

*The Advocate
of Truth*



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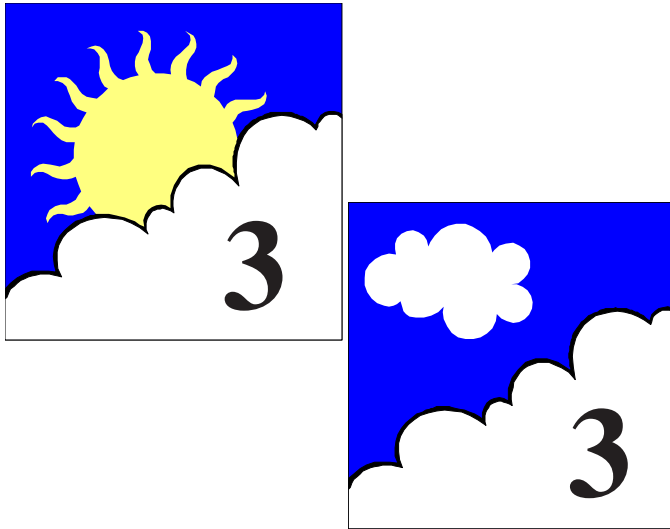
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THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS TIME-LAPSE

By Siegfried Maywald

What is the intended meaning of Jesus's exact phrase "three days and three nights," as recorded in Matthew 12:40?

One explanation based on tradition is that, when Jesus spoke, He did not exactly mean what He said, but that He was thinking of the Jewish expression, "a part of a day is equal to a whole." But the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmud apply this expression only to the time periods of circumcision and mourning, not to the measurement of other times.

Jesus said: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40). So I believe Jesus's words and prophetic statement to mean exactly what He said. "Three days and three nights" is referring to an uninterrupted 72 hour entombment. To explain the time frame in any other shorter time span, would indicate that Jonah could not have been continually in the belly of the fish. We then must assume that he was only close nearby and probably hanging on to the fish's fins and was able to let go of the fin at intervals and then again catch up with him to again hang onto it's fins. Yet this theory seems improbable and absurd. So why do we not simply believe what Jesus said?

Scripture reveals to us that Jesus was crucified and buried on Wednesday, that the annual "High day" Sabbath (John 12:31) was Thursday, and that spices were bought and prepared (Mark 16:1; Luke 23:56) on Friday. Then late on the Sabbath (Matthew 28:1-6) the earth quaked. An angel rolled back the stone and declared to the women, who first arrived, "He is not here: for He is risen, as He said." This exactly verifies Jesus' words. He

spoke the truth!

The six time periods of Matthew 12:40 can not be squeezed into the traditional scenario of the late Friday burial and an early Sunday morning resurrection. Jesus told us that He would be three nights and three days in the grave. And He was - from Wednesday evening, before sunset until Saturday evening before sunset. Matthew 28:1 states "In the end of the Sabbath as it began to dawn, or draw close, toward the first day of the week." If it is in the end of The Sabbath, then it can not be in the beginning of the first day! The importance here is that Jesus rose from the dead. The prophecy and accuracy in regard to the time frame of "three days and three nights" gives us the confidence that Jesus is correct in all of His other statements as well. If Jesus' words are only taken in a vague and ambiguous way in regards to His sign as being the true Messiah, then all other pronouncements of His might also be suspect for interpretation to mean something else than what Jesus actually did! Jesus does not change (Hebrews 13:8). His words are the truth and we ought to rather believe in what He said, than to rely on a traditional interpretation of man, Jesus said:

"I am the resurrection and life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

This conviction and doctrine concerning the duration of Christ's entombment prior to the Resurrection has long existed among Christians and can be traced back to the time of the early church.

THE PRAYER OF FAITH



BY CAROL BUECHNER



The Bible states that "**THE PRAYER OF FAITH**" will do something for you, so it is imperative that exploration of this prayer be done to find out the components of it. James 5:14-15 gives instruction on healing of the sick the Biblical way. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: **AND THE PRAYER OF FAITH SHALL SAVE THE SICK**, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." The prayer of faith is one of the actions that must be done when a person is sick and has called for the elders of the church to pray for him and anoint him with oil.

Before beginning to examine the prayer of faith, it is necessary to understand what the word faith means. Faith, in the context in which will be used in this article, means an unquestioning belief, complete trust and unrelenting confidence in God that does not require evidence or proof or something that can be seen at the time. It requires complete acceptance, certainty, dependence and reliance on God and His word. There is no room for doubt or disbelief.

Jesus explains the prayer of faith in Mark 11:22-24. "And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

The **FIRST** instruction Jesus gives you for the prayer of faith in Mark chapter eleven is to "**HAVE FAITH IN GOD**" To have is to possess, grasp, to have in oneself, control, own, be there as a part of, to be occupied by.

Previously the word faith was discussed. The word God means the Creator, the Almighty Ruler of the universe and the Supreme Being. He is Eternal, Infinite, All Knowing, All Mighty, All powerful, and there is no other like unto Him. Jesus is saying that you must possess and have in your heart and being in complete trust, belief, reliance and dependence, without any doubt or wavering or lack of confidence in the God Almighty who has the power to do anything, that nothing is impossible with Him and that He knows all your needs. Hebrews 10:23 states: "Let us hold fast (hold tight to) the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)." This is further enhanced in James 1:6-8: "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." To waver is to show doubt and indecision, to be unable to decide and to quiver and be unsteady. The Bible speaks plainly that you must hold fast to your faith. If you do not hold fast, you are doubtful of God and indecisive about what He can do. This type of person is double minded, trusting sometimes in God, sometimes in others, and sometimes in their own abilities. Instructions are given in Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Believe in God with your whole heart and being, and do not try to understand or figure out the solution with your own knowledge and abilities. God is the only one that knows and will show you the way every time. Jesus emphasizes this in Mark 5:36: "...Be not afraid, **ONLY BELIEVE** (have faith in God)."

The **SECOND** step in the prayer of faith in Mark is: "**...SAY UNTO THIS MOUNTAIN...**" To say is to

Speak, express in words, confess, to pronounce, announce, repeat, enunciate, affirm, declare, vocalize and to state definitely, clearly and distinctly. A mountain is a heap (a mass of large quantity), pile or mound of things jumbled together, plug (something that stops passage of), something that is quite large causing an obstruction (hindrance, barrier, impediment, obstacle) or something that is restricting. When you are praying the prayer of faith to God, it is important that you say clearly and precisely what it is (the "mountain") that you are petitioning God for. What is the particular thing that is blocking your way, whether it is a need for healing, a financial problem, a need for another person, material needs, spiritual weaknesses, etc.? Once you have identified what it is that you are speaking about in your prayer, you need to go on to the next step.

