

The Sword AND Staff

"Preach the Word" (II Timothy 4:2) • "Feed the Flock" (I Peter 5:2)

THE DIGNITY OF MAN



By JAMES E. GIBBONS — 1535 Fairfield Drive
Mount Airy, N.C. 27030 U.S.A.

IN THE 8TH PSALM we see the glory of God and the dignity of man. "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens...When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Yes, in contrast with God and his creative acts man seems so inconsequential and minutely small, but read

on. God has placed a special dignity upon man. "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet; All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" Not only is this a beautiful Psalm, it stresses great truth.

The Bible teaches the true dignity of man as a creature made in God's own image and then the restored and augmented dignity as found in Christ. But we are living in an age when these high and holy concepts have largely been replaced by an earthly orientation, a Godless humanism, and an animal and fleshly sophistication. The underlying philosophy behind all of this delusion is evolution. Man is pictured as the final product (or the most advanced version of it) of a long and involved journey from the swamp. He is just another animal among animals (howbeit of a higher order). And with such a life-view, he has been living like an animal (by the law of the jungle and primarily for fleshly gratification). Yes, we are living in an age of cheap humanity. Mankind is selling himself short of the true worth and dignity that are really his.

Therefore, it behooves us to learn more about the dignity of man from the viewpoint of the Word of God.

I. THE DIGNITY OF MAN IN THE BEGINNING

Made in the Very Image of God

Genesis 1:26 reads, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . ." Then Genesis 2:7 reads, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Then Genesis 1:27 is sort of a summary statement: 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he

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THE SWORD AND STAFF

Post Office Box 147

Mt. Airy, N.C. 27030 U.S.A.

INFORMATION:

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Proverbially SPEAKING...

A CHRISTIAN can live life to the fullest because he is not afraid to die.

"Guilt hugs the sin like its shadow, and it is impossible to send the one away without sending away also the other."

Only a few people get brainstormed while most of the others fall into the category of the brainwashed.

"You can't expect to make a place in the sun for yourself if you keep taking refuge under the family tree."

The danger we face in being too tolerant of the wrongs in others is that we will become too tolerant of the wrongs in ourselves.

"The trouble with letting off steam is that it only gets you into more hot water."

Folks sure are peculiar: they want the front of the bus, the back of the church, and the middle of the road.

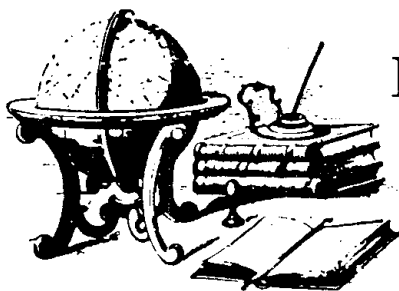
"In gratitude for your own good fortune you must render in return some sacrifice of your life for other life."

You cannot take it with you, but you can send it on ahead (Matthew 6:19-21; I Timothy 6:17-19; II Timothy 1:12; Colossians 3:23,24).

"Life is tragic for the person who has plenty to live on but nothing to live for."

There is nothing more pitiful (and sometimes disgusting) than a reactionary reacting against himself and other reactionaries.

"What the world needs is more vision and less television."



EDITORIAL

COMMENTS...

"AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, AND DWELT AMONG US"

■ "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:1,14).

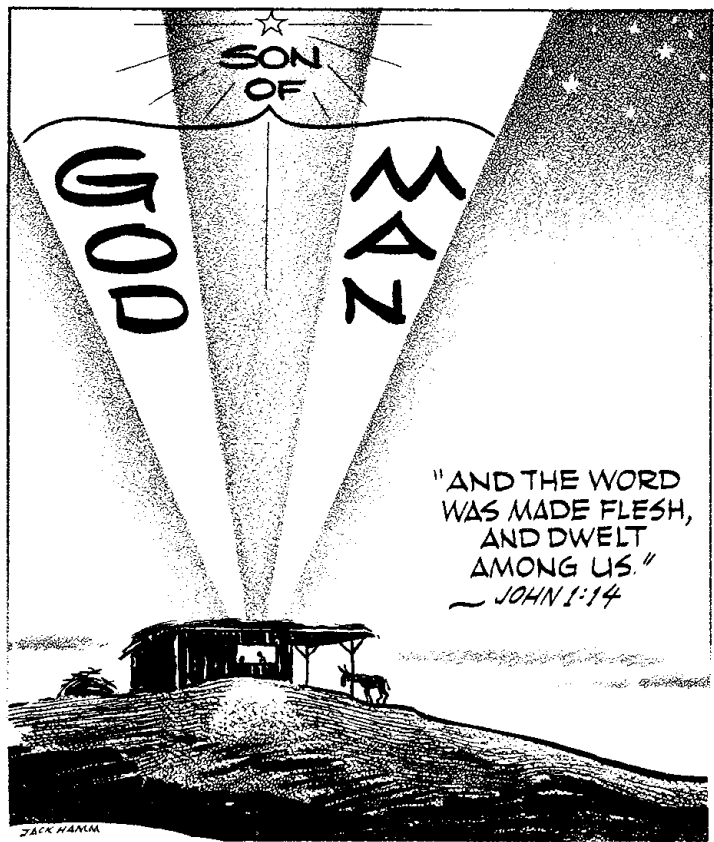
"AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH"—what great and wonderful truth is bound up in these few short words (for which we can never praise God enough)! It is mind-boggling, as a human being, to try to think about God and try to comprehend him—God, the Almighty One, who is Spirit (who is invisible); God, Supreme Intelligence, the Eternal Self-Existent One (the great I AM); God, the essence and totality of perfection (whose character constitutes the law of the universe); God, who has called everything into being (and, as Paul said, "in him we live, and move, and have our being"); God, who exists as Supreme Personality (who is greater than the sum total of everything). And some small minds would arrogantly speak of "the philosophical conception of the inconceivable." But, "the Word was made flesh"!

Not only was God "reconciling the world unto himself" (II Corinthians 5:19) in becoming flesh, He made it easier for us (with our fleshly limitations) to understand him. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." The apostle Paul declared, "For in him (Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead (Deity) bodily" (Colossians 2:9). An interesting exchange of words is found in John 14:8 and 9, "Philip saith unto him, Lord shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" In John 10:30 Jesus had declared, "I and my Father are one." God is not just "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity" (Isaiah 57:15), He has manifested Himself in the most practical way to his intelligent creation in the physical realm. "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23). When we think about God, it is still mind-boggling, but we have something more concrete upon which to fasten our finite minds. No, we had no problem in believing in God as Spirit (everything points to His reality, Romans 1:20). It is just that in the Word becoming flesh, we can better behold His glory, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Man needed that, and God has accommodated us.

In presenting the great and majestic truths of God, the Bible, and eternity we need to do the same. It is ever so commendable to engage in talk, discussion, and writings about the great doctrines of the Bible. But if we don't come down to practical appli-

cation, "what doth it profit?" Many may ascend upon high into their ivory theological towers among the clouds (with their many theoretical and theological concepts) far removed from everyday reality. One person spoke of such a one. In great theological treatments he could go the deepest, and stay in the longest, to come out the driest! Moses was not like that. He scaled the lofty and holy heights of Mount Sinai to be with God in experiences unparalleled, but when he came down he had the Ten Commandments. The apostle Paul could write about some of the most profound and lofty doctrines, but he always came down to practical application of that which he wrote. The book of Romans is a good example of this. The great doctrines are seen in the first ten chapters. After these exalted truths, and praising God for them ("O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!...Romans 11:33-36), we have Romans 12:1 and 2 (then the rest of this great book). He begins the practical application: "I beseech you THEREFORE (on the basis of the wonderful doctrines of the preceding chapters), brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye

THEY MEET IN ONE



present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." The first three chapters of Ephesians are the same way (how wonderful!), but he gets around to the "THEREFORE" of practical application beginning in chapter 4:1. These

books are not exceptions, but the rule with him. Let us learn from this inspired man.

