

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. 10

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY – PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE

By GREG GAY

When God created Eve, the crown jewel of all creation, and presented her to Adam, it appears their introduction was also their wedding ceremony.

Eve had no time for preparation for the ceremony because she did not exist until just before the wedding. Adam’s only preparation seems to be the loneliness that God knew would be apparent after Adam had named all the animals without finding a suitable companion for him. God put Adam into anesthetized-like sleep, performed miraculous surgery and healing, and used the material He removed from Adam to create Eve.

The Bible says of Eve’s creation and the wedding ceremony: “ And the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Genesis 2:18-25 NKJV).

When the scriptures reveal “He brought her to the man,” we know this was their introduction and their wedding because the result of that meeting is they were called, “the man and his wife.”

We are not told how they learned how to live together.

They had no prior examples to follow since they were the first humans. God may have miraculously given them the knowledge they needed, or that may have been one of the subjects they discussed in their conversations with God (Genesis 3:8).

Today, many happy couples get so caught up in the process of preparing for their wedding ceremony they forget to prepare for life together as husband and wife. They go through the ceremony with much pomp and circumstance, sometimes having spent many thousands of dollars, but with scant thought or preparation for the roles they are about to occupy, as if that part may just happen miraculously. Unfortunately, careful meticulous planning, and the ultimate beauty of a wedding cannot guarantee a strong Christian home will emerge from the ceremony to thrive “as long as they both shall live.”

The spiritual excellence of a home after the wedding can be greatly enhanced by personal preparation for marriage with vision that looks far beyond the wedding ceremony. This is something all prospective spouses should consider and all Christians should encourage of those who are contemplating marriage.

In a 2003 study, Carroll and Doherty summarize their research on premarital counseling with an amazing statistic. Quoting from their online abstract: “...the average participant in a premarital program tends to experience about a 30% increase in measures of outcome success. Our findings suggest that premarital prevention programs are generally effective in producing immediate and shortterm gains in interpersonal skills and overall relationship quality and that these improvements are significantly better than nonintervention couples in these areas.” (Carroll, J. S. and Doherty, W. J. (2003), Evaluating the Effectiveness of Premarital Prevention Programs: A Meta-Analytic Review of Outcome Research. *Family Relations*, 52: 105-118). While they caution that long-term effectiveness was yet unmeasured, nevertheless their research indicates premarital preparation, even from a worldly perspective, increases the odds of relationship success.

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Editorial

A MEMORABLE JOURNEY

By DON L. KING

Normally, we don't hear preachers say much about their travels, even if they are difficult. In the years since 1981, when I made the first trip to the Philippines, we have experienced some wonderful things and times. The people of the Philippines are generally kind, hospitable and considerate, and we have enjoyed their kindness for many years. However, there was one trip Jerry Cutter and I made that was very difficult. I want to relate that to you.

It was 1982 when we made this trip, and it was the most arduous and difficult of my life. For some reason that I no longer recall, we needed to go to Baguio City, a mountainous place of about 5,000 feet elevation. At that early time, there was no congregation in Baguio, so I suspect we wanted to go there to rest and get our laundry done. We had planned to go on to Malaysia and work with the church there, and as I recall the normal way we would have gone was impassable due to recent storms. Bro Danao said we could go by Northern Luzon through Apparri where he had gone to college and eventually get to Baguio that way.

We left Roxas very early one morning in the rain in our small rented Japanese car and made our way north. At that time, the roads were mostly dirt which means that in the rain they were muddy. All day we drove slowly at no more than 25 miles an hour and much of the time the roads were only ruts. The car would stay in the ruts by itself because they were very deep. We had only a couple of candy bars for food praying the city of Apparri would have some American style food. Brother Danao believed it would. At long last, after about 14 hours of driving in the mud and constant rain, we entered the city of Apparri. My hopes sank because it was obvious we would not find food such as we were wishing for there.

We finally decided to spend the night in an ancient wooden hotel of several stories. They had a room on about the 4th story for Jerry and I but nothing for Bro Danao. They finally made arrangements in the basement for Bro Danao. We managed to clean up by turning the shower on with a pair of vice grips which the front desk gave us for that purpose. We noticed a sign at the desk that we must turn in our guns with them until morning. Fortunately, we had none so that was fine. However, we still had not eaten all day except for the candy bars, and we had nothing to drink since no one had bottled water to sell. I had brought some water purification

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QUERIST COLUMN

By *RONNY F. WADE*

Question: Would it be permissible to refill the cup, while it is being passed, so that you don't run out of grape juice before the entire congregation is served?

Answer: There are a number of problems associated with such a practice. First of all there would be no joint participation (communion) between all assembled since some would partake of the first cup filled with grape juice and others would partake of the refilled cup. One could as easily ask would it be scriptural to have a second loaf available if the first loaf were totally consumed? Could we then start the second loaf and those who missed the first loaf partake of this one? Would that be scriptural communion? In essence if the cup is refilled during the communion service, you have used two cups. One might ask why not just start out with two cups to begin with? The answer is simple: that is not what Christ ordered, nor what the apostle Paul demanded 1 Corinthians 11:20-29. The current craze on the part of some to build mega churches leads to all kinds of unscriptural practices. Many seem to forget that there is ample scripture to justify a plurality of congregations but none to justify the use of more than one loaf and cup in the observance of the communion. The notion that refilling the cup is scriptural, while starting out with multiple cups to begin with is unscriptural, indicates a delusionary outlook. Those groups wishing to speed up the process have been greatly helped by the company that now produces small individual cups with a piece of bread on top of the juice so that the communicant can dispense with both the fruit of the vine and loaf at the same time. It is amazing what the human mind can produce when it is unaided by the revealed will of God. While it is possible to refill the cup one or more times during the course of the communion, in the view of this writer, it is not scripturally permissible.

