

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

August-November 2018

“Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 1:2). God’s blessings are amazing! He is able to keep you from falling.

Upcoming Meetings: Lynnford Beachy will be speaking in **Phoenix, AZ** November 23, 24. Call Cristina for more information: 520-705-5898.

You are Invited: We are having non-denominational Bible studies on Saturday evenings in Kansas, Oklahoma. We meet at 5:30pm for a light supper followed by music and a Bible study. All of our friends and neighbors are invited to join us. We hope to see you here! Call 304-633-5411 for more information.

What is the Gospel?

by Lynnford Beachy

Jesus said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). We are to preach the gospel to everyone, but what is it? The Bible says, “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:15). The gospel is good news of peace. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a multitude of angels sang, “Glory to God in

the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14). The gospel is the good news about God’s gift of salvation to bring peace and good will to humanity.

Paul proclaimed, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed...” (Romans 1:16, 17). The gospel is so powerful because it reveals God’s righteousness; His goodness. And “His goodness” is what leads us to “repentance” (Romans 2:4). Notice that it is the “goodness”



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of God that leads us to repentance, not His scolding or correction. Those things are not what lead us to repentance. If you are trying to scare people into heaven, you are going about it the wrong way. His love will draw them (John 12:32).

I used to be a heavy drug user and a drug dealer. At that time, I knew I was living wrong and I thought God didn't love me. I thought He loved good people who do good stuff, but not people like me. Boy, was I wrong! (Romans 5:8; Luke 19:10). One night I was having a drug party at my house. I went into my bedroom to get something and God impressed me that I was a lost sinner going to hell and that He loves me and wants me to go to heaven. That was a huge surprise to me. The realization that God cares for me, personally, was foreign to what I believed about God; I thought He was mad at me. That revelation of God's goodness changed my life forever. I immediately decided to follow God. I saw goodness in Him that I wanted. It was God's goodness that led me to repentance. Two months later (October 1991) I was born again (John 3:3-7), and was radically transformed instantly. I have not done drugs since. (If you would like to read my conversion story, request a free copy of *Rescued from Addiction*.)

What is Repentance?

Jesus said, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17). Repentance is "a change of mind" (*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*). It

means, "to be sorry, ...regret" (*Brown-Driver-Brigg's Hebrew Lexicon*). David wrote, "For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin" (Psalms 38:18; see also 2 Corinthians 7:10).

Repentance involves viewing things differently, and realizing the sins you committed did you no good. The Bible says, "He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light" (Job 33:27, 28).

Repentance requires facing the reality that "My way of doing things has not been working out." Say to God, "I am sorry for my sins, please come into my heart and change me so I will not do it again." God wants us to come to the point where we are ready to lay ourselves at God's feet to be transformed. This is the first step of conversion.

Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" (Luke 9:23, 24). Notice that the first step to following Jesus is not to say a prayer to get to heaven. Instead, it is to yield your life wholeheartedly to God to be transformed into His likeness (Romans 8:29).

There are three steps to conversion, 1) deny yourself, 2) take up your cross daily, 3) follow Jesus. These steps must be taken in this order or there will be no true success. Let us make sure we understand these steps.

To deny yourself means to abandon your old life; which is called the “old man” (Romans 6:6; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9). For the rich young ruler this meant to sell everything and give to the poor, then “take up the cross, and follow” Jesus (Mark 10:21). God does not ask everyone to sell all of their possessions, but He does ask everyone to give everything to God to use as He wills.

To explain what it means to deny yourself, Jesus said in the next verse, “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it” (Luke 9:24). Your old life with its ambitions and goals is not worth saving. If you try to save it, you will lose it anyway. Go ahead and give it up now, lose it for Jesus’ sake. Don’t hurt yourself, but give yourself 100% to God without holding anything back. This is the first step of repentance. Without that, you cannot be a disciple of Christ. For He said, “...whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33). If you do not make this first step, then trying to follow Jesus will not work.

To take up your cross means dying. Paul proclaimed, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). Let it be clear, salvation is not about saying a prayer to go to

heaven, but about yielding your life to God to be transformed into His image (Romans 8:29; 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 5:17).

Don’t settle for normal Christianity, be extraordinary, live supernaturally, for that is what God has provided for us (John 1:12; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 10:4-6). Remember, “...wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat” (Matthew 7:13). Jesus said, “Not every one that

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saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many

wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity [sin]” (Matthew 7:21-23).

