

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

June 2009

“Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:3). I pray that you are doing well and prospering in your spiritual walk.

Final Call: This is the last call for the West Virginia Camp Meeting. It will be held June 16-20 in Welch, WV. I hope to see you there. Call us for more information.

A New Format: I am sure you have noticed that this paper is in a smaller format than usual. There are several advantages to this new format, and we hope that you like it. We would appreciate your input on this new size. Please let us know what you think.

E-mail Reminder: Let us know if you would like *Present Truth* by e-mail.

Upcoming Meetings: Rick and Mary Jaroh will be hosting meetings near Cadillac, Michigan June 24-26 and July 24, 25. Call 231-920-9202 for information.

Faith in the Son of God

by Lynnford Beachy

Faith is a crucial element in our experience with God. “Without faith it is impossible to please him” (Hebrews 11:6). John explained, “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4). Our faith is the key that gives us the victory over the world, which is victory over lust and sin (1 John 2:15, 16).

When Jesus was here, He emphasized the importance of having faith. He often said things like: “thy faith hath made thee whole” (Luke 8:48) or “Thy faith hath saved thee” (Luke 7:50). Jesus also reprimanded people for having little faith. When Peter walked on the water and then began to sink, “immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”

(Matthew 14:31). He asked His disciples, “Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?” (Mark 4:40).

One day Jesus was asked, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:28, 29). God’s work is to get you to believe. Jesus said, “If ye have

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faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matthew 17:20).

Faith is very precious and important. It must be guarded and strengthened. The disciples saw this need and entreated Jesus, “Increase our faith” (Luke 17:5). Anything that decreases our faith must be avoided, and we should seek to have our faith increased. The Bible says, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Our faith will be increased the more we hear and study the word of God and put the principles found there into practice.

What is Faith?

The Bible says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). This may be difficult to understand, so I would like to illustrate it by using an example of faith in action.

Jesus found something that He called “great faith.” If we can discover what He was referring to, we can be sure that we know what faith is. One day a Roman soldier came to Jesus, petitioning Him to heal his servant. Jesus gladly accepted his plea and offered to come to his house and heal his servant. But, “the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed... When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel” (Matthew 8:8, 10).

This centurion had great faith, something Jesus never said about anyone else

while upon this earth. More often than not, Jesus would rebuke people for not having enough faith, but in this case he commended the centurion for not only having faith but for having “*great* faith.” Notice how the centurion responded to Jesus’ offer to come and heal his servant. He said, “speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed” (v. 8). This centurion did not rely upon Jesus physically doing something to heal his servant, nor did he rely upon being able to see his servant healed. Rather, he depended wholly upon the word of Jesus, and His word “only,” to accomplish what he desired to be done.

Faith, then, is depending wholly upon the word of God only, to do what that word says. This agrees with God’s promise: “For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10, 11).

Notice what God says will accomplish what He pleases. It is His word, and His word only, that will accomplish what He pleases. God used His word to create man in the beginning, and it is by His word that He recreates and maintains us in the new birth. “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” (Psalm 33:6).

Faith is not true faith unless it is firmly anchored to God’s word. You can have faith that it will rain tomorrow, but unless you have a “thus saith the Lord”

to rest your faith upon, it is not biblical faith. When Moses told Pharaoh it was going to hail, he knew it was going to happen because God said it would, and He even instructed Moses what to say to Pharaoh. This faith is certain. There is no true faith disconnected from the word of God. To overcome the world, you must have faith in God and in His word. You must believe that what He says is true.

Satan's Attack upon God's Word

Satan is using every means possible to shake our faith in God's word. From the very first lie Satan told in the Garden of Eden unto today, he has sought to discredit God by claiming His words cannot be trusted. Today Satan uses the argument that God's words have been translated too often and that men have been too involved in bringing us the word of God, causing it to no longer be trustworthy. He has convinced some to cast out portions of the Bible, leaving them with fragments of the Bible to rely upon. And even these fragments, to them, are subject to scrutiny and may be cast out at any time.

I have encountered people who say that God does not take life under any circumstances, and they have concluded that every time the Bible says that God took life, such as in Noah's flood, in the parting of the Red Sea, and in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha, this was all Satan doing these things. These people told me that Satan instructed Cain and Abel to offer animal sacrifices, and it was Satan who gave the commands to Moses regarding which sacrifices should be offered for various sins and ceremonies or when the death penalty was to be administered. They said

the authors of the Bible thought that it was God giving these instructions, so they wrote it as if it was God talking.

The proponents of this theory told me that whenever the Bible mentions taking the life of men or animals or records any instruction for this to be done, it was Satan speaking. I asked them if they realized how much of the Bible they were claiming came from Satan. They replied, "We know! It is about half of the Bible." They were left to pick and choose what they wanted to accept that came from God and what came from Satan.