Question: Please explain the meaning of Matthew 16:19 where Jesus said "whatsoever you shall bound on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Answer: We should first of all point out that what is promised here was not for Peter only, but was applicable to all the apostles. Those who claim that this passage invests in Peter papal power or authority are wrong. Peter was not the first pope. Kyle Pope correctly points out that "this binding and loosing is not something that happens at the time the apostles (or others) implement a

principle. Rather, they are to implement that which had already been decreed or bound in heaven" These men merely delivered the message that originated in heaven. Deciding or determining what was lawful was not their job. Neither is it ours today. We like them must answer to the dictates that come from heaven. While Peter occupied a very prominent role as an apostle he did not enjoy or fulfill the preeminence awarded him by the Roman Catholic Church. He was not the first Pope and he alone did not make law. He along with other inspired men merely delivered the sacred oracles to fallen man. It should also be noted that there were no successors to Peter. Peter realized that he would eventually decrease (1 Peter 1:13-15) and that those remaining would need to rely on what had been given by the Holy Spirit. He did not promise or imply that he would be followed by a successor who would take his place in revealing the word of God. Unfortunately today there are many who assume a prerogative of adding to divine revelation. Everything they add is nothing more than man-made opinion, and should be regarded as such.

History of The Querist Column

The Querist Column first appeared in the July 1987 edition of the Old Paths Advocate, and has continued each month for the past thirty plus years. It has been my privilege to write the column each month. I have tried, to the best of my ability, to write what I personally believe to be the truth about each question asked. Beginning with the November issue of 2017 brother Clint DeFrance will be writing the column. Clint is a young man of outstanding ability and dedication to divine revelation. Send all questions to him at 2121 South Columbia Ave. Suite LL2 Tulsa, OK 74114 or Cdefrance87@yahoo.com

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**“FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS”
CO-STARRING MORDECAI**

By RICK MARTIN

The story of Esther usually focuses on the Judean beauty that became queen and ultimately saved her people from destruction, but there was a “co-star” in the Biblical narrative. During the Babylonian captivity of Judah, a champion rose to courageously defend God’s people. Mordecai was an intelligent man with a heart of gold. He was a true servant-leader and he loved God and His people more than he loved his own life.

In the story, we see that Esther was taken with other fair young virgins to the king’s palace to replace Queen Vashti. It likely came as no surprise to Mordecai when Esther was selected to become queen. He knew that God was present and moving in the situation for a divine purpose, so he wisely advised Esther to keep quiet about her Jewish origins.

Mordecai held an office in the king’s court. After Esther was chosen as queen, he exposed a plot to assassinate the king. The conspirators were hanged and Queen Esther saw to it that Mordecai’s actions were recorded in the king’s history book, although no reward was immediately offered.

A man named Haman had been appointed to the highest position in the kingdom, but Mordecai refused to bow to him. Haman became so infuriated that he devised a plan to destroy not only Mordecai, but all the Jews in the empire. Not knowing of Esther’s Jewish origins, the king gave Haman the authority to carry out his plan.

When Mordecai learned of this plan, he sat himself before the king’s gate, wore sackcloth and ashes, and wailed loudly. His behavior caught Esther’s attention and through a messenger, she was notified of Haman’s plot. Mordecai and Esther agreed that she should take the opportunity to reveal the plot to the king.

One night, the king could not sleep and he asked for the history books to be read. As they are reading, they discovered Mordecai’s exposure of the assassination attempt, and they discover that he had never been honored. The next morning the king asked Haman, “What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?” Haman thinks the king wants to honor him, so he pompously suggests that such a man should be given a robe of the king, have a royal crest placed on his head and be paraded through the city on one of the king’s horses, escorted by one of the king’s top men, proclaiming, “Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!” The king responds, “That’s a great idea Haman, now I want you to do that for this

fellow Mordecai”. Haman obeyed, but went home humiliated.

That night, at the banquet that Queen Esther had arranged, the king asked Esther what her special request was. Esther must have been very special, because the king offered up to half of his kingdom. Esther then revealed the wicked plan to exterminate her people and exposed Haman as the perpetrator.

Haman was hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordecai. Esther revealed to the king, Mordecai’s relationship to her and the king promoted him to Haman’s position, giving him all of Haman’s property. Mordecai was a man of commitment and courage, who walked with wisdom and sensitivity to God. Mordecai stood up to his adversary, risking his own life for the lives of his people, and earned a name and a reputation worthy of respect among God’s people for all time.

In his co-starring role, we see Mordecai’s kindness. He has brought up Esther, his orphaned cousin, as his own daughter. Their relationship is a loving one, because when she is taken to be presented to the king, Mordecai daily comes as close as he is allowed, to learn of her welfare.

