

A photograph of a lush green forest. The trees are tall and thin, with dense foliage. The sky is visible through the canopy. A light blue banner is overlaid on the image, containing the text 'The Advocate of Truth' in a green, italicized font.

The Advocate of Truth

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By David Royer

This article is presented to explore what is the Kingdom of God, where it is and where it will be. The Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Heaven, and the Kingdom of Christ are all synonyms. These are all expressions of one Kingdom, in heaven. It is not unusual for the Bible to use various names for the same subject/person. For example:

Jerusalem:

- Salem—Psalm 76:2
- Zion—II Samuel 5:6-7
- The City of God and David—II Samuel 5:7; Psalm 46:4

Jesus:

- Emmanuel—Matthew 1:23
- Christ—I Corinthians 4:15
- Lord—Romans 10:9-13
- Messiah—John 4:25

Here are Bible verses supporting that the kingdom of God, Christ and Heaven are the same:

➤ *"For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."* (Ephesians 5:5)

➤ *"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:23); compare to: "And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23)*

➤ *"And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 3:2); compare to: "And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." (Mark 1:15)*

➤ *"And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22:29-30)*

[For the rest of this article, I will use the KINGDOM or Kingdom of God.]

WHAT IS A KINGDOM?

There are natural kingdoms of this world. A natural kingdom is a territory or people over whom a king rules. We can understand what a kingdom is since we have historical examples of man-made territories with people under the domination and rulership of a king. Current kingdoms with an absolute monarchy include Saudi Arabia, Oman and Swaziland. These earthly kingdoms have specific geographical limitations.

The Kingdom of God is quite different. It is not of this world. There are no geographical constraints. There is only one ultimate Ruler: God. Since God is our Creator, He is the Ruler of the universe, and, in that sense, His KINGDOM is universal and rules with divine sovereignty.

A simple way to say this is that God is in total control of the universe and all creation. (Sovereignty per Meriam-Webster Dictionary: **a**: supreme power; **b**: freedom from external control; **c**: controlling influence).

God says (through Isaiah) *“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.”* (Isaiah 46:9-10)



COMPREHENDING THIS KINGDOM OF GOD

God abides and rules His KINGDOM from Heaven. King Solomon prayed to God: *“May you yourself listen from the heavens, your established place of dwelling.”* (1 Kings 8:43). Jesus taught his disciples to address their prayer: *“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”* (Matthew 6:9) *“The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.”* (Psalm 103:19).

We read in Genesis Chapter 1, that God existed before creation. This means that He existed even before our concept of time, outside the bounds of space, and matter. Jesus said, *“God is a Spirit...”* (John 4:24) so, He has no physical constraints and can be everywhere and all-present. Because the KINGDOM is not a natural kingdom of this world, it can only be understood with a spiritual mind. As

non-spiritual humans, we will never fully know Him or understand an infinite God. Isaiah 55:8 says, in part: *“My thoughts are not your thoughts”*.

It is our faith that helps us accept the concept of one eternal, continually existing, almighty God. Faith, that our God has prepared a plan of salvation and committed his Son, Jesus to be an integral part of His plan.

JESUS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

God’s Son was with Him at Creation. However, at this time, he was not called Jesus but “the WORD”. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.”* (John 1:1-2) The Word would later become known as Jesus: *“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”* (John 1:14)

The KINGDOM remained in heaven while Jesus was born into our world as a mortal human being and lived approximately 33 years on earth until His crucifixion. Jesus specifically stated that His mission in life was to preach the gospel and fulfill Scriptures. The gospel (or good news) Jesus is referring to is the coming KINGDOM. *“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”* (Mark 1:14-15)

Scripture tells us the KINGDOM was present in a spiritual form on earth, demonstrated by Christ’s ability to cast out demons. *“But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you...And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.”* (Matthew 12:28, 4:23) But conducting healings and miracles was not the fulfillment of the Kingdom.

The Lord’s prayer is quite clear: *“And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in*

heaven, *Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.*" (Luke 11:2) As an example of how to live our lives, Jesus says to use the same intensity that man does to seek food, clothing and earthly things, toward prioritizing and giving in to God's Word and authority. *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* (Matthew 6:33)

After Jesus was crucified, buried, and resurrected the third day, he revealed himself to over 500 brethren and specifically spoke with His disciples. *"To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:"* (Acts 1: 3) Mathew recounted: *"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."* (Matthew 28:18)

Shortly thereafter, Jesus was seen ascending to heaven. Peter spoke of this event in Acts 2:32-36:

"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

The writer of Hebrews said: *"After Jesus was resurrected, he entered "into heaven itself, now to appear before the person of God."* (Hebrews 9:24); *"But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"* (Hebrews 1:13-14)

In the book of Romans, Paul reinforces the declaration of Jesus's reign in heaven with God. *"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."* (Romans 8:34).

Paul continues this thought in Ephesians 1:20-23 which says: *"Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."*



THE KINGDOM NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

The point of all these Bible texts above, is to show that after Jesus's resurrection, His heavenly Father, God, invited Christ to REIGN (with authority) with Him in His KINGDOM.

So, Christ is now reigning in the Kingdom of God. His rule is for a short period of time, based on Psalm 110:1-2: *"(A Psalm of David.) The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies."* (This Psalm was of crucial importance for the early church, as it sought to fulfill the prophecy of Jesus being a King in the lineage of King David.) Paul connects David with Jesus's rule in heaven: *"For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."* (I Corinthians 15:25)

In the future, at His second coming to earth, Jesus will bring with Him a physical KINGDOM, the New Jerusalem, to rule from Israel for 1,000 years. The raptured saints will co-reign with Him. To reinforce the many Bible

verses mentioned above, Christ returns as a triumphant warrior king with a name: “*And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*” (Revelation 19:16)

Finally (as prophesied), Christ places all of His enemies under His feet and creates a new earth, culminating in a refined, pure KINGDOM that fully reflects His righteous reign. This is the “true kingdom” on earth that we are patiently waiting for.

