

*The Advocate of Truth*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

*Word Keys That Unlock Truth* ..... 3  
Our word this month is "almug".

*Thankful To God* ..... 3-4  
Do we thank God enough?

*The Human Factor* ..... 4  
Love has an affect on our health.

*7 Things You May Or May Not Know About Isaac* .... 5-6

*Why Is Church Fellowship Needed* ..... 6-8  
Four reasons are listed.

*Honor God's Will And He Will Hear* ..... 8-9  
God's children strive to do God's will.

*Being True To Christ* ..... 9-10  
Here we find some thoughts about Judas.

*Deceptions* ..... 10-11  
Prove all things from God's Word.

*Christ Our Wisdom* ..... 11-13  
We need to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, our example.

*My Friend* ..... 13  
I have learned.

*Signs Of The Times* ..... 14-15  
Here we find a new kind of youth ministry.

*Questions And Answers* ..... 16-17  
What is meant by Gog and Magog?

*The Church Around The World* ..... 18-19  
Here we look at some baptisms in Mexico

*The Children's Pages* ..... 20-23

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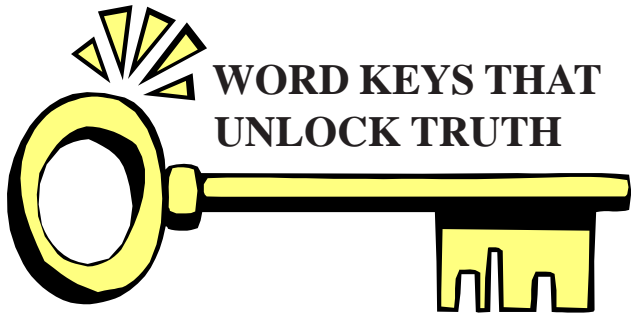
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## WORD KEYS THAT UNLOCK TRUTH

### "ALMUG"

"And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones. And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the Lord, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day" (I Kings 10:11-12). The almug tree is only mentioned in connection with Solomon's construction of the temple in II Chronicles 2:8; 9:10-11 and I Kings 10:11-12 and its use in making harps and psalteries for singers. Little is known

of this tree, though there is some speculation. In the Hebrew, this word occurs in the plural *almuggim* which seems to indicate that the wood was brought in planks. Some believe it was the white sandalwood of India (*Santalum album*), a native of the mountainous parts of the Malabar Coast. This is a fragrant wood. Others think that it was more likely the Indian red sandalwood (*Pterocarpus santolinas*), a heavy, fine-grained wood, the Sanscrit name of which is *valguka*. It is found in the Coromandel Coast and in Ceylon. Red sandalwood is very heavy, hard and fine grained, and a beautiful garnet color. All through the ages it was highly prized for its color, fragrance, durability and texture. Bible versions disagree on the translation of the Hebrew word *algum* or *almug*, using sandalwood, juniper, or some variation of *algum*. It is certain; however, the wood of that tree was very precious and had distinct usage. It was evidently a fine, close-grained wood, suitable for carving only the very finest was used to build the temple and its furnishings. Each type of material was carefully selected. What, then is *almug* wood? Is this tree now extinct? Though little is known of the *almug*, it is important to keep in mind that God finds and uses the best for His purpose.

## THANKFUL TO GOD WE OWE GOD THANKSGIVING

By Bond Tennant



November 25, 2004 is Thanksgiving day in the United States. Have we really thought about why we, as children of God, must be thankful to God?

In Revelation 4:11, We hear the words: "Thou art worthy O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Let us consider this truth! God is worthy of our thanks because He is our Maker. "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" (Psalm 100:3).

All that we are and have is from God's hand. God has given us many gifts. The strength we have, the food and shelter that maintain our lives, the blood and breath within our bodies, and the very time we all have on this earth come from God. He sustains and provides for us. His hand provides every necessity of life.

Revelation 5:12 records, "..., Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." How thankful we should be that God sent His only begotten Son to earth to be our Redeemer.

There are many exhortations to thanks in the Bible. "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High" (Psalm 50:14). "Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms" (Psalm 95:2). "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name" (Psalm 100:4). "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever" (Psalm 107:1). "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6). "Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Colossians 2:7). "Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 7:12).

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*The following is an excerpt from an article, **The Power of Love, which appeared in the TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER NEWS.***

## THE HUMAN FACTOR

In his book "*Love and Survival*," noted cardiologist Dean Ornish, M.D., who incidentally studied under Justice's tutelage, writes "love and intimacy are at the root of what makes us sick and what makes us well, what causes sadness and what brings happiness, what makes us suffer and what leads to healing." Love, Ornish believes, has as important an impact on a patient's cardiovascular health as diet, smoking, genetics, or exercise.

Recently, researchers at the Institute of Heartmath in Boulder Creek, California discovered that, like the brain, the heart produces chemicals in response to emotions. Love results in a very rhythmic, coherent, beating pattern, while negative emotions spawn erratic patterns.

This conclusion is borne out by more than 50 years of scientific studies.

In a 1952 study, male students at Harvard University completed surveys regarding the nature of their relation-

ships with their parents. Thirty-five years after, the respondents, now in their 50s, underwent physical exams. More than 90 percent of the men who lacked a loving parental relationship suffered from coronary artery disease, hypertension, ulcers and alcoholism. This was double the percentage of illness in men who reported loving parental relationships.

Intimate touching, whether holding hands, walking arm-in-arm, or softly stroking a lover's face, has also been shown to increase certain antibodies that fight disease and promote growth hormones.

At Case Western Reserve University, 10,000 married men were asked, "Does your wife show you her love?" A follow up study five years later revealed that those who answered "yes" experienced significantly less anginal, despite risk factors such as elevated cholesterol, diabetes and high blood pressure.

Numerically speaking, some researchers believe that happily married men and women with heart disease can live almost four years longer than unmarried healthy individuals. Married people who are 20 pounds overweight still have a longer life expectancy than healthy, unmarried people, studies show.

Like the brain, the heart produces chemicals in response to emotions. Love results in a very rhythmic, coherent, beating pattern, while negative emotions spawn erratic patterns.

Justice proposes several explanations.

"We all have a basic human desire to connect with other human beings. Alienation and loneliness induce stress, which eventually takes a toll on one's physical health," he explained.

Then, there are the practical, less philosophical explanations.

"Compared to their single counterparts, most married men have a distinct advantage. Their wives plan balanced meals, cook, and nag their husbands to keep doctors' appointments," Justice explains. "I'm not saying women should be relegated to caretakers. But generally speaking, they're better at running the show."

Avoiding risky sex is another marital advantage in light of today's dicey dating scene, he adds.

"The overriding message, confirmed again and again by decades of research, is the power of love improves our health," Justice says

"We can all be reassured that the more we love and are loved, the healthier we become."

# 7

## Things You May Or May Not Know About

### ISAAC

by Warren H. Randall Jr.

