

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. 7

BETTER THAN GOLD

By JERRY DICKINSON

While visiting with my dad recently I heard him say something that I do not recall hearing anyone else say, at least not in the same words. Dad is ninety one and he was reminiscing about his life and he said, “I have really enjoyed being a Christian! I have enjoyed going to gospel meetings, attending the New Year and Fourth of July meetings, participating in the preacher’s studies, and debating and discussing the scriptures. I have enjoyed being a member of the church” I do not think I have ever heard anyone say it just like that. Looking back over his life he could say, “I have really enjoyed being a Christian!” My dad did not obey the gospel until he was about thirty years old and when he did, he made a drastic change of lifestyle. It was a total about face for him and sixty years later he could look back and declare how glad he was that he chose to live for Jesus. Here is how David expressed it:

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law does he meditate day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he does shall prosper.” (Psalm 1:1-3) The word delight means “to give great joy or pleasure.” Can you say you delight in the law of the Lord? Does being a Christian bring you great Joy and pleasure? There is nothing that brings greater joy and satisfaction than serving our Lord. It is of more value than silver and gold! This is the consistent testimony of God’s word. Notice some things that are “better than gold.”

WISDOM: “How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.” (Proverbs 16:16) “Happy is the man who finds wisdom ... for her proceeds are better than silver and gold. And all the things you may desire cannot compare with her.” (Proverbs 3:13-15) Job declares

that wisdom and understanding cannot be purchased with silver and gold. (Job 28:12-15) If wisdom and understanding are of such exceeding value and they cannot be purchased with money, how can we acquire it? “If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all men liberally and without reproach and it will be given to him.” (James 1:5) God will never reproach or upbraid or chastise if you ask for wisdom. He wants to give it and will give it liberally to the person who asks sincerely and in unwavering faith. How awesome is that? When you say your prayers tonight before going to sleep ask not for silver and gold, or some other temporal blessing, but ask for wisdom and God will give it to you. God was pleased, we remember, when Solomon did not ask for riches, or long life, or earthly glory, but for an understanding heart to judge the people of Israel. God gave him what he requested and he will do the same for you and me. Wisdom, that comes from God, is better than gold!

GOD’S WORD: “The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver.” (Psalm 119:72) God’s law, testimony, statutes, commandments, and judgements are “more to be desired than gold, yea, much fine gold, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, and in keeping them is great reward.” (Psalm 19:7-11) I ask again, do you delight as much in God’s word as in silver and gold, or sports, or television programs, or movies, or video games, etc.? It is remarkable that some Christians can name every player on their favorite football team but cannot name the books of the New Testament! Make it a deliberate and consistent habit to read a portion of God’s word every morning and evening, and the sweeter and more meaningful it will become to you. It will become your delight. His word is better than gold!

A WISE REBUKER: Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold, is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear. (Proverbs 25:12) It may be a bitter pill to swallow but we all need to be rebuked once in a while. I am thankful that in the past there was someone wise enough and caring enough to rebuke me when

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Editorial

HEAVEN

By DON L. KING

We all love to think of heaven, because it means so much to a Christian. Perhaps everyone has some special longings and feelings about heaven, but we know it will be wonderful. Heaven is the home of our Lord. He was there before He ever came to this world of sin and woe.

I always appreciated the way Lynwood Smith described the coming of Christ into this world. He said, "Down from Heaven He came, stepping on the clouds, as it were, into this world through a barn door." What a lowly entrance for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! We would scarcely look for the greatest man who ever walked to make such an entrance. The earthly life of Christ is not only wonderful and interesting to read, but also it makes one sad to realize what suffering He went through just being here away from home. He was so mistreated and unappreciated by those who should have welcomed Him.

During the years I have preached the gospel, I can truly say I have enjoyed it. I love it, and dread the day when age, sickness or death, may stop me from going. Yet, there is always a longing for home while I am away no matter where it might be. As a boy, raised in the home of a gospel preacher, I always dreaded the time when we had to pack up and leave home to travel. There is nothing like home. There we can truly relax, be ourselves, and let our hair down. Heaven is home for the righteous. Paul wrote of Heaven when he said, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Corinthians 5:1) Of course, Paul said this by inspiration, but it is obvious he thought of heaven as home. We should feel the same, perhaps even say so, but our actions may sometimes indicate otherwise.

Jesus spoke of "treasures in heaven" to the rich young ruler. In Mark 10:21 the record says, "Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me." Treasures in heaven? Yes, indeed, we can have treasures in heaven. No matter how little you may have here in this old world, you can be putting aside treasures in heaven. Jesus spoke of this on several occasions. The idea seems to be that you can live in such a way, learn to love the church, the Lord's way, and brethren in such a way, that you will long for the day to just go home

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QUERIST COLUMN

By *RONNY F. WADE*

Question: Do the scriptures teach that the end of the world is at hand and that Jesus is coming soon?