And the Word needs to become flesh in other ways too. People can hear preaching about Christ and being a Christian (being like Christ), but they need to see it. Christianity came into the Roman Empire as an alien religion. In a world of sensuality (void of love), the life-style it advocated was decidedly different from what they had been used to seeing. Even as Christ became flesh, the world needs to see the great and noble teachings of Christ embodied in a human being. The world must see a real life sample of the product we represent. Then, and only then, will the people of the world be impressed. That is why preachers, elders, and teachers must be the real thing. The new converts need to know what is expected of them, in a practical way, by looking to leaders and those who are already Christians. Paul's words are more meaningful if we keep this in mind. Paul urged the Corinthians, "Brethren, be followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). Being burdened that some were not embodying the truth as it is in Christ, Paul charged the Philippian Christians, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample" (Read Philippians 3:16-19). And being more specific, Paul told the Thessalonians: "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought (nothing); but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not the power (the right to be supported as a preacher), but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (II Thessalonians 3:7-10). Paul worked in order to show the Thessalonians that this is honorable (and is what every Christian should do)—although as a preacher of the gospel he had a right to be supported in his work. At Ephesus he went a step further and said that he had showed them (in his working) how they should do this in order to be able to take care of the needy (Acts 20: 34,35). Elders are to meet certain qualifications of maturity (the Word becoming flesh in them) so they can be examples for the flock to follow (I Peter 5:3; Hebrews 13:7; I Timothy 3:1-7).

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). What great and glorious truth this is! But the Word needs to be made flesh again, and again, and again. You get the message. And may we be God's flesh and blood message to the world (in deed and in truth). Amen. □

EDITORIAL

Byways

DISRUPTED SLEEP AND THE APOSTLES

EVERY TIME that *The Sword and Staff* goes into the mail we usually receive a series of telephone calls. This past issue was no exception. Of the first three that came in, the first one was from North Carolina and the next two from Tennessee and Illinois respectively. In this article we wish to concentrate on the one that came from North Carolina.

My wife and I were settled down in the bed soundly asleep that Saturday night, trying to get needed sleep in anticipation of the coming Lord's day (we would lose one hour that night as the clocks had been set ahead for the beginning of Daylight-Saving Time the next day). Our sound sleep was suddenly and abruptly disrupted by the persistent ringing of the telephone.

Agreement

As I struggled to the floor, and tried to get my mind in gear, the gentleman on the other end of the line let me know that he had received *The Sword and Staff* and that he would like to say some things about the letter I had written to *THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS* (having to do with the ordination of a woman as a bishop in the Episcopal Church). As he referred to and read part of the article aloud, yes, he seemingly was in agreement with point number 1. (Women should not be ordained bishops because women are not to teach or usurp authority over the man in the context of the church, I Timothy 2:11-14, and obviously women cannot meet the stated requirements for it says "if a MAN desire the office of a bishop" and that a bishop must be "the HUSBAND of ONE WIFE," I Timothy 3:1f). I was encouraged as he pressed the conversation and expressed agreement with point number 2; yes, the office of bishop as practiced by the Episcopal Church (and others) represents nothing found in the New Testament Scriptures. All sounded well and good, I thought, as I tried to rub the sleep from my eyes.

Disagreement

The caller continued, but he "came on" in a more aggressive manner. He definitely was not in agreement with point number 3. As he made reference to my quotation from Ephesians 2:20, he strongly disagreed with my assertion that there were no apostles in the church upon earth today. I had said that the very nature of the office of an apostle made it impossible for them to have successors. They were the official eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ (especially selected by him) in getting the church going among men, as well as revealing and confirming the truth of the New Testament (Acts 1:8,21,22; 2:14,32,43; 4:33; 5:29-32; 10:39-42; 26:16; I Corinthians 9:1; 15:7,8; II Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3,4; Ephesians 3:2-5; John 16:13). We enjoy the benefits of their accomplished and completed work in the church and in the New Testament Scriptures. By now my nocturnal caller was coming on so strong that I just let him talk, hardly interrupting him (and at the same time remembering some words of our

Lord that just might apply to such a one). I could have rudely interrupted him, as my wife was wanting to get back to sleep, but I didn't. He said that Ephesians 4:11-14 teaches that we still have living apostles in the church today. There were apostles other than the twelve and Paul, he added. Then to reinforce his claim of apostles being in the church today, he quoted Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day and for ever." And with this, more generically, he threw in words spoken by our Lord, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12).



THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES ON THE APOSTLES.

Other Apostles

To his claim that there are apostles in the church today because other men besides the twelve and Paul were called such, I tried to get a word in "edge ways" in the following thoughts (which I was unable to finish). Yes, the word apostle is used in the New Testament of others besides the twelve and Paul. It is very much like the term elder. We find it used in a generic sense and in a specific sense. Elder simply means older, and in a generic sense that is what all older men are called. However, in a specific sense it refers to an office in the church. We can understand this without any problem. The same is true of the term translated "deacon" (*diakonos*) in the New Testament Scriptures. The term is found used in the generic sense (servant) as well as the specific sense (an office in the church). This is likewise true with apostle. The word apostle literally means one sent forth. The meaning is narrowed down to one sent on a special mission, and then more uniquely and specifically, the twelve and Paul who were sent forth as the official eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ.

The wider use of the word can be seen in the following Scriptures: (1) Paul and Barnabas, as they were sent out by the church at Antioch on a special mission of evangelism, are called apostles jointly (Acts 13:1-3; 14:4,14). This is used in a way beyond Paul being called an apostle in the sense of the twelve. (2) Paul speaks

of "us the apostles" who were fools for Christ's sake, etc. in I Corinthians 4:9,10. The context (3:4-6,21-23; 4:1-10; etc.) seems to indicate that the antecedent and reference in I Corinthians points to Paul, Apollos, and Cephas ("us the apostles"). (3) The brethren who carried the special offering of relief to the poor Jewish Christians in Palestine are called apostles of the churches ("messengers" is a translation of the word for apostles) (II Corinthians 8:23). In keeping with the basic meaning of the word, they had been sent forth (and on a special mission). (4) Epaphroditus is called an apostle in Philippians 2:25 (the KJV rendering "messenger" is the English representation of the Greek word *apostolos*). This brother had been sent by the church at Philippi to Rome to minister unto the needs of the special prisoner Paul. (5) Paul, Silas, and Timothy are jointly called apostles in I Thessalonians. Silas and Timothy, along with Paul, jointly send greetings. Follow the "we" references all through chapter 1 and on into chapter 2. All of these preachers are included in what is being said. Then notice 2:6, "Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the *apostles* of Christ." (6) Christ himself is called an apostle in Hebrews 3:1. In keeping with the meaning of the word, we know that he was sent from heaven to earth on the greatest mission ever undertaken (and accomplished) in behalf of man.

So these are the more generic uses of the word apostle, whereas when speaking of the twelve and Paul, a more limited and specific application of the word is meant. The word is used in an official sense, referring to their special and unique office (and work). They were the official eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ (especially chosen and sent forth for that purpose). As such, they had no successors.

Christ the Same

As already indicated, my outspoken nocturnal caller continued to press his claims in behalf of present-day apostles by saying, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). The thought evidently was: if they had apostles in the first century church, and Jesus Christ is still the same, we can have apostles in the church today. When I said that God created Adam and Eve, but that is not the way He chooses to bring human beings into the world today, my caller didn't seem to get the point (or at least he didn't acknowledge it as he kept on talking). And God exerted His Almighty Power in a different way, He used different "laws" and principles, in bringing things into being than He does now in sustaining and continuing them. And if men at one time offered animal sacrifices to God, why don't we still offer them today? God is still the same. However, as we look at the Bible as a whole we are made to realize that God has progressively revealed Himself and His will to mankind, one thing preparing and leading to another. If God does not have men exercising the power of apostles today, that does not mean that God has changed. It means His purpose has been accomplished as to why He had apostles.

Present-Day Apostles

Upon my caller's continued persistence in claims of present-day apostles, and somehow sensing that he must be some kind of "Pentecostal," I finally said to him, "All right, if we have apostles today, who are the apostles? Is Oral Roberts an apostle? Is Jim Bakker?" (and what about the Mormons and the Catholics? They make their claims of apostles). To this he replied (in so many words), "No, they are not apostles, and neither is Jerry Falwell!" I insisted (we must be practical), "Give me the name of a present-day apostle then. Do you know any?" To this he more humbly responded that he knew of none and that he had never met one. I took this cue to tell him that I had no problem with identifying the apostles, and that I read their writings almost every day. Their completed work has been done, and I was enjoying the benefits of it. (To this he advised me not to worship the Bible). And to say that there are living apostles in the church today is to imply that the Bible has not been completed, and that men (modern-day "apostles and prophets") may yet add to the pages of this Holy Book (Ephesians 3:2-5; John 16:13). I don't "buy" this, do you?

