand the meaning. It comes from this passage:

¹There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: ²The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. ³Jesus answered and said unto him,

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
⁴Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? ⁵Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. ⁸The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. ⁹Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? ¹⁰Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? ¹¹Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. ¹²If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? ¹³And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. ¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: ¹⁵That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:1-16).

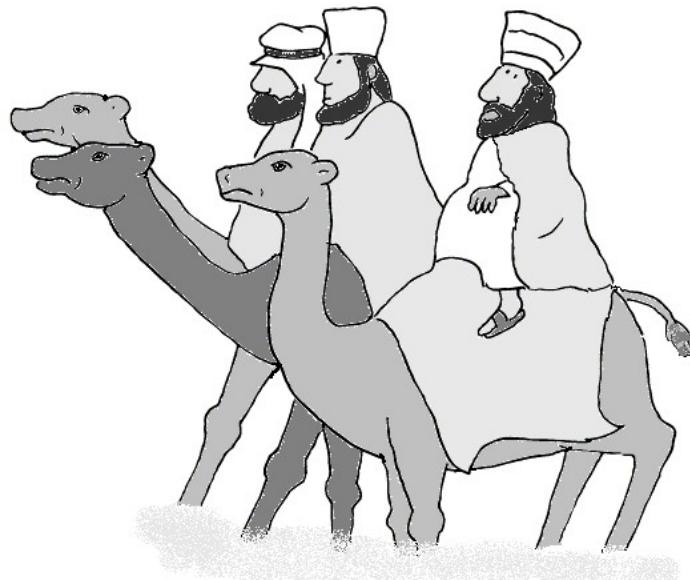
So by reading the preceding passage, you have read not only the origination of the term “born again,” but also you have read how the most famous verse regarding salvation fits into the Bible.

You must be born again. Please bow your head and invite the Savior into your heart at this moment. *Dear Heavenly Father, I am a sinner who now confesses my sins unto you and repents of my sinful ways. Jesus, please enter my life as my Savior and my Lord. Help me to turn from my sinful past and to live for you. In Jesus name. Amen.*

By the way, do you see that Salvation is easy for us? (It was hard for Jesus, though.) Do you see that you do not have to send money somewhere or join a club? Salvation is a personal relationship between you and God. His gift is free. The God that created everything does not need our money. He just wants our love in return for His.



Chapter 8. Wisdom and Government



Obey the government, for God is the one who has put it there. There is no government anywhere that God has not placed in power. So those who refuse to obey the laws of the land are refusing to obey God, and punishment will follow. For the policeman does not frighten people who are doing right; but those doing evil will always fear him. So if you don't want to be afraid, keep the laws and you will get along well. The policeman is sent by God to help you. But if you are doing something wrong, of course you should be afraid, for he will have you punished. He is sent by God for that very purpose.

Obey the laws, then, for two reasons: first, to keep from being punished, and second, just because you know you should. Pay your taxes too, for these same two reasons. For government workers need to be paid so that they can keep on doing God's work, serving you. Pay everyone whatever he ought to have: pay your taxes and import duties gladly, obey those over you, and give honor and respect to all those to whom it is due.

Pay all your debts except the debt of love for others--never finish paying that! For if you love them, you will be obeying all of God's laws, fulfilling all his requirements. If you love your neighbor as much as you love yourself you will not want to harm or cheat him, or kill him or steal from him. And you won't sin with his wife or want what is his, or do anything else the Ten

Commandments say is wrong. All ten are wrapped up in this one, to love your neighbor as you love yourself. Love does no wrong to anyone. That's why it fully satisfies all of God's requirements. It is the only law you need. Romans 13:1-10.

KINGS (LEADERS)

History has recorded both good leaders and bad leaders, and their traits. We should know how to run a country properly by now, but greed and/or pride usually get in the way. It is essential to world peace that we comprehend that no government exists that God has not allowed or put in place. He has destroyed many of the corrupt ones by His hand. Others have self-destructed. We need to follow God's direction when standing up against a wicked government, and be more patient than we have been throughout the past. Following is Wisdom on the subject:

¹⁰God will help the king to judge the people fairly; there need be no mistakes.

¹²It is a horrible thing for a king to do evil. His right to rule depends upon his fairness.

¹³The king rejoices when his people are truthful and fair.

¹⁴The anger of the king is a messenger of death and a wise man will appease it.

¹⁵Many favors are showered on those who please the king. (Proverbs 16:10, 12-15 LVB).

The king's anger is as dangerous as a lion's. But his approval is as refreshing as the dew on grass. (Proverbs 19:12 LVB).

²The king's fury is like that of a roaring lion; to rouse his anger is to risk your life.

²⁸If a king is kind, honest and fair, his kingdom stands secure. (Proverbs 20:2, 28 LVB).

Don't go to war without wise guidance; there is safety in many counselors. (Proverbs 24:6 LVB).

When you remove dross from silver, you have sterling ready for the silversmith. When you remove corrupt men from the king's court, his reign will be just and fair. (Proverbs 25:4 LVB).

When there is moral rot within a nation, its government topples easily; but with honest, sensible leaders there is stability. (Proverbs 28:2 LVB).

⁴A just king gives stability to his nation, but one who demands bribes destroys it.

⁵Flattery is a trap; evil men are caught in it, but good men stay away and sing for joy.

¹⁴A king who is fair to the poor shall have a long reign

¹⁶When rulers are wicked, their people are too; but good men will live to see the tyrant's downfall.

¹⁸Where there is ignorance of God, crime runs wild; but what a wonderful thing it is for a nation to know and keep his laws. (Proverbs 29:4-5, 14, 16, 18 LVB).

CITIZENSHIP

God absolutely wants us to be good citizens, but to follow Him first. This is tricky, though. From a Western point of view, suppose I live in the make believe country of Yes Kegastan and that the religion is not Judeo-Christian. Further, suppose that the ruler is Slobodan been Laden. Now,

Mr. Slob, president of Yes, decides it would be good for all citizens to join the army and kill the infidels. Would it be right for me to become one of his Yes men, and under the flag of my country go kill people because they are Jewish or Christian?

I guess if a man loves the God of the Bible, he should live in the right neighborhood and not be a yes man for some slob.

¹⁰The whole city celebrates a good man's success--and also the godless man's death.

¹¹The good influence of godly citizens causes a city to prosper, but the moral decay of the wicked drives it downhill. (Proverbs 11:10-11 LVB).

Without wise leadership, a nation is in trouble; but with good counselors there is safety. (Proverbs 11:14 LVB).

¹⁵When a man is gloomy, everything seems to go wrong; when he is cheerful, everything seems right!

¹⁷It is better to eat soup with someone you love than steak with someone you hate. (Proverbs 15:15, 17 LVB).

²³From a wise mind comes careful and persuasive speech.

²⁴Kind words are like honey--enjoyable and healthful. (Proverbs 16:23-24 LVB).

¹A dry crust eaten in peace is better than steak every day along with argument and strife.

¹⁴It is hard to stop a quarrel once it starts, so don't let it begin.

²²A cheerful heart does good like medicine, but a broken spirit makes one sick. (Proverbs 17:1, 14, 22 LVB).

³It is an honor for a man to stay out of a fight. Only fools insist on quarreling.

²²Don't repay evil for evil. Wait for the Lord to handle the matter. (Proverbs 20:3, 22 LVB).

³God is more pleased when we are just and fair than when we give him gifts.

¹⁴An angry man is silenced by giving him a gift!

²¹The man who tries to be good, loving and kind finds life, righteousness and honor. (Proverbs 21:3, 14, 21 LVB).

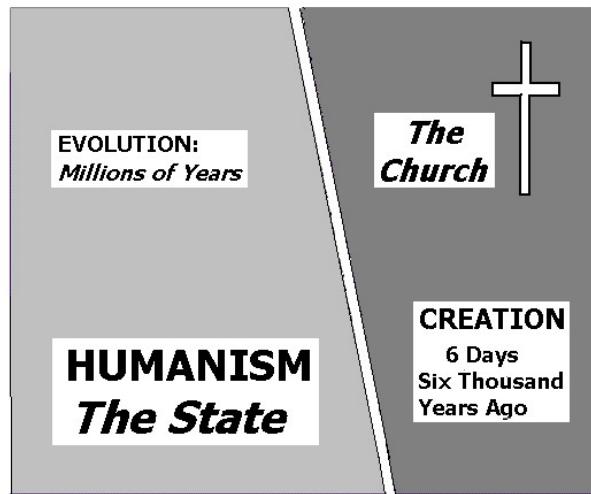
¹⁰You are a poor specimen if you can't stand the pressure of adversity.

¹⁷Do not rejoice when your enemy meets trouble. Let there be no gladness when he falls- ¹⁸for the Lord may be displeased with you and stop punishing him! (Proverbs 24:10, 17-18 LVB).

If your enemy is hungry, give him food! If he is thirsty, give him something to drink! This will make him feel ashamed of himself, and God will reward you. (Proverbs 25:21 LVB).

CHURCH & STATE

How do we teach our children about God if they are confused between a Supreme Being and a supreme court? We constantly hear about the separation of church and state in America. Notice not too many people are ready to shove it in God's face and take the motto "In God We Trust" from our currency.

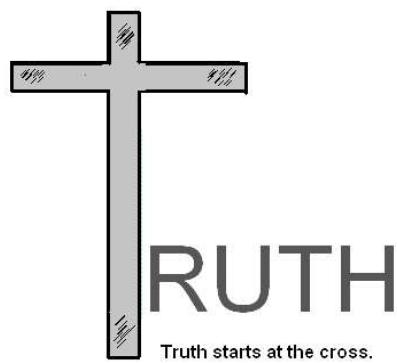


Then (Jesus) saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. Matthew 22:21.

After the 9/11 tragedy Americans were resounding the familiar “God Bless America.” We believed we needed God, or a god, to help us through that era to save those that could be saved, restore our economy, and help us to rout our enemies. It surely will not be long after we feel “whole” again that we will again renounce God and rally to keep prayer out of schools and biblical creation out of the classrooms.

And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. (Luke 4:4).

TRUTH & LIES



If you have ever watched the television show COPS, you have seen citizens at their worst. Have you noticed how easy it is to tell when these people are lying? Often they try to implicate God in their lies, “That’s the honest-to God’s truth, officer.” (Me thinks he doth protest too much.) The lie is told to get out of the crime because they do not want to do the time. The lying always makes it worse. I have it on good authority that one’s best chance of avoiding the time is to tell the truth up front.

¹³Lies will get any man into trouble, but honesty is its own defense.

¹⁴Telling the truth gives a man great satisfaction, and hard work returns many blessings to him.

¹⁷A good man is known by his truthfulness; a false man by deceit and lies.

¹⁹Truth stands the test of time; lies are soon exposed.

²⁰Deceit fills hearts that are plotting for evil; joy fills hearts that are planning for good!

²²God delights in those who keep their promises, and abhors those who don't. (Proverbs 12:13-14, 17, 19-20, 22 LVB).

Those who love to talk will suffer the consequences. Men have died for saying the wrong thing! (Proverbs 18:21 LVB).

THE COURTS

Now the “perp” from the COPS show above invariably ends up in court, wearing his best-tailored suit, so that he can finally tell his side. He has had time to organize his thoughts:

- **Man:** “Judge, that cop is a-lyin’. He’s had it in for me ever since we moved our camper onto that golf course. Him with his high and mighty attitude. Man, why are you doin’ me like this?”
- **Judge:** Can you spell p-r-i-s-o-n, because I am sure you cannot spell “penitentiary.”

²The good man wins his case by careful argument; the evil-minded only wants to fight.

⁶A man's goodness helps him all through life, while evil men are being destroyed by their wickedness. (Proverbs 13:2, 6 LVB).

Evil men shall bow before the godly. (Proverbs 14:19 LVB).

⁵It is wrong for a judge to favor the wicked and condemn the innocent.

¹³What a shame--yes, how stupid!--to decide before knowing the facts!

¹⁷Any story sounds true until someone tells the other side and sets the record straight. (Proverbs 18:18:5, 13, 17 LVB).

⁵Punish false witnesses. Track down liars.

⁹A false witness shall be punished and a liar shall be caught.

²⁸A worthless witness cares nothing for truth--he enjoys his sinning too much. (Proverbs 19:5, 9, 28 LVB).

A king sitting as judge weighs all the evidence carefully, distinguishing the true from false. (Proverbs 20:8 LVB).

¹¹Rescue those who are unjustly sentenced to death; don't stand back and let them die. Don't try to disclaim responsibility by saying you didn't know about it. For God, who knows all hearts, knows yours, and he knows you knew! And he will reward everyone according to his deeds.

²⁴He who says to the wicked, “You are innocent,” shall be cursed by many people of many nations;

²⁵but blessings shall be showered on those who rebuke sin fearlessly

²⁸Don't testify spitefully against an innocent neighbor. Why lie about him? Don't say, “Now I can

pay him back for all his meanness to me!” (Proverbs 24:11, 24-25, 28 LVB).

⁸Don't be hot-headed and rush to court! You may start something you can't finish and go down before your neighbor in shameful defeat. So discuss the matter with him privately. Don't tell anyone else, lest he accuse you of slander and you can't withdraw what you said.

¹⁸Telling lies about someone is as harmful as hitting him with an axe, or wounding him with a sword, or shooting him with a sharp arrow. (Proverbs 25:8, 18 LVB).

⁴To complain about the law is to praise wickedness. To obey the law is to fight evil.

⁵Evil men don't understand the importance of justice, but those who follow the Lord are much concerned about it. (Proverbs 28:4-5 LVB).

Do you want justice? Don't fawn on the judge, but ask the Lord for it! (Proverbs 29:26 LVB).

Some small-minded people need tall soapboxes. (Lerch 20:03).

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. (Mark 1:17).

The best leaders know this. Your little brother will mimic you. Your son will idolize you. Recall the words of *The Cat's in the Cradle*, “I grew up just like you, Dad, I grew up just like you.” Your employees will not work harder than you or care more than you- unless they are out to get your job.

The man of few words and settled mind is wise; therefore, even a fool is thought to be wise when he is silent. It pays him to keep his mouth shut. (Proverbs 17:27 LVB).

A wise man's words express deep streams of thought. (Proverbs 18:4 LVB).

Better to be silent and thought a fool than to open your mouth and prove it.

THE CENTURION'S EXAMPLE

⁸The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. ⁹For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. ¹⁰When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. (Matthew 8:8-10).

That is a beautiful passage and a testimony of faith. A Roman soldier, heathen perhaps, knows that Jesus has the power to heal his servant. The soldier also realizes that Jesus is of a higher authority that he cannot understand; but, the centurion knows that Jesus' authority will heal his servant. Do any of us have such faith?

Faith can give you wisdom; hear the word of God and obey. Faith can bring you eternal life; hear the word of God. Hebrews 11 is the Faith Chapter. The following is excerpted from that text:

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things, which are seen, were not made of things that do appear.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; he had this testimony, that he pleased God. By faith Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out went out, not knowing whither he went. Through faith Sara received strength to conceive, and was delivered of a child when she was past age.

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped. By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel.

By faith Moses was hid three months; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith Moses kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith Rahab perished not with them that believed not. And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. (Hebrews 11).

If you have not done so already, I urge you to begin your life of faith, faith in the God who controls the outcome of everything on this earth. As the centurion implored of Jesus, "speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed," God has that power, that omnipotence.

God gives you full will over your life and choice of your eternity. Speak the word only, and you shall have eternal life just by asking. *Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for your gift of Salvation and forgiveness of sins. Thank you for giving me the power to accept the substitute for my punishment, Christ Jesus, so that I can have eternal life. Jesus, come into my heart as my LORD and Savior. In your Holy Name. Amen.*



Chapter 9. The King and Women



Now when He was at Bethany, in the house of Simon the Leper, while He was at table, there came a woman with a jar of pure, sweet-scented ointment very costly: she broke the jar and poured the ointment over His head. But there were some who said indignantly among themselves, "Why has the ointment been thus wasted? For that ointment might have been sold for fifteen pounds or more, and the money have been given to the poor." And they were exceedingly angry with her. But Jesus said, "Leave her alone: why are you troubling her? She has done a most gracious act towards me. For you always have the poor among you, and whenever you choose you can do acts of kindness to them; but me you have not always. What she could she did: she has perfumed my body in preparation for my burial. And I solemnly tell you that wherever in the whole world the Good News shall be proclaimed, this which she has done shall also be told in remembrance of her." (Mark 14:3-9).

A wondrous and beautiful biblical account is the Annunciation. A mortal woman was to be the mother of the Son of God, the Messiah:

²⁸(The angel Gabriel) went in and said to her, Rejoice, you who enjoy God's favour! The Lord is with you. ²⁹She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, ³⁰but the angel said to her, Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. ³¹Look! You

are to conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; ³³he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end. (Luke 1:28-33 NJB).

A chronicle particularly meaningful to me follows the lines of this Luke chapter 1 report. First, my younger brother, Fred, has a vibrant imagination. When he was not very old, while doing somersaults on the bed, he asked our mother if Jesus was upside down in his heart. His next tough question was to ask how he got inside Mom's tummy before he was born. Mom replied, "God put you there." Undaunted, Fred asked, "Did God say 'Let's do a trick'?" With that in mind, read this account involving women (and children).

³⁹In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and she exclaimed with a loud cry, Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord. (Luke 1:39-45 RSV).

Our Savior held women in high regard. Many biblical retellings demonstrate Jesus' mercy toward women. A famous example is, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." (John 8:7).

There is another passage dear to me that demonstrates a clever woman's resourcefulness:

²²(A Canaanite woman) came out and cried, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon. ²³But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, Send her away, for she is crying after us. ²⁴He answered, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ²⁵But she came and knelt before him, saying, Lord, help me. ²⁶And he answered, It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. ²⁷She said, Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table. ²⁸Then Jesus answered her, O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire. And her daughter was healed instantly. (Matthew 16:22-28 RSV).

We are off the course of Solomon's wisdom and what he can tell us about women. Back to that, let us read what the sage has to say about this subject, both in wholesome relationships and lustful encounters.

The lips of a prostitute are as sweet as honey, but afterwards only a bitter conscience is left to you.
She leads you down to death and hell. For she does not know the path to life.

Be happy, yes, rejoice in the wife of your youth.

The wicked man is doomed by his own sins; they are ropes that catch and hold him.

(From Proverbs 5 LVB).

³²But the man who commits adultery is an utter fool, for he destroys his own soul. ³³Wounds and constant disgrace are his lot, ³⁴for the woman's husband will be furious in his jealousy, and he will have no mercy on you in his day of vengeance. (Proverbs 6:32-34 LVB).

Honor goes to kind and gracious women, mere money to cruel men. (Proverbs 11:16 LVB).

A beautiful woman lacking discretion and modesty is like a fine gold ring in a pig's snout. (Proverbs 11:22 LVB).

If you can find a truly good wife, she is worth more than precious gems! (Proverbs 31:10 LVB).

Live happily with the woman you love through the fleeting days of life, for the wife God gives you is your best reward down here for all your earthly toil. (Ecclesiastes 9:9 LVB).

My father told me that my mother was his best friend. They were probably married 40 or more years at the time. I thought that was sweet. It came to be that my wife is now my best friend. I met Jeanne 35 years ago and married her 33 years ago. We have a grown son and daughter, and five wonderful grandchildren. We love to spend time together and to do things for each other. I would willingly die for her. I will spend eternity with her.

There is nothing on earth that I could want that does not involve Jeanne. Anything apart from my wife would be fleeting and meaningless.

I am not sure I have any comment on the verses that follow. Solomon obviously was not planning on "his women" reading this before he died. She, or they according to the ancient customs, could make life rough if they had a mind to. Did you ever see one of the T-shirts that declare, "If Momma ain't happy, ain't nobody happy"?

It is better to live in the corner of an attic than with a crabby woman in a lovely home. (Proverbs 21:9 LVB).

Better to live in the desert than with a quarrelsome, complaining woman. (Proverbs 21:19 LVB).

¹⁵A constant dripping on a rainy day and a cranky woman are much alike! ¹⁶You can no more stop her complaints than you can stop the wind or hold onto anything with oil-slick hands. (Proverbs 27:15-16).

¹These are the wise sayings of King Lemuel of Massa, taught to him at his mother's knee: ²O my son, whom I have dedicated to the Lord, ³do not spend your time with women--the royal pathway to destruction. (Proverbs 27:1-3 LVB).

This is my conclusion, says the Preacher. Step by step I came to this result after researching in every direction: One tenth of one percent of the men I interviewed could be said to be wise, but not one woman! (Ecclesiastes 7:27 LVB).

AHA! I see King Solomon's problem! Check this out:

King Solomon married many other girls besides the Egyptian princess. Many of them came from nations where idols were worshiped --Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and from the Hittites—(1 Kings 11:1 LVB).

If Solomon married so many girls, no wonder he occasionally found an old one that was hard to live with. I will tell you who will be easy to live with- God! Realizing that in our marital relationships, we are "perfect" and our spouse has flaws that we put up with, God *really is* perfect. Seated at His right hand is Jesus- He is perfect, too. In heaven we will not be stuck with these old corruptible bodies any more. The scriptures tell us that we will not all die. That means some will,

some will not. Here is what that means:

⁵¹Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. (1 Corinthians 15:51-54).

What a wonderful revelation! I want to be one of the changed ones, not one of the sleeping (dead) ones. In verse 51, the phrase “we shall all be changed” in contrast to “we shall not all sleep” does not mean “all” as in everybody. It means all as in who is not in the other phrase- in short, it means those who belong to God.

Do you want to belong to God and get an incorruptible body some day? It is this simple: we must die because mankind has sinned; the penalty of sin is death; we can be forgiven of our sins through the shedding of a blood sacrifice; since the day that Christ shed His blood for us, His blood only will atone for our sins.

Only through Jesus can we have salvation and a new body. Pray, “*Dear God, I am a sinner, I know. I am sorry for my sins and confess them to you. I accept Jesus as my savior, having died for me that I might have life. Please save me from my sins and help me to turn from them. I give my life to you. In Jesus name I pray these things. Amen.*”



Part II: The Creator, Messiah, and Wisdom



In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (John 1:1-4).



Chapter 10. Jesus and Parables



Parables: The Teachings of Jesus

Jesus was the supreme teacher of all time. There was no close second. The parables He told were unmatched and beyond compare. Divine. No human can enhance the meaning, appropriateness, or significance of these lessons. In this chapter, the parables are merely compiled, alphabetically by title, and I can only add, "Here they are." All biblical text is from Weymouth's New Testament unless noted otherwise.

THE AMBITIOUS GUEST

⁷Then, when He noticed that the invited guests chose the best seats, He used this as an illustration and said to them, ⁸"When any one invites you to a wedding banquet, do not take the best seat, lest perhaps some more honored guest than you may have been asked, ⁹and the man who invited you both will come and will say to you, 'Make room for this guest,' and then you, ashamed, will move to the lowest place. ¹⁰On the contrary, when you are invited go and take the lowest place, that when your host comes round he may say to you, 'My friend, come up higher.' This will be doing you honor in the presence of all the other guests. ¹¹For whoever uplifts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be uplifted. ¹²Also to His host, who had invited Him, He said, "When you give a breakfast or a dinner, do not invite your friends or brothers or relatives or rich neighbors, lest perhaps they should invite you in return and a requital be made you. ¹³But when you entertain, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind; ¹⁴and you will be blessed, because they have no means of requiting you, but there will be requital for you at the Resurrection of the righteous." (Luke 14:7-14).

THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND

¹³"Every plant," He replied, "which my Heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. ¹⁴Leave them alone. They are blind guides of the blind; and if a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall

into some pit." ¹⁵"Explain to us this figurative language," said Peter. ¹⁶"Are even you," He answered, "still without intelligence? ¹⁷Do you not understand that whatever enters the mouth passes into the stomach and is afterwards ejected from the body? ¹⁸But the things that come out of the mouth proceed from the heart, and it is these that defile the man. (Matthew 15:13-18).

CLOTH AND WINESKINS

²¹No one mends an old garment with a piece of unshrunk cloth. Otherwise, the patch put on would tear away from it - the new from the old - and a worse hole would be made. ²²And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise the wine would burst the skins, and both wine and skins would be lost. New wine needs fresh skins!" (Mark 2:21-22).

THE DRAGNET

⁴⁷"Again the Kingdom of the Heavens is like a (dragnet) let down into the sea, which encloses fish of all sorts. ⁴⁸When full, they haul it up on the beach, and sit down and collect the good fish in baskets, while the worthless they throw away. ⁴⁹So will it be at the Close of the Age. The angels will go forth and separate the wicked from among the righteous, ⁵⁰and will throw them into the fiery furnace. There will be the weeping aloud and the gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 13:47-50).

THE FIG TREE

²⁸"Learn from the fig-tree the lesson it teaches. As soon as its branch has become soft and it is bursting into leaf, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also do you, when you see these things happening, be sure that He is near, at your very door. ³⁰I tell you in solemn truth that the present generation will certainly not pass away without all these things having first taken place. ³¹Earth and sky will pass away, but it is certain that my words will not pass away. ³²"But as to that day or the exact time no one knows - not even the angels in Heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. (Mark 13:28-32).

FATHERHOOD

¹¹And what father is there among you, who, if his son asks for a slice of bread, will offer him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will instead of a fish offer him a snake? ¹²or if he asks for an egg, will offer him a scorpion? ¹³If you then, with all your human frailty, know how to give your children gifts that are good for them, how much more certainly will your Father who is in Heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:11-13).

THE GARDENER AND THE FIG TREE

⁶And He gave them the following parable. "A man," He said, "who had a fig-tree growing in his garden came to look for fruit on it and could find none. ⁷So he said to the gardener, "See, this is the third year I have come to look for fruit on this fig-tree and cannot find any. Cut it down. Why should so much ground be actually wasted?" ⁸"But the gardener pleaded, "Leave it, Sir, this year

also, till I have dug round it and manured it. ⁹If after that it bears fruit, well and good; if it does not, then you shall cut it down." (Luke 13:6-9).

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

³⁰Jesus replied, "A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he fell among robbers, who after both stripping and beating him went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹Now a priest happened to be going down that way, and on seeing him passed by on the other side. ³²In like manner a Levite also came to the place, and seeing him passed by on the other side. ³³But a certain Samaritan, being on a journey, came where he lay, and seeing him was moved with pity. ³⁴He went to him, and dressed his wounds with oil and wine and bound them up. Then placing him on his own mule he brought him to an inn, where he bestowed every care on him. ³⁵The next day he took out two shillings and gave them to the innkeeper. "'Take care of him,' he said, 'and whatever further expense you are put to, I will repay it you at my next visit.' ³⁶"Which of those three seems to you to have acted like a fellow man to him who fell among the robbers?" ³⁷"The one who showed him pity," he replied. "Go," said Jesus, "and act in the same way." (Luke 10:30-37).

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

¹"In most solemn truth I tell you that the man who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs over some other way, is a thief and a robber. ²But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³To him the porter opens the door, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by their names and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out his own sheep - all of them - he walks at the head of them; and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice. ⁵But a stranger they will by no means follow, but will run away from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶Jesus spoke to them in this figurative language, but they did not understand what He meant. ⁷Again therefore Jesus said to them, "In most solemn truth I tell you that I am the Door of the sheep. ⁸All who have come before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep would not listen to them. ⁹I am the Door. If any one enters by me, he will find safety, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy: I have come that they may have Life, and may have it in abundance. ¹¹"I am the Good Shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his very life for the sheep. ¹²The hired servant - one who is not a shepherd and does not own the sheep - no sooner sees the wolf coming than he leaves the sheep and runs away; and the wolf worries and scatters them. ¹³For he is only a hired servant and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴"I am the Good Shepherd. And I know my sheep and my sheep know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I am laying down my life for the sheep. (John 10:1-15).

HIDDEN TREASURE

The Kingdom of the Heavens is like treasure buried in the open country, which a man finds, but buries again, and, in his joy about it, goes and sells all he has and buys that piece of ground. (Matthew 13:44).

THE HOUSEHOLDER I

"Therefore," He said, "remember that every Scribe well trained for the Kingdom of the Heavens is

like a householder who brings out of his storehouse new things and old." (Matthew 13:52).

THE HOUSEHOLDER II

³³"Listen to another parable. There was a householder who planted a vineyard, made a fence round it, dug a wine-tank in it, and built a strong lodge; then let the place to vinedressers, and went abroad.

³⁴When vintage-time approached, he sent his servants to the vine-dressers to receive his share of the grapes; ³⁵but the vine-dressers seized the servants, and one they cruelly beat, one they killed, one they pelted with stones. ³⁶Again he sent another party of servants more numerous than the first; and these they treated in the same manner. ³⁷Later still he sent to them his son, saying, "They will respect my son.' ³⁸"But the vine-dressers, when they saw the son, said to one another, "Here is the heir: come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' ³⁹"So they seized him, dragged him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰When then the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-dressers?" ⁴¹"He will put the wretches to a wretched death," was the reply, "and will entrust the vineyard to other vine-dressers who will render the produce to him at the vintage season."

⁴²"Have you never read in the Scriptures," said Jesus, "*'the stone which the builders rejected has been made the cornerstone: this cornerstone came from the lord, and is wonderful in our eyes'*?"

⁴³"That, I tell you, is the reason why the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and given to a nation that will exhibit the power of it. ⁴⁴"He who falls on this stone will be severely hurt; but he on whom it falls will be utterly crushed." (Matthew 21:33-44).

THE KING AND THE WICKED SERVANT

²³"For this reason the Kingdom of the Heavens may be compared to a king who determined to have a settlement of accounts with his servants. ²⁴But as soon as he began the settlement, one was brought before him who owed 10,000 talents, ²⁵and was unable to pay. So his master ordered that he and his wife and children and everything that he had should be sold, and payment be made.

²⁶The servant therefore falling down, prostrated himself at his feet and entreated him. "Only give me time,' he said, 'and I will pay you the whole.' ²⁷"Whereupon his master, touched with compassion, set him free and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But no sooner had that servant gone out, than he met with one of his fellow servants who owed him 100 shillings; and seizing him by the throat and nearly strangling him he exclaimed, "Pay me all you owe.' ²⁹"His fellow servant therefore fell at his feet and entreated him, "Only give me time,' he said, 'and I will pay you.' ³⁰"He would not, however, but went and threw him into prison until he should pay what was due. ³¹His fellow servants, therefore, seeing what had happened, were exceedingly angry; and they came and told their master without reserve all that had happened. ³²At once his master called him and said, "Wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you entreated me: ³³ought not you also to have had pity on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' ³⁴"So his master, greatly incensed, handed him over to the jailers until he should pay all he owed him. ³⁵"In the same way my Heavenly Father will deal with you, if you do not all of you forgive one another from your hearts." (Matthew 18:23-35).

THE KING CONTEMPLATING WAR

³¹Or what king, marching to encounter another king in war, does not first sit down and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand men to meet the one who is advancing against him with twenty thousand? ³²If not, while the other is still a long way off, he sends messengers and sues for peace.

³³Just as no one of you who does not detach himself from all that belongs to him can be a disciple of mine. (Luke 14:31-33).

THE LABORERS

¹"For the Kingdom of the Heavens is like an employer who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard, ²and having made an agreement with them for a shilling a day, sent them into his vineyard. ³About nine o'clock he went out and saw others loitering in the market place. ⁴To these also he said, "You also, go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' ⁵So they went. Again about twelve, and about three o'clock, he went out and did the same. ⁶And going out about five o'clock he found others loitering, and he asked them, "Why have you been standing here all day long, doing nothing?' ⁷"Because no one has hired us,' they replied. "'You also, go into the vineyard,' he said. ⁸"When evening came, the master said to his steward, "'Call the men and pay them their wages. Begin with the last set and finish with the first.' ⁹"When those came who had begun at five o'clock, they received a shilling apiece; ¹⁰and when the first came, they expected to get more, but they also each got the shilling. ¹¹So when they had received it, they grumbled against the employer, saying, ¹²"These who came last have done only one hour's work, and you have put them on a level with us who have worked the whole day and have borne the scorching heat.' ¹³"My friend,' he answered to one of them, 'I am doing you no injustice. Did you not agree with me for a shilling? ¹⁴Take your money and go. I choose to give this last comer just as much as I give you. ¹⁵Have I not a right to do what I choose with my own property? Or are you envious because I am generous?' ¹⁶"So the last shall be first, and the first last." (Matthew 20:1-16).

THE LAMB

²¹(Jesus) went on to say, "Is the lamp brought in in order to be put under the bushel or under the bed? Is it not rather in order that it may be placed on the lamp stand? ²²Why, there is nothing hidden except with a view to its being ultimately disclosed, nor has anything been made a secret but that it may at last come to light. ²³Listen, every one who has ears to listen with!" ²⁴He also said to them, "Take care what you hear. With what measure you measure, it will be measured to you, and that with interest. ²⁵For those who have will have more given them; and from those who have not, even what they have will be taken away." (Mark 4:21-25).

THE LEAVEN

Another parable He spoke to them. "The Kingdom of the Heavens," He said, "is like yeast (leaven) which a woman takes and buries in a bushel of flour, for it to work there till the whole mass has risen." (Matthew 13:33).

THE LONG JOURNEY

¹²So He said to them, "A man of noble family traveled to a distant country to obtain the rank of king, and to return. ¹³And he called ten of his servants and gave each of them a pound, instructing them to trade with the money during his absence. ¹⁴"Now his countrymen hated him, and sent a deputation after him to say, 'We are not willing that he should become our king.' ¹⁵And upon his

return, after he had obtained the sovereignty, he ordered those servants to whom he had given the money to be summoned before him, that he might learn their success in trading. ¹⁶"So the first came and said, "Sir, your pound has produced ten pounds more.' ¹⁷"Well done, good servant,' he replied; 'because you have been faithful in a very small matter, be in authority over ten towns.' ¹⁸"The second came, and said, "'Your pound, Sir, has produced five pounds.' ¹⁹"So he said to this one also, "'And you, be the governor of five towns.' ²⁰The next came. "'Sir,' he said, 'here is your pound, which I have kept wrapped up in a cloth. ²¹For I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man: you take up what you did not lay down, and you reap what you did not sow.' ²²"By your own words,' he replied, 'I will judge you, you bad servant. You knew me to be a severe man, taking up what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow: ²³why then did you not put my money into a bank, that when I came I might have received it back with interest?' ²⁴"And he said to those who stood by, "'Take the pound from him and give it to him who has the ten pounds.' ²⁵("They said to him, "'Sir, he already has ten pounds.') ²⁶"I tell you that to every one who has anything, more shall be given; and from him who has not anything, even what he has shall be taken away. ²⁷But as for those enemies of mine who were unwilling that I should become their king, bring them here, and cut them to pieces in my presence." (Luke 19:12-27).

THE LOST COIN

⁸"Or what woman who has ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully till she finds it? ⁹And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, and says, "'Congratulate me, for I have found the coin which I had lost.' ¹⁰I tell you that in the same way there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one repentant sinner." (Luke 15:8-19).

THE LOST SHEEP

⁴"Which of you men, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in their pasture and go in search of the lost one till he finds it? ⁵And when he has found it, he lifts it on his shoulder, glad at heart. ⁶Then coming home he calls his friends and neighbors together, and says, 'Congratulate me, for I have found my sheep - the one I had lost.' ⁷I tell you that in the same way there will be rejoicing in Heaven over one repentant sinner - more rejoicing than over ninety-nine blameless persons who have no need of repentance. (Luke 15:4-7).

THE MARRIAGE FEAST

¹⁵After listening to this teaching, one of His fellow guests said to Him, "Blessed is he who shall feast in God's Kingdom." ¹⁶"A man once gave a great dinner," replied Jesus, "to which he invited a large number of guests. ¹⁷At dinnertime he sent his servant to announce to those who had been invited, "'Come, for things are now ready.' ¹⁸"But they all without exception began to excuse themselves. The first told him, "'I have purchased a piece of land, and must of necessity go and look at it. Pray hold me excused.' ¹⁹"A second pleaded, "'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and am on my way to try them. Pray hold me excused.' ²⁰"Another said, "'I am just married. It is impossible for me to come.' ²¹"So the servant came and brought these answers to his master, and they stirred his anger. "'Go out quickly,' he said, 'into the streets of the city - the wide ones and the narrow. You will see poor men, and crippled, blind, lame: fetch them all in here.' ²²"Soon the

servant reported the result, saying, "Sir, what you ordered is done, and there is room still.' ²³"Go out,' replied the master, 'to the high roads and hedgerows, and compel the people to come in, so that my house may be filled. ²⁴For I tell you that not one of those who were invited shall taste my dinner.'" (Luke 14:15-24).

THE MUSTARD SEED

³¹Another parable He put before them. "The Kingdom of the Heavens," He said, "is like a mustard-seed, which a man takes and sows in his ground. ³²It is the smallest of all seeds, and yet when full-grown it is larger than any herb and forms a tree, so that the birds come and build in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32).

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

⁴⁵"Again the Kingdom of the Heavens is like a jewel merchant who is in quest of choice pearls. ⁴⁶He finds one most costly pearl; he goes away; and though it costs all he has, he buys it. (Matthew 13:45-46).

THE PERSISTENT FRIEND

⁵And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend and shall go to him in the middle of the night and say, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶for a friend of mine has just come to my house from a distance, and I have nothing for him to eat"? ⁷"And he from indoors shall answer, "Do not pester me. The door is now barred, and I am here in bed with my children. I cannot get up and give you bread.' ⁸"I tell you that even if he will not rise and give him the loaves because he is his friend, at any rate because of his persistency he will rouse himself and give him as many as he requires. ⁹"So I say to you, 'Ask, and what you ask for shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and the door shall be opened to you.' ¹⁰For every one who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, the door shall be opened. (Luke 11:5-10).

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

¹⁰"Two men went up to the Temple to pray," He said; "one being a Pharisee and the other a tax-gatherer. ¹¹The Pharisee, standing erect, prayed as follows by himself: "O God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people - I am not a thief nor a cheat nor an adulterer, nor do I even resemble this tax-gatherer. ¹²I fast twice a week. I pay the tithe on all my gains.' ¹³"But the tax-gatherer, standing far back, would not so much as lift his eyes to Heaven, but kept beating his breast and saying, "O God, be reconciled to me, sinner that I am.' ¹⁴"I tell you that this man went home more thoroughly absolved from guilt than the other; for every one who uplifts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be uplifted." (Luke 18:10-14).

PARABLE OF PRAYER

¹He also taught them by a parable that they must always pray and never lose heart. ²"In a certain

town," He said, "there was a judge who had no fear of God and no respect for man. ³And in the same town was a widow who repeatedly came and entreated him, saying, "Give me justice and stop my oppressor.' ⁴"For a time he would not, but afterwards he said to himself, "Though I have neither reverence for God nor respect for man, ⁵yet because she annoys me I will give her justice, to prevent her from constantly coming to pester me." ⁶And the Lord said, "Hear those words of the unjust judge. ⁷And will not God avenge the wrongs of His own People who cry aloud to Him day and night, although He seems slow in taking action on their behalf? ⁸Yes, He will soon avenge their wrongs. Yet, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?" (Luke 18:1-8).

THE PRODIGAL SON

¹¹(Jesus) went on to say, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that comes to me.' " So he divided his wealth between them. ¹³No long time afterwards the younger son got all together and traveled to a distant country, where he wasted his money in debauchery and excess. ¹⁴At last, when he had spent everything, there came a terrible famine throughout that country, and he began to feel the pinch of want. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself to one of the inhabitants of that country, who sent him on to his farm to tend swine; ¹⁶and he longed to make a hearty meal of the pods the swine were eating, but no one gave him any. ¹⁷"But on coming to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired men have more bread than they want, while I here am dying of hunger! ¹⁸I will rise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before you: ¹⁹I no longer deserve to be called a son of yours: treat me as one of your hired men.' ²⁰"So he rose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and pitied him, and ran and threw his arms round his neck and kissed him tenderly. ²¹"Father,' cried the son, 'I have sinned against Heaven and before you: no longer do I deserve to be called a son of yours.' ²²"But the father said to his servants, "Fetch a good coat quickly - the best one - and put it on him; and bring a ring for his finger and shoes for his feet. ²³Fetch the fat calf and kill it, and let us feast and enjoy ourselves; ²⁴for my son here was dead and has come to life again: he was lost and has been found.' "And they began to be merry. ²⁵"Now his elder son was out on the farm; and when he returned and came near home, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶Then he called one of the lads to him and asked what all this meant. ²⁷"Your brother has come,' he replied; 'and your father has had the fat calf killed, because he has got him home safe and sound.' ²⁸"Then he was angry and would not go in. But his father came out and entreated him. ²⁹"All these years,' replied the son, 'I have been slaving for you, and I have never at any time disobeyed any of your orders, and yet you have never given me so much as a kid, for me to enjoy myself with my friends; ³⁰but now that this son of yours is come who has eaten up your property among his bad women, you have killed the fat calf for him.' ³¹"you my dear son,' said the father, 'are always with me, and all that is mine is also yours. ³²We are bound to make merry and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has come back to life, he was lost and has been found.'" (Luke 15:11-32).

THE RICH FOOL

¹⁶And He spoke a parable to them. "A certain rich man's lands," He said, "yielded abundant crops, ¹⁷and he debated within himself, saying, "What am I to do? For I have no place in which to store my crops.' ¹⁸"And he said to himself, "This is what I will do: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and in them I will store up all my harvest and my wealth; ¹⁹and I will say to my life, "Life, you have ample possessions laid up for many years to come: take your ease, eat, drink, enjoy

yourself.' ²⁰"But God said to him, "Foolish man, this night your life is demanded from you; and these preparations - for whom shall they be?" ²¹"So is it with him who amasses treasure for himself, but has no riches in God." ²²Then turning to His disciples He said, "For this reason I say to you, 'Dismiss all anxious care for your lives, inquiring what you are to eat, and for your bodies, what you are to put on.' ²³For life is a greater gift than food, and the body is a greater gift than clothing. (Luke 12:16-23).

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

¹⁹"There was once a rich man who habitually arrayed himself in purple and fine linen, and enjoyed a splendid banquet every day, ²⁰while at his outer door there lay a beggar, Lazarus by name, ²¹covered with sores and longing to make a full meal off the scraps flung on the floor from the rich man's table. Nay, the dogs, too, used to come and lick his sores. ²²"But in course of time the beggar died; and he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and had a funeral. ²³And in Hades, being in torment, he looked and saw Abraham in the far distance, and Lazarus resting in his arms. ²⁴So he cried aloud, and said, "'Father Abraham, take pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.' ²⁵''Remember, my child,' said Abraham, 'that you had all your good things during your lifetime, and that Lazarus in like manner had his bad things. But, now and here, he is receiving consolation and you are in agony. ²⁶And, besides all this, a vast chasm is immovably fixed between us and you, put there in order that those who desire to cross from this side to you may not be able, nor any be able to cross over from your side to us.' ²⁷''I entreat you then, father,' said he, 'to send him to my father's house. ²⁸For I have five brothers. Let him earnestly warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' ²⁹''They have Moses and the Prophets,' replied Abraham; 'let them hear them.' ³⁰''No, father Abraham,' he pleaded; 'but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' ³¹''If they are deaf to Moses and the Prophets,' replied Abraham, 'they would not be led to believe even if some one should rise from the dead.' (Luke 16:19-31).

THE SAVORLESS SALT

³⁴"Salt is good: but if even the salt has become tasteless, what will you use to season it? ³⁵Neither for land nor dunghill is it of any use; they throw it away. Listen, every one who has ears to listen with!" (Luke 14:34-35).

THE SOWER AND THE SOILS

³"Listen: the sower goes out to sow. ⁴As he sows, some of the seed falls by the wayside, and the birds come and peck it up. ⁵Some falls on the rocky ground where it finds but little earth, and it shoots up quickly because it has no depth of soil; ⁶but when the sun is risen, it is scorched, and through having no root it withers away. ⁷Some, again, falls among the thorns; and the thorns spring up and stifle it, so that it yields no crop. ⁸But some of the seed falls into good ground, and gives a return: it comes up and increases, and yields thirty, sixty, or a hundred-fold." ⁹"Listen," He added, "every one who has ears to listen with!" ¹⁰When He was alone, the Twelve and the others who were about Him requested Him to explain His figurative language. ¹¹"To you," He replied, "has been entrusted the secret truth concerning the Kingdom of God; but to those others outside your number all this is spoken in figurative language; ¹²that '*they may look and look but not see, and listen and*

listen but not understand, lest perchance they should return and be pardoned.“¹³Do you all miss the meaning of this parable?” He added; “how then will you understand the rest of my parables?”¹⁴What the sower sows is the Message.¹⁵Those who receive the seed by the wayside are those in whom the Message is sown, but, when they have heard it, Satan comes at once and carries away the Message sown in them.¹⁶In the same way those who receive the seed on the rocky places are those who, when they have heard the Message, at once accept it joyfully,¹⁷but they have no root within them. They last for a time; then, when suffering or persecution comes because of the Message, they are immediately overthrown.¹⁸Others there are who receive the seed among the thorns: these are they who have heard the Message,¹⁹but worldly cares and the deceitfulness of wealth and the excessive pursuit of other objects come in and stifle the Message, and it becomes unfruitful.²⁰Those, on the other hand, who have received the seed on the good ground, are all who hear the Message and welcome it, and yield a return of thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold.” (Mark 4:3-20).

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

²⁶Another saying of His was this: “The Kingdom of God is as if a man scattered seed over the ground:²⁷he spends days and nights, now awake, now asleep, while the seed sprouts and grows tall, he knows not how.²⁸Of itself the land produces the crop - first the blade, then the ear; afterwards the perfect grain is seen in the ear.²⁹But no sooner is the crop ripe, than he sends the reapers, because the time of harvest has come.” (Mark 4:26-29).