1. His father, Abraham, was told that in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

"And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Genesis 21:9-12).

2. He carried the wood of burnt offering when God told his father to sacrifice him.

"And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together" (Genesis 22:5-6).

3. He married Rebekah after his mother's death.

"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant. What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master; therefore she took a veil, and covered

herself.

And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death" (Genesis 24:63-67).

4. The covenant was reconfirmed in Isaac.

"And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar. And the Lord appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Genesis 26:1-5).

5. He lied about this wife, just like his father Abraham.

"And Isaac dwelt in Gerar: And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon " (Genesis 26:6-7).

6. Before Isaac entreated the Lord, his wife was barren.

"And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac: And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of the Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram., the sister to Laban the Syrian. And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren: and the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived" (Genesis 25:19-21).

7. Because of very poor eyesight, Jacob was able to fool him.

"And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I. And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death: Now therefore

take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; And make me savory meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die. And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man: My father preadventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing. And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.

And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savory meat, such as his father loved. And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son: And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck: And he came near, and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed:" (Genesis 27:1-4,11-16,27).

## Why is Church Fellowship Needed?

By Siegfried Maywald



In our modern society today, we find that many people prefer in spiritual matters to "paddle their own canoes" rather than become participants of a larger church group of any kind. Within their own canoes, they make their own decisions about where and how long to journey, when to go ashore, and when to return to routine life. But an individual canoe can not even attempt to fulfill the mission as given the disciples. Christ gave His church a mission to complete when He said:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19-20).

We ought to make disciples of all nations, and to accomplish this mission we need partners, co-workers in Christ Jesus. It becomes a much more difficult and demanding mission than that of a travel agent to fill a cruise liner or to fulfill the mission of an oilrig somewhere in the ocean where all workers have to join in a united effort to accomplish their task. God's commission requires the combined efforts of many people to work in unison. In Christ's mission, it becomes the teamwork of committed Christians who come to the same understanding and purpose

in life. The Christian mission requires certain sacrifices of all believers who participate in spreading the Gospel. Just like the crews of a cruise ship or oil rig in the ocean have to make certain sacrifices and give up certain privileges in order to devote their energies to the larger purposes, so likewise all Christians have to commit time and effort and work together in harmony.

But of late it has become a more common practice for certain Christians to adapt to a private entrepreneurial, self seeking, go-it-alone religion. Now days regarding spiritual matters people prefer to "paddle their own canoes." They do not want to be confined to fixed doctrines of a large organization. They prefer the freedom for self interpretation. When looking in the Old Testament, we see that even Moses experienced with the children of Israel, God's "chosen" people, difficulties in the demanding task to get a large group of people like that to move in the same direction in unison. It gave him great challenges. We, in our society, face the same frustrations to get people to work harmoniously together as a team. Too much of our time and energy is lost in committee meetings instead of serving our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Unlike members of the military, who must follow or-



ders or will have to face disciplinary actions, church's members don't take orders, they volunteer to follow the leader in the service to God. Therefore many find it tempting to just go off by themselves and do their own thing. After all, salvation or condemnation comes to each individual by choice because every person is responsible for his or her own actions before God. A church or organizational membership does not guarantee him or her eternal life. So why get involved with a bunch of difficult people?

I have to admit that I also had not always a rosy relationship with the church and it's politics. It is the politicking that turns people off. There were times in my life when I decided to "paddle my own canoe," in spiritual matters. The people in the congregation I had been attending had grown abusive and dysfunctional. They still were lacking compassion and love of their fellow brethren, and so I came to the conclusion that the conditions there actually threatened my spiritual well being. The Holy Spirit had left the church. Therefore, after a long time of regular church attendance and service, I moved away from this church altogether. Now I find harmony, peace and love in another congregation in which the Spirit of God is truly at work. A judgemental attitude drives people away, but love, care and interest for others attract people. To be effective in the work of God one needs to become part of a congregation even if it is at times an exasperating experience to be part of an institution that calls itself church because of all it's political expediencies. But we all know that people make up the church and none of us are perfect. We all make mistakes at times, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, love, patience and a caring attitude those hurdles can be overcome.

We may distinguish four reasons to seek fellowship with brethren because:

1. We all need help

Even the best leader needs help sometimes. We all need reassurance and guidance in the spiritual realm because Satan keeps whispering his lies wherever he can and tries to disorient and lead us away from our faith. Therefore we need to associate with other Christians to find help to keep us on course.

Although I changed my local congregation, I did not let go of the fellowship of a church. For the church of God is the "Body of Christ" and extends far beyond any single congregation. I still and always will continue to stay in contact with trusted Christian friends whose coun-

sel I value.

When it comes to living the Christian life, we are all in the same boat for we shall need help from one another to stay firm in God's word. We always can find problems within the confines of a church, but never forget it is people that make up the church and none of us are perfect.

Because I perceived my local congregation to be in desperate spiritual condition, I needed other caring and encouraging Christians to help me stay on track, to give me hope and purpose. We all need someone we can trust, and can give encouragement and hope for the better. It is the power of the Holy Spirit of God who enables us to act in this manner, but proclaimed faith without action is dead as seen in James 2:20.

2. We all need encouragement

Someone once said that Satan's greatest single tool is discouragement. Life in our society offers plenty of occasions to despair, and attempting to live a Christian life in a fallen society can dismay us even more. Therefore, we must seek encouragement via the Holy Spirit through prayer and study of the Word of God, but we also need human friends. Let us not forget that Jesus took Peter, James and John to watch with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. Even the Son of God looked for encouragement through prayer near His time of trial that was to come.

3. We all need to belong

God told us that it is not good for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18). Psychologists tell us that the need to belong, to be loved and be needed forms our deepest human needs. It was God, who placed that need within us. And the church is designed to also help fill this need within a human being. Therefore, becoming part of a healthy congregation enhances the individual personal emotional health by giving him or her a sense of belonging to something greater than self.

4. We all need to fully express ourselves.

One might be a poor navigator, even of a canoe, but skilled at communication or control of a larger operation. In my own canoe in the end I would always feel somewhat out of place, since I wouldn't be able either to fulfill my personal mission or not have the opportunity to pursue my individual gift to the fullest. As long as one is trying to do it all alone, one will in the end always become frustrated. Our greatest opportunity for personal fulfillment comes in using our God given gifts for the edification of

the church as the whole. The church provides the best opportunity to each individual believer to express his God given gifts and talents to help fulfill the great commission.

The church as an organization will always present us with frustrations and challenges because God has filled it with broken and hurting people just like you and I. In placing us together in the church, He has given us the opportunity to grow together, to become what none of us could become alone, and to be part of the greatest task ever entrusted to human beings. So in spite of its problems, the church still is the place one needs to be. Proverbs 11:14 tells us: "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety."

The church is a community of believers who confess that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Saviour. We all join together in worship, fellowship and instruction in God's word and proclaim His message worldwide, The church is God's family; adopted by Him as children. It is the body of Christ with Christ Himself as its head.