Greater Works Than Christ

Almost generically, he insisted that we would do greater works than Christ (John 14:12), as already intimated. This is a mighty big claim when we consider that in Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead (Deity) bodily" (Colossians 2:9), and that he had the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34). He was the Almighty God of eternity, the great I AM, in human form. Do greater works in the category of Deity? How presumptuous to entertain such a thought. No way! Here I finally interrupted him, and said, "Christ raised three people from the dead. How many have you raised?" The question went unanswered (as he continued to talk). Certainly by the power of God the apostles did many mighty works (in keeping with their office, II Corinthians 12:12) that were of the nature of those done by Christ, but what about the "greater works"? It cannot refer to miracles, for who could surpass God Himself? "By this the Lord does not mean that the disciples shall perform greater miracles, but that they shall produce moral and spiritual revolutions which are intrinsically more wonderful than miracles. For instance, at his death Jesus had converted five hundred disciples (i.e., I Corinthians 15:6), but at Pentecost the apostles converted three thousand in one day. The converts of Paul greatly outnumbered those of Christ's own ministry."

By now I could see by the expression on my wife's face that she would prefer to be back asleep and that the telephone conversation was largely futile, so I interrupted our nocturnal caller to say, "You woke us from our sleep, and my wife would like to get back to sleep. If you would like to continue this conversation, I will pick up a telephone in another room." To which he said that he was through and didn't wish to talk anymore. However, he did take a little more time to call the wrath of God down upon me. I was anathematized as he quoted Galatians 1:8, "But though we, or an

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EDITORIAL *Byways*

(Continued from Last Page)

angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” With that we settled down again and went back to sleep. □

THE DIGNITY OF MAN

(Continued from Page 1)

him; male and female created he them.”

Man is not just an animal—he is a dual personality, flesh and spirit; physically adapted to his present environment and spiritually made after the image of God to live forever. The image is not the material body, but the spirit within (John 4:24; Luke 24:39) (for God is Spirit). And, subsequently, the image also involves man’s intellect. Man is after God’s image in being created with a superior intelligence. He is an intelligent being; thus, a responsible, accountable, free-moral agent—a moral creature with a conscience capacity. The likeness of God was reflected in man in that he was created sinless and holy.

What a great dignity!

Man’s Physical Dignity

Evolution pictures the first “true” man as a stooped and haggard ape-like creature, the climax of millions of year in his upward climb from the swamp. The Bible presents the first man Adam (and there was none before him, I Corinthians 15:45) as a prince-of-a-man, the master of all that he surveyed, and wherein the very image of God was placed. He came into being as a direct act of God’s creative power (no evolution). He really had to be some man, although later having sinned and physically under the sentence of death, to live to be 930 years of age (Genesis 5:5). Methuselah even lived to be 969 years old (Genesis 5:27). Man had just been created, and was strong and vigorous, no doubt; all of the diseases of today had not spread into the world.

Order of Creation and Dominion

Man’s place in the order of creation suggests favor and dignity. Everything was ready for him when he arrived on the scene. By logical sequence all things had been brought into being, leading up to man. Now on the sixth day, as the summit and crowning act of God’s creation, man is brought into being. Then God showed his special regard for this favored creature by providing a paradise on earth for him, the Garden of Eden. He was called upon to name all of the creatures and was placed in dominion over everything (and was told that he should subdue it). This is the dignity of man.

Man Created Full Grown

In view of all of this apparent dignity bestowed upon man, with the Psalmist we are made to exclaim, “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well” (Psalms 139:14).

But some would try to detract from this dignity (and

try to buttress their pagan philosophy of origins, evolution) by making their claims of uniformitarianism—that the earth is very old and has been here for eons upon eons of eons of time. The Bible doesn’t really say how old the earth is (Genesis 1:1,2). However, we cannot accurately judge that which we see in nature by the observation of existing powers, natural laws, and principles as far as origins is concerned (we can’t if we believe in special creation). Let us illustrate. Just suppose that we could have been on the sideline right after God had created everything. We are able to see Adam. He is just an hour old, but to us he looks like he is thirty years old. He has been created full grown. The same seems to be true of all of God’s creation. The stars and heavenly bodies may be all of those multiplied light years away, but that has no bearing on determining the age of the universe, the solar systems. They were all created accomplishing their purpose as they came into being. In other words, the light from these distant heavenly bodies was striking the earth as they came into being. They were created “full grown.” By the very nature of things, God would have had to exert His Almighty Power, His natural laws, and divine principles in a different way in creating than he does in the sustaining and continued existence of that which has been brought into being. No, this creates no problem with us. There has been no distraction from man’s dignity as created by God.

Instantaneous Eternal Bodies

Then some would try to accommodate the Bible and the theory of evolution by saying that God created everything through evolution—theistic evolution. We have no problem in believing that God created man in the limits of the literal sixth day and firmly believe that he could have done it faster if He had so chosen. After all, He is God; He is Almighty. With the second coming of Christ, Pauls says that “we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trump shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (I Corinthians 15:51,52). This word of “moment” (*atomo*, the word from which we get our English word atom) means not cut or divided. In other words, before we can reckon time (before we can “bat” an eye with the “twinkling of an eye”) time will be no more, and we shall be changed into our new eternal bodies; bodies that will never die. If God instantaneously can create a body that will last forever, we do not have to resort to the sickly theory of theistic evolution that says it took him millions of years to create the earthly body of man as we know it. He is Almighty; let us never forget this!

But, in the meantime, what a great honor and dignity he has placed upon us from creation. Let us always respect ourselves accordingly.

II. THE DIGNITY OF MAN RESTORED IN CHRIST

The dignity of man—how we need to respect ourselves as God respects us. How we need to respect one another and respect the dignity of God within us, the very image of God. Yes, we are created in His image. We are creatures not just of time, but eternity.

Inasmuch as man was created in God's image, he was made a moral being—and thus he had a moral choice. And we know that he made a wrong choice in the Garden of Eden, as he exercised this special prerogative. God said that if man ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree he would surely die (Genesis 2:17). We know the sad story of how sin and death came into the world, and the human race became a dying race.

As we jump across the thousands of years and centuries, we come to the New Testament Scriptures. We find that the apostle Paul says in Romans 8:22 "that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." He also says in Romans that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Man by unfortunate choice had lost, or marred, much of that original dignity. Well, to bridge the gap and to make a long story short, all of us know John 3:16, and how Jesus came into the world that man might be restored to God and again have that dignity he enjoyed before; yes, that God might reclaim us, that we might be the children of God in truth, spiritually speaking.

Children of God:

Birth, Adoption, Joint-Heirs with Christ

And, thus, we read in the gospel of John (1:12), where it says, "But as many as received him to them gave he power (the right or privilege) to become the sons of God (children of God) even to them that believe on his name." So John says, if we will believe on his name we have the privilege of becoming children of God (again, and in a restored and wonderful sense). In I John chapter 3, verse 1, John said, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God (children of God); therefore, the world knoweth us not because it knew him not." So, what a great love has been bestowed upon us that we should actually be called the children of God.

Well, we know that John teaches that we must be born of water and the Spirit to enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:3,5). John puts the emphasis upon conversion as a new birth. As we know this takes place when we repent and are baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38; I Peter 1:22,23). Throughout John's writings he talks about being children of God through the new birth. This may be something that some haven't considered before, but Paul puts the emphasis upon this from another angle. He says that we are children of God through adoption. He uses this figure rather than the birth.

Let's illustrate this by turning to Romans 8, reading verses 15 through 17. Paul says, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs with God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." All right, he says that we have the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." What about "Abba"? What about "Father"? These words actually mean the same. "Abba" is Aramaic for father, and, of course, "Father" in English represents the Greek for father. The word "Abba" is

from the native tongue of the Jews, and basically it would be more of a personal expression for father (like a child says, "Daddy," or "Dad"). In "Abba" we hear the babbling of a child. So, in "Abba, Father" we cry out in the Spirit of adoption that we are God's children. And we have two witnesses to back it up, the Holy Spirit and our own being witness that we are indeed the children of God ("in the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word be established").