THE TALENTS

¹⁴“Why, it is like a man who, when going on his travels, called his bondservants and entrusted his property to their care.¹⁵To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one - to each according to his individual capacity; and then started from home.¹⁶Without delay the one who had received the five talents went and employed them in business, and gained five more.¹⁷In the same way he who had the two gained two more.¹⁸But the man who had received the one went and dug a hole and buried his master's money.¹⁹After a long lapse of time the master of those servants returned, and had a reckoning with them.²⁰The one who had received the five talents came and brought five more, and said, “Sir, it was five talents that you entrusted to me: see, I have gained five more.”²¹“You have done well, good and trustworthy servant,” replied his master; ‘you have been trustworthy in the management of a little, I will put you in charge of much: share your master's joy.’²²The second, who had received the two talents, came and said, “Sir, it was two talents you entrusted to me: see, I have gained two more.”²³“Good and trustworthy servant, you have done well,’ his master replied; ‘you have been trustworthy in the management of a little, I will put you in charge of much: share your master's joy.’²⁴But, next, the man who had the one talent in his keeping came and said, “Sir, I knew you to be a severe man, reaping where you had not sown and garnering what you had not winnowed.²⁵So being afraid I went and buried your talent in the ground: there you have what belongs to you.”²⁶“You wicked and slothful servant,” replied his master, ‘did you know that I reap where I have not sown, and garner what I have not winnowed?²⁷Your duty then was to deposit my money in some bank, and so when I came I should have got back my property with interest.²⁸So take away the talent from him, and give it to the man who has the ten.’²⁹(For to every one who has, more shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him who has nothing, even what he has shall be taken away.)³⁰But as for this worthless servant, put him out into the darkness outside: there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.’ (Matthew 25:14-30).

TARES AMONG THE WHEAT

²⁴Another parable He put before them. "The Kingdom of the Heavens," He said, "may be compared to a man who has sown good seed in his field,²⁵but during the night his enemy comes, and over the first seed he sows darnel among the wheat, and goes away.²⁶But when the blade shoots up and the grain is formed, then appears the darnel also.²⁷"So the farmer's men come and ask him, "Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed on your land? Where then does the darnel come from?"²⁸"Some enemy has done this,' he said. "Shall we go, and collect it?' the men inquire.²⁹"No,' he replied, 'for fear that while collecting the darnel you should at the same time root up the wheat with it.³⁰Leave both to grow together until the harvest, and at harvest-time I will direct the reapers, Collect the darnel first, and make it up into bundles to burn it, but bring all the wheat into my barn."³¹(Matthew 13:24-30).

TEN VIRGINS

¹"Then will the Kingdom of the Heavens be found to be like ten bridesmaids who took their torches and went out to meet the bridegroom.²Five of them were foolish and five were wise.³For the foolish, when they took their torches, did not provide themselves with oil;⁴but the wise, besides their torches, took oil in their flasks.⁵The bridegroom was a long time in coming, so that meanwhile they all became drowsy and fell asleep.⁶But at midnight there is a loud cry, "'The bridegroom! Go out and meet him!'⁷Then all those bridesmaids roused themselves and trimmed their torches.⁸"Give us some of your oil,' said the foolish ones to the wise, 'for our torches are going out.'⁹"But perhaps,' replied the wise, 'there will not be enough for all of us. Go to the shops rather, and buy some for yourselves.'¹⁰So they went to buy. But meanwhile the bridegroom came; those bridesmaids who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet; and the door was shut.¹¹"Afterwards the other bridesmaids came and cried, "'Sir, Sir, open the door to us.'¹²"In solemn truth I tell you,' he replied, 'I do not know you.'¹³Keep awake therefore; for you know neither the day nor the hour. (Matthew 25:1-13).

TESTING OF SERVANTS

⁴¹"Master," said Peter, "are you addressing this parable to us, or to all alike?"⁴²"Who, then," replied the Lord, "is the faithful and intelligent steward whom his Master will put in charge of His household to serve out their rations at the proper times?⁴³Blessed is that servant whom his Master when He comes shall find so doing.⁴⁴I tell you truly that He will put him in authority over all His possessions.⁴⁵But if that servant should say in his heart, 'My Master is a long time in coming,' and should begin to beat the menservants and the maids, and to eat and drink, drinking even to excess;⁴⁶that servant's Master will come on a day when he is not expecting Him and at an hour that he knows not of, and will punish him severely, and make him share the lot of the unfaithful.⁴⁷And that servant who has been told his Master's will and yet made no preparation and did not obey His will, will receive many lashes.⁴⁸But he who had not been told it and yet did what deserved the scourge, will receive but few lashes. To whomsoever much has been given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been entrusted, of him a larger amount will be demanded. (Luke 12:41-48).

THE TOWER

²⁸"Which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not sit down first and calculate the cost, asking if he has the means to finish it? ²⁹lest perhaps, when he has laid the foundation and is unable to finish, all who see it shall begin to jeer at him, ³⁰saying, 'This man began to build, but could not finish.' (Luke 14:28-30).

TWO BUILDERS

⁴⁶"And why do you all call me 'Master, Master' and yet not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷Every one who comes to me and listens to my words and puts them in practice, I will show you whom he is like. ⁴⁸He is like a man building a house, who digs and goes deep, and lays the foundation on the rock; and when a flood comes, the torrent bursts upon that house, but is unable to shake it, because it is securely built. ⁴⁹But he who has heard and not practiced is like a man who has built a house upon the soft soil without a foundation, against which the torrent bursts, and immediately it collapses, and terrible is the wreck and ruin of that house." (Luke 6:46-49).

TWO DEBTORS

⁴⁰In answer to his thoughts Jesus said to him, "Simon, I have a word to say to you." "Rabbi, say on," he replied. ⁴¹"There were once two men in debt to one money-lender," said Jesus; "one owed him five hundred shillings and the other fifty. ⁴²But neither of them could pay anything; so he freely forgave them both. Tell me, then, which of them will love him most?" ⁴³"I suppose," replied Simon, "the one to whom he forgave most." "You have judged rightly," Jesus rejoined. (Luke 7:40-43).

TWO SONS

^{28b}There was a man who had two sons. He came to the elder of them, and said, "My son, go and work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹"I will not,' he replied. "But afterwards he was sorry, and went. ³⁰He came to the second and spoke in the same manner. His answer was, "'I will go, Sir.' " But he did not go. ³¹'Which of the two did as his father desired?' " The first," they said. "I solemnly tell you,' replied Jesus, "that the tax-gatherers and the notorious sinners are entering the Kingdom of God in front of you. ³²For John came to you observing all sorts of ritual, and you put no faith in him: the tax-gatherers and the notorious sinners did put faith in him, and you, though you saw this example set you, were not even afterwards sorry so as to believe him. (Matthew 21:28-32).

THE UNJUST STEWARD

¹He said also to His disciples: "There was a rich man who had a steward, about whom a report was brought to him, that he was wasting his property. ²He called him and said, "What is this I hear about you? Render an account of your stewardship, for I cannot let you hold it any longer.' "Then the steward said within himself, "'What am I to do? For my master is taking away the stewardship from me. I am not strong enough for field labor: to beg, I should be ashamed. ⁴I see what to do, in order that when I am discharged from the stewardship they may give me a home in their own

houses.' ⁵"So he called all his master's debtors, one by one, and asked the first, 'How much are you in debt to my master?' ⁶"A hundred firkins of oil,' he replied. "Here is your account,' said the steward: 'sit down quickly and change it into fifty firkins.' ⁷To a second he said, "And how much do you owe?' "⁸A hundred quarters of wheat,' was the answer. "Here is your account,' said he: 'change it into eighty quarters.' ⁸"And the master praised the dishonest steward for his shrewdness; for, in relation to their own contemporaries, the men of this age are shrewder than the sons of Light. ⁹"But I charge you, so to use the wealth which is ever tempting to dishonesty as to win friends who, when it fails, shall welcome you to the tents that never perish. ¹⁰The man who is honest in a very small matter is honest in a great one also; and he who is dishonest in a very small matter is dishonest in a great one also. ¹¹If therefore you have not proved yourselves faithful in dealing with the wealth that is tainted with fraud, who will entrust to you the true good? ¹²And if you have not been faithful in dealing with that which is not your own, who will give you that which is your own? ¹³"No servant can be in bondage to two masters. For either he will hate one and love the other, or else he will cling fast to one and scorn the other. You cannot be bondservants both of God and of gold." (Luke 16:1-13).

WARNINGS OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

³⁵"Have your girdles on, and let your lamps be alight; ³⁶and be yourselves like men waiting for their master - on the look-out till he shall return from the wedding feast - that, when he comes and knocks, they may open the door instantly. ³⁷Blessed are those servants, whom their Master when He comes shall find on the watch. I tell you in solemn truth, that He will tie an apron round Him, and will bid them recline at table while He comes and waits on them. ³⁸And whether it is in the second watch or in the third that He comes and finds them so, blessed are they. ³⁹Of this be sure, that if the master of the house had known what time the robber was coming, he would have kept awake and not have allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰Be you also ready, for at an hour when you are not expecting Him the Son of Man will come." (Luke 12:35-40).



Chapter 11. Jesus and Other Wisdom



JESUS AMAZES THE TEACHERS AT THE TEMPLE

²⁸And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: ²⁹For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (Matthew 7:28-29).

The Hebrew Bible foretells the Messiah with descriptions of how He will arrive, what He will do, and so forth. I can understand how that before Jesus came, the prophecies probably seemed surreal, and a long way off.

Then one day He came. Messiah did not jet in on a jumbo. He was not escorted in by the secret service or even by a bunch of nuns in a limo. He just happened to be born in a stable to these ordinary parents, grew up with His brothers and other kids, and went to the temple at age 12. Of course He was not wearing a special “Messiah” outfit, so when He amazed the teachers at the temple, they had no idea who He was.

When Jesus was about 30 years of age, He started His ministry. All of the sudden this every-day man began speaking as God, and of course He is God, but that was probably tougher to grasp than we think. How would we have behaved had we been there? Maybe we are lucky our time is now. Maybe we would not have accepted Him either, as so many of that day refused to do.

The Messiah, Jesus Christ, first had to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies and bases for being on earth.

JESUS EXPLAINS O.T. BASIS FOR HIS SUFFERINGS AND GLORY

²⁷And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. ⁴⁴And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. ⁴⁵Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: ⁴⁷And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:27, 44-47).

The disciples were present for most of Christ's ministry. Imagine the astounding events they witnessed- healings, casting out of devils, the resurrections of Lazarus, Jairus's daughter, and Himself! They heard wise sayings from God. They saw a few fishes feed multitudes and water turned to wine. Some saw Christ transfigured and speaking to Moses and Elijah. Now, the disciples are about to see Him ascend to heaven. We have the advantage of looking back and studying biblical history. The disciples still did not understand what was about to happen. Jesus explained it, the fulfillment of the scriptures- now they would see it.

JESUS DEMONSTRATES HIS DIVINITY

²¹They went into the town of Capernaum. On the Sabbath day, when Jesus went into the synagogue, he began to teach the people right away. ²²They were amazed at what he taught. Jesus was teaching them as one with authority--not as the teachers of the law. (Mark 1:21-22 Simple English).

Imagine a wise teacher coming to your church and teaching astonishing lessons. At some point he reveals he is God.

²³There was a man in their synagogue with an evil spirit. Suddenly, he shouted, ²⁴Jesus of Nazareth! What do you want with us? Did you come here to destroy us? I know who you are--the Holy One of God! ²⁵But Jesus stopped the evil spirit. Jesus said, Stop talking and come out of the man! ²⁶The evil spirit jerked the man around. He shouted loudly and came out of the man. ²⁷The people were shocked. They started asking one another, What is this? A new teaching? With authority Jesus commands evil spirits and they obey him. ²⁸And so, the news about Jesus went out immediately to the whole area around the land of Galilee. (Mark 1:23-28 Simple English).

By the way, an interesting twist, especially when we compare the preceding account to modern exorcisms, with reports of demons admonishing the exorcists:

Jesus healed the many people who had many types of diseases. He also threw out many demons. He would not allow the demons to talk, because the demons knew who he was. Mark 1:34 Simple English).

Further information, including testimony from the enemy:

Demons were coming out of many people, shouting, You are the Son of God! But Jesus wouldn't let the demons say anything more; the demons knew that Jesus was the Messiah. (Luke 4:41 Simple English).

¹⁸While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

¹⁹And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples. ²³And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, ²⁴He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. ²⁵But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. ²⁶And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land. (Matthew 9:18-19, 23-26). *First, note that the ruler had faith in Jesus, so Jesus went. Jesus got there too late, and "they" scorned Jesus. Jesus, all-knowing, knew this, and Jesus, all-powerful, resurrected her. This is also an important lesson in Jesus' power over death in*

His own later resurrection.

²⁰And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: ²¹For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. ²²But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. Matthew 9:20-22). *This episode took place on the way to the ruler's house in the previous passage. This woman perhaps did not fully understand omnipotence, but she had faith in the power of this man Jesus. No matter how she understood, His omnipotence healed her.*

JESUS ANSWERS SATAN

The need for the Messiah was due to first sin. That is, Jesus Christ had to die for the remission of our sins resulting from our sinful nature due to the original sin. So the Messiah came to conquer sin.

Who created sin? I can tell you God did not. *And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.* (Genesis 1:31). When God ended creation, He called everything “very good,” which He would not have and could not have said if sin existed at that time. Satan created sin when he and one-third of the angels fell. Satan coaxed mankind to sin when he tempted Eve.

Therefore, Christ’s first task after establishing that He is the Messiah was to show power over Satan and sin. Satan was pleased to oblige and wasted no time in tempting Jesus in the wilderness. *The Messiah won. The Messiah won. My Messiah won.*

³And when (Satan) came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. ⁴But (Jesus) answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:3-4.) *Jesus points to the importance of spiritual life over material life. Jesus is just beginning His ministry of revealing the omniscience and omnipotence of God*

⁵Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, ⁶And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. ⁷Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. (Matthew 4:5-7). *Satan well knows the power of Jesus. Jesus does not need help from the angels He created. He admonishes Satan again spiritually, ignoring the physical.*

⁸Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; ⁹And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. ¹⁰Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (Matthew 4:8-10). *Again Satan tempts with the physical. Jesus rebukes him with spiritual law.*

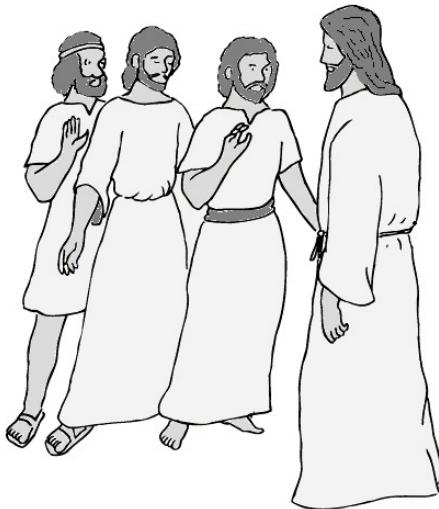
JESUS AND THE MATERIAL WORLD

Throughout Jesus’ life and ministry, He took a dim view on worldly possessions and touted heavenly rewards. He encouraged His followers to sell what they own, give to the poor, and follow

Him. If we had a heavenly perspective, we would probably react the same way to things of the flesh. Imagine if you drove home to heaven every night and came to earth every day to work, trying to gain followers for the Messiah. What is on earth is of no comparison to heaven, so meager that you would not want it. (Maybe it would compare to jumping out of the car to compete with some buzzards over a road kill.)

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. (Matthew 5:12). *After declaring that the poor, the meek, the merciful are blessed, Jesus tells the multitude of a waiting eternal reward. At that time they did not fully understand. Jesus was paving the way that one day they could understand.*

JESUS AMONG SINNERS



Continuing on the road kill example, if you came to the roadside to invite buzzards to a feast, you have to go where the buzzards go. Jesus went to the sinners and to the sick, the people that needed Him most. The self-righteous and the rich had little use for Christ's living water.

²And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. ³And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. ⁴And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? ⁵For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? ⁶But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. (Matthew 9:2-6). *You and I learned about Jesus after the whole story was written. The people of His day only learned as He revealed. This passage demonstrates Christ's full authority both spiritually and physically.*

¹⁰And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. ¹¹And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? ¹²But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. ¹³But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but

sinners to repentance. (Matthew 9:10-13).

For Satan to work his evil, where might he be the most effective? How about in a church? Why waste time on those already wicked? Would it be most effective to work against the most evangelical of churches? So with Jesus, the worst sinners, not at all self-righteous, needed Him most.

JESUS AND THE PHARISEES

And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. (Luke 4:24).

In the drama on the silver screen and the small screen, our heroes face impossible odds, inescapable traps, and near perfect treachery. They always find a way out (we know they will). Jesus faced situations many times that would have done us in, yet like our acting heroes, He always escaped.

The Pharisees were one of three main sects of Jews, literally “the separate people.” They strictly followed the Mosaic laws and Jewish customs. The Pharisees believed in eternal reward based on works. In Jesus’ day they were also adding to The Law. This self-righteousness led to Jesus’ accusation of the Pharisees as “Hypocrites.”

²³One Sabbath He was walking through the wheatfields when His disciples began to pluck the ears of wheat as they went. ²⁴So the Pharisees said to Him, "Look! why are they doing what on the Sabbath is unlawful?" ²⁵"Have you never read," Jesus replied, "what David did when the necessity arose and he and his men were hungry: ²⁶how he entered the house of God in the High-priesthood of Abiathar, and ate the Presented Loaves - which none but the priests are allowed to eat - and gave some to his men also?" ²⁷And Jesus said to them: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; ²⁸so that the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." (Mark 2:23-28 WEY). *The Pharisees hated Jesus and looked for any excuse to deride Him. Jesus turns the tables with, “The Sabbath was made for man.”*

^{10b}And (the Pharisees) questioned Him, "Is it right to cure people on the Sabbath?" Their intention was to bring a charge against Him. ¹¹"Which of you is there," He replied, "who, if he has but a single sheep and it falls into a hole on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? ¹²Is not a man, however, far superior to a sheep? Therefore it is right to do good on the Sabbath." (Matthew 12:10-12). *Jesus must have cringed each time He saw the Pharisees there waiting for Him, much like I did when I saw a bully. Of course the Pharisees were no matches, just annoying. But, thanks to the persistence of the Pharisees, we benefit to this day from the lessons and words of Jesus. The Pharisees were self-righteously concerned with the Sabbath, again, and Jesus, again, took them to task.*

The Pharisees marvel about the wisdom of this man, Jesus. Jesus answers this question, and says, The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. (Matthew 12:42).

³The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? ⁴And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, ⁵And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

⁶Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. ⁷They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorce, and to put her away? ⁸He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. (Matthew 19:3-9). *Jesus expertly countered the conceit of the Pharisees by telling them that the laws were established for their weaknesses. The Pharisees understood the laws for man, but not the mind of God.*

¹⁴So (the Pharisees) came to Him. "Rabbi," they said, "we know that you are a truthful man and you do not fear any one; for you do not recognize human distinctions, but teach God's way truly. Is it allowable to pay poll tax to Caesar, or not?" ¹⁵"Shall we pay, or shall we refuse to pay?" But He, knowing their hypocrisy, replied, "Why try to ensnare me? Bring me a shilling for me to look at." ¹⁶They brought one; and He asked them, "Whose is this likeness and this inscription?" "Caesar's," they replied. ¹⁷"What is Caesar's," replied Jesus, "pay to Caesar - and what is God's, pay to God." And they wondered exceedingly at Him. (Mark 12:14-17 WEY). *I like the King James wording of verse 17, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him." Imagine yourself trying to answer the Pharisees. I cannot imagine what big rigmarole I would have gone through, and it would have ended in argument, if it ended at all.*

³⁴But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. ³⁵Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, ³⁶Master, which is the great commandment in the law? ³⁷Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:34-40). *One would think that the Pharisees would tire of losing arguments to Jesus. All of these Pharisees put their heads together and come up with stumpers, and Jesus keeps getting them!*

ENTER THE SCRIBES

The Scribes were the lawyers of the bunch who copied and interpreted the ancient laws. Many Scribes had disciples of their own. They were no doubt at least jealous of this newcomer, Jesus, and detested His changing regard for the Mosaic Law.

¹Then there came to Jesus a party of Pharisees and Scribes from Jerusalem, who inquired, ²"Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the Elders by not washing their hands before meals?" ³"Why do you, too," He retorted, "transgress God's commands for the sake of your tradition?" ⁴For God said, 'Honor thy father and thy mother'; and 'let him who reviles father or mother be certainly put to death'; ⁵but you - this is what you say: 'If a man says to his father or mother, That is consecrated, whatever it is, which otherwise you should have received from me - ⁶he shall be absolved from honoring his father'; and so you have abrogated God's Word for the sake of your tradition. ⁷Hypocrites! well did Isaiah prophesy of you, ⁸"This is a People who honor Me with their lips, while their heart is far away from Me; ⁹but it is in vain they worship me, while they lay down precepts which are mere human rules."¹⁰Then, when He had called the people to Him, Jesus said, "Hear and understand. ¹¹It is not what goes into a man's mouth that defiles him; but it is what comes out of his mouth - that defiles a man." (Matthew 15:1-11 WEY). *The Pharisees, reinforced*

by the Scribes, gained strength in numbers, albeit false strength. They could be no matches for the LORD.

¹⁵And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. ¹⁶And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? ¹⁷When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. ¹⁸And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? ¹⁹And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. ²⁰But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. *(Mark 2:15-20). The scribes and Pharisees again are concerned with "The Law." They chose not to understand that God was with them in Christ. Jesus' answer is fundamentally that the concern for eternal life is more important than the laws. The Pharisees concern for law was merely a show, besides.*

²²And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. ²³And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. ²⁶And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. ²⁷No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. ²⁸Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: ²⁹But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: ³⁰Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit. *(Mark 3:22-30). Now the Pharisees friends are on a new kick. They lose every time they bring up the Sabbath with Jesus, so now they resort to accusing Him of having powers from Satan. Why would they think Satan would cast out Satan? That is Jesus' point, which He uses to turn the tables on the Pharisees.*

THE SADDUCEES

The Sadducees were generally the opponents of the Pharisees. A Jewish party of high priests, they took law only from the scripture, but denied any reference to eternal life. The Sadducees also denied spirits and angels. John the Baptist referred to them as vipers (Matt. 3:7). As members of the Sanhedrin, along with the Pharisees, Paul the apostle was able to outwit them and to put them at odds with each other. The Sadducees main thrust with Jesus was to embarrass Him with questions about eternal life.

¹⁸Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, ¹⁹Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. ²⁰Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed. ²¹And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise. ²²And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also. ²³In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife. ²⁴And Jesus answering said unto them, Do

ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? ²⁵For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven. ²⁶And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? ²⁷He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err. (Mark 12:18-27). *Interestingly, the Sadducees use a question about the afterlife to try to trick Jesus, and they do not believe in the afterlife.*

THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND THE ELDERS

The chief priests of Jesus' day were a remnant from the days of the temple and the high priests. The chief priests were essentially political appointees. The elders came out of the tribal system of Israel. Elders were the oldest man in a family, and sometimes one of those elders appointed by the village as their collective elder.

²³And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? ²⁴And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? ²⁶But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. ²⁷And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. (Matthew 21:23-27). *This was a supreme example of faith. By faith, one could see that Jesus was of God. Jesus should not need to tell anyone with their spiritual eyes open by what authority he does "these things." The ultimate embarrassment to the chief priests and elders is that Jesus refused to answer their question, and they were made fools in the process.*

THE RULER OF THE SYNAGOGUE

¹⁰And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. ¹¹And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. ¹²And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. ¹³And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. ¹⁴And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. ¹⁵The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? ¹⁶And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? ¹⁷And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him. (Luke 13:10-17). *Does mankind have less need than the beast of the field? Jesus makes a brilliant illustration giving justification for healing an afflicted (which, by the way, is brought on by Satan and sin) daughter of Abraham.*

JESUS CHALLENGED BY HIS DISCIPLES

Disciples challenging the Master reminds me of children challenging their parents. That is, the nature of the disciples' questions is often childish. "Who do you like best?"

