

# The Sword AND Staff

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

## MEDITATIONS ON THE 23RD PSALM



● By **JAMES E. GIBBONS**—1535 Fairfield Drive  
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**A** STUDY of the Psalms is most interesting, as well as inspiring. Intense feelings are expressed here, and we can become personally and emotionally involved as we read. However, when we are in this book, we should always keep in mind that we are in the Old Testament. Many concepts and feelings are found here which are not compatible with the New Testament (God's completed and final revelation). The Old Testament promised a land flowing with milk and honey (material, temporal blessings), whereas the New Testament puts the primary emphasis upon the spiritual and the eternal. Characteristic of the Old Testament, in the Psalms vengeance (even personal vengeance) and the law of sin and death are ever before us. Yet the Psalms are highly spiritual and touch our souls. As we study we can profitably make a twofold application of them, first drinking in the words as they are written, and then by making

a New Testament application of them.

Of all the Scripture making up the Bible there are two references that stand out as perhaps being the most loved and well known. They are the 23rd Psalm and John 3:16. In this article let us spend a little time with the 23rd Psalm. Such informal meditation is good for the soul.

**VERSE 1: "The LORD  
is my shepherd; I shall not want."**

Palestine was a land of a simple pastoral society from which David emerged to become the king of Israel. In growing up David himself had experienced being a young shepherd boy in taking care of his father's sheep. He was personally qualified from a life of experience, both physically and spiritually, to make all of the impressive applications we read in this psalm. He speaks from his point of view.

### **The Shepherd**

David said, "The LORD is my shepherd..." The word "LORD" represents the great, unspeakable name of God. The Jews respected the name so highly that they would not even say it, but used another word in its place. Inasmuch as the early written Hebrew language had no vowel markings, with time the exact pronunciation was lost (not ever being uttered). Our English word "LORD" (capital letters) stands for this name. It is thought that Jehovah, or Yahweh, comes close to the pronunciation. Regardless, it is God's personal name, and it refers to Him as the Eternal, Self-Existent One. It represents Him in covenant relationship to His people.

### **"My Shepherd"**

David said that such a Being is "*my* shepherd." God is a personal God, and personal pronouns are found 17 times in this psalm expressing our close relationship to such a shepherd. The great God of eternity was the Shepherd of the lowly shepherd

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—**THANK YOU**—

## Proverbially **SPEAKING...**

**CHRISTIANITY** is about forgiveness and reconciliation.

All the great prophecies climaxing in the coming of Christ are like Gulf Streams in God's ocean of love.

*Anger, or the wrath of man, is a cop-out in handling problems.*

You cannot let your light shine (Matthew 5:16) without it lighting up your own world.

*By getting on our knees we can better ascertain where we stand with God.*

Anger and hate, although directed at others, are the most damaging to the person who harbors such feelings.

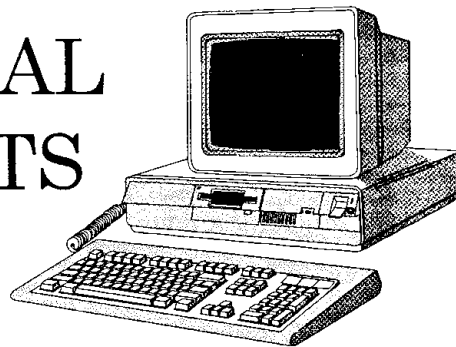
*Help others while you can because the time may come when you can't even help yourself.*

Don't die until you have learned how to live, and you haven't learned how to live until you have learned how to die.

*People who don't know how to love don't know how to forgive.*

A happy face makes a happy place.

# EDITORIAL COMMENTS



## Prayer Prayed at the State House in Topeka, Kansas (January 23, 1996)

**W**E COME before you today to ask Your forgiveness and seek Your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, "Woe to those who call evil good," but that's exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and inverted our values.

We confess that:

We have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it moral pluralism;

We have worshipped other gods and called it multiculturalism;

We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative lifestyle;

We have exploited the poor and called it lottery;

We have neglected the needy and called it self-preservation;

We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare;

We have killed our unborn and called it choice;

We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable;

We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building esteem;

We have abused power and called it political savvy;

We have coveted our neighbors' possessions and called it ambition;

We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression;

We have ridiculed the time honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

Search us, O God, and know our hearts today; try us and see if there be some wicked way in us; cleanse us from every sin and set us free.

Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent here by the people of Kansas, and who have been ordained by You, to govern this great state. Grant them Your wisdom to rule and may their decisions direct us to the center of Your will.

I ask it in the name of your Son, the living Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.—*Joe Wright (Amen!!!—Editor)*

(WE do not know the gentlemen who said the words written above, or anything about him, but we say a hearty "AMEN!!!" to this very fitting prayer—*Editor*). □