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Saviour of the body" (Ephesians 5:23).

"This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us" (Acts 7:38).

"And he gave some, apostles, and some, prophets; and some, evangelist; and some, pastors and teachers: For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Til we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-15).

Our oneness in Jesus Christ does not destroy our individuality. God through the Holy Spirit has given every believer certain gifts to help edify the church as a whole, to better equip the saints to reach out to their people. We're to use our talents and look for opportunities to serve. For God has given the church an enormous commission in making disciples of all nations. If we had to fulfill the commission as individuals, we might as well give up because it is impossible to do this on our own. Therefore, God calls all members of His to use their various given gifts to work in unison. And it is for us to understand that only in this way the fullness of Christ can be expressed (Ephesians 3:19).

## ***HONOR GOD'S WILL, AND HE WILL HEAR***

***BY BUDDY SCOTT***



The boy's father was a pillar of the community, and the life he lived in public was the same life he lived at home. He was a living example of the best guidance provided in effective books on parenting.

However, his 18-year-old son had a take-him-or-leave-him attitude toward his father. He didn't have the maturity to truly recognize that he was blessed above all sons of the earth.

What his father loved, he mostly ignored. If it wasn't convenient to honor his father's values, he didn't seem to

mind disappointing him. He just went his way as if he didn't have a most excellent father.

But when he needed or wanted something, it was to his father that he issued his requests. His father was disheartened by his son's behavior. His son felt that he should have all the benefits of an authentic relationship with his father without doing what it takes to build one.

Do you like the kid?

The father in the above story is our Father who is in heaven. The son is we who don't walk with him daily in an



authentic relationship, yet issue our requests for help when we need or want something.

The Apostle John, the one known as the beloved disciple, tells us how it is supposed to be;

"Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey His commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as He commanded us. Those who obey His commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit He gave us" (I John 3:21-24, New International Version).

"And receive from Him anything we ask" must be qualified. The disciples were praying to authentically taking the pristine path of Christ and praying about how to invite others to join them. They weren't asking for a new high definition TV.

The following Scripture is known in theology as the master key of prayer. Jesus gave us the secret to prayer when He said, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7)

Jesus was clear about authentic relationship when He said: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love, I for you obey my commands,

you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete" (John 15:9-11, NIV).

The Apostle Paul followed up to implore us not to put away the fire of the spirit: "Pray without ceasing (Pray by the way you live your life). "In every thing give thanks (live hopefully and confidently in Christ): for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (You and God are living in harmony with His will and purpose). Quench not the Spirit (do not fail to have an authentic relationship with your Father in heaven)" (Thessalonians 5:17-19, KJV).

This is actually easy to comprehend:  $A+B=C$ .

Have an authentic, compliant-child relationship with God, ask what we will within God's will and purpose, and we'll have positioned ourselves to see our prayers answered by Him.

If we ignore God, or live in defiance of God, and His daily will and purpose for our lives, but suddenly issue needs and wants to Him in prayer, we shouldn't be disappointed when God doesn't act against His word by running errands for us.

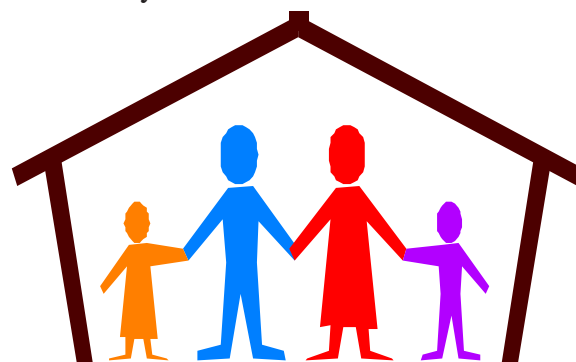
We remember that Jesus said: "If ye abide in me, and my word abide in you, ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you."

## ***BEING TRUE TO CHRIST***

### ***A LESSON STUDY***

"Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said" (Matthew 26:25).

Judas had been especially selected by Jesus as one of His twelve apostles, and sent forth by Him to heal the sick, to cast out devils, and to carry out many other works in connection with His earthly ministry. He had been a witness to Jesus' miracle-working powers, and had learned firsthand from His teaching of the Scriptures. No doubt, he began his ministry with sincerer motives and



desires to be a true follower of the Master.

Evidently, however, Judas allowed the selfish tendencies of his earthly nature to hold sway over his action. Instead of appreciating the principle of truth and righteousness as illustrated by our Lord's life and teachings, he was gradually consumed by pride and greed. He failed to develop the noble qualities of justice, love, and mercy as shown in Jesus' life. Instead, he went on to cultivate earthly characteristics of his own nature. Judas had become attracted to the glorious prospects of the kingdom which

had been set forth by Jesus to His close followers. He had heard the Master's teaching concerning the throne of glory, and the honors attached to it. He probably misunderstood the reality of the situation as well as the ultimate prospect. The opportunity of judging the twelve tribes of Israel interested his ego, but he was not prepared to lay down his life in sacrifice to obtain the blessing.

As worldly wisdom overtook his mind, apparently he became offended at Jesus' actions as being foolish and began to be more critical of Him. The multitudes desired to make Jesus a king, so why, from His prospective, should He refuse them and withdraw Himself from such an honor? Instead of speaking to the people in parables why not explain them so that they could understand? Judas may have reasoned that Jesus could have worked with the religious leaders of Israel rather than to constantly reprove them and refuse to cooperate with them.

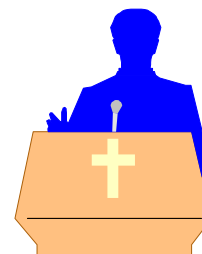
Judas' selfish attitude was revealed in connection with anointing of Jesus' feet by Mary of Bethany a few days before the Master's betrayal and crucifixion. Mary had procured very expensive and precious perfume for the occasion. Her actions offended Judas who considered

the matter as wasteful extravagance. He remarked that the money should have been spent on behalf of the poor, but he, no doubt, had little interest in their welfare. This ambitious spirit led him to plot with the chief priests of Israel in Jesus' betrayal and death. Finding them eager to conspire against the Master, he said unto them "..., What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenant with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him" (Matthew 26:15-16).

Jesus was aware of the deceitful conspiracy that was being formulated against Him. He knew that Judas, one of the Twelve who shared with Him the Last Supper around the table that final night of His life on earth, would be the one who would ultimately betray Him. The Lord's eloquent teachings, healing of the sick and afflicted, and even the miracles of raising the dead to life, had been disregarded. Jesus said, "The son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matthew 26:24).

Contributed

## *DECEPTIONS*



God's servants knew that in the last days many would be deceived and would be led astray from the truth. There have been deceptions from the time of the apostles.