We also see that Mordecai’s role included faithfulness. In Esther 2:21-23 we see Mordecai’s faithfulness with respect to the king. Never mind that the king was a Persian monarch. Never mind his immoral character. Mordecai recognized he was the king whom God had placed on the throne. Perhaps that is a lesson many of us need to learn, from what I see and hear of how many speak of our own ruling authorities. Rom 13:1 “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” I Tim 2:1-2 “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”

In his co-starring role Mordecai exhibited sympathy. The threatened destruction of the Jewish people throughout the Persian Empire was a direct consequence of Mordecai’s acting in accord with the mind of God in refusing to bow to Haman. Mordecai’s faithfulness to God brought Haman’s hatred upon him. When the decree to exterminate the Jews was sent out, it brought great distress to them. We see Mordecai with clothes torn, in sackcloth and ashes, weeping bitterly, sharing their distress. In these extremely unfavorable circumstances, Mordecai encouraged and counseled Esther to do that which ultimately brought deliverance to the Jews. He fasted for Esther, and probably also prayed.

Mordecai’s role brought him great honor and power.

Mordecai was made chief minister and entrusted with the king's signet ring. He was then able to effectively overcome the decree Haman had issued against the Jews, turning it against their enemies instead. The last chapter of Esther shows us Mordecai's greatness after the excitement was past. We see he is given a position of greatness by the king. He rules wisely and well, "seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to his countrymen." He is not only honored by the king, but is "great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed." (Est. 10:3).

Conclusion:

Long ago Mordecai spoke those immortal words to Esther; "and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this"? Those words could have very well been spoken about Mordecai himself. Today, you have an opportunity to become a star in God's kingdom. Why not take advantage of this significant role that you can play? Remarkable things may be in store. You won't receive an Oscar or an Emmy, but you will receive a crown in glory. "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

IF I AM LOST—WHO IS TO BLAME?

By Barney Owens

"All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God." (II Cor. 5:18-20).

Taking responsibility is seemingly very difficult for many people, in fact, some will go to considerably more trouble to avoid responsibility than it would be to accept it and go on from there. However, to blame someone or some thing apparently in their mind allows them to experience satisfaction with themselves, This (may I term it,) "blame game" often ebbs into religious practices. Of all places one would think that a Christian would accept personal responsibility for some malady or shortcoming, but alas, that is not the case. This lays the foundation of this piece, in the most important area of one's life, if lost who is to blame?

IF I AM LOST I CANNOT BLAME GOD

Some have reasoned that the very existence of sin is God's fault. If sin were banished from the world then

the possibility of error would be extinct. Has it ever occurred to such people that this would do away with choice making us robots rather than free men? Presently we have the choice of doing God's will or rejecting it. God does not make us serve Him, but gives to us a choice and allows us to reason on the consequence of obeying or walking the way of transgression. The lesson is one of most ancient history. God placed the first man and his mate in the Garden of Eden with a choice before them. Every tree in the garden they were permitted to eat of, but, there was a single tree that they were forbidden to partake. If they should eat of it the consequence—death would follow. Once Adam had eaten the forbidden fruit, he attempted to blame God. Said he, "the woman whom THOU gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." (Gen. 3:12). And more than that God has provided a way of salvation, which liquidates sin giving us hope. That means we do not have to be lost. Our text says, "all things are of God," referring to the scheme of redemption (creating us anew). God without any outside counselor aid devised a plan by which human beings can become "new creatures." Notice the previous verse, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (Vs. 17). Therefore, a man may choose the spiritual realm to which he belongs. He may dwell in the realm of the WORLD or he may enter the BODY OF CHRIST. God declares that entering the body of Christ means that all things are new, have started over, the slate is clean, he is now acceptable to God. If I decide that I will not become a "new creature" (a figure borrowed from Jesus expression to Nicodemus Jn. 3:3), then I cannot blame God. The choice is mine—I can (I must), make it. When I do the consequences are on my head and I cannot blame God. Since you can make the choice why not make it today and avoid being eternally lost? A verse that everyone is acquainted assures us as well as any that the blame for being lost cannot be laid at the feet of God by any human being. Jesus stated it in the plainest manner, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (Jn. 3:16).

IF I AM LOST CAN I BLAME CHRIST?

"God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ ... God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," so states our text. We immediately know that God's plan for saving the human race called for Jesus Christ as the go between from God to man and for man back to God. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. "(I Tim. 2:5). Jesus is spoken of as "the man" in the passage because it is not His Deity that brings people back to God but his humanity. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." (Heb. 10:5).

That is why Jesus could say, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save.” (Lk. 19:10). Jesus came to earth to offer Himself in sacrifice. There was not and is no salvation apart from His sacrificial death JESUS CAME TO DIE. Sin demands a penalty or something to satisfy the debt. The debt for sin is death; “the wages of sin is death.” Jesus’ death is the satisfaction. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation (that which satisfied God), for our sins: and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” (I Jn. 2:1-2). Peter in an earlier sermon proclaimed, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12). Men have sought and do seek salvation through various means. Some rely on a supposed god, their good works, morality, education, and philosophy. And on and on goes the list, but the search for salvation is a vain one unless it centers in Christ Jesus the Lord. One thing for sure the means of salvation has been provided by God through Jesus, “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:6-8). Therefore, if I am lost how can I blame Jesus Christ. He did for me what I could not do for myself.

IF I AM LOST I CANNOT BLAME THE APOSTLES
 “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead.” Ambassador is defined as “an accredited diplomatic agent of the highest rank, appointed as the representative of one government to another. A personal representative or messenger.” Such an office or work was appointed the Apostles by Christ. They were commissioned to take the Gospel to the lost. “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Then we are told, “So after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.” (Mk. 16:15, 16, 19, 20). Reading the Acts of the Apostles we see that they carried this out in their lifetime as well as recording it in writing allowing it to be of use to men for all time. The Apostolic writer commented on this showing us that there is no blame to be laid upon the Apostles. “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witnesses, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will? (Heb.

