

Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinance as delivered.”

“Thus saith the Lord, ‘stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.’ (Jer. 6:16) “And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.” (Isa. 58:12).

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NO. 2

RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

By *RICK MARTIN*

In Mark Chapter 14, we are introduced to a nameless pitcher bearer. This man was a servant who held no position, had no property and little social influence. Jesus told two of his disciples to “go into the city and there you will meet a man bearing a pitcher of water.” Jesus, in his infinite wisdom and knowledge, knew that this man would be in the right place, at the right time. What took place in that upper room that night was no small, insignificant thing. It was here that Jesus opened up to his disciples the real meaning of the kingdom of God. It was in this room that Jesus revealed his coming betrayal to his disciples. It was in that upper room where he introduced the precious memorial of his death and suffering that we commemorate every first day of the week.

It is heartening to know that no matter how lacking in talent or ability, that there is something that every servant of God can do. This nameless pitcher bearer inspires every man, woman, boy or girl to bring whatever talents they may have and put them to work for the Savior. Tillit S. Teddlie wrote. “There’s a place for me in the service, I will work where the call may be, I will go or stay if for Jesus, There’s a place in the ranks for me.” “Let me fill my place in His service, what he bids I will gladly do. Just a humble part in His vineyard, only let me to Him be true.”

Although Jesus expects us to utilize all the talents he has given us, He appreciates and can use the little things that everyone can do. We are thankful for those multi-talented people, but Jesus can take little things and use them too. There is a place for everyone in the Kingdom. YOU can be a person in the right place, at the right time.

It doesn’t matter what your status in life may be, there is a place for you. Some may think that they have little if any ability, but as I have already said, Jesus will and can use the small things. All members are important. Do not judge yourself based on the talents that others may have. You may not be able to preach, or lead a song, or lead a public prayer, but God and Jesus can use you if you will let them. God can use you if you will give Him your body. Rom 12:1-2 tells us “we are to present our bodies a living sacrifice.” We have hands, what can we do with these hands? They can write a letter or sign a card to encourage someone or sympathize with them. We have feet. Our feet can take us places to support the preaching of the Gospel or to visit the sick and lonely. We have eyes. We can keep our eyes open and look to help someone who is struggling, physically or spiritually. We have ears, ears that can listen for those who need to share their burdens. Lynwood Smith wrote: “you may never fully know the impact you may have, as you travel thru the land: someone sinking in despair, may find his hope renewed, when you lend a helping hand. Tiny deeds that seem so small to you, may be deeds that offer strength anew, we may lift some load on life’s weary road, by some tiny deed we do.”

Your greatest work may be in the home. Parents need to teach their children the Bible, perhaps even more so today than ever before. When we train and encourage our children, they are on their way to heaven. We need Godly parents in the home. Such will also strengthen the church. What a great thing to be able to say that you influenced your children in right living. Mothers, you might not be able to preach, but that little boy in your home might become a great preacher, because of your influence. That little girl may become a great asset to the church, because you influenced her to live

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Editorial

A PLAN FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN LIFE

By: BARNEY OWENS

The November issue of this paper contained an article with the above caption to which I wish to make a few comments. As far as I know, I have never met the author of the piece. And, to the best of my recall this is the first time I have seen his name in print, therefore, I have no ill feelings toward him. I have no reason to think he is anything but an honest upstanding man. I am not judging his intentions, as such judgment must be left to Deity. However, his words I do take exception to. Moreover, it is these that evoke my concern, as the Lord declared; “Ye shall know them by their fruits.” (Mt. 7:16).

The brother’s problem seems to be that he wishes to apply the specific commandments given to some in the Scriptures to every person generally that has named the name of Christ. That does not follow! God ordained that certain works be done by some people He appointed to carry out His will in a particular time or under a certain circumstance. When that person fulfilled his work, which God called him to perform-that ended the matter. Pentecostalism is founded on the principle that what some were called to do in Apostolic times holds true today for all disciples. While each Christian is to walk worthy of our vocation, God has not set any of us aside by giving us a specific mission to fulfill. A prominent doctrine of denominations is that men are “led of God.” Obviously, this is done because they wish to teach and live contrary to God’s word. I’m not accusing the author of this article of that, but the logical conclusion leads in that direction.