The **THIRD** step is telling this identified mountain to **"BE THOU REMOVED, AND BE THOU CAST INTO THE SEA."** You are to speak or command this "mountain" to be removed. If something is removed it is taken from where it is (in your body or presence) and transferred, lifted or carried away. It is to do away with, dismiss, eliminate, separate and discharge. When it is removed, then it must be cast away. Cast means to throw with force, fling, hurl, thrust, pitch, toss, launch and project. The sea symbolizes a vast open and empty space. You are throwing this thing far from you so that it does not return to you again. Cast it out of your mind.

The **FOURTH** instruction or step is **"...YOU...SHALL NOT DOUBT IN HIS (YOUR) HEART."** Shall is a strong statement because it expresses determination and necessity. You will do this and not question it or think the word maybe. Not is expressing the idea that in no manner will it be accepted, but it will be rejected. It is a refusal (decline to accept or submit to). Doubt is being undecided or uncertain about or questioning what you believe. It causes apprehension, perplexity and faltering. The heart is the center of your very being, your thoughts, feelings, emotions, innermost core of who you are and your intellect. In effect this is saying that your request against this mountain must not in any way be looked upon with uncertainty or questioning. You cannot be saying with your mouth that you believe in what you are asking but in your heart you are saying that you are not sure and it might be that it will happen. It must be an absolute belief.

The **FIFTH** step is **"...YOU...SHALL BELIEVE THAT THOSE THINGS WHICH HE (YOU) SAITH SHALL COME TO PASS."** To believe is to have confidence in, accept as truth, be convinced, to have no doubt, to rest assured. Come means to occur, happen or take place. Pass means to take place or transpire, to ensue or come about immediately. This step is reinforcing step four because doubt would be the opposite of believing, or it cancels out believing. You must have the confidence that what you are speaking shall (a strong statement of determination) take place.

Jesus summarizes the prayer of faith in this manner: **"Therefore I say unto you, What things so every-one desire, when ye pray, BELIEVE THAT YE RECEIVE THEM, AND YE SHALL HAVE THEM"** (Mark 11:24). The instructions are to pray your requests, believe them and you will receive them. The statement does not say that you might receive them but that you **SHALL** receive them.

It is extremely vital to examine the central theme of this prayer, and it comes from two words. These words are **FAITH AND BELIEVE**. These two words are closely connected and work together. For example, if you do not believe, you do not have faith. This is evidenced in Hebrews 11:6: "But **WITHOUT FAITH** it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God **MUST BELIEVE** that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." There is no doubt that when you come to God in prayer, you must believe in Him, His power and His promises. You can not be questioning God's ability, but you must put complete trust and confidence in Him. Jesus modeled this many times in His ministry. Review the following scriptural passages and notice the relationship of faith and believing in what Jesus said and did and the healings that happened.

Matthew 8:5-8,10,13: "And, when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion (a Roman soldier), beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The 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. When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, **VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, I HAVE NOT FOUND SO GREAT FAITH, NO, NOT IN ISRAEL.** And Jesus

said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and AS THOU HAST BELIEVED, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour." Matthew 9:27-30: "And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, BELIEVE YE THAT I AM ABLE TO DO THIS? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH BE IT UNTO YOU. And their eyes were opened..."

Matthew 17:14-21: "And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed;...And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O FAITHLESS and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, WHY COULD NOT WE CAST HIM OUT? And Jesus said unto them, BECAUSE OF YOUR UNBELIEF: for I say unto you, if ye have FAITH as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

Matthew 13:53-54,57-58: "...Jesus...departed thence. And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, in so much that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? And they were offended in him...And he did not many mighty works there BECAUSE OF THEIR UNBELIEF." Mark 9:23: "Jesus said unto him, IF THOU CANST BELIEVE, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE TO THEM THAT BELIEVETH."

What was Jesus teaching you about faith and believing? Jesus had a Roman soldier come to him and request healing for his servant. This man is a member of the Roman army that occupied the land at that time. The Roman rulers were often known for their cruel treatment of the ordinary people. This soldier is stating that Jesus did not even have to come to this house where the servant was

because he knew that Jesus could heal the servant just by speaking the word. Jesus was amazed at the faith of this soldier. Even the most unlikely people can have great faith.

Two blind men were following Jesus and begging for His mercy to heal them. Jesus simply asked them if they believed He could perform this healing. Their answer was yes, and Jesus said that it would be done according to the faith they exhibit. If Jesus were telling you that what you had requested would be done depending on what you believed, what would the outcome be? Perhaps you are being asked this all the time, and your response is not getting the results you would like to have.

Jesus is approached by a man who is seeking healing for his son who is troubled by devils. The man explains that even Jesus' disciples could not cast out the devils in his son. Jesus healed the child. The disciples questioned Jesus concerning their inability to heal the child. Jesus said simply that it could not be done because of their unbelief. He stated that all it took was the faith the size of a mustard seed, which is very tiny. Jesus concluded that with this kind of faith nothing would be impossible.

A journey into His own country proved to be unfruitful for Jesus. He was not able to do healings or any special works for the people of His home place because of one thing - THEIR UNBELIEF. It is stated that they were offended in Him. Could it be that Jesus became a stumbling block or a snare that trapped the people of Jesus' country in their sins? It was easier to turn from Jesus than to stand up and face their own sins.

Frequently, Jesus would first ask if the person seeking healing believed before He healed them. His reply was that the result would be according to their faith. Faith and belief bring healing. Doubt and unbelief bring nothing.

It is important to remember that without faith you cannot please God. Do you have faith? The Bible says: "...God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3). The faith is in you, but it must be developed and released. Compare faith to potential. Potential is what is possible for a person to do, but it does not mean that it will happen. The person may have the capability, ability or talent to do something, but yet they do not do it. For example, a person may have the potential of becoming an excellent musician. But if the person does not take the initiative to develop this talent or ability, it will be useless.

It may take many years to develop such a talent through music lesson, practice, performances etc., and much patience during the development process. It is something like growing a garden. You can plant the seeds, but if you do not water the seeds and take care of them, they will not reach maturity. Faith is the same way. You have the potential to exercise faith, but if you do not take the steps to do so, it will be useless.

MEDITATE on one more scripture given by Jesus in John 11:40: "Jesus said unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, IF THOU WOULDST BELIEVE, THOU SHOULDEST SEE THE GLORY OF GOD." These are powerful words. Start by thinking about the word IF. This word invokes a condition-provided that, supposing that, granted that, assuming that. With the condition that you believe or not believe, there will be results. What do you want the results to be? The choice is yours. If you do have this faith and believe, you SHALL SEE THE GLORY OF GOD. If you do not have faith, you will not see the glory of God. Who wouldn't want to see the glory of God?