Then in verse 17, he says, "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Now this is rather interesting since Paul is writing to Rome, and we understand that it was a Roman law that said an adopted child could not receive any less inheritance than a regular child by birth. To use Paul's figure, we are adopted children of God, we are joint-heirs, and he says that we are joint-heirs *with Christ*. Christ is the only begotten Son of God, and we are joint-heirs with him. This is beyond our wildest imagination, isn't it, to think that we are joint-heirs with the only begotten Son of God in eternity. To think of all that God has in store for those who love him! We have been restored to God. Our relationship known in the Garden of Eden has been restored. But on top of that we are joint-heirs with the very Son of God in eternity. As that grand old hymn goes, "I'm a child of the king, a child of the king; with Jesus my Savior, I'm a child of the king." How wonderful to be a child of God and to know that we are joint-heirs with the Son of God throughout all eternity! What a great honor and dignity are ours!

The Temple of God

(The Holy Spirit Dwells in Christians)

According to Acts 2:38 when we repent and are baptized (immersed) for the remission of sins, we thereby receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (i.e., the Holy Spirit as a gift). The promise of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit (in this way) are universal according to the next verse: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (2:39). Acts 5:32 says that the Holy Spirit is "given to them that obey him (God)." In Romans 5:5 Paul speaks of "the Holy Ghost (Spirit) which is given unto us." Having initially been given to us when we repented and were baptized, the Holy Spirit continues to dwell in us according to our faith and obedience. Paul prayed in behalf of the Ephesian Christians, "That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. . ." (Ephesians 3:16,17a).

This should be plain enough, but Paul asks in I Corinthians 6:19,20, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost (Spirit) which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Continued thought in this vein is found in II Corinthians 6:16, "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my

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THE DIGNITY OF MAN

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people." Individually Christians are the temple of God, but this figure (and the reality of it spiritually) is expanded to apply to them collectively. Paul says that we "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 2:20-22). Either way we look at it, we are the temple of God and the "habitation of God through the Spirit."

This certainly is a great honor and dignity, as well as being the source of great spiritual strength. However, the sacredness and dignity that is ours is made even more evident and emphatic when we examine the word translated "temple" in these verses. There are two Greek words for temple in the New Testament Scriptures, *hieron* and *naos*. *Hieron* is more generic as it included the various other structures and complexes in connection with the temple on the temple mount. But *naos* is more limited as it always refers to the temple proper; yes, the temple wherein was the Holy of Holies and God's very presence. Such is the sacredness (and closeness) of our relationship to him as he personally indwells us as his temple.

What a great dignity he has bestowed upon us by his presence! How sacred and sanctified are our bodies! Let us regard our bodies accordingly and live our lives in this body in keeping with this great truth.

Citizens of a Heavenly Kingdom

Many times as Christians we are too much at home in this old world, failing to realize just who we are and what a great dignity has been placed upon us. We fail to fully realize just what an elevated and exalted realm it is in which we live and move and have our being. Many needlessly and foolishly feel deprived and insecure in this old world.

To get a little background to what we wish to say, we call your attention to John the Baptist (the forerunner of Christ) as he appeared in the Judean wilderness, preaching, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). When John was cast into prison, Jesus and his disciples took up the same urgent message (Matthew 4:17). In that great Sermon on the Mount, Jesus talked about entering this kingdom (Matthew 5:20; 7:21) and seeking it first (Matthew 6:33). Later he would say that the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11). He would talk about entering the kingdom, and emphatically say, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Earlier in his ministry, during his first visit to Jerusalem as recorded by John, he just as emphatically had said to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:3,5). In Matthew 16:16-19, the year leading up to the crucifixion, Jesus told Peter in response to his

good confession that upon that truth he would build his church. Then he went on to use the expression "kingdom of heaven" and "church" interchangeably. And following that he said, "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). This was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ in Acts 2. Jesus had been raised from the dead, had ascended to heaven, and (spiritually speaking) was sitting upon the throne of David (Acts 2:30-33; Luke 1:31-33). The great outpouring of the Holy Spirit had occurred. The church was established; the

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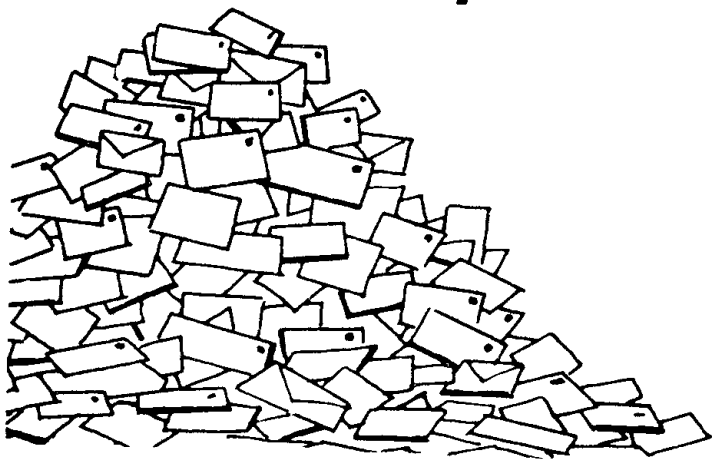
BIBLE QUESTIONS *(over the twelve apostles)*

1. The apostles are also called disciples—what does the word disciple, and apostle, literally mean?
2. What was a basic requirement in being an apostle of Christ?
3. When a listing of the original twelve is given, who always heads the list? and who is always listed last?
4. What part of Palestine were all of the apostles from except one, and where was he from?
5. Which apostles do we definitely know were fishermen before they were called to follow Jesus?
6. Which apostle was a tax collector when Jesus called him?
7. Which apostle had been part of a radical political group before following Jesus?
8. Which disciples (apostles) did Jesus call "sons of thunder"?
9. Which disciple (apostle) made the great confession upon which Jesus said that he would build his church?
10. Which disciple (apostle) was not present when Jesus appeared to them the day of his resurrection and this disciple didn't get to see him until a week later?
11. What disciple replaced Judas to be one of the twelve apostles?
12. What happened to the apostles on the day of Pentecost after the ascension of Christ as the fulfillment of a promise Christ had made to them?
13. How many people were baptized into Christ that day as a result of what happened and the apostles' preaching?
14. How is the work of the apostles described in the early days of the church?
15. What special benefit was bestowed upon believers through the laying on of hands by the apostles?
16. What apostle through the power of God raised a woman from the dead in the early days of the church?
17. Which apostle was used of God to receive the first Gentiles into the church?
18. Who was the first apostle to be put to death for preaching the gospel of Christ?
19. According to Ephesians 2:20, the church is built upon what foundation?
20. From all indications who was the last apostle to die (and the only one to die a natural death)?

(NOTE: Answers found elsewhere in this issue of the paper).

READERS'

... Response



VIRGINIA:

■ "I am pleased with your SWORD AND STAFF. I hope that you can keep it coming."

KENTUCKY:

■ "I really get blessed from THE SWORD AND STAFF. I sincerely appreciate your faithfulness to the Scriptures. In this modern day most preachers bend the Scriptures to fit the worldly.

"God's Word meant exactly what it said—in the time it was written and it still stands today."

■ "It has been a great privilege of mine to read and make application in my daily Christian life your publications of THE SWORD AND STAFF. You do a fantastic job and I have no doubts that God has and will continue to bless you and your work. . . Thank you for making a difference."

DELAWARE:

■ "I was given several copies of THE SWORD AND STAFF by a Christian brother. These copies are dated 1986 and 1987. Needless to say, I enjoy them immensely, and wish to be put on your mailing list immediately. Please send me some more information on your bound volumes of recent years. May the Lord bless and keep you and strengthen your ministry."