FIRST, SOME PRELIMINARY REMARKS

“In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews language, but according to the language of each people.” (Neh. 13:23-24). The Law of God could not be understood correctly by these children because they had adapted jargon foreign to the language of the Jews. The language that men use has always been

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QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: What generation did Jesus have in mind when he said “This generation shall not pass until all things are fulfilled?” Matthew 24:34

Answer: Matthew 24 may well be one of the most controversial chapters in the New Testament. A number of false doctrines have emerged because of a misunderstanding of what Jesus taught in these passages. Among them, the idea of pre-millennialism (thousand year reign of Christ on earth), the rapture, and certain parts of the A.D. 70 doctrine relative to the second coming of Christ. After showing Jesus the buildings of the temple, the disciples were shocked to hear Him declare “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” (Mt. 24:2) This came as a surprise to the disciples, who obviously thought the temple in all of its grandeur and beauty would stand forever, hence they asked “Tell us, when will these things be? And what shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (verse 3) Two questions: “when shall these things be?” and “what shall be the sign of your coming, and the end of the age?” A failure to recognize the difference in these questions has led to a great misunderstanding on the part many. These disciples wanted to know when the temple would be destroyed and if there would be any signs of the Lord’s second coming (i.e. the end of the age). The transition in the answers given by Christ are marked by verse 36 which serves as the “transition text.” In the verses prior to verse 36 Jesus is very definite about the events and the time of the judgment on the Jews i.e. the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. He mentions some definite things that will come before his second return. Such things as false christs, wars, earthquakes, famines, persecutions etc. By way of contrast after verse 36 Jesus is very indefinite about the things mentioned. “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” “Watch therefore: for ye know not the hour your Lord doth come” (v. 42). “Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (v. 44). The emphasis in the verses after v. 36 is one of delay. Prior to v. 36 He describes

the situation that is to soon take place with the destruction of Jerusalem. Mark in chapter 13:1-2 records the question of the disciples “When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?” Jesus answered the question when he said “When ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors” (v. 29). Going on Mark adds “Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done” v. 30). What is meant by “this generation?” The obvious answer is “the generation of people living at that time.” Titus led the Roman Army against Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Many of the people living at the time Jesus spoke these words to the disciples were still alive, “this generation” was still alive and witnessed the very things of which Christ spoke. The mistake that many make is trying to tie the second coming of Christ at the end of the age to the “this generation” of verse 34. Some today claim that Christ actually came in A.D. 70 and will not come again in the end of this age. The following passages teach that Christ’s second coming is yet future Acts 1:9-11, 2Peter 3:4-11, and 1Cor. 15. He will come bringing rest to those who are righteous and punishment to the wicked. 2 Thess. 1:7-10 (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com

WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE?

By BILLY D. DICKINSON

Micah 6:8 says, “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” What a great passage of Scripture! No wonder Jimmy Carter chose to quote it in his inaugural address and it is also inscribed in the walls of the Library of Congress. However, it’s real importance is in how it simplifies for us what God really desires of man. According to one count, Moses gave the children of Israel 365 prohibitions and 248 positive commands. Yet, Micah essentially narrows it all down to three things.

When you stop to think about it, this was a purpose of the law of Moses- to show us the need to be in a right relationship with both God and our fellow man. In fact, Jesus validated that concept in Matt. 22:37-40, declaring that “on these two

commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Here’s what He had reference to: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Yes, this is what the old law was attempting to teach them, and this is still what is required of us under the new covenant.

It is true, as a comparison between the two covenants will show, that some things commanded under the law of Moses are not binding today. Nevertheless, the overriding principle remains the same in that we are to love God (by keeping His commandments- 1 John 5:3) and love mankind (by treating our neighbor in the right way). Let it be remembered that these are requirements! It is something that is necessary in order to gain a certain blessing or advantage, leaving one disqualified without it. If we fail to live up to God’s standard of requirements, surely we cannot expect to be pleasing unto Him to where heaven is going to be our eternal home.

One preacher made the following comment about Micah 6:8, “Now, you understand that this is not a requirement to go to heaven. I hope you have more maturity than that.” How absurd! That, of course, is the logical consequence of teaching that salvation is by “faith only,” but the Bible nowhere teaches such. The following passages expose this false doctrine for what it is: “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Rev. 22:14) & “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (1 John 3:15). Denying God’s word is not a sign of maturity at all! It is actually a denial of what should be obvious: one cannot be pleasing to God without meeting these requirements.

Please notice Micah’s opening statement: “He has shown you, O man, what is good.” In other words, the good way that we are to pursue is the way revealed by God, meaning that we are not left to decide for ourselves what pleases the Lord. The issue is then dealt with by focusing on three things...

“TO DO JUSTLY

The first thing that is brought up is justice, perhaps leading the list because social injustice was a great evil at that time (See Micah 3:1-2; 9-11). According to what I have read, the Hebrew word for doing “justly” comes from a verb that means to decide a legal dispute or case. It is simply doing what is right because of honesty and fairness in all things. Prov. 21:3 says, “To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.” What does this mean to us in a practical way in our everyday lives? It means that when it comes to rendering judgments in regard to one another, we must conduct ourselves in a way that is fair and evenhanded.

“To do justly” involves several principles: (1) We treat others as we want to be treated- The “Golden Rule” is found in Matt. 7:12, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” If everyone lived by this simple maxim, what a different world we would live in! There would be no stealing, lying, violence, adultery, etc. (2) We are not to render judgments upon appearances alone- Jesus said in John 7:24, “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” First impressions can be important, but sometimes we do a person an injustice by not taking a second look. As the old saying goes, you can’t always judge a book by its cover. (3) We are not to have “respect to persons” (James 2:9)- This is declared to be sin! Since righteous judgment is based upon truth (what is right) and not on the persons involved, the rich and powerful should not get better treatment than the poor and defenseless. Psalms 82:3 says, “Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.” (4) If I expect mercy in my circumstance, I should be willing to extend mercy unto others in similar circumstances- Matt. 5:7 says, “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” That leads us to the next point...