Following Christ is a total life transformation and God Has provided everything so that can take place. God wants us all to be saved, for He is “...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). Jesus said, “...repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). The Bible says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). We are weak, but God is strong, for “greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

Remember that success in our walk with the Lord is not dependent upon our works, but His power and goodness. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22). Notice that these amazing characteristics are the fruit of the Spirit, not the fruit of our efforts. We have to co-operate with God by yielding to the work of His Spirit in our lives by faith in His promises (2 Peter 1:3, 4; Colossians 1:29). True obedience flows from within, from the love of God in our hearts (1 John 2:5; Romans 5:5; John 5:42; 1 John 3:17).

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13).

Repentance includes a change of mind and being sorry for our sins, and turning from them, but what is sin?

The Definition of Sin

The Bible says, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). The Greek word translated “sin” here means “to miss the mark... to wander from the law of God, violate God’s law” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*). It is “the transgression of the law,” which is “the condition of without law ...contempt and violation of law, iniquity, wickedness” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*). Sin is the outworking of the principle of selfishness which is at war with the

great law of love; it is transgressing the law.

The Bible explains, “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:14, 15). Temptation begins by being drawn away of our own lust and enticed. At that stage, there is no sin. It is not until those desires conceive that they bring forth sin. There is a saying,

“You can’t stop a bird from flying over your head, but you can stop him from building a nest there.” You can’t stop evil thoughts from entering your mind, but you can stop them from becoming a part of you. Don’t claim the thoughts as your own, they are for-

eigners. If evil thoughts are cherished and accepted then they bring forth sin. Sin is brought forth in thought before an outward action takes place. Once you make the decision to follow evil desires lust has conceived, you have claimed it as your own and decided to let it become a part of you. This is sin even if something prevents you from committing the act.

Jesus said, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5:27, 28). Jesus broadened our views of the law to reach deeper than the letter of the law,

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for part of His mission was to “magnify the law, and make it honourable” (Isaiah 42:21). He helped us to see that God’s “commandment is exceeding broad” (Psalms 119:96). Notice, Jesus was not saying that to be drawn away of your own lust, and enticed is sin, but that looking at a woman for the purpose of lusting after her is sin. This involves a decision to stare at a woman to gratify sinful desires. If not brought into captivity to Christ, forbidden thoughts that are dwelt upon and desired are sin.

Paul wrote, “...I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Romans 7:7). The law reveals our true condition and leads us to Christ (Galatians 3:24; John 5:39; 1 Timothy 1:9). Paul states that the Tenth Commandment makes known lust. The Tenth Commandment forbids coveting (lusting for) the possessions or wife of your neighbor (Exodus 20:17). Yet, God had already forbidden adultery and stealing in Commandments Seven and Eight (verses 14, 15), so why did He add the Tenth Commandment? He wanted to help us identify sinful desires, and recognize that following them is transgressing the law even if it is only done in our thoughts.

The Greek word *avopia-anomia* (Strong’s #458) that was translated “the transgression of the law” in 1 John 3:4 is the noun form of the adjective *avovos-anomos* (Strong’s #459) “without law.” The adjective *anomos* is the description of things that are without law, the noun *anomia* is the principle of lawlessness in action either by thought or deed.

To understand the principle a little better it helps to understand the word itself. The last part of the word *avovos-anomos* is *vovos-nomos*, which is “law.” *Anomos* is “without law.” When the letter “a” is added as a prefix in front of a Greek word it means “without.” In English this practice is preserved in some words such as theist and atheist; moral and amoral; cellular and acellular, etc.

So, in reality, *anomos* is not a thing, but the lack of something; in this case, the lack of “law.” Some other Biblical explanations of the outworking of this selfish principle include, “All unrighteousness is sin” (1 John 5:17) and “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Romans 14:23). Again, we can see this is speaking about the lack of something, the lack of faith, the lack of righteousness, the lack of law. These are all in perfect agreement. Sin is the outworking of the principle of selfishness, which falls short of God’s perfect character of selfless love. If you are without righteousness, you will live unrighteously. If you are without faith, you will live faithlessly. If you are without law, you will live lawlessly. If you are without love you will live selfishly.

There is no such thing as darkness. It is not a real thing it is just the lack of light. If it is too bright in a room you cannot shine a dark beam to darken the room. Instead, you must find ways to shut out the light. Darkness is the absence of light. There is no such thing as cold; it is just the absence of heat. To make things colder you can’t add cold, you must remove heat. There is no such thing as death, rather it is just

the absence of life. I am a first responder for the Fire Department. When we arrive at a scene where a person is injured, the first thing we do is look for signs of life. Is there a heartbeat? Are they breathing? We do not look for death, but for life. If there is no life nor signs compatible with life, then we conclude they are dead, not because we found something called death, but we could not find life.