Mission accomplished, Christ’s reign comes to an end. He returns, or hands-over the KINGDOM to his Father. “*Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*” (I Corinthians 15:24-28)

To summarize: Jesus is presently reigning on the Throne with God in the KINGDOM; He will continue to reign until the last enemy (death) is destroyed; After His achievement, the KINGDOM will be returned to God; Finally, Jesus’s completed reign will restore God’s sovereign rule over the new creation.

Brothers and Sisters, we are taught to pray for this coming KINGDOM. But we can allow Jesus to reign (in a spiritual sense) over our lives **today**. With the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our heart and mind, we have the opportunity (by the grace of God) to obtain an inheritance in this KINGDOM.

"...God is in total control of the universe and all creation."

THE WAITING By Betty Whetstone

*As twilight again comes softly,
Marking "closed" to another long day;
A sad faced old couple rests on their porch,
For this is the time when they pray.*

*Two worn hands caress an old Bible,
Voices quiver as they read the same Word;
As once again they are hearing the Promise
That grows dearer each time it is heard.*

*Her hand traces each Word of the Scripture,
So familiar, never dulling with age;
Her voice often breaks as she reads them,
Worn hands wiping a tear from each page.*

*Their hopes burn bright as they listen,
Then fade away as the hour grows late;
No sound of a car on the roadway,
No creak as they open the gate.*

*A sad faced old dog rests at their feet,
His eyes now dim with age;
He's been faithful through hardships and blessings,
And the turning of life's every page.*

*The city has claimed the ones that they miss,
The streets screaming with noise and the sin;
And every night they rest behind locked doors,
Their peace disturbed by the din.*

*Sometimes their thoughts turn to a simple life,
Where crops marched along in neat rows;
Where now brambles and weeds are choking the soil,
Bringing an end to the life they had once known.*

*A sad eyed old dog slowly moves from the porch
To rest between two newly made mounds;
With a whimper and sigh, he gives up his life,
And brambles soon will cover the mounds.*

*And still in the city, life moves along
'Midst all the noise and sin
Where two unhappy people dream of a life
That will never be known again.*

Two Breaths of Life

By Moises Torres M.

Genesis 2:7: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the **breath of life**; and man became **a living soul**." **Job 33:4:** "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life."

Note: A living soul is composed of spirit, soul, and body. A living soul is not only an automaton body, but an individual having understanding, and feelings. Otherwise Adam had not understood the prevention of God about not eating from the tree of science, nor the intelligence to name all the animals of the Earth. This means that God has formed man "to his image and likeness" in both, figure (shape) and intelligence, reasoning, and feelings. Adam was shown having feelings when he was alone in the garden; and God was aware of this. Genesis 2:18: "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." (Read also Genesis 1:27-28).

Even with the prevention of God, man was not able to live as a living soul because of his disobedience to the words of God and lost this kind of life the Lord had breathed on him.

SECOND BREATH OF LIFE:

John 20:19-22: "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, **he breathed on them**, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost".

Note: This second breath of life was not for a man to live as a living soul; this time it was the beginning for man to acquire a new nature, not a human, but a spiritual nature. As soon as the Lord was risen from the dead, he went to meet his disciples to breathe on them the Holy Spirit. The Lord had acquired a heavenly or spiritual nature at His resurrection, that is why the verse quoted above reads, "...when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled... came Jesus and stood in the midst..." Yes, He materialized in the middle of them! He has taken a spiritual nature, and time, space, and matter would not be barriers for Him anymore.

This **second breath of life** is the last chance for the human race to have eternal life. This is the Holy Spirit that we receive from God when we believe and accept His Son Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. So, this time, let us keep His words so that we do not fall once again as Adam in Eden. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." (John 8:51).



The Measurement of Faith

Daniel Cruz

In our fast moving day to day pace we find we use some sort of measurement to dictate how we will accomplish tasks given to us. We incorporate all our work for the day and begin to measure what, when, where and how we will complete our works. It may not seem like it, however, you can think upon a normal work day and realize that you either have a good handle on managing your time or you don't. The idea that this has any similarity to our faith may seem unparalleled. I would like to, hopefully, help you see that God has created all things for a purpose and that He wants to add to our spiritual walk daily. The question is, do we have a starting point to see where we are and how much we've grown since our acceptance of His Truths? There are many verses in the Bible that can help us in discovering our strengths or shortcomings. Either way we must rely on The Word of God to help us and make room for growth.

I Samuel 2:26: "And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with people." Samuel was about 11 years old when this calling came to him and yet, he was still being groomed for his relationship with the Lord and it had not yet been revealed unto Samuel. Eli instructed him with all understanding that God would prepare Samuel and give purpose to him for God's will. Samuel became a man well known among the people for his faith and obedience to God. Only those who truly sought the Lord could see the faith of Samuel and God's favor upon him. God revealed the fate of Eli, Samuel's teacher, of what would become of his household. See Chapter 3:13-14. Verse 19: "And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground." His faith grew and was measured by God and those who witnessed.

We cannot limit our growth or confirm that it is in our attendance in Church or works that we perform before man. God is taking note and seeing when and what we

allow Him to do in our lives. This does not come with our kindness or gratitude that we show man, it is how we do such things. God takes note of this and calls us as He did Samuel. The Word directs us and God speaks to us through it and affirms that we are sowing good works for His Kingdom. Philippians 1:6: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ". This shows the extent of God's presence in an obedient child of God. It gives us the measurement of how He is with us and through our wantonness of Him in our walk, we are given the extent of His faith in us to complete the Gospel News.