“TO LOVE MERCY

While mercy without justice can lead to anarchy among the people, justice without any consideration of mercy can lead to cruelty. An old adage says that justice is sometimes better served when tempered with mercy. And thank God for His desire to forgive!

After all, if we received nothing but justice (what the law requires), we would all stand condemned. Rom. 3:23 says, “For all have sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God.” However, God is not only just and holy, but he is also full of mercy, “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

After declaring that “all have sinned,” Paul explains in the next verse (Rom. 3:24) how God’s mercy is extended unto us- “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Yes, it was in the cross that both justice and mercy were satisfied! 1 Pet. 3:18 explains it perfectly, “For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. . .” As those who know of God’s graciousness, surely we can find it in our hearts to be merciful unto others. Notice that Micah says we are “to love mercy.” It is something that we delight in, not simply when we receive it, but looking for opportunities to imitate our heavenly Father in this attribute.

“TO WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD

This last expression is a sermon in itself highlighting several truths: (1) There is the idea of “walking” with God- This denotes continuous action and a way of life. Gen. 5:22 says, “And Enoch walked with God. . .” What does that mean? Heb. 11:5 explains that Enoch “had this testimony, that he pleased God.” It is to live a faithful, obedient life. (2) It is something that we do “humbly”- It involves the idea of sacrificing our desires in order to please God. The humble person is one who yields himself to be Christ’s servant (James 4:7;10). (3) There is the significance of walking humbly with “your God” This lets us know that a commitment has been made in one’s heart to serve God in all things.

We are required to live each day in fairness and kindness (as we deal with our fellow man) and to walk with God (by humbly doing His will). This is the great challenge that all of us face in life.

“QUEEN JAMES BIBLE?”

BY BRETT HICKEY

In previous generations, challenging someone’s religious practice met with the inspired response of Isaiah 1:18, Come, let us reason together...” But

today, when discussing straightforward Scriptures on salvation, worship or doctrine, a friend or co-worker is more likely to say, “Well, that’s just your interpretation.” Admittedly, some passages in the Bible are difficult. In fact, a red flag goes up when someone tells me the book of Revelation is “easy to understand”.

Sincere, serious-minded Bible students acknowledge they have much to learn; I know I do! The earlier on in our quest for knowledge, the more help we need. When Philip asked the Ethiopian in Acts 8 if he understood what he was reading (Isaiah 53), the Ethiopian answered, “How can I except some man guide me?” He was uncertain about the subject of the Messianic prophecy. While many of Philip’s Jewish contemporaries would have said, “That’s just your interpretation,” the fact remains that Philip provided the only correct interpretation.

People suggest by saying this that you cannot be sure what the Bible is teaching in a particular passage. This expression of religious tolerance is convenient for those unwilling to confront error in their belief system. This defense grants them, they believe, freedom from scrutinizing the flaws in their understanding. The interpretation dodge relegates major religious controversies to the realm of nebulous gray areas and enables those on the hot seat to breathe a sigh of relief. “You see,” they say, “it really doesn’t matter.” Unfortunately, those jubilant over this popular avoidance technique are unwilling or unable to confront the ultimate consequences of this approach. Think about it: if everyone looks at every issue this way, where will it lead?

A similar response is, “You’ve got to make changes to keep up with the times; you have to be more progressive.” Once again, people fail to recognize the consequences of others applying their approach to their own cherished and inflexible convictions.

In a recent development in the ongoing proliferation of Bible translations, “the chickens,” as Robert Southey put it in 1810, “have come home to roost.” When I first read the headline, The Queen James Bible, I thought someone had simply made a poor attempt at humor. As I read

on, I realized this latest translation attempted to eliminate the sinfulness of homosexuality from Scripture. The editors claim this Bible would clear up another misinterpretation.

The next generation is listening to the fast and loose approach many take to salvation, worship, doctrine, and morals. If it is acceptable for us to whisk away a Bible teaching we do not like, how can we criticize others for applying the same standard to Scriptures that we hold dear.

Much of the Bible is straightforward, especially on the fundamentals of salvation, worship, morals and doctrine. It is not a matter subject to interpretation, but rather, as Paul puts it in Ephesians 3:4, "when you read, you may understand." We should approach the Bible like we want our children and grandchildren to approach it; as a book that means what it says and says what it means. -P.O. Box 68 Mountain Home, AR 72654 unityseeker@hotmail.com

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right. You will have been in the right place, at the right time.