Sin is the outworking of the principle of selfishness, which is being absent of God's goodness, and He only is good (Mark 10:18). The heart of the commandment is unconditional love (Matthew 24:37-40; Romans 13:8-10). And "love is of God" (1 John 4:7). The only way a person can love is if he has God's Spirit living in him. If a person is missing God's love, he is living in sin; he is not connected to God's righteousness, His goodness, His life. Therefore, he is abiding in death, in darkness (1 John 3:14), even if he does things that look good to others.

The Solution

So, what is the solution to the sin problem? Is it to clean up the actions alone? No! That will leave us like the Pharisees or Laodiceans (Matthew 23:25-28; Revelation 3:14-21). Sinful actions are only a symptom of the real problem; they reveal that we are missing something. If we stop at cleaning up our actions, we have missed the point. Our problem is the lack of

something, or more specifically someone. Jesus is the one who brings true righteousness, true faith, true love, true life, and the living law. Without Him we "can do nothing" (John 15:5), with Him we "can do all things" (Philippians 4:13).

Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). He also said, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that

sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). The Bible says, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11, 12). If

we have the Son of God living in our hearts we have passed from death to life, and the life of Jesus will "...be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Corinthians 4:11). The Bible gives us a sure sign that the Son of God has taken up residence in our hearts: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (1 John 3:14).

It seems strange that a person can abide in death while he is alive. Yet, the Bible says, "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Timothy 5:6). The death described here is not physical death, but spiritual death. Death is "the loss of that life

"Love is of God" (1 John 4:7). If a person is missing God's love, ...he is abiding in death, in darkness (1 John 3:14), even if he does things that look good to others."

which alone is worthy of the name” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*). Death is the absence of life, spiritual death is the absence of spiritual life. “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:6-8). “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify [put to death] the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:13, 14).

Wait a minute; aren’t we always going to be in this sinful flesh until Jesus comes? How can God expect us to put to death the deeds of the flesh when we are living in this body? God sent His Son to give us freedom from the lusts of the flesh. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:2-4). Let that sink in. We can be free from “the law of sin;” the pull of sin (Romans 7:23). The pull will still be there, but it can be overcome by the Spirit of life in Christ! Hallelujah!

Freedom in Christ

I know that many have been taught that freedom from sin in this life is

impossible, but the Bible says it is possible. I am glad for that because I don’t like being held captive to sin. I want freedom, complete freedom, and God has made that a reality by sending His Son into this world to experience temptation and gain the victory on every point so He can give us the victory. He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Hebrews 5:8). “For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour [help] them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18). “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57). Jesus promised, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.... Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.... If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:32, 34, 36).

Friends, God has given us “all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Peter 1:3, 4). God has made it possible for us to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. He can “keep you from falling” (Jude 1:24). There is freedom in Jesus! “(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every

high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled” (2 Corinthians 10:4-6).

Every thought can be brought into the obedience of Christ. That is wonderful! The biggest obstacle to living a victorious life is the belief that it is neither possible nor expected. If it were not possible, God would not have given us so many exceeding great and precious promises saying that it is possible. If victory over sin is not possible, how much sin is acceptable? Should we tell the axe murderer that he is free to continue murdering? Shall we tell the adulterer they are free to continue wrecking families? Should we tell the thief he is free to continue stealing? Should we tell the pagan idol worshiper he is free to continue practicing idolatry? The Bible says, “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Timothy 2:19).

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10). “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry,

witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.... And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” (Galatians 5:19-21, 24).

If we tell people they can continue these practices and still go to heaven, we are telling them a lie, and Jesus will tell them, “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:23). If we are lying to people about this, He will tell us the same thing, for Jesus said, “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:19).