What is the glory of God? The word glory means greatness, splendor, honor, excellency, majesty, beauty, honor, dignity, radiance, magnificence, grandeur, brilliance, adoration, praise, gorgeousness, richness, preciousness, fineness and copiousness. The word copiousness really expands the meaning of glory. It means very plentiful, abundant and richness. The glory of God would be His abundant greatness, His magnificence and grandness, the grandeur of His generosity and blessings and so much more. The glory of God is beyond description, but it is something that you can feel and realize and receive of His promises if you have faith and believe in what He has said He will do. God's word is full of promises of what He will do for you and you can share in His glory. Remember Jesus' words in John 14:13-14: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." You will see the glory of God through answered prayers in all areas of your life.

This discussion has shown that the prayer of faith should be an important and integral part of your spiritual life. It involves an absolute belief in God and what He can and will do for you when you ask Him for things. You

must stand your ground against Satan and the lies he will feed you to cause you to waver and doubt. You must read the Bible to know the promises of God and what His will is for you. You can speak the positive words that will bring about the removal of any obstacles in your life whether they are physical, emotional, mental or spiritual. Jesus said that you SHALL have them if you have a steady faith in God and believe that what He says will come true for you. When you pray, pray the prayer of faith because it is the only way to pray.

Realizing the result of true faith and belief in God, may help you to continue the walk of faith. "But thou, O man of God, flee these things (unwholesome words, pride, strife, envy, railings, evil surmising perverse disputing, discontentment, foolish and hurtful lusts, love of money, devoting-See verses 3-10); and follow after RIGHTEOUSNESS, GODLINESS, FAITH, LOVE, PATIENCE, MEEKNESS. **FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH, LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE**, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (I Timothy 6:11-12). Keep active at the faith of faith and belief in God for the result will be eternal life. If you have any doubts, let the words of John sink into your spirit in a mighty way. "...this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that GOD HATH GIVEN TO US ETERNAL LIFE, and this life is in the Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the CONFIDENCE that we have in him, that, IF WE ASK ANYTHING ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, HE HEARETH US: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, WE KNOWETH WE HAVE THE PETITIONS THAT WE DESIRED OF HIM" (I John 5:4, 10-15). **COULD YOU ASK FOR ANYTHING BETTER THAN VICTORY AND ETERNAL LIFE?**

BUILDING AND BATTLING

THE HIGH COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

BY BOND TENNANT



"And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sister, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:25-33).

Jesus never promised it would be a bed of roses to be a child of God! The following verses are the words of Jesus. "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22). "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18). "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake" (Luke 6:22). "And a MAN'S FOES SHALL BE THEY OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD" (Matthew 10:36). There are also the internal; difficulties: doubts, fears, frustration, temptation, etc. It costs children of God a great price in

watchings, in fasting, in discipline, and in self-denial. The Christian life calls for self-renunciation and entire surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In our opening text, Jesus is journeying to Jerusalem for the last time. He knew what was before Him. A great crowd followed Him. They wanted to be near Him. Some wanted to hear more. Some were just going along for the ride. Some of the most serious and solemn words ever spoken by Jesus was when He cried out three times to the crowd, "He cannot be my disciple" (vss. 26-28). Who? Jesus was always more interested in quality than quantity. Men count noses, but He counts the extent of our love for Him!

This was something Belshazzar had to learn. God's message to him was, "Thou art weighed into the balances, and art found wanting" (Daniel 5:27). God does not count men. He weighs them. Gideon also learned this lesson. God made him run his army down from 32,000 to 300 soldiers. God needs and wants only the faithful and obedient. Jesus was speaking about building and about battling. He was saying, "Before you build, before you do battle, count the cost." The life of the child of God consists of building and battling.

Six months before, Jesus used similar figures of speech in Caesarea Philippi. He said, "... and upon this rock will I build (building) my church: and the gate of hell shall not prevail (battling) against it" (Matthew 16:18). We read in the book of Nehemiah of the men who built the walls of Jerusalem. They had a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other.

The church must battle against Satan. But many members drag it down. Instead of giving inspiration and enthu-

siasm to the church, they give it many headaches and heartaches. They seem to be pampered. They become terribly upset and critical of the pastor and the church does not please them. The faithful must bear their own load and the load of the unfaithful, and also the reproach they bring upon the church.

Children of God should remember the words of the late President John F. Kennedy, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but rather what you can do for your country." Don't ask what the church can do for you, but what you can do for the church. Jesus told His disciples to count the cost in regard to three things: first, "The Supreme Relationship," second, "The Supreme Responsibility," and third, "The Supreme Renunciation."

First, let us look at the supreme relationship. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sister, yea, and his own life also, he can not be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). ("And does not in comparison hate his father..."; Berkley "Love far less dearly his own father.") Jesus also said. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I come not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to SET MAN AT VARIANCE AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND THE DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND THE DAUGHTER IN LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER IN LAW. AND THAT MAN'S FOES SHALL BE THEY OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD" (Matthew 10:34-36). Then He stated, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (vs. 37). He is speaking of earth's greatest relationships (family ties). He is saying, "I am the most important of all, and your relationship with me is more important than all family and earthly ties." He is also saying, "You must break up any or all earthly relationships, if necessary, to establish your relationship with me. No home, love, or earthly affection should even come into competition with your love for me." The choice for Him may bring children of God much earthly loss, but in return they will receive much heavenly gain.

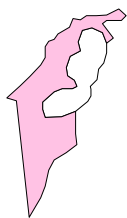
Second, let us consider the supreme responsibility. "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Vs. 38). The cross that the child of God must bear, of which Jesus speaks, has nothing to do with personal troubles, frustration, suffering, sorrow, physi-

cal sickness, disobedient children, etc. It is that suffering, reproach, and persecution that the child of God must suffer. It is real self-denial! Jesus said, "..., If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Many are afraid to suffer for Jesus's sake. "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ sufferings; that, wherein his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified" (I Peter 4:13-14). "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Hebrews 13:13). The sincere person comes to Christ not to get fame, but to share His shame. He rejoices in being treated like the Saviour!

Third, let us consider the supreme renunciation. "But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (II Corinthians 4:2). Jesus is saying to count the cost! Sin must be renounced: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7)). The world must be renounced: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the father, but is of the world" (I John 2:15-16). "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). The renouncing of the world, the flesh, the devil, and anything else to meet God's requirements is imperative to becoming a child of God.

It costs a lot to be a true child of God! It costs a lot more not to be a child of God! One will get so much more in return if he lives a life of victory in Jesus! "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sister, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life" (Matthew 19:29).

ISRAEL



ISRAEL AND PROPHECY

Israel plays an important part in Bible prophecy. The word "Israel" occurs over two thousand times in more than two thousand verses. Many prophecies have already been fulfilled to prove that "the God of Israel" is the true God. Zechariah 12:2-3 declares: "Behold. I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered against it."

This prophecy is amazing in that at that time Jerusalem was in ruins. It is difficult to believe that Jerusalem would become a burden to the whole world and that all of Israel's neighbors would be united against her. They have fought one another several times in the past. Israel's neighbors have launched surprise attacks against her for over fifty years. She has proven too strong militarily for them even though they outnumber her forty to one. God said, "In that day will I make the governors of Judah like a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem" (Zechariah 12:6).