There is a place for us on our jobs to serve the Lord. Working a job, for most, is a necessity. If we are the proper example in the workplace, then we can be an influence for Christ and the Church. People who leave their Christian ways at the Church building can damage the cause of Christ. If you have co-workers who participate in a sinful lifestyle, you cannot go along with them. You should be influencing them. By doing this you will be influencing the growth of the church. You need to find your place on your job and be in the right place, at the right time.

Some people are not in the right place at the right time when it comes to the Church. We are all familiar with people who show little regard for the assembly. People in the right place at the right time support the work of the church. They make sure pulpits are filled and they take on responsibilities around the congregation. The local Church is a

family and we are to be concerned about the spiritual welfare of our brothers and sisters in Christ. We need to be in the right place at the right time to help one another. Galatians 6:1-2 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Some are only interested in themselves, caring little about the burdens of others. Some offer little if any help to the congregation, but they are quick to criticize. We see some people who drift from congregation to congregation. These people never make any substantial contributions to the Lord's cause. Being a hard-working member of a local congregation will put us in the right place at the right time. If we are going to be in the right place at the right time, we must use our time wisely. I cannot imagine the pitcher-bearer wasting time. I don't think he would have spent too much time down at the well gossiping, or talking about the politics of the day. I don't think he made several detours on his way back to the house. I see him as being determined and wisely using the time he had to get the job done. We often hear people say "I don't have time." Such a statement really isn't true. Each of us has the same amount of time- 24 hours a day. Whenever we use that phrase we are really saying "I don't value that activity enough to do it." Such a statement reveals our priorities. Many times people use this phrase in reference to spiritual things. Some don't have time for church, bible study or evangelism. They have enough time for their jobs, leisure activities, or anything else they want to do. Surely early Christians had far better reasons to use this phrase than we do; given all the modern conveniences we are afforded. Peter was encouraged by Jesus to leave all and "follow him." Peter could have said "I don't have time, I've got to fish and provide for my family", but he didn't. Matthew was told, "Follow me." He could have said, "I don't have time, I have my friends, my business acquaintances. I'm a government worker, my job keeps me busy."

When Saul of Tarsus encountered Jesus, he could have said, "I don't have time to follow you. I'm busy doing what I was taught to do. Don't you realize I have a heritage and traditions to defend? You can't expect me to drop all for you and leave the faith of my fathers." He could have, but he

didn't. Talk about a man who was in the right place at the right time. Paul went through many trials and tribulations. Not one time is it ever recorded that he said, "I don't have time." Why is that the case? The things that were once dear to him, he counted dung that he might gain Christ. When he was concerned about the church at Corinth, what if he would have said, "I need to write those people a letter, maybe I'll get around to it some day." We should become imitators of Paul and use our time wisely. Then we too, can be in the right place at the right time.

People in the right place at the right time serve with zeal. God and people may see things different. The church at Sardis learned that their opinion of themselves was not God's evaluation of their spiritual state. Revelation 3:1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

When man thinks about greatness, he thinks of things like popularity, power, position and prestige. The Lord's criteria for greatest is service, Mark 10:42-45. In Romans chapter 12, Paul gives inspired information that is relative to the service by which one can become great in the kingdom. In verse 11, he declared, "fervent in spirit serving the Lord." Fervent in spirit means having enthusiasm, excitement, dedication and zeal. I believe that the man with the pitcher was enthusiastic, dedicated, and zealous. He quite obviously did not waver in doing his duty. He had a job to do and he did it the best he could and in a timely matter. Zeal in doing a job is important if one is going to be successful in any task.

Zeal for the Lord's cause is vital for the success of preaching the gospel, teaching God's word, living the Christian life, restoring the lost, and encouraging others. If we are grateful to the Lord for his sacrifice, we will become a people who will be "zealous for good works", Tit. 2:14.

We must be zealous and combat false doctrine. Error, untruth, and false doctrine can come from within or without. The church at Ephesus was threatened by false doctrine. The church at Pergamos was likewise threatened. Some people will not acknowledge that some are in religious error. It may seem a hard

thing, but the commandments of men can turn people away from truth. Titus 1:14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. When we are standing against false doctrine, we are in the right place at the right time.

In conclusion, I am thankful that God and Jesus can use the little things. You don't have to be a millionaire; you don't have to be the greatest preacher or song-leader. You don't have to be educated. Just do the little things and you can be used. If there has ever been a time when God needed people in the right place at the right time, it's now.

I don't know whether that pitcher bearer ever knew the impact of what he did; but I do know that because of his reliability, faithfulness and unswerving loyalty, he became a man in the right place at the right time.

The question is do you have what it takes to be the same. Be obedient to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and remain faithful, so you can be useful in the Lord's service. - Rick Martin 300 Clubview Terrace Woodstock, GA 30189 mmartin@bellsouth.net

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A PLAN FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN LIFEcontinued from page two

important to God and remains current with Him. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (I Pet. 4:11). To promote unity among Christians and to dissuade division disciples should exercise care when we speak, as the Apostle said, "...speak the same things that there be no divisions among you." (I Cor. 1:10). Many problems and divisions have been created and are exploited by men using the jargon of the religious world. When the vernacular of denominations is used expressing denominational ideas we are not far from practicing denominationalism.