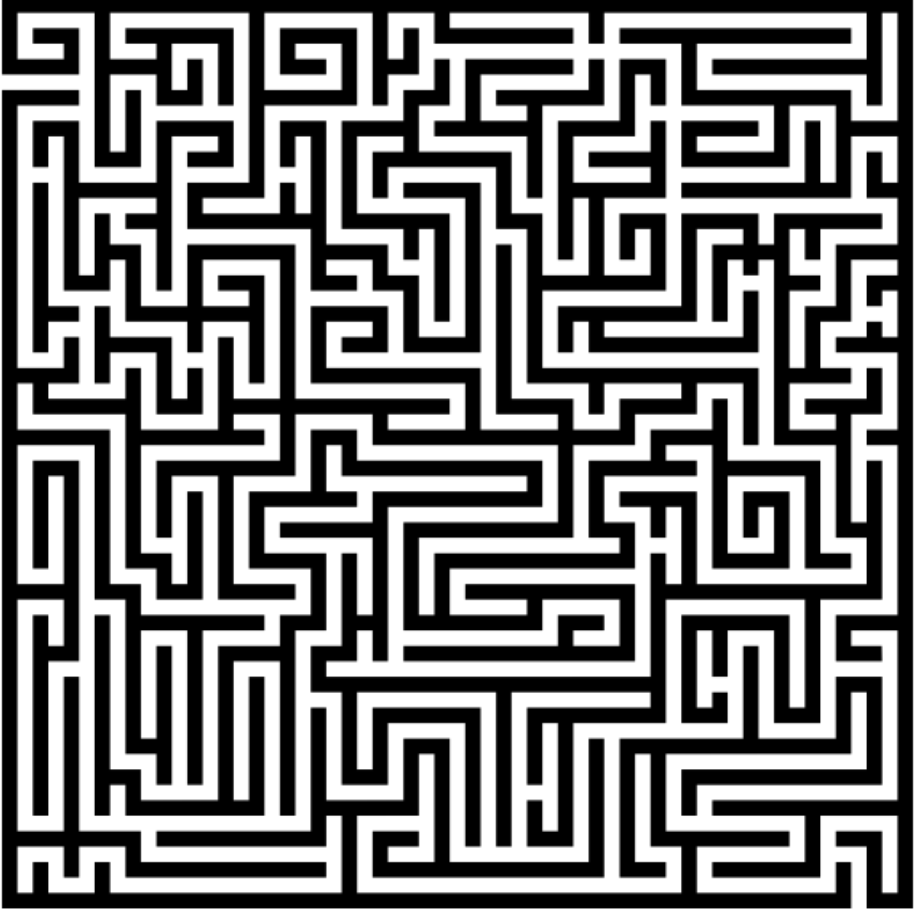
Many preachers give the message to their listeners that they will never be free from every sin, and that they should just sin a little less than they did before becoming a Christian. This presents a dichotomy that should not exist. If God can deliver us from some sins, why can’t He do it for all of them? (John 8:32-36). The carnal heart wants to cling to some of the old lifestyle, but Jesus said, all or nothing. We must lose our lives for Him, deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him (Luke 9:23, 24; 14:33).

If we tell people they can continue these practices and still go to heaven, we are telling them a lie.

*And ye shall seek me, and find me, when
ye shall search for me with all your heart.*

Jeremiah 29:13

Finish



Start



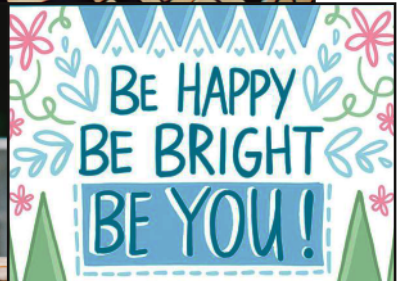
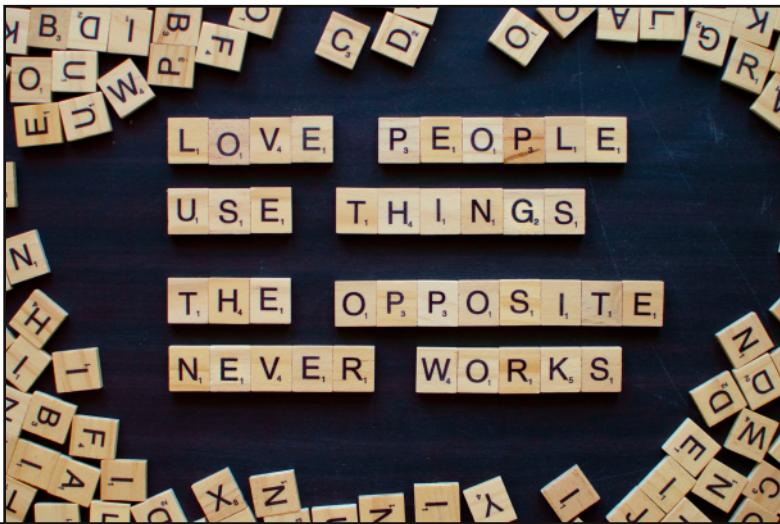
Present Truth - Kids' Korner

Bible Word Search

Find the underlined words...

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed...” (Romans 1:16, 17).

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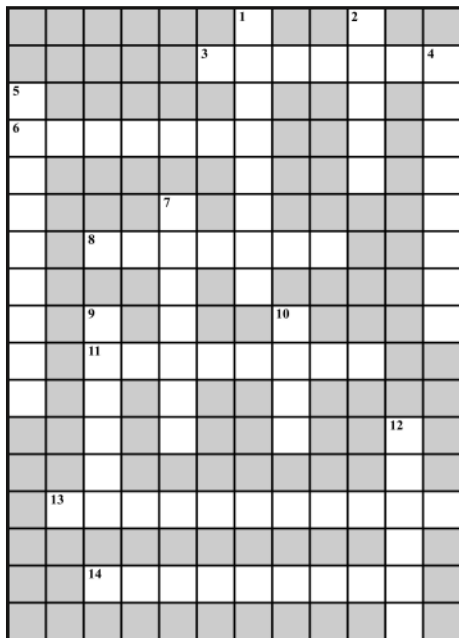


Present Truth - Kids' Korner

Bible Study Crossword - Personality of God - Part 8

(The King James Version is required.)