Answer: The second coming of Christ is a topic of great concern. It is also, unfortunately, a topic of unbridled speculation. Beginning even shortly after the establishment of the church some were expecting the Lord to return in the near future. Paul corrected their unfounded ideas in Second Thessalonians chapter two. Hence it is very important for those of us today to understand the difference between what we know and what we do not know. First of all we can be sure that the end will come. Paul declared in 1 Corinthians 15:24 "...then will come the end when he delivers the kingdom to God." Jesus declared in John 14:2 "I will come again..." Each generation seems to have doubters like those in 2 Peter 3:4 who ask "where is the promise of his coming?" Since promises are important to God He declares thru Peter that "the day of the Lord will come" 2 Peter 3:9-10. It is impossible, however, for man to predict the date of the Lord's second return. "Of that day and hour knows no man..." Mk. 13:32. Even though the scriptures are plain about this, men continue to speculate. Down thru the ages various supposed "prophets" have predicted what they call "the soon return of Christ." All have failed. Harold Camping predicted October 21, 2011 as the date of Christ's return. After this failed, he admitted in a private interview, that he no longer believed anybody could know the time of the end of the world. He was finally right. Jesus could return at any moment or He could wait another thousand years in order to give more souls time to repent and turn to him. We know that He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance 2 Thess. 2:3. But what about the "signs of the times"? Are there events that indicate a soon return of Christ? If so what are they and where are they recorded in scripture? Almost every week some preacher on TV or radio declares that "Jesus is coming soon." After almost every famine, earthquake, rise in crime, and events like the 9/11 attack, someone declares that "the end can't be far away." Is it possible the end is near? Are there "signs" that indicate a soon return of Christ? If so what are they? For what should we be looking? Most people point to Matthew 24 as evidence that the end is near. In the early verses of this chapter Jesus informs the disciples that the temple will be destroyed and that the destruction will be so complete that not one stone will be left upon another. The disciples respond by asking "when shall these things be and what will be the sign of thy coming and the end of the world? Jesus answers their questions in the order asked. In verses 4-35 he explains

the signs pertaining to the Roman invasion of Jerusalem in A.D.70. During that invasion the city of Jerusalem was destroyed. One million one hundred thousand Jews perished. Historians declare that the streets of the city were filled with dead bodies, and blood ran in the streets. It was a horrible sight of total destruction. In verse 36 of chapter 24 through chapter 25:46 he plainly states that there would be no signs to precede his return. In order to understand Mt. 24 it is necessary that we observe and understand what scholars describe as the chapters "continental divide" in verse 34 which reads "Verily I say to you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." "All these things is a reference to what has been said up to this point (Mt. 2:4-33). Everything said before verse 34 pertains to "that generation" i.e. roughly A.D. 30-70. Everything beginning with verse 35 pertains to the second coming of Christ. It is unfortunate that some think they have found "signs" of the Lord's second advent when in reality the "signs" are a reference to events dealing with first century Jerusalem. "The end" mentioned in v.6, 13, and 14 is a reference to the end of Judaism, not the end of the world. The mentioning of the coming of Christ is a figurative expression describing his coming in judgment on that generation and not his personal return. It is strange that some claim to find clues in Mt. 24 about the second coming of Christ that Jesus himself didn't know were there. Jesus said "of that day and hour knows no man no man no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" Mt. 24:36. Beginning with Mt. 24:32 we have the description of the Lord's second coming. With an understanding of what is taught in Mt. 24, it seems evident that no one knows when Jesus will come again, and to claim we do flies in face of plain bible teaching. Unfortunately we sometime sing what we refuse to teach from the pulpit. For this reason I cannot with good conscience sing that "Jesus is coming soon" since I don't believe that the bible teaches such a thing. If I could scripturally sing it, I could also scripturally teach it. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

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PAGES FROM THE PAST

The following article was written by Lynwood Smith and was published in the June 1950 issue of the Old Paths Advocate. Often the past is one of the things that keep us from moving forward. In this article Brother Smith suggest that we often remember things that we should not remember. As we grow older we sometimes become forgetful, and we lament that fact, but sometimes it is good to forget things. - Rick Martin

Forgetting

The great Apostle Paul whom the Lord chose “for a pattern unto all them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting,” and who said of himself, “Follow me as I follow Christ,” tells us in his letter to the Philippians (Chapter 3: 13) that he had learned that a good way to press on faithfully toward the goal in a very successful manner was by, ‘(forgetting those things which are behind-.’ Yes, I think that Paul had much that he needed to lay aside and FORGET. What person starting out to live the Christian life doesn’t do and say things in their efforts to serve Christ and live for Him, that we need to forget?

Many are the failings and shortcomings of the past that we need to forget, both in ourselves and in our brethren. I am of the opinion that one of the greatest needs of our brotherhood is, “Forgetting.”

We do too much remembering of the things which we should not. It is just as important for us to FORGET THE THINGS which should be forgotten in the living of the Christian life, as it is for us to remember the things which should be kept in mind. I think that we are to understand that Paul was not hinting that we should or could forget anything that would be helpful and encouraging unto us. But those things of the past; those mistakes, those troubles, either in our own lives or in the lives of others. It is not very likely that we will be very successful in “Reaching forth unto those things which are before,” unless we are forgetting of the things which are behind.