■ "We want to send you a gift to help with your expenses in putting out THE SWORD AND STAFF. It is a great and edifying magazine. "Toward A More Spiritual Concept" (reprinting articles, old ones) is a great idea. You are 'hitting the nail directly on the head.' The last SWORD AND STAFF we got was just great! Keep up your wonderful, bold work on God's Word. We need it. All Christians need to fear God more, keep his commandments, and live and know what is pleasing and acceptable to GOD. . ."

PENNSYLVANIA:

■ "Please find enclosed a check for your publication THE SWORD AND STAFF. My husband was enrolled several years ago by a Christian friend and has been receiving your magazine regularly for years. However, to our knowledge, we have never sent any money for renewal fees. Therefore, we are sending this to catch up, to renew, to help out—whatever you'd like to call it—and we say 'thank you' for keeping us on your mailing list so long at your own expense. My husband truly enjoys your publication and you do a wonderful job of preaching the Word!"

MICHIGAN:

■ "Thank you so much for your wisdom, labor and caring to put forth the Lord's Word in the plain simple truth that it is. We always look forward to every new issue of THE SWORD AND STAFF and continually reflect on past issues. . ."

INDIANA:

■ "Please take my name off your mailing list. I don't agree with your theology about baptism being a part of salvation. Studying all the Scriptures together without taking any of them out of context, I find this nowhere in the Scriptures."

MISSOURI:

■ "Enclosed you will find my contribution to help in your continued effort to teach the Truth in printed form. Having received your publication for several years I am ashamed to admit I haven't sent you financial help as intended. Please forgive.

"The printed 'Word,' the correction, the rebuking, the encouraging, the careful instruction, has been 'in season and out of season' and I am grateful. May God continue to bless and use you and yours in this way. May He be glorified!"

KANSAS:

■ "I am unaware of how you got my name to send me your publication. But I do not wish to receive them any longer. . ."

TEXAS:

■ "The wife and I enjoy THE SWORD AND STAFF. We certainly agree with your Scriptural response to the MOUNT AIRY NEWS editorial concerning ordaining women as bishops. The problem with the Episcopalians and many other sects is that they do not believe in spiritual authority. . ."

CALIFORNIA:

■ "I received the volumes 21-22 and 23-24, and I want to praise you for what you're doing. I am really enjoying reading them and my daughter loves to read them, and we're learning so much from them. Keep up the good work; every Christian needs to study them. . ."

■ "Thank God you are doing this truth telling work."

THE DIGNITY OF MAN

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kingdom had come with power. Men repented and were baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (were born of water and the Spirit), and they were added to the church (entered the kingdom) (Acts 2:38-47). The kingdom was preached in the book of Acts (Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23,31). Men were spoken of as being in the kingdom (Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9).

Just think! We are so honored to now be citizens of the kingdom of heaven. This is something higher, more wonderful, than any or all earthly ties—more wonderful than we can imagine. The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11), great as he was (a spiritual birth is greater than a physical birth). Just try to think of what all is involved. Even the patriarchs and Old Testament saints anticipated this and strongly yearned for this day. Hebrews 11:13-16 reads, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country (Greek

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patris, fatherland). And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared them a city." Peter calls the church a "holy nation" (I Peter 2:9). Paul says that our citizenship is in heaven. Listen to what he says and to what all it entails: "For our conversation (Greek *politeuma*, citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself" (Philippians 3:20,21). I Corinthians 15:24 ties right in with this: "Then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." Because we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven on earth one day we will be in heaven (the eternal phase of it).

May we appreciate all the privileges, honor, and dignity this heavenly citizenship affords. May we realize that our allegiance is to something higher than any earthly government (but it is to a kingdom that cannot be moved—Matthew 16:18; Hebrews 12:28). Our allegiance is first to God who is our ruler—to king Jesus. (Notice what Peter said to the authorities in Jerusalem: "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to *obey* God rather than men," Acts 5:29). "OBEY" is a translation of the Greek *peith-archeo*, which means to obey a ruler). Everyone who is in the kingdom of heaven is fellow-citizen with us (Ephesians 2:16-19) and our brother regardless where he may be found upon the face of this earth as far as earthly governments are concerned. May we honor him and respect him accordingly.

Concluding Remarks

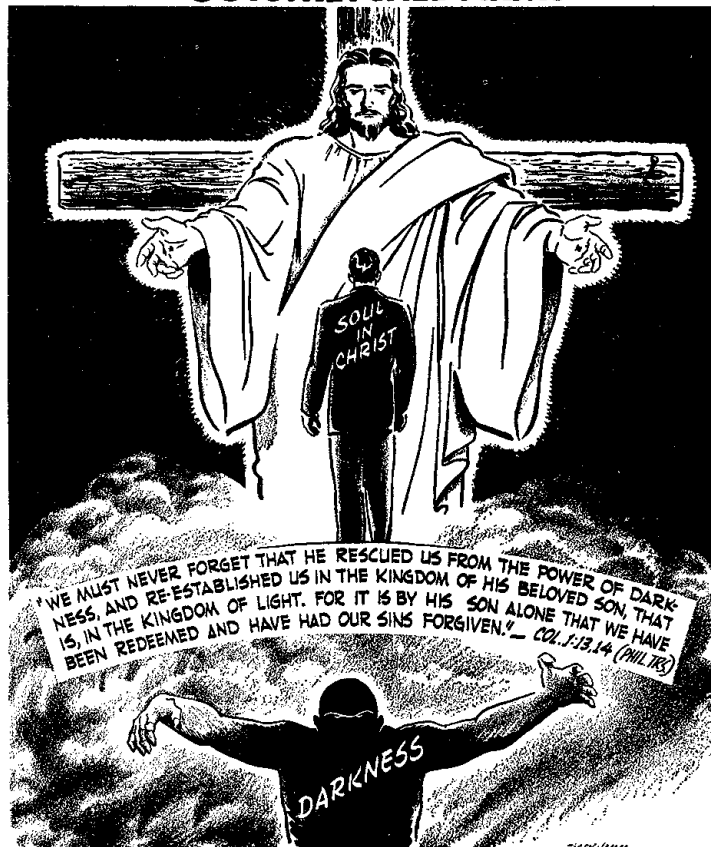
IN THE 8TH PSALM the question was asked (in view of the greatness of God), "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" And very aptly the answer was given, "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." There is much that can be said about the dignity of man. We have attempted to bring out some important considerations, perhaps being rather selective in dealing with this subject (for other things can be said). We are more than animals; more than creatures of time, but eternity. We have noticed man's original dignity from creation and his restored (and augmented) dignity in Christ. How we regard ourselves, our life-view, will largely determine how we live, our life-style. The Bible is the truth. Believing and practicing the view that God's Word presents of man will bring glory to God and respect (and dignity) for ourselves. It will lead us into the good and honorable life (and finally into heaven). Let us take these noble truths to heart. □

Lying to Fellow Members

"THEREFORE, putting away lying, each one speak truth with his neighbour, *for we are members of one another*" (Ephesians 4:25).

Chrysostom said: "Let not the eye lie to the foot, nor the foot to the eye. If there be a deep pit, and its mouth covered with reeds shall present to the eye the appearance of solid ground, will not the eye use the foot to ascertain whether it is hollow underneath, or whether it is firm and resists? Will the foot tell a lie, and not the truth as it is? And what, again, if the eye were to spy a serpent or a wild beast, will it lie to the foot?" □

OUTSTRETCHED ARMS



Needed in Christianity Today

THE TROUBLE with Christianity today is not so much ignorance as indifference. It has lost its passion. You will meet a high type of scholarship all about you. The preachers of today will compare in elegance and refinement most favorably with those of any day, but more than culture and eloquence is needed. All through the years it has been the passionate souls that have stirred men; men of passion like that of Moses when he cried out to God for the forgiveness of the people's sin. "And if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of thy book which thou hast written"; that passion that could sing in the heart of Paul in the midnight dungeon; that passion which in the early years of Christianity fed the fires of persecution, never counting life dear unto itself. Passion prevails when intellect fails without it. . . May your words be hissing hot from a heart on fire with a loving devotion. May you be "Heralds of Passion."—R.H. Glover □

????????????????
QUESTIONS
????????????????

The apostle Paul said that “godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (II Corinthians 7:10). What Judas experienced was “the sorrow of the world” (not godly sorrow), and it literally worked death in his case (not the wholesome fruits of repentance and salvation).