We must tell others of the good news of the Gospel and how it has changed our lives for the better. They must see the changes in our lives how the Lord has taken us out of the mire and made us new. How we've increased in our walk with Him and the true change is the measurement of God's favor towards us. II Timothy 2:21: "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." We cannot portray to know Christ and lead a contrary or mediocre life. God is taking into account all things and eyes His children especially closely. He loves us dearly and will keep in account when we go contrary to Him. We cannot obtain goodness and have an inmeasurable amount of sin within us. Sallust, a Roman Historian once said: Those most moved to tears by every word of a preacher are generally weak and a rascal when the feelings evaporate. He hears God's Word and finds sin within him and feels the guilt of it all, yet he remains mischievous. Let us strive for good measures and works that reflect our Father and our service to Him. We must not be found empty or void of God, however; let others see that our cup truly runneth over with God's love and contentment in our lives. We cannot be found, or desire, to be empty of His Spirit.

DOES THE BIBLE CONTRADICT ITSELF?

Reprinted and condensed

A well balanced knowledge of dispensational truth is most essential to have a correct understanding of the Bible. We must also realize that there are dangers as well as helps that attend the study of the dispensations.

Many so-called contradictions of the Bible dissolve with readiness under the light of dispensational truth. Several cases in point follow here in this article.

The fourth chapter of Genesis, for instance, gives us the account of Cain and Abel. Cain murdered his brother Abel, but capital punishment upon him was forbidden. **“And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him”** (Genesis 4:15). Then chapter nine records the commission God gave to Noah after the flood. Here we read: **“Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man”** (Genesis 9:6).

It has been said that between these two statements exists an irreconcilable contradiction. Taken as two statements and ignoring the exhortation to **“rightly divide the word of truth,”** so it would seem. But, in what dispensation did God prohibit capital punishment upon a murderer? The word “Dispensation” means to separate portions and to administer laws, to do away with certain laws that have become obsolete. So that law concerning Cain and the murder of his brother Abel had become worthless at the time of the deluge of Noah. So in the dispensation of conscience God did not kill the evil doer. God did prohibit capital punishment upon a murderer for man had not come into the complete light of good and evil. When God asked Cain about his brother, the reply was: **“Am I my brother’s keeper?”** Cain’s knowledge of good and evil, through the fall, had no other prompting

agent in his experiencing the good and ill save his conscience. Conscience having proved an insufficient guide with the increase of sin, God, after the Flood, instituted another type of government among men by placing authority in the hands of Noah and the patriarchs to deal with this kind of justice and punishment.

Man’s conscience has not been dispensed with, but it is not his sole guide in matters pertaining to right and wrong. Unless it is trained and taught by the Word of God, it becomes seared and hardened. For those who have no conscience, external authority must needs step in to enforce the right and condemn the wrong. This authority continued to this very day, as we read about it in Romans, chapter 13.

As we read about the judgeship of Jesus Christ, another seemingly apparent contradiction appears. In John 5:22 we read: **“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son”**. The contradiction (so thought) is found in the statement of Jesus: **“the Father...hath committed ALL judgment unto the Son.”** The seemingly contrary statement is again made by Jesus, when we read the words: **“And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world”** (John 12:47).

The dispensational solution to the, so called, contradiction lies in the two phases of Christ’s second coming. Remember that there are two (2) advents to the blessed return of Christ. These two advents are called: Christ coming FOR His saints and Christ coming WITH His saints. He did not come to judge the world when He came to catch up the saints but was **“King of saints”** (“Revelation 15:3). Then He comes with His saints as

“King Of Kings” (Revelation 19:11-16). Jesus will then exercise His judgship with unerring justice born of His impeccable holiness given to Him by His Holy Father.

Another subject concerning contradictions is Jesus and His work with **“Peace.”** This **“Peace”** is very much misunderstood, and therefore called by secular ministers a controverted Bible teaching. Jesus is affectionately called by His saints, **“The Prince of Peace.”** Then Jesus is lamented, maligned and deplored by doubting men that His mission of peace is not more effectually appropriated.

Isaiah 9:6 is frequently quoted: **“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.”** Now how can you reconcile these words with the words of Jesus when He said: **“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household”** (Matthew 10:34-36).

To us who understand dispensational distinctions immediately find the solution in the two advents of Christ. At the time of the first coming, Jesus came in the flesh (John 1:14). At this time, Jesus’ coming did not bring peace to the people. In fact, the Gospel of Jesus brings variance. At this coming in the flesh, Jesus came not to bring peace in the commonly thought of and desired fashion. To those who trusted Jesus, He came as Lord and Saviour, and His peace at that time brought forth personal peace in the way of a pure conscience before God, and through this Gospel, Jesus brought peace of heart and mind and gave cleansing of heart and mind from sin. But this very estate on the part of an individual so testifying to His grace and peace provokes the wrath of those who see no beauty in the Lord Jesus that they should trust Him, and so variance at once develops.

The universal peace so commonly thought of in connection with Jesus as the Prince of Peace will not come until He returns to the earth as its rightful King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Thus, when Jesus’ feet touch the Mt. of Olives and He establishes His kingdom all over the earth, in a literal fashion, He will by the power of His essential deity, establish and enforce peace throughout

the world. Thus, while **“unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given”** the government is not yet upon His shoulders. A dispensation intervenes.

These are simple examples of how dispensational teaching solves difficulties of which the skeptics make much.

"Watch!"

(from Matthew 24)

By David DeLong

Watch! for you know not the time of day
Your holy Lord arrives;
It may be dusk, it may be dawn,
Or midnight, in the skies.

But, if the goodman of the house
Had known what watch the thief
Would come, he would not let his house
Be broken up with grief.