2:3-4). The Apostles did their work and did it well often suffering greatly even to dying as faithful envoys carrying out their appointment. If I am lost I cannot blame the Apostles.

IF I AM LOST I CANNOT BLAME THE WORD OF GOD

Speaking of the connecting link for man to obtain salvation the Apostle says of himself and his brother Apostles that God “hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation,” (Vs. 19). Men can talk about Jesus speaking to their heart, about the Holy Spirit moving upon them and any other thing that meets their fancy or fantasy, but inspiration speaks of God using His Word (preached or written), to effect conversion by drawing men back to Him. The word of God (Gospel), “is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” (Rom. 1:16). God’s power to save men is not in vain-it accomplishes the purpose He had (has), in mind, and the power He exerts is the word of truth to save any and all men. James spoke of it to the twelve tribes as “the engrafted word which is able to save your souls.” (Js. 1:21). Later he referred to it as “the perfect law of liberty” assuring them that the man doing it would “be blessed in his deed.” (Vs. 25). Is there a man that desires knowledge of salvation? Does one wish the foul deeds he has done to be pointed out? Can a man who needs to know how to correct his life learn how this is to be done? Once that point is reached what is one then to do? Hear the word of truth, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (II Tim. 3:16-17). These things being said if I am lost I cannot blame the word of God.

IF I AM LOST I HAVE ONLY MYSELF TO BLAME
 The Ambassadors for Christ, beseech and beg us “in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” There is something that each individual must do to obtain salvation. Redemption then has a personal responsibility that all of us must accept. There is something I must comply with, obey or do to save my own soul. As before stated God and Christ have done for us what we could not do for ourselves, but we are expected to do what we are able. The critics that deny there is something to do openly acknowledge, no more, they preach that we must believe. Well, Jesus in response to the question, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” “Replied in a way that none could misunderstand, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” (Jn. 6:28-29). One can shout from now until the Lord comes that “believing is not a work.” But, the fact is it is a work—something a man must do. Listening to the first Gospel sermon the people understood they were incomplete although they believed that “God had made that same Jesus, whom they crucified both Lord

and Christ,” asked “what shall we do?” Think now, what were they to do? Inspiration says, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” (Acts 2:38). Would they have had their sins remitted if they refused to do what they were told? I think NOT. On his way to Damascus Saul of Tarsus realized he had been travelling the wrong road by persecuting the church of Christ, “And he trembling and astonished said, Lord what wilt thou have me to do? (Acts 9:6). The instructions were immediately given, “Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.” Question, what was he told to do? “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16). If Saul had refused to be baptized or do what he was told would his sins have been washed away? Were his sins washed away before he was baptized or before he did what he was told to do? Methinks that would NOT have been the case. There is a vast difference in doing a work we have devised and depend upon for our salvation and doing, obeying or complying with a commandment of God. There were those in the days of revelation that devised a scheme of salvation causing them to refuse to submit to God’s plan to their own detriment. “For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” (Rom. 9:2-3). The righteousness of God has been revealed in the Gospel of Christ (See Rom. 1:16-17). An ignorance like the people spoken of is displayed by many a preacher today when they speak about the works of James in the second chapter of his writing. These works are the things commanded by God. If we fail to comply that is a demonstration that our faith is vain or useless. We can believe but failing to do will damn our soul eternally. On the other hand (and preachers generally are correct) in saying that we are not saved by our own works, but by the grace of God (Eph. 2:8-9). However, being saved by grace does not cancel out our part in our own salvation, as there are things each and everyone of us must do. If I am lost I am to blame. Allow me to add we cannot blame our parents, children, husband/wife, friends, environment, circumstance with which we must deal, or our brethren and sisters in Christ, nor some malady in the church. Look in the mirror and you can see without a doubt the one responsible for you not being saved. Forget the “blame game” and face up to your responsibility. If I am lost there is none to blame but me.

CHRISTIAN FAMILY continued from page one

The scriptures encourage us to prepare diligently for marriage because of the importance of the spiritual image it portrays. Paul was inspired to write that the

husband and wife relationship is compared to the relationship that exists between Christ and the church. What a beautiful picture is presented:

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband” (Ephesians 5:25-33 NKJV).

Christ and his relationship with the church was not an accident that happened on the spur-of-the-moment. The church was planned in all her glory, and in every detail, since the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). When the time was right, every detail was then shared, explained, and fulfilled, totally in keeping with God’s will.

The beginning of the church at Pentecost was a wonderful day that established new relationships, just like a wedding, when several thousand hearers of Peter’s sermon repented and were baptized to be saved and added to the Church of Christ (Acts 2:38, 47).

We do know that Peter taught “many other words” (Acts 2:40) on that same day, but the great beginning on Pentecost was followed by all those who were faithful continuing “steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42 NKJV). Every day, their ardent desire was to be appropriate in their role as members of that glorious church! At first, they even met daily in the temple to learn God’s will for their lives in their new relationship as Christians (Acts 2:46).

Similarly, after their wedding, a happy Christian couple is to continue steadfastly in acceptance of and submission to their assigned roles in their home for the glory of God (Ephesians 5:21). Each will give special attention to their commanded duties to exemplify love and respect (Ephesians 5:33), thus showing all who are influenced by their marriage the beauty of the relationship between Christ and the church by their lives.

