

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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MOTHER’S FAMILY BIBLE

By *BILLY D. DICKINSON*

Family Bibles were once a popular item in a household, often serving as a “warehouse” that preserved a family’s history. Produced by large publishing houses, being over-sized and leather bound, it was frequently the most expensive book in a home. Since it was designed to withstand the abuse of time, it became a natural place to keep important documents and items of sentimental value. As it was handed down through a family, each successive generation added genealogical information to the record. Since it contained the actual handwriting of ancestors, it’s not hard to understand why such a book was guarded and preserved as a family treasure.

Due to old age and medical issues, my parents are now living in an assistant care facility in Midlothian, TX, having made the move in August of 2015. After 67 years of married life in the Houston area, the largest city in the Lone Star state, Bill and Jimie Dickinson are now residing in a new location. As they prepared to move, certain possessions were passed on to family members according to their wishes, involving things like furniture, dishes, jewelry, and religious books. One of the items that I received is the Family Bible that my mother bought years ago. That’s why I’m calling it-- MOTHER’S FAMILY BIBLE. It is something that I treasure and plan to pass on to my children someday, hoping that it will be a blessing to future generations yet to come.

With the book now in my possession, I’ve had the opportunity to scrutinize its contents. It has surely been a walk down memory lane for me! No wonder my mother loved this book. Of all the possessions given away, this was the one item that she thought twice about giving up. I’m thankful for the gift because it has already been a blessing to me. Indeed, many great truths are reinforced in my mind when I consider the contents of mother’s Family Bible.

Please consider some of them with me:

THE HOLY BOOK

First, I want to emphasize that the Bible is a special book, the only one of its kind. While Solomon’s observation is still true, that “of making many books there is no end” (Ecc. 12:12), the Bible is the only book that contains the “holy scriptures” (2 Tim. 3:15). Looking at the cover of such a large volume like mother’s Family Bible, I am struck by the impressiveness of those words that declare in big, bold letters-- HOLY BIBLE! Pay special attention to that word “holy” because it aptly describes what the Bible is all about.

Certainly the Bible is holy because of its origin-- “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:20-21). It is those sacred writings of inspired men, Paul affirmed to Timothy, that “are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15). This demonstrates that it is also holy in content. In the Bible we find a sacred account of all that we need to know about Jesus and why we should place our faith in Him as the Son of God (John 20:30-31).

If we really believe that it is a holy book in origin and content, we must conclude that it is an authoritative book! That’s why we look to the Scriptures for guidance and instruction, daring not to err from its teachings (2 John 9). After all the Bible is the definitive, official source on how to live for God and make heaven our home. Believing that to be true, my mother purchased a Family Bible many years ago and taught her children to respect God’s word. That leads me to my next point . . .

CENTERPIECE OF THE HOME

There was a time when mother’s Family Bible sat on

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Editorial

THE WILLFUL SIN

By DON L. KING

From time to time we hear someone assert that if we sin willfully we can never be forgiven. Years ago, as a young preacher, I asked my father about the so called "unforgivable sin." His answer was simple and fast: "Any sin one can repent of can be forgiven." Later, I came to understand that as being exactly correct. However, let's look at the passage where "willful sin" is found, The place is Hebrews 10:26. In verse 25 the writer had written that Christians are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. Then in verse 26 it says, "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Because this immediately follows the command not to forsake, or miss, the assembly, it is sometimes assumed to miss the assembly "willfully" means we cannot be forgiven. Several occasions come to my mind when this has been stated emphatically.

There is no question that it is sinful to miss, or forsake, the Lord's Day assembly. Verse 25 certainly says that. However, let's notice another passage or two. 1 John 1:9 reads: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Would actions committed under the influence of "all unrighteousness" be forgiven? Assuming one confesses (admits) such sins, the answer is of course they will be. Inspiration plainly tells us here. Burton Coffman comments: "The singular sin sometimes denotes the principle of sin, but this cannot be the meaning here. All sin means every act of sin. This great verse is the source of incredible joy, assurance and consolation to the child of God. He never needs to fear that some impulsive, unintentional, or atypical conduct might overtake him with the result of eternal condemnation." In a moment of weakness, a Christian sometimes willfully makes a decision to do wrong. It may even include missing the worship on Lord's Day, Thank the Lord, he may later repent, and confess the sin he committed, and after prayer, know he is forgiven. In Galatians 6:1 the apostle Paul spoke of brethren who are ..."overtaken in a fault." His instructions were: "Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself lest thou also be tempted." It goes without saying that some who are thus "overtaken" realize that their actions are sinful before they do them. Still, we are told to restore them. So,

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QUERIST COLUMN

By *RONNY F. WADE*

Question: Would you please describe the proper attitude we should manifest toward brethren with whom we disagree?