I was shocked at how far people are willing to go to support their preconceived ideas. No longer do they have the Bible to test to see if their theories are correct; now they use their theories to test to see if the Bible is correct. They claimed that everything must be viewed in light of the teachings of Jesus and that Jesus spoke the truth, but they could not depend upon what others had written. Yet, Jesus said to the Pharisees, "For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Matthew 15:4-6). Jesus said that the command for certain people to be killed under the Mosaic system came from God, not the devil. The portion of Scripture that Jesus was quoting (Exodus 21:17) was one of the sections that I had been told came from Satan. Jesus said that this was a command of God.

This is just one example of the strange theories people are beginning to believe that cause them to doubt the word of God. Their faith has been severely shaken. Sadly, several theological seminaries teach their aspiring pastors and church leaders that the Bible cannot be trusted, that men have handled it too much and that the stories are interesting but cannot be trusted as coming from God. These subversive theories are trickling down to the church members.

The Bible is the word of God. He is well able to guard His word. It is amazing how accurately the Bible has been preserved for us. When the Dead Sea Scrolls (dating from around AD 60) were found, scholars were amazed that the complete scroll of Isaiah was exactly in harmony with the manuscripts we have today. Don't let Satan fool you into believing that God is not able to preserve His word. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). God has especially guarded His word, and none need doubt the authenticity and dependability of the Bible. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

Faith in the Son of God

In our opening text, we saw that our faith is the victory that overcomes the world. Yet, John did not end there, he continued: "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?... He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in

himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son" (1 John 5:5, 10).

We certainly do not want to call God a liar, but that is exactly what we are doing if we do not believe the record that God gave of His Son. The fact that Jesus is the Son of God is a basic, fundamental, teaching of the Bible. If we cannot believe that He is telling us the truth on this point, how can we believe anything else He says? Nothing breaks confidence in a person faster than a lie. We are expecting to overcome the world. The crisis of the mark of the beast is going to come upon us very soon. We cannot afford to doubt God's word. This is the only dependable thing that we can rely upon when even the powers of heaven are shaken (Matthew 24:29).

God ties our dependence upon Him with believing that what God said about His Son is true. If we can believe what He said here, we can believe everything else. So what did God say about His Son?

There are three times that the Father spoke from heaven, as follows:

And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matthew 3:17).

While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him (Matthew 17:5).

Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again (John 12:28).

Two out of the three times the Father spoke from heaven while Jesus was here, He said that Jesus is His Son. He was telling us the absolute truth. If we cannot believe this, then our faith in God is on shaky ground.

Some people say that God just called Jesus His Son as a way of expressing the fact that He has a close relationship with Jesus. They say that He chose to call Him His Son because it is one of the closest human relationships that exist but that He never expected us to believe that Jesus is actually His Son.

As an example of this concept, let me quote from a Presbyterian website:

“The problem is that the idea of the Trinity as best we can explain it doesn’t even really explain it. The 3-in-1-ness of God is impossible for the human mind to comprehend. That’s why Jesus has to use the language that He does (‘My Father’) to talk about His relationship with God (Matt. 18:14, John 6:46, John 10:29-30, John 17:21, etc.) He is limited by human language, human understanding, human terminology, and human culture” (www.gspc.net/youth/index_files/Page370.htm).

The author says here that Jesus only called God, “My Father,” because He was “limited by human language...” In other words, when Jesus said that God is His Father, He didn’t really mean that God is actually His Father. This idea makes God out to be a liar, and it has a major flaw in its reasoning. You see, this reasoning assumes that God came across this strange breed of beings called “humans” who have strange relationships. It assumes that God failed to communicate with us properly because He was limited by our human relationships and language to get across the

truth of His divine relationship with Jesus. The fact is, God created us the way we are, and He said that He made us in His image. He is the one who designed us to have the relationships that we have. Before He ever created us, He had a Father-Son relationship with Christ. He then formed man in such a way that he, too, would have a father-son relationship, so that when He wanted to express His love by sending His Son to die for us, we would understand what He meant.

God is not limited by our human language and relationships. He created our relationships and our speaking abilities exactly the way He wanted them to be. The concept of a father and son are universal in every language on the earth. Everyone knows what a father and son are, and that is what God says His relationship with His Son is. If God wanted us to believe something else, He is well able to communicate with us whatever He wants to. He does not have to rely upon theologians to come up with highfalutin words like hypostasis, consubstantial, and 3-in-1. He just says what He means in His Bible, “This is my beloved Son.” That is what He wants us to believe. To believe otherwise is to make God a liar, and it will have drastic effects upon our ability to trust God. We cannot have weak faith in God and remain strong during the events of the last days. We have to keep our faith strong, and God has inseparably linked our faith with believing that Jesus is the Son of God.

Today, many Christians have completely discarded the idea of Christ being the begotten Son of God. As an example of this, let us read what one prominent Bible Commentary has to say

about it. "The Sonship of Christ is in no proper sense a born relationship to the Father, as some, otherwise sound divines, conceive of it." (*Jamieson, Fausset & Brown Commentary* on Romans 1:4) By the way, the "otherwise sound divines" he is talking about are the early Christian writers of the first, second, and third centuries. These people believed that Christ was literally begotten of God, and is really God's Son.