LOOKING AT THE ARTICLE

"There was a man sent from God (John 1:6-8). He came to the world as God's messenger. He was on God's business (Lk. 2:49). Each Christian today is likewise 'sent from God' into the world (John 17:18)." This statement "begs the question" since John was the subject of and the fulfillment of

prophecy. That is not true of Christians now. The passage (Jn. 17:18) the brother asserts proves his point, proves the opposite. Verse 14 shows Jesus was speaking of the Apostles, not God's children generally.

"If we are sent from God (and you will know who you are), it is on some definite errand. God has a plan (Acts 8:26). a purpose for every Christian life." He does not say how or when "you will know who you are." Regardless, I must deny the entire statement. Look at the passage used as proof of it -Acts 8:26. Surely, the author does not think we have "angels speaking to us today?" No. We are not sent from God on a mission.

"No person who obeys the gospel is without a mission (Mk. 16:15-17)." Again, the passage the brother makes use of belies his conclusion. The commandment given to the Apostles was fulfilled by them as the Gospel was preached to the entire known world in their lifetime. If I must go into all the known world today, I am (and shall be in judgment) a miserable failure. While a Christian wishes to share the Word with his neighbors so that they can know the joy of salvation, taking the Gospel to all men was and is the mission of the Apostles. They not only preached (verbally) but they recorded (wrote) the word for the benefit of future generations, in all the world.

We are 'sent from God.' Every brother and sister of us has a definite work assigned as did Moses, John, Paul, Priscilla, Dorcas, Lydia, Eunice and Lois." It is true that Moses, John, and Paul had a definite work as they were chosen and set apart by God for their particular work. However, it is a stretch to assume that such was true of the others named. Priscilla did not need an angel to speak to her as she with her husband Aquila did what any Christian couple would do; took Apollos aside and explained what was lacking in his life (Acts 8:4). Was Dorcas set apart by God to make coats? No, she saw a need and as any disciple was "ready to every good work" (Eph. 2:10). Lydia evidently was a hospitable woman before conversion as it is clear that Paul had not so instructed her (Acts 16:15). However, hospitable is something every Christian should be. Was Eunice selected to bear a son? I think not (I Tim. 2:15). In addition, to desire the salvation of our children and work to that end

is for all Christians (Tit. 2:4). These women were not in the category of the others named. The only thing they could do-which they did-was to "work out their own salvation."

The author speaks in several places about our being a witness and being given a mission. Both ideas are false. The only witness of and for the Lord were those who saw Him after He resurrected and bore witnesses to the fact (Lk. 24:49). Because Paul was not with the others to bear testimony of the same, it was necessary for the Lord to show Himself to Paul at a later time. This meant he was "as one born out of due time." (I Cor. 15:8). As to a "mission" it was the Apostles who were given the "message" and the "mission" to take it to the world. As the word of God abode within them, they were "the earthen vessels" in whom was the "treasure"-the Gospel. We are not "earthen vessels" and the "treasure" is not within us.

It would occupy too much space to take up everything in the article, however, I believe enough is said for each of you to re-read the article and consider these things. To the author's credit, he does say some good things. Howbeit, it appears that his zeal to encourage us to work for the Lord has blinded him. -8782 Meadowview, W. Chester, OH 45069.

Announcements

ALABAMA NEW YEAR'S MEETING

The New Year Meeting held each year under the direction of the church in Dothan, AL was a great success this past December. Crowds far exceeded our expectations. Seventeen States were represented as Christians came from far and near to participate in dedicated religious services and enjoy the friendship and association of fellow Christians. Twenty one preachers participated in the teaching of God's word and fourteen young men made talks that were both interesting and edifying. The theme of the meeting was "Breaking Alabaster Boxes." Brother Kevin Presley prepared a songbook for the occasion and the theme song was without doubt one of the best songs Kevin has composed to date. Why not make your plans now to attend the meeting this coming December? You will never regret it, we feel sure. It is a great way to end the old year and begin the new.

Our Departed

TRIPLETT- Sister Ruth Triplett quietly slipped from this world into eternity on January 9, 2013, after a difficult battle with cancer. In July of 1946 she was united in marriage to Kenneth Triplett and to this union two daughters and one son were born. For most of her life she attended the Lee's Summit congregation near Lebanon, MO, where her beautiful alto voice could be heard singing the songs of Zion with this group of sanctified Christians. She was a dedicated wife, mother and Christian lady. Ruth was preceded in death by her husband Kenneth and several other family members. Surviving are her son Mark, and daughters Jerri Young and Linda Hamm, and several grandchildren and great grandchildren. She will be lovingly remembered by those whose lives she touched by her good deeds and Christian influence. This writer and Brother Brad Shockley conducted the memorial service. -Ronny F. Wade