Exactly as foretold, Jerusalem is a burden to all people of the world. The record shows that more than 60,000 individual votes have been cast in the UN against Israel. This tiny nation with only 1,000th of the world's population has occupied one-third of the United Nation's time. It is a burden indeed!

Skeptics accuse some Christians of trying to fit current events to the Bible claiming that no one recognized such prophecies until Israel was formed in 1948. On the contrary, for many years before Israel became a nation, the Church of God preached from the Bible that the Jews would return to their own land. It is said that this was also the opinion of John Milton, John Bunyan, Roger Will-

iams, Oliver Cromwell, and many others.

There are two specific reasons for God's judgment against the nations: "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with (punish) them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom 1. they have scattered among the nations, and 2. parted my land" (Joel 3:2).

Of course, all nations have participated in persecuting and scattering the Jews from country to country for many years. The second reason for God's judgment falling on all nations, however, is something that has only occurred within our generation: "they have...parted (divided) my land." Israel has been overrun by invaders many times. However, never did any conqueror divide the land. A country does not share its spoils with others. But since World War II, all nations have joined to divide the land of Israel!

God's anger is growing hotter against the nations of this world for robbing Israel of what He gave to her. In continued defiance of God, every peace proposal that the West has imposed upon Israel has involved further dividing of God's land. President Bush, a professing Christian, originated the so-called "road map to peace," which calls for a further dividing of the land of Israel.

On her part, Israel has been willing to give away more and more land in exchange for promises of "peace" from the PLO in spite of the fact that its charter calls for the destruction of Israel and that its maps and those of the entire Arab world do not ever acknowledge Israel's existence. The fact that Israel has been forced to do so by the West is no excuse. For this she may be severely punished.

Believers are to meet together to encourage and exhort one another from Scripture, "so much the more, as ye see the day (of judgment) approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). Fulfilled prophecies are bringing on that day as never before!

Contributed



"TO DRINK OR NOT TO DRINK"

BY CARLO RASMUSSEN
(DECEASED)

To drink, or not to drink, that is the question? The partaking of alcoholic beverages has been going on since before the flood. We know this from Jesus' words in Matthew 24:38, where He spoke of the prevailing wickedness before the flood. In these last days of the Gentile age, the situation is much the same as in Noah's time. Just as Jesus predicted it would be. In many problems, the spirit produced from alcoholic consumption is one to then be a great contributing factor therein. This was even the case in the time of Noah. There is no record in Scripture where the name of the Lord has received any honor or glory from the partaking of alcoholic beverages. From social drinking has come only dishonor unto the Lord. The Word of God is plain concerning drunkenness from overindulgence in wine or strong drink. No drunkard will inherit eternal life, nor enter into the Holy City when it comes as Jesus' reward.

The controversy on the subject is drinking in moderation. Some will say it is acceptable to drink in moderation and use temperance. There are several Bible texts used which appear reasonable on the surface to that idea. Let us take a closer look into some of these texts and see for ourselves.

The first text we will examine is in I Corinthians 9:25, which reads; "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." Paul is writing here of a runner, an athlete who keeps his body in condition for the race. It is a parable comparing that runner to the Saint in the race for eternal life. The word "temperate" used here deals with one's diet and chastity, according to the Greek dictionary in the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. Concerning the diet of any athlete, who strives for best condition of the body, that partaking of alcoholic beverages is forbidden. The question thus arises, can we properly run the race for eternal life while socially partaking of an alcoholic beverage?

In Titus 1:8 we find the word "temperate" used again when Paul writes of the qualifications of a bishop; "...a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate." Temperate, as used here means "appetite." We know this could not refer to wine or strong drink because verse 7 directly means this.

Titus 2:2 reads, "That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience." The word temperate as used here means one's "opinion or passion." Here there is no connection with wine and strong drink.

Philippians 4:5 tells us to "Let your moderation be known to all men. The Lord is at hand." The word "moderation" means a person's physical reactions, such as gentleness and patience which are the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Again there is no connection to wine or strong drink in this text.

Alcohol in the bloodstream travels through the brain and causes a deadening, some numbing effect to one's senses. The person's ability to function properly has been weakened to a degree. The amount of disability will depend upon the body chemistry of the individual. Continued and prolonged amounts of alcohol in the bloodstream will soon kill certain brain cells. Once their brain cells have been destroyed the body can not reproduce them again.

The Lord God created the earth and all that is therein. All ingredients used in alcoholic beverages are part of God's creation, however, it was not God's intent to have His creation abused due to the lusts of mankind. Alcohol has a good medicinal value and is found in our common medicines. Cough syrup, for example contains a percentage of alcohol. When properly used, it is a benefit to mankind, and will be approved of God. The reader may remember that the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy to "use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities"

(I Timothy 5:23). It is evident here that Timothy was suffering from a stomach ailment, and wine would be a good medicine. It is certain that Timothy was never advised of Paul to sit down and enjoy a few drinks and forget his problems! This would be against the very qualifications of a minister as outlined by Paul in I Timothy 3:3. This is in line with the project's requirement of the Levitical Priesthood. The Lord spoke to Aaron in Leviticus 10:9 saying, "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die." This admonition is repeated in Ezekiel 44:21. The Lord is speaking in both these texts. Some may say - That only means while they are in the tabernacle or inner court. This is true, and today our body is the "tabernacle with the inner court" and each of us is our own priest of that tabernacle (the body). Is there a time, or season when we may relax and be free from the wiles (tricks) of Satan? The devil is about as a roaring lion seeking to devour. Does Satan take a season to relax in his efforts? This advice is also given to kings and princes as we learn from Proverbs 31:4-5.

During the times of the Levitical Priesthood, some would enter into a special time, or reason of closeness to the Lord for a special reason. This person then took the Nazarite vow. This vow was spoken to Moses by the Lord Himself in Numbers 6:1-3. During this special period of time, the person was to keep from wine and strong drink, neither were they to drink "vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor (beverage) of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried." The Nazarite vow would last for any length of time that was predetermined. In certain cases, the vow was for a lifetime. In the 13th chapter of Judges we read of someone special unto the Lord, who was to deliver the Israelites "out of the hand of the Philistines" after Israel's 40 years of subjection to their enemies. The wife of Manoah was to have a son who was to be "a Nazarite unto God from the womb." Because of the special purpose of this man, who was Samson, the mother was not to drink wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing. Another hero of the Scriptures, who had a special purpose of God was John the Baptist. Before the birth of John, in Luke 1:15, his father Zacharias, was told by an angel that his son "shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb." The record of the Scriptures inform us of the efforts of

John the Baptist, as he bear witness of That Light, the Lord Jesus Christ. It must be noted that because of his special purpose of the Lord., John did not partake of wine nor strong drink.