It is sad to see how people are willing to discredit God by saying that what He said about His Son is not true. Jesus said that He is "the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). We can be sure that He was telling the truth.

The Foundation of the Church

One day, when Jesus and His disciples came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:13-18)

Notice that the subject of this conversation was the identity of Jesus. When Jesus said, "upon this rock I will build my church," He didn't change the subject and refer to Peter as the rock. Instead, He was referring to the truth that

Jesus is the Son of God. Upon this truth, Jesus said, "I will build my church," a truth which came directly from God, the Father. This is the foundation of Christ's church. It is the primary fundamental belief. Everything you believe is going to be affected by what you believe about Jesus.

The Testimony of the Disciples

John the Baptist said of Christ, "And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John 1:34).

Philip found Nathanael, and told him that he had found the Messiah that Moses had written about. When Nathanael met Jesus, he was amazed that Jesus knew him and saw him under the fig tree. "Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these" (John 1:49, 50).

In this brief encounter with Jesus, Nathanael knew that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus commended him for His belief.

When Martha's brother, Lazarus, died, Jesus comforted her by saying: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world" (John 11:26, 27). These testimonies indicate that they were expecting the Messiah to come, and they were expecting this Messiah to be the Son of God.

When several of Jesus' disciples left Him, Jesus asked the twelve if they would also leave Him. "Then Simon

Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:68, 69).

When Jesus came walking on water to the disciples, Peter came out to Him, “And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God” (Matthew 14:32, 33).

God sent Philip to minister to an Ethiopian eunuch, who was studying a prophecy in Isaiah about the Messiah. After teaching the eunuch about the Messiah, he desired to be baptized. “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37). When the early disciples taught people about Christ, an integral part of this was to teach them that He is the Son of God. This is so fundamental that it was the only recorded doctrinal affirmation required before baptism. There may have been more, but this is the only one that is recorded in the Bible.

Saul of Tarsus was one of the strongest opponents of the early Christian church; yet his name was changed to Paul, and he became one of the greatest evangelists who ever lived. After the Lord met him on the road to Emmaus, he was baptized, “And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God” (Acts 9:20).

The Apostle John wrote his gospel with one purpose in mind. Near the end of his book, he said: “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye

might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:30, 31). John took time to write his gospel so that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.

John began his second epistle by stating, “Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love” (2 John 1:3). John was convinced that Jesus truly is the Son of the Father. He stated in his previous letter that if we do not believe this we are making God a liar. He also wrote, “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son” (1 John 2:22). To deny that Jesus is truly the Son of God is antichristian because it denies the very cornerstone of the gospel. The good news that God loves us enough to send His Son to die for us is meaningless if we deny that Jesus is the Son of God.

Jesus said, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30). This has caused many to be confused into thinking that Jesus is the Father, or is somehow joined to Him in a way that makes the Father and Son a compound being. Yet, this faulty conclusion need not be reached. It is helpful to read the context. Jesus said, “I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your

law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John 10:30-36). Jesus denied the charge of claiming to be God, pointing out that His claim was merely to be the Son of God.


The Jews evidently understood His words, because when He was finally charged for blasphemy and condemned to death, the accusation was that He claimed to be the Son of God.

When brought before Caiaphas, the Bible says, "Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God" (Matthew 26:63). Luke's account says, "Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth" (Luke 22:70, 71). After this Jesus was brought before Pilate, and when Pilate said he could find no fault in Him, "The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God" (John 19:7).

The jeering crowd at Christ's crucifixion said, "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God" (Matthew 27:43). Naturally, the strongest accusations about Christ would come from those who condemned Him to death. They all said that His claim was that He is the Son of God. This is exactly who Jesus said He is.