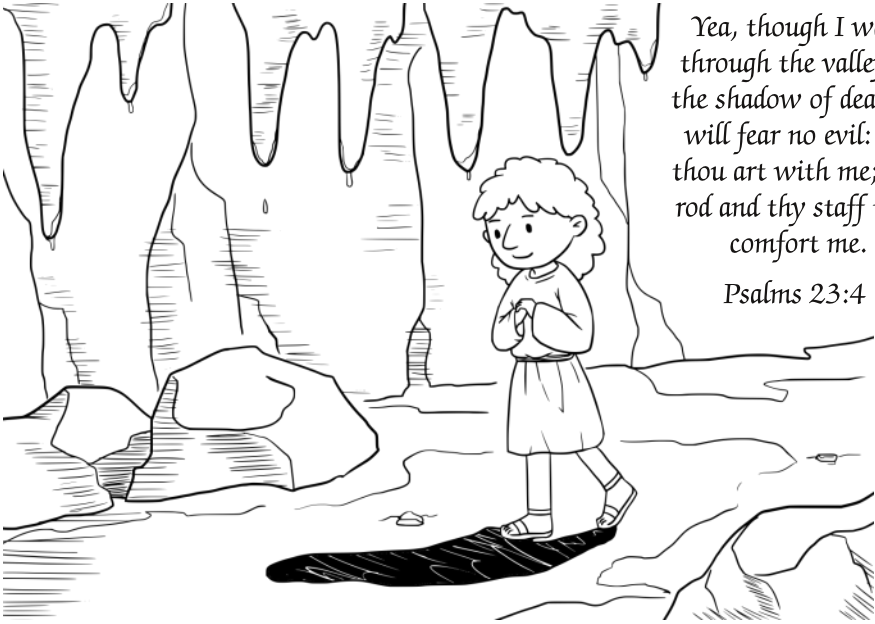
- "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the _____ of us all." Isaiah 53:6—**11 Across**
- "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the _____ is with me." John 16:32—**12 Down**
- "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou _____ me?" Matthew 27:46—**1 Down**
- "But of that day and that hour _____ no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Mark 13:32—**8 Across**
- "And Jesus increased in _____ and stature, and in favour with God and man." Luke 2:52—**9 Down**
- "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Timothy 6:14—**5 Down**
- "Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only _____, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." 1 Timothy 6:15—**14 Across**
- "Who only hath _____, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." 1 Timothy 6:16—**13 Across**
- "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of _____, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste _____ for every man." Hebrews 2:9 (1 word)—**2 Down**
- "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up _____ and supplications



with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;" Hebrews 5:7—**6 Across**

- "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I _____ my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." Luke 23:46—**3 Across**
- "I can of mine own self do _____: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." John 5:30—**7 Down**
- "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that _____ in me, he doeth the works." John 14:10—**4 Down**
- "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently _____ me more than twelve legions of angels?" Matthew 26:53—**10 Down**

Present Truth - Kids' Korner



Yea, though I walk
through the valley of
the shadow of death, I
will fear no evil: for
thou art with me; thy
rod and thy staff they
comfort me.

Psalms 23:4



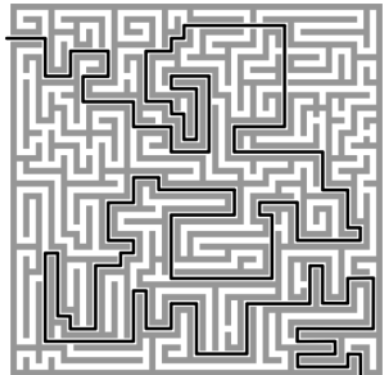
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Bonus

How many
times can you
find the word
“gospel”
in the first
article? _____

*Answer for
the Last
Issue:*
Born 21



Friends, this is not bad news! God knows everything and loves us unconditionally. His instructions for our lives are far better than anything we can devise. Trust Him completely, fully surrender, and the joy and peace you will experience is much greater than words can express (1 Peter 1:8).

The New Birth

The incredible joy of full surrender cannot be experienced until you are born again. Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:3-7).

You must be born again! Nothing else matters until this is a reality in your life. Make sure you know what this means and how it is accomplished. You were born of the flesh on your birthday, but you are born of the Spirit when you open the door of your heart and invite Jesus to live in you by His Spirit. (Please request the booklet, *You Must be Born Again* for a deeper study on this vital topic.)