Q: Were all the apostles saved?

A: We have noticed Judas. We do not have a record of the death of any of the other apostles except James (Acts 12). We do know that Paul was facing death when he wrote II Timothy. In II Timothy 4:6-8 we read about this, and he seems very confident about his situation. We do know that if the apostles were faithful until death they were saved (Revelation 2:10; Matthew 24:13; Hebrews 3:14). We have reason to believe that they were. But Paul was ever aware of the need of being faithful (even as an apostle and preacher of the gospel): “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (I Corinthians 9:27).

Q: A question about the meaning of water in John 3:5, and does it mean baptism?

A: Yes, we are convinced that it does mean baptism. Most denominations, because their “theological” mold will not allow baptism to be part of God’s plan of salvation, vigorously deny this. They imagine that it conflicts with grace, and they preach salvation by “faith only.” One argument used in trying to get around baptism here is to say that “water” refers to natural birth. The new baby is cushioned in water in the mother’s body, and that water is broken when the baby is born; thus, born of “water.” How illogical! This would make every person in the world “halfway” into the kingdom (for all have been born of water like this). Others say water means the Word. How arbitrary and artificial! How simple just to take what the Bible says on baptism, believe it, and leave it there. In anticipation of the coming kingdom, Jesus said that a person must be born of water and the Spirit to get into it. In the Great Commission he said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. . .” (Mark 16:16a). When the church was established, Peter emphatically said, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Spirit)” (Acts 2:38). If this is not a fitting and explanatory commentary on being born of water and the Spirit, what is? Parallel with this is I Corinthians 6:11, “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” Consider Titus 3:5, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost (Spirit).” Peter gives somewhat an overview of it all in I Peter 1:22 and 23, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart

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WE DO NOT solicit questions about the Bible, nor do we think that we have all of the answers. However, several questions are on hand that have been received. In answering them it is hoped that the answers will be helpful to others also. The questions follow.

From North Carolina:

Q: Somewhere along the way I have read why it is said that Christ was born 4 B.C., but don’t remember why now—would you please comment on this?

A: From what we can find out, the monk Dionysius Exiguus (532 A.D.) was the one who came up with the system of dating everything from the time of the birth of Christ (before and after). In retrospect he had to date everything. Romans dated their history from the beginning of Rome. This monk calculated that Jesus was born the year 753 from the founding of Rome. He came to this conclusion from Luke 3:1 and 23, knowing the dates of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. Tiberius succeeded Augustus on August 19th, year 767 from the founding of Rome—thus his 15th year (Luke 3:1) would be 779 from the founding of Rome. However, the date of the death of Herod the Great (Jesus being born right before this) would seem to put it back further—he died just before the Passover (April 12th that year) in the 750th year of Rome. It was found later that Tiberius began to reign four years before Augustus died (reigned jointly with him)—so that would back up the date of the birth of Jesus four years and toward the time of Herod’s death.

From Virginia:

Q: If Judas killed himself, did he go to heaven?

A: Judas did more than commit suicide. He was a thief (John 12:6), and he betrayed the Lord unto death. He is called “the son of perdition” (John 17:12). This word “perdition” means loss or destruction. It is just the opposite of being saved. Acts 1:25 tells us that “Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” It is sad to say, but obviously that place is not heaven.

Now talking about suicide, suicide is the taking of a person’s own life, self murder. According to Revelation 21:8 murderers will not be in heaven. The only way that a person can get rid of his sin through Christ is to repent of it, and if that person kills himself he is not in a position to repent. A possible exception might be found in a person who had really been a Christian going “crazy” (being mentally deranged) doing such a thing (which is highly unlikely). God might take that into consideration in the judgment, but we are not God. That is His department.

Judas was remorseful for what had happened after he had done the awful thing. That lead to his suicide.

QUESTIONS

(Continued from Last Page)

fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Yes, we are convinced that "water" means baptism in John 3:5.

Q: Could you tell me about your church? What is a non-denominational church?

A: It is understood what is meant when you say "your church," but (in all kindness) we prefer not to speak in these terms. Christ brought the church into being; he purchased it with his own blood (Acts 20:28). The church belongs to him, and we prefer to speak of it as his.

In answering your question about what is a "non-denominational" church, we simply point you to the New Testament. Here you have the answer. What you read about here is the non-denominational church of our Lord. Ephesians 4:4-6 reads, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Christ, during his ministry, said, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). This church (or kingdom) would come "with power" in the lifetime of those who heard him (Mark 9:1). In Acts 2, the first Jewish Pentecost after his resurrection and ascension, this took place. On that day when people repented and were baptized for the remission of sins, the Lord added them to his church (Acts 2:38-41,47). Note: the Lord added them; they didn't join it. Yes, when we become a Christian in the way that the New Testament teaches, we are baptized into ONE BODY (I Corinthians 12:13). We are called into ONE BODY (Colossians 3:15). If the Lord puts us into his ONE BODY (one church, Colossians 1:18), let us stay in that one body and practice the unity taught in the New Testament Scriptures (and not denominationalism).

The word "denomination" means to divide and name (hence, the distinctive doctrines and names of religious groups). The peculiar doctrines and names of each denomination are what divides them from other religious people (and in particular, the creeds and traditions of men). This writer can speak from experience, as he left a major denomination that sprinkles (and even sprinkles infants) in the place of New Testament baptism (besides their other traditions of men not found in the Scriptures). Read what Jesus thought about the traditions and doctrines of men (Matthew 15:1-14). Read what the apostle Paul thought about the names of men applied to people religiously (I Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:4,5). Christ is to have the pre-eminence in all things (Colossians 1:18).

Christians—that's all that we are (that's all that the New Testament makes out of people). If we work under the Great Commission given by our Lord (Matthew 28:18-20), and that alone, we will not have denominations. A person, working under the Great Commission, has no authority to invite anyone to join a denomination (a division). When people accept Christ Scripturally, they are therewith added by the Lord to the

only church (Acts 2:41,47). Yes, Christian unity is attained at this point and is to be maintained in this one body wherein the Lord has called and added us.

Organizationally speaking, local churches are all that there is to the body of Christ. Each is independent and autonomous in its function, not looking to overhead organizations or conventions. The only headquarters of the undenominational New Testament church is in heaven where the head (Christ) is. In this church there is no organizational structure (religiously speaking) beyond the local church. When you have seen the local church, you have seen it all. Yes, Christians are part of the church universally, and collectively speaking, but the universal church is not organized. As men become denominations, they think they must have such organizations through which to channel their denominational aspirations (to be recognized and heard as a denominational people). Denominationalism draws undue attention to men.

Q: According to Isaiah 34, will hell be upon the earth?

A: Read Isaiah 34 again. No doubt the Holy Spirit in Isaiah 34 (and other places in the Old Testament) is developing the language and imagery that later would be used to refer to the end of all things (and hell), thus foreshadowing all of this, but basically that is not what is in mind here. Here we see God's judgment coming upon all nations hostile to God and his people. The stench of death can be smelled in the carcasses as their blood, so enormous, melts (or dissolves) the mountains away. The judgment is narrowed down to Edumea (EDOM) by way of application—Edom, who would not let Israel pass through its land on the way to Canaan; Edom, Israel's perpetual enemy. God's sword is bathed in heaven to bring judgment upon the Edomites, but read about the various animals being slaughtered and sacrificed (rather than saying people). Their chief city of Bozrah is named. Of their land, we read, "And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever." Like much of the Old Testament prophecy, especially here, the poetic language is rich, emphatic, and suggestive rather than being altogether literal. Why do we say this? This seeming overstatement here (in Isaiah) is used to show the great destruction and judgment upon the land. It can't literally be hell in the immediate context, because he is talking about Edom, and time continues: "from generation to generation it shall lie waste." Where people once dwelt, all kinds of unclean creatures (for the most part) will be found. Such would not be the case if this referred to hell and literal fire. Where palaces and fortresses had been, thorns, nettles and brambles would be found growing and wild beasts, unclean birds, and serpents would take this as their habitation. No fire here, and such creatures will not be found in hell (nor plants growing). It will be for man (with the devil and his angels).