Summary

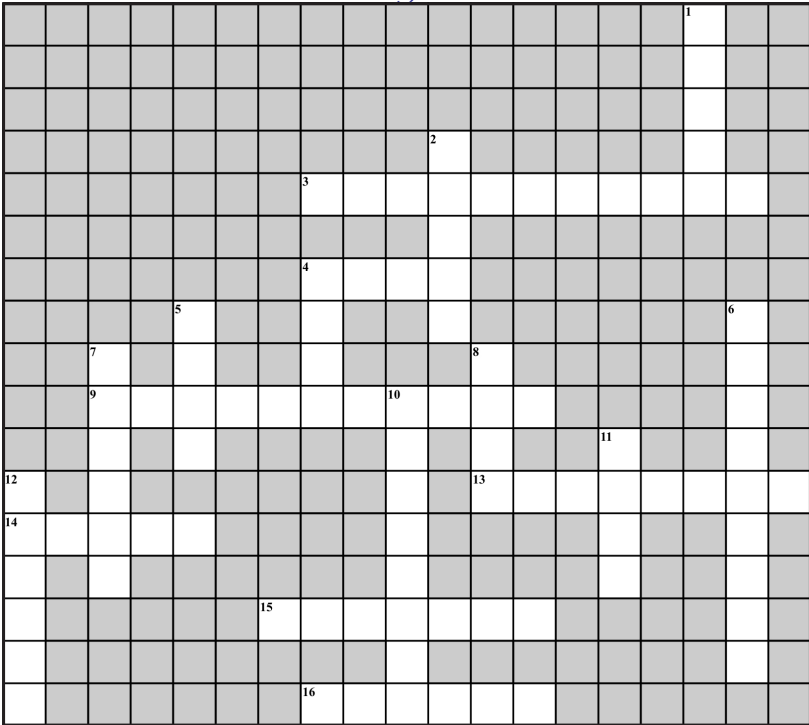
Faith is depending upon the word of God only to do what that word says. Our faith is directly related to the word of God. If we doubt God's word, our faith, necessarily, is diminished. God inseparably linked our faith to believing that Jesus is the Son of God. Any variance from that belief causes our faith to decrease. We cannot afford to let our faith to be lessened, especially at this time in earth's history. If you believe that Jesus is a coeternal companion of God, or simply one of the manifestations of God, or an angel, or just a man, your faith is bound to be faulty. God said that Jesus is His beloved Son (Matthew 3:17), and that He was begotten by Him (Hebrews 1:5). This is the truth! If we can believe this, then our faith in God can grow immensely. (For further study on Christ as the Son of God, I encourage you to read the book entitled, *God's Love on Trial*. You can contact us and request this book, or you can download it for free on our website at www.presenttruth.info.)

I pray that your faith will remain strong, and get stronger. Please avoid anything that would tend to weaken your faith, and fill your mind with God's word which will strengthen your faith. One excellent way to increase your time in God's word is to use an mp3 player, and load it with the Bible. You can download the mp3 Bible for free. You can get the NT at: www.audiotreasure.com/KJV. I suggest this one because it does not have any music in the background. You can also get the entire Bible at: firefighters.org/kjv/bible/index.cfm, but there is music in the background. I pray that these resources will be helpful to you. May it truly be said of you that "your faith is increased" (2 Corinthians 10:15). 

Something for the Young at Heart

This month we are continuing a series of crossword Bible studies based on a series of Bible Lessons written by Lynnford Beachy, entitled, "God's Love on Trial," taken from the book by the same title. In order to maintain the flow of the study, this crossword puzzle is not split into Across and Down sections—Across or Down is indicated at the end of each line. (The KJV is required.)

The Resurrection of Christ (Lesson 8)



Answers will be printed on the back page of next month's issue

Note: In the last lesson we learned that the Son of God died completely, and that His soul was made an offering for sin, not his body only. We saw how the prophecies of Psalm 88 applied to Christ. In this lesson we will discover what took place after His death.

➤ Jesus told His disciples that they would leave Him _____. John 16:32—**14 Across**

➤ The Psalms prophesied that Christ was made an _____ unto His acquaintances. Psalm 88:8—**9 Across**

➤ This verse portrays Christ saying, "I am shut up, and I _____ come forth." Psalm 88:8—**7 Down**

➤ The Father _____ Jesus from the dead. Galatians 1:1—**12 Down**

Note: Paul wrote, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in

the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us—ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:17-20). If someone else exercised his power in raising Jesus from the dead, Paul would not have used this as an example of the Father’s great power.

Here is a list of over 30 verses that say the Father raised His Son from the dead: Acts 2:24,30,32; 3:15,26; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:23,30,33,34,37; 17:31; 26:8; Romans 4:24,25; 6:4; 8:11; 10:9; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:15; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2 Timothy 2:8; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 1:3,21.

- Jesus said, “I can of mine own self do ____.” John 5:30—**15 Across**
- Jesus said, “I... was ____.” Revelation 1:18—**11 Down**
- The dead ____ not any thing. Ecclesiastes 9:5—**5 Down**
- When a person dies his ____ perish. Psalm 146:4—**10 Down**

Note: When Christ was dead He did not know anything, for His thought processes had stopped. He could not do anything at all, and certainly could not have raised Himself from the dead. Instead, He relied upon someone else to raise Him from the dead.

- When Christ was here, He prayed to the One who was able to ____ from death. Hebrews 5:7—**4 Across**

Note: It would have been a mockery for Christ to have cried out to His Father to save Him from death, if all the while He was immortal and able to save Himself from death. Christ died completely, friends, and He relied upon His Father to resurrect Him. He said, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke

23:46), indicating His complete dependence upon His Father to save Him out of death, and His willingness to entrust His eternal life into the hands of His Father.

Many Christians believe that when Jesus was on earth He was omniscient (all knowing), omnipotent (all powerful), omnipresent (having the ability to be all places at once), and immortal. These misconceptions keep people from being able to appreciate the magnitude of Christ’s sacrifice and suffering in our behalf.