SMITH - Sis. Grace Brasington Smith of Samson, AL left this world for the next on June 6, 2012. She was born on November 9, 1929 in Geneva County, AL. She passed away rather unexpectedly after a brief illness. Grace was a devoted and caring mother and grandmother and a faithful member of the Lord's Church in Earlytown, AL. She was a fixture in the congregation and was faithful to live the Christian life and assemble with the saints even when her health made it hard to do so. In many respects, Grace had a difficult life yet raised three loving children who honored her and cared for her until the end. Their love and gratitude for their dear mother and her sacrificial life was seen in their constant attention to her needs. Grace will long be remembered for her sense of humor. Simply put: she loved to laugh! Her witty barbs and her infectious laugh brightened every room she was in. Her modest appearance and demeanor was indicative of the godly woman she was. She is survived by her daughter Patti Hatcher; two sons Freddie and Tony; five grandchildren; two sisters, June Broxson of Earlytown, AL and Pat Hart of Montgomery, AL; and many other loved ones. It was my privilege to comfort the grieving and warn the unprepared at her service. Her earthly house awaits the resurrection in the Travelers Rest Cemetery near Samson. How we will miss her until that day! Kevin W. Presley

COALE - Bro. James A. (Jimmy) Coale of Earlytown, AL departed this life on May 12, 2012 at the age of 84. He was born February 27, 1928 in Brewton, AL. Bro. Jimmy spent most of his life living and working in Geneva County, AL and was a long-time member of the old Earlytown church. In fact, it is hard to call to mind the Earlytown congregation without thinking of Jimmy and his wife Norma. He was baptized many, many years ago by Bro. Homer Gay. Jimmy was a faithful and devout Christian and did what he could to further the cause of Christ in this part of the world. He was not a teacher but nobody loved and supported gospel preaching any more than Jimmy Coale. He and Norma's home has been a haven of hospitality for many a preacher through the years. He was a meat cutter and grocer by trade and could outdoor grill with the very best. If you have been fortunate enough to put your feet beneath Sis Norma's table, you probably know how good Jimmy was at his craft. Jimmy lovingly cared for the church and cemetery grounds for many years. He struggled with Parkinson's disease for nearly 15 years and his health gradually declined over that period until it was necessary to care for him at a nursing home. He was tired and ready to go be with the Lord. His memory will long live on in this small community and in the brotherhood. He is survived by his loving wife of more than 60 years, Norma; his sons Maury (and wife Jill) and Phillip; two grandchildren, Sallie and Sam Coale; and other relatives and loved ones. I was honored to speak words of tribute, comfort, and warning to a large gathering at the Early meeting house he loved so much. He was laid to rest in the Earlytown cemetery alongside many other saints awaiting the resurrection of the great day. - Kevin W. Presley

BLEVINS- Mary Catherine Blevins, daughter of Ralph and Cassie Beard was born on August 2, 1934 near Bernie, Missouri. She passed away at her home in Powe, Missouri on November 21, 2012. She married Robert Blevins on October 2, 1954 in Hernando, Mississippi. She was a long time member of the Powe, Missouri congregation. She is survived by her husband, Robert, of the home; three sons: David and Wanda Blevins and Randy Blevins of Bernie, Missouri, and Mark Blevins of St. Louis, Missouri; three daughters: Sharon and Dennis Johnson of Wentzville, Missouri, Becky and Kent Weather of Kearney, Missouri, and

Marilyn and Mark Hamilton of Allen, Texas. She is also survived by three brothers: Don Beard of St. Louis, Missouri, and Wesley and Ronnie Beard of Bernie, Missouri; also two sisters: Neva Wilson and Audrey Hatchel, both of Bernie, Missouri. Sister Blevins is also survived by twelve grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents, two brothers and four sisters. Sister Blevins will be sadly missed by the Powe congregation, whose membership includes children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of this dear sister. Funeral services were conducted by the writer in Bernie, Missouri on November 25, 2012 with singing provided by members of the Bernie Church of Christ and burial in Bernie Cemetery. -Edward Williamson

MARSH - It is with sadness we announce to the brotherhood the passing of Bro. Charles Marsh of Newton, AL. He departed this world for the realm beyond on December 22, 2012, just a few days before his 56th birthday. Bro. Marsh was born December 29, 1956 and laid his armor down after a lengthy and hard fought battle with cancer and kidney disease. Bro. Marsh was reared in a godly home and devoted his life to serving the Lord. He was a long-time leader of the church in Dothan, AL and his memory will long be associated with the churches in the Southeast. Charles spent his formative years in Panama City, FL and Samson, AL before moving to Texas as a young man. He married Donna Chapman in 1981 and to this union, three boys were born: Daniel, Dwayne, and Craig. He was a devoted husband and father who treasured his family second only to Christ and the church. After living many years near Fort Worth, TX, Charles' career took him to Washington State where he resided for a short time. In 1999, Charles was able to return "home" with his family and be with his aged mother and other loved ones for the past 13 years. He was an asset to the cause wherever he was but his wisdom, leadership, and talents became so vital in what was, at that time, a young, fledgling evangelistic work in Dothan, AL. The church grew under his influence. Charles was loved and respected by his brethren and by those without. His gentle spirit, amiableness, hospitality, and thoughtful manner endeared him to the congregation and all who knew him. He was an outstanding bible teacher. His sermons were not oratorically powerful or full of flowery