Answer: The proper relationship and attitude we have with our brethren in Christ is critical to the success of the church as well as our own eternal salvation. It is indeed "good and pleasant" for brethren to dwell together in unity and peace. From time to time, however, there will be disagreements and perhaps strained feelings among those who seek to follow the teachings of the scriptures. The way we react to each other and those differences could determine the future of the church for years to come. The following scriptures define an approach that we all would do well to follow. "Therefore let us pursue the things that make for peace and the things by which one may edify another" Romans 14:9. Edify is defined as "the act of one who promotes another's growth in Christian wisdom, holiness, piety, happiness" Thayer. We should seek to strengthen those with whom we disagree. They may need to be taught not only the truth, but the danger of going beyond what is written as well. I must always measure what I say by how it affects others. If by encouragement and teaching I can induce one to embrace the truth, I have been successful. If I win the argument, but lost the brother, I have not been successful. In Eph. 4:32 Paul writes "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you." The world needs more kindness. So does the church. That doesn't mean that I won't point out the faults of a brother, but it does mean that I will not be cruel, harsh and unforgiving. I will never be rude or mean, "Love is kind..." 1Cor. 13:4. Kindness can open a heart or home where arguments never could have. In Hebrews 3:12-13 "Beware brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, but exhort one another daily, while it is called today lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." We all need to be exhorted from time to time in those matters that affect our salvation. If I am weak and fail to carry my part of the load, someone needs to care enough about me to "exhort" me to do better. If I am flirting with unscriptural practices someone needs to exhort me about the danger of such a course. If I take lightly the warnings of God's word, I need to be exhorted about that. If my practices are wrecking havoc in the brotherhood, someone needs to exhort me in that

matter so I can realize my mistake and change before it is too late. If I become stubborn and refuse to listen to those whose wise instruction could lead me back to the truth, I risk the loss of my soul. In Hebrews 12:6 we are told "for whom the Lord loves, he chastens." There are times when we need to be chastened. Just as our parents chastened us when we were children, God chastens us as His children when we need it. In dealing with some brethren who have openly violated the scriptures, it is often necessary for some good brother or brethren to take that person aside and seek to correct him/her so that they can change their behavior and remain pleasing to God. Such a task is often difficult, but needed. Brethren who fail to heed such warnings, chart for themselves a path of heartache and difficulty. In James 5:16 "Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another, that you may be healed the effectual prayer of a righteous man avails much." Often what we fail to do, the Lord can accomplish. I have tried many times to get certain people to change, without success. Often people criticize, run someone down, threaten, talk about them, and resort to whatever they feel might help without success. But how often do we pray for those same people? We should never treat our brethren with whom we agree or disagree in a way that brings shame upon the name of Christ, and endangers our soul. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

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REPENT AND...
(PART TWO)
By GREG GAY

In the previous article in this series we looked at Jesus words from Mark 16:16 “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...” with an emphasis only on two words “Belief and...”

To summarize that article, false doctrine dating at least from the time of Martin Luther has led many denominations today to teach that salvation is by “faith only” along with a recitation of the so-called sinner’s prayer. All will look in vain for an alien sinner’s prayer for salvation in the scriptures, so this is just one more thing to be added to the long list of Satan’s devices that confuse the religious world today.

While the Bible does express the necessity of belief, or faith, in passages like “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8) and “without faith it is impossible to please him for he that cometh to God must believe that he is...” (Hebrews 11:6), it is not the only requirement given in the scriptures for salvation.

The teaching of repentance as a requirement for salvation can be found in the sermon of the Apostle Peter as given on the Day of Pentecost. On that great day, Peter is preaching to the assembled crowd of thousands and has shared with them they are responsible for killing the long-awaited Messiah when Jesus died on the cross.

Peter’s words at the end of what is recorded of his sermon are: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 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” (Acts 2:36-38).

This is not the first time repentance can be found in the the Bible. Early in the Old Testament we find the concept of repentance included in an act of God. Before the flood we read: “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of

the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them” (Genesis 6:5-7). In this passage, repentance means God changed his mind about allowing mankind to continue his current course.

Gill comments: “This is speaking by an anthropopathy, after the manner of men, because God determined to do, and did something similar to men, when they repent of anything: as a potter, when he has formed a vessel that does not please him, and he repents that he has made it, he takes it and breaks it in pieces; and so God, because of man’s wickedness, and to show his aversion to it, and displicency at it, repented of his making him; that is, he resolved within himself to destroy him...” (<http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/geb/genesis-6.html>).

In the New Testament, repentance is also a changing of mind with an emphasis on proving or displaying the change. John the Baptist told his skeptics, “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Matthew 3:8). The New American Standard Bible translates the verse, “bear fruit in keeping with repentance.” B.W. Johnson comments, “There is no repentance whatever unless there is a change of life as the result. The change of life is the proof of the change of heart” (www.studydrive.org/commentaries/pnt/matthew-3.html).

There is a big difference between the repentance that saves and the repentance that is a reaction to being caught making a mistake. Paul writes about the two types of repentance to our brethren at Corinth: “Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Corinthians 7:9-10).