Therefore be ye ready,
For in a certain hour
You think your Lord would never come,
He comes in awesome power.

Who, then, is a servant wise,
His Lord has made to rule;
To give out meat in season, due,
And not to act the fool.

Blessed is that servant, whom
His Lord shall find so doing;
For He shall make him rule His goods,
For righteousness, pursuing.

THOUGHTS ABOUT SACRIFICE

Bond Tennant

In our society, we see and hear much advertising about various human comforts. Therefore, the word “sacrifice” may not have much meaning. As children of God, our Lord tells us to engage in self-denial. Therefore, we should be very careful about the accumulation of personal possessions or cultivating earthly interest. Many children of God have family obligations. According to the clear statements of Scripture, these cannot be sacrificed legitimately. When it comes to our own personal time and needs, our Lord would be pleased to accept such sacrifices as a demonstration of our love for Him (Romans 13:14). Also, we are admonished to “...seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). We must not develop a spirit of covetousness or idolatry when it comes to these matters.

A desire for wealth, or the things which money can buy may be high on the list of potential idols in some lives. Our Lord speaks about the “deceitfulness of riches” (Matthew 13:22). Elsewhere in Scripture we are told that the love of money is the root of all evil. The temptation to acquire wealth can be very subtle. Therefore, it must

be killed by all true children of God. This is not saying that the mere possession of means would cause consecrated children of God to stumble, especially if it is dedicated to God’s service. If one is motivated with a desire to increase his goods for the sake of self-gratification, this surely would be a red flag, signaling danger.

Those in America, who have not yet reached retirement age, may have certain questions which affect them. Will there be Social Security in place if I live to retirement age? Since my pension plan may be scaled back, should I invest more heavily in the stock market to provide for my future? How much do I need to save to reasonably insure that I will have health benefits to cover future illnesses? Some children of God may ask themselves if they lack faith if they concern themselves about these matters. However, the Lord’s people may well be impacted by many of these issues in the future.

God’s children who live in countries where sacrifice is, of necessity, a way of life have furnished us an example to be faithful here in a land of comparative plenty where we look to a possible future of increased hardship and financial uncertainty.

The Oneness of God

By David DeLong

In I Corinthians 14:33 we read this text of Scripture: "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." This verse suggests that God has only one way of doing things. Otherwise, there would be great confusion in the churches of God. When we go

to the passage of Scripture in Ephesians 4:4-6 we are specifically told that there is only one God, the Father, and that He does have only one way of doing things. These verses read: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one

faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Let us examine some of the oneness of God as told by these verses. First, we are told that there is only one body. This refers to Christ's body, or the Church (see Ephesians 1:19-23). In the New Testament this church is named the Church of God. It is composed of all those who truly live according to only the Scriptures (holy Bible). (Remember that God has only one way, and that way is revealed in one written source known as the Scriptures--both Old and New Testaments).

Christ's body is also known as a family--the family of God. Reading in Ephesians 3:13-21 we find: "Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

This family, or church, is not only made up of certain humans on this earth, but is also made up of angelic beings in heaven. Christ must dwell in one's heart by faith through the Holy Spirit to be a part of this family. One must also know the love of Christ. The love of Christ is always met with obedience to the Word of God. This obedience always includes the keeping of the Lord's commandments. Jesus said in John 15:9-10: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." These commandments include the Ten Commandments as well as a number of others outlined in the Bible.

Then we are told that there is one Spirit. This is the Spirit of God and it must dwell in one's heart by faith as

we mentioned earlier. The Holy Spirit enters a person after baptism by the laying on of hands and prayer by the minister or ministers who perform the baptism. We will have more on this later. The Holy Spirit is the power of God, and it helps the believer to lead a holy life for the Lord, and then is the power that resurrects a person to eternal life when Jesus Christ comes back to earth (see Romans 8:11-13).

Third, we are called in one hope of our calling. We only have this lifetime to make our calling and election sure. We need to see that this calling is made sure quickly in our lives for we never know when our lives will end. In Hebrews 3:7-11 we read: "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)"

There is only one Lord Jesus Christ. He, of course, is the One who has made salvation possible by His death on the cross. Now He is seated on the right hand of God and is our intercessor to the Father. We know from the Scriptures that He is coming again to receive His people and to pour out great punishments upon the wicked. His warning to us is: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:42-44).

There is only one faith which is acceptable to God. The Greek word for faith here is "pistis" and it has several meanings. It can mean "persuasion, credence, conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; constancy in such profession; by extension the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself." So, we see that one must have a firm belief in the truth, reliance upon Christ for salvation, and be involved in the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself. This can only come about from an intense study of the Scriptures to find and adhere to God's truth, and not to follow man's traditions.

This next point is where many people fall short. There is only one baptism that has been outlined in the Scriptures. We are talking about water baptism, and it refers to a complete immersion in water so that the baptismal candidate is completely immersed in water. This baptism leaves no room for sprinkling or any other type of baptizing except total immersion in water. Jesus is our example of being baptized and He was totally immersed in water. The example is found in Matthew 3:13-17: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The phrase concerning Jesus which says, "went up straightway out of the water" refers to His having been totally immersed in water and coming forth, or out, of the river Jordan.