Paul wrote in II Thessalonians 2:7, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work:..." There were many false doctrines on every hand, and the people at that time stood ready to believe them. In the years that followed the death of the original apostles, men of doubtful sincerity and certain pagan background began to assume positions of importance in the church, at the same time introducing into true worship doctrines that had been a part of their idolatrous past. These people were of Gentile extraction, and they hated the Jews. They set about to rid Christianity of its Jewish connections.

It was in this period of anti-Judaism and mythological interpolation that many of the false teachings so prevalent in the world were introduced into Christianity. The force

of many years widespread usage has caused many people to become so deeply grounded in these deceptions that they feel an attempt to present the truth is but an attempt to deceive. To them, the traditions of men are true while the pure Word of God is misapplied if presented free from encumbrance of tradition.

Deception is so widespread now that it is hard to introduce people to consider the importance of sincere and unbiased study of the Scriptures. Today, when people read the Bible, it is not to learn more of the precious truth, but to support their own doctrine which they have received from their fathers. This is not in keeping with the admonition, "study to shew thyself approved unto God." The motive behind such study is but to show one's self approval unto man according to the doctrine of men.

In these last days when deception is widespread, we can feel indeed thankful that God has called us out of the

error of idolatry and confusion of man's traditions, and into the glorious light of His truth. We can rejoice in this blessing, not with the attitude of the Pharisee, "I thank thee, Father, that I am not as other men," But with the

humble gratitude that is characteristic of Christ. God does not want people who are deceived. He wants people who know and live by the truth.



## CHRIST OUR WISDOM

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (I Corinthians 1:30).

Our Lord Jesus Christ walked in the narrow way that leads to immortality. It is only through His merit, and by virtue of His counsel and example that others can walk acceptably in the same narrow way. As our opening text emphasizes, Christ is our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification and our redemption. In other words, He is all and everything to us that is necessary in order that we may be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ in the heavenly reward offered to the saints during this age.

One of the chief titles the Scriptures give to Jesus is that of Counsellor. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace" (Isaiah 9:6). If we are able to be truly wise, it is essential that we follow the instructions and leadership of Christ. The wise Man said, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and knowledge of the holy is understanding" (Proverbs 9:10). To reverence the Lord implies respect for His words of enlightenment and instruction. This respect will lead us to fully obey the divine will. This quality of reverence for God is necessary from every beginning of our approach to Him, for it means that we recognize His greatness, and our own nothingness-His perfection of holiness, and our own depravity and unrighteousness. To recognize this is the true foundation of wisdom's structure. It implies willingness and desire to put aside our own imperfect viewpoints and ways, and to accept instead His counsel and will. "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the chil-

dren of the Highest; for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke 6:35).

Approaching God in this wise attitude of humility, desiring to be taught of Him, one of the first lessons we learn is the wondrous provision through Christ whereby, despite our imperfections, we can enjoy the blessings which His grace vouchsafes to all who long to be in harmony with Him-who "pant" after Him is "the hart panteth after the water brooks." "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God" (Psalm 42:1).

An honest recognition of our own imperfectness, hence the need of a Redeemer, is but the first step in wisdom's way. We need also to recognize the wisdom of making a full consecration of ourselves to do the Father's will. The recognition of our own lack of wisdom would be largely in vain should we fail to devote ourselves fully to Him who has promised to give to His own that wisdom which is from above. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, what giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not": and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17). While the Word of God is filled with all the necessary counsel to make us truly wise, its instructions become the guiding light of our lives only when we devote ourselves unreservedly to doing the will of God represented therein.

Christ is our wisdom in this fuller sense also, because He is to us the living Word of God. In the perfect example of His life, we have patterned for us the manner in which the written institutions of the Word apply to the lives of the consecrated. He is the Captain of our salvation, the



Forerunner, the Head of the body, who in being guided by words of God Himself, has shown us the true meaning of those instructions as they affect the lives of those who are following in His footsteps.

Heavenly wisdom rejoices in mercy. How beautifully Jesus exemplified this quality of the divine character, both in His teaching and manner of life. When He was asked how often one should forgive, He gave the "seventy times seven" formula of divine mercy, which, when adopted in the life of a child of God, serves to bypass nearly all friction and disputes that otherwise rob followers of the Master of the fullness of joy in the Lord that should be theirs. "Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, "Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:22). Whether in our individual lives as children of God, in our homes, or in the church, the mercy element of heavenly wisdom serves to sweeten all of our experiences and to make us more like our Father in heaven.

Fruits of the Christian life are the fruits of the Spirit. The growth of such fruit will inevitably take place when one turns his life over to Christ. Here again the fullness of our devotion to God will be the measure of the fruitage developed in our lives. If we are to be full of good fruits, we must be empty of self. Barren is the selfish heart of the flesh, but to the extent self-will is renounced, and the will of God in Christ becomes tell all-possessing power of our lives, there is certain to be an abundant crop of good fruit.

The Scriptures explain that ye are all in one Christ Jesus. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Therefore, to show partiality in our dealings with fellow members of the body of Christ would display a lack of wisdom from above. Just as God is no repossessor of persons, so we who are trying to be like Him must ever maintain His viewpoint, which is one of love that seeks to bestow blessings upon all. The outward features of the natural man and his social condition are ignored by those who have the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of wisdom which comes from above. To be partial in our dealings with each other, or even with the world, would imply a measure of injustice, which would be contrary to the course of heavenly wisdom, and contrary to the example set by Christ. True, some of the disciples seemed to be more appreciative of the master than others, and these were granted additional privileges. In

doing this however, the Master did not work any injustice upon the others, and His nearness to Peter, James, and John, was doubtless because of their greater love and understanding of Him. God is not unjustly a respecter of persons, yet He makes it plain in His Word that He draws especially near to those who draw near to Him. "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (James 4:8).

The heavenly wisdom which we see exemplified in Christ also is without hypocrisy. It is so pure, so peaceable, so gentle, so merciful toward all, that there is the absence of sin and hypocrisy. Those guided by heavenly wisdom must, of necessity, be out of harmony and sympathy with all that is sinful - not merely outwardly, but in their hearts. To be a true follower of Christ, who is our wisdom, we must indeed practice what we preach. We are not only to outwardly support and be in sympathy with that which is pure, peaceable and gentle, but these divine qualities of heavenly wisdom, must also be the adornment of our hearts and characters.

Following the course of heavenly wisdom must lead to gentleness of demeanor and character. The coarse ways of the flesh and the world, should give place, as we make progress in the narrow way, to genuine refinement and gentleness of heart and disposition. Christ is pleasingly gentle and so "easy to be entreated" that even the children were not uncomfortable in His presence. These who sought the blessings He could bestow were given audience and consideration, even though they succeeded only in touching the hem of His garment. But the Master's gentleness always was in keeping with His purity. He was gentle to those deserving gentleness, but stern in His rebuttal of the hypocritical Pharisee. In our desire for peace, and in our disposition to promote it, we, like the Master, should be gentle. We should have an open heart toward those who cross our pathway, and for whom, in the divine providence, we may have blessings of comfort and joy in the Holy Spirit, if they would but receive them. Yet, as with Jesus, so with us, we will not be easily entreated to walk contrary to the will of God, or to lend our support by sympathy, word, or deed to anything that is out of harmony with the spirit of heavenly wisdom.