Preparation for marriage can include learning as much

as possible prior to being married in order to please God in the new role of husband or wife. For example, the “nourishing and cherishing” of self and the concept of receiving and giving the commanded “love and respect” that is referred to in Ephesians 5 does not begin at the wedding, but is intended to be a part of maturing in Christ prior to marriage.

Preparation for marriage for Christians should not mean living together in an immoral relationship, as is practiced by so many in our culture. Rather, God’s people will seriously study to understand the responsibilities of a life-long commitment. Jesus quoted what was first stated by Adam in the Garden in Genesis 2:24, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:4-6 NKJV).

Preparation for marriage can also be considered important to Christians because voluntary submission to assigned roles is essential in the church and at home, but is not an easy lesson to learn (Ephesians 5:21). A man is to voluntarily lead in the relationship and his wife is to voluntarily let him (Ephesians 5:22-24). While it is likely that the wife has the more difficult task here, both must be willing to do their part.

While we appreciate every family who influenced us as we were growing up, their marriages may not always be good models to follow. Premarital contemplation can remind us to love them, but not follow them in perpetuating any relationship errors. Obviously, not every marriage is as God intends in every way, even in the church. If we are to break those cycles of inappropriate role behavior, we will have to have a different strategy in our lives.

Premarital preparation is also helpful as an encouragement for morality, for the good of the church, for the economic welfare of the home, and for the anticipation of children in the home. We do not want our marriage choices, whether in who we marry, or in how we conduct ourselves, to be a “grief of mind” to anyone (Genesis 26:35), especially to God.

There are many resources for learning about our roles in marriage. Starting with the Bible, there are many scriptures about husband and wife relationships with accounts of both good examples, as in the Virtuous woman and her family in Proverbs 31, and bad, as in Ahab and Jezebel in 1 Kings 16:31. Additionally, any scripture about how one Christian is to treat another is also applicable to each in the Christian home.

Many marriage preparation materials can be found online or in religious bookstores. Of course, none of these are inspired and must be used carefully to make sure their suggestions are supported by scriptures. One study help I have used with many couples through the years is a workbook, *Before You Say I Do*, by H. Norman Wright & Wes Roberts. The latest version was updated in 2015. Any couple contemplating marriage can benefit greatly just recording their answers separately and reviewing them together privately, or with the help of a trusted facilitator. 5109 Chicago Ave., Fair Oaks, CA 95628, papagreg@aol.com, 916-804-3787.

A MEMORABLE continued from page two

tablets from California issued by the US military so we decided to use them. The room had a metal thermos type container already filled with local water which was not potable for us. The instructions said to place a certain number of tablets in the water and cover it for 8 hours. In the morning, a green scum was sitting on the water which we skimmed off and then drank the water. It had a strange taste but did not harm us. We decided to head for Baguio which was a few hundred miles to the South and in the mountains. We knew there was American food available there.

The rain was continuing to pour down. We left before daylight and continued all day long. We probably were able to buy more candy bars along the way but nothing else that I recall. The roads were still just muddy trails and gas stations had to have the pumps cranked by hand because there was no electricity yet in that area. In those times I normally did all the driving and continued until long after dark when I finally reached the end of my endurance. I asked Jerry to take over and I collapsed in the right seat and went to sleep. About midnight we finally reached Baguio and eventually located an old hotel called the Mount Crest which is still in operation today. The restaurant was long closed so we had to go to bed hungry again and hope for better fare in the morning.

The room was actually pretty nice with a tile shower and clean beds. As soon as the restaurant opened, we went in and ordered breakfast. If I live to a hundred, I doubt if I will ever again enjoy a breakfast like that one. Ham and eggs with toast and jelly! Clean and hot, tastefully prepared and all the good coffee a fellow wished. The shower had plenty of hot water and we felt as though we were in the finest of places. We had not had hot water for about two weeks and it is amazing how much we enjoyed those luxuries. What a wonderful experience!

After a couple of days rest and washing our clothes in the bathtub, we made our way back to Manila and departed for Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia where we held a

short meeting and some profitable studies with the two congregations existing there at that time. The next year, Bennie Cryer and I made a return trip to Malaysia and were able to convert a digressive brother who was a great asset to the work.

We have made the same trips since then but the roads are paved now, clean and modern gas stations exist, and comfortable hotels as well. Plenty of bottled water and clean food are available now in several modern places along the way. On more than one occasion, Jerry Cutter and I have spoken of that two day trip and both of us agree that it was the most brutal trip either of us have ever taken.

The work is still growing, and the churches have long surpassed my ability to know their exact number. This year, Lord willing, Frank Brancato and I will make another trip along with my Grandson to the Philippines. It will be, I believe, trip number 37 for me. One every year since the beginning of the work. May God bless that wonderful work. Think on these things. DLK

PAGES FROM THE PAST

The following article by Brother L.N. Byford is from the January 1936 issue of the Old Paths Advocate. In this article Brother Byford informs us what we miss if we fail to attend the assembly. Certainly, this article is timely today. People failed to attend the assembly for a variety of reasons, thinking that they have a perfectly good excuse. Assembling with the saints is of utmost importance. Hebrews 10:25 "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." -Rick Martin

[NOTE: The Byford family were family friends of the Kings for as long as I can recall. Sister Byford was a sister of Edwin S. Morris. They visited our family many times and we stayed in their home in Texas many times as well. Great people. DLK]