- When Jesus was here He did not know the day or the ____ of His return. Mark 13:32—**8 Down**
 - Jesus increased in _____. Luke 2:52—**16 Across**
- Note:** You cannot increase in something if you already possess it all. Jesus did not know everything when He was here.
- Christ was made lower than the angels for the ____ of death. Hebrews 2:9—**6 Down**
 - There is Someone who only hath _____. 1 Timothy 6:16—**3 Across**
 - This Person dwells in ____ that man cannot approach. 1 Timothy 6:16—**1 Down**
 - No man hath ____ this Person. 1 Timothy 6:16—**4 Down**

Note: We have seen that Jesus was not immortal, all powerful nor all knowing. Any one of these attributes would have prevented Jesus from being able to suffer and experience fear or turmoil in the garden of Gethsemane or on the cross. We have also seen that God, the Father, raised Jesus from the dead, and that He could not raise Himself from the dead or He would not have been dead to begin with.

- Jesus said that He had ____ to lay down His life. John 10:17, 18—**2 Down**


Note: The word translated, “power,” in this verse means “authority.” It is the same word used when Jesus spoke with authority (Mark 1:22).

➤ Jesus said that He _____ this commandment from His Father. John 10:18—**13 Across**

Note: The Greek word, λαμβανω, that was translated “take” in this verse was also translated “received” at the end of this verse. The King James Version translated this verse in a way that makes it appear that Jesus had the power to raise Himself from the dead, but this would contradict over 30 verses that say the Father raised Him. The KJV translation is not completely accurate in this case. Notice some other translations of this statement: “I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to receive it again. This is the command which I received from my Father” (Twentieth Century NT). “Authority, have I, to lay it down, and, authority, have I, again, to receive it: This commandment, received I, from my Father” (1902 Rotherham Bible). “I am authorized to lay it down, and I am authorized

to receive it back again. This is the command I received from my Father” (1912 Weymouth NT Translation). “authority I have to lay down her, and authority I have again to receive her; this the command I received from the Father of me” (1865 Diaglot NT).

The above translations are correct in the way they render the words “authority” and “receive.” Jesus was not stating that He could raise Himself from the dead. The prophecy in Psalm 88:8 was true of Him, which says, “I am shut up, and cannot come forth.”

It was an immense sacrifice for God to yield up His only-begotten Son for us, yet He was willing to do it. If there was any other way that the human race could have been redeemed, God would have done it. Paul wrote, “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” (Galatians 2:21) Redemption comes to us only through “the blood of Jesus Christ.” God demonstrated His love by sending His Son to die for you. Please surrender your life to Him and invite Him to live in your heart. 

Tennessee Camp Meeting


In September of this year, the Berean Ministries located in Roan Mountain, Tennessee will host a camp meeting. This camp meeting will be held at the Roan Mountain State Park from Tuesday, September 29, through October 3, 2009.

All the speakers for this camp meeting are not yet finalized but will be announced later on as they are confirmed.

This promises to be a good camp meeting located in an area that is, at that time of the year, one of the most scenic parts of the USA. Tent sites are available for \$11 per night. RV sites are \$20 or \$25 per night depending upon your needs. Cabins should

be reserved as early as possible since there is often fairly heavy occupancy of the cabins at this time of year, because people come from all over to see the colors as the leaves take on their fall costume.

Most of the cabins can be shared (two couples) and it would be good, to make arrangements with friends so that you can book together. This way you will have the option of choosing who you will be sharing with. Cabin reservations should be made by calling 1-800-250-8620 or, 423-772-3030.

For more information you may call Pastor Malcolm McCrillis at 423-772-3161, or send him an e-mail at John17three@earthlink.net. 

The National Sunday Law (Part 8)

by Alonzo T. Jones

(The following is a portion of an argument of Alonzo T. Jones before The United States Senate, December 13, 1888, opposing the Blair Bill that promoted a Sunday law. *Editor*)

Mr. Jones: What they say is for the good of society is for the ruin of society.

Senator Blair: Do you understand that it is the church or the State that is making this law?

Mr. Jones: It is the State that is doing it, just as Constantine did it, to satisfy the churches.

Senator Blair: It may or may not satisfy the churches. The churches give their reasons here, which may be right or wrong, for the establishment of the Sabbath — for this Sunday legislation in all the States. The State, the whole people, make the law. You say that the whole people shall not make a good law because the churches ask for it.

Mr. Jones: I say the whole people shall not make a *bad* law, even though the churches do demand it; for any civil law relating to God is a bad law.

Senator Blair: Then what God did for three thousand years for the good of the Jews and the human race, was wrong?

Mr. Jones: No, sir; it was right.

Senator Blair: Then why not continue it?

Mr. Jones: Because he has discontinued that kind of government.

Senator Blair: We have done nothing in the world to divide the powers of government into those of church and state. We say those departments shall not interfere with each other.

Mr. Jones: Certainly.