eloquence but practical and straight-forward. In my hearing, he never failed to edify the church with a timely and well-prepared lesson suitable for the young or advanced in the faith. He was staunch and appreciated preachers who "tell is like it is", and still loving and patient with others. Charles' passing leaves a tremendous void in the Dothan congregation and in the brotherhood. He was a credit to the work here and his "works do follow" him. He leaves behind his devoted wife of 31 years; his three sons; two brothers, Travis and Jimmy; his mother, Mattie and a host of other family and loved ones. Charles' last two years on this earth were difficult but how blessed the hope that an endless life awaits with no sickness and no sorrow. The funeral was held in the church meeting house he helped to build in Dothan. It was my honor along with Bro. George Battey and Bro. Ronny Wade to speak words of remembrance, tribute and warning to the large company gathered. His body awaits the resurrection in the Oak Ridge cemetery near Samson, AL, the community of his youth. May the Lord bless his family and the church he leaves behind. - Kevin W. Presley

Bonds of Matrimony

WALLACE - FESLER - The evening of July 14, 2012 marked the beginning of a Christian home. Blake Wallace, the son of Steve and Angie Wallace of Trussville, AL and Heather Fesler, the daughter of Kent and Natalie Fesler of Luther, OK were united in marriage. The beautiful outdoor ceremony took place in the cool of the evening at a lovely rural setting. A large company of family and friends gathered to bless this new union. Blake and Heather are dedicated children of God, both reared in godly homes, and both wonderful 'examples of the believers'. They have made their home near Birmingham, AL and worship with the Crescent Ridge congregation. Blake is an outstanding young teacher and does much to help the cause of Christ in this part of the country. He and Heather, we believe, will maintain a home with Christ as its ruler and His word its guiding star. Their family will surely be a blessing to society and to the brotherhood. I was honored to officiate as they began their new life together. - Kevin W. Presley



Field Reports

Kevin W. Presley, 108 Mulberry Ct., Dothan, AL 36303, January 6, 2013 - 2012 was in many ways a difficult year for our family. We face the future hoping for better days and more to be accomplished in the Lord's work. We want to thank the brotherhood for all of the prayers and gestures of love and kindness during the illness and subsequent passing of my father-in-law, Lyle Lorton. The love of the Lord and your support sustained our family. The year ended on a much brighter note. It was my privilege to assist the brethren in Manteca, CA (Labor Day); Lodi, CA; LaGrange, GA; and Sharonville, OH in gospel meetings. I enjoyed each congregation and pray that good was accomplished in someone's heart and life along the way. The Alabama New Year's meeting seemed a tremendous success this year which we hope most of all pleased the Lord and brought glory to Him. Brethren came from across the nation and the largest gathering was nearly 400. The singing was some of the best I can remember and the preaching was needed and well-delivered. It was a real boost to the cause of Christ in this part of the kingdom. Ronny Wade does a wonderful job in coordinating the meeting each year. Another special note: Bro. C.A. Smith was able to make the trip and we were so honored to have him in our home and at the meeting. The church at Earlytown (where we worship and labor) had an encouraging year. Travis Garrett, a young man and husband of one of our younger sisters, was baptized into Christ. He is a fine man with a good heart and a zeal to serve the Lord. We also have a young family of five who recently moved to a home near the meeting house. They have been attending for about four months and have even brought others with them. We are hopeful that they will learn the truth and be converted to Christ and His way. Another brother who has been "out of duty" for many, many years has been assembling with us along with some in his family and we are optimistic he will return to the faith and his family perhaps be converted. Lord willing, I begin a meeting this Wednesday in Fort Smith, AR where our television program has been airing for several years. We look for good things to result in the Lord's work. As for the first half of this year, I am also scheduled March 6-10 at Neosho, MO (Hwy. 160); April 7-14 at 21st St. in

Oklahoma City; May 5-12 at Napoleon, AL; and June 12-16 at Wichita Falls, TX. We look forward to seeing you along the way, the Lord willing.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, January 6: The Lord blessed our efforts immensely in 2012, and now we are looking forward to the new year of 2013 with renewed spirits. Our next meeting in Ada is our annual March Young Speakers' Meeting. The dates for this year are March 35. Make your plans to be with us for a great weekend of services. My meeting schedule for 2013 includes: Lexington, OK (Mar. 17-24?); Cable Ridge, MO (Apr. 10-14); Fieldstone, MO (Apr. 21-28); Yuba City, CA (May 10-12); Hillcrest, MS (June 9-16); Shenango, PA (June 23-30); Chapel Grove, TN (July 7-14); Rogers, AR (July 17-21); Napoleon, AL (Aug. 4-11); Neosho, MO (Sept. 22-29); Jamesville, MO (Oct. 4-6); and Mill Creek, KS (Oct.). May God bless us all as we serve and glorify Him!

Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com We were privileged to end 2012 at the Alabama New Years meeting in Dothan, AL. It proved to be a great success. Large crowds helped to make the singing and association outstanding. One was baptized, one restored, and one confessed wrongs. Currently we are at home in Springfield working with the Hartwell congregation in Arkansas on a part time basis. This church has grown in recent years and the crowds continue to encourage us. We hope and pray for more growth in the future. The Lord willing we will be in a meeting with the Moore, OK church Jan. 23-27 then to Bolivar, MO Feb. 8-10 and Hwy. 85 in Brookhaven, MS Feb. 13-17. In March, Lord willing we will be at Pleasant Grove near Brazilo, IN 17-24. We look forward to all these meetings in anticipation of planting the good seed of the Kingdom. My wife, Alfreda, has undergone some serious medical problems of late and we continue to ask your prayers in her behalf. The Lord bless his people everywhere.



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NO ATHEISTS IN SPACE?

By CARL M. JOHNSON

Last month (Dec. 2012), marked the 40th anniversary of Apollo 17's space mission to the moon. The commander of Apollo 17 was Captain Eugene Cernan, and just as Neil Armstrong is remembered as the first man to walk on the moon, Cernan is remembered as the last man to walk on the moon. In celebration of the 40th, anniversary of the historic trip, Fox News' Neil Cavuto interviewed Cernan and asked him about the last thing he saw as he began to step back into the lunar module for his return to earth and what was going through his mind at the time.

Cernan replied that he saw the magnificent, blue marble-like earth on the moon's horizon. Then he added, "I thought to myself that if I could take every human being with me for five minutes to look back at the earth from where I stood, the world might very well be a better place. There is no question in my mind that it is the work of the Creator of the Universe."

Cavuto observed, "I guess there are no atheists in space; once you've been exposed to what you've seen?"

Cernan quickly agreed and replied with great emotion, "The moon and the earth were not just two dust particles that came together in an infinite sea of black space, and then created massive energy, and then life. Such [an occurrence] is just inconceivable! There is no question in my mind that there is a Creator!"

Cernan's words show he emphatically endorses the ancient message of psalmist David who says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Ps. 19:1).

David focused on the heavens above him, but there are many worlds in God's creation. They include the earth beneath our feet; the plant and animal worlds on earth, in the skies, and in the waters; the human world; the world of rocks and crystals; worlds visible to the human eye; and worlds so small we need special equipment to see them. Biologists claim there are 1.6 million species of fungi in the world today, 10,000 species of ants, 300,000 species of flowering plants, over 4,000 species of mammals, and approximately 10,000 species of birds. These large numbers pale into insignificance, however, when you compare them to the heavens as David did and begin to calculate distances in light-years. David did not have our modern scientific data, but when he began to ponder the heavens he was overwhelmed by the glory of God.

The Jews were forbidden to worship objects in the heavens (Ex. 20:4-5; Deut. 4:14-19; 5:8-9), and they were forbidden the practice of astrology (Is. 47:13-14; Jer. 10:1-5). God insisted they worship the Creator and not the creation (Rom. 1:25).

David argues, however, that the existence of the creation necessarily implies the existence of a Creator. He argues further that the nature of the creation implies a Creator wise enough to plan the creation, and powerful enough to execute His plan and maintain what He has made. So complex a universe demands a Creator who can do anything, who knows everything, and who is present everywhere.

David knew further that God was speaking to the inhabitants of the earth by means of His creation. The heavens do not speak actual words, so no one is deprived of its message because of language or geographical barriers. Regardless of their language, culture, or education, all people are exposed to creation's message and can understand it. God continues to speak through the creation day after day and night after night; His speech pours out silently, abundantly, and universally (Ps. 19:1-4).

David adds that the triumphant sweep of the sun through the heavens displays the glory of God like a bridegroom, who, dressed in his greatest finery and beaming with the joy of the occasion, leaves his pavilion to be joined to his bride. The public nature of such an occasion would involve the whole village population in the celebration, emphasizing the impossibility of missing the event (Ps. 19:5).

Similarly, God, in His creation of the heavens, is making Himself known to all people on just such a scale of joy and glory. The sun travels all the way across the sky and nothing hides from its heat. If anyone misses the lesson the sun teaches, it will not be because he or she has never been exposed to its warm rays (Ps. 19:6).

Who can miss the truth of God's nature as preached by the heavens? God speaks to every person through every hour and minute, telling them who He is and what He has done, and He has left Himself the witness of the heavens (Acts 14:17).

In spite of all of the above, Cavuto may have been mistaken. It is possible there have been atheists in space, especially when you consider cosmonauts from the former Soviet Union. It is clear, however, that such a possibility is not only incomprehensible to Captain Cernan, but it is one that is inexcusable to God (Rom. 1:20). cmjthebackpage@gmail.com