What He Missed By L.N. Byford

There is a lesson that it seems to me is badly needed by most church members. Everywhere I go I hear statements from brethren that causes me to believe the lesson is needed generally over the country. Last summer a brother was absent from the worship, and the next service a brother asked him why he was absent. He said, "well I stayed at home to rest." When told what a good lesson he missed he said, "well, I heard that last year, so I did not miss anything." The brother seemed to have the idea that the meeting was solely to entertain church members. But let us see what he missed. (1) He

missed a lesson from the word of the Lord that he must live by, die by and be judged by. He should have heard the lesson many times before for the bible is almost two thousand years old. It is like drinking from a cold spring -each time we drink of the same fountain we are refreshed, and in a little while we long for more. (2) He missed the association of the Christians. By being together often we learn to love each other more. (3) He missed the song service, in which he could have had some part. (4) He missed an opportunity of saying some word of encouragement to some weak brother, or a word of warning to some poor sinner. By being present at each service he can show to the world that he believes there is a reality in the gospel. When he goes each day to his work, in the same building, working with the same ones; he misses a day, he does not say that he did not miss anything. He knows that he misses his wages, but Christians are, or should be, working for a crown. The hired Pastor is the entertainer. He is paid by the month to do the work the Lord told the elders to do and to entertain the congregation. He must have something new and different each time. The evangelist is to preach the gospel, and not to entertain folks. Each member of the church has a duty to perform and no one else can perform it for him. So, let us begin now to sow the seed of the Kingdom and contribute of our means, with which the Lord has blessed us, and we will be ready for the meeting, when the time comes. Thus our lights will be shining, and it will not take a week of the meeting to get the church warmed up. -L.N. Byford

Announcement

OPPOSED TO CARNAL WAR - May it be known to all that the brother in Christ named in this announcement is publicly stating his opposition to carnal warfare or military service due to his being a conscientious objector. Signed Sam T. Coale, 648 Cassie Rd., Kinston, AL 36453

Our Departed

JACKSON - Carlton "Jack" Jackson, passed away July 26, 2017 at the age of 86 years. Jack had been a member of the Lord's church since March of 1962. As it happened, he was the last person my father (Homer L. King) baptized before his stroke in March of 62. Jack used to quip that he supposed he was too much for Brother King. Jack is survived by his loving wife, Jean Jackson, to whom he was married for 55 years. He was preceded in death by a son, William Jackson. Jack and I became acquainted when he and Jean began dating. Jean is my wife's Aunt and they married about a month after Pat and myself. We have been close friends and family ever since. Jack was a very good man and possessed a tender heart. He loved the church, his wife, his family and brethren very much. He also loved to hear good preaching and singing. When Pat and I moved to the

Bay Area in 1971 Jack and Jean were part of the small church in Fremont and were always faithful to attend. Jack would lead singing, wait on the table, lead prayer, and could teach though he did not like to do so. When Jack's health began failing Jean was without fault in caring for him. She stayed by his side through thick and thin. Her home was always clean, attractive and a comfortable place to visit. Jack stayed at home until it was no longer possible and did not like to be away from home. At the time of his passing, Jean and the family were near, and tried to make him comfortable. We will miss him terribly but we thank God we can look forward to a grand reunion day with him and all the redeemed on a brighter shore. It was my honor to be asked to speak words of comfort and hope at his funeral. -Don L. King

Field Reports

Greg Gay - 5109 Chicago Ave., Fair Oaks, CA 95628, 916-804-3787, papagreg@aol.com, August 8, 2017. We were close to home for the Fair Oaks congregation's annual Western Study July 26-29. Alan Bonifay and I were asked to help them organize this study in its beginning many years ago and I was honored to be the speaker this year. The brethren allowed me to revive having a question and answer session after the Friday and Saturday night topics which was well received. Friday's topic was The Mark of the Beast and Saturday's was Mark and Avoid. While the first topic is a great mystery, the second is much more easily understood, but mostly ignored. There are still those around the brotherhood who are attempting to deceive the faithful to be part of the tentacles of the beast of error that has plagued us in the last decade or so. It was good to see all who came to the study from up and down the state. We enjoyed hearing Brad Shockley from Missouri in a recent meeting at Stockton, CA. Our work continues at 64th St. in Sacramento, for which we are thankful.

Don L. King - 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old_paths@juno.com, September 14 - I have had some speech problems again but they seem to have improved somewhat. My broken arm is doing very well and I am able to use it about 90% I would say. As Brother Homer A. Gay used to say, "we are faint but pursuing." Getting older is a bit like trying to keep an old car running. It seems there is always something that needs fixing. Someone remarked the other day, "These golden years are not very golden." We are looking forward to our meeting with Ronny Wade next month. We have enjoyed hearing some others preach lately and that is always a pleasure. Just today we finalized the plans for the 2018 trip to the Philippines and we look forward to another wonderful effort there. Lord willing, Bro Frank Brancato will accompany us once again. We need material for the paper, preachers. If you would like to write an article now is a great time to do so. Please send your material so that it is in our hands by the 12th of the month. We try to mail the copy to the printers on or about the 15th.

David Estaville - Phillipines. We are doing well. Lately we are helping the work in Banguian, Abulog Cagayan where brother Rey, the elder brother of Roger is working. There were at least two congregations that were abandoned by their preacher (they are from the no exception) Since that group has nothing to care about these brethren, Rey started to visit them until such time that he asked our help in conducting studies with them. Roger and his brother is concentrating in those places and I was privileged to be with them once and soon we will be scheduling more studies. I told brother Rey that these brethren must attend the worship and last Sunday, he was very happy because most of the brethren attended the worship in Banguian. Our plan is to conduct weekly studies with them as I and Roger will be going there to help. Generally, we are doing well. I do not see any problem so far. Thank you once again. God Bless!