¹Just then the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who ranks higher than others in the Kingdom of the Heavens?" ²So He called a young child to Him, and, bidding him stand in the midst of them, ³said, "In solemn truth I tell you that unless you turn and become like little children, you will in no case be admitted into the Kingdom of the Heavens. ⁴Whoever therefore shall humble himself as this young child, he it is who is superior to others in the Kingdom of the Heavens. ⁵And whoever for my sake receives one young child such as this, receives me. ⁶But whoever shall occasion the fall of one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for him to have a millstone hung round his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.¹⁰"Beware of ever despising one of these little ones, for I tell you that in Heaven their angels have continual access to my Father who is in Heaven. (Matthew 18:1-6, 10 WEY). *Are the disciples childish to ask who ranks highest? Perhaps no different than us wondering who our boss favors. Jesus is the master of making his point by opposite extreme. He in effect tells His disciples that the least is greatest, and that it is because of their innocence, meekness, and love of the LORD. Can the least servant be the greatest in the love for his master?*

⁷"Alas for the world because of causes of falling! They cannot but come, but alas for each man through whom they come! ⁸If your hand or your foot is causing you to fall into sin, cut it off and away with it. It is better for you to enter into Life crippled in hand or foot than to remain in possession of two sound hands or feet but be thrown into the fire of the Ages. ⁹And if your eye is causing you to fall into sin, tear it out and away with it; it is better for you to enter into Life with only one eye, than to remain in possession of two eyes but be thrown into the Gehenna of fire. (Matthew 18:7-9 WEY). *Jesus continues to answer the question asked in Matthew 18:1. This is a lesson in dedication to the LORD. All sin is against the LORD, even when it is against man. Jesus tells us in this lesson to avoid temptation at all cost. (Great will be our reward in Heaven.). The scriptures tell us, For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (Romans 3:23). Jesus' entire ministry leads to the Good news of Salvation through Him, available to the worst sinner,* ²⁴*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: ²⁵Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (Romans 3:24-25).*

²¹Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? ²²Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. (Matthew 18:21-22). *Did the disciples ask Jesus these questions because they wanted to learn, or was it for some kind of shock value? I asked my junior high school science teacher if the hot stuff in the middle of the earth could be hell. I got in trouble. So if Peter would have asked, "Should we forgive a thousand times?" Jesus would have said, Nay, a thousand times a thousand."*

²⁰Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. ²¹And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. ²²But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. ²³And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I

am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. ²⁴And when the (other) ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. (Matthew 20:20-24). *This little scenario came about by the mother of two of the disciples, yet the other disciples were resentful over a matter Peter previously raised. The mother wanted elevated status for her sons. Did the disciples ask, "Who is greatest in heaven" just two short chapters ago? It is natural for a mother to want the most or the best for her children, but as Jesus replied, she did not know what she asked.* ²⁵But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. ²⁶But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; ²⁷And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: ²⁸Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:25-28). *Jesus gives glory to The Father. Jesus came to minister, not to be worshipped.*

THE FINAL ANSWER

Jesus always had a good answer, a good defense. Jesus had a powerful offense, too: ⁴¹Then, surrounded by the Pharisees, he asked them a question: ⁴²What about the Messiah? Whose son is he? The son of David, they replied. ⁴³Then why does David, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, call him "Lord?" Jesus asked. For David said, ⁴⁴God said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies beneath your feet. ⁴⁵Since David called him "Lord," how can he be merely his son? ⁴⁶They had no answer. And after that no one dared ask him any more questions. Matthew 22:41-46 LVB).

Jesus had a final blitz for the Pharisees, and the scribes as well; a dissertation known as "The Seven Woes:"

¹Then said Jesus to the crowds and to his disciples, ²"The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; ³so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice. ⁴They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger.

⁵They do all their deeds to be seen by men; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, ⁶and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, ⁷and salutations in the market places, and being called rabbi by men. ⁸But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren. ⁹And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. ¹⁰Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ.

¹¹He who is greatest among you shall be your servant; ¹²whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

¹³⁻¹⁴"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in. ¹⁵Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you traverse sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves. ¹⁶"Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'If any one swears by the temple, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' ¹⁷You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? ¹⁸And you say, 'If any one swears by the altar, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.' ¹⁹You blind

men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? ²⁰So he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; ²¹and he who swears by the temple, swears by it and by him who dwells in it; ²²and he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

²³"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. ²⁴You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

²⁵"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of extortion and rapacity. ²⁶You blind Pharisee! first cleanse the inside of the cup and of the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

²⁷"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸So you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

²⁹"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, ³⁰saying, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.'

³¹Thus you witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. ³²Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. ³³You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?

³⁴Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, ³⁵that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. ³⁶Truly, I say to you, all this will come upon this generation.

³⁷"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! ³⁸Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate. ³⁹For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'“ (Matthew 23:1-39 RSV). *As a youngster, I loved when the hero turned the tables on the bad guys. The Lone Ranger would whistle for Silver, Tonto would throw him a gun, and they would get the drop on the guys in black hats. In this passage, Jesus “gets the drop on ‘em” and assails those bad guys like I wanted Him to all chapter. The Pharisees concern themselves with human law, not God’s law. Jesus condemns them for this and calls them Hypocrites.*

THE MESSIAH'S REWARDS

²⁸Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30). *We love our children and grandchildren. We do not like to see them suffer. As a grandfather I want to do anything I can for*

my little loved ones to keep them from harm and to make them happy, even if I have to suffer a little. Jesus feels that way about His creation. He died for us.

Jesus' mission on this earth was not to show how clever He could be. His mission was revealed in Isaiah chapter 53, among other places:

¹Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? ²For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. ³He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. ⁸By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? ⁹And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; ¹¹he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah chapter 53 RSV).

Jesus started his ministry after being tempted by Satan. It had to be this way- God and Satan are as opposite as opposites get, as far as the east is from the west. Jesus had to draw a line in the sand. Satan has no power over God; God has all power over his creation, including Satan, whom He created. God gives us great power: *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.* (Psalms 103:12). When Jesus exhibited His power over Satan, He exhibited His power over heaven and earth.

Satan is the destroyer. Jesus is the Savior. Have you accepted Jesus as your Savior? If you will, just pray, “*Dear God, I know I am a sinner and that you sent your Son to die for my sins. I accept your gift and want Jesus to be my personal Savior. Jesus, please enter my life and guide me. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.*”



Chapter 12. The Universe



The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun. (Psalms 19:1-4).

THE BIG BANG

Who lit the fuse for the Big Bang? Where did all the matter come from that blew up in the Big Bang? Could the matter have always been? Evolutionary thought always falls a bit short. Evolutionists believe that things yet to be discovered will answer their questions.

On the other hand, if God made everything, where did the matter come from? Easy- God made matter, and science tells us how (Einstein's Theory of Equivalence of Matter and Energy). God made matter from energy. God says He is omnipotent (all powerful) and therefore has no limit to the amount of matter He can make from energy.

Some four thousand years ago, Moses wrote that there is a God that always has been. This God made everything from nothing. This God said he is all-powerful, omnipotent. So four thousand years before Einstein, Moses somehow knew that God could make matter from energy. On the other hand, every other culture that recorded deities wrote of gods that were fallible. Some wrote of many gods in competition. How unique is the God of Moses!

WISDOM AND THE CREATION

Solomon's writings were not copious testimony to God's creation. Just as his wisdom reflected common sense, and I guess the two would necessarily go hand-in-hand, Solomon recorded just a few references to the creation. The words he did write were gems.

The Bible teaches that God created everything there is. Therefore He owns everything there is. Since God owns us, we must obey Him. Obedience to God means that we are not permitted to do many of the things the flesh tells us is fun. That, I sincerely believe, is why the world loves evolution. Taking evolutionary teachings to the hilt, if life resulted from spontaneous, chaotic events of billions of years ago, then we own and answer only to ourselves, that is, flesh answers to flesh.

What outside of the Bible gave us the convictions to determine that murder is wrong? If polite society decided that murder is wrong, why can society say abortion is not murder? Could one reason be that we think adultery is okay, if we are not caught? In some cases murdering a baby is necessary to hide adultery. Why not just shoot the father and let the baby live?

I, and many others, do believe the biblical creation account is true. Later this chapter and in the Appendix I will explain why.

Think hard about these scriptures from Solomon and that God made us:

¹¹He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. ¹²I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life. ¹³And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God. ¹⁴I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. (Ecclesiastes 3:11-14).

The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil (judgment). (Proverbs 16:4).

If you have good eyesight and good hearing, thank God who gave them to you. (Proverbs 20:12 LVB).

SOLOMON'S FATHER, KING DAVID

Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created.

(Psalms 148:5).

The books I have written that delve more deeply into the evolution/creation dispute mention fond memories of discussions on this subject with my father, of sharing materials on the subject, and outings together to hear biblical-creationist speakers. Perhaps Dad now has complete understanding of our origins because he went to be with the Creator four years ago.

My dad was an intelligent man. Solomon's dad was smart, too. In fact, Solomon probably learned much at his elder's feet. His dad was a king named David. Solomon's senior wrote a book called "Psalms," and obviously taught him about "The Beginning."

King David wrote these things about our Caring Creator:

¹¹The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. ¹²The north and the south thou hast created them: (Psalms 89:11-12a).

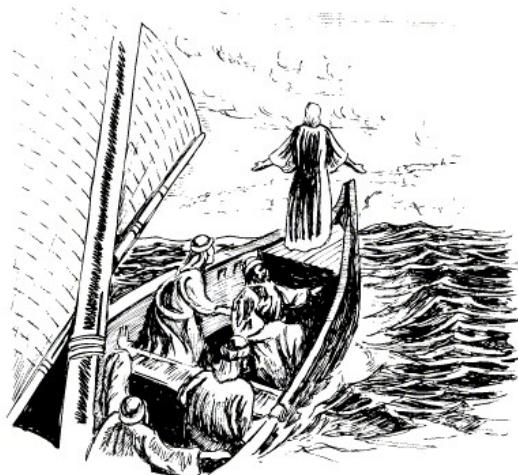
⁶By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. ⁷He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. ⁸Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. ⁹For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. (Psalms 33:6-9).

¹²Yet, God, my king from the first, author of saving acts throughout the earth, ¹³. by your power you split the sea in two, and smashed the heads of the monsters on the waters. ¹⁴You crushed Leviathan's heads, gave him as food to the wild animals. ¹⁵You released the springs and brooks, and turned primordial rivers into dry land. ¹⁶. Yours is the day and yours the night, you caused sun and light to exist, ¹⁷you fixed all the boundaries of the earth, you created summer and winter. ¹⁸Remember, Yahweh, the enemy's blasphemy, a foolish people insults your name. (Psalms 74:12-18 New Jerusalem).

Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. (Psalms 100:3).

¹⁴I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. ¹⁵My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. (Psalms 139:14-15).

CREATOR JESUS HAS COMMAND OF NATURE



¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The same was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (John 1:1-3).

Jesus is God and Creator. He obviously has all power over nature, as evidenced by His acts of healing. He showed His power over more than life by commanding the elements to obey His will.

⁴Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. ⁵And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and

have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. ⁶And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. ⁷And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. (Luke 5:4-7).

⁵When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? ⁶And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. ⁷Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. ⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, ⁹There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? ¹⁰And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. ¹¹And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. ¹²When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. ¹³Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. (John 6:5-13).

²⁵And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. ²⁶And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. ²⁷But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. (Matthew 14:25-27).

³⁷And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. ³⁸And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? ³⁹And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? (Mark 4: 37-40).

As to life itself, only God has “the breath of life.”

¹Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. ³²Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. ⁴¹Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. ⁴²And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. ⁴³And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. ⁴⁴And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. (John 11:1, 32, 41-44).

WHAT DO THE SCIENTISTS SAY?

“The cosmos is all there is and ever will be.” Carl Sagan.

Following are quotes from some of the most brilliant evolutionist-scientists that the world has to offer. (I realize that to some including me, “brilliant evolutionist-scientist” is an oxymoron.) These quotes have been extracted from a collection of 130 such quotes found in *The Revised Quote*

Book from Answers in Genesis Ministries (see Endnotes):

- In fact, evolution became in a sense a scientific religion; almost all scientists have accepted it and many are prepared to “bend” their observations to fit in with it. Professor H. S. Lipson.¹
- The fact of evolution is the backbone of biology, and biology is thus in the peculiar position of being a science founded on an unproved theory—is it then a science or a faith? L. Harrison Matthews.²
- It is easy enough to make up stories of how one form gave rise to another, and to find reasons why the stages should be favoured by natural selection. But such stories are not part of science, for there is no way of putting them to the test. Dr. Colin Patterson.³
- Biologists are simply naïve when they talk about experiments designed to test the theory of evolution. It is not testable. Professor Whitten.⁴
- Facts do not “speak for themselves”; they are read in the light of a *theory* (emphasis added). Professor Stephen Jay Gould.⁵
- Question is: Can you tell me anything you know about evolution, any one thing, and any one thing that is true? I tried that question on the biology staff at the Field Museum of Natural History and the only answer I got was silence. Dr. Colin Patterson, after working on evolution for 20 years.⁶
- Evolutionism is a fairy tale for grown-ups. Professor Louis Bounoure.⁷
- I think, however, that we must go further than this and admit that the only acceptable solution is *creation*. Professor H. S. Lipson.⁸
- All paleontologists know that the fossil record contains precious little in the way of intermediate forms; transitions between major groups are characteristically abrupt. Professor Stephen Jay Gould.⁹
- Contrary to what most scientists write, the fossil record does not support the Darwinian theory of evolution because it is this theory (there are several) which we use to interpret the fossil record. By doing so we are guilty of circular reasoning if we then say the fossil record supports this theory. Dr. Ronald R. West.¹⁰
- Echoing the criticism made of his father’s *habilis* skulls, he added that Lucy’s skull was so incomplete that most of it was “imagination made of plaster of paris,” thus making it impossible to draw any firm conclusion about what species she belonged to.” Richard Leakey.¹¹
- Gradual evolutionary change by natural selection operates so slowly within established species that it cannot account for the major features of evolution. Steven M. Stanley.¹²
- The origin of the genetic code is the most baffling aspect of the problem of the origins of life and a major conceptual or experimental breakthrough may be needed before we can make any substantial progress. Dr. Leslie Orgel.¹³
- These results indicate that even total-rock systems may be open during metamorphism and may have their isotopic systems changed, making it impossible to determine their geologic age. Professor Gunter Faure.¹⁴
- It cannot be denied that from a strictly philosophical standpoint the geologists are here arguing in a circle. The succession of organisms has been determined by a study of their remains imbedded in the rocks, and the relative ages of the rocks are determined by the remains of organisms that contain. R. H. Rastall.¹⁵

THE BIBLE AND ORIGINS

Do scientists think they are ahead of the Bible? “No, no the Bible is wrong. It is archaic

material written long ago by people that barely understood fire.” Oh, yeah?

- *The Bible says there was a worldwide flood.* The fossil record shows evidence of a worldwide flood (billions of dead things buried in rock).
- *The Bible says the world is round.* *It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:* (Isaiah 40:22). The scientists one day long ago discovered the world is round. Remember, before that, scientists thought the world was flat!
- *The earth is hanging in space.* *He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.* (Job 26:7). Scientists first believed that Atlas carried the world upon his shoulders. The earth is hanging upon nothing.
- *All of us are descendants of one woman, Eve.* Scientists are now turning this way, that there was an “Eve,” in their “Out of Africa” postulation.
- *The Bible says the earth was divided in the days of Peleg.* The earth was divided. This could refer to continental drift, the shifting of the tectonic plates.

QUESTIONS ABOUT BIBLICAL CREATION

- SIX DAYS- God is all-powerful and could have made it all in one day. There was no time before creation. God had to create time as well.
- A DAY IS AS A THOUSAND YEARS- Could each creation day have been a thousand years? II Peter 3:8 records that with the LORD a day is as a thousand years. This merely means that God is outside of time.
- A DAY IS AS A THOUSAND YEARS, AGAIN- “Since science has proven evolution, God couldn’t have created in 6 ordinary days. He must have done it in 6,000 years.” No, God did not say that. In the Hebrew text, “Yom” is the word used for day, and Yom means 24 our day except when used in verses such as “In the day of the LORD.”
- THEISTIC EVOLUTION- This is a compromise where Christians say, “God created everything, and evolution is how He did it.” This still calls God a hoax. It also means that there was death before sin.
- GAP THEORY- Another way to try to get around six days and young earth is the Gap Theory. This theory places millions of years in between the first two verses of the Bible, with Lucifer at the helm. Lucifer rebels, God wipes everything out with “Lucifer’s Flood,” God recreates (it means death before Adam’s sin again), and says everything is very good (including Lucifer at that time)- it does not work.
- STARLIGHT- If the earth is young and the stars are billions of light years away, why can we see the light from these stars? It should not be here yet. Did you see “*Back to the Future?*” In the words of the professor, “You’re not thinking fourth dimensionally.” God made the stars. God made the light. Do you think it would occur to Him to make the light beams in place?
- THE FLOOD- The fossil record just screams out “Noahic Flood.” The fossil record could be the best evidence for the historicity of the Bible, and against evolution.
- THE ICE AGE- A natural occurrence after the worldwide flood was an ice age, and there definitely was one. There are theories involving different scenarios, but the simplest to me seems the most likely. Prior to Noah’s Flood, there was a canopy of waters above the firmament that created a greenhouse effect around the earth. During the torrents, this canopy was depleted. Suddenly the earth was covered with water. The poles became sub-zero. Ice Age.

- IF I WERE THE BOSS- I guess my sense of humor would have me do some things differently. Like the platypus. I would have made more animals like the platypus to mess with the evolutionists. I would have put toe tags on the animals buried in the flood with patent numbers and dates. I would have buried a wooly mammoth with a WWJD license plate.

In creation versus evolution arguments, we seek the truth regarding our origin, and should believe the one who was there: *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* (Matthew 6:33)

Christ died on the cross for our sins. Our sins. Yours. Mine. Salvation is not set-aside for “good” people. If it were, Heaven would be empty. Jesus shared Calvary with two thieves. Do you know the fate of the thieves? ³⁹*And one of the (thieves) which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.* ⁴⁰*But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?* ⁴¹*And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.* ⁴²*And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.* ⁴³*And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* (Luke 23:39-43).

One thief was saved, because he believed in the LORD Jesus Christ. None should despair. The other was not saved. None should be presumptuous. The thief that did not repent looked upon the Savior’s face. Someday, Jesus will not know him: ²²*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord,* ²³*And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* (Matthew 7:22a-23)

Do not make the same error as the first thief. Jesus came unto the Jews as their promised Messiah. He was not the Messiah they wanted. He came as the Redeemer, as promised, but not as the conqueror, as He will return later. John 1:11 says that He came unto His own (the Jews), and His own received Him not. Do not make that mistake. Simply pray, *“Dear Heavenly Father, I know I am a sinner, just like the repentant thief. I know that your Son Jesus died for my sins, too. Jesus, please come into my heart and be my Savior. Please guide my daily life, which I give to You. In Your Holy Name. Amen.”*



Chapter 13. Subdue the Earth



²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. ²⁸And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. ²⁹And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. (Genesis 1:27-29).

SUBDUE THE EARTH

God commanded us, by directing Adam, to “subdue the earth.” What does that mean? The definition we might normally recall is to “overcome by superior force,” as an enemy. God actually meant us to have control over the earth. He gave us every seed and fruit for sustenance, and later the meat of certain animals. He gave us superiority and control over every living thing.

“Subdue the earth” tells us to do much more than eat fruit and be the boss over the flora and fauna. It means, take control of the elements. Use herbs for medicines. Master the use of metals, minerals, woods, and stones to build cities, tools, and musical instruments (*And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city...* Genesis 4:17. *And [Jabal's] brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructer of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah.* Genesis 4:21-22). And, oh yes, to build planes, trains, and automobiles.

A TALE OF EARLY MAN

We are taught as a result of the hard work of the past centuries' archaeologists that ancient man was primitive. They have laid out for us how early man dwelt in caves and developed simple tools of stone and bone. As man progressed, he developed a sophisticated speech and bit-by-bit, discovery-by-discovery, came to be what we are today.

Our ancestors' accomplishments are legends within the mystery of how they achieved great feats that we can't duplicate: the pyramids of Egypt and Central America, the henges, the gardens of Babylon, the Nazca images, Minoan relics that appear to be calculating devices, and the high quality canals of the Incas to name a few.¹⁶ Some scientists even propose that help came from the cosmos, i.e. aliens.

The Bible leads one to believe quite the opposite. The preceding quotes from Genesis 4 paint a picture of high technology for early man. The book of Genesis leads to the conclusion that earliest man (Adam) was quite intelligent. Somehow we lost the knowledge God gave us, and later had to rediscover what was lost. How does this view fit the worldview?

THE BIBLE AND CAVE MAN

Granted, some people at some time lived in caves. Some had crude tools. Much evidence exists of people more "primitive" than the Genesis account. Much more is recounted in Genesis than six days of creation. Genesis also relates a worldwide flood, a place called Babel, and the days of Peleg. Genesis also describes a world to account for primitive ancient man, and intelligent ancient man. How so?

PARADISE ISLAND

We are smart today, right? Suppose you and 100 of your most clever friends are aboard a ship. You go out on a three-hour tour, but due to rough weather, the ship gets grounded on a tiny island. All you have with you is fancy clothing, a chest of gold, and some nerd with a science kit. (This could make for an interesting television series.) Other than that, you only have your wits for survival. Luckily, all 100 are highly skilled in one particular field or another, and it is a lovely island paradise. Let's see how well the group would "subdue the earth."

First we must complete arrangements for accommodations and sustaining life, that is, a place to sleep out of the elements, and food. One friend yells, "Let's build a hotel." Then another yells-- well, let us just say the scene quickly becomes chaotic. Being both a born leader and the one conceiving this story, the author quickly takes control of matters, and records a diary as well. This is a recount of that diary.

CAVEMAN'S DIARY

I declare to my shipmates that due to my 20-years experience as a professional engineer, most of which was in building large retail and industrial facilities, that I will personally lead the 100 in erecting a marvelous dwelling. A few minor drawbacks arise quickly:

- "Since none of you brought a bulldozer or a backhoe, bunches of you go make shovels to

dig with.

- Would someone please step forward who either brought a laptop with software capable of designing foundations, or knowledgeable in the formulas to work them long hand?
- We need someone else to calculate the size of the wooden beams and columns, roof pitch, gutters and numbers of downspouts.
- Some of you go find hammers and nails, saws, axes, picks, levels, glue, cedar shingles, and anything else you perceive that we might need.
- Any questions? Ok, meet back here in an hour.”

An hour passes. Everyone returns empty handed. I quickly assess the situation and come to an executive decision. “We need more time. Meet back here at this time tomorrow.”

“This time tomorrow” arrives, so does the crew, but this time they are not empty handed. Some have broken sticks, seashells, and smooth stones. (Well, it is a start.) Now I have to reach my second executive decision and declare, “OK people, go look for caves.”

We all find caves, which solves the first problem, at least partially. We soon learn that the accommodations are away from the rain, but there are other problems. Bit by bit we figure out how to make fires by the caves for warmth and to drive out the dampness, and for light at night. We overcome the lack of feather pillows and comfy mattresses by clever use of some of fancy clothing and dried grasses and vegetation. We also learn not to keep this material too close to the nighttime fires. It takes months to begin to feel comfortable in our caves. They are very different from how even the simplest of us used to live.