God, when he went to make the new Covenant, Promised among other things that “their sins and their iniquities will remember no more.” In other words, I will forget them, said God. That is one attribute of God that we must imbibe in our lives if we are Godlike in our nature. Perhaps it is impossible for us to forget it in the real and absolute sense; that is, cease to have any remembrance of it. But we must forget it to the extent that it would not hinder us in being what we should be and doing what we should do in our duty unto God. The attribute was certainly in Jesus, the Son of God. I think He must have been exercising some forgetting when He was hanging there in the gloom on the cross on that

lonely old hill long ago. Yes, we need some hatchet burying and forgetting in the brotherhood. “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND, and reaching unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Gracious God, help us forget,

The things in life, which we have met,

That would molest us day by day

As we all journey on our way.

May we try to see the pure;

Help us attune our ears to hear-

Things that would make our life worthwhile,

While walking down life’s weary mile.

May we be easy to forget,

The things that fill us with regret.

-M. Lynwood Smith.

SHARING THE GOSPEL

By KEITH THOMSON

Mark 16: 15-16 And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

As Christians we are taught to share the gospel with others. But how do we do it? How do you effectively share the good news with those who need it so much?

In this article I want to give some ideas that will help us when we are talking to others.

Rom. 1: 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

I. Love

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

We need to talk about the motivation for sharing the gospel in the first place. Jesus came to the earth to save sinners because of LOVE. We see the love of the Father and the love of the Son for the world. We can see the evidence of that love in the redeeming act of Christ on the cross.

We can go out to share the gospel with others, but as Paul said if we do it without love, we are nothing. “but

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A PATTERN OF GOOD WORKS

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

The title of this article is a phrase found in a letter of the apostle Paul written to a fellow preacher of the Gospel. He says, "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (Tit. 2:7, 8). The definition of the word "pattern" is "a good example: a model that is considered worthy of imitation." He wrote to another preacher and said, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." This apostle said of himself, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" 1 Cor. 9:27). In view of this he could advise others to do the same. He was a true example and could write to brethren in general, "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:9). This man of God could say, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example" (Phil. 3:17). Again, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). All Gospel preachers should be able to say the same. Not only so, but so should every other Christian.

In the days when Jesus, our great leader, was in the world, there were religious leaders among the Jews who bound heavy burdens on their followers, but they themselves would not lift a finger to do what they bound on others. Jesus said of them, "whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matt. 23 :2). That should not be said of any preacher of the Gospel of Christ. But at the same time all Christians should recognize the importance of their own Christian example. The apostle Paul taught by his example as well as by word, and he encourages us to follow that pattern. He wrote to brethren at Rome, "We are buried with him by baptism into death: ... even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6).

It has been said, and quoted many times, that we as Christians, are the only Bible some people will ever read; which means that people are influenced by the life which is lived according to the Bible. They can see that there is a reality in living the Christian life, because

they see a person actually putting it into practice every day, walking according to the direction of the Lord. They can depend on his word, because he always tells the truth. He does not use foul language to express himself, no curse words, nor even slang as a substitute for cursing, and he always dresses in modest attire, and he is careful not to engage in any questionable practice that might mar his Christian influence. He attends the worship services regularly and is sure to offer thanks to God for the all the blessings he receives, and he is not ashamed of being a follower of Christ. People take note of those things and are affected.

Jesus taught His disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:13-16). In this, Jesus was not talking about literal salt and light, except by example. He is making a comparison. As salt flavors food, and as light dispels darkness, if the salt has no flavor or influence on the taste of the food, it is good for nothing be to be discarded. And if the light cannot be seen, it does not dispel darkness. And if a child of God is not a pattern of good works, then he does not use his influence for good in the world, and, therefore he is of no benefit to the Lord or to his Cause. Every Christian should determine to be a "pattern of good works".

Home Lights Will Greet Us

There never was a day so misty and grey
That the blue was not somewhere above it;
There's never a mountain top so bleak,
That some little flower does not love it.
There never was a night so dreary and dark
That the stars were not somewhere shining;
There's never a cloud so heavy and black
That has not a silver lining.
There never is a waiting time weary and long
That will not sometime have an ending;
The most beautiful part of the landscaping where
The sun and shadows are blending.
Into every life some shadows will fall,
But heaven sends sunshine of love;
Thru the rifts of the clouds, we may, if we will,
See the beautiful blue above.
The darkness is gathering fast,
And the turn in the road is just a little way on;
Where the home lights wilt greet us at last,
And we will know then that our journey is done.
Author unknown

“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:57, 58)

A Word of Caution

Every version of the scriptures is not a literal translation of the original text of the Bible. Many, so called translators, have taken the liberty to include in their, so called, translations their personal religious views and understanding, thus becoming interpreters. And every version has to have some major changes in it to meet the lawful requirement in order to patented. So, knowing this, we must take every precaution not to just pick up a version of the scriptures, just because some person we admire or some preacher we know has adopted it as his personal preference. Several years ago when the “Living Letters” came out, which amounted to a commentary, it became popular with some of the more liberal brethren, and a number of them completely left the truth.