Why do we have to be born again? Isn't our first birth good enough? No! In our first birth we were born with a natural tendency to sin. I am not saying we are born sinners, but that we are born with a strong disposition to sin. It is so strong that every human born onto this planet, given enough time, will naturally act selfishly and manifest sinful characteristics. There is only one exception to this, and that

is Jesus Christ who "is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Hebrews 7:26). "...in him is no sin" (1 John 3:5). He "loved righteousness, and hated iniquity" (Hebrews 1:9). He delighted to do God's will, for His law was in His heart (Psalm 40:8). He was born "of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:20). He was "born of God" (1 John 5:1) from the beginning of His time on earth. He did not have to be born again.

This cannot be said of any other human who was born on this planet. We have all "gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6). "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Romans 3:10-12). "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Out of the billions of people who have been born on this planet, Jesus is the only one who lived a continual life of victory over sin. He lived this way because He was born "of the Holy Ghost," "born of God," and He continually yielded Himself to His Father's will. We were not born this way, and that is why we "must be born again" "born of the Spirit" (John 3:7, 6). Jesus did not live the way He did because He had exceptional parents. He did have great parents, but that is not what made Him so exceptional, for even his brothers and sisters who had the same upbringing were sinners like the rest of us (Mark 6:3).

Am I saying that Jesus was different than us? Yes, and no. He partook of the exact same sinful flesh that all of us are born with (Romans 8:3; Hebrews 2:14-18). This enabled Him to be “in all points tempted like as we are” (Hebrews 4:15). Yet, because He was born of the Spirit He was able to live “without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). He still had to choose every moment to submit to His Father. He did this knowing that God’s ways are the best option available (John 12:49, 50). (Request the study, “The Faith of the Son of God” for deeper insight into His faith.)

Jesus was different than us in that He was “born of the Spirit,” and “born of God” from the beginning. He “loved righteousness, and hated iniquity” (Hebrews 1:9). He demonstrated how we can live when we become partakers of the divine nature as He was. He had something better than those who have not been born again, but He offers this advantage to us through the new birth (1 John 5:4; 3:9; 4:7; 5:18; 2:29; John 1:12, 13). Therefore, He had no advantage over a born again Christian.

Some think that He had nothing better than everyone else. If that were true then He would have nothing to offer us; there would be no benefit of the new birth. He had an advantage, but He gives this to us so that we are on an equal level with Him in relation to sin. Praise God! He is able to live in us by His Spirit to transform us from the inside out (Romans 8:2-4). Let Him in by opening the door of your heart and inviting Him in (Revelation 3:20).

The 1st and 2nd Deaths

When Adam sinned he plunged the world hopelessly into death. “Wherefore,

as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12). Everyone must suffer death because of what Adam did. “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

This death that passes upon all men is not the end of the story, for afterward there is a judgment. Everyone must die because of what Adam did, for after his sin he could pass on no higher nature than his fallen, sinful flesh (Genesis 5:3). His entire offspring share in his sinful nature and in the consequence of his sin which is death. We are not guilty, for we had no choice in the matter, yet we still must die.

God does not offer to save us from this death, for even after we are saved by faith in Christ, we still must suffer death. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). Praise God! He provided a way for all men to be made alive again. Even though the first death is not avoided, we have been given another chance, a second probation. All men die the first death because of what Adam did, but those who die the second death will do so because of their own sins (Revelation 20:6, 11-15). (For a thorough study on the first and second deaths, request a free copy of *God’s Love Revealed in Hell*.) The Bible says, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23). It is the second death that is the wages of sin, not the first. Some have gotten confused from reading Romans chapter 5, mixing up the distinction between the first and second

deaths. It was the first death that passed upon all men, not the second. Jesus made a way to reverse the effects of the first death, bringing all men back to life in the resurrection (Acts 24:15).

Some churches mix this up concluding that Adam's sin brings the second death. Therefore, they baptize infants to try to keep them out of hell. They are mistaken. Adam's sin only brought the first death, and baptizing an infant will not reverse that, nor change their natures. Also, baptizing an infant will do nothing to remove their guilt because infants do not have guilt since they have not reached the age to know to choose good or evil (Isaiah 7:16). Infants could not die for their own sins because they don't have any. When you read about death in the Bible make sure you check the context to know whether it is talking about the first or the second death (Revelation 21:8).

If we only deal with actions in our struggle with sin, we will be left corrupt on the inside, while appearing righteous on the outside. This will leave us outside of the kingdom of heaven.

his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jeremiah 13:23).

Jesus said, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matthew 15:19). All of these sins come out of a corrupt heart. Jesus explained, "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matthew 12:33-35). You see, sin is not the main problem, but a side effect of a deeper problem; a corrupt heart.