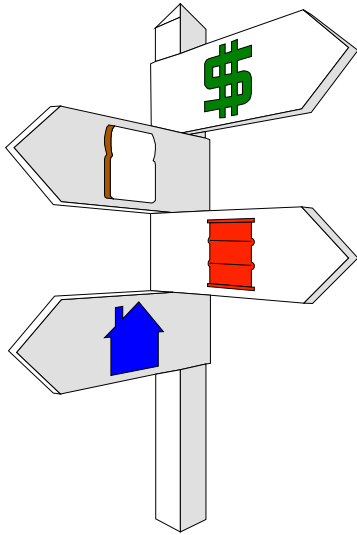
The Book of Acts gives the proper method for baptism as we follow the examples of the apostles in such matters. For example, the Apostle Peter taught in Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." So, repentance, or turning from sin, precedes baptism, and then it must be done in Jesus' name, followed by the reception of the Holy Spirit. Again, I want to emphasize that receiving the Holy Spirit after baptism is done by the ministers laying their hands upon the baptismal candidate and praying for the person to receive the Holy Spirit. We have an example of this in Acts 8:14-17: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

Another example of baptism is found in Acts 19:2-6 where the Apostle Paul found some disciples at the city of

Ephesus. Paul then asks them a question: "He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." If you have not been baptized, or you have not been baptized in Jesus' name with hands laid upon you for the reception of the Holy Spirit, we encourage you to do so by a minister, or ministers, from the Church of God, 7th day, with headquarters in Salem, West Virginia.

Finally, we come full circle by the Scriptures telling us that there is "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (verse 6). When Paul wrote that God the Father is in you all, He, of course, was referring to the Ephesian brethren who were His children. God will likewise be in all of His children who repent, get baptized by immersion in Jesus' name, have hands laid on them to receive the Holy Spirit, and who live the rest of their lives for Him, including obeying His laws from the Scriptures. God has one way for us to go. May we be finding, and following, that way as we study His Word from the Bible.





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 WELFARE SYSTEM

President Donald Trump plans to target the U.S. welfare system. He thinks that people are taking advantage of the system.

Comment

Definitely some are taking advantage of the system, but some really need it because of no fault of their own.

ABOUT STUDENT LOANS

I read an article in the newspaper which stated that in some states those who do not pay their student loans are subject to losing their employment and/or having their licenses taken away.

Comment

This idea does not make much sense. If a person has no work and cannot exercise his or her profession, how can any student loan be repaid?

ABOUT OIL

The following is the first paragraph of an article entitled *Oil may lose market by 2040* by Collin Eaton which appeared in the **Houston Chronicle**:

“The oil industry could lose its century-old grip on the transportation market by 2040 as consumers turn to electric cars, ride-hailing apps and other disruptive technologies expected to transform the way people get around, researchers predict.”

Comment

Features on oil have been featured in this column before. But I think that this is the first time that an approximate date has been set. It may really be weird to

experience the disappearance of much oil.

BLASPHEMY

You could not have missed the news about the senatorial candidate in Alabama who was accused of sexual harassment after several ladies came forth to tell their stories. He said that he was a man of the Bible and opposed sexual misconduct in any form. Whether he did commit sexual harassment (or assault) before becoming a candidate for the Senate was made a great deal. Some said that if he won, he should not be seated as a senator.

Some of his backers who may have believed him said that it would have been alright. They gave the biblical example of the Virgin Mary giving birth to Jesus. To equate these two incident blasphemes the Word of God.

JERUSALEM AS CAPITAL

President Donald Trump has declared Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. This has riled up the Arab neighbors. Trump’s resolution was voted down by the United Nations.

God’s Word speaks about Jerusalem in the latter days when it is recorded in Zechariah 12:3, “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 together against it.”

TOY TECHNOLOGY

I saw an article in a newspaper with the heading *Got a toy that can spy? Here’s how to know and what to do.*

It is weird to have a toy that can spy and not know it. The article stated that the FBI says toys connected to the internet could be a target for crooks who may listen in on

conversations or use them to steal a child's personal data.

MOON AND MARS

President Trump has signed Space Policy Directive 1. This directive urges NASA to return Americans to the moon and encourage human space exploration to Mars and beyond.

Comment

Why so much emphasis on going to the moon and Mars? There are so many important earthly causes such as hurricane relief on which money can be spent.

JOBS FOR CRIMINALS AND SOME OTHERS

I read an article in the **Houston Chronicle** entitled *In tight market, even prisoners are job recruits*. The following is the first paragraph of that article:

A rapidly tightening labor market is forcing companies across the country to consider workers they once would have turned away. That is providing opportunities to people who have long faced barriers to employment, such as criminal records, disabilities or prolonged bouts of joblessness.

Comment

This is a good thing to do. It is only fair that those less fortunate be given a chance to earn a living. Many of them may have a higher intelligence quota (I Q) and aptitude for some jobs more than many others.

THE NORM

I heard a commentator say he believes that President Trump upended the norm in his first year as president. By the norm he meant that President Trump makes decisions vastly differently than most other presidents.

Comment

It makes no difference how any president makes decisions. What matters is if the decisions are in the best interest of our country.

TROUBLE IN MYANMAR

At this time, there is trouble in Myanmar. There is a certain sect of Muslims, called Rohingya, being persecuted in Myanmar's western Rakhine state. The Myanmar military conducts operations against these Muslims. Myanmar is a predominantly Buddhist country.

Comment

Buddhism is said to be a very peaceful religion. One may be able to presume that many of the members of Myanmar's military are Buddhist. Why would members of a peaceful religion persecute anyone?

INDIAN WITCH HUNTS

I read an article in **USA TODAY** that told that witch hunts in India are real and deadly for the accused. It said that almost 2,000 people were killed from 2005 to 2015. However, there was a Prevention of Witch-hunting act passed two years ago, but in the 86 cases filed since the act was passed no one has been convicted. The article said that the objective in most of the cases was just to grab their property.

HEALTH INSURANCE IN AMERICA

It is reported just recently that the number of Americans without health insurance has risen. The losses of health insurance followed big gains.

Comment

The acquiring of health insurance is very vital to those who cannot cover the full cost of their health care out of their own pockets. Let us pray that a suitable health care insurance plan will prevail.