Some versions (perversions) pawned off on the unsuspecting public have words substituted, words left out, and even whole verses of scripture deleted. This is done, at least sometimes, because of some personal preference or religious idea that the translator has which is then reflected in his work. This is done in spite of the warnings in the sacred word against such liberties.

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I needed it. Such a rebuke, Solomon says, is better than gold. David had committed adultery, murder, and had covered it up - so he thought. God sent a rebuker, Nathan the prophet, and David wilted under the power of the rebuke of truth. Notice that it is a “wise” rebuker that is better than gold. Not everyone has the wisdom and expertise to rebuke. God’s word is a sharp sword that can be used to kill or heal. Not everyone is skilled in handling the sword of the Spirit and sometimes more damage is done than good. We need “wise” rebukers and experienced handlers of the sword of the Spirit. Notice also that a wise rebuker is better than gold to “an obedient ear.” I have to be open to the rebuke that comes from the truth. I have to have a heart that wants to know and do what is right. Truly then the rebuker is better than gold!

JESUS: “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” (Acts 3:6) Like Peter and John, we have something of far greater value to give to people than silver and gold. We have the

unsearchable riches of salvation offered through Jesus. Jesus is better than gold. I’d rather have Jesus than silver and gold, I’d rather be His than have riches untold; I’d rather have Jesus than houses or lands, I’d rather be led by his nail pierced hands. Than to be the king of a vast domain, or be held in sin’s dread sway; I’d rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today. After all, Peter assures us, we were not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus. What would we do without Jesus? Where would we be without him? Jesus is better than gold!

HEAVEN: “The construction of the wall was of jasper; and the city was of pure gold, like clear glass.” (Revelation 21:18) “And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.” (Revelation 21:21) John describes heaven as made not just of gold, but “pure” gold. Now of course, we understand that John was describing the Indescribable and he used the most precious element known to man to describe the beauty and glory of heaven. I do not believe John is telling us that heaven is made of literal gold. It is better than gold! That is the point. It is more precious, beautiful, and glorious than all the gold in this world. Peter describes it as “an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away reserved in heaven for you.” (I Peter 1:4) Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us and has promised to come again and take us to be with him in His Father’s House. That promise is better than gold! Peter says it is reserved in Heaven for us. Do you have your reservations? You cannot just wait till you leave this world and hope there will be a room waiting for you. You must make your reservations now. Don’t wait too long. In fact, do it right now. Make your reservation by obeying the gospel and living for Jesus all the days of your life. Having a room reserved in Heaven is better than gold!

ARGUMENTATION FOR THE MESSIAHSHIP OF CHRIST

BY DEREK THOMPSON

I believe that everyone would agree that a public confession of faith must be made in order to continue the process of accepting the Lord’s gift of Salvation. This confession that we make is similar to the confession that Peter made in Matthew 16:15-16, “He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ ‘Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ ‘This certainly is an interesting statement. Peter knew that Jesus was the “Christ” that had been promised through the prophets and God. Christ is translated to mean,

anointed, which can be translated as, consecrated which can be translated to set apart. If we study through the Old Testament we find that three things were anointed: Priests, Prophets, and Kings. How does this apply to Jesus? We would like to focus our study on examining what this statement really means and what it means to confess Jesus as the Son of God and the Christ, and to demonstrate the importance of this concept.

Any reader of the Old Testament scriptures would come across certain statements that seem supernatural in nature. These are called “prophecies,” meaning, a prediction of what will happen in the future. We see a lot of prophecies throughout the Old Testament of things to come. However, the groups of prophecies we wish to focus on are the prophecies concerning a Messiah, or “the promised deliverer.” There are over 300 prophecies about this Messiah in the Old Testament, but we wish to focus on the prophecies that convey to us that this Messiah would hold three offices at the same time: Prophet, Priest, and King.

Firstly, the King. Genesis 49:10 states: “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.” We see the prophecy here from a dying Jacob about how the ruler’s scepter will not depart from him until Shiloh (translated in the Vulgate as “he who is to be sent”) comes, and how when that person comes then HE will have the obedience of the people (c.r Isaiah 9:6 “For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Psalm 110:1 “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!” We will examine this prophecy a little more in depth later. But this is just the beginning. In 2 Samuel 7:12-16 is the covenant, often called the Davidic Covenant, established with David which says that a kingdom will be established, and the throne of David will be forever. “When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.” Now this prophecy is talking about both Christ and Solomon, since Solomon came and built the temple, and Solomon was the seed of David, but Jesus is the

ULTIMATE fulfillment. Solomon did build the temple in God’s name, Solomon WAS David’s literal seed; but Jesus was from the lineage of David, Jesus established a kingdom, Jesus is sitting on the throne eternal at the right hand of God.