How about Children of God today, who follow the Lord through the Scriptures? Jesus said, in Matthew 22:37 to, "...love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and with all thy mind.." Jesus was speaking to the scribes and Pharisees concerning the "first and great Commandment." This certainly requires a consecration on the part of the sincere person far above a mere token expression of their belief. Today, the Child of God does not take the Nazarine vow as a requirement for salvation. Never the less the follower of the Lord Jesus Christ will certainly repent of the former ways and be baptized for the remission of sin. Upon this act of faith in its sincerity and truth, would it appear reasonable to partake of a drink that could allow Satan to gain control of our body, even if only for a moment? That which hangs in the balance from such activity is the gift of eternal life. Can one afford to lose eternal life? It would do us well to fulfill a complete consecration unto the Lord through his Son, Jesus Christ, and thereby be filled with the Holy Spirit, the Power of God unto salvation. Let us remember the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13.

Down through the years of time, many have expressed the thought that the Lord God has placed His stamp of approval on social drinking in moderation. The fact remains however, that there is not one text of Scripture where the Lord Himself approved of a social drink, or advised social drinking for mankind. The conclusion through which permeates the Holy Writings from Genesis to Revelation is "BEWARE" and "BE NOT DECEIVED THEREBY." The thoughts in Proverbs 20:6 read, "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cure? Who hath the redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine." Some of the preceding thoughts deal with overindulgence. The fact remains, one can not have many without first having one. The warning message is for us not be to deceived; he that thinks that he stands, take heed, lest he fall. The words "mocking, raging, and not wise" are not of God's Holy Spirit, but of an evil spirit which can control a body if allowed to enter therein.

There are those in the world who like to say that the

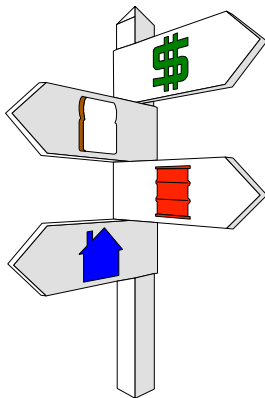
Lord Jesus drank wine socially. The Bible text with the word "winebibber" is cited as proof, to show Jesus drank wine. The fact is, Jesus said things about Himself as an expression of what the scribes and Pharisees were telling about Him at that time. There is not one text of Scripture stating that the Son of God in any way drank wine or strong drink. Do not be deceived with men's suppositions on this subject in the Word of God. If John the Baptist did not partake of these drinks because of his life's purpose for God, are we to consider the thought that Jesus, who had a greater purpose, did drink of wine and strong drink - God Forbid!

Today in the final days of this entire age many people like to consider themselves more intelligent than the people of the generation past. The thought that is heard is this: "We know better now and will do what we know ourselves to be right and proper." Is this philosophy in line with God and His Word? Certainly not! Today the world is not a new and better place of progressive people wherein is found true improvement. Today's worldly situation rather falls into the fulfillment of Jesus's own words: "as the days of Noah...For as in the days that were be-

fore the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage...And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so that all the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37-39). A good share of the problems today, like Jesus prophesied, are the result of drinking the alcoholic beverage. The leaders of the various churches who are silent, or condone this activity, will have to stand before the Lord at the appointed season and plead their case before Him. This so-called modern philosophy is contrary to the outline of a Godly life as presented in the Scriptures, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Did you know there is an approved wine mentioned in the Scriptures and we are advised to partake of it in great quantities? This wine is found in Proverbs 9:5. This wine is the wine of "wisdom" and "understanding." This wine of wisdom can only be found through the Lord Jesus Christ. Come! Let us partake of this wine and allow it to quench our thirst for the rest of our lives. Herein lies the real true and complete life to all who will seek it out for themselves. We can not indulge ourselves enough in learning the ways of God through His Word.

He that hath an ear, let him hear.



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 article appeared in the *Houston Chronicle*.

STANDING AT HEAVEN'S GATE

After a car accident left him mangled and lifeless, Don Piper got a glimpse of eternity and lived to tell his story

**By Richard Vara
Houston Chronicle**

On a cold, dismal January morning in 1989, the Rev. Don Piper eased his red hatchback Ford Escort through the entrance of Trinity pines Conference Center on the shores of Lake Livingston.

To his left, the road led through Livingston and then to U.S. 59, a familiar route to his home in Alvin. On his right, Texas 19 to U.S. 45 then south toward home, a route he had never taken. Piper, spiritually fresh from a church-growth conference, wheeled right and hit 50 mph.

Fifteen minutes later, Piper's mangled body was entombed in his crumpled car. He had been hit head-on by an 18-wheeler on a two-lane bridge spanning the Trinity River.

"The nine wheels on the driver's side went over the car," Piper said earlier this month, standing on the exact spot of the collision on the Texas War memorial Bridge. A scant few yards away, traffic whizzed by on a new four-lane bridge.

Piper's left forearm was nearly severed. Both legs were crushed; his left leg was barely attached. Emergency personnel found no pulse. They covered his blood-soaked body with a tarp, left him in the car and waited for a justice of the peace to pronounce him dead.

Piper remembers nothing of the accident, but everything about heaven.

The Southern Baptist minister is convinced he made a brief visit to heaven, where he was greeted by long-dead friends and relatives and glimpsed the wonders of eternity. Piper's account of his experience, *90 Minutes In Heaven: A True Story of Death and Life*, has sold nearly 85,000 copies since it was published in September.

Easter Sunday is the celebration of the triumph of life over death, hope over despair. In his case, said Piper, 54, he died, then he lived.

"Death is what I experienced, then I lived," he said. "Christianity is about dying to yourself and then you live forever."

"Jesus Christ said He was going to die, and He did. He said He was going to come back, and He did. Then he went on to prepare for us a better place."

Piper insists 'heaven is a place,' dismissing any suggestion that what he experienced was an illusion or dream.

"It is more real than the place we are standing in right now. It is the ultimate place because it is where God is."

No dark tunnel

There was no long, dark tunnel leading to a blinding light, a description often used by those who describe near death experiences.

Piper found himself standing before a large, translucent, shimmery gate. "It really is a pearly gate," he said,

describing it as sculpted mother of pear.

And he was surrounded by family and friends who had died. At the end of her life, his American Indian great grandmother had been hunched over because of osteoporosis. He remembered her as wrinkled and toothless. In heaven she was young, standing tall and with a beautiful smile, he said.

Perfection is what heaven is all about, Piper said.

"The sound is perfect, the sight is perfect. It is breathtakingly beautiful. It is beyond belief."

Piper's most memorable recollection is the music. "You can hear thousands of songs, each one of them with your heavenly ears. And there is no chaos," he said. "I can still hear those songs."

None were songs we know on earth, Piper said. "They were all glorifying God, all alleluia songs, all 'glory to God' songs."