Senator Blair: Here and in the States we are trying to run the civil

parts. We have taken jurisdiction of a portion of what God has entire jurisdiction, as to the church and state in the civil relations of men. The entire society does that. We put the sovereignty into the hands of everybody except women, and some of us are trying to do that. We have the same subject-matter, the good of society under our control, which under the theocracy was united into both church and state. If you do not let the State continue to do what was essential to society then, and is now, you are striking at one of the great ends for which government exists.

Mr. Jones: Not at all; because God has discontinued that kind of government.

Senator Blair: He has not discontinued the necessity of laws for the regulation of society.

Mr. Jones: He has in that way.

Senator Blair: No; it is just as necessary that there should be a Sabbath now for the good of man, as when God made and enforced the law by his direct supervision under a theocracy.

Mr. Jones: But no government but a theocracy can enforce such laws.

Senator Blair: Then unless we have a theocracy, we shall have no Sabbath.

Mr. Jones: We shall have no laws regulating the Sabbath.

Senator Blair: The Sabbath did not descend to the Jews and to all mankind, because there was a theocratic form of government among the Jews. How did the Sabbath come to mankind at large, when there was no theocratic form of government?

Mr. Jones: Those nations never kept it. Nobody but the Jews ever kept it.

Senator Blair: They could have kept it, because you say the Sabbath existed for all; not for the Jews alone, but for the human race.

Mr. Jones: Certainly, but if they did not keep it, it would do no good.

Senator Blair: It did not exist for good, then?

Mr. Jones: Certainly; a thing may exist for my good, and I may refuse to use it, as thousands do the salvation of Christ.

Senator Blair: I was taking your statement as true that it did exist for good outside of the Jews.

Mr. Jones: I said it was for the good of man. The Saviour said it was for the good of man. The Saviour died for the good of man.

Senator Blair: You would abolish the Sabbath, anyway?

Mr. Jones: Yes, in the civil law.

Senator Blair: You would abolish any Sabbath from human practice which shall be in the form of law, unless the individual here and there sees fit to observe it?

Mr. Jones: Certainly; that is a matter between man and his God.

Senator Blair: Your time has expired. Please take five minutes to close, as I have asked you some questions; still, they were questions that touched the trouble in my own mind.

Mr. Jones: Certainly; but I supposed that I was to have an hour to devote, uninterruptedly, to the points in questions.

Senator Blair: We have always been accustomed to conducting these hearings with reference to getting at the difficulties we had in our own minds, and I do not feel as though you could complain with an hour and ten minutes, if we give you ten minutes more.

Mr. Jones: Very good. Mr. Chairman, I have shown that in the fourth century this same movement developed a theocracy and in that the papacy, religious despotism, and oppression for conscience' sake. Now I want to show the secret of at least a portion of the present movement. The representative of the National Reform Association spoke here in behalf of this proposed legislation. That Association is asking for such a law and for such an amendment to the Constitution as you have proposed, in relation to the Christian religion in the public schools. That measure pleases them well, and this proposed Sunday law pleases them well.

Senator Blair: Just incorporate that proposed amendment to the Constitution in your remarks.

Mr. Jones: Very well; it is as follows:
"50th CONGRESS, } S. R. 86. 1st
SESSION. }

"Joint Resolution, proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States respecting establishments of religion and free public schools.

"Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), That the following amendment to the Constitution of the United States be, and hereby is, proposed to the States, to become valid when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the States, as provided in the Constitution:

"ARTICLE.

"SECTION 1. No State shall ever make or maintain any law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

"SEC. 2. Each State in this Union shall establish and maintain a system

of free public schools adequate for the education of all the children living therein, between the ages of six and sixteen years, inclusive, in the common branches of knowledge, and in virtue, morality, and the principles of the Christian religion. But no money raised by taxation imposed by law, or any money or other property or credit belonging to any municipal organization, or to any State, or to the United States, shall ever be appropriated, applied, or given to the use or purposes of any school, institution, corporation, or person, whereby instruction or training shall be given in the doctrines, tenets, belief, ceremonials, or observances peculiar to any sect, denomination, organization, or society, being, or claiming to be, religious in its character; nor shall such peculiar doctrines, tenets, belief, ceremonials, or observances be taught or inculcated in the free public schools.

“SEC. 3. To the end that each State, the United States, and all the people thereof, may have and preserve governments republican in form and in substance, the United States shall guaranty to every State, and to the People of every State and of the United States, the support and maintenance of such a system of free public schools as is herein provided.

“SEC. 4. That Congress shall enforce this article by legislation when necessary.”

What, then, do these men propose to do with the civil power when they can use it? The Christian Statesman is the organ of that Association, and in its issue of Oct. 2, 1884, said:

“Give all men to understand that this is a Christian nation, and that, believing that without Christianity we perish, we must maintain by all means our Christian character. Inscribe this character

on our Constitution. Enforce upon all who come among us the laws of Christian morality.”