Secondly, the Priest. Psalm 110:4 prophecies that the Messiah will be a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, “The Lord has sworn, And will not relent, “You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.” Now, a priest was someone who interceded with sacrifices on behalf of the people. This, Melchizedek was one of these (Genesis 14:18), and this prophecy states that the Messiah’s priesthood would be according to the order that this priest established.

Thirdly, the Prophet. A prophet is defined as a person regarded as an inspired teacher or proclaimer of the Will of God. Isaiah 52:7 tells us: “How beautiful upon the mountains, are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, “Your God reigns!” Isaiah 42:1 likewise proclaims: “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.” These are not prophecies of current Bible characters. These are direct prophecies of one to come. The elect one will have God’s spirit, and proclaim justice to the Gentiles, and bring forth the gospel of peace and good news. In other words, all of these were fulfilled by Jesus during His time on earth. Deuteronomy 18:15-19 is the prophecy where the Messiah will be like Moses a prophet, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. This is according to all that you asked of the Lord your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.’ The Lord said to me, ‘They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.’” How was this Messiah to be like Moses? It means he will do likewise if not MORE than Moses, in that He will deliver God’s chosen people, and give them new law/establish a New Covenant. In Galatians 3:16, Paul makes the point that when God prophesies something in the singular He MEANS it in the singular. The early Jews understood it this way (John 1:21 “They asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ And he said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the Prophet?’ And he answered, ‘No.’ John 7:40 “Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, “Truly this is the Prophet.””).

Obviously there were different views about this expected Messiah from the crowds. The Pharisees were expecting a King to be the promised one, but the Sadducees believed that a Priest would be the promised one. However, the Sadducees emphasized this priestly role. It was not an either/or thing, where there was a blurred line. But the Pharisees explicitly expected JUST a King. Now let us look at a New Testament example in which the Messiahship of Jesus is established and defended.

The first Gospel Sermon on the Day of Pentecost is where we wish to examine. Peter makes notably two arguments for the messiahship of Christ in Acts 2:22-36. The first half of this sermon contains Peter defending the apostles because the Jews supposed they were drunk. The Holy Spirit had just been revealed to these people. Afterward, Peter says starting in verse 22: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know - Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of joy in Your presence.' Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.' Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

This is a hefty passage of Scripture in which Peter quotes several prophecies regarding their fulfillment to Christ. Let us establish the arguments he makes supporting Jesus as the Christ:

Firstly, Peter argues that Jesus was not the one abandoned to Hades. The first scripture Peter quotes is his defense of Jesus is Psalm 16:8-11, which states: "I have set the Lord continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay." Peter identifies and explains this scripture as a prophecy of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, for Jesus' flesh did not suffer decay and his soul was not abandoned to Hades.

Secondly, Jesus was the individual spoken of in Psalm 110. Peter says Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God, not David. David surely died; Peter says his tomb is with us to this day. But where is Jesus'? The stone is rolled away!

But the one supreme argument is this: the fulfillment of OT Prophecy. Mark 16:20 and Hebrews 2:1-4 say that miracles were a confirmation of the claims that men made. Jesus' claims of being the promised Messiah and the Son of God were affirmed by miracles. When the prophet told the leper to dunk in the Jordan seven times and he will be cleansed, that statement was affirmed when the leper came out of the water the seventh time.

Peter thoroughly understood the concept that Jesus was the Christ that had been promised for so many years, known as "The Deliverer." But what does this mean to the modern age of today?

We will now examine the prophetic, priestly and kingly rolls of Jesus by historical examples from Israel and show how Jesus fulfills all of these roles for the people of God in this day and time.

Firstly, the prophetic role. As discussed earlier, a prophet is defined as a person regarded as an inspired teacher or proclaimer of the Will of God. Moses was very much a prophet. He proclaimed the Will of God at Mt. Sinai when the Commandments were given. But how did Jesus fulfill this role? There is a passage of scripture where we find Jesus proclaiming the will of God, and it is found in Matthew 12:17-20, where Jesus fulfills the prophecy found in Isaiah 42. Jesus proclaimed the Will of God through the Gentiles, in this case. But that is not the only recorded instance that we find.

Secondly, the priestly role. A priest is someone who offers sacrifices, such as Melchizedek in Genesis 14. And it is not hard to see how Jesus fulfilled this role. He offered the sacrifice of his life. In Hebrews 9:13-14 the writer shows us how much more superior the sacrifice of Christ's blood is compared to bulls and goats that were once used. "For if the blood of bulls and goats and

the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Thirdly and lastly, the kingly role. A king is obviously one who rules over something, or literally defined as a person or thing regarded as the finest or most important in their sphere or group. Jesus is indeed a ruler, and definitely is important. But we know that the kings we think of today were earthly. Jesus' kingdom is not. He told Pilate that in John 18:36-37. "Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.' Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.'" The key scripture I found is Matthew 21:5, where Jesus fulfills the prophecy in Zechariah 9. The "daughter of Zion" spoken of is actually a metaphor for the relationship that God has with His people. This prophecy speaks of Jesus, and He fulfills it.