The next obstacle, which we had to overcome, even before we found the caves, was to organize and stock our larders with food. Now this was not meant to be a stereotyped society, but we soon learned that the men hung out doing little and lost ambition with each passing day. At the same time, the women were focused and found it essential to gather food. The women kept finding the men napping, and when they did work, they brought home sticks, grasses, and poison ivy. Big help!

The women first went out looking for what one would expect to find in a paradise: nuts, berries, yams, wild carrots, honey, and ingredients to make bread. Here is a brief rundown on some of the problems:

- No berries resembling anything theretofore seen by man were found. Bright red berries that tasted like pine pitch were discovered, but found to make the diner quite ill. They did come in handy later for making lipstick.
- Of all things, nuts resembling almonds were found. They were quite tasty, but only a few were discovered. Not enough to sustain a population.
- There were very few edible roots found, none resembling what we knew before. They were bland, but we got by.
- No wheat sacks were found, so we could not bake bread. Combined with the elusiveness of tomatoes, no pizza.
- The women found a little honey and small amounts of fruits.

The men could only nap so long, and were bored with the old football legends, and turned to hunting. They manufactured crude bows and arrows. Unfortunately they never became accomplished marksmen, and the arrows did not go far due to the weight of the rock tips. They did learn by trial and error how to steal eggs from birds, but not so many as to make the captive populations go extinct. They also learned how to build a better mousetrap.

So we lived on mice, bird eggs, and a little bit of the seeds and herbs God gave us “for

meat.”

For excitement, we decided to add some island holidays. We first chose a day to honor the defense team that we put in place, which we celebrated on 3-4, or “March forth!” Some looked upon our CB radio from the ship as a god, hoping to reach the outside world on it someday. To honor this god, they selected October fourth (10-4 good buddy). Lastly, those loyal to the true God decorated the island with Christmas colors taken from the German favorite, O’ Tan and Brown.

If this sounds like a paradise, I need to tell you about the larger problems. From time to time we got sick and fortunately had a doctor and a nurse among our numbers. Unfortunately, we had no medicine. At least we knew what illness caused one’s death, and knew enough to bury them deeply.

In many cases, we knew what caused an illness but could do little about it. We learned in time how to dispose of human waste in a way that would not cause us harm or malodorous conditions. One of us was a plumber, and he had figured out a crude septic system.

Of course it was sad when someone died, but every now and again we were blessed with a new birth. Most of the time both mother and child lived. The future of our little group looked bleak, though, unless we learned how to better care for the sick and the weak.

Many of our ranks grew ill with rickets and other diseases that affected their bones and posture, giving them what present-day archaeologists might call Neanderthal-like appearances.

An unfortunate state of affairs grew out of the geographical distribution of the caves. Some of the caves were on the East side of the island, some West, North, and South. Rivalries began to grow and territorial disputes developed. There were arguments over which group should control what resource, “who” (if not me) should run things, and so forth. After awhile, we began to stain our clothing to display to which “clan” we belonged- red, yellow, black, or white- and to show loyalty to “our kind” and distrust toward the “others.”

CAVE MAN DIARY CONCLUSIONS

Suppose that this little paradise population dies off in the next fifty years, or is rescued and somehow forgotten. Then in the year 3000, some archaeological dig unearths the former community. We cannot say or assume what tools are available to scientists at that time, but might archaeologists not date the dig based on the crude instruments as eons ago? Would paleontologists examine the crooked bones bent with rickets as being Neanderthal man? But what might the explorers say when they discover the diary detailing things we knew of but could not do? Perhaps cave art would show inexplicable objects and life forms, perhaps space travel leading to the “logical conclusion” that we were placed here by aliens 50,000 years ago.

BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The Bible actually outlines history on a par with “the cave man diary.” Suppose we consider this as the scenario of history:

- God made Adam and Eve. As perfect parts of His perfect creation they were highly intelligent.
- Adam and Eve, as well as most recorded Antediluvian humans, lived to be very old (Adam 930, Seth 912, Enosh 905, Kenan 910, Mahalalel 895, Jared 962, Methuselah 969 for example). Poor Lamech only lived to 777. Noah was 500 when he began having sons, and

600 when he built the ark.

- These men, starting out smart with little or no mutations or degradation, would have been exceedingly intelligent before they died, and would have passed the knowledge to their healthy children and grandchildren.
- We humans became a perverse race, so God destroyed all but Noah's family.

Noah and his wife, 100 year-old sons, and daughters-in-law must have had a wealth of knowledge when they entered the ark. When they disembarked one year later, they still had the head knowledge but not the resources. Man had to start over, as it were, with building tools and restoring technology.

- Noah's children begat children, and the population began to grow.
- Noah's son Ham had a son named Cush. His descendant Nimrod became the first ever king, or dictator.
- Nimrod's kingdom grew away from the true God. His empire included Babylon where the people decided to build a temple-tower reaching to the sky to weld them together and keep them from scattering abroad as God had commanded.
- All the people of earth spoke one language. God saw this and what the people were doing, and confused their language. The city became named Babel (meaning "confusion").
- The people scattered within "language groups" all over the earth.
- In those days, "the earth was divided." (Days of Peleg, 1 Chronicles 1:19.) *Note: Some say that "dividing" meant that the earth was mapped and surveyed, some say divided by waters (rivers), and some say the continents shifted (plate tectonics). At any rate, there was a noteworthy division of some type.*

When the peoples were scattered at Babel, it was after they had relearned much that was lost with the people drowned in the global (Noachian) flood. They recovered and built wonderful structures in Babylon and Nimrod's kingdom. Now that they were dispersed, bits and pieces of the whole of technology went with each group.

CONCLUSION FROM THE BIBLE

The results of Noah's flood and the scattering at Babel sound like what happened at our make believe paradise. Intelligent people capable of wondrous works lost their entire technology because of a breakup in resources. We don't know how smart those ancient peoples really were, but we find baffling evidence all the time of things they could do that astound us.

CONCLUSION FROM EVOLUTIONARY THOUGHT

Because the vast majority of scientists wrongly believe the bankrupt theory of evolution, they are thrust into a belief system that forces the thought that life evolves onward and upward, including man. It would be heresy for an evolutionist to suppose that ancient man could be above primitive. That mind-set even allows for extraordinary ideas such as Panspermia (our life was sewn from seeds from outer space), aliens, and other non-scientific thinking. (D'ya know, if a child proposes life from outer space he is childish, if an idiot proposes it he is an idiot, and if a scientist proposes it he is a scientist. If a Bible believer says there was a flood, he is a nut.)

GOD'S POWER OVER CREATION

²³And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. ²⁴And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. ²⁵And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. ²⁶And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. ²⁷But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him! (Matthew 8:23-27).

God has complete dominion over nature. Do not take the creation account as trite. He has full authority to command us to "subdue the earth." He wants us to know what to eat to avoid diseases and how to cure our ailments. Of course He wants us to learn how to manufacture plastics and alloys, and how to master electronics. He loves us and wants what is best for us, though we do not deserve it and might wonder, "Why."

³When I look up into the night skies and see the work of your fingers--the moon and the stars you have made-- ⁴I cannot understand how you can bother with mere puny man, to pay any attention to him! ⁵And yet you have made him only a little lower than the angels, and placed a crown of glory and honor upon his head. ⁶You have put him in charge of everything you made; everything is put under his authority: (Psalms 8:3-6 LVB).

God gave each of us the wisdom to see His handiwork, to know He made us. We can see that He loves us and wants the best for us. We are to subdue the earth to the benefit of our physical needs. More important eternally than His concern for our bodily well-being is His care for our eternal destiny. That is why he gave us someone that no other can take from us, His Son Jesus.

Reject the false teachings of humanism and accept those of the living God. Accept Jesus as your personal savior and LORD of your life. Do it now!

Dear LORD God, Thank you for the good things you gave us, but most of all for the blood sacrifice you gave us to save us from our sins. I confess that I am a sinner and ask that Jesus enter my heart and life as my savior, and to help me turn from my sinful ways. Thank you, LORD, for saving me. In Jesus name. Amen.

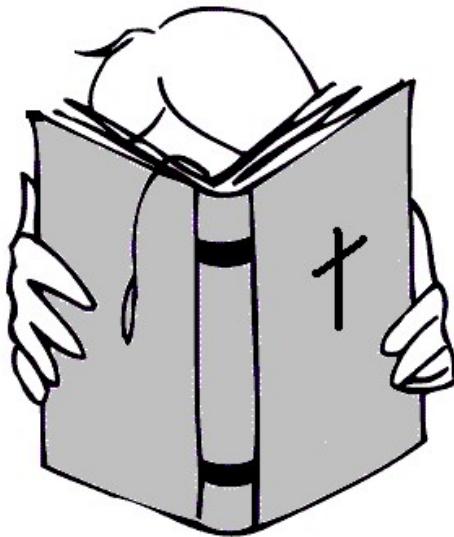
This concludes our review of biblical wisdom. Assurance of eternal life is the wisest step one can take, and you have read how. The appendix that follows consists of tracts that not only explain "how," but also "why." These monographs can be downloaded and reprinted from our website www.word2world.com.

God bless you. I hope to meet you in heaven.

Harold Lerch



Appendix: Word to the World



Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it. (Luke 11:28b).

This appendix includes tracts by Harold Lerch, Sr. and Word to the World Ministries which can be downloaded and reproduced for Christian witnessing at website www.word2world.com.

EVOLUTION/BIBLICAL CREATION:

Cop in a Test Tube Sir John Templeton donates his fortune to prove God. The proof is here. Why do we not see it?

The Breath of Life Man cannot duplicate what God created, that essence called the “breath of life.”

Daddy, Who Made Me? How do you answer your children when they ask about evolution, the Bible, and the TV shows such as “Walking with Dinosaurs?”

SALVATION

Cop What does the Bible say about cops? A cop would die for you- who else already did?

The Greatest Gifts of All Time A Man’s life is the greatest gift he can give to his fellow citizens. There is one greater gift of which no man is worthy.

Blind Faith Do we really take God by “blind faith?”

A Heathen’s Fate Is it fair for peoples of cultures who do not know God to suffer eternal damnation?

Dad’s New Body The author’s father fought cancer three times. He found victory with his new body.

Good Enough for Heaven? Can you get to heaven by achieving a level of goodness?

The Door Is there a secret door to walk through to see heaven?

Heaven’s Secret Handshake Can we reach heaven by knowing the secret way in?

TESTIMONY

My Parents Were Complete Failures The author ascribes his salvation to the testimony of his parents, and tired of his mother's claims, "I was a failure."

Who Me, Witness? Many Christians excuse themselves from witnessing due to "no talent." You can do far more than you imagine!

Saved from What? When you witness, does the listener have any idea why he needs "saved?"

Dear God, Why Won't You Heal Me? The author recounts his battle with migraines, his acceptance of God's answer to prayers for healing, and the strength found in God's grace.

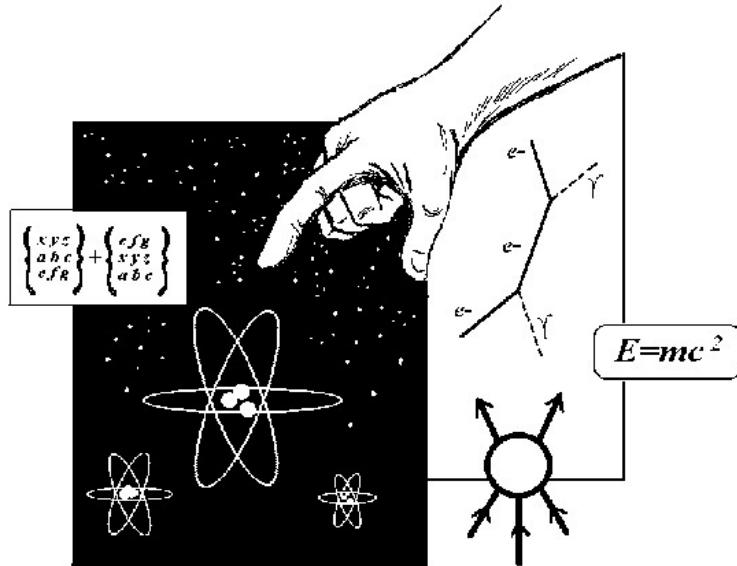
Chief of Sinners The author claims to be a worse sinner than the famed "chief," the Apostle Paul.

Abortion, or Not? So we condone murder to commit murder? How are abortions performed, and why are they wrong?



God in a Test Tube

TYCOON BELIEVER: "PROVE GOD"



If we could only prove the existence of God! That is the thought of well-intended believer Sir John Templeton, the former business tycoon now investing his money to prove God¹. Mr. Templeton obviously feels a burden for the unsaved. His generosity is commendable, but he is squandering his money.

The “proof” is already in front of our noses. How does a woodpecker (and so many other animals) evolve an eye to see where to fly, an ear to hear its prey, a long sticky tongue to nab its quarry, a sheath wrapped around its head so it can put the tongue away, a hard bill, a shock-absorbing skull, the reflex to blink with every peck so its eyes don’t pop out? How could arms become wings, skin, hair, or scales become feathers? Who wrote the code for DNA?

You see, the problem is that “proof” is only seen through the glasses with which one looks. Biblical glasses show that the preceding evidence points to intelligent design, and to the written historic claim that a supernatural God willed this creation into being in six literal days.

The polarization of humanistic glasses filters out the image of God. Humanists do not want to owe their existence to a God who established laws and moralities that offend the good times they enjoy brought on by sin.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. 2 Timothy 4:3-5.

We can go round and round with our imperfect human minds and debate God, creation, and evolution. One might think he has the incontestable proof; that the other side has to concede; but remember, each side examines the facts through their “glasses,” or bias. Ken Ham, executive director of Answers in Genesis, in his question and answer book with the intriguing title Did Adam Have a Belly Button,² relates the following:

“I’ve had lots of people over the years say that if we could only find Noah’s ark, then we could convince people the Bible’s true.” Mr. Ham continues, “I’m reminded of a professor who once said to me after I spoke at a secular (non-Christian) college- ‘I don’t care if they do find a big boat on the top of Mt. Ararat and drag it down Main Street, I still won’t believe it’s Noah’s ark.’ At another meeting, a man said to me, ‘Who’s to say some priests didn’t build a big boat on Mt. Ararat because they wanted people to believe the story in the Bible.’”

How can two intelligent people examine the same facts and result in diametric conclusions? It is a fact to look at a fossil and say, “This is a fossil.” It is non factual to look at a fossil and determine what year it lived and died, what color its skin was, etc. The examiners are filling in the intangibles with assumptions. A Christian might look at a fossil and estimate that it lived 5000 years ago based on belief that the period of creation was 6000 years ago. A scientist-evolutionist might examine the same fossil and conclude that the animal lived millions of years ago because of how that would fit within their evolutionary time frame (and perhaps because of the faulty dating methods used). Both views cannot be right.

For one thing, remember that we do have frail minds. Even the most qualified of scientists, Christian or non-Christian, has a fallible mind. Neither was there when “The Beginning” happened. This does give the Christian a leg up, or should. The Christian should believe that there was an eye witness, an infallible eye witness, who did what He did and had it all plainly recorded for us. Of course, a non-Christian will not believe this. What is our excuse?

Some of us Christians are duped into saying that the Bible is wrong because the mortal scientists who weren’t there at the start, who don’t know what happened, who don’t know how it happened, who don’t believe in God, have said they proved their theory using their corrupt human brains, their unsound methods, and their fallible equipment.

I recently had a conversation with a medical doctor, a specialist. On his office wall was a diagram showing a complicated organ about which he is expert. I pointed to the chart and asked, “Evolution or design?” Not knowing my angle, the doctor tried to dodge the question. Upon my pressing for an off-the-record answer he said, “A lot of people have sat down and discussed this issue. The majority seems to think that evolution is the answer.” He then said, “I guess it’s whatever you believe in.” (He must have a good bedside manner.)

In Jesus’ day, many saw Him, the Son of God, and believed not. How can scientific proof be more convincing?

²⁴And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. ^{25a}And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed...²⁶Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: ²⁷For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. ²⁸Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. Acts 28:24-28.

And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from Heaven, tempting him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a

sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation. Mark 8:11-12.

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. John 6:35-36.

Big bang, progressive creation, theistic evolution, chaotic inflation, little green men from outer space- there are many thoughts and theories that have been “thunk up” to explain what might have happened for us to happen to be here. All of those “ideas” take a whole lot of faith. Is it so hard to believe that a supernatural God willed everything into existence in six ordinary days?

What Sir John Templeton wants us to discover in the end is not science but Salvation:

- *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Romans 6:23.
- *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.* Ephesians 2:8-9.
- *Salvation from our sins is for anyone who will accept God's gift. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:* John 1:12.

To accept Jesus as your Savior, pray: “Dear Father in Heaven, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins. I repent and ask that you will forgive me. I accept Jesus as my Savior. From this day forward I will strive to live for Him. Dear LORD Jesus, please come into my heart. Amen.”

¹AP, Williamsport (PA) Sun Gazette, 4/7/2002, p. A-4.

² Ham, Ken, Did Adam Have a Belly Button?” Green Forest, Arkansas, Master Books, 1999.

The Breath of Life



And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. Genesis 2:7.

I recently had the experience of assisting Ken Ham, executive director of Answers in Genesis Ministries, with a series of programs at a Bible college, seminary, and high school. I was vastly familiar with (biblical) creation science beforehand. After hearing most of the presentations, I had the occasion to speak with Ken during a rare break. I shared with him that four indistinct words from the biblical creation account convince me of special creation: “the breath of life.”

The biblical creation sequence might seem illogical to us: light was created before the sun; reptiles were created the same day as mammals and man (evolutionists believe that dinosaurs lived earlier than man), and; birds created before dinosaurs (evolutionists believe birds evolved from dinosaurs). How does a Bible-believing Christian explain this?

If the Bible is true and infallible, it should be easy to prove these “inconsistencies.” So, what evidence exists way or the other? Let us start with the “breath of life.”

The moment after a living being dies, the body still contains every essential DNA strand, molecule, organ, and body fluid it possessed while living moments before.

Why did it die? What is the fundamental essence missing that prevent the organized materials from living?

Ken Ham is a scientist. He agrees that this “breath of life” is outside of our human comprehension and perception. This reason alone would allow me to accept intelligent design by a supreme being (God), but there are many other reasons. Some scientists attempt to solve the intelligent design quandary by introducing space men as the intelligent designers; but where would they come from?) What about Cro-Magnon man, Neanderthal, and proof of evolution found in the fossil record? What about the Bible’s stories of a Noachic flood and dinosaurs?

The Discovery Channel aired the production The Last Neanderthal, which was about our supposed brutish ancestor. Evolutionists must make Neanderthal fit into their long ages time frame, so they depict Neanderthal as apish. Sit on a bench at the mall; you will see all sorts of shapes walk by, including “Neanderthal” and “Cro-Magnon.” Following is the evolutionist claim, and the creationist response:

- Neanderthals perhaps had complex language (from The Last Neanderthal). The Bible teaches that there are only God's People, not Neanderthals, Cro-Magnons, Homo Africanus, etc. They all spoke from the day of the creation of Adam (creationist position). So, we agree.
- Neanderthals lived in Europe and the Middle East hundreds of thousands of years ago. We agree with the location for early man as indicated by the Bible.
- Lived in small groups. Cared for one another. Hunters/gatherers. Crude tools. Buried their dead. Of course. We descended from 2 people. We were families from the day Adam and Eve had their first son. God gave us every herb for food. We did not eat meat until after the flood.
- Disappeared suddenly. Several possibilities. Those living prior to Noah's flood were buried in the flood. Others scattered quickly after the confusion at Babel. Others picked up and moved from time to time.
- Neanderthals had large bones, large brains, were muscular. Compare Eskimos to Native Americans to Europeans to Asians. All humans can be built differently including skull shapes.
- A new "predecessor," Cro Magnon, was found in France. His skull was different than Neanderthal, he was taller, lighter boned, ate a better diet, and made jewelry. Sounds like the USA.
- A second group came "out-of-Africa" and either displaced all others including Neanderthal, or mixed and merged with the others. We mix and merge all the time these days and use the hateful name "half-breed."

The fossil record consists of dead animals whose living cells were replaced by minerals over a period. To fossilize, a dead animal or plant must be covered by mud quickly before it is eaten or decomposes. Evolutionary scientists are not consistent with this process. They count the layers in the same rocks and conclude ages of millions of years. They accept the improbable notion that dead animals lay uncovered for long ages (without being eaten or rotting) and then fossilized. The Bible tells us that a worldwide flood covered the entire earth. This would have killed and fossilized every air-breathing creature except for those on the ark. The fossil record therefore fits the biblical account better than the evolutionary account.

What else rings true of a flood? The sunken cities found in the oceans (also the subject of a Discovery Channel production) have presented investigators with an enigma. Who built them? When? How? What happened to them? I believe the simple solution is that these cities were destroyed by Noah's flood, and remain covered by the now-deeper oceans.

Can dinosaurs fit with the Bible? Absolutely. The Bible speaks of "dragons," just as does medieval history. God speaks of dinosaurs with Job:

Lo, now, (Behemoth- perhaps Diplodocus) strength is in his loins, and his force is in the muscles of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar. His bones are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of God. Behold he drinketh up a river, and hasteneth not. Job 40:15-19, 23. Canst thou draw out Leviathan (perhaps t. Rex) with a hook? Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons, or his head with fish spears? None is so fierce that dares stir him up; I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion. His teeth are terrible round about. His scales are his pride. By his sneezings a light doth shine. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth. When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid. Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. Job 41: 1, 7, 10, 12, 14-15, 18-21, 25, 33.

Evolution is a form of religion. It is a preformed system of beliefs. The Bible says:

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water. 2 Peter 3:3-5.

The religion of evolution has as its trinity Time, Chance, and Struggle & Death. As its bible, On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, as its televangelist, Nova, and its periodical, National Geographic. The saints of evolution include of course Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley, Ernst Haeckel, and Carl Sagan. The fundamental scripture, a quote from the late Carl Sagan, is “The cosmos is all there is and ever will be.”

The incredulous premise of evolution is that “in the beginning” there was a “big bang” after which all else came to be. After millions or billions of years, a serendipitous arrangement of molecules gave rise to a proper environment to support life. Other molecules by chance resulted in a living cell. Then after millions or billions of additional years, through time, chance, struggle, and death—voila! Catastrophes and climactic changes caused extinctions. Man alone arose to a supreme level, having evolved from a lower, apelike animal.

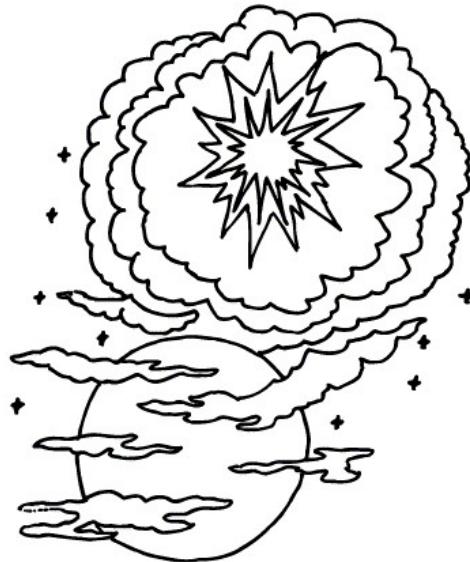
There is no room or need for a personal, creator God in the naturalistic religion of evolution. In fact, evolution is perhaps Satan’s most clever lie. Unlike Satan’s temptations such as, “did God really say that,” in the lie of evolution we are told, “we don’t need God,” or “there is no God.” Satan must snicker every time a Christian says, “I believe that God created everything, and evolution is how He did it.” Sadly, I fear that a majority of Christians believe just that. The reason a Christian would believe in evolution is because that is what we are being taught by the secular world, and we are not being exposed to the fallacies of evolution in church. Evolution is a faith the facts fail.