We see examples of the two types of repentance in the incidents involving Judas and Peter when Jesus was crucified. Judas returned the money he had taken from the Jewish officials to betray Christ’s location. He even made the statement, “I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood” (Matthew 27:4). But, instead of following that confession of fault with proving his repentance by doing what he could to improve his situation, he hanged himself (Matthew 27:5). Sadly, his mistakes become an example of “the sorrow of the world.”

Peter is an example of fulfilling “Godly sorrow [that] worketh repentance to salvation.” He sinned when he

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willful sin is more than just knowing beforehand that the action constitutes sin. As we shall show below, it involves a total apostasy.

Since, “all unrighteousness” can be forgiven through repentance, confession, and prayer, what does the statement in Hebrews 10:26 mean? When one carefully reads the epistle of Hebrews it appears that the purpose of the letter was to attempt to discourage Jews from leaving the truth found in the New Testament, and returning to the old Jewish law.

Persecution against the church in and around Jerusalem was terrible at the time the letter to the Hebrews was written. According to Robert Milligan it was written about AD 63, and that was a very bad time for Christians living there and in other places as well. Some were put in prison for long periods of time and many others were killed in horrific ways. This caused a temptation for Jewish Christians to return to the old Law of Moses to escape the terrible persecution. Apparently, this was happening and Paul wished to discourage that, if possible. Jewish Christians were not assembling with the others of the church; undoubtedly, because of fear and also discouragement. Their absence indicated an apostasy from the truth. It showed they had quit the church, and this was the point under consideration in verse 26. The old Law had been nailed to the cross (See Colossians 2:14). This meant that the animal sacrifices were no longer there to remove sin even for a short time. The only sacrifice now available to them was that of Christ. If they turned away from Christ, Paul said: “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” Since there was no other sacrifice available beside that of Christ, if they turned their back on that provided by God’s only Son, they were forever lost.

It appears obvious then that the sin of forsaking the Lord’s Day can indeed be forgiven, along with all other sins we might repent of, through our confession, and seeking God’s forgiveness through sincere prayer.

It is also worrisome to notice members who are indeed present at worship but engrossed in other things rather than worship. During services members are sometimes seen checking their cell phones, passing notes, talking to others, etc. and one has to wonder if while they are physically present, if they are worshiping at all. What must the God of Heaven think of such behavior? Think on these things.-DLK

JESUS, JONAH, AND THE GENTILES (PART TWO)

By BART SHAW

Is there a scriptural link between Jonah’s experience on the stormy Mediterranean sea and the Lord’s calming of the Galilean tempest nearly 800 years later? At first glance, perhaps not. But a closer examination reveals several interesting points of association (and contrast) between the two events. These interconnections invite the Bible reader to compare the glorious evangelistic ministry of the Lord to the lukewarm service of the prophet Jonah.

Notice some parallels from the two scriptural narratives:

First of all, in both accounts Jesus and Jonah were asleep in a boat when a storm arose. The storm was violent, the ship was threatened with destruction, and the crew was fearful. Jonah was rudely awakened by the terrified captain, and Jesus was suddenly roused by the panicky band of disciples.

In Jonah and the gospel narratives the ‘sleeper’ is rebuked for sound somnolence in the midst of dangerous circumstances. The captain said to Jonah, ‘What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish.’ (Jonah 1:6) The disciples said to Jesus, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” (Mark 4:38)

There were frantic inquiries about Jesus and Jonah. A barrage of questions is blurted out by the terrified sailors to Jonah:

Then they said to him, “Please tell us! For whose cause is this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?” (Jonah 1:8)

The disciples ask their questions about Jesus secretly amongst themselves:

And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, “Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!” (Luke 8:25)

Another obvious comparison is that both Jonah and Jesus bring peace to the raging sea. Jonah rashly volunteers his life to the Gentile sailors: “Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you.” (Jonah 1:12) Jesus, conversely, pacifies the sea by His command:

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the coffee table of our living room for all to see and utilize. There was a reason why it occupied a place of prominence. I now realize, more than ever before, how it was a symbol of the fact that Christ and His word was the very foundation of our home. Right in the middle of this edition, between the old and new testaments, information concerning "important events in our family history" is recorded. Involving several generations, details about births, marriages, and the deaths of family members can be found there.

My trip down memory lane reminded me of how our parents always encouraged us to put Christ first in our lives. As a result, our home was a place of Bible reading, prayer, and devotion to God. Certainly I'm not saying that we literally have to possess a Family Bible today in order to be serious about serving God, but I'm emphasizing what it once symbolized in people's lives. It is this kind of commitment to God and His word that our homes must be founded upon. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath," Paul wrote in Eph, 6:4, "but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The old country song captures the essence of what I'm trying to say:

There's a family Bible on the table
Each page is torn and hard to read
But the family Bible on the table
Will ever be my key to memories
At the end of the day when work was over
And when the evening meal was done
Dad would read to us from the family Bible
And we'd count our blessings one by one

PASSING IT ON

Finally, I am reminded that God's word must be passed on to future generations. As I've already implied, mother's Family Bible includes a "grandchildren's register" that she meticulously filled out. Let us remember that generations come and go, but life continues on and God's word remains forever (1 Pet. 1:25). Why do you suppose that genealogical information was ever recorded in a Family Bible? Undoubtedly people believed that this was a safe place to preserve something! While other items might lose their significance and be destroyed or given away, the presumption was that the Bible would always be preserved and passed on from generation to generation.