Isaiah uses such language to overwhelm us with the

concept of God's judgment upon Edom. Perhaps the words of Jeremiah, who is talking about the same thing (but using a little different way of expressing himself), would throw a little more light on what Isaiah means. "Also Edom shall be in desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it" (Jeremiah 49:17,18). In Isaiah 34 he recalls the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which was with fire, to overwhelm their minds with the idea of total judgment, destruction, and desolation which was to come upon Edom (although literal fire did not come).

Q: Is the Holy Spirit the Word of God?

A: No, not any more than your words are you, and the words you see written on this page are the person (this writer) who wrote them.

Some have mistakenly quoted John 6:63 in "support" of such a position: "It is the spirit that quickeneth (makes alive); the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

To properly understand this verse, (as always) we need to consider the context to really see what Jesus meant. On the northeastern slopes of the Sea of Galilee Jesus had fed the 5,000 with the five loaves and two small fish. How impressed the people were (even wanting to make Jesus their king). When he was back on the other side of the Sea of Galilee in Capernaum, he preached a sermon on the bread of life in the synagogue. But his hearers were too preoccupied with the literal and the material to get hold of what he said. He said, "I am the bread of life" (6:48). Then we further read his words and the reaction of the Jews. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. . ." (6:51-53). After Jesus had finished speaking, we read, "Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" (6:60). That is when Jesus said, by way of explanation, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

Really, what is Jesus saying? Jesus is correcting their misunderstanding of what he said (his teachings). They were taking him literally, being so materialistic, when he said that they must eat his flesh and drink his blood. How unthinkable! He sets them straight by saying that he is not talking about the flesh (material things), but the spirit (spiritual things). Therefore, he said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." The nature of his words (teachings) was spirit (spiritual) and life (life producing), not physical. That is all that our Lord is

saying here.

As far as the Holy Spirit is concerned, when we talk about the Holy Spirit, we are talking about God. HE IS REAL, HE IS A PERSON, AND HE DWELLS in the body of the believer (which is the temple of the Holy Spirit). Read about this in the current issue of this paper in the article, "The Dignity of Man" under the second part where we talk about "The Temple of God (The Holy Spirit Dwells in Christians).

From Pennsylvania:

Q: Why and when did they start calling our Saviour's Resurrection Day Easter, after the goddess of fertility? Makes me sad. Wonder what Jesus thinks?

A: We haven't really been able to nail down the exact particulars to all of this. It is "weird," isn't it? The greatest event in history the devil has succeeded in shrouding in the language of heathenism (as if to distract and mock). The following quotation from *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* should be interesting and somewhat helpful.

"Easter is a word of Saxon origin, and imports a goddess of the Saxons, or, rather of the East, *Eastera*, in honor of whom sacrifices being annually offered about the Passover time of the year (spring), the name became attached by association of ideas of the Christian festival of the resurrection, which happened at the time of the Passover: hence we say *Easter-day*, *Easter-Sunday*, but very improperly; as we by no means refer to the festival then kept to the goddess of the ancient Saxons."

Personally we hesitate to think of the "Saviour's Resurrection Day" as coming just once a year and on that day that unfortunately is called "Easter." Following is part of a leaflet we have written, which will show our thinking on this matter.

"EASTER" EVERY SUNDAY

CHRISTMAS AND EASTER were not days observed in the church of the New Testament. Search your New Testament Scriptures from cover to cover. You cannot find just once where these days were observed (and the Lord in the Great Commission instructed the apostles to teach men "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). Hence, if the Lord had wanted us to observe such days in the church, we would have a record of them in the writings of the apostles or other inspired men (John 14:26; 16:13; II Timothy 3:16,17). (But we are suspicious that, like the secular world, religious publishing houses promote these days to sell their products).

A hint as to the origin of the observance of Christmas can easily be seen by the observant person in the etymology of the word itself. Notice "Christmas," **CHRIST-MASS** (you figure this one out for yourself). And for those who think they have found Scriptural authority for Easter in Acts 12:4 of the King James Version of the Bible, a second thought is in order. For those who have made the King James Version an idol, we are sorry to say, but this is a mistranslation (check your other versions). The Greek word in the original is *pascha*, **PASSOVER**, even as the writer Luke says, "Then were the days of unleavened bread" (Acts 12:3). It is weird to have the word "Easter" associated with the resurrection of

(Continued on Next Page)

QUESTIONS

(Continued from Last Page)

Christ, as it had reference to a pagan festival in the spring-time observed in connection with the heathen goddess Eastre. Yes, it is strange how many things get started and "intelligent" men keep hanging on to them.

However, for practical purposes we understand what people mean when they use the word "Easter" today. They have reference to the day they remember the resurrection of Christ from the grave, which brings us to our following line of thought.

A marvelous prophecy is found in Psalms 118:22-24. It reads, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." This Scripture is quoted more than once in the New Testament. Among the references is Acts 4:11, with the verse right before it throwing light upon its meaning: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. *This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner.*" Yes, obviously he is referring to the prophecy in Psalms. The stone being rejected (set at nought) ties in with the crucifixion of Christ, and it being made the head of the corner ties in with the resurrection of Christ.

The last part of the passage in Psalms 118, although it is not quoted in Acts, applies to the glorious event spoken of there: "Whom God raised from the dead." The Psalms reference reads, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalms 118:24). What a day that was!

Really, what day was it when Jesus came forth from the grave? "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of Jesus. . ." (Read Luke 24:1-3; Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-9; John 20:1). Mark 16:9 very plainly states, "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week. . ." So, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ occurred on what we call Sunday, the first day of the week, which followed Saturday (the sabbath, the seventh day of the week).

The first day of the week is emphasized in reference to the resurrection appearances of Jesus and the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. Notice John 20:1 (1) "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre" (verse 1). (2) "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them. Peace be unto you" (verse 19). (3) "And after eight days (being the first day of the week) again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them; then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you" (verse 26). It seems the writer makes a special point of mentioning the first day of the week.

It is interesting to notice that the early church met on the first day of the week, instead of the sabbath (and the first day of the week, Sunday, is universally recognized until this day). Acts 20:7 reads, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." Paul instructed the Co-

rinthians, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come" (I Corinthians 16:2). Christians no longer observed the sabbath because that "handwriting of ordinances" (the O.T. law) had been taken out of the way, God "nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14). Consequently Paul said, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of any holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days" (Colossians 2:14). Some Christians in Galatia were observing the sabbath and other days. Paul solemnly wrote to them, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Galatians 4:10,11).

(It is a matter of special interest that it was upon the first day of the week the church was started. As we know, the church came into being with power on the first Jewish Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ—Matthew 16:18,19; Mark 9:1; Acts 2. Leviticus 23:15 and 16, having to do with the day of Pentecost, reads, "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; even seven sabbaths shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord." A week of sabbaths was to follow the Passover sabbath, then the next day, fiftieth day, was the day of Pentecost, which means fifty. Of course the day that follows the sabbath is the first day of the week. Therefore, not only was Christ resurrected from the grave on the first day of the week, the church was established on this day too—only a little later).

What we are trying to say in this article is that the first day of every week (SUNDAY) is "Easter" (as the world calls it) to the New Testament Christians. The evidence points to the fact that the early church met on this day, instead of the sabbath, in honor of the resurrection of Christ (and that day is commonly observed until this day, although many have forgotten what the original significance was). "This is the day the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalms 118:24). Let us not detract from the Scriptures by emphasizing special days other than what the Lord has emphasized.

New Testament Christians observe the Lord's supper the first day of every week (Acts 20:7) in remembrance of the death of Christ, and how appropriate to remember his death on the day of his resurrection. Both are great and cardinal doctrines of Christianity, neither being meaningful without the other.

REMEMBER: Every Sunday is "Easter" (resurrection day) to the New Testament Christians. In the light of this we admonish you with the Hebrews writer, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is: but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). What exciting, glorious, and precious truths we celebrate as we gather together with those of like precious faith! AMEN!

Q: Do any translations use the word immersion?

A: Not any of the major ones that we know of or have in our library does.