NO FUNDS

Regions in America have been through many disasters, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, wildfires. The government agency, FEMA, that is to help the victims of those disasters is out of funding. This puts a bind upon those who cannot afford to pay for all the things they need out of their own pockets.

GAY MARRIAGE IN AUSTRALIA

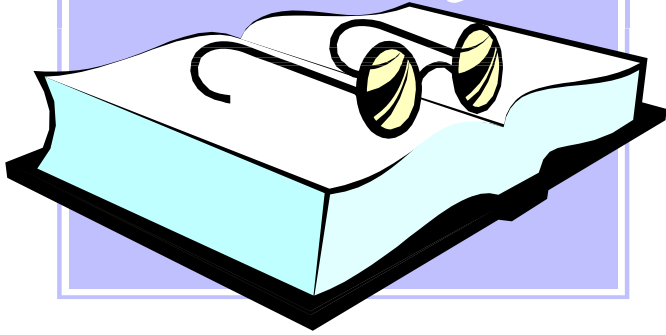
Gay marriage is now legal in Australia. A newspaper article said that Australia's prime minister rushed the gay marriage law into effect. Sydney's mayor said, "This is a historic day in the struggle for civil rights."

Comment

Gay marriage might be considered civil rights, but it is not according to God's Word.

BIBLE

Study



QUESTION: What about studying the Bible along topical lines?

ANSWER: In this approach, the various Scriptures from the Old and New Testaments on a particular subject are brought together. The words of the prophets and the teachings of Jesus and the apostles are analyzed and compared. The point is to limit the study to the one subject under consideration, and to bring together all possible Scripture texts to bear upon it. This method is based upon the assumption that, when properly understood, all Scriptures will harmonize with each other, though taken from sixty-six different books written at various times and by different hands in the knowledge that God is their true Author.

QUESTION: Can we refute the Catholic teaching of the perpetual virginity of Mary?

ANSWER: Let us read Matthew 1:24-25 from the Amplified New Testament: “Then Joseph . . . did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took (her to his side as) his wife, but he had no union with her as her husband until she had borne her first-born Son.”

There appears to be a clear implication here that after Jesus was born Mary and Joseph lived a normal married life together. In the course of time, several children, both boys and girls, were born to Mary as enumerated in Mark 6:3 which reads, “Is not this the carpenter, the son of

Questions and Answers

Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.”

QUESTION: Will David’s throne be again set up?

ANSWER: Yes, it will. Nothing is clearer than that the throne of David will literally be re-established. “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. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:6-7). See also Jeremiah 23:5-8; Luke 1:31-33).

QUESTION: Is it true that all people upon the earth, white and black, red and brown and yellow, are descended from Noah?

ANSWER: Yes, this is true. In the Flood of Noah’s time, all human life was wiped off the face of the earth except Noah and his family. Only eight persons were saved from drowning. These were Noah and his wife and their three sons and their wives. The three sons were Sham, Ham and Japheth. Genesis 10 tells about their descendants. See Genesis 7:7; 9:18-19.

QUESTION: Matthew 13:17 reads, “For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have

desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.” Why were these holy men of old unable to see the light which children of God enjoy?

ANSWER: It was not “due time” to have these truths revealed before Christ’s first advent.

QUESTION: You possibly have heard the expression, “I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet.” What character in the Bible was its author? Under what circumstances did he use it?

ANSWER: It was the prophet Amos who was the author of the expression. It was the answer made by the prophet to Amaziah, the priest of Bethel. Amaziah tried to persuade Amos not to prophesy further against Israel. See Amos 7:10-15.

QUESTION: Being a minister, I sometimes have the feeling that I should just give up. Many in my congregation, even those who claim that they are converted, do not seem to practice what I preach from the Word of God. Can you give me any encouragement?

ANSWER: Let us consider the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah is universally known as the minister who cried. Several passages in his book (9:11) and the whole book of Jeremiah’s Lamentations show us the terrible predicaments he was in. **“Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people”** is one of the saddest verses.

It was the sad fate of Jeremiah to preside over the fall of the children of Israel. He had to stand by and watch the country go into eclipse without being able to do anything about it. He was the unwelcome and hated minister in the nation. He was imprisoned for telling the truth and trying to present the will of God to the people. Just think of it, three times he was told by God through the Holy Spirit: **“Pray not for this people”** (7:16; 11:14 and 14:11). What sadder mission could a prophet of God have?

The people were stealing, murdering, committing adultery, swearing falsely, burning incense to Baal and walking after all kinds of gods they could congregate up. Then on a Sabbath, which was convenient, they would

take their Sabbath Day’s journey to the temple and say: We are safe, we have come into the Temple today. The people bragged: “We are safe, we are delivered from anything evil we have done.” See Jeremiah 7:10.

Jeremiah prophesied through the reign of the last five kings of the Judah Kingdom. In vain he pleaded for repentance so that the children of Israel could come to their senses before being destroyed. He pleaded with Israel to escape the impending doom from God. But it was to no avail.

Jeremiah spent 40 years preaching to his people with no visible results. I know some ministers who have spent many years in a city and did not receive one convert! Jeremiah’s messages met with ridicule and rejection, and increasingly with persecution and threats of harm and even death. That would be hard to take. But that was the fate of Jeremiah, whose ministry lasted from 626 to 586 B.C. when his people were taken as slaves to Babylon.

Jeremiah’s personality appeals to us ministers. We can associate ourselves with him. Though he was a Spirit-filled preacher, he was intensely human and thought many times, was it his failure to reach the people? Many preachers today feel as if they are at fault. No matter how spiritual the minister may be, it is under the will of God that he is doing his best. No matter how godly we may be, we are still human with some faults and frailties and the natural reactions of our particular personalities. Instead of letting adversity be a stumbling stone in our walk of life, we should turn it into stepping stones to higher achievements. God bless you dear ministers out in the harvest field. Do not get discouraged. God loves you even if you have tears in your eyes.