Through all of this study, we can come to the conclusion that Jesus is in fact who he claimed to be throughout his entire ministry, and how He fulfills the roles of prophet, priest, and king today for US as God's People. He is our prophet in the sense that He teaches and proclaims the Will of God through the Word of God; He is our Priest because he offered the ultimate sacrifice of His life that we may have forgiveness of sins, and He is our King in that we submit to Him and His authority. Whatever He says, that is what we will do. This is a hefty study but this is the very foundation of Christianity. The entire Bible is the revelation of God's love through Jesus Christ His Son, whom He sent to die for us that we may be in communion with him for eternity. What a precious gift and honor. This is the beauty of the confession, "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." disciplederek@gmail.com

HEAVEN . . . continued from page two

to be with the redeemed and the Lord. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:12, "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" Think of it: no more questions we can't answer. We will know as we are known of the Lord. Does that not equate to "treasures?" I don't suppose we will be so impressed with what John described as a street of gold, gates of pearl, and all of the finery spoken of, though it will be tremendous to see. No one I have ever known has lived

with such wealth. Think of who will be there! That is what will make heaven so grand. Treasures, indeed.

Having said this, however, we wonder if some are as convinced as others are. Preachers see folks on a regular basis who put nearly anything ahead of the church. Games, sports, vacations, etc., are just the beginning of things we might mention. The point is that God's people, seemingly without thinking, get so caught up in this old world that instead of the church, the truth, and the Lord's way being first it may come in last. We recall many years ago getting to a place to hold a meeting at a small congregation, only to learn that three families chose that week to go to Disney World. It is sometimes difficult to choose a time for a gospel meeting so as to fit it in between all of the fun things going on among the Lord's people. Nothing wrong with God's people having fun, but it needs to be in proper perspective. Remember, the Lord mentioned "cares riches and pleasures" as being thorns that choked out the word! Luke 8:14.

Think on these things. DLK

SHARING THE GOSPEL . . . continued from page four

do not have love, I am nothing." (1 Corinthians 13:2)

Christian love is self-sacrificing and puts all others before us. Love is caring where people will spend eternity. Love is not caring if we are rejected. Love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (1 Corinthians 13:7)

So let's follow the example that Christ has given us - through love and let us take the Gospel to the world.

II. What is the Gospel?

Surprisingly I have had people come to my door claiming to be sharing the Gospel, but when I asked what they thought the gospel was, they were not able to answer. We need to make sure we are never caught in this situation. We must know what the gospel is and how it affects us. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Romans 1: 16)

The gospel is how God has brought salvation into the world. The word itself means "good news" and salvation from sin is indeed good news for us all. The gospel is the Power of God for salvation. As such we need to understand as much as we can about the good news. "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures," (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

In 1st Corinthians 15: 1-5 the Apostle Paul explains a lot about the gospel. He tells us that it is to be preached and received. He tells us we have to make our stand in the gospel and that it is through the gospel we are saved. He then goes on to define just what the gospel is. He tells us the gospel is that;

1. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures
2. He was buried
3. and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures/ (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

Because of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection we have the chance to have eternal life - we can live eternally with Christ in heaven. That is the good news!

This is the message we have to share with others. We obey the gospel when through faith we repent and are baptized into Christ. "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:3-4)

III. Preaching the Word

Acts 8:4 Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.

A result of the persecution following the martyrdom of Stephen in Acts 8 we see the actions of the Christians. They had to flee from Jerusalem, but rather than hiding in the hills of Judea, keeping a very low profile, we see them preaching the word.

It's a great encouragement for me, thinking of these sweet Christians in their time of testing. They did not forsake their faith, they proclaimed it! Stephen had been killed for being a Christian, others had been arrested awaiting trial and death, but these Christians, in their dispersion, took the gospel with them.

What a wonderful example to us today. We have nothing more to fear in sharing the gospel than rejection. These brethren risked their lives in spreading the word. Should we do less? Let us be like these dear brethren and go about preaching the word. OPA

Our Departed

Batson, Johnnie Lee - It is with sadness that we make known the untimely passing of sister Johnnie Batson, wife of Jim and mother of Mary, Wendy, Jimmy and Joanne. Her death was sudden and unexpected. Johnnie possessed a meek and quiet spirit, and was a loving wife and dedicated mother to all her children. Her life and conduct as a Christian was exemplary. She was born November 17, 1942 and departed this life, while a patient in Mercy hospital Springfield, MO, April

18, 2016. She had been a member of the church for a number of years and almost always traveled with Jim when he went to various speaking engagements at churches in this area. She will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her. This writer was privileged to conducted the memorial service. - Ronnie Wade

Conley, Mary Evelyn (Davis) - Born December 22, 1971 in Bowling Green, Kentucky to James and Evelyn Davis. Mary was the youngest of six children and preceded in death by her father. Mary grew up in Smith's Grove, Kentucky (a small community to the northeast of Bowling Green).