The streets were made of gold, and there were magnificent dwellings. "From the gate on, it just gets higher and higher and higher, and as it gets higher it is brighter," he said, "It is brilliant beyond what earthly eyes can see." He theorizes that God is at the summit.

But Piper never made it inside heaven's gate.

As he prepared to enter - and as his family and friends made a way for him - there was a pause. In the darkness, Piper heard himself singing "What a Friend We have in Jesus."

Against the odds

Back on the highway, the accident caused a massive traffic backup. One of the delayed motorists was a fellow minister from the church conference.

The late Rev. Dick Onerecker, then pastor of a Klein church, later said he felt compelled to pray for the dead man in the red car.

Onerecker crawled through what had been the hatchback, also checked for a pulse and found none, but still prayed.

Unlike Catholics who have last rites for the dying, Baptists do not pray for the dead. He began singing "What a Friend We have in Jesus", then bolted from the car when Piper joined in.

Skeptical emergency personnel checked Piper and then called for the jaws of life to extract him from the car.

"The doctors have no explanation about why I didn't lose all the blood in my body," Piper wrote in his book.

That evening Piper was taken to Houston's Hermann

Hospital. He underwent many hours of surgery, the first of 34 major operations. He would spend more than 13 months bedridden in hospitals and at home.

His recovery is slow and painful. His left arm and leg were held together by clamps and thin metal rods piercing his flesh. Not even a morphine pump could soften the excruciating pain of each tiny movement

Piper could see the strain on his wife, Eva, and three children, Nicole and twins Chris and Joe.

He longed to return to heaven.

"I did not want to be here," he said. He prayed to die as he battled depression and anger.

"It was the great 'Why?' I still could not understand what was the point of this.

Piper did not speak of his heavenly experience for nearly two years. "It was too personal and too private," he said. He also feared he would be considered crazy.

Slowly he began to mend. He accepted his pain and suffering as part of living for God, and his depression lifted.

He began sharing his experience with a few others and saw happiness and joy in their eyes, especially those who had lost loved ones.

"When I talked about it, people were so encouraged," Piper said. The more he spoke about it, the more people asked about a book. "People want hope and encouragement. I have seen many tears since this book was released."

The book, now in its 10th reprinting, has also had an impact on Piper's life. He left his position as minister of education at First Baptist Church of Pasadena to handle speaking engagements. He plans to write a second book detailing his story's impact on readers.

A number of readers wrote Piper to tell him how the book had consoled and reassured them

"I've been praying all week that God would send some peace about my daughter's death," one woman wrote. "God put your book in my path at Wal-Mart, and it was the last one on the shelf, . It has truly watered my soul back to life."

"Your story gave me an incredible sense of hope and a new respect for the life I now have," wrote a Canadian reader.

A matter of faith

But is this story authentic? Theologians and scholars agree there is no empirical evidence that can prove or disprove it.

"Are these true trips to heaven or, as some say, the firing or misfiring of the brain in the recollection of memories before a person succumbs to death?" said David The professor of New Testament at Houston Baptist University.

Caspers is open to the stories being actual.

"As a Christian, I have to be open to them because history is too full of these instances. They come back transformed people," Caspers said. "It gives them meaning in their lives they did not have before."

The Rev. Mike Olson, a professor in the University of St. Thomas School of Theology, said such incidents can be good if they lead to greater faith and trust in God.

"If the testimony makes some complacent, then it is not a good thing," Olson said. He is familiar with similar incidents.

"The whole scriptural point is that 'eye has not seen, ear has not heard what God has ready for those who love him,'" he said, quoting Paul the Apostle's Letter to the Corinthians.

"All we know is that heaven surpasses anything in our imagination or happiness," Olson said.

Piper said the agony he underwent taught him three spiritual lessons.

God answers payers.

"I am answered payer," he said.

God still performs miracles.

"I am a miracle," Piper said.

Heaven is real.

"It is the most real experience I have had in my existence. That's why I can't wait to get back there."

Comment

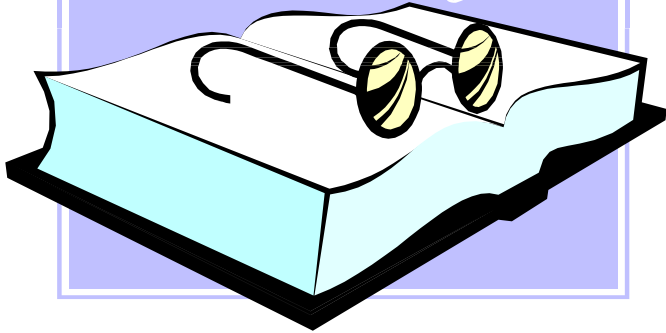
The experience of the man in the above article is just another clever deception of Satan and his angels.

We are informed in the Scriptures that the dead know nothing. There is nothing that departs from them at death and goes to heaven or anywhere else, except the breath of life. All the dead are awaiting their respective resurrections.

If what we experience contradicts the Bible, it is of Satan. Satan can cause signs and lying wonders. Read II Thessalonians 2:9.

BIBLE

Study



Question: How can we know if a person is a false prophet (minister)?

Answer: There are many false prophets today everywhere who have been sent by Satan to lead people away from the truth. "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed in to an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (II Corinthians 11:14-15). There are a few ways to recognize and separate these deceivers from the true minister is of God. The Bible has set forth guidelines to show who is disguised or who is an honest leader. Let us consider some of them. You can apply them when the hour of deception comes. God will help you to see these people for the deceivers they are, and you will not be led astray.

A False Minister Usually Will Come Claiming A Special Revelation From God

"And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you: For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Mark 13:5-6). The apostle said that Satan is transformed into an angel of light and that his ministers are transformed as the ministers of righteousness. It should not shock us to realize that Satan has ministers just as the Lord Jesus has ministers. When these false ministers come, they will declare that they have a new deeper revelation from God. Anything "NEW" is to be guarded against. All the truth is in the word of God. They will claim to have spiritual in-

Questions and Answers

sight and understanding that pastors and teachers do not have. They will say theirs is special revelation that God has unveiled to them. They might tell you that Jesus is coming in three months from today.

A woman once came to a Church of God pastor and said: "God has given me a revelation so deep that even you will not believe it." The pastor opened his Bible to Hebrews 1:1-2 and read: "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Then he told of the time of Jesus's glorification on Mount Hermon: "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASSED; HEAR YE HIM" (Matthew 17:5). The woman was really shocked that the pastor would not even listen to her. We must hear what the Son of God has for us. We must keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ!

An evangelist advertised his coming campaign with posters saying that he would reveal the message of the seven thunders of Revelation 10. Right then and there you knew what kind of evangelist he was. He was going to make up his own thoughts about the seven thunders. John wrote: "And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, AND WRITE THEM NOT" (vs 4). Should we believe the Bible or should we believe the deceiving minister?

The book of Revelation can be tested by the Word of

God. There is so much of the revelation of Jesus Christ already revealed from the Old Testament. Beware of far-out doctrines that twist the scriptures in order to have something "biblical" to stand on.