To enforce upon men the laws of Christian morality, is nothing else than an attempt to compel them to be Christians, and does in fact compel them to be hypocrites. It will be seen at once that this will be but to invade the rights of conscience, and this, one of the vice-presidents of the Association declares, civil power has the right to do. Rev. David Gregg, D. D., now pastor of Park Street Church, Boston, a vice-president of the National Reform Association, plainly declared in the Christian Statesman of June 5, 1884, that the civil power “has the right to command the consciences of men.”

Rev. M. A. Gault, a district secretary and a leading worker of the Association, says:

“Our remedy for all these malefic influences, is to have the Government simply set up the moral law and recognize God’s authority behind it, and lay its hand on any religion that does not conform to it.”

When they have the Government lay its hand on dissenters, what will they have it do? Rev. E. B. Graham, also a vice-president of the Association, in an address delivered at York, Neb., and reported in the Christian Statesman of May 21, 1885, said:

“We might add in all justice, If the opponents of the Bible do not like our Government and its Christian features, let them go to some wild, desolate land, and in the name of the Devil, and for the sake of the Devil, subdue it, and set up a government of their own on infidel and atheistic ideas; and then if they can stand it, stay there till they die.”

That is what they propose to do. And that is worse than Russia. In the Century for April, 1888, Mr. Kennan gave a

view of the statutes of Russia on the subject of crimes against the faith, quoting statute after statute providing that whoever shall censure the Christian faith or the orthodox church, or the Scriptures, or the holy sacraments, or the saints, or their images, or the Virgin Mary, or the angels, or Christ, or God, shall be deprived of all civil rights, and exiled for life to the most remote parts of Siberia. This is the system in Russia, and it is in the direct line of the wishes of the National Reform Association.

Nor is that all. Rev. Jonathan Edwards, D. D., another vice-president of that Association, makes all dissenters atheists. He names atheists, deists, Jews, and Seventh-day Baptists, then classes them all together as atheists. I will read his own words:

“These all are, for the occasion, and so far as our amendment is concerned, one class. They use the same arguments and the same tactics against us. They must be counted together, which we very much regret, but which we cannot help. The first-named is the leader in the discontent and in the outcry — the atheist, to whom nothing is higher or more sacred than man, and nothing survives the tomb. It is his class. Its labors are almost wholly in his interest; its success would be almost wholly his triumph. The rest are adjuncts to him in this contest. They must be named from him; they must be treated as, for this question, one party.”

They class us as atheists, and are going to condemn all alike; and you are asked to give them the power. Remember these are the views of the members of the National Reform Association, whose secretary stood at this table this morning in defense of this Sunday law. These extracts show what his ideas are, and how he would use them. Dr. Everts, of Chicago, who also was here,

declared last month in Chicago, in my hearing, on the subject of this Sunday law, that “it is atheism or the Sabbath.”

Mr. Edwards continues:

“What are the rights of the atheist? I would tolerate him as I would tolerate a poor lunatic; for in my view his mind is scarcely sound. So long as he does not rave, so long as he is not dangerous, I would tolerate him. I would tolerate him as I would a conspirator. The atheist is a dangerous man. Yes, to this extent I will tolerate the atheist; but no more. Why should I? The atheist does not tolerate me. He does not smile either in pity or in scorn upon my faith. He hates my faith, and he hates me for my faith.... I can tolerate difference and discussion; I can tolerate heresy and false religion; I can debate the use of the Bible in our common schools, the taxation of church property, the propriety of chaplaincies and the like, but there are some questions past debate. Tolerate atheism, sir? There is nothing out of hell that I would not tolerate as soon! The atheist may live, as I have said; but, God helping us, the taint of his destructive creed shall not defile any of the civil institutions of all this fair land! Let us repeat, atheism and Christianity are contradictory terms. They are incompatible systems. They cannot dwell together on the same continent!”

Senator Blair: Many atheists are for Sunday laws.

Mr. Jones: Let them be so if they choose; but what I am striking at, is that these men have no right to say that I am an atheist simply because I do not believe in keeping Sunday.

To be Continued...

(This article was taken from pages 93-101 of the book entitled, *The National Sunday Law*, by Alonzo T. Jones. Some editing was done for this publication. *Editor*)

The Gospel in Creation (Part 5)

by Ellet J. Waggoner

Continued from last month...

“The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times” (Psalm 12:6). Therefore he who builds upon the Rock Jesus Christ, by accepting His word in living faith, builds upon a tried foundation. So we read: “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded” (1 Peter 2:1-6).

The force of this is not so clearly seen until we read the passage of Scripture which is quoted by the apostle, in connection with the one that we have quoted from the Saviour’s Sermon on the Mount. Recalling the latter, we read from the prophecy of Isaiah:

“Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone of sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. And I will make judgment the line, and righteousness the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge

shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. As often as it passeth through, it shall take you; for morning by morning shall it pass through, by day and by night: and it shall be nought but terror to understand the message” (Isaiah 28:16-19, R.V.).