QUESTION: To what does the year 601 mentioned in Genesis 8:13 refer?

ANSWER: Genesis 7:11 tells us that “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.”

Genesis 8:13 tells us that the face of the ground was dry in the six hundredth and first year. Considering these two verses, it tells us that Noah was 601 years old when the face of the ground was dry.



The Ministerial Council, 2018, in Dallas, Texas

Ministers, from left to right (front row): Ricky Herrera, Del DeLong, Moises Torres M., Jerry Womble, Daniel Cruz, Warren (Bud) Randall, Alfonso Telesca. (Back row): Manual Gonzalez, Tommy Herrera, Osman Pineda, David DeLong, Mario Cantu, Gary Mills, David Royer, Tim Buechner.





Ministers and Church members in the dining hall.

LESSON I

MOSES SLAYS AN EGYPTIAN

Scripture Reading: Exodus 2:11-20.

Golden Text: Exodus 2:12.

“And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.”

1. What did Moses do when he was grown? Exodus 2:11.
2. What did Moses do to the Egyptian? Exodus 2:12.
3. What did two men of the Hebrews do? Exodus 2:13.
4. Did Moses believe that his deed was known? Exodus 2:14.
5. What did Pharaoh seek to do, and what did Moses do? Exodus 2:15 (first part).
6. Where did Moses dwell after he fled from Pharaoh? Exodus 2:15 (last part).
7. What did the priest of Midian have, and what did they do? Exodus 2:16.
8. What did Moses do for the priest’s daughters? Exodus 2:17.
9. What did the father say to his daughters? Exodus 2:18.
10. What did his daughters tell him? Exodus 2:19.
11. What was the father’s reply to his daughters? Exodus 2:20.



LESSON II

MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH

Scripture Reading: Exodus 3:1-14.

Golden Text: Exodus 3:2.

“And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.”

1. Where did Moses lead Jethro’s sheep? Exodus 3:1.
2. How did the angel of the Lord appear unto Moses? Exodus 3:2.
3. From where did God call unto Moses? Exodus 3:4.
4. What did God say unto Moses? Exodus 3:5-10.
5. What was Moses’s reply? Exodus 3:11.
6. What did God say unto Moses? Exodus 3:12.
7. What question did Moses ask of God? Exodus 3:13.
8. What answer did God give Moses? Exodus 3:14.

LESSON III

MOSES IS COMMISSIONED BY GOD

Scripture Reading: Exodus 3:15-22.

Golden Text: Exodus 3:15.

“And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.”

1. What did God say unto Moses? Exodus 3:15.

2. What did God tell Moses to do? Exodus 3:16.
3. Where did God say He would bring the children of Israel? Exodus 3:17.
4. Would the children of Israel hearken unto Moses's voice? Exodus 3:18 (first part).
5. Then what was Moses to do? Exodus 3:18 (last part).
6. What did God say about the king of Egypt letting the children of Israel go? Exodus 3:19.
7. What did God say He would do? Exodus 3:20.
8. Would God give favour to the children of Israel in the sight of the Egyptians? Exodus 3:21-22.

6. Then what did the Lord tell Moses to do? What was the result? Exodus 4:6.
7. What happened when Moses put his hand into his bosom and took it out again? Exodus 4:7.
8. What did the Lord say would happen if the Egyptians would not hearken to the voices of the first and latter signs? Exodus 4:8-9.



LESSON IV

**MOSES'S OBJECTION
(THE UNBELIEF OF THE PEOPLE)**

Scripture Reading: Exodus 4:1-9.

Golden Text: Exodus 4:1.

“And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, the LORD hath not appeared unto thee.”

1. What did Moses say? Exodus 4:1.
2. What did the Lord ask Moses, and what was Moses's reply? Exodus 4:2.
3. What did the Lord tell Moses to do? What was the result? Exodus 4:3.
4. Then what did the Lord tell Moses to do? What was the result? Exodus 4:4.
5. What was the purpose of this miracle? Exodus 4:5.

**ANSWERS:
THEY HAVE A DREAM**

1. Joseph, Matthew 1:20
2. Jacob, Genesis 28:10-12
3. The wise men, Matthew 2:7, 12
4. Joseph, Genesis 37
5. Solomon, I Kings 3:5
6. Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 2
7. Pilate's wife, Matthew 27:17-19
8. Paul, Acts 16:9
9. Joseph, Matthew 2:13
10. Abimelech, Genesis 20:3





HE PICKED ME

By Sherry James

“Why are you staring in your cocoon?” Cassandra the caterpillar asked.

“I’m reading a message from God,” said Bella the butterfly. “I’ve been chosen for a special task.”

Cassandra stretched up tall and clapped her hands. “How exciting! I can’t wait to hear about your adventure.”

Through the long grass of the meadow Bella flew. Six ladybugs sat on bright red flowers with yellow star centers. They were sipping sweet smelling nectar. “Join us for a scrumptious meal,” they said.

Bella’s throat felt dry and the nectar looked so good. She cleared her throat with determination. “I’m on a mission for the Lord. I’ll be back soon.”

“Congratulations,” they squealed. “We can’t wait to hear about your adventures.”

Over the pond Bella soared. Five tiny brown frogs napped between beautiful pink flowers. The frogs stretched and sang to Bella. “Rest with us on these lovely petals.”

The dark green lily pads would be nice place to rest thought Bella. She did feel a bit tired. Bella stopped flying and floated down for a landing. All of a sudden one of the frogs stuck out his tongue looking to grab her. Bella jerked and flew up just in time.

“You naughty frog! I’m on a mission for the Lord. I won’t stop to rest with you.”