The Apostle Paul admonished: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18). This beloved traveler in the narrow way knew,

even as Jesus exemplified in His life, that putting purity first in the consecrated life means that we will not always be able to dwell in peace in the world, or with the worldly-minded. Had Christ not put purity first, had He only yielded to the adversary's suggestions to compromise the divine will, He doubtless would have avoided most of the persecution that came upon Him. Had He taken the course pleasing to the god of this world," He could have dwelt peaceably with those who do the will of that god.

Putting purity first in the carrying out of our consecrated views will cause us loss of worldly friendships, and may even test the depth of our devotion as it applies to our association with some who profess to be followers of

the Master. Where issues of the truth and its service are concerned, a peace-at-any-price is not wise. It does not conform to the example of Christ, who, by the appointment of our Heavenly Father, has been made unto us the embodiment of heavenly wisdom.

And so, from whatever viewpoint we analyze the wisdom which is from above, we find that in the life of Christ we have a perfect example of how it should control those who are following Him in the narrow way. Not only does the beginning of wisdom lead us to Christ as the Redeemer, but we find wisdom's perfection manifested in His every word and deed, which, by God's grace, we are trying to copy in our own lives.

## MY FRIEND .. I'VE LEARNED

I've learned.... That life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes.

I've learned.... That we should be glad God doesn't give us everything we ask for.

I've learned.... That money doesn't buy class.

I've learned.... That it's those small daily happenings that make life so spectacular.

I've learned.... That under everyone's hard shell is someone who wants to be appreciated and loved.

I've learned.... That the Lord didn't do it all in one day. What makes me think I can?

I've learned... That to ignore the facts does not change the facts.

I've learned..... That when you plan to get even with someone you are only letting that person continue to hurt you.

I've learned..... That love, not time, heals all wounds.

I've learned.... That the easiest way for me to grow as a person is to surround myself with people smarter than I am.

I've learned.... That everyone you meet deserves to be greeted with a smile.

I've learned..... That there's nothing sweeter than sleeping with your babies and feeling their breath on your cheeks.

I've learned.... That this one is perfect until you fall in love with them.

I've learned.... That life is tough, but I'm tougher.

I've learned.... That opportunities are never lost; someone will take the ones you miss.

I've learned.... That when you harbor bitterness, happiness will dock elsewhere.

I've learned.... That I should tell people that I love them as many times as I can before it's too late.

I've learned..... That one should keep his words both soft and tender, because tomorrow he may have to eat them.

I've learned.... That a smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks.

I've learned.... That I can't choose how I feel, but I can choose what I do about it.

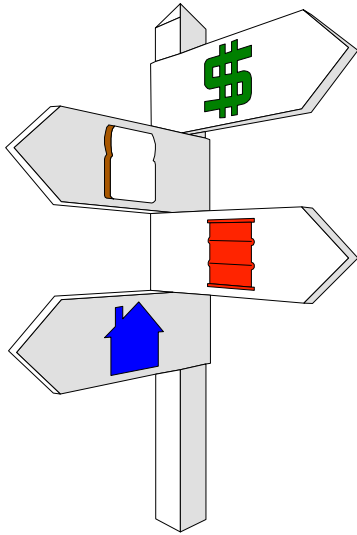
I've learned.... That when your newly born child holds your little finger in his little fist, that you're hooked for life.

I've learned.... That everyone wants to live on top of the mountain, but all the happiness and growth occurs while you're climbing it.

I've learned.... That it is best to give advice in only two circumstances; when it is requested and when it is a life threatening situation.

I've learned.... That the less time I have to work with, the more things I get done.

-From the Internet



# THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

*If you have any items of interest that you would like to submit to this segment, please send them to The Church of God Publishing House, PO Box 328, Salem, WV 26426-0328.*

The following articles appeared in the Houston Chronicle.

## **Ministry goes to extremes to draw in young people** **by Kelly Kurt** **Associated Press**

TULSA, Okla. - It's Wednesday night, and the hottest teen hang out around is packed and throbbing with what seems an unholy beat.

A disc jockey spins dance tunes upstairs, sending boys in sagging, pants into contortions. Downstairs, girls surf the Internet from rows of I-Macs flanking a glassed-in basketball court. Hundreds of new arrivals flow under a neon sign reading, "Oneighty," slowed only by a weapons check at the door.

Church-night Bible study it's not. But the music is Christian, the surfing monitored and "the funniest part," a 12-year-old Oneighty regular attests over a video game, "is learning bout God."

With a worship style that's both hugely popular and way over the top - this night's service features live motorcross stunts - the youth ministry of Tulsa's Church on the Move has been copied nationwide.

More than 100 unrelated youth groups have franchised the concept and the trademarked Oneighty name, despite critics who find its approach big on show and short on spirituality.

The night Westside Church in Bend, Ore., launches its Oneighty ministry, more than 8000 kids showed up - about 10 percent of the city's population, a pastor says.

When New Harvest Christian Fellowship's version of Oneighty bought a skate park, video arcade and DJ concert in the Los Angeles suburb of Norwalk, the youth group went from 40 teens to about 600.

"Flannel boards don't work anymore," says senior pastor Richard Salazar, referring to the cloth cutout story boards that were once a Sunday school staple. "This is a technical generation. I think our numbers speak for themselves."

Salazar was wary at first. But like other pastors facing big congregations and shrinking youth groups, he was also frustrated.

He followed other pilgrims to Tulsa to see what has been proclaimed the nation's largest weekly youth gathering, secular or otherwise.

Each Wednesday 2,000 to 3,000 teens pour into what looks like a suburban multiplex in an industrial section of the city. They spend an hour in fellowship - playing free video games, dancing, watching other teens from the flavored water bar - and an hour in an X-Game styled worship service.

The ministry started about eight years ago when the Rev. Willie George gave up his midweek pulpit at Church on the Move, a charismatic Christian mega church drawing as many as 10,000 weekend worshippers. He wanted to focus on the ailing youth group, says Blaine Bartel, Oneighty's national director.

George's conclusion; if MTV spends all the money it does to lure young men and women, the church needs to do it, too.

"You've got to have the book - the message of the Gospel. But you've got to have bait on the hook," Bartel



says. "We've got to have things that appeal to kids,"

And so the youth group scrapped its hokey singalongs and beige fellowship hall, adopted a name that suggested the 180-degree turn of repentance and in 2002 moved into its multimillion-dollar 92,000 square foot building.

"Oneighty is the result of failure," says Bartel, whose sermon this night happens to be about just that.

Giant screens in Oneighty's auditorium display a motorcross racer detailing his failures in a litany of broken bones. The screens switch to a live feed from just outside the building. The same racer is there, gunning his bike toward a ramp.