Likewise, as parents and grandparents we need to see the importance of passing God's word on to the next generation (2 Tim. 2:2). In the final analysis, it's not that my parents had a Family Bible that set my feet on the right path. No, it was their godly influence in seeing how they lived out truth and righteousness on a daily basis. There must never be any question in our children's minds about our commitment to the Lord or what that commitment involves. Whether its recorded in a Family Bible or etched on a tombstone, our lives will begin and end as it does with every generation— "A time to be born, and a time to die" (Ecc. 3:2). Isn't it sobering to realize that how we live between those two events will determine our eternal destiny? Think about it

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vehemently lied multiple times about knowing Jesus and being with him. When the rooster crowed, reminding Peter of Jesus' prediction, "Peter went out and wept bitterly" (Matthew 26:75). Afterwards, unlike Judas, Peter proved his repentance, proclaiming knowledge of Jesus, declaring him to be "Lord and Christ" in his sermon to thousands on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36), and never denying him again.

When Peter told the assembled crowd to "repent and be baptized" he, of all people in the crowd, understood the concept of repentance. After all, that is what he was personally demonstrating as he spoke.

As used in Acts 2:38, Robertson says the verb, "repent," means: "Change your mind and your life. Turn right about and do it now. You crucified this Jesus. Now crown him" (<http://www.studyLight.org/commentaries/rwp/acts-2.html#3>).

Robertson attempts to convey the urgency of the message to match the passion of Pentecost's message. Peter is not idly giving a discourse to be digested and dissected over days. He is saying, this needs to be done now!

Notice that Peter told the Jews to repent after they were "pricked in their heart." This state of being "cut to the heart," or "pierced to the heart," as other translations read, is feeling sorrow for a wrong deed. But, that feeling is not automatically "Godly sorrow," and it is not repentance, or else Peter would not have told them that repentance was required of them.

Repentance in obeying the gospel may certainly start

with sorrow as it did at Pentecost, or with a logical conclusion of the necessity to change (Romans 12:1-2), or perhaps it is provoked by an acknowledgment of the goodness of God (Romans 2:4), but it is then completed and proven in the observable behaviors that reflect a changed heart.

Initially, in one's search for a right relationship with God, repentance means being willing to perform the additional steps of salvation to reflect a changed heart. Ultimately, it means we will be willing to join all those who daily "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" (2 Corinthians 13:5) with a heart that is ready to yield to God's will.

Once anyone starts down the false path of salvation by "faith alone", there is a quandary of how to handle the concept of repentance. One author attempts to settle the issue by declaring repentance is a choice each can make and is not at all necessary for salvation.

Myers writes: "Eternal life is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Turning from sin is not required." What an amazing false conjecture, that "turning from sin is not required." Notice, Paul's purpose in preaching to the lost that was given him by Jesus: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18). Turning from darkness to light is turning from sin to righteousness, certainly a biblical description of repentance and all of God's plan of salvation.

Meyers continues his false teaching with, "It is probably best to think of repentance as an aspect of discipleship. Both believers and unbelievers can understand God's instructions in Scripture, see the devastating consequences of sin in their own lives, and as a result, repent of their sin and seek to follow God instead."

Myers also says, "If unbelievers do this, such repentance may help bring them to the place where they believe in Jesus for eternal life, but if this happens, such repentance does not in any way contribute to their eternal life..." Meyers' use of the word "if" appears to mean an unbeliever may or may not repent, it is their choice. Contrast that arrogance with the attitude of David regarding his sin: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart..." (Psalms 51:17).

Myers concludes with a grand false conclusion, "Repentance is vitally important for living life with God and with each other the way life was meant to be lived,

but repentance is not one of the conditions for receiving eternal life from God. Thankfully, eternal life is a free gift of God to anyone and everyone who believes in Jesus for it" (<https://redeeminggod.com/repentance-not-a-condition-for-eternal-life>).

All of the above quotes just go from bad to worse. It is amazing the great lengths to which some will go to avoid the plain, simple teachings of the Bible. While all of Meyer's statements may follow logically from the premise of "faith alone" as necessary for salvation, the premise is still false and not to be believed. As a result of his reasoning, the author ends up sailing through the air on a limb cut off from the tree with no support from the scriptures. With his reasoning, he would have to call Peter on Pentecost a false teacher because Peter did declare repentance necessary for salvation.

Peter was inspired by God to give the assembled crowd on Pentecost a command to repent. It was absolutely required that they repent in their quest to be saved, to restore a right relationship with God, From the scriptures, it is logical to conclude it was impossible for them to have the forgiveness of sins without repentance.