Frank Brancato - 12718 Larkin Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93312, September 14, 2017, email: frankbrancato@sbcglobal.net. Since last reporting, I had the pleasure of holding meetings in Columbia MO, Marietta Ga, and Richmond Ind. All meetings were well attended, and I pray that lasting good was accomplished by our efforts. I am also happy to report that the work here locally in Bakersfield continues to move forward. We had another baptism last week for which we give God all of the glory. If the Lord wills my Fall meeting schedule will be as follows: Sharonville OH (September 27- October 1), and Nashville TN (November 10-12). I am also looking forward to another trip to the Philippines with Don King in January. The work in the Philippines is one of the greatest works in the world, and I am very thankful to be a small part of it. The preachers there continue to work hard for the cause of Christ, and many are being added to the church every year. If the Lord wills, January's trip will be my 9th in 12 years, and I pray that it is a safe and fruitful one. Please pray for the faithful everywhere, and that God will continue to bless all of our efforts.

Billy D. Dickinson - 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickinson@juno.com, Sept 5. Now that Labor Day weekend is behind us, we are surely on the backside of this year. The congregation in Buffalo just hosted a great meeting with large crowds, invigorating praise to God in song, and a timely theme: "Christianity In Modern Times." I was privileged, along with Jimmie Smith, David Griffen. Brandon Stephens, Reggie Kinser, Dennis Smith and Smith Bibens, to be one of the speakers. All of us did our best to point people back to the "old paths" of God's word (Jer. 6:16). It's good to see that the Missouri Labor Day Meeting is alive and well, causing us to look forward to next year when the congregation at Bolivar will be hosting it. This is quite an undertaking, so thank you Buffalo for all your hard work and hospitality! Since my last report, I have held meetings and preached at various places. This includes Indianapolis, IN, Mountain Home, AR, Cleburne, TX, and McAlester, OK. I am now looking forward to a

meeting in Birmingham, AL on the dates of Oct 8-15. The church here at Jamesville has scheduled Walter Hunter for the weekend of Oct 27-29. This will be the first time for Walter to be with us, but we know that everyone will have an instant appreciation for his ability to proclaim the gospel. Since there are only four months left in 2017, it's time to take stock and do all that we can for the cause of Christ. May we all be able to look back upon this year, Lord willing, and feel a sense of satisfaction because we sought every opportunity to save lost souls.

Kevin W. Presley - 108 Mulberry Court, Dothan, AL 36303, September 10, 2017. The Labor Day meetings in TN and TX were each a pleasure to participate in. The brethren at Chapel Grove and Fossil Creek are all to be commended for their hard work and dedication to provide such opportunities to worship together and feed on the word of God. The annual singing in Marietta, GA was one of our best in many years. A large crowd came and the singing was great. My thanks go to Bro. Johnny Elmore for making the trip from OK once again. His presence is a real boost to the singing. Also, thanks to the church at Marietta for making this an annual tradition for some 23 years. They love gospel singing and work to promote it and I personally appreciate their support and encouragement in printing new songbooks. Speaking of that, the brotherhood has been so kind and supportive in using the new book Wonderful Name. Thanks to all who have ordered the book. If your congregation still needs copies, there are plenty available. Contact me for more information. My last meetings were in Piedmont, AL and Little Rock, AR where I enjoyed the hospitality of preaching brethren Terry Studdard and Doug Edwards. Lord, willing I will be this Wednesday in Fort Smith, AR and then on to Temple, GA. In October, I plan to be in Wichita Falls, TX and Washington, OK, the Lord willing and then Rogers, AR and Birmingham, AL in November. May God bless the work everywhere.

Carl M. Johnson - 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820 cmjthebackpage@gmail.com Sept. 4. We just closed a wonderful meeting with the Bedford, Indiana congregation. The church building was packed at the first Lords Day morning service, and it was packed again at the Lords Day evening service. In fact, the building was packed at EVERY service afterwards! The brethren had to set up extra chairs on at least three occasions. It is very unusual to see such a large percentage of Sunday morning worshipers back for every service thereafter. What a treat to preach to such large, attentive, and knowledgeable crowds! In addition to the large number of home folks in attendance, we had visitors from the community and several sister congregations, including preachers Brent Wilson, Brian Burns, and Richard Bunner. Also in attendance were Marcus Reppert and family from Blue Springs, Kentucky, and Shawn Willis and family from Pontiac, Michigan. I appreciate very much my association with Walter Hunter during the meeting. Obviously, he and the brethren at Bedford are

doing a great job. May Gods richest blessings be with them. Brother Jimmy Gating is scheduled to conduct our fall meeting in Ada (Sept. 17-24). My meetings schedule for the next couple of months includes: Shawnee, KS (Sept. 8-10), Springfield, MO (Mission Hills) (Oct. 1-8), and then Odom, MO (Oct. 11-15). May God bless and keep us all.