Flawlessly, he executes high-flying flip after flip. Guitars grind inside, and Proverbs 24:16 flashes on a screen: "For though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again."

Bartel, dressed in a T-shirt and jeans and in front of a trampoline, says the on stage prop is "just like the Lord. He will help you to bounce back everytime."

The service ends with two dozen youths tramping to the front in an altar call.

Sixteen-year-old Eddy Allen has been a Oneighty regular for years and returns to her family's Baptist church on Sunday mornings.

"It's more than coming here and playing games," she says, adding that Bartel makes the Bible more accessible. "Instead of saying, 'Thou shalt not whatever,' he'll say, 'This is what you shouldn't do.'"

The high-tech, entertainment-based approach has become popular among churches looking to draw a crowd, says Mark Oestreicher, president of Youth Specialties, which provides training and resources to youth workers from a variety of Christian denominations.

But not all ministers think Oneighty's popularity equals success, they say. Some find the approach has little effect on long-term spiritual growth.

Dan Kimball, pastor of Vinte Faith Church in Santa Cruz, California, says teens had started asking him, "Where's the spirituality?"

"Are we creating in teenagers a view of church that is scored by what we do entertainment-wise like the American Idol panel, rather than on Jesus?" Kimball asks. "They are seeking the spiritual, so why should we give them entertainment?"

But Bartel says teens searching for something more sublime find it in "Oneighty unplugged," small Monday-

night gatherings that include Bible study. And for some, the Oneighty experience is their only contact with organized religion.

"We have kids who come to Oneighty that don't come to church on Sunday," Salazar says. "They call this their church."

### **Comment**

The above article shows the trend of these last days. Is it right to use the night club setting to bring young people to the Lord? The responsibility of guiding a young child to the Lord rests with his parents and the church - not in a club like setting.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:40). Also we are told not to forsake the assembling of ourselves as we see the day approaching. Young people need to go to church!

### **Oklahoma school sends 6th-grade rowdies home**

#### **Associated Press**

OKLAHOMA CITY - A public school suspended nearly all of its sixth-graders for class disruptions and a cafeteria ruckus this week, though many of the students were allowed to return after their parents met with school officials.

Sixteen of the 147 sixth graders at F.D. Moon Academy were suspended Monday for class disruption, and 120 students were suspended Wednesday after they picked up cafeteria tables, slammed them to the floor and talked back to faculty, school officials said. Principal Elaine Ford estimated teachers spend 85 percent of their time reprimanding students and said test scores won't improve until disciplinary problems are resolved. The school, a magnet program for mass media communications and technology, is listed by the state as needing improvement because of low test scores.

"I wish you could be a fly on the wall, because some of the time you'd be shocked at what your child is doing," Ford told parents Wednesday.

About 125 of the suspended students returned to class Thursday, city schools spokeswoman Sherry Fair said. The suspended students will be required to do work at the school today.



# Questions and Answers

**Question:** What is meant by Gog and Magog?

**Answer:** Gog and Magog (pronounced "maygog") are used rather obscurely in the Scriptures. In I Chronicles 5:4, Gog is mentioned as the son of Shemaiah in the line of Reuben, and in Genesis 10:2, Magog is referred to as the son of Japheth and a brother of Meshech and Tubal, but in Ezekiel 38 and 39, Gog appears as the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, which is also called the land of Magog. The prophet foretold that Gog of the land of Magog would be defeated and five-sixths of his army destroyed when he came "up from the north parts" and invaded "the mountains of Israel." Here it is clear that Gog and Magog are the names respectively of a king and his supposed kingdom, but the passages contain only vague and uncertain indications as to the identity of the ruler and the location of his realm. In Revelation 20:8-10, Gog and Magog are linked together as if they were both persons, and they seem to symbolize all future enemies of the kingdom of God.

**Question:** Does not the word "Leaven" in Matthew 13:33 mean the literal Kingdom of God. Would this not contradict your explanation of leaven meaning "something not good or sin?"

**Answer:** The word "leaven" in the Bible is invariably used as indicative of sin, evil and corruption. There are

some mistaken interpreters which say that the Gospel is leaven. If this is true, then the whole world must be converted, for the expression is, "till the whole was leavened." But this would flatly contradict the other parables, like the wheat and the tares. It can not mean that the whole world will be saved during the millennium either, for the sinner dies at the age of one hundred. Also many will join themselves with Satan at the end of the millennium to compass about the New Jerusalem, and they will be destroyed with fire from heaven. See Isaiah 65:20 and Revelation 20:7-9.

A close study reveals that "leaven" in this parable means false doctrines creeping into the church and using a falling away from the truth. It is a comfort to remember from other passages that there are always a few chosen ones who remain faithful and will continue to be the remnant of the Church.

**Question:** How is the best way to study the Bible?

**Answer:** There is really no best way to study the Bible because there are many good and different ways. It all depends on the one wishing to study. There are many suggestions on how to study the Bible by many different Bible scholars, but this method is what they considered best for them and wish to pass on their thoughts to you.

When you begin to study the Bible, begin it with a prayer for enlightenment, discernment, and retention. A

spiritual attitude is indispensable. The Book you are studying is the Word of God. He is all powerful.. He is efferent. His Book is not just a literary production. It is a text book on how to receive eternal life.

Here are some methods you may wish to try:

Study the Bible as a traveler. As you journey through life, there is so much to see and absorb. Remember what you see is part of the Creation of the author of the Book of books. Go over the vast fields of truth and doctrine. Descend into the valleys of history. Climb its mountains of vision. Follow its streams of inspiration. Enter its halls of instruction. Visit its wondrous galleries with its "Apples of Gold and Pictures of Silver."

Use a systemic method. Discard haphazard reading. Break down the bible into its history Books, into its Prose and Poetry Books, into its Major and Minor Prophetic books, into its Gospel Books, and into its letters, some of which could be divided into church letters and personal letters. These are some of the categories you could use, and then study them as eagerly as a hungry man seeks for bread.

Use a topical method. Get a good concordance for this, and choose your topic. List all the verses as they appear in the concordance , and divide them into the groups concerning the topic.

Use a biographical method. This is to study the different characters of the Bible. Study about good and bad men and women in the Bible can be intensely interesting and profitable.

There are other kinds of methods. Choose the one you will enjoy and be most comfortable with. Jesus said, "Search the scriptures." Memorize the great verses so that they can be available at a moment's notice.

**Question:** How can you say that the 144,000 are already sealed? Is it not true that there is no sealing until after the judgment?

**Answer:** The sealing is going on during the time of the judgment. There is no sealing when the judgment is over. The sealing is for the purpose of keeping us from the executive part of the judgment. Let us go to the Bible to see when the judgment began. John 9:39 says, "and Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind (Israel)."