Under the tree branches Bella flew. Four yellow spotted lizards bounced on creamy mushroom tops. “Come jump with us,” they yelled.

Bouncing was Bella’s favorite game. It was tempting to stop and play. Bella took a big breath, “I’d need to work first. I’m on a mission for the lord.”

“Good for you.” They said “We can’t wait to hear about your adventures.”

Beside a long bridge Bella sprinted. Three red ants were carrying big green leaves across. “Can you help us carry more leaves?” they asked. “We’re helping a friend build a new house.”

Bella thought about her mission and their mission. Both seemed like good joys, but if she stopped to help the ants, she wouldn’t have enough time for her own task. “I’m sorry I can’t help you,” she said. “I’m on a mission for the Lord, too; and I can’t spare the time.”

The ants became very angry. One threw a rock at Bella. “You’re being selfish,” they cried.

Bella felt very sad. Maybe she misunderstood the message in the cocoon. Perhaps she should have helped the ants. Bella’s wings slowed, drifting her around the barn. Two horses kicked and jumped for joy. “We’re so glad to see you, Bella.”

Bella was surprised they remembered her name. She had only been this way once before. She stopped to sit on the railing.

“Don’t stop now,” they said. “You’re on a mission for the Lord.”

Bella felt encouraged to continue. She waved goodbye. “Thank you, my friends.”

With renewed determination Bella flew next to the bird bath, above the sleeping cat and beneath the porch. There she found Katie with fresh tears on her cheeks.

Bella landed carefully on Katie’s tightly folded hands. Bella opened and closed her wings very slowly two times. Katie smiled and Bella jumped into the air performing a spiral dance for the little girl. Katie held out her hand and Bella landed again.

“Thank you God,” the little girl whispered.

Katie quickly ran inside the house. “Mom! God sent me a butterfly. He’s answering my prayer.”

Sheer joy rippled through Bella’s heart. She was glad God picked her for this mission.

Bella flew out from beneath the porch, above the cat, next to the bird bath, around the barn, beside the bridge, under the branches, over the pond and through the meadow back to her home. There gathered together were all her friends eager to hear about her adventures.



BIBLE TREES

Many events in the Bible involved trees in some way. How many blanks can you complete without looking up the references?

1. After Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, they made themselves aprons from the leaves of ____ tree (Genesis 3:7).
2. As the Lord Jesus rode a little donkey into Jerusalem, the people shouted and waved branches of ____ trees (John 12:13).
3. Elijah, discouraged and fleeing from Jezebel, went a day's journey into the wilderness, sat down beneath this tree, and prayed that he might die. While he slept, an angel touched him, and he awoke and found food and water set out for him. Name the tree ____ (I Kings 19:4).
4. When the spies returned from the land of Canaan, they brought back grapes, figs, and the fruit of the ____ tree (Numbers 13:23).
5. King David's palace was built from the wood of the ____ tree (II Chronicles 2:3).
6. When Noah released the dove the second time from the ark, the dove returned with a leaf from an ____ tree

in her mouth (Genesis 8:11).

7. When Zacchaeus wanted to see the Lord Jesus, he climbed a ____ tree (Luke 19:4).
8. King David's son, Absalom, died when his long hair caught in the branches of the ____ tree (II Samuel 18:9).
9. God told Moses to have the leader of each of the twelve tribes of Israel bring a rod to the tabernacle, and the following day Aaron's rod had buds which blossomed and bore a certain type of nut (Numbers 17:8). Name the tree.
10. When the children of Israel were taken captive and sent to a strange land, they were sad and could not sing. They hung their harps on the ____ trees (Psalm 137:2).
11. The Lord told King David he should go to battle when he heard the sound of marching in the branches of the ____ trees (II Samuel 5:24).
12. In John's vision of the heavenly city, he tells about the tree which bears twelve kinds of fruit (Revelation 22:2). Name the tree.

THEY HAD A DREAM

In Scripture, dreams are a form of communication from God -- messages of encouragement, direction, or warning. Can you identify the dreamers in the hints given below?

1. He was told in a dream to take to himself a wife.
2. He saw a ladder from heaven with angels on it.
3. They were told in a dream to go home another way.
4. His dreams got him into trouble with his brothers.
5. He dreamed God said, "Ask what I shall give you."
6. Daniel interpreted his troubling dream.
7. She told her husband she suffered from her dream.
8. He dreamed a man said, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."
9. He was told in a dream to take his family to Egypt.
10. He learned in his dreams he had taken another man's wife.

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***THE HOPE OF GLORY
(Deuteronomy 6) - Pat Evans***

*When your sons and daughters ask you,
About the past, in the days to come;
Remember what our Lord taught us,
And all the wonderful things He has done.*

*Look back on the time of Noah,
The world exceeded the limits of sin;
So the Lord cleansed the earth the first time,
And could find just eight righteous, then.*

*The Israelites became bondsmen in Egypt,
A life of slavery in a foreign land;
But through miracles, signs, and wonders,
The Lord freed them with His mighty hand.*

*He said if you keep my commandments,
My statutes and testimonies too;
I'll give you the Land that I've promised
To the faithful who came before you.*

*So all Israel waited for the Savior,
But when He came, they said this can't be Him;
They rejected what He tried to teach them,
So the Gentiles were grafted in.*

*Even though they crucified Jesus,
He was raised and lives immortal today;
For our sins, He was sacrificed for us,
And through His Word we are taught the way.*

*Again, He says, keep my commandments,
And the New Covenant I bring to you;
I'll continue to bless you in all things,
And grant the gift, eternal life, too.*

*So let us not be forgetful,
And remember what we have to do;
To fear God is the beginning of knowledge,
And the hope of glory is Christ in you.*