False Ministers Usually Attack And Criticize Members Of Local Church

When false ministers and teachers come in to spoil the flock, they try to convince the congregation that its leaders, elders, deacons, Sabbath School teachers and faithful workers have faults. They claim they do not have the spiritual life they should have. They do not have biblical light. They will tell of something that perhaps was done before they became children of God. They usually condemn those who are watching over and feeding the flock - the ones who for years have taken care of the congregation. These false ministers have bad things to say about the pastor of those in authority.

They want to destroy the credibility of the church, its literature and true leaders who stand up against them. The Bible is very clear that the saints are to submit themselves to the authority of those who must watch over them. Why? It is because God has put the leaders in authority and given them wisdom to protect and care for the flock. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till 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 continue, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:11-14).

That is what pastors are for. Church leaders must rescue their sheep as part of their spiritual responsibility. When they see the congregation drifting in the wrong direction, they must rise up and take action. The flock must be warned when there is a false teaching going around. Every true minister has the responsibility to guard the flock of God and to keep them from the enemy and his workers.

False Teachers And Deceivers Usually Claim they Have Been Sent By God

In many instances, false prophets declare emphatically: "God Almighty has sent me to you with a message." We know that God can send people to us with messages. But more often than not this is a very strong indication that such a person is a deceiver. The minister of Satan recognizes no truth from the Bible if you show it to him.

He recognizes no authority such as a tract or a constitution or doctrinal points. He is rebellious and unteachable and will not yield to any sort of authority. Be quick to recognize that this is a minister of Satan!

Ye Shall Know Ministers By Their Fruits

We read in Ephesians 6:11-13: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Whereof take unto you the whole armour of God, that may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." A sure sign that a person is a tool of Satan is that, even though he causes supernatural things to happen, his life does not demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus said: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:15-20). Please take notice of verses 22 and 23: "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."

Jesus did not say you would know the good from the bad by their words or their miracles or their supernatural signs or wonders. He did not say you would know them by their prophecies which come true - or even strange occurrences in their lives. NO. Jesus said you would know them by their fruits. In these last days, we are going to see more and more supernatural occurrences. Please read II Thessalonians 2:7-10.

Just because a person has the power to amaze you does not mean that he is of God. These false teachers, false Christs, false apostles and prophets deceive many people. We must be aware! Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Satans' demons are even transformed into ministers of righteousness They can work all sorts of false, lying miracles and wonders of all kinds. Follow them not! They are able to deceive you!



Hawaii

This photograph was taken during our recent trip to Hawaii and then on to the Philippines.



On the facing page are pictures taken of the various families in the Church in Hawaii.



LESSON I

DAVID SPARES SAUL THE SECOND TIME

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 26:1-12.

Golden Text: I Samuel 26:9.

"And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?"

NOTE: In our last lesson we learned that David refused to kill Saul when he had the opportunity. In chapter 25 we read about the death of Samuel. David marries Abigail, who is a tactful and gracious woman. Now we are going to study chapter 26 which will tell us how David spares Saul's life for the second time.

1. Saul heard that David was in the wilderness of Ziph. Did he again seek David? I Samuel 26:1-3.
2. What did David do in I Samuel 26:4?
3. What did David do when he learned that Saul was near? I Samuel 26:5.
4. Who volunteered to go with David into Saul's camp? I Samuel 26:6.
5. David and Abishai went to Saul's camp by night. What did they do there? I Samuel 26:7-8.
6. Did David allow Abishai to destroy Saul? Why? I Samuel 26:9-11.
7. What did David take from Saul? Did any of Saul's camp know what David had done? I Samuel 26:12.

LESSON II

DAVID CONFRONTS ABNER AND SAUL

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 26:13-25.

Golden Text: I Samuel 26:23 (last part).

"...for the Lord delivered thee into my hand to-day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed."

NOTE: In our last lesson we learned that David spared Saul's life for the second time. David took Saul's spear and cruse of water without anyone in the camp knowing of their presence. We will now learn what David has to say to Saul and Abner.

1. After David left Saul's camp, what did he do? I Samuel 26:13.
 2. What did David say to Abner in I Samuel 26:14-16.
- NOTE:** Abner is King Saul's first cousin and commander-in-chief of his army.
3. Did Saul recognize David's voice? I Samuel 26:17.
 4. What question did Saul ask David? I Samuel 26:18.
 5. What did Saul again promise in I Samuel 26:21?
 6. What was David's answer to him in I Samuel 26:22-24?
 7. Did David go on his way and allow Saul to return to his place? I Samuel 20:23.

LESSON III

DAVID'S LACK OF FAITH

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 27:1-12.

Golden Text: I Samuel 27:1 (first part).

"And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul..."

NOTE: In our last lesson we learned that Saul acknowledged that he had been a foolish person, but he kept right on being that way. David now seeks refuge among the Philistines.

1. Why did David wish to flee to the land of the Philistines? I Samuel 27:1.
2. Where did David go, and who went with him? I Samuel 27:2-3.
3. What request did David make of Achish? I Samuel 27:5.
4. Did Achish grant his request? I Samuel 27:6.
5. How long did David dwell in the country of the Philistines? I Samuel 27:7.
6. What land did David and his men invade? I Samuel 27:8-10.
7. Why did David destroy men, women and children in these different invasions? I Samuel 27:11.
8. What did Achish believe and say in I Samuel 27:12?

LESSON IV

**SAUL CONSULTS THE WITCH OF ENDOR
(PART 1)**

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 28:1-10.

Golden Text: I Samuel 28:7 (first part).

"Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her..."

NOTE: David had been among the Philistines now for one year and four months. His faith became weak in the protection of the Lord, so he sought refuge among the Philistines. In this lesson we are going to see why Saul seeks advice from the witch of Endor.

1. David is still among the Philistines. Read I Samuel 28:1-2.
2. What did Saul do after the death of Samuel? I Samuel

- 28:3.
3. Was Saul afraid when he saw the host of the Philistines? I Samuel 28:4-5.
4. Did Saul seek the Lord, and did the Lord answer? I Samuel 28:6.
5. To whom did Saul turn when the Lord did not answer his pleas? I Samuel 28:7.
6. Did Saul disguise himself before going to the witch of Endor? I Samuel 28:8.
7. What did the woman say to Saul? I Samuel 28:9.
8. What did Saul promise her? I Samuel 28:10.