We can draw that conclusion because in the phrase "repent and be baptized" we again encounter the little word, "and." As in our prior article, "Belief and...", the word "and" has not changed in meaning. It still gives equal weight to the words on either side as equivalent conditions for a desired result. In this case, Peter promised remission of sins in response to two acts of obedience, repentance and baptism.

One may ask, what about the importance of faith, as pointed out in the prior article in this series? It is not necessary for every item required for salvation to be specifically mentioned in every place that mentions salvation in the scriptures, any more than we find all of God's rules for worship or for holy living listed in every place where one of those subjects is discussed. Nevertheless, remember, Peter's hearers on Pentecost are described as "devout" individuals (Acts 2:5). Certainly that means they were people of great faith in God.

When we obey the gospel, faith is required, as we studied in the previous article in this series, but it does not stand alone. Repentance is also required of those who would be saved, but the requirements of salvation do not end there. The scriptures reveal more that is required. Our next article will deal with the subject of "Confess and..." 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747 papagreg@aol.com

JESUS, JONAH continued from page five

Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" (Mark 4:39)

Jesus eventually, of course, freely offered His life to bring redemption to the troubled seas of sinful mankind.

Another point of agreement between the book of Jonah and the New Testament is that Gentiles cast lots. The seafaring sailors cast lots to determine guilt before they eventually lift up Jonah and cast him into the sea:

And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. (Jonah 1:7)

The enlisted legionnaires cast lots for Jesus' clothing when He is 'lifted up':

They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: "They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." (John 19:24)

Another parallel is that Gentiles work hard to preserve life:

And he said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest is because of me." Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land.- (Jonah 1:12-13)

The same is true of Pilate, the Gentile ruler governing the Jews who were clamoring for the death of Christ. Pilate, in a metaphorical sense, 'rowed hard' to save Jesus from death:

From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar." (John 19:12)

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. (Acts 3:13)

Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, said to them, "You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning

those things of which you accuse Him... Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. (Luke 23:13,20)

Notice how gallantly the Gentiles are portrayed in both stories. Even while flawed and ignorant of God's will, the Gentiles strive to be innocent of the blood of the man they are eventually forced to put to death. The reader should marvel as the unlearned sailors cry out to the Lord God of the Hebrews:

Therefore they cried out to the Lord and said, "We pray, O Lord, please do not let us perish for this man's life, and do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O Lord, have done as it pleased You." (Jonah 1:14)

Comparably, the heathen Roman governor Pilate intercedes with the Jews on Jesus' behalf and makes great statements of conviction concerning Jesus Christ. Frustrated to the point of exasperation, Pilate makes a public demonstration of washing his hands:

Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!" Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!" When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it." (Matt 27:22-24)

We can infer that both the sailors and Pilate saw a 'tumult' rising and were eventually forced to put a man to death. The sailors did so in the face of the turbulent sea, and Pilate did so in the face of the tempestuous Jews.

Another point of similarity between the 2 accounts is that Jonah and Jesus were 'lifted up.' Many translations state that Jonah was 'picked up' and thrown overboard into the ocean by the sailors. However, the Hebrew word translated in the NKJV as 'picked up' is defined by Strong's to be 'lifted up.' The Young's Literal translation translates this verb as 'lift' in two verses:

Jonah 1:12 (YLT) And he saith unto them, 'Lift me up, and cast me into the sea, and the sea doth cease from you...

Jonah 1:15 (YLT) And they lift up Jonah, and cast him into the sea, and the sea ceaseth from its raging;

Jesus too though, like Jonah, was 'lifted up' by men.

And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." This He said, signifying by what

death He would die. (John 12:32-33)

Both Jonah and Jesus are lifted up to be cast into death, Jonah a metaphorical death, but Jesus a literal death.

Two sermons were preached about destruction coming to a city: Jonah's five word Hebrew sermon is very terse: "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be destroyed!" The Lord conversely spends many words on His sermon of coming desolation in His Olivet discourse:

"And Jesus said to them, "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." (Matthew 24:2)

Hateful Jonah does not cry over the city of Nineveh, but Jesus weeps over Jerusalem. Nineveh had forty days, but Jerusalem had forty years from the death of Jesus (AD 30) until the coming of the Roman armies in AD 70.

It should be obvious then that the parallels between the book of Jonah and the life of Jesus are unmistakable and indisputable. Why are they there? The scripture is pointing to a very sharp contrast that is important to consider. We are to behold the obstinate contrarian Jonah juxtaposed with the perfectly obedient Lord Jesus.

Jonah opposed steadfastly the conversion of Gentiles, rejected unequivocally God's command, and (after he was spit out of his burial chamber) preached tepidly a lukewarm gospel.

Jesus obeyed perfectly, died passionately, and then arose energetically from the grave to zealously pursue the gentile nations with the gospel of faith, confession, repentance, and obedience to water baptism for the remission of sins. A greater dissimilarity is difficult to envision.

One final engaging and provoking note on this subject from the New Testament related to the book of Jonah: Who was the father of Peter?