Upon whom did the judgment begin? "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (I Peter 4:17)

It should be plain enough from these texts that Jesus began the judgment. It began on the house of God. First, it began with Israel, and 144,000 were sealed, and they rest in their graves now sealed with the Holy Spirit. We are told that the 144,000 will be sealed with a special seal in their foreheads later, and this may be where your confusion comes in.

The gospel is now given to the Gentiles, and out of them are being sealed a great multitude which no man can number.

The sealing is what the judgment is all about "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13). We are sealed after we believe, not after the judgment because we are judged day by day as we live. If we turn back after we believe, we can lose the Holy Spirit and become unsealed and will have to be punished by a second death, which is the execution part of the judgement. "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

The judgment today is one of judging ourselves so that we will not have to be destroyed in the second death. I Corinthians 11:31-32 states, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." We need the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, so that we will be raised up in the last day when Jesus returns for His saints

**Question:** How do we pray for the dead?

**Answer:** We are not given any authority in the word of God to pray for the dead! Nor would it benefit them if we did. Praying for the dead, as practiced by some, is in the belief that the dead for whom prayers are offered are in "purgatory." But there is no such place as purgatory. It is not mentioned in the Bible. The dead are unconscious in the sleep of death and will so remain until awakened from death by divine power in the resurrection. Nothing at all is accomplished for them through prayer, since they are nonexistent until the time for their resurrection.





*Mexico*

*Baptism service in Guadalajara*



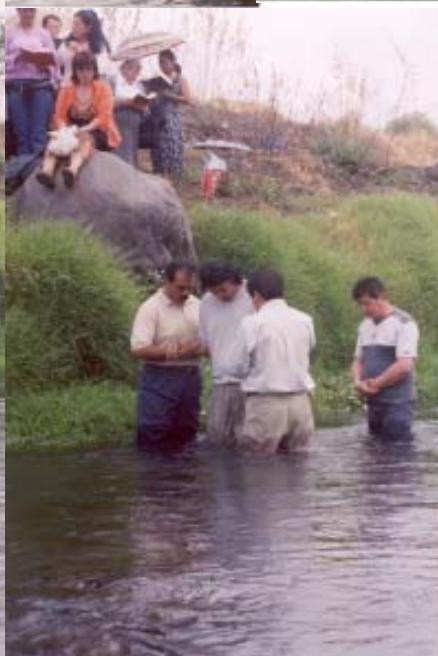
*Baptism service in Hidalgo*



*Baptism service in Veracruz*



*Baptism service in Morelos*





**LESSON I**

**GIDEON CHOSEN BY GOD**

**Scripture Reading: Judges 6:1-24.**

**Golden Text: Judges 6:16.**

**"And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites tis one man."**

NOTE: In Judges 5:31 we learn that Israel had peace for 40 years under Deborah's rule. We shall study now how the Lord again gave them victory over their enemies when they cried to HIM.

1. How long were the Israelites in the hands of the Midianites? Judges 6:1.
2. Where did the Israelites seek refuge from the Midianites? Judges 6:2.
3. After the children of Israel had their crops and animals destroyed, did they then turn to the Lord for help? Judges 6:4-6.
4. Did God again answer their plea? Judges 6:8-10.
5. An angel appeared to Gideon while he was threshing wheat. Read Judges 6:11-16, and then tell in your own words what the angel said to Gideon.
6. Gideon doesn't believe that the angel is sent from God. What does the angel do to persuade Gideon? Judges 6:19-23.
7. Gideon still has doubts about leading Israel. What did God do to show Gideon that He wanted him to continue leading Israel? Judges 6:36-40.

**LESSON II**

**GIDEON PREPARES FOR BATTLE**

**Scripture Reading: Judges 7:1-25.**

**Golden Text: Judges 7:6.**

**"And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but**

**all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water."**

NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned that God chose Gideon to lead the Israelites against the army of the Midianites. Let us study now how Gideon accomplished his defeat of the enemy.

1. How many men did Gideon have to fight for Israel? Judges 7:3-4.
2. The Lord could not work with so many men. He wanted to show Israel that it was through His help alone that they could defeat the enemy. What method was used to choose those who were to fight with Gideon? Judges 7:5-7.
3. What did God tell Gideon to do that night, and who was to go with him? Judges 7:9-11.
4. How large was the Midianite army? Judges 7:12.
5. What was the dream that Gideon heard being told? Judges 7:13-15.
6. Read Judges 7:16-21 and then tell what method the 300 used to startle the Midianites while they slept.
7. What did the Midianites do? Judges 7:22-23.

**LESSON III**

**THE BIRTH OF SAMSON**

**Scripture Reading: Judges 13:1-25.**

**Golden Text: Judges 13:24.**

**"And what woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him,."**

NOTE: In Judges 8-11 you may read more about Israel's disobedience to God. We have studied some of the terrible things which happened to Israel because they didn't obey God. For the present, we will go to Judges 13 to study the life of Samson who was Israel's deliverer.



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|---|--|
| <p>1. Who were the parents of Samson? Judges 13:2.</p> <p>2. What did the angel of the Lord say to Samson's mother when he appeared to her? Judges 13:3.</p> <p>3. What instructions did the angel give to her? Judges 13:4-5.</p> <p>4. Did she tell her husband about the angel's visit, and what was his reaction to her story? Judges 13:6-8.</p> <p>5. Did God hearken to Manoah's plea? Judges 13:9-10.</p> <p>6. What was the conversation between the angel and Manoah and his wife? Judges 13:11-16.</p> <p>7. While Manoah was offering his meat offering unto the Lord, what happened to the angel? Judges 13:19-21.</p> <p>8. When Samson was born, was he blessed by God? Judges 13:24-25.</p> | <p>14:5-6.</p> <p>4. When Samson went to take his wife from the Philistines, what riddle did he put forth to the 30 companions? Judges 14:11-14.</p> <p>5. They could not expound the riddle in 3 days, so what did they ask Samson's wife to do? Judges 14:15.</p> <p>6. Did the men tell Samson the answer to the riddle before the seven days were up? Judges 14:18.</p> <p>7. What did Samson do to again show his great strength, and what happened to his wife? Judges 14:19-20.</p> |
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**LITTLE EFFORTS**

A little child I am indeed,  
 And little do I know;  
 Much help and care I yet shall need,  
 That I may wiser grow,  
 If I would ever hope to do  
 Things great and good and useful too.

But even now I ought to try  
 To do what good I may;  
 God never meant that such as I  
 Should only live to play,  
 And talk and laugh and eat and drink,  
 and sleep and wake - and never think.

One gentle word that I may speak,  
 Or one kind, loving deed,  
 may, though a trifle, poor and weak,  
 Prove like a tiny seed;  
 And who can tell what good may spring  
 From such a very little thing.

Then let me try each day and hour,  
 to act upon this plan;  
 What little good is in my power,  
 To it while can.  
 If to be useful thus I try,  
 I may be little by and by.