It is regrettable that the words *baptizo* and *baptismos*, represented by baptize and baptism in standard English Bibles, have never actually been translated into English. Instead of translating these words as dip (immerse) and dipping (immersion) respectively, they have been transliterated. In other words, the Greek words were taken and Anglicized (an English ending was put on the words and straightway passed over into English use without being literally translated). Most of the Reformers who had accepted the Catholic prac-

tice of sprinkling, having been sprinkled themselves, were pleased to have it so. That way a person could take the new words “baptize” and “baptism” and make of them whatever he wanted (sprinkling, pouring, or immersion). This would not disrupt the Reformers’ less than steady apple cart (in this category). Since the practice was started long ago, and since this would be too radical for those who practiced sprinkling to read (and accept), translators have continued to use these transliterated words. We understand that even the American Bible Society has voted never to print a Bible into any language that does not allow the reader to choose either sprinkling, pouring, or immersion as the “method” of baptism. They stick with baptize and baptism (instead of actually translating these words). They do not wish to alienate any part of “Christendom.” (However, just a casual study of our English translations using baptize and baptism is enough to be conclusive about baptism being immersion—Matthew 4:13-16; Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:4,5; I Peter 3:21; etc.).

However, the cognate word for baptize (by which we have reference to *bapto*) did not suffer the same fate of becoming a technical transliterated word. Here we can breath the air of truth without any obstruction. Everywhere the word carries the idea of “dip” (and is so translated) just like *baptizo* should have been rendered. Examples follow. The rich man wanted Lazarus to “DIP” his finger in water to cool his parching tongue (Luke 16:24). Jesus indentified his betrayer as he “DIPPED” the sop (morsel) and gave it to him (John 13:26). In the book of Revelation (19:13), the one who rode upon the white horse and upon whose head were many crowns, also “was clothed in a vesture DIPPED in blood. . .”

BAPTIZE means immerse for the same reason that immerse means immerse, and dip means dip. It is what we call an onomatopoeic word. In it we can hear the splashing of the water. □

“The Story of “Amazing Grace”

JOHN NEWTON, the celebrated English preacher and hymnwriter realized that he was an object of Divine grace. A while before his death, a fellow-minister came in to have breakfast with him. Family prayers followed the meal. Mr. Newton’s sight had almost failed, and he was unable to read. He sat and listened to his friend as he read the 15th chapter of I Corinthians. When this 10th verse was read, “But by the grace of God I am what I am,” Mr. Newton began to speak:

“I am not what I ought to be. Ah! how imperfect and deficient! I am not what I wish to be. I abhor what is evil, and I would cleave to what is good. I am not what I hope to be. Soon, soon, shall I put off, with mortality, sin and imperfection. Though I am not what I ought to be, now what I wish to be, nor what I hope to be, I can truly say I am not what I once was—a slave to sin and Satan; and I can heartily join with the apostle and acknowledge, By the grace of God, I am what I am.”

John Newton could say that with conviction and joy.

He lost his mother when he was young. A little later,

he went to sea with his father and learned all the evils of the seaman’s life. Still later, he was forced into the navy. He deserted, but was caught and stripped and beaten, until the blood flowed from his wounds. He had now become a hardened infidel. He fell in with African slavetraders. He went from bad to worse, until he himself was sold as a slave.

It was a Negro woman who bought him and she gloried in her power over him. She made him depend for his food on the crusts she tossed under the table. He had fallen to the depths of human degradation. And yet, the grace of God found him, reclaimed him, and made of him the accomplished person that he became and a writer of hymns that have stirred the hearts of men the world over. Truly he could say, “By the grace of God, I am what I am.” No wonder he wrote the words of that old hymn,

Amazing grace, How sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me;
I once was lost, but now am found
Was blind, but now I see.

—Selected

\$86,400 Credited Each Day

IF YOU had a bank that credited your account each morning with \$86,400, and that carried over no balance from day to day, and allowed you to keep no cash from the account, and every evening canceled the amount you had failed to use during the day, what would you do?

You do have such a bank. It’s name is **TIME**. Every morning it credits you with 86,400 seconds to be used that day, but every night it cancels, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest for a good purpose. It carries over no balances. It allows no overdrafts. Each day opens a new account for you. Each night the account is closed with no balance carried over to the next day. If you fail to use the day’s deposits, the loss is yours. There is no drawing against the tomorrow. You must learn that today’s deposits are adequate. Invest wisely that which is given to you, that you may profit the most in spiritual growth, in service to God and fellowmen, and in preparation for eternity.—Selected □

How Would Your Wife React?

SUPPOSE you left your family by just walking off and staying three or four weeks without explanation. But, suddenly one morning you walk in and inquire about your breakfast, without any apology or explanation to your wife. You feel no shame for your behavior and do not say you are sorry. How many wives would receive a husband under these conditions? Probably none! Yet, there are many so-called “church members” who are absent from the services of the church for weeks at a time, apparently not caring whether the church lives or dies, or if the Lord’s work is carried on or not. If you are one of these kind of “church members,” stop fooling yourself, quit being a headache to the church, and get right with the Lord! That is about as kindly as we can say it. □

LOOK WELL TO THIS DAY
*Yesterday is already a dream, and
Tomorrow is only a vision;
But today, well lived, makes every
Yesterday a dream of happiness
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day.*
—Selected

The Temple of God’s Word

“...YEARS AGO, with the Holy Spirit as my guide I entered the wonderful temple of Christianity. I entered at the portico of Genesis, walked down through the Old Testament galleries where pictures of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Isaac, Jacob, and Daniel were hung on the walls. I passed into the music room of the Psalms, where it seemed that every reed and pipe in God’s great organ responded to the tuneful harp of David, the sweet singer of Israel.

“I entered the chamber of Ecclesiastes, where the voice of the Preacher was heard; and into the conservatory of Sharon, where the Lily of the Valley’s sweet scented spices filled and perfumed my life. I entered the business room of Proverbs, and then into the observatory room of the prophets, where I saw telescopes of various sizes, pointed to far-off events, but all concentrated on the bright and morning Star.

“I entered the audience room of the King of kings, and caught a vision of His glory from the standpoint of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; passed into the Acts of the Apostles where the Holy Spirit was doing His work in the formation of the infant church. Then into the correspondence room, where sat Paul, Peter, James, and John, penning their Epistles. I stepped into the throne room of Revelation where towered the glittering peaks and, seeing in a vision of the King sitting upon the throne in all His glory, I cried: ‘All hail the power of Jesus’ name, let angels prostrate fall; bring forth the royal diadem and crown Him Lord of all!’”—Selected

WOMEN’S SWIMWEAR has changed from indecent to just plain vulgar.

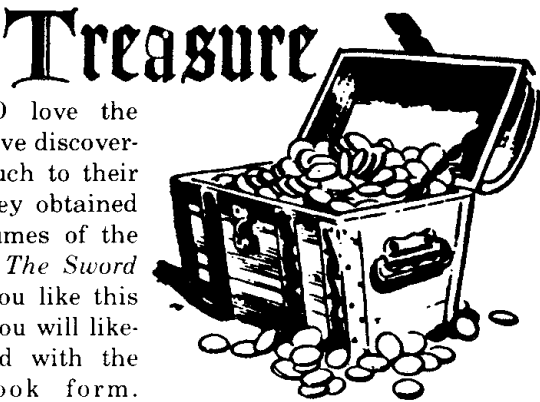
ALWAYS PUT GOD FIRST

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**Answers to:
BIBLE QUESTIONS**

- 1. Disciple: learner; apostle: one sent forth; 2. Acts 2:21,22; 1 Corinthians 15-9; 3. Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:14-19; Luke 6:13-16; 4. Galilee, Acts 1:11; Judas Iscariot: Iscariot is short for *Ish Kerioth*, man of Kerioth—a place in Judah; 5. Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; 6. Matthew 9:9; Mark 2:14; 7. Matthew 10:4; Luke 6:15—Simon *Zelotes*; 8. Mark 3:17; Luke 9:54; 9. Matthew 16:16-18; 10. John 20:24-28; 11. Acts 1:24-26; 12. John 14:25,26; 15:26,27; 16:13; Luke 24:49; Acts 2; 13. Acts 2:14,37-41; 14. Acts 1:8; 2:32,43; 4:33; 15. Acts 8:17-19; Hebrews 2:3,4; 16. Acts 9:36-42; 17. Acts 10; 18. Acts 12:1,2; 19. Ephesians 2:20; 20. John.



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