The Apostle John writes that Peter was John's son (John 1:42, John 21:15-17). However, in the gospel of Matthew, Jesus refers to Peter as Simon Bar-Jonah--the son of Jonah.

Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the

kingdom of heaven..." (Matthew 16:17-19)

Which is correct? John or Jonah? Is this simply a textual manuscript error? The names are closely related and many Greek scholars take this position.¹

However, it may be possible that Jesus deliberately misstated Peter as the son of Jonah to make a point. Why? In the ancient world to be someone's son was emblematic of your nature. If you were the 'son of God' then you were a blessed person, but if you were a 'son of the Devil' you were cursed. Consider what it might mean to be called the 'son of Jonah.'

Jonah, God's insubordinate apostle, was given the keys to the conversion of the Ninevites through preaching of a gospel of repentance. Eight hundred years later Peter was given the keys to the church and was at the helm of the Gentile conversion in Acts 10.

On a rooftop in Joppa (the city from which Jonah disembarked on his fugitive voyage) he received a vision from God concerning Cornelius the Gentile. Would Peter be a Jonah and refuse the Gentiles entrance into the church? Three times he heard the Lord speak and he was commanded by the Spirit to welcome the Gentiles now standing at his door, doubting nothing. This motif of the Lord repeating a command three times to Peter was not new. Indeed, three times on the shores of Galilee Jesus had said to Peter, "Feed my sheep." (John 21)

Perhaps our Lord used Jonah's name purposefully to warn Peter of a dangerous weakness in his character: The day is coming, Peter, when you will be called upon to open the doors of the church to the Gentiles. My sheep are not just the Jews. My sheep are also the Gentiles. Do not be a son of Jonah! Feed my sheep. Perhaps Peter spent many sleepless nights contemplating the mysterious message of the Lord. We know this subject was difficult for Peter because Paul had to withstand Peter to his face concerning his dissimulation against the Gentile brethren (Galatians 2). Peter and even Barnabas were temporarily swept up in hypocrisy and played the Jonah.

In conclusion, many interconnecting points in Jonah's narrative allude to the coming perfect sinless Messiah who, unlike Jonah, would show no favoritism. Do we preach with prejudice? God forbid! Let us learn the lesson of Jonah and strive to emulate Christ, Peter, and Paul and joyfully spread the gospel to every person regardless of background, ethnicity, gender, and social standing.

—Bart Shaw, tbartshaw@hotmail.com

¹ <http://www.livingwater.org/about-the-logos-21-translation.html>

Bonds of Matrimony

BARNES-GORRELL - On the evening of Friday, September 16, 2016, a good number of friends, family, and other well-wishers gathered at Firestone Baars Chapel in Columbia, MO to witness the marriage ceremony uniting Matthew Barnes and Amber Gorrell in holy matrimony. Matthew is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Barnes, of Rhome, TX and Amber is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Loren Correll, of Columbia, MO. After a brief trip to the Bahamas, the couple is making their home in Hurst, TX. They plan to worship with the church in Grapevine, TX, where Matthew assists as an evangelist. I counted it as an honor to be asked to officiate at the wedding of these fine, young Christians.
-- Johnny Elmore

Our Departed

ELMORE: Floye Lucille Elmore -- It was my sad duty to conduct the funeral for Floye Elmore, who was my last surviving sibling. Floye was born to Joe D. and Mollie Elmore at Alma, OK September 12, 1912, and departed this life August 12, 2016 at the age of 103, just one month short of 104 years of age. She was preceded in death by her parents, by three sisters, Willie, Eva, and Vera; two brothers, J.D. and Glenn. She is survived by one son, Vernon Elmore and one brother, Johnny Elmore; three grandchildren, five great grandchildren, and one great-great granddaughter; and many nieces and nephews. She obeyed the gospel early in life and was faithful to that calling until death. She was much loved and respected by the congregation in Ardmore. Her health was so good that she never needed a prescription, so far as I know. Her doctor asked her how she was able to have such good health, and she replied: "By staying away from doctors." The funeral, or what we like to think of as a "celebration of life," was conducted from the church in Ardmore on August 16, 2016, and she was laid to rest at Hillcrest Memorial Park, where all the other Elmore's await the coming of the Lord.
-- Johnny Elmore

CARTER: Wyvonee (Wy) Carter- Wyvonee passed away at home on July 30, 2016. Her faithful and loving husband and daughters Mona and Lisa were by her side. Funeral services were at the funeral home in Yuba City, CA on August 5, 2016. Wy was born March 12, 1923 to Alfred and Esther Perrin in Spiro, Oklahoma. She worked for 32 years for Cal-Trans. Most importantly, she was a faithful member of the Lord's church in Yuba

City, CA for 75 years. The services were conducted by Darren Whitaker and the singing was led by Jeff Cryer. NOTE: Pat and I have known this good family for many years. I preached periodically at Yuba City for a lot of years and it was rare to be there and not see her. If health permitted, she and Steryl were on the front row and listened closely to the sermon. Nearly every time I spoke she would come by at the front door, smile, and say, "What a sermon!" She was faithful to the Lord, her husband and family. Her views concerning Scripture were consistently conservative and she was such a pleasure to be around whether at the services or in her home where delicious meals were always served. She was a Christian lady in every way and it was a pleasure and honor to know her and the family. It won't be the same now but we all look forward to a grand reunion day when we can all be together again. God bless Steryl and the family. —Don L. King

Announcement

I am happy to announce that we have published the first volume of **Words of Love - Radio Sermons by J. Wayne McKamie**. This volume contains 43 sermons across numerous Bible subjects. The Words of Love radio program has been aired on a Lubbock, TX radio station for some 41 years. If it is the Lord's will, we plan to publish additional volumes.