Creation is a faith the facts fit. You can believe that the Bible is God’s infallible word. It contains truth and it is truth. The Bible is not fairy tales or just stories to channel our morals. If you are not a Christian, you might not be aware of the very best news from the Bible; that is, Salvation and eternal life in Heaven with God according to His promises:

- *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Romans 6:23.
- *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.* Ephesians 2:8-9.
- *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* John 14:1-3.

If you want eternal life, accept Jesus as your Savior. Pray these words, “Dear Father in Heaven, I know I am a sinner and have sinned against you. I am sorry for my sins and sinful nature, and ask that you will forgive me. I accept Jesus now as my Savior who shed His blood for me. I give my life to you and will strive to live for you. Thank you, LORD, for saving my soul. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

Daddy, Who Made Me?



How do you answer your child when he or she asks you to reconcile the creation account taught in Sunday School against the stunning productions aired on television: Dinosaurs, Allosaurus, Neanderthal, Real Eve, the series Nova, and similar technical wonders?

The answer most Christians give today, I fear, is that “God made us and evolution is how He did it.” Why is that the answer given so commonly among Christians? Is it because we are now better able to translate the ancient biblical texts and have found our previous beliefs to be unfounded? Is it because science has proven evolution indisputable? Would it have to be one or the other to overturn a basic religious belief that has stood for thousands of years?

The answer to origins is the same today as when Peter recorded, Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 2 Peter 3:3-7.

The answer is, God created everything in six literal days, including man on day 6, as His Word reveals. The evidence supports this. The world is seeking another answer.

ON THE SIDE OF SCIENCE

I do not believe there is any science supporting evolution, but that would hardly help us address our children. On the other hand, a tract is such a brief forum that it is difficult to approach such a subject as our origins; but, we will look at some basics.

Big Bang: Science must explain where the universe came from, but cannot. The only non-biblical solution is to say that there was a big glob of “stuff” that blew up and resulted in all of the galaxies, solar systems, stars, moons, planets, comets, etc. They have not figured where the “stuff” that the Big Bang started with came from.

Fossils: Plants and animals died. Over years and centuries it is believed they were covered by earth and fossilized. The notion is that the oldest species are on the bottom, and as we come up the geologic column we find the more recent species that evolved from the earlier ones.

Dinosaurs: Ancient creatures that dominated the planet until a large meteor, 2 miles in diameter, landed in the Gulf of Mexico, starting a chain reaction that brought the dinosaurs to extinction.

Eve: Scientists believe that, based on the study of mitochondrial DNA, we are all ancestors of one woman, The Real Eve.

Millions and Billions of Years: For the Big Bang to occur and “stabilize” (my words), for the entire geologic column to be laid down with the resulting fossil record, for dinosaurs to evolve and then achieve extinction, long ages (including eons of struggle-and-death evolution) would have been necessary.

THE BIBLICAL SIDE

We should be indebted to all of the scientific findings that are supportive of the biblical creation account.

Big Bang: I really would like to know where the matter came from. Is it easier to believe there always was a God or there always was matter? Is it easier to trust scientists than God? Since the question in this tract is more, “did God use evolution,” we will skip those points. A basic problem with the Big Bang comes from the laws of physics, specifically the Law of Conservation of Angular Momentum. When a figure skater begins to spin in a circle, his or her angular speed increases as he or she tucks more tightly into a spin. Essentially, conservation of angular momentum means a relationship between energy and the distance from the center of the skater must be kept. In the same way, the central objects in solar systems should be spinning at tremendous speeds, but they are not. This basic law then goes against the Big Bang.

Fossils: How do fossils form? If you could see this occur for yourself it would be most easily understood. The next time you pass a road kill, retrieve it and place it in your front yard. Wait for it to be covered with dust and dirt over time, then allow years for fossilization (mineralization), then dig it back up. Better yet, place several specimens in your yard. Do you think that other animals and insects might eat a few carcasses before they can be covered? Might the remainder decompose first? If you think this you are right. The animals would need to be covered fast. What could do that?

The fossil record is most likely the result of Noah’s flood. Plants and animals would have been covered quickly, all over the earth. That is also why marine fossils are found on the tops of many tall mountains. The ark was large enough to carry dinosaurs, too. Genesis 6:15-16 indicates the ark had more floor space than two football fields.

Dinosaurs: There is evidence that dinosaurs lived with man. Some footprints of man and dinosaur have been found together. The Bible indicates that man and land animals (such as

dinosaurs) were created on the same day (day 6). Job describes creatures that sound like a sauropod and t. Rex. The Schofield Bible suggests perhaps the hippopotamus and crocodile, but read for yourself: Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of God: Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteneth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. (Condensed from Job 40:15-23. Behemoth fears no man, no beast). Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? Canst thou put an hook into his nose? Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears? None is so fierce that dare stir him up: His scales are his pride, His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth. In his neck remaineth strength, When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. (From Job 41:1-33.) David wrote Thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people. (From Psalm 74:13-14.) “Dragon” is mentioned throughout the Old Testament. Could there be credibility to the dragon legends of the middle ages?

Eve: Current, sound science links all of us to a single woman ancestor. In the cytoplasm of our cells are organelles called “mitochondria.” These structures contain some DNA that is only inherited from the woman. In analyzing this DNA in humans all over the globe, scientists showed that all humans on earth inherited this from one woman. Scientists call this woman “Eve.” The Bible calls this woman, “Eve.”

Millions and billions of years- God only took 6 days. What took Him so long? Answer- He had to create time, perhaps His most difficult task. Six thousand years ago is when He did it.

Daddy, and Mommy, God made me on day 6 of the first week. He lovingly formed me with plan and purpose. His literal, biblical creation is how he did it!

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- Parker, Gary, Ph.D., *Creation Facts of Life*, Colorado Springs, Colorado, Master Books, 1994.
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Suggested Resource:

Answers in Genesis Ministries, PO Box 6330, Florence, KY 41022 USA
www.answersingenesis.org



(For cops) don't scare people who do good things; only evil-doers should fear. Do you want to be unafraid of authority? Do good things! Then, he will honor you. Romans 13:3 Simple English Translation

I looked up to police officers, “cops,” when I was very young. As with many other boys, that was what I wanted to be when I grew up, along with cowboy and soldier. In a way a police officer is all three, usually without the horse.

When I got older and was issued my driver’s license, I learned a different respect for “cops.” For some reason they had it in for me, and I (of course) did not deserve it. After all, what’s wrong with screaming around corners, laying rubber, passing anywhere you want, driving fast but within your youthful capabilities, and blowing stop signs? (Do you agree?)

With all that aside, here is what those “dirty coppers” do every day:

- They carry old women out of burning buildings.
- Step between irrational, armed spouses during domestic disputes. (Usually one spouse turns on the officer trying to protect him or her.)
- Have nightmares after lifting a dead child and his bicycle from the roadway (themselves being parents).
- Remove abused children from homes while taking abuse themselves.
- Stop a speeder, not knowing if he just robbed a store and is going to shoot him.
- Arrest the punk that is going to sell dope to your child, only to be kicked and spat upon.
- Reach into their own pockets to give some poor kid lunch money.
- Investigate grizzly, fatal accidents.
- Take verbal abuse from a parent while explaining why they were stopped for not having their children in safety restraints. “Why don’t you go after the real criminals?” (See above.)

The preceding is the tip of the iceberg. Think about this the next time some trooper pulls you over for speeding: God sets the rules; man is to follow them. God ordains “cops”- police, troopers, sheriffs, deputies, and agents- to uphold the rules. God inspired Paul to write as follows:

CIVIL AUTHORITY

¹*Obey the government, for God is the one who has put it there. There is no government anywhere that God has not placed in power.* ²*So those who refuse to obey the laws of the land are refusing to obey God, and punishment will follow.* ³*For the policeman does not frighten people who are doing right; but those doing evil will always fear him. So if you don't want to be afraid, keep the laws and you will get along well.* ⁴*The policeman is sent by God to help you. But if you are doing something wrong, of course you should be afraid, for he will have you punished. He is sent by God for that very purpose.* ⁵*Obey the laws, then, for two reasons: first, to keep from being punished, and second, just because you know you should.*

TAXES AND DEBTS

⁶*Pay your taxes too, for these same two reasons. For government workers need to be paid so that they can keep on doing God's work, serving you.* ⁷*Pay everyone whatever he ought to have: pay your taxes and import duties gladly, obey those over you, and give honor and respect to all those to whom it is due.* ⁸*Pay all your debts except the debt of love for others--never finish paying that! For if you love them, you will be obeying all of God's laws, fulfilling all his requirements.* ⁹*If you love your neighbor as much as you love yourself you will not want to harm or cheat him, or kill him or steal from him.*

LOVE AND LAW

And you won't sin with his wife or want what is his, or do anything else the Ten Commandments say is wrong. All ten are wrapped up in this one, to love your neighbor as you love yourself. ¹⁰*Love does no wrong to anyone. That's why it fully satisfies all of God's requirements. It is the only law you need.*

CHILDREN OF LIGHT

¹¹*Another reason for right living is this: you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for the coming of the Lord is nearer now than when we first believed.* ¹²⁻¹³*The night is far gone, the day of his return will soon be here. So quit the evil deeds of darkness and put on the armor of right living, as we who live in the daylight should! Be decent and true in everything you do so that all can approve your behavior. Don't spend your time in wild parties and getting drunk or in adultery and lust, or fighting, or jealousy.* ¹⁴*But ask the Lord Jesus Christ to help you live as you should, and don't make plans to enjoy evil.* Romans 13 LVB.

The Simple English Translation of Romans 13:3 interestingly uses the term “evil-doers.” Since September 11, 2001, we have heard those words used frequently by President Bush to describe the Godless and things outside of God. The evildoers of September 11 have something to fear. Evildoer is also used many times in the King James and other versions. Here is a sampling”

- *Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the*

Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Psalm 37:1-3.

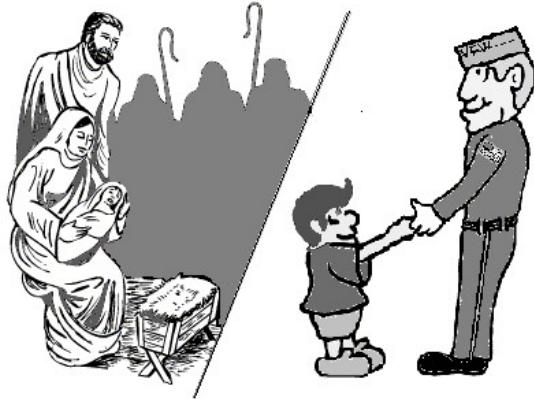
- *Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?* Psalm 94:16.
- *Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward.* Webster's Bible Isaiah 1:4.
- *Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.* 1 Peter 3:16.

So, respect the “cops” and what they do for you. They are doing God’s work in a nonspiritual nature, nevertheless upholding God’s commandments. When an officer pulls you over for a little “harmless speeding,” remember that he does not know if you have a gun and just robbed a bank. Know that his job is dangerous, and he will treat you with more respect than you show to him. He will give his life for your child.

God’s Son already gave His life for your child and for you. He gave His life so that we might have eternal life. This is a gift, but you must accept it for it to be of value to you:

Because of our sins, we are destined to die: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (Romans 3:23). Even so, God loves us and provided a substitute to pay for our sins: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16). Salvation from our sins is for anyone who will accept God’s gift. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (John 1:12).

To accept Jesus as your Savior, pray: “Dear Father in Heaven, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins. I repent and ask that you will forgive me. I accept Jesus as my Savior. From this day forward I will strive to live for Him. Dear LORD Jesus, please come into my heart. Amen.”



THE GREATEST GIFTS OF ALL TIME

The old warrior was about to leave the elementary school after participating in a Veteran's Day assembly when the father of a young boy approached him. A kindergarten student was fortunate to have his patriotic father on hand that day for the program, and insisted that he speak to a soldier before they got away. The father, young as well in comparison, told the former fighter that his five year old had something to say to him, "But I don't know what it is." The little boy peer-ed skyward toward the soldier's leathered face and said, "Thanks for protecting us and keeping us safe."

A GREAT GIFT

The utmost price ever paid by any human was to give his life to protect the lives of others, and in the case of the free world, to guarantee their freedom and independence. The old soldier mentioned previously was one of the lucky ones to come home, successfully avoiding the perils of war for weeks, months, or years. Because of men like him, we have what we have and enjoy what we enjoy.

Presently, cowards ambush the free world. They are afraid to face our brave men and women. By contrast, not only our military but also our police, firefighters, emergency workers, and others "lay it on the line" for us. Some die nearly every day. Yet, there is one gift even more precious.

A GREATER GIFT

We citizens cannot do what the military, cops, firemen, EMT's, and others do for us. We are not qualified. It takes them to save us. It is also wonderful that when our brave men and women die, their lives do not need to stop at "Gone but Not Forgotten." Someone greater than all of us died for him or her, and for us too, to provide an even larger freedom. That is, freedom from Sin and Death.

When Adam and Eve first sinned, they brought death into the world. *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;* (Romans 3:23). God required the shedding of blood for forgive-ness of our sins. Because of God's love for us, He provided a blood sacrifice for us, His

son, the only one worthy: *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* (John 3:16).

Salvation from our sins is for anyone who will accept God's gift. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:* (John 1:12).

God has promised those that call on the name of His son, Jesus, the messiah, eternal life in heaven with Him: *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* (John 14:1-3).

God's Son gave His life for you and your family. This is a gift, but you must accept it for it to be of value to you. To accept Jesus as your Savior, pray: "*Dear Father in Heaven, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins. I repent and ask that you will forgive me and help me to turn from my sins. I accept Jesus as my Savior. From this day forward I will strive to live for Him. Dear Lord Jesus, please come into my heart. Amen.*"

Blind Faith?



Are you a sighted person? Have you witnessed the beauty within our world? If the answer to the first question is "yes," the answer to the second is also "yes," whether you realize it or not.

A vision-impaired individual can ask others to describe our awesome surroundings. We can try to explain what we see, but how do we explain the color green, or a rainbow painted above a water fall to one who has never seen light? So it is said that we take God by blind faith.

As far as I know, I have never seen God physically doing anything. I have never seen photographs of the cross or of Noah's ark, or spoken to someone who saw Jesus. So as the visually impaired person takes our word about the beauty of a peacock's plumage, we take God by blind faith, right?

I believe that the civil war took place, though I was not there. I have never spoken to anyone that was there; however, I am 100% certain it happened. I have proof. My grandfather's father was there when it ensued, and in fact fought against inequality at Gettysburg. I never knew my great grandfather, but I knew someone that knew him. Many accounts have been written about the civil war, including Gettysburg. I toured the battlefield at Gettysburg. I know beyond any doubt that there was a civil war including a battle in the little town of Gettysburg.

It is too bad we cannot prove the existence of God as easily as the physical, oral, and written evidence proves beyond doubt the reality of the civil war (or can we?). So again I ask, we say we take Him by "blind faith," right?

On a daily basis there are men and women who receive prison sentences, some the death penalty. They are arrested by police and then prosecuted by attorneys, judges, and juries, none of whom were there to witness the crime. Witnesses "blind" to the crime proved their guilt. How can we relate that to blind faith and proving the existence of God?

You could attempt this proof if you could teleport yourself to a vantage point back in time, and see anything and everything that ever happened. You could establish facts by first person witnessing of acts of God that would prove His existence. What would you need to see?

THE CREATION (Genesis 1:1-31)

Do we not see the evidence of creation first hand every day? The only “accepted” alternative is evolution, a theory. Evolution is incredulous. There are no scientific tests or discoveries that “prove” evolution. In fact, the recent science I have seen supports special creation by a designer with purpose. Evolution is a lie.

FIRST SIN (Genesis 3:1-19)

Just as my grandfather knew my great grandfather, someone who knew someone recorded the account of Eve succumbing to Satan’s temptation in what was until then a perfect world (Genesis 1:31). This first sin not only happened, it brought the death sentence to mankind along with sickness, hard work, and suffering. The person who knew someone who knew someone knew Adam who knew God.

NOAH’S FLOOD (Genesis chapters 6-8)

Perhaps one day we will find Noah’s ark on the mountains of Ararat. We do not have to find the ark to prove a worldwide flood. We have found the evidence of the flood: mats of vegetation turned to coal and oil, marine fossils on the top of the tallest mountains, fossils buried in thick layers of roiled-up earth, fossils found out of evolutionary sequence. The flood evidence ties biblical history to Noah, who knew God.

JESUS’ BIRTH (Luke 2:6-14)

Shepherds saw Jesus after He was born. Wise men saw him later. This is documented in written history. At age 12 Jesus amazed teachers at the temple. This corroborates that He was special. Thousands followed Him and received blessings from Him. This is written.

THE CROSS (Luke 23:1-56)

The cross was a big event 2000 years ago. Throngs were interested one way or the other. It was their headline news. Again, there were witnesses and resultant recorded history. No one made this up. Jesus lived, taught, suffered, and then He died.

THE RESURRECTION (Matthew 28:1-10)

Wow! This was big, too. Jesus’ loved ones saw Him alive again. Thomas placed his fingers in the nail holes in Christ’s body. This event did not just occur, it was prophesied. It would have been very controversial. The event was included in a book called the Bible, which is today being verified as accurate history.

THE ASCENSION (Mark 16:19)

As if rising from the dead would not be enough, Jesus later ascended into heaven, in front of witnesses, to sit at the right hand of God, His Father. Once again, this event is documented history.

MANY CHOOSE not to believe in God. They would question the reliability and authenticity of the Bible. Remember also that even today there are defense attorneys who try to discredit the solid evidence in a trial, even evidence as ironclad as that in the Bible. Satan was able to deceive Eve, do not let him deceive you. Nevertheless, the evidence does prove the existence of God.

BECAUSE OF FIRST SIN, WE ARE DESTINED TO DIE

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (Romans 3:23). Even so, God loves us and provided a substitute to pay for our sins: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16). Salvation from our sins is for anyone who will accept God's gift. It is an exclusive club, but anyone can join: But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (John 1:12).

Will you “join the club” now? To accept Jesus as your Savior, pray: “Dear Father in Heaven, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins. I repent and ask that you will forgive me and help me turn from my sins. I accept Jesus as my Savior. From this day forward I will strive to live for Him. Dear LORD Jesus, please come into my heart. Amen.”

A Heathen's Fate



Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?
(Psalms 2:1).

Are we to believe that God created other people in order to condemn them?" (Sister Joan Chittister as quoted by Glembocki, Vicki, "Vow of No Silence, Penn Stater, Penn State Alumni Association, University Park, Pa., January/February 2001, p. 35.)

I remember pondering as a boy, "God wouldn't send the 'heathen' Africans to hell when they die. They do not know about Jesus. They have not had a chance to invite Jesus into their hearts to be their Savior. My misinformed view of African and other cultures was primarily the result of TV in the 1950's, including Tarzan movies. What of the others around the world in South America, China, and so forth that are in the dark concerning God?

A firm belief that the Bible is the authoritative Word of God has allowed me to rethink this issue. If we begin at the beginning, we read that God created everything, including the first man and woman. The first man and woman gave rise to all civilization. Therefore, at one time all of civilization was very aware of the Creator God.

Because of sin and failure to obey God, the people of the world became very corrupt. God decided to destroy all of the living creatures in a great flood. Noah found grace. His family and pairs of living creatures were spared. All of Noah's family knew God. All of today's heathens are descendants of Noah's family. Therefore, all heathens are descendants of Noah, who knew God, and chose to reject God and worship whatever else they wanted to worship.

Using the Word of God as the measuring stick (as it is God who established the rules in the first place) anyone lost has no excuse:

But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, evil men who push away the truth from them. For the truth about God is known to them instinctively; God has put this knowledge in their hearts. Since earliest times men have seen the earth and sky and all God made, and have known of his existence and great eternal power. So they will have no excuse [when they stand before God at Judgment Day]. Romans 1:18-20.

Buddhist, your ancestor Noah knew the living God. You rejected him. Muslim, you ignored that Jesus is LORD; he is not a prophet. Mormon, God's Word was concluded with the Revelation of Jesus Christ- you are a cult. Jehovah's Witness, Christian Scientist, Jesus is God. God is Just; there is only one way:

So how many of us have remained true to God? Here is what the world population believes:

Judaism	18,153,000	
Roman Catholic	1,042,501,000	
Protestant	382,374,000	
Orthodox	173,560,000	
Anglican	75,847,000	
TOTAL JUDEO-CHRISTIAN	1,692,435,000	30%
TOTAL ISLAM AND BAHĀ'Ī	1,020,114,000	18%
Hindu	751,360,000	
Buddhist	334,002,000	
Traditional Chinese	140,956,000	
Sikhism	19,853,000	
Shamanism	10,854,000	
Confucianism	6,230,000	
Jainism	3,927,000	
Shinto's	3,336,000	
TOTAL EASTERN	1,270,508,000	23%
Other "Christianity"	195,470,000	
Tribal Religions	99,736,000	
Other and new religions	142,948,000	
TOTAL OTHER	438,154,000	8%
Non-religious	912,874,000	
Atheist	241,852,000	
TOTAL NON/NO GOD	1,154,726,000	21%
GRAND TOTAL	5,575,947,000	100%

I had wondered how a third of the angels could have fallen with Satan. Well, our record is that 70% of the people on earth do not believe on the LORD Jesus. 20% of us lost faith that there is a God. And all this after 100% of the first people on earth, Adam and Eve, knew there was a living God? And then 100% again when Noah's family disembarked from the ark. Remember when Moses went to the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments, he returned to find his people worshipping a golden calf. How can we wonder why the "Heathens" are not accountable? What does God tell us?

He hath remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations. (Psalms 105:8). If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. (II Timothy 2:13). For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever. (Psalms 119:89,160). Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations; (Deuteronomy 7:9).

Not only is it fair for the heathen to go to eternal punishment, it is fair for all of us to go to eternal punishment. But God has provided a way for us to escape from this destiny. Here is God's way as spoken by His Son Jesus Christ:

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14:1-6.

But why does anyone deserve eternal punishment? *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (Romans 3:23). For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23).*

What is salvation, and why through Jesus? *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9).*

I have heard so many rationalizations on how one gets to heaven- do the best you can, if you just try, as long as you believe something. Jesus said this: *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Matthew 7:21-23.*

If you accept God's way, then there is a place in Heaven for you. Please do not delay. Life is so uncertain. The great racing driver, Dale Earnhart, was sitting on the top of the world on the last lap of a big race. He never made it to the finish line. Make sure you do! I cannot repeat enough that everyone has the power to be accepted into Heaven, but not everyone will use it: *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: John 1:12.*

To accept God's gift of salvation, pray, "Dear Heavenly Father, I am a sinner and I have sinned against you. I am sorry for my sins and sinful nature. I repent of my sins and accept Jesus here and now as my Savior. Jesus, save me by your blood shed for me. I now give my life to you and turn from my sins. In your Holy name I pray, Jesus, Amen."