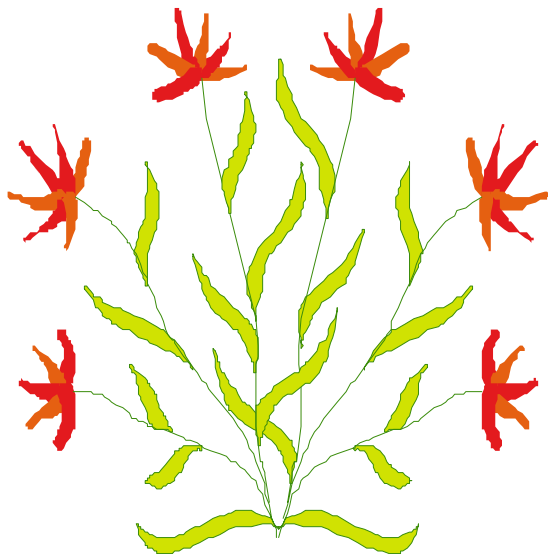
LOOK ME UP

Below you will find some familiar verses. See if you can find the book, chapter and verse where they are found.

1. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."
2. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time aren't worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
3. "For the time is cometh 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?"

SOMETHING FOR YOU TO DO

We know that men should praise God. Psalm 148 says that all nature is praising God too. On a sheet of paper write, "ALL THINGS THAT PRAISE THE LORD!" Then make a list from Psalm 148 of things mentioned, like the sun, hills, trees, etc. See if you can find twenty-five.



TWO BRAVE PREACHERS

Do you girls have a linen dress to wear to Sabbath School this summer? Or, do you boys have a pair of linen pants? Linen is such nice material for many things.

The flax plant is one of the most valuable of all plants, not counting the ones we use for food. From the flax, those threads of linen are obtained. Mother's most prized tablecloth came from the flax plant.

The plants are first drawn through iron teeth which remove the seeds. They then are soaked in water for several days, after which the outer fibers are separated from the core. It is from the inner part that the linen threads are made.

When the stalks are taken out of the water, they are laid out to dry. Then they are put through sharp teeth once more, which divide them lengthwise. It seems like rough treatment for a plant, but that is the only way linen threads can be obtained.

The reason the flax stands hard usage is because of the inner fiber which is made stronger and finer by it. All these harsh processes must take place before the flax can be spun into fine strong linen threads.

Peter and John had to under go rough treatment many times. Turn in your Bibles to Acts 3 to see if you can find the reason Peter and John were put into prison. It was for

a good deed done to a lame man.

Nothing in all the world that Peter and John might have possessed, aside from their gift of healing, could have meant so much to the lame man. They might have given him the most comfortable home imaginable, with servants to do his bidding, but he still would have been helpless and lame.

No wonder he leaped up and praised God with all his heart and voice! No other but God, working through Peter and John, could perform this great cure. No wonder the people standing about, who had always known the lame man, were filled with amazement!

It was then that Peter had the chance to preach about Jesus. At the beginning of their sermon he told them it was not by their own power he and John had done this. No, it was through Jesus, the one they had crucified. Peter told them they ought to repent.

That struck them pretty hard. When Peter told them that God was even then ready to forgive them for treating His Son so, they felt a need to make a decision. Five thousand of them believed the words Peter preached. Just think! Five thousand!

The rulers were not among this group. They had taken hold of Peter and John, threw them into jail, and left them there all night. Peter and John were not discouraged, they went right on preaching about Jesus.

How is it, do you think, that those two men did not lose their courage through all this rough treatment? Remember about that strong, inner fiber of the flax that came out stronger and finer after harsh treatment? Peter and John possessed a strong inner fiber, their faith in God and Jesus, their Lord. The rough treatment made their faith stronger and brighter.

When the rulers were ready to let Peter and John out of prison, they threatened them with great punishment if they did not quit preaching. Did that scare them? They answered, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.. We ought to obey God rather than men." It took courage and faith to say this.

Young people, you may never be put to death nor even be imprisoned because of your faith in God, but remember, when you are laughed at or teated roughly because of your faith in God, that, like the flax, you will come out stronger and better, if you are true.

WORD SEARCH

Below is a list of the words you will be looking for in our word search. They come from the book of Daniel. You will find these words horizontally, vertically, and diagonally.

DANIEL DARIUS SHADRACH
 MESHACH FOOD ABEDNEGO
 CAPTIVES PRAY IMAGE LIONS



FIGURE THIS OUT

How Old Was Joseph When His Brothers Sold Him?

Start with the number of years Moses led the Hebrews in the wilderness. (Numbers 14:33)
 Subtract the number of chapters in the book of Jude.
 Divide by the number of crosses on the hill where Jesus died.
 Add the number of chapters in the book of Ruth.
 How old was Joseph when his brother put him in the pit?

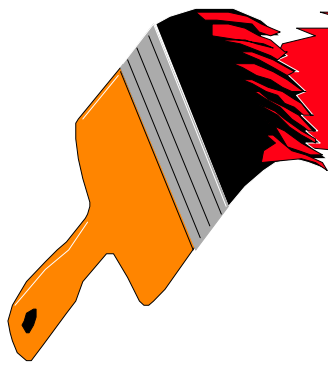
ALL OF THESE PEOPLE ARE DESCRIBED IN THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL.

HOW MANY CAN YOU IDENTIFY, USING THE CLUES BELOW.

1. She took her son to the temple and there "lent him to the Lord" but each year she went to see him and gave him a new coat.
2. He died when he learned that the ark of God had been taken in battle by the Philistines.
3. A sleeping child, he was awakened and told to give sad news to the old man who had been kind to him.
4. He went looking for some missing farm animals and returned as the anointed king of his people.
5. A king's son and the hero of his people, he ate a little honey without knowing he would be killed for doing so (I Samuel 14:27).
6. A brave and loyal soldier, he was killed because a king wanted his wife.
7. A very handsome man with much ability, he rebelled against his father and almost succeeded in dethroning him.
8. He is described as "the sweet psalmist of Israel."

Answers: Hannah, Eli, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, Uriah, Absalom, David

**"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."
 Ecclesiastes 3:1**



PRAYER

This is so neat. I had never heard this before. This is beautiful - and it is surely worth making the 5 finger prayer a part of our lives.

1. Your thumb is nearest you. So begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you. They are the easiest to remember. To pray for our loved ones is, as C.S. Lewis once said, a "sweet duty."

2. The next finger is the pointing finger. Pray for those who teach, instruct and heal. This includes teachers, doctors, and ministers. They need support and wisdom in pointing others in the right direction. Keep them in your prayers.

3. The next finger is the tallest finger. It reminds us of our leaders. Pray for the president, leaders in business and industry, and administrators. These people shape our nation and guide public opinion. They need God's guidance.

4. The fourth finger is our ring finger. Surprising to many is the fact that it is our weakest finger; as any piano teacher will testify. It should remind us to pray for those who are weak, in trouble or in pain. They need your prayers day and night. You cannot pray too much for them.

5. And lastly comes our little finger; the smallest finger of all that which is where we should place ourselves in relation to God and others. Also the Bible says, "The least shall be the greatest among you." Your pinkie should remind you to pray for yourself. By the time you have prayed for the other four groups, your own needs will be put into proper perspective, and you will be able to pray for yourself more effectively.

From the Internet