We are offering Brother Wayne's book in three forms: hardback book, paperback book, and an eBook that can be read on electronic devices.

The hardback book is \$16 + \$4 shipping and the paperback book is \$8 + \$3 shipping. Print book prices include all sales and use taxes. To order one or more copies of the print books, contact me by email at parables@sbcglobal.net, by phone at 817-598-0463, or by mail at P.O. Box 2634, Weatherford, TX 76086.

We continue to offer The Parables of Jesus book of sermons by J. Wayne McKamie in English and in Spanish as Las parábolas de Jesús. The hardback book is \$15 + \$4 shipping and the paperback book is \$7 + \$3 shipping for either of these books. Print book prices include all sales and use taxes.

For eBook orders of any of the three books, the cost is \$2.99. They are available on www.lulu.com, www.ibookstore.com, Amazon Kindle, Barnes & Noble Nook, and Kobo. Go to one of the websites to place your order and download your eBook. Las parábolas de Jesús eBook is only available on www.lulu.com.

In Him, Gary Robinson

Field Reports

Johnny Elmore - 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, johnnyelmore@gmail.com. It has been my good pleasure to speak this year at Galey, Ada, and Sentinel, in Oklahoma, at Springfield, and Columbia, in Missouri, at Crestview (Wichita Falls), Texas, and LaGrange, in Georgia. I enjoyed being at Mission Hills, in Springfield, MO April 10-17, at Harrisonville, Mo June 1-5, at Kennewick, Washington, September 28-October 2. It has been very good for me to get to visit with preachers I have worked with in the past. It was a special joy to attend the great 4th of July meeting at Springfield, and the fine Labor Day meeting at Grapevine, TX, which is supported by the Fossil Creek congregation in Ft. Worth, TX. I appreciated very much the hospitality and care extended by Michael Bolton in Kennewick. He is working hard in an isolated area to build up the church. Michael has done good work in several foreign mission efforts, but plans to stay closer for a while. He brings a unique value in his preaching, coming to the truth from a denominational background. Get acquainted with him if you have the opportunity. He will do you good. I am looking forward to being at Houston, Mo November 2-6. It was here that my wife and I did some of our first work together over sixty years ago. Attend the meeting if you can. I still have something to say and not much time left in which to say it.

Don L. King - 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old_paths@juno.com, October 11- Our meeting with Doug Hawkins closed with no visible results but we are certain good was done. The brethren advertised extensively, as always, and we did appreciate help from surrounding congregations. Doug did a fine job preaching the Word with power and simplicity, and we enjoyed having him with us. We pray God's blessings on all those who preach the truth. We look forward to being with Rick Martin during his meeting at Turlock soon and being with all the brethren there. The church at home is doing well and we are now making plans for Bro Frank Brancato and myself to make the trip to the Philippines in January. This will be the 36th trip for me and I look forward to working with Frank again and seeing the brethren there. We ask your prayers for the work everywhere.

Michael Bolton - mwbolton2001, I must say I am beginning to feel like an area evangelist. As you will soon see I am privileged to spend lots of time on the road. I am thankful for the opportunities afforded me to work in the Kingdom. I pray the Lord is pleased with my labors.

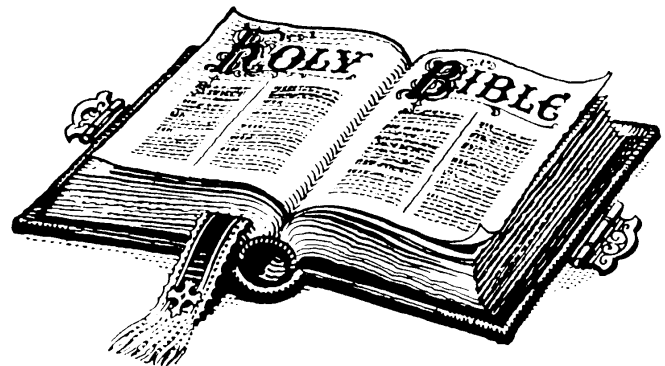
I determined about two months ago to put foreign work on hold for two years at least. I perceived the work here as needing attention and the works in foreign fields seemed to be in good hands. I am thankful for the honor of being entrusted with work so far away from home. I am thankful to know the brethren in Bangladesh, Myanmar, Cambodia and Australia, where my influence has played a small role are being faithful. This is not accomplished without strong local leadership, and the help of other brethren. I have been a part of a team, not a solo worker. I believe this is the Lord's pattern in the scriptures.