On January 22, 1988, at the age of 17, Mary met Michael Conley whom she would marry four years later on February 7, 1992. Michael and Mary would be married for 24 years by the time of her passing.

Neither Mary nor Michael were acquainted with the Lord's church growing up, but thanks to a persistent Christian (Teresa Hunton) who kept inviting Mary to church, they both came to know the Lord and His beautiful bride (the church - Ephesians 5:23-25). After several invitations to come to church, Mary informed Michael one afternoon in 1989 that they were "going on a date to church." Their lives would never be the same again because of that decision. The following year, on January 21, 1990, Mary obeyed the gospel (Romans 10:16) by "being baptized into Christ" (Galatians 3:27). Brother Shelby Taulbee was the preacher used by the Lord to teach and baptize Mary and Michael into a saved state.

As stated earlier, Mary and Michael were united in marriage in 1992. To this union was born three children: Michaela, Jacob, and Mallory.

I first met Mary and Michael when I held a meeting in Bowling Green in April, 2002. At the time Michaela and Jacob were small children. Mallory would come along much later. Mary and Michael were both so friendly, inquisitive, and burning with zeal. They wanted to hear and learn the scriptures. They wanted to know if they were doing anything wrong. They wanted to know if they could be doing better. They were in the mode of "self-examination" (2 Corinthians 13:5) and this quality would (to their credit) never leave them. This quality was simply part of their makeup.

In 2003 Michael and Mary moved to Lexington, Kentucky where Michael began preaching full-time. Mary was very instrumental in Michael becoming a preacher. Michael said Mary was his greatest critic. She offered her advice and wisdom on how to improve his preaching. She did not automatically endorse everything Michael said just because he was her husband. They made a good team Mary was a "helper suitable to him" (Genesis 2:18)

While living in Lexington Mary was expecting the birth of their third child. That same year (2004) Mary was also diagnosed with throat cancer. Here was a dilemma. Mary needed radiation therapy to treat her cancer, but she was carrying her baby. What was she to do? The oncologist advised Mary to have an abortion because “if the radiation doesn’t kill the baby it will certainly be deformed”. This was out of the question as far as Mary was concerned. If need-be, Mary would simply die rather than kill her unborn child. Wisely, Mary and Michael shopped around for another oncologist. They found a skilled and wise doctor who told Mary “I’m going to take care of you and your baby”. This second doctor constructed a lead box which shielded Mary’s body and allowed only the neck to receive the radiation treatment. A month after the radiation ceased, Mallory was born with no birth defects. How wisely Mary and Michael were to ignore the first doctor and find the second.

In 2010 Mary and Michael moved their family to Brookhaven, Mississippi where Michael continued to preach among various congregations in the Brookhaven area.

On April 26, 2016 Mary had a rather minor and routine surgery to remove a bone spur from her hip. The surgery was successful. Mary was in the recovery area with Michael sitting by her side. Shortly they would be going home. Everything seemed to be going normal for this kind of surgery. Mary was, however, having difficulty coming completely out from under the anesthesia. She was in pain and was given a mild pain-killer, but this would prove to be fatal in the end. Mary became so relaxed she fell into a deep sleep and it is believed she swallowed her tongue which cut off the air to her lungs. By the time a nurse noticed Mary was not breathing, it would be too late to revive her. Mary was on life-support machinery for two weeks when it was finally decided to remove the machinery and she was officially declared deceased on May 9 by the attending physician. All of this reminds the wise to constantly be prepared - watching and ready for either death or the Lord’s return (Matthew 25:13)

Mary leaves behind her loving husband (Michael), her three children (Michaela, Jacob, Mallory), two brothers (Jerry Rainwaters; Charles Edward Rainwaters), three sisters (April Davis Wright; Angel Howell; Bernettia Clayton), her mother (Evelyn Gipson Sizemore), as well as a host of friends and brothers and sisters in Christ. The surgeon who performed Mary’s hip surgery also attended the funeral services to express his own sorrow to the family for their loss. I was honored to have known Mary and to have been asked to share with brother Cecil Smith in the funeral service held in her memory - George Battey

Field Report

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickinson@juno.com, June 16-- I’ll be leaving tomorrow for a weekend meeting in Pleasant Hill, MO. The last time I was with them was back in 2009, so that adds to the pleasure of being with them again. I’ll be staying with Clayton and Joyce McDavitt, dear friends who love the Lord and his church, and I know that I will enjoy their hospitality. So far I have held two meetings this year. Back in March I was with the brethren in Buffalo, MO and we had good attendance during each service. This is where Brad Shockley lives and labors, dividing up his time and efforts between the congregations at Buffalo and Bolivar, and it’s always a blessing to be with him. As I’ve said before, I don’t know anyone who stays busier or works harder than Brad. Also, I held a meeting in April at Texarkana, TX. With outside interest and good cooperation from nearby congregations, it was a joy to preach to people who were eager to listen to the gospel. I want to especially express my appreciation to those who came from Louisiana to be with us, including two preachers-- Cullen Smith of Farmerville and Floyd Harris, JR of West Monroe. This, of course, is where my brother, Jerry, calls home and we always enjoy being able to spend time together. Many thanks to these brethren for the invitation and their hospitality!