Christ is the tried foundation. Righteousness is the plummet by which He is laid. His character is perfectly true and right. Satan exhausted all his arts in trying to lead Him to sin, and was unsuccessful. He is a sure foundation. We build on Him by believing His word, as He Himself said. The floods will surely come. There will be an overflowing scourge that will sweep away the refuge of lies, and all who have built on a false foundation. The house built on the sand will certainly fall. When the storm begins to beat with fury, those who have made lies their refuge will flee for their lives as their foundation begins to totter; but the flood will carry them away. This is the picture presented by the two passages of Scripture.

But far different will it be with those who have built on the Rock of Ages. That sure foundation will stand every blast. Nothing can shake it. Those who have built on it will not make haste. They have often proved that it is a sure refuge, and so they can calmly watch the torrent. They do not need to flee for their lives. Having built on the rock, they are as secure as the rock itself. And why? Because they are really a part of the rock, for the Rock builds up all who build upon it. Listen to the words of the apostle: “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are

sanctified.” Acts 20:32. When one builds upon the Rock, the rock itself, being a living rock, grows up into him, so that the foundation and the building are all one piece. This is shown by many passages of Scripture. We will repeat a few.

“For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Hebrews 2:11).

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:19-22).

“To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:4, 5).

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith” (Colossians 2:6, 7).

Here we have combined the figure of a house with that of a plant. This is perfectly natural, because the Rock upon which we build is a living stone, and gives life to those who are built upon it, so that they, as lively stones, grow into a building. The two figures are combined by the apostle Paul, “Ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building” (1 Corinthians 3:9).

This is also shown very beautifully in the exhortation which Jehoshaphat gave to Israel when at the command of the Lord they were going out against a vastly superior force, trusting in His word that He would fight for them. “And they rose

early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper” (2 Chronicles 20:20). Here as we have seen in the case of Abraham, the word “believe” is from the Hebrew word “Amen.” The word “established” is also another form of the very same word. So that the passage might properly be rendered thus: “Build upon the Lord your God, so shall ye be built up.”

THE MESSAGE OF COMFORT: One more point only will be given to show the hope and comfort that are contained in the things that were written aforetime. The fortieth chapter of Isaiah is wholly a message of comfort. It begins, “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God.” Then follows an assurance of forgiveness, and then the special message is given by the voice of one crying in the wilderness. That message is the power of the word of God, as contrasted with the weakness of men. “The voice said, Cry. And he said, what shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever” (verses 6-8).

Then follow illustrations of the power of the word. The facts of creation are referred to, and the power of God is contrasted with the weakness of men. Then comes this beautiful passage: “To whom then will ye liken Me, that I should be equal to him? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by

number: He calleth them all by name; by the greatness of His might, and for that He is strong in power, not one is lacking” (Isaiah 121:25, 26, R. V.).

Here again we are referred to the fact that God is the upholder of the heavens; that it is His power that keeps the heavenly bodies in their places. But for His direct interposition there would be chaos. In the following verses this fact is offered to the people of God for their special encouragement. “Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid faggr..... .at i omw id, “If ye havee over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength” (Isaiah 40:27-29).

What a lesson of trust is here! “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God” (Psalm 62:11). That power is the power that upholds the heavens, and causes the stars and planets to hold their courses. It is this power that He gives to the faint, and to those who have no might, if they will but trust Him. Let a despondent soul but spend a little time in contemplation of the heavens, thinking the while of this passage, and he will be better able than ever before to realize what the apostle means when he says, “Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, unto patience and longsuffering, with joyfulness” (Colossians 1:11).

But what is all this intended to show? The power of the word; for it is by the word of His power that all things are upheld. It is the word of the Lord that has created all things. That word is brought to our attention in the first part of the

chapter, in contrast with all flesh, as the word that abideth forever. Read now the fortieth chapter of Isaiah entire, especially verses 6-8, and 26, and then read the apostle Peter’s comment:

“Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth, and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth forever” 1 Peter 1:23-25. Here we have the quotation from the fortieth of Isaiah concerning the word of God, which creates and upholds all things. It is the living word, which is the life and strength of all things. Take this all in, and then read the closing words of the apostle: “And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

The gospel, then, is simply the creative power of God applied to men. Any gospel that leaves creation out, or which does not preach the creative power of God, as seen in the things that He has made, and which does not comfort men by that power, calling upon them ever to keep it in mind as their only source of strength, is “another gospel,” which is simply no gospel at all, since there can be no other.

This, then, is the lesson to be learned “in the beginning.” He who has learned it is a new creature in Christ, and is ready to learn that which follows; namely, the lesson of growth. With these wonderful facts in mind, how worse than useless do the fears seem which some express: “I am afraid that if I begin the Christian life, I shall not be able to hold out.” Of course, you wouldn’t be able to hold out. You are without strength, but help has been laid upon One that is mighty. He is able to make you stand, and to keep you to the end. “Kept by the power of God through

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