In September we held our annual Fall meeting. We were honored to have Brother Johnny Elmore in our home. It was a privilege to get to know him, and to hear him preach in a local setting for several days. We had several brethren from area congregations attend, and we were privileged to have 10 visitors from the community. About half of those ten are folks who are not associated with the Lord's church.

We went to Pacific, Wa and studied the 7th chapter of Revelation and brother Sky (Gail) Stevens and I went to a couple's home and had our second bible study with them. The church in Pacific has for a number of years been home for a growing number of Spanish brethren. These brethren have made the decision to begin their own congregation. They are planning to begin meeting on the first Sunday in November. I have been honored to work a little with these men and am looking forward to the coming days.

We only ask for a continued interest in your prayers. We are looking forward to the preachers study this month in North Plains, and then to hosting the 63rd Annual Thanksgiving Day meeting.

In His Service, Michael Bolton



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THE BACK PAGE...

THE HANCOCK FAMILY LEGACY

By CARL M. JOHNSON

Two years ago in October, Phyllis and I were walking the historic "Freedom Trail," that runs through downtown Boston when we came to Granary Burial Ground, one of the oldest cemeteries in the country. Several of the signers of the Declaration of Independence are buried there, including Samuel Adams, Paul Revere, and John Hancock.

John Hancock's grave marker is the largest and most elaborate individual marker in the cemetery, which seems fitting since his signature is the largest and most flamboyant of all 56 signatures on the Declaration of Independence.

Hancock was an American merchant, smuggler, statesman, and prominent patriot of the American Revolution. He served as president of the Second Continental Congress and was the first and third Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

He is best remembered, however, for his large and stylish signature of the Declaration of Independence. As president of congress he was the first to sign the document and tradition says he signed in such a way that England's "King George could read it without his spectacles."

Hancock's signature has become so iconic in our country that "John Hancock" has become an informal synonym for one's signature. It is common to hear someone say, "Now, if I can just get you to put your John Hancock on the dotted line we shall be finished with the formalities."

While this is an interesting legacy left by one of our country's founders, John Hancock's brother Benjamin leaves us a more significant legacy.

Benjamin had a grandson by the name of G.B. Hancock, who became a member of the Lord's church, a preacher of the gospel, a public debater, and an author.

G.B. grew up in the hills of Kentucky, lost his parents at an early age, lived with one relative after another for several years, and endured many hardships, including abusive guardians and a life-threatening case of typhoid fever.

He was determined to get an education, went to school and became proficient in a number of subjects, and actually became a school teacher himself by the time he was in his late teenage years.

His first teaching job was near Albany, Kentucky. The people in that remote area had never seen a blackboard and were resistant to modern teaching methods so G.B. moved on.

He left Kentucky with the intention of going to California. He arrived in Missouri, decided to spend the winter there, and got a job teaching school in Unionville. The town had never had a public school before because every time they tried to begin one a few bullies would stop it by running off the teacher. On the first day of school 125 pupils showed up for class. G.B. quickly spotted the trouble-makers—boys about 17 years old. He also learned they were armed, so he picked out a nice-sized stick from a brush pile to defend himself. When the main troublemaker threatened G.B. and made a move for a potential weapon inside his shirt, G.B. took hold of his stick with both hands and struck the bully with all the power he could summon. The stunned bully gathered his books and left school at noon. The ringleader was gone, but the spirit of insubordination remained. G.B. said that if he could get by with whipping fewer than 25 students on any day, he figured that was a remarkably quiet day.

One of his next stops in Missouri was in Macon County, where he met and married his wife, Mary Minerva Burris. He later moved to Barry County, where he spent most of the rest of his life. He is buried in Mars Hill Cemetery near Crane, Missouri.

Hancock was initially a member of the Baptist church, but became disillusioned with its teaching because it did not harmonize with what he learned from reading the New Testament. Eventually, he heard the gospel preached, became acquainted with the writings of Alexander Campbell, and took his stand with the Lord's church.

He spent the rest of his life preaching, baptizing, establishing congregations in southern Missouri and northern Arkansas, and debating the opposition. His best-known work is a book entitled **Mormonism Exposed**. The book is an account of a debate Hancock had in 1900 in Fayette City, Pennsylvania, with leaders of the Mormon Church. The proposition was: "Joseph Smith is an impostor, and the Book of Mormon is a fraud." The book is a classic and is still in print today.

While John Hancock's brother Benjamin does not have his name in the Declaration of Independence, many of Benjamin's direct descendants, including G.B. Hancock, have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life. That legacy, my friends, is far more significant than John's (Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 11:8; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27). (Info on G.B. Hancock's life is taken from his own handwritten notes that were copied and published in 1958 in a book entitled **My Life is an Open Book**, by granddaughter Imogene Hancock May of Galena, Missouri.)cmjthebackpage@gmail.com