Roger Owens - Neosho, Missouri. The work in Nebraska began with great excitement. One lady had called a few weeks at the end of last year. I made two long trips to visit and study with her. Then I ran an ad in the local paper and began to get requests for more information. It was then I realized this was an area that wanted the truth, Brother Bill Ferguson and I had visited the year before and he was interested in getting involved. Since that time he has with both feet. Bill and I sent out some 12,000 flyers requesting folks take the Bible correspondence course, "Know your Bible." In less than 14 days we received some 70 requests. I had run an ad in the local paper that yielded a few more. Total request are around 80. We had used the program, EDDM, or every door direct mailing from the post office. For the last 4 months we have increased our attention and follow efforts. We have some 4 or 5 on going home studies or private studies. Five weeks ago I baptized Rita and we began a congregation in the area. I have been working with a local store Hobby Lobby to see if they will allow us to set up a track rack of requests for the Bible correspondence program. They are considering the idea and I will know very soon. There is a great deal of interest from this community, Scottsbluff area in western Nebraska. Last Sunday the Let the Bible speak program aired, channel 8 @ 6:30 AM, the discussion between Ronny Wade and Kevin Presley. I saw the program and it had some real teeth to its subject matter. It has been difficult but Bill and I along with a young man from Colorado, Thaddeus Young, have kept the fires hot and burning. I sent out request letters to brethren who have been good to support me. I can tell you the hours are long and the work demanding but it is wonderful to feed people the words of truth. The work will continue as long as we have funds and the health to sustain the effort. We are looking to find a family or two that would move to the area and oversee the local church work. Bill and I will be around to support it regardless what happens. We would love to have an evangelist interested in getting into this effort to help us move it along. We need more congregations in this part of the country. I believe this is just the beginning of more to come. If you know of any evangelist or family willing to come and work please call us. I mention the fact that death has claimed so many this year already. Life is moving swiftly along as Lynwood's song suggested. Brethren if we don't work at spreading the gospel at home as well as in foreign fields we are lacking. Come for the fields are white unto harvest. Please pray for this effort. In the fields of duty we go marching on. God bless our people everywhere.

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DEATH TO SIN AT WHAT POINT?

By CARL M. JOHNSON

During a meeting years ago in the Ozarks I made an observation during a sermon that we are buried with Christ by baptism into death (Rom. 6:4). Therefore, we die to sin in baptism and not at the point of belief or repentance. An elderly brother from the “cups and classes” church was visiting that night and as we shook hands after services he said, “Young man, I don’t know how they do it out in Oklahoma, but here in the Ozarks we don’t bury a man until after he dies. Our Lord was dead before he was buried and I believe we are dead to sin BEFORE we are buried in the watery grave of baptism.”

His argument sounds logical, and a lot of expositors agree with him, including some preachers from the American Restoration Movement era. Moses Lard says, “We die to sins when we believe in Christ and repent of our sins;” (In other words, baptism is just the burial of the dead man) (Romans 195-196). David Lipscomb concurs (GA Commentary on Romans 114).

The problem with this view is that Paul says nothing in Romans 6:3-4 about faith or repentance. If either of these is the point in time when death to sin occurs, why does he not say so? Why did he not say, “Don’t you know we believed and repented unto death?” Paul says nothing of the kind. He says we are baptized into the death of Christ and planted together in the likeness of his death (6:4-5).

If we take the position that we become dead to sin at the point of belief or repentance, we must conclude baptism is not essential to salvation. Paul says clearly, “He that is dead is FREED FROM SIN” (Rom. 6:7). If death to sin is reached prior to our being baptized, then we are freed from sin prior to being baptized and baptism becomes nonessential.

Romans 6 is not as much a treatise on the subject of baptism as it is a treatise on the subject of death to sin. Paul says, “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20). He anticipates his antagonists will twist his words to mean, “If grace is provided as an antidote to sin, I can sin all I want and receive all the grace I need.” Such a conclusion is a gross perversion of his teaching. Paul replies, “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid” (Rom. 6:1). All Paul means in Romans 5:20 is that no sin is too big for the grace of God to handle. He is saying, “I do not care what you have done. If you will submit to the grace of God, you will be forgiven.” However, he makes it clear that those who are dead to sin can no longer live in it (Rom. 6:2). “No one who has ‘died to sin’ (i.e., to the love and habitual practice of sin) would dare to want to keep on living in that sordid state.” (Wayne Jackson, NT Commentary 273).

Paul continues, “Don’t you know that when you were baptized into Christ, you were baptized into His very death? And just as surely as His death was followed by His resurrection, don’t you know that you too were raised up to walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:3-4; Eph. 2:1, 5-6; 2 Cor. 5:17; In. 3:5; Tit. 3:5).

To walk in newness of life” means to live a holy life, a life of obedience to God’s laws. We do not just “live” this life, we WALK in it. This is one of Paul’s favorite expressions for one’s behavior or daily conduct, good or bad. This is the whole purpose of our death to sin and our resurrection with Christ. Grace does not encourage sinning, it does just the opposite. It separates us from sin and sets us on the road of righteousness. “Shall we remain in sin?” is the objection. Paul replies, “How COULD you? You have died to sin and been made alive in Jesus Christ! So WALK in the power and possibilities of your new life. Just do it!” (Jack Cottrell, Commentary on Romans 390).

When are we united with Christ? When does our death to sin occur? When do we receive newness of life? Paul says it all happens at baptism. When Paul wants to emphasize the unthinkable of continuing deliberately a life of sin, and the possibility of living a holy life, he appeals to what happens to us at baptism. He does not say, “Remember when you first believed,” or, “Don’t you know what happened when you first repented?”, or “Think about the time you bowed your head and received Christ into your heart.” No, he says, “Remember your baptism.” Why would Paul magnify baptism if this is not the specific point where the life-changing and heart-renewing work of God is actually accomplished? (Cottrell, Baptism 88). cmjthebackpage@gmail.com