The Root of the Problem

We are born with a natural pull toward evil, kind of like a very powerful magnet drawing us toward sin. The more sin is practiced, the more strongly that pull becomes. The Bible says, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11). The heart becomes more and more corrupt as sin is practiced, and it is more difficult to make good choices. "Can the Ethiopian change

It is a waste of time to try to clean up the actions without dealing with the root of the problem. Jesus said, "Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matthew 23:26-28). If we

only deal with actions in our struggle with sin, we will be left corrupt on the inside, while appearing righteous on the outside. This will leave us outside of the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said, “Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (Matthew 7:17, 18). James questioned, “Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh” (James 3:11, 12).

The Bible identifies our real problem as a “heart” issue, “a corrupt tree,” or bitter “fountain.” If sin is being manifested in your life, focus on the root of the problem, your corrupt heart. Make sure that gets taken care of, or all your other efforts will be in vain. “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23). Jesus said, “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Conclusion

The gospel proclaims “liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound” (Isaiah 61:1). Jesus came to set the captives free from “the bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:23), “the cords of his sins” (Proverbs 5:22). You can be free on the inside regardless of what circumstances you

are facing on the outside. Jesus can make you “free from sin” (Romans 6:18, 22; see also John 8:32, 34, 36). He does this by introducing a new principle into the human experience, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2).

Practicing sin has caused us to be bent so far down toward sin (Hosea 11:7) that it is impossible to live victoriously until that bond to sin is broken (Romans 8:7, 8). This is accomplished by being born again by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. This does several things. First, God removes our corrupt heart bent toward sin (Ezekiel 36:26), setting us free from the chains that have bound us. He then gives us a new heart of flesh, giving us a fresh start, just as though we had never sinned (Romans 3:25; 1 John 1:9). Next, He puts His Spirit within us to lead us to make good choices (Ezekiel 36:27; Romans 8:14). At this point we are brand new creatures. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

This does not remove the temptations to sin, but since the chains we have established by sin have been broken, and a stronger magnet toward righteousness has been implanted to counteract the pull of sin (1 John 4:4), our lives are totally transformed. Now we have the freedom to choose to follow the promptings of God’s Spirit and allow “the life also of Jesus” to “be made manifest in our mortal

flesh” (2 Corinthians 4:11). It is no longer you who directs your life according to your own lusts, but now you continually choose to “yield yourselves unto God” (Romans 6:13, 16, 19). This is something that could not be accomplished before the chains were broken and Christ is living within by His Spirit (Galatians 2:20).

I know this from firsthand experience. I was a drug addict bound by the chains of sin (Job 36:8; Proverbs 5:22). I tried to quit several times but failed. When I read the following verse, it changed my life forever: God promised, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” (Ezekiel 36:26, 27). My dad told me to ask God to give me a new heart and invite Jesus to live in my heart. He said, “You will not feel anything happen, but just believe that God gives you a new heart because He promised, and then don’t stop believing you have a new heart. After a few days you will notice there has been a change.” That was the best advice I have ever received.

I asked God to give me a new heart and invited Jesus to live in my new heart. I couldn’t feel anything happen, but I believed it was real because God promised. I came away from that prayer so excited, knowing that I am a new person and that now Jesus is living in me. After a few days it was just like my dad had told me, I noticed that

I was responding to things differently. Before, if someone did something mean to me I would immediately want to get even. But after God gave me a new heart, that desire did not even come up; instead I felt sorry for the person and wanted to help them. That was foreign to the way I lived before. I knew that something major had changed. “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren” (1 John 3:14). This new response was the Spirit of Christ Who when He was being crucified asked His Father to forgive His persecutors (Luke 23:34). Jesus, “when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not” (1 Peter 2:23).

The new birth is a radical transformation that takes place. You may not notice it as drastically as I did when I experienced it, but it is just as amazing. Ask and believe that God has given you a new heart, and it will be a reality. Just don’t stop believing! Invite Jesus into your heart (Revelation 3:20), and a new life will transform you. He enters your heart by faith, and He remains there the same way. Christ will “dwell in your hearts by faith” (Ephesians 3:17). “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Colossians 2:6).

I pray that you truly experience all the blessings that God has provided for you, and that your life will be a witness to that fact. Go and live the life you were created for. Be a window for “the glorious gospel of Christ” to shine through every aspect of your life. >>

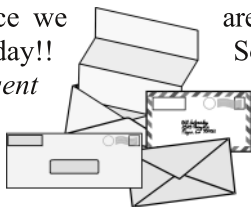


Letters from our Readers



"I want you to know that I enjoy your messages in *Present Truth*!!! We have learned so much. My wife and I have been so blessed since we have been keeping the 7th day!! Thanks again for *Present Truth*."