Dad's New Body

Dad liked to put on a ball glove and go out back and play "catch." He was a better athlete in his day than I was, but I was 30 years younger. It was easy for me to jump for a ball I misjudged or chase after one that got away. Dad's shoulder would get sore sometimes and he could not play long. It was too bad he could not get a new body, or at least new parts to replace the worn out ones.

Humor was important in our family, too. A good joke or bit of wit could make up for most shortcomings. When I was perhaps 10, Dad had an operation to correct a deviated septum. I did not quite know what that was, still do not, except that the doctor had to do something to his nose. When we went to visit Dad at the hospital, it was only natural for me to wear a large fake nose.

By age 50, Dad had his nose fixed, a bad shoulder, his appendix was gone, tonsils taken, hair history, he was overweight- you know, typical American. Too bad he could not get a new body. His brain was better than ever. Now I know what it is like to be 50 and a bit how Dad might have felt.

Dad held out hope for a new body some day: *For you have a new life. It was not passed on to you from your parents, for the life they gave you will fade away. This new one will last forever, for it comes from Christ, God's ever-living Message to men. Yes, our natural lives will fade as grass does when it becomes all brown and dry. All our greatness is like a flower that droops and falls; but the Word of the Lord will last forever. And his message is the Good News that was preached to you.* 1 Peter 1:23-25 LVB

Eventually things got worse for Dad's body. He got diabetes. That took its toll on one of his favorite hobbies- eating. Cookies, ice cream, pies... Then he had to part with his gall bladder. That was even tougher on his hobby. Then he got that dreaded "C" word. We were able to get through everything else, even the diabetes and gall bladder surgery, with some humor. We did not find any humor in this illness at all. That does not mean Dad did not have an outlet to ease his sorrows. Although the outcome of the cancer was uncertain, Dad had hope in the ultimate conclusion.

He kept a diary. On May 17, 1992, he entered, "When I leave this earth, don't mourn for me- be prepared to join me at the end of your (life)." This was written before his first bout with cancer. In 1996, Dad began successive years of fighting cancer. The chemotherapy and other treatments were painful and a lot to bear for a 75 year-old man. Dad was looking forward to his eventual new body as he endured these treatments. Here are the thoughts of a man knowing what God had waiting for him:

- April 24, 1996. "I can't do much work anymore. To anyone reading this, put your trust in Jesus Christ and come see me and my new body."
- May 6, 1996. "I am a coward, even though I know that for me to die is gain. I'm so glad I love Jesus. I'm so glad He loves me."
- December 18, 1996. "I'm not very confident of my condition. I just have to repeat,

- I'm so glad there is a Heaven that we are promised."
- March 7, 1997. "Another not so hot day. Things are sure to get better for me someday."

Dad knew some other scripture, such as the following, which were implied in his entries:

⁵¹*Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,* ⁵²*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* ⁵³*For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.* ⁵⁴*So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.* ⁵⁵*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* ⁵⁶*The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.* ⁵⁷*But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Corinthians 15:51-57

In 1997, Dad successfully beat cancer a second time. The following year, on the Fourth of July, Dad had a lump above his left eye. It so happened that all of us were home visiting. We took Dad to the hospital. The next day he found out that the lump was a tumor. It would prove to be cancerous.

Dad was able to see his second great-grandson, as he had seen the other two great grandchildren before him. He would not see the second and third great granddaughters born a few years later. I stood by Dad's bedside the last night of his life on this earth. I don't know how you personally feel about these things or the writings of Billy Graham's on angels, but Dad saw someone else in the room with us that night and asked me who it was. I know who I believe it was.

The next day, July 25, 1998, my Dad joined Jesus in Heaven. We who know Jesus as our Savior can take comfort in the same promises that comforted my dad. He left a legacy of kindness. If it were up to Dad, everyone would go to Heaven- everyone. It is not up to Dad. It is up to someone perfect and just. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. We all deserve death, the wages of sin. But by God's grace, through the shedding of the blood of His son, we all can have eternal life, and a home in Heaven:

- *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Romans 6:23.
- *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.* Ephesians 2:8-9.
- *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* John 14:1-3.

Do you want a new, incorruptible body someday? Salvation and a free new body can be yours. If you want eternal life, accept Jesus as your Savior. Pray these words, "Dear Father in Heaven, I know I am a sinner and have sinned against you. I am sorry for my sins and sinful nature, and ask that you will forgive me. I accept Jesus now as my Savior who shed His blood for me. I give my life to you and will strive to live for you. Thank you, LORD, for saving my soul. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

My Parents Were Complete Failures

Jesus taught us to honor our parents. Perhaps it goes against His teachings to complain about our parents, but I do not think other children should have to go through what I went through. I want to expose my parents' mistakes so others can benefit.

When Jesus was 12 years old, He astounded the teachers at the temple. When I was 12 years old, I had a paper route. The \$8 per week from this paper route was to pay for my school lunches, clothing, and other needs. You must understand that my family was not wealthy. Do you think my parents were very selfish having me do this hard job and learning the values that came with it? Sometimes the weather was brutal- would it have been better for me to sit in the warm and study?

With such emphasis on money, why did my parents not go into debt for a larger house and shinier car? Sometimes our old car and older house embarrassed me. I remember telling my mother that if she were not so lazy she would get a job. Obviously she preferred to lounge about and do whatever the mother of three does. I suppose she needed a little time to prepare to teach her Sunday school and junior church lessons, but someone else could take her place doing that.

MY DAD

Some fathers are not very attentive to their children and leave the family matters to the mother. Apparently my father did not care about us too much. Do you remember, "Spare the rod and spoil the child?" One day I decided not to go to kindergarten, so I ran off. Dad was all over looking for me. I remember watching him as I lay silently behind a fence. When I was finally caught, Dad took me into the house to spank me. He whispered, "You pretend to cry." He hit the bed with his belt, and I pretended to cry. (She was not fooled.) Now what kind of lesson was that for me?

When Fred, the youngest of us was born, Dad had to make supper. Can you imagine what we had to eat? He took a packet of dry Lipton's Noodle Soup, added water and a little can of chicken pieces, and boiled it to death. What kind of meal was that? I suppose we had to eat butter bread with it. To show you the effect this had on me, I vowed not to do this to my family, and in fact became adept at preparing real food- frozen pizza.

Dad used to run out on us. I remember many Sundays that Dad was not home in the afternoon. Instead he was out with his gospel quartet singing and witnessing in prisons and churches.

I guess to combine cheating on the food bill and to teach me some kind of life lesson, Dad took me hunting when I reached the age. It used to get so cold just sitting and waiting. I remember

one time my feet got so cold I could hardly stand it. Dad had me remove my boots and put my feet inside his coat to warm them. (In fact on this trip I was only eleven, we were hunting squirrels, and I was not old enough to shoot yet.) During these hunting trips we would talk and he would teach me things that he could just as well have taught me in the warm. So why did he make me go out in the cold? Regardless, he made me stick it out in the cold, 100%.

Dad taught me other life lessons. It seems, looking back, that he could not just come out and tell me something. The lessons were shrouded- like parables. Dad had a wooden statuette of a child. The child's dog was running along side, racing toward something or someone. The child was looking a bit upward, as if at an adult. I figured that one out right away. It was my sister and her dog Bee Bee welcoming Dad home. I complimented Dad on the statue, hoping he would confirm what I had supposed. Dad just said, "It means something to me." So now I do not know if it was about my sister Jane or Dad and his dog when he was a boy.

When I got my first girlfriend, Dad decided he had better tell me about the facts of life. I had a good idea from what I heard from other kids. Here is what my father told me, "There are three tests to decide if it's the right girl: 1. would you share her toothbrush; 2. would you want her to be the mother of your children, and; 3. some day she'll look like her mother." I do not know what kind of facts those were. I married that same girl 32 years ago. We have a son, daughter, and five grandchildren. Think how well I would have done if Dad told me everything.

MY MOM

In nature we find that a mother protects her offspring at all costs. Rather than nurture, my mother salted my wounds. She was squeamish about cuts, blood, and so on, so she was not good about cleaning our wounds. Mom's salty tears cleaned my wounds rather than peroxide. Why would she do that? Did she care?

Mom had an aunt that suffered from polio when she was young. Aunt Dorothy was not capable of taking care of herself totally. As if our house was not small enough, as if our resources were not already meager, Mom took her in. I do not know how that helped us. Why would Mom be so unconcerned about us?

I already told you that it was all about money concerning my paper route and me. Listen to this- Mom bought a set of clippers and cut our hair. How embarrassing. I do not know what she did with the money she saved, but I never saw any of it.

My paper route already cut into my free time. I guess the old school taught Mom that kids should not have fun, and of course there is the proverb that idle time is the Devil's workshop. With that in mind, during prime time, Mom led evening devotions. Then she would ask questions. Then we' would pray- and it would drag on. Then we would recite our memory verses. No- kids were not meant to have fun.

Mom has told Jane, Fred, and I many times that she was a failure. I do not know why. None of us have ever been in prison. None of us are on drugs or are alcoholics. Most importantly, all three of us know Jesus as our Savior and will spend eternity with our "misfit" parents and our LORD.

Mom bowed her head with me when I asked Jesus to be my Savior. Mom has been my most effective and most accurate critic in editing my writings. I have learned by observing my mother that a good Mother has only one critic- herself.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Will you spend eternity with your mother and father? With our Holy Father? When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they committed First Sin. God had told them that for this sin they would surely die. The only forgiveness for this sin is the shedding of blood. Our Father in Heaven sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins. If we confess that we are sinners, repent of our sins, and accept Jesus as our Savior, we will have eternal life.

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

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. Ephesians 2:8-9.

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. John 14:1-3.

To accept Jesus as your Savior, pray: “Dear Father in Heaven, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins and ask that you will forgive me. I accept Jesus as my Savior. From this day forward I will strive to live for Him. Dear LORD Jesus, please come into my heart.”

Who, Me, Witness?

I have told everyone the Good News that you forgive people's sins. I have not been timid about it, as you well know, O Lord. (Psalms 40:9 LVB).

For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is God's powerful method of bringing all who believe it to heaven. This message was preached first to the Jews alone, but now everyone is invited to come to God in this same way. (Romans 1:16 LVB).

I have been asked, "Why is it that Christians think they have to try to convert everybody?" That absolutely is not true. It should be true. Our LORD commands us to witness. We have the best story to tell in the universe, the only religion that can guarantee me that I am going to see my loved ones again. Yet we tell hardly anyone. How many people did you see today? How many did you tell about the Good News?

Witnessing, simply, is explaining God and why we need Him. The witness must first understand the truth that is found in the entire Bible and be brave enough to witness? Here is the basic truth:

- God is eternal and always was. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever (Hebrews 13:8).
- God created everything from nothing, so He owns everything, including us. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is (Exodus 20:11a).
- Sin corrupted a perfect creation and brought death into the world. God said to the woman, You shall bear children in intense pain and suffering. And to Adam, God said, Because you ate the fruit when I told you not to, I have placed a curse upon the soil. All your life you will struggle to (live) from it. It will grow thorns and thistles. All your life you will sweat to master it, until your dying day. Then you will return to the ground from which you came. (Genesis 3:16-19a LVB).
- Jesus Christ, God incarnate, died on the cross for our sins. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom 6:23).
- All who accept Jesus as their Savior shall have eternal life in a perfect (non-corrupt) Heaven with God. A gift is only a gift if you accept it. But to all who received him, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12 LVB)
- Salvation without the shedding of Christ's blood is not possible. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. (Heb 9:22).
- Jesus gives us the bread of life. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. (John 6:35).
- First feed them the bread of life, then the needs of the flesh. And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Mark

12:22-23, 29, 31).

Now you know the task, what next? *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.* (Mark 16:15). Jesus' command did not limit us to skipping over to Africa and forgetting about our home area. Is your next-door neighbor less important than someone half a world away? Do you have no concern for your friends? The entire world does need missionaries. Those of us who stay back here in the comfort of democracy making ends meet need to support our missionaries on all continents. These servants of God make sacrifices we will not make and probably cannot imagine. The least we can do is witness to the loved ones the missionaries had to leave behind while they went to follow God's will.

The next hurdle is to conquer your fear. Perhaps you think you have no talent or ability. There is more than one way to witness. You do not have to preach from a street corner or teach a class. We can witness in many other ways that do not require a lot of ability or knowledge and are easy for those who otherwise find it hard to witness:

- PRAY! How many people do you know who are doing God's work? Pray for them. Pastors, their wives, Sunday school teachers, missionaries- they all need our prayers.
- Invite someone to church. "The pastor is speaking about angels," "we're having special music," or "we're having a movie about the Holy Land," etc.
- Ask someone to come to a party at your house to watch Billy Graham on television.
- Similarly, refreshments, friends, and the Jesus film.
- Offer to sponsor a youth to a summer church camp.
- Volunteer to provide transportation to services. There are many people who would love to attend church, especially the elderly, but they cannot get there.
- Take bulletins and an audiotape of that day's service to a shut in.

If you cannot do any of the above on your own, become active in a committee. Five people each doing a little is better than five people individually doing nothing. Let us not think that doing a little is not doing much.

What is the potential contribution of a Christian that leads a drunk to Christ? The drunk turns from his evil ways and eventually becomes a pastor. This pastor leads many more to Christ, and so forth. We have heard stories like this repeatedly. So what do you think about the contribution of the nervous Christian that first approached the drunk about Jesus?

I once was a timid witness, very unsure of myself. I have become braver with every opportunity. Pray! Do not be afraid! What can happen to you? The apostle Paul wrote the following wonderful divinely inspired letters:

It is God himself, in his mercy, who has given us this wonderful work and so we never give up. We do not try to trick people into believing--we are not interested in fooling anyone. We never try to get anyone to believe that the Bible teaches what it does not. All such shameful methods we forego. We stand in the presence of God as we speak and so we tell the truth, as all who know us will agree. If the Good News we preach is hidden to anyone, it is hidden from the one who is on the road to eternal death. 2 Corinthians 4:1-3 LVB.

Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand safe against all strategies and tricks of Satan. But to do this, you will need the strong belt of truth and the breastplate of God's approval. Wear shoes that are able to speed you on as you preach the Good News of peace with God. In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan. And

you will need the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit--which is the Word of God. Pray all the time. Ask God for anything in line with the Holy Spirit's wishes. Ephesians 6:11, 14-18a LVB.

Defend your faith. But sanctify the Lord in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear, Having a good conscience, that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good manner of life in Christ. 1 Peter 3:15-16.

You witness to people who do not have personal relationships with Jesus Christ. What if they ask you a tough question like, "Where did Cain get his wife?" Answer: "Be ready always to give an answer." (See suggested reading.) Know what other faiths believe. How do you discuss "who's right" if you do not know what others believe? Do not let them know more about their faith than you know about yours.

Witnessing to young people can be so rewarding! My mother taught Good News Club, Sunday School, Junior Church, and Vacation Bible School. I saw first hand many children accept Christ as Savior. It must have been wonderful for my mother. Children can be so tender and open. No wonder Jesus loved them so. If you cannot teach, volunteer to open your home to children. Sure, some will be noisy. Something might get broken. A beautiful child's soul might be saved, too. Maybe someone else will teach if you cannot, just open your home.

American youth greatly admire professional athletes. The following organizations can arrange for a Christian athlete to come and fellowship with your impressionable youth.

Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 8701 Leeds Road, Kansas City MO 64129, Phone 816-921-0909, Web site fca@fca.org

Unlimited Potential, Inc., P.O. Box 1355, Warsaw IN 46581-1355, Phone 219-267-7988, Web site www.upi.org

Other witnessing material sources:

American Tract Society, PO Box 462008, Garland TX 75046, 800-548-7228

Good News Publishers, 9825 West Roosevelt Road, Westchester IL 60153

Answers in Genesis, PO Box 6330, Florence KY 41022, www.answersingenesis.org

Word to the World (for free downloadable copies of tracts from this chapter), Middleburg, PA 17842 www.word2world.com

Suggested Reading:

Ham, Ken, *Did Adam Have a Belly Button?*" Green Forest, Arkansas, Master Books, 1999.

Ham, Ken, Snelling, Andrew, Wieland, Carl, *The Answers Book*, Green Forest, Arkansas, Master Books, 1990.

Lerch, Harold A. Sr. P.E., *Did God Really Say That?*, Fairfax, Virginia, Xulon Press, 2002.

Lerch, Harold, *God's People, God's Plan*, Fairfax, Virginia, Xulon Press, 2002.

Do not procrastinate. You can witness in the present, not in the past. There is no assurance that you can witness tomorrow.

Witnessing is not limited to running out and finding heathens to convert, drunks to save, or murderers to reform. Our Christian brethren need ministering at times. Do not forsake your own. Study, be brave, and spread the good news!

Saved from What?

"Are you saved, Brother?" is often heard, poking fun at Christians; yet, it is asked, and it is misunderstood.

Before we go further on the word "saved," let us consider "Saved from what?" That is, "saved from your sins." So we need to understand these words: sins, saved, the consequences of being saved or not being saved, and how to be saved. Since it is generally best to start at the beginning, let us start at "sin," since sin is why we need to be saved.

SIN

Sin is disobedience to God. The first sin was the first disobedience. It occurred in the Garden of Eden:

The serpent said unto the woman (Eve), Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, she took of the fruit and did eat, and gave also unto her husband; and he did eat. And the Lord God called unto Adam, hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast eaten of the tree, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. So he drove out the man of the Garden of Eden. From Genesis 3.

Unfortunately for us, God held us all accountable for First Sin. Does that sound fair? I remember in school, sometimes the entire class got in trouble because of a few bigmouths. This punishment for sin seems like the same thing. The difference, in school I never disagreed with the whole class getting in trouble because I was one of the bigmouths. Similarly, I am one of the sinners against God, so I am in familiar territory. Here is what the Bible says about us sinners:

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23.) 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.)

We all know the Ten Commandments: 1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me; 2. Do not worship graven images; 3. Don't take the LORD's name in vain; 4. Keep the Sabbath holy; 5. Honor thy father and mother; 6. Do not kill; 7. Do not commit adultery; 8. Do not steal; 9. Do not lie; 10. Do not be covetous. There are other commandments such as Love thy neighbor, love thine

enemies, do unto others, etc. How many of these did you break today? Are you a sinner?

SAVED

So now we know that everyone has sinned according to the Scriptures. This is what we need to be saved from, sin. But what if I do not sin? Do I need to be saved? What if a bunch of us get with lawyers and plea bargain with God?

The Bible says all have sinned. There goes the first argument. Anyone that says he has not sinned is a liar! That violates commandment #9, which is also a sin. Further, with God all have sinned, even a brand new baby is born into sin.

God is a Just God and must condemn us for our sins. And though we are condemned already, God is a God of love and mercy and has provided a substitute to bear the burden of the penalty of our sins, that being His Son, the LORD Jesus. God provided a way for us to be saved.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT BEING SAVED

Let me be blunt. Does the word “Hell” mean anything to you? Fiery furnace? Bottomless pit? Following are some bleak passages:

- *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* Matthew 7:21a-23.
- *But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.* Luke 12:9.
- *Heaven can be entered only through the narrow gate! The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide enough for all the multitudes who choose its easy way.* Matthew 7:13 LVB.
- *Keep far from a false charge, and do not slay the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked.* Exodus 23:7 RSV.
- *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.* Revelation 21:8.

THE HOPE IN ONE THAT IS SAVED

This is what awaits the saved:

- *Eternity with God: In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* John 14:2-3.
- *An eternal, immortal body: Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.* 1

Corinthians 15:51-53.

- *Eternal reward: And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.* Revelation 21:1-4, 7.
- *Peace eternal: And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* Philippians 4:7.

HOW TO BE SAVED

When Jesus walked the earth, He taught the concept of sin, so the multitudes knew what sin was. Sin is simply disobeying God. Jesus told them they needed to be saved from their sins. They knew why they needed saved, but not how. When the Apostles Paul and Silas were asked “How?”: Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* Acts 16:30b-31.

The words of Jesus: *If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* John 3:12-18.

Paul: *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Romans 6:23.

Paul: *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.* Ephesians 2:8-9.

Salvation from our sins is for anyone who will accept God’s gift. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:* John 1:12.

To accept Jesus as your Savior, pray: “Dear Father in Heaven, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins. I repent and ask that you will forgive me. I accept Jesus as my Savior. From this day forward I will strive to live for Him. Dear LORD Jesus, please come into my heart. Amen.”

Dear God, Why Won't You Heal Me? Don't You Care? Why Must Christians Suffer?

I am a severe migraine sufferer, and have been for most of my adult life. How many times have I asked God to take these from me; Ten thousand times- once a day for 25 years?

I have spent many hours over many days for many years throughout several decades lying in bed, writhing in pain, praying yet receiving no relief. Aloud I have asked God countless times why He would not answer my prayer. What good was it doing me or anyone else for me to be in this pain? Family outings were spoiled, plans ruined, and even going to church is often interrupted. I still get these headaches. Does that mean God does not care for me? I know that He has heard my prayers.

God must care for me because He sent His Son to die for me. (Would I send my son to die for Him?) He must care for me a lot! So when I prayed 10,000 times, what did God say to me, how did He answer? Why did it take so long to hear an answer? worded my pleading prayers every possible way that I could.

One answer to my prayers was to find a doctor that could help. Under the care of Dr. R. Michael Gallagher, one of the world's leading authorities on headaches and treatment, I have greatly improved. I still get a dozen or more migraines per month. Effective abortive medicines have become available in recent years; nonetheless, often these medications are slow or are ineffective on the worst of my headaches, which can last several days.

So what is God's answer when a Christian is suffering and praying for help? He heals multitudes of sick people. He just does not heal everyone. Though He has the power and authority, He does not for reasons we do not understand. I had a tough time with this discernment until I read "In the Grip of Grace" by Max Lucado. One chapter in this book contemplates an illness or circumstance the apostle Paul had, which is not named in the Bible, but was apparently of major discomfort to Paul. Paul's attitude was unlike mine:

^{5b}*I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses...⁷To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.* ⁸*Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.* ⁹*But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."* ¹⁰*Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.* ¹¹*That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.* 2 Corinthians 12:5b, 7-11 NIV.

When I read this scripture, I immediately realized how trivial my headaches are compared to the importance of eternal life. It touched me so I cried and cried, and thanked God for His grace that would allow me to spend eternity with my LORD free of ailments. Sickness, disease, and death are a result of first sin. God has no obligation for the fall of man and the price that came with the fall. But He provided a substitute to take away our punishment of death.

I shared with my mother what this scripture meant to me. Little did I know that the very same verses got her through a difficult, bedridden pregnancy 45 years earlier. My sister, Jane, was the result of that pregnancy. Jane is the one that told me of a friend, Dr. R. Michael Gallagher, who diagnoses and treats headaches. She convinced me to make the 340 mile round trips to see him. Can you see that God began answering my prayer, through 2 Corinthians chapter 12, decades before I prayed it?

Is spending a joyful eternity with God and other loved ones within the beauty of Heaven more important to you than the trivial trials of this life? God has a master plan and wants eternal life for us. But we have sinned and interrupted God's plan. So God sent His Son to pay the price of our sins so that we might be saved, if we will just accept this gift. The Bible says:

- *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Romans 6:23.
- *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.* Ephesians 2:8-9.
- *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* John 14:1-3.