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old.paths@juno.com, June 13- The church at home is doing pretty well. Matt Trent will be here pretty soon for a short meeting; and while it will be impossible for us to be at home, we are happy for the brethren to have him. Jimmy Cating is in Hawaii; and in a conversation with him by phone, we know the church there is also doing well. The work in the Philippines is also growing and continuing in peace. For all of this we thank the Lord and give him praise and glory. Yesterday it was our pleasure and privilege to preach twice at the Stockton, CA congregation. Many years ago Stockton and Lodi both ordained me to preach and we won’t forget that. Next Lord’s Day we are to be at Yuba City, Lord willing. It will soon be time to leave for some meetings in other States, Chapel Grove, TN, and Norman, OK, to name two. We look forward to those as well as a brief time at the 4th of July meeting in Springfield, MO. Preachers, we need your material right away, please. Lord bless the faithful.

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SAME OLD, SAME OLD

By CARL M. JOHNSON

In the most recent issue of The Christian Chronicle, “an international newspaper for Churches of Christ,” chief correspondent Bobby Ross gives us a glimpse of a movement going on among our “cups and classes” brethren concerning the planting of new congregations (June 2016).

Convinced that a traditional evangelistic approach no longer reaches lost souls, EPIC Church in Torrance, California, will no longer meet for worship in a building with wooden pews, but will be conducting services in a movie theater in one of America’s largest shopping malls beginning in August. After services, church members will head straight from the AMC theater to a food court “filled with lost souls.” One member implies his multiple tattoos will actually be an asset as he tries to initiate religious conversations with diners.

Lead church planter Matt Raines says they do not intend to “franchise” a traditional Church of Christ. He explains, “Our guiding ethic is to do what makes sense in our West Coast context (culture).”

Associate Stan Granberg says, “Churches rooted in and practicing 20th century church models are not doing well in our 21st century culture.” Ted Vogt adds, “Every generation must reevaluate what practices may hinder others from turning to God.”

In view of the above logic, churches associated with EPIC Church have decided to continue to observe the practice of baptism and the weekly Lord’s Supper, but apparently everything else is up for grabs. They no longer call themselves “Churches of Christ,” they allow women to lead prayer and read Scriptures in the public assembly, and 60 percent of the associated congregations use instrumental music in worship services. Vogt argues that the church needs to make even GREATER CHANGES than these if it is going to engage our modern culture successfully.

The willingness of church planters to compromise almost everything Churches of Christ have practiced for centuries reminds me of the spirit of the church in Pergamos (Rev. 2: 12-17). Jesus directs some of His harshest words toward the sin of compromise found in the Pergamos church embodied in the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. Both doctrines were efforts to adjust Christianity to the level of the world rather than lift the world to the level of Christianity. They taught the people to go along in order to get along, in short, to compromise. However, Jesus says he “hates” the doctrine (2:15), and the Scriptures warn us repeatedly against it (2 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 12:2; 2 Tim. 2:19).

The members of EPIC Church may think their approach is new, exciting, and relevant, but in reality it is more of the same old, same old. In 1993 John McArthur wrote a scathing expose of a similar philosophy within the “evangelical” churches. He says, “Church growth experts have concluded that the priorities of the early church—the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers (Acts 2:42)—do not seem to work any more ... Preaching is being discarded or downplayed in favor of newer means, such as drama, dance, comedy, variety, side-show histrionics, pop psychology, and other entertainment forms. The new methods are supposedly more effective—that is, they draw a bigger crowd. Since for many the chief criterion for gauging the success of a church has become attendance figures, whatever pulls in the most people is accepted without critical analysis as good” (Ashamed of the Gospel xiii).

Sound familiar?

If you buy into EPIC Church’s philosophy you will be forced, as Ted Vogt says, to reevaluate your church with the arrival of each new generation and eliminate any practice you decide is no longer relevant. That conclusion is necessary because what appears to be relevant to our culture today will be out-of-date tomorrow. That is one of the problems with culture—it is transitory. Christ, however, is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8), and the church is an eternal kingdom (Dan. 2:44). Therefore, God never intended the church to be reinvented and conformed to the cultural demands of each succeeding generation. The Apostle Paul says, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2). God never intended for us to adapt the church to reflect the culture, but rather He intends for people of the culture to be adapted into the image of His dear Son (Rom. 8:29).

The word translated “church” in the New Testament is ekklesia, and it means “a called out body.” Christians are called-out from the world and separated as the body of Christ. While we are not isolated from the world, we are separated from its attitudes, its sinful behavior, and its God-defying lifestyle (1 In. 21 :5). Therefore, the last thing we need in order to make the church more relevant today is to put back into it more of the world out of which we have been called. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com