Arizona



"A brother passed along a newsletter from you, and I cannot express what a blessing it is to me. It is the June-July 2018 issue. While the Lord did show me the words in Galatians 2:20, 'the faith of the Son of God,' not faith in, but faith of, I had not seen it in the other verses you included in the teaching. For where I am in my walk right now, and what the Lord is teaching me, it was, of course, His perfect timing in receiving it. Facing 46 more years in prison, and having the Lord show me more than once, that the door will open, and I will go home and serve Him. I am almost 64 years old. I am His, all His, and as He gives me opportunity to serve Him here, and study, I am growing in faith. We serve a merciful and gracious God. Please send me a copy of your *Present Truth* newsletter, which I will study, and pass on. The Lord's richest blessing upon you. May He continue to use you in small and great ways."

Prisoner in New York

"I am requesting four more copies of your magazine, 'The Faith of the Son of God.' It was very inspirational. I am enclosing a check for \$10.00 to cover your costs. I have joined a prison ministry and send letters to five inmates. I am primarily sharing Jesus with them

through Bible promises, chain-marking Bible studies and now your magazine. My three favorite things to do in life are talking, reading, and writing.

So I have already sent two letters to them and here comes the third. I am so excited and look forward to their letters."

Montana

(Thank you so much for your service to reach out to prisoners and those in need. I really appreciate you sharing your testimony.

Editor)

"I was raised a Jehovah's Witness and have been studying with the Seventh-day Adventists since September of 2017. I have not been baptized yet. I was given your booklets, *Understanding the Personality of God*, and *Answering Objections*. Wow! What an eye opener! I would like you to please send me *God's Love on Trial* and *The Formulation of the Doctrine of the Trinity*. Is there a local church here in Oregon that could reach out to me?"

Prisoner in Oregon

"Thank you so much for sending *Present Truth* to me by mail for the last few years. I have always enjoyed, and have been greatly benefited by, reading them. They speak directly to my heart, similar to when I am reading the Bible. English is my second language which I have learned only in my adult life when I migrated from Europe. I have sometimes had difficulties to understand the full and proper meaning of Bible verses. Especially in the King James Version, after I was convinced not to use the NIV or Good News Bibles.

Present Truth

Recently I have been introduced by a friend to issues of the Trinity, taught by most Christians of the world and by my own church as well... I humbly request two copies of *Understanding the Personality of God* and its companion book, *Answering Objections*. I hope they will be yet another right piece of the puzzle in a beautiful, yet forgotten or purposefully changed, teaching of the Bible. May our heavenly Father richly bless you personally, your family, and *Present Truth Fellowship*.” **Australia**

“I was very pleased to receive the books from you in such a timely manner. I am enjoying the readings. They are very well written. I am very interested to know if you have any writings on the following subjects, Heaven/Hell, Punishment of the wicked, State of the dead, Three days and three nights, Second coming of Christ, Christ’s Millennial Kingdom, Sabbath/Sunday question, and Was evil created by God? I would very much like to swap information so all of us can be better enlightened into God’s word. PS: You didn’t tell me how much the books were, so I enclosed the postage plus some for the books. If that does not cover the cost of the books, please let me know.” **Oklahoma**

(Thank you so much for your encouragement and support. Yes, we have studies on those topics. They have been sent to you. We send everything for free. Donations are appreciated, but

not required, so we do not send a bill. Jesus said, “freely ye have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8). **Editor**)

“Since I have on file several years of past dated publications I began sending many of these to 4 separate inmates in Harare Prison, Zimbabwe. I have sent many of our publications throughout the years, which gets a little expensive, but since I have many of the newsletters from selected ministries I can send several at one time to each inmate. Sorry to say, one of these newsletters I plan (selfishly) to keep. The May 2006 Brazil Trip Report by our own Pastor Lynnford, cheered my heart all over again. It was as if I was reading it for the first time. I dearly love these reports. I am going to keep it so I can read it many times over in the coming months, should time last that long. Brother Lynnford, I wouldn’t wish you away from your family, but is there an upcoming mission trip in the making by any chance. Your reports are like dessert at the end of a spiritual meal. I wish you all peace and happiness in the coming days.”

“PS I forgot to mention what a great ‘Trip Report’ (April-May 2015) Brother Lynnford wrote on the Dominican Republic. That’s what I originally meant to comment on, then I read the 2006 report, commenting on it, and forgetting the most recent. Brother Lynnford, you are off the hook for now. Love you all.” **Montana**

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“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.”

John 3:16

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“And this is life eternal, that they might
know thee the only true God, and Jesus
Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

John 17:3