To accept God's gift of salvation, pray, "Dear Heavenly Father, I am a sinner and I have sinned against you. I am sorry for my sins and sinful nature. I repent of my sins and accept Jesus here and now as my Savior. Jesus, save me by your blood shed for me. Help me turn from my sins. I now give my life to you. In your name I pray, Jesus, Amen."

Suggested reading:

Lucado, Max, In the Grip of Grace, Dallas, TX, Word Publishing, 1996.
Epp, Theodore, Why Do Christians Suffer?, Back to the Bible, 1970.

Interesting points from Theodore Epp:

- Suffering is a result of sin. It is physical and mental. It can build us- witness Job- and produces spiritual growth.
- Satan hates God and wanted to drive a wedge between himself and God. Man has free will and chose to sin.
- Christ was the supreme sufferer. Although He himself is perfect, His suffering brought us hope and eternal life.
- Sickness tests our faith. If we can overcome our trials, we will find joy within.
- God permits suffering to chasten us. Chastisement can be disciplinary, corrective, educative, or preventive.
- Suffering also can be purifying, fruit bearing, perfecting, and reducing of the ego.
- Learn how to suffer, with and for Christ. We should not despise the chastening. Do not become calloused, "murmur," criticize God, or give up.
- Renew your confidence in God. Pray. Count your blessings.
- Praise the LORD, love others, and submit yourself to God.
- Glorify God!

Chief of Sinners

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.
1 Timothy 1:1-2, 15b.

I finally found a mistake in the Bible. Just as the infallibility of the Scriptures was becoming increasingly well-known to me-- I found something wrong. I found that the great Apostle, Paul, bestowed on himself the title of Chief of Sinners. That cannot be true for I am chief of sinners!

WHAT DID PAUL MEAN? WHAT DO I MEAN?

From additional Scripture reading, we see that Paul is speaking of times prior to his finding the grace of our LORD:

According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. 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. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Timothy 1:11-17.

Paul had been an ignorant sinner. When he came to the Truth, he found mercy through Christ. That is what Paul meant.

How about me? Why am I chief of sinners? How dare I compare myself with Paul?

One day I was conversing with a pastor who at the time did not know me well. I was seeking guidance about a matter of Christian conduct. In the process of the conversation I told him that I was the worst sinner that had ever darkened his church's door. He of course had no idea if I meant I was a bank robber, murderer, drug dealer, or worse. My sin: I was a believer, a Christian, a creature made new in Christ, but one who was as though he were dead.

Would you say that a godless life is expected of the ungodly? Is it so strange for someone such as Paul, who had spoken against Christ, to be chief of sinners? A Christian on the other hand, who knows the grace of God and Salvation through Jesus Christ, has no excuse to live a godless life. I had no excuse.

MY DAYS IN SIN

I was so lucky to be born into a family with a Christian mother and father. The knowledge of salvation and the ways of God were fed to me from a silver spoon. I was a bright boy who absorbed much at Sunday school, church, youth programs, Sunday evening worship, Wednesday prayer meetings, special programs, and evening devotions. By the day I left for college I had a sound Christian background and love for my Savior.

By the time I graduated from college, I did not go to church much. In fact, through my twenties, thirties, and forties, I did nothing for God. I still had head knowledge, I still believed, and- I do not know if this makes sense- did love the LORD. I was not witnessing to others about things of the LORD, I did not shine by example, and I showed nothing of the hope that was in me. Can anything be worse? Can one sin more than that?

PRAYER AND PERSEVERANCE

My parents never lost their faith. They are the ones that dedicated me to the LORD as a child. They prayed for me daily all my life, including the years of my twenties, thirties, and forties. Dad nurtured my interest in the scientific and spoke with me for years about the evidence supporting biblical creation.¹ I suppose everyone has his or her “thing,” and this interested me. I still did believe the ways of the LORD, after all.

Continued prayer and effort on behalf of my parents resulted in an eventual change. Something “clicked” in my head that said, “Hey, God made everything, He set the rules, the rules haven’t changed- this is exciting. I have to tell everybody!”

I am now doing what I should have been doing 30 years ago. I do not know if witnessing is supposed to be fun, but it really is, in an exciting way. I am praying daily for opportunities, and God is responding. I ask for guidance as I witness, and God is responding to that, too.

I put God on a shelf. He patiently waited.

LESSONS FROM PAUL TO TIMOTHY

I have had subsequent conversations with the pastor I mentioned previously. I explained to him that when I told him I was the worst sinner to darken his church’s door, I meant that I was a Christian doing nothing for God. I do not know how there can be worse sin. The pastor mentioned Paul’s words from 1 Timothy. I figure I am worse than Paul. At least his greatest sins were as a non-believer.

Believer, I hope you do not sink as far as I had sunk. It is so wonderful to live for Him. Read Paul’s letters to Timothy and enjoy your walk with God.

From Paul: *Here are my directions: Pray much for others; plead for God's mercy upon them; give thanks for all he is going to do for them.* 1 Timothy 2:1 LVB.

It is a true saying that if a man wants to be a pastor he has a good ambition. For a pastor must be a good man whose life cannot be spoken against. He must have only one wife, and he must be hard working and thoughtful, orderly, and full of good deeds. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and must be a good Bible teacher. 1 Timothy 3:1-2 LVB.

Be sure to use the abilities God has given you through his prophets when the elders of the church

laid their hands upon your head. Put these abilities to work; throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone may notice your improvement and progress. Keep a close watch on all you do and think. Stay true to what is right and God will bless you and use you to help others. 1 Timothy 4:14-16 LVB.

This being so, I want to remind you to stir into flame the strength and boldness that is in you, that entered into you when I laid my hands upon your head and blessed you. For the Holy Spirit, God's gift, does not want you to be afraid of people, but to be wise and strong, and to love them and enjoy being with them. If you will stir up this inner power, you will never be afraid to tell others about our Lord, or to let them know that I am your friend even though I am here in jail for Christ's sake. You will be ready to suffer with me for the Lord, for he will give you strength in suffering. 2 Tim. 1:6-8 LVB.

Be strong with the strength Christ Jesus gives you. For you must teach others those things you and many others have heard me speak about. Teach these great truths to trustworthy men who will, in turn, pass them on to others. Work hard so God can say to you, "Well done." Be a good workman, one who does not need to be ashamed when God examines your work. Know what his Word says and means. 2 Timothy 2:1-2, 15 LVB.

You may as well know this too that in the last days it is going to be very difficult to be a Christian. For people will love only themselves and their money; they will be proud and boastful, sneering at God, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful to them, and thoroughly bad. 2 Timothy 3:1-2 LVB.

The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it strengthens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone. 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

I solemnly urge you before God and before Christ Jesus--who will some day judge the living and the dead when he appears to set up his Kingdom-- to preach the Word of God urgently at all times, whenever you get the chance, in season and out, when it is convenient and when it is not. Correct and rebuke your people when they need it, encourage them to do right, and all the time be feeding them patiently with God's Word. May the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Farewell, Paul. 2 Timothy 4:1-2, 22 LVB.

¹For information on biblical creation: www.AnswersInGenesis.org

Abortion, or not?



"Abortion (is the) termination of pregnancy before birth, resulting in, or accompanied by, the death of the fetus.

"Abortion has become one of the most widely debated ethical issues of our time. On one side are pro-choice supporters, individuals who favor a woman's reproductive rights, including the right to choose to have an abortion. On the other side are the pro-life advocates, who oppose abortion except in extreme circumstances, as when the mother's life would be threatened by carrying a pregnancy to term. At one end of this ethical spectrum are pro-choice defenders who believe the fetus is only a potential human being until it is viable. Until this time the fetus has no legal rights—the rights belong to the woman carrying the fetus, who can decide whether or not to bring the pregnancy to full term. At the other end of the spectrum are pro-life supporters who believe the fetus is a human being from the time of conception"¹. (Emphasis added.)

THE CONFLICT

I have seen photographs of aborted babies. They have little hands and little feet. They once were living. As far as viable, what is viable? You could drop me off in the woods and I would survive for a while. How about a 6-month old baby? How would it do on its own? 12 months? The baby would die. So, can we say we can kill a one-year old baby because it is not viable?

These days rationalization for purposes of our own ends can be our god. The pro-choice argument and the possibility of multiple definitions of the word "viable" make the pro-choice view wide open. The pro-life viewpoint allows for a very narrow interpretation and relies primarily on "Thou shalt not kill." There is hardly room for compromise between the two camps.

THE HUMANISTIC VIEW

The worldview is that we can discard unborn babies at our convenience. A pro-life supporter would use the examples of rape and incest to try to obtain a sympathetic ear from the devoutly religious. Ponder this: rape and incest are evil measures. Murder is an evil measure. Murder of a baby because of rape and incest is a virtuous measure?

Those that favor abortion speak of instances when the mother's life is in danger. They say they have their "just cause." Then they contradict themselves and include abortion as a means to end unwanted pregnancies. We are teaching our young people that they can be immoral, and if they make a mistake, they can "have it taken care of."

The landmark court decision most responsible for allowing abortion and pro-choice was the 1973 Supreme Court case Roe v. Wade. The woman known as Jane Roe in that trial, Norma McCorvey, has changed her mind on abortion. According to an AP release, McCorvey stated, "My case was wrongfully decided, and has caused great harm to the women and children of our nation." McCorvey is active in anti-abortion causes.²

A MATTER OF CONVENIENCE

From another AP article about an AMA recommendation of selling the morning-after pill over-the-counter: Joan Coombs, senior vice president of Planned Parenthood said, "This is a wonderful (recommendation) by the AMA." She said widespread use of the morning-after pill could prevent 1.7 million unplanned pregnancies and 800,000 abortions annually.³

This pill will abort pregnancies if taken within three days of intercourse. This is still murder just as much as if using forceps on a 5-month old fetus. I guess at 3 days, one does not look, feel, or act pregnant, so it appears to be "no big deal." Contrary to the implication by Ms. Coombs, this is still abortion.

Dr. Irvin M. Cushner, as testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, 97th Congress, First Session, 1983, p. 158, "Over 99% of all U.S. abortions have nothing to do with the life or health of the woman. They are done simply because of her desire for convenience, absence of distress, and her so-called happiness."

HOW THEY KILL THE BABIES

- D&C is a common procedure. The baby is cut into pieces with a sharp scraping instrument after the cervix is dilated with several other instruments.
- Suction Curettage is as above except that instead of cutting the baby with a curette, a strong suction tube is used. The suction dismembers the baby and vacuums it into a jar.
- Dilation and Evacuation is a method of killing larger babies of 12-20 weeks of age. Sharp-teethed forceps are used to tear away the baby's body piece by piece. Usually, the baby's head is too large to be extracted whole. In this event, the head must be crushed and drained prior to removal.
- Saline Injection. Still larger babies (after 16 weeks) are killed by saline poisoning. A salt solution is injected through the mother's abdomen into the womb. The baby suffers, kicks, and jerks violently for over an hour until it dies. Within 24 hours, labor will begin. Usually the baby is born dead, others need more time of nonattendance to die.
- Just as c-section is used to deliver wanted babies, the same procedure is used to deliver the

unwanted. After delivery, the baby is allowed to die by neglect. This procedure is used in the last 3 months of pregnancy. Many of these babies at this stage could live if wanted.

- Chemical Abortion uses chemicals to perform a prostaglandin chemical abortion. The chemicals cause intense contractions so strong that generally the contractions kill the baby. Some of the babies are born alive and allowed to die.
- Partial Birth abortion, the cervix is dilated. The baby is pulled into the birth canal in breech fashion. An incision is made in the baby's head. The brain is removed by suction, collapsing the head. The body is then "delivered."

Can you imagine a human rights group that would stand for this to be done to even the worst criminal?

WHAT DOES GOD SAY?

God is the creator. He set the rules. He obviously considers an embryo a precious being:
For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Psalms 139:13-15.

God also said:

- *Thou shalt not kill.* Exodus 20:13.
- *Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.* Exodus 23:7.
- *Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of one's youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.* Psalm 127:3-5.
- *Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.* Psalm 128:3.
- *Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.* Proverbs 17:6.
- *Then the word of the Lord came unto me saying, Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.* Jeremiah 1:4-5.
- *But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.* Luke 1:13-15.

CHRISTIAN COUNSELING

If you are in a position to recommend counseling to a woman with a pregnancy concern, recommend Christian counseling. A secular medical facility is influenced by humanistic thought processes and is biased by "of the flesh" mentality- we are just high animal forms responsible only

to ourselves. In contrast, read the scriptures.

I am a man writing about a decision I should never have to face; but I do know that the Christian counselors offer a message of love in a time of turmoil. Speak with these tenderhearted women if you have a need. Let them guide you to a responsible decision, an informed decision, and the right decision.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Publicize God's view on abortion. It is murder. Have your church or group of concerned citizens take out full-page pro-life ads in newspapers. Include pictures of aborted babies. Send copies to your congressmen, both state and federal.

You can obtain materials on abortion needed for your campaign from the following organizations:

- American Tract Society, PO Box 462008, Garland TX 75046
- Last Days Ministries, Box 40, Lindale TX 75771-0040
- Christian Medical and Dental Society, <http://prnewswire.com>
- "Abortion Alternatives" in the phone book
- Dr. and Mrs. J.C. Willke, Handbook on Abortion, Hayes Publishing Co., 6304 Hamilton Avenue, Cincinnati OH 45224
- Dr. Brian Close, Pro-Life Encyclopedia, Stafford: American Life League
- Pharmacists for Life International, New Abortion Drugs, a Health Threat, PO Box 1281, Powell OH 43065

¹Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia 2001. © 1993-2000 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

²Roe vs. Wade's Jane Roe files friend-of-court briefs opposing abortion, the Associated Press, The Sentinel, Lewistown, Pa., USA 6/1/01, p. A8.

³Branom, Mike, AMA recommends selling morning-after pill over-the-counter, The Associated Press, The Daily Item, Sunbury, Pa., USA 12/6/00 p. A6.

Good Enough for Heaven?

Can one live a “good enough” life to earn a place in heaven, to balance misbehavior with good conduct? Is there a formula for how many pounds of “good” are needed to outweigh a pound of “bad?” Let us examine the Bible as the resource for the answers to these questions.

From the earliest biblical records, we learn of dreadful consequences from disobedience to God. Adam and Eve, who at first lived in a perfect world, sinned against God and then were forced to work hard in a degraded world, destined to die. Their descendants, all but Noah and his family, were drowned in a catastrophic, worldwide deluge. Sorrows continued throughout the Old Testament, following periods of defiance.

Until the great prophet Isaiah begins his writings in the eighth century B.C., there is not much recorded about salvation. Until then, the Lord is referred to as “rock and salvation,” but in the defeat-our-mortal-enemies sense, such as: *I will hide in God, Who is my rock and my refuge. He is my shield and my salvation, my refuge and high tower. Thank you, O my Savior, for saving me from all my enemies.* (2 Samuel 22:3 LVB.)

Isaiah advanced his strong prophetic messages of the coming messiah. This is when the meaning of “salvation” took on a wondrous new dimension: *But Israel shall be saved by Jehovah with eternal salvation; they shall never be disappointed in their God through all eternity. For Jehovah created the heavens and earth and put everything in place, and he made the world to be lived in, not to be an empty chaos. I am Jehovah, he says, and there is no other!* (Isaiah 45:17-18 LVB.)

So how does this “eternal salvation” thing work and how does one earn it? The Jews were taught that the only means of remission for their sins was the sacrifice and shedding of blood of a clean animal. What are the relationships of good, evil, punishment, and reward to salvation? *Plant the good seeds of righteousness and you will reap a crop of my love; plow the hard ground of your hearts, for now is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and shower salvation upon you.* (Hosea 10:12 LVB.) That verse, by a contemporary of Isaiah, suggests that we do good things, but that our salvation is from the Lord, not from doing good things. How, then, can we be good enough for heaven?

We must ask the Savior that Isaiah, Hosea, and others prophesied. He, Jesus, followed a string of 17 prophets, fulfilling every messianic prophecy. One night, a Jewish religious leader named Nicodemus came to speak with Jesus. He said, “We all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miracles prove this.” Jesus replied, “With all the earnestness I possess I tell you this: Unless you are born again, you can never get into the Kingdom of God.” “Born again!” exclaimed Nicodemus. “What do you mean? How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?” Jesus replied, “What I am telling you so earnestly is this: Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Men can only reproduce human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven; so don’t be surprised at my statement that you must be born again!” (John 3:3-7 LVB.)

Jesus' emphatic reply is that physical acts cannot buy a spiritual life. Eternal life in heaven can only be acquired by a spiritual rebirth. Only Jesus can save us. We can never be good enough. *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* (Romans 3:23.) Our good deeds, "works," cannot do it. *We are saved by God's grace: For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God-- not because of works, lest any man should boast.* (Ephesians 2:8-9 RSV.)

Here is another account from Jesus with a promise of Good News: "*Let not your heart be troubled. You are trusting God, now trust in me. There are many homes up there where my Father lives, and I am going to prepare them for your coming. When everything is ready, then I will come and get you, so that you can always be with me where I am. If this were not so, I would tell you plainly. And you know where I am going and how to get there.*" "*No, we don't,*" Thomas, said. "*We haven't any idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?*" Jesus told him, "*I am the Way--yes, and the Truth and the Life. No one can get to the Father except by means of me.*" (John 14:1-6.)

If you want to be "good enough for heaven," you cannot. But you can go there someday. If you would like eternal life, pray, "Dear God, I confess that I am a sinner. I believe in your Son Jesus Christ, our Savior. I ask Jesus here and now to come into my heart and life and to be my savior. Please help me to turn from sin. I give my life to you. Thank you, Lord, for saving me. In Jesus name I pray. Amen."

The Door

It would be wonderful if there were a door to Heaven that we could open at will. This door could eliminate all of our troubles and sorrows by simply allowing us to unbolt it and enter God's domain. Actually, "the door" is at our fingertips and within our reach. Jesus said, "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.*" (Revelation 3:20 RSV.) Jesus added, "*He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.*" (Revelation 3:21 RSV.)



Jesus is the doorway to heaven. We cannot enter as we are. We are sinners with sinful, mortal bodies. We must be changed before we can cross the threshold to Heaven. The apostle Paul tells us, "*For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (1 Corinthians 15:53-57 RSV.)

The aged door in the picture above was once a beautiful entrance to my Mother's childhood home. It is testimony to the fact that in the beginning, God wound-up His creation, which is now winding down. By three steps one could enter Mom's home, and by three steps one can enter Heaven:

1. Confess your sins. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* (1 John 1:9 KJV.)
2. Believe in Christ. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* (Acts 16:31b KJV.)
3. Ask Jesus into your Heart. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:* (John 1:12 KJV.)

Jesus can and will save you from your sins, and make a place for you in Heaven: *In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.* (John 14:2-3 RSV.)

If you would like to enter the door to Heaven, pray, "Dear Father in Heaven, I know I am a sinner and have sinned against you. I am sorry for my sins and sinful nature, and ask that you will forgive me. I accept Jesus now as my Savior, who shed His blood for me. I give my life to you and will strive to live for you. Thank you, LORD, for saving my soul. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

Heaven's Secret Handshake

I stumbled upon scripture regarding a Christian handshake. Is there some slick, secret handshake by which we can enter heaven? Secret handshakes unlock doors in many clubs and organizations. In fact, we seem to be fascinated by secret societies, secret handshakes, and so on. Perhaps this is due to the allure of the unknown, and our speculation about the big secrets that the rest of us cannot know.

What about this Christian handshake? First, there are some fascinating secret organizations around the world. Yale's Skull & Bones Society, the Bilderberger Group, the Illuminati, Knights of Malta, Knights Templar, and so forth, having their secret membership lists which include the rich and famous and perhaps influence the world order. Nonmembers can only hypothesize about these clandestine social orders. One thing is for sure- they must have their own secret handshakes! If you know the secret handshake, you can attend the secret meetings and influence important circles around the world.

When you die, your domination of world affairs ends; but maybe along the way you learned a secret handshake to take you to the "next level." Maybe you learned "heaven's secret handshake."

The only source we have to study about heaven is the Bible. The Bible also is known as the Word of God. Therefore, the Bible is the only reliable source we can consult to seek a handshake that will allow us to enter heaven. God gives Peter the keys to heaven¹, so let us look to Peter for a clue. Here is what Peter wrote about the Christian handshake: Give each other the handshake of Christian love. Peace is to all of you who are in Christ. (1 Peter 5:14 LVB.) What is the substance of this handshake? Peter, the keeper of the keys, also wrote, All honor to God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; for it is his boundless mercy that has given us the privilege of being born again, so that we are now members of God's own family. Now we live in the hope of eternal life because Christ rose again from the dead. And God has reserved for his children the priceless gift of eternal life; it is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. And God, in his mighty power, will make sure that you get there safely to receive it, because you are trusting him. (1 Peter 1:3-5a LVB.)

So the "secret handshake," or "Handshake of Christian Love," is spiritual in nature-not a physical grasping of the arms. It is an embracing of the beliefs mandated by God, taught by His only begotten Son Jesus- this is what can get us into heaven- heaven's handshake. These verses summarize the doctrine behind the "secret handshake," salvation from your sins, God's gift: For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23.)

- For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9.)

- Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. (John 14:1-3.)

To accept Jesus as your Savior, pray: "Dear Father in Heaven, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins and ask that you will forgive me. I accept Jesus as my Savior. From this day forward I will strive to live for Him. Dear Lord Jesus, please come into my heart."

¹Jesus said, "You are Peter, a stone; and upon this rock I will build my church; and all the powers of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; whatever doors you lock on earth shall be locked in heaven; and whatever doors you open on earth shall be open in heaven!" (Matthew 16:18-19 LVB.)

Endnotes

Dr. Andrew Snelling editor, The Revised Quote Book, Creation Science Foundation Ltd., Answers in Genesis, Acacia Ridge, Queensland, Australia 1990. p. 2. Original sources of all quotes are cited within this reference.

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Two Wrongs Don't Make a Right, But Three Lefts Do

As a child I was in awe at the intelligence of adults. I thought grownups knew just about everything. Even in light conversations, I took their words as serious and meaningful. Later I became more impressed with the wisdom recorded in the Bible, such as Solomon's "Cut the child in two." How about the supreme wisdom spoken time and time again by Jesus, "Render unto Caesar," for example?

Years ago I came up with wisdom of my own, albeit twisted, "Two wrongs don't make a right" (a wise man ahead of me said that), but I added, "but three lefts do." I think that came to me after I crashed my bicycle. The front fork was bent backward so that I couldn't turn right, but I could accomplish the same result by circling left. Anyway, I thought that would make a great title for a book. All I needed was a subject: wisdom and wit! I expect that you will like this book as much as I enjoyed writing it.



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Harold is the author of *Did God Really Say That?* which explains that we can trust the Bible, including the creation account, and must follow God's commandments. Another book, *God's People, God's Plan*, explains that the biblical prophecy of the Messiah is real, and that Jesus has fulfilled this promise.

Word to the World is a ministry founded by Harold Lerch to distribute, at no cost, witnessing materials and biblically based information. Tracts written by Mr. Lerch may be viewed and downloaded from the website, www.word2world.com.

¹ Dr. Andrew Snelling editor, *The Revised Quote Book*, Creation Science Foundation Ltd., Answers in Genesis, Acacia Ridge, Queensland, Australia 1990. p. 2. Original sources of all quotes are cited within this reference.

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