**LESSON IV**

**SAMSON'S MARRIAGE TO THE PHILISTINE**  
**Scripture Reading; Judges 14:1-20.**

**Golden text; Judges 14:4.**

**"But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel."**

NOTE: In our last lesson we learned that Samson was blessed of God from his birth. We will now begin our study of how God used him to break the Philistine oppression.

1. When Samson went to Timnath, what did he tell his parents when he returned? Judges 14:1-2.
2. Were Samson's parents pleased with his report, and what did they not know? Judges 14:3-4.
3. As Samson and his parents went back to Timnath, what incident occurred to show the strength of Samson? Judges



## A STRONG FAMILY

"You just ought to feel my muscle, Papa," said Johnny. "Don't you think it's big and hard?"

The flannel shirt was pushed up into wrinkles at the shoulder, and a very soft and pink arm presented itself proudly for inspection.

"Pretty good for seven years," said Papa, smiling. "I hope some day to see you as strong a family I know."

"What's their name?" asked Johnny, forgetting his muscle to the first hint of a story.

"Their name is Never," answered father, with a funny little wrinkle at each eye-corner, as if a tiny little smile was curled up there.

"Never! What a funny name!" exclaimed Johnny. "What are their other names?"

"Oh, there are a lot of them. There is Mr. Never drink; he has such clear eyes, and such a steady step, you'd know him anywhere; a strong fellow is Mr. Never-drink, always ready to lift his end of the log.

"Another is Mr. Never-swear; you will know him by the company he keeps; and suppose he grows strong by

not wasting his breath.

"Then there's Never-lie, whom everybody trusts; and Mr. Never-be unkind, whom everybody loves; and Mr. Never-forget, who loses nothing; and Mr. Never-be-idle, who does the world's work; and Mr. Never-be-discouraged-"

Papa stopped and laughed aloud, for Johnny was in the midst of a big yawn.

"You don't seem to care much about my strong people, Johnny," he said.

"I like stories about sure-'nuff people." replied Johnny.

"All right. Once there was a little boy who wanted to be very strong; oh, as strong as Samson! So he went to the strongest man on N street, and asked him how to get strong and hardy.

"By not touching strong drink, said the strong man on N Street.

"He asked another strong man the same question. "Never swear," said the man. "It takes you into low company, where God and men are dishonored."

"Another side, "Never lie. A single lie takes away a man's courage-"

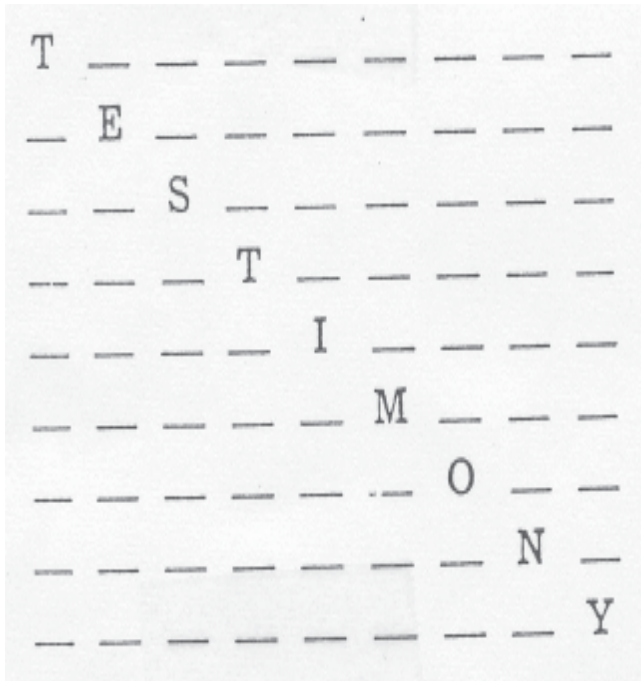
"Who was the little boy that talked to all those strong people, Papa?" interrupted Johnny suddenly.

"He was the little boy that I want my own boy to be." answered the father. "I want him to make friends with the Nevers, because they are the friends of God. And their family motto is this, "Thus saith the Lord, Thou shall not."

### Answers to Testimony Puzzle

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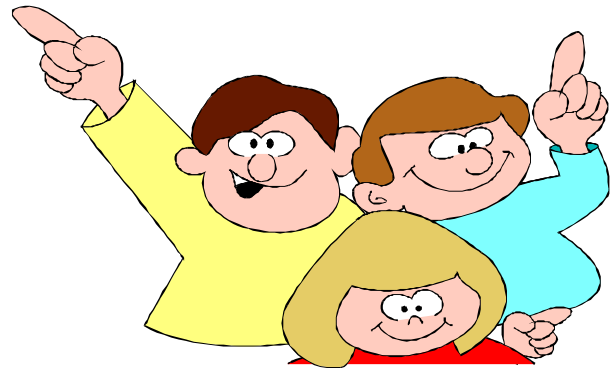
*"He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true" (John 3:33).*



**JUDGES**



**ANATH ELI ABIMELECH IBZON  
OTHNIEL DEBORAH TOLA ELON  
EHUD BARAK JAIR ABDON  
SHAMGAR GIDEON JEPH THAT  
SAMSON**



**GOD KEEPS US**

Find the Bible verses and fill in the blanks.

1. "Fear thou ....; for I am with thee: be to dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will .... thee; yea, I will .... thee with the right hand of my ....." (Isaiah 41:10).
2. "And the Lord shall deliver me from every .... work, and will... Me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (II Timothy 4:18).
3. "O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the ....., and plentifully rewardeth the proud....." (Psalm 31:23).

Using the clues given below, fill in each blank space.

1. Paul's occupation; also that of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:3).
2. She hid her baby nephew from the wrath of a murderous queen (II Kings 11:2).
3. The twelve apostles; followers (Luke 9:1).
4. He said, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof" (Matthew 8:8).
5. Greek term meaning "head of the family"; opposite of matriarch (Hebrews 7:4).
6. Genesis to Malachi is called the Old \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Rehobom's reply to the Israelites was: "My father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with \_\_\_\_\_" (I Kings 12:14).
8. Fire and \_\_\_\_\_ were rained on Sodom and Gomorrah (Psalm 11:6).
9. A one humped camel used for riding (Jeremiah 2:23).

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## TOO BUSY TO PRAY?

The Bible tells us that whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive it, and you will. And, whenever you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against any one so that your Father, who is in heaven, also may forgive you for your trespasses (Mark 11:24-25). Sometimes we expect God to grant us all of our worldly desires, even when we seem to be too busy to go to Him in prayer. We may feel that if God knows all of our needs and what is best for us, He should just take care of us, and that there is no reason to go to Him in prayer. The fact is, He does take care of us and supplies our needs even when we don't always acknowledge Him. It may be hard for us to fathom the love that our Heavenly Father has for us. In a similar way, most of us probably never truly appreciated as children all of the good things our parents were doing for us. God is like a good parent who always wants the very best for His children. He will never leave them or forsake them. When we go to him in prayer, we can approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Hebrews 4:16).