*A Series Involving the Bible and Prophecy...*

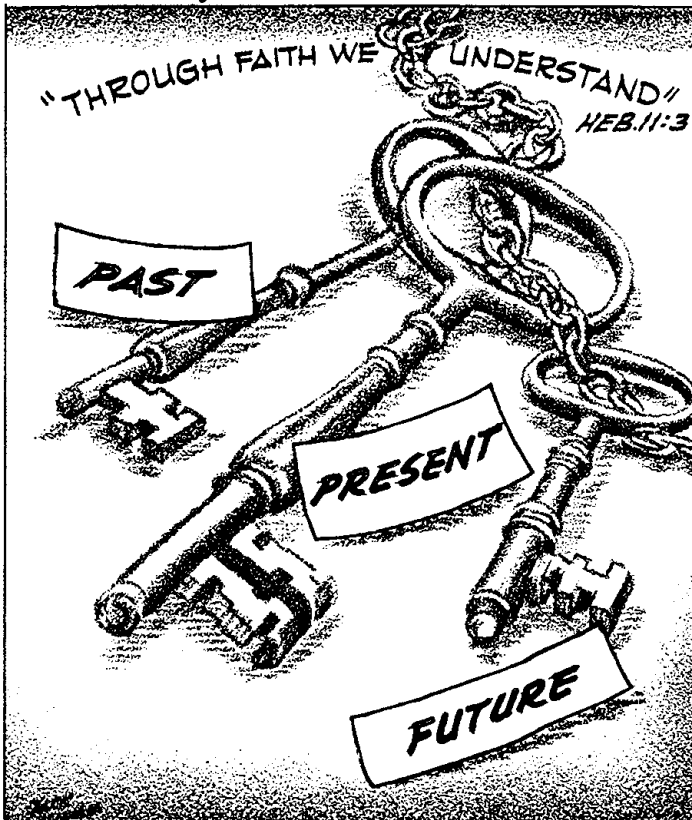
## Why Study Prophecy?

● By **DAVID VAUGHN ELLIOTT**  
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**S**OME PEOPLE are fascinated and thrilled by Bible prophecy. Other people find Bible prophecy too difficult. Still others find it uninteresting. Some think it is unimportant. They want to stick with the things that are “necessary to salvation.” They want to stay away from that part of the Bible which they consider open to so much speculation. Who is right? Why study prophecy, anyway?

Several years ago, a preacher in New York City was conversing with a well-educated woman. She was knowledgeable in history and in the writings of the famous 16th-century astrologer, Nostradamus. She was comparing Nostradamus with Daniel. The preacher invited her to study one of Daniel’s many detailed prophecies. Because of her knowledge of history, the woman immediately realized the fulfillment. She then readily admitted that there was nothing in all of Nostradamus’ writings to compare with the detail and clarity of Daniel’s prophecy.

### Keys to the Book of Books



Written over a period of 16 centuries by some 40 writers, the Bible contains many remarkable prophecies. They are not just a weatherman’s calcu-

lations of tomorrow’s weather. They are not just a commentator’s prediction of the winner of the next election. They are real prophecies! Many of them were made centuries before their fulfillment. There is no other book in the world like the Bible. Prophecy is one reason why.

### THE BIBLE IS FULL OF PROPHECY

If you consider Bible study important, then you already consider the study of prophecy important, whether you realize it or not. For prophecy, you see, is no mere tiny segment of God’s communication with man. From Genesis 3:15 to Revelation 22:20, the Bible is filled with prophecy!

#### The Old Testament

Genesis contains many prophecies regarding the chosen people of God. Deuteronomy 18 contains the beautiful prophecy of the Prophet like Moses that God would raise up. Deuteronomy 28 is required reading for anyone who would understand what is happening to the Jews today.

The historical books contain many prophecies. See 2 Samuel 7:1-17 and 12:10,11 for example. Even many Psalms are prophecies. Consider Psalms 2, 16, 22, 69 and 110.

Almost half of the 39 books of the Old Testament are directly prophetic books. They contain a mixture of exhortation and foretelling. Major themes of the foretelling are the destinies of the nations and the coming Messiah and his kingdom.

The very last words of the Old Testament are prophetic (Malachi 4:5,6). “I will send you Elijah.” Four centuries later, an angel told Zacharias that his son (John) would “go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:17).

#### The Gospels

How many times do the Gospels say “that it might be fulfilled,” “thus it is written” and similar expressions? For starters, look over the first four chapters of Matthew’s Gospel.

When wise men entered Jerusalem looking for the “King of the Jews,” Herod knew they were seeking the “Christ” (Messiah). He figured that the chief priests and scribes would know where the Messiah should be born. The prophet Micah had foretold it some seven centuries earlier. Imagine! Herod referred to prophecy in order to determine where to send the wise men. You have heard the saying “wise men seek Him.” Have you considered that, to seek Him, *they* were guided by a star *and* by prophecy?! The star cannot help *us* today to seek Him, *but prophecy surely can!*

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# Why Study Prophecy?

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Notice the importance of prophecy in pointing to and identifying the Messiah. When Philip discovered Jesus, he found Nathanael. He told him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth" (John 1:45).

## **The Preaching of the Early Church**

The apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, placed heavy emphasis on fulfilled prophecy. In Acts 2, Luke summarizes Peter's Pentecost sermon in 26 verses. Of these 26 verses, 12 are direct quotations from three Old Testament prophecies. At least four more verses are explanations of these prophecies. Thus, well over half of the first Gospel sermon is a study in prophecy.

The latter "half" of another of Peter's sermons (Acts 3) centers around the prophecies made to or by Abraham, Moses, Samuel "and all the prophets." "Those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled" (verse 18). "All the prophets from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days" (verse 24).

Read for yourself Paul's sermon in Acts 13:16-41 to see the same emphasis on fulfilled prophecy.

## **Also, Prophecy Not Yet Fulfilled**

The New Testament also records many prophecies not yet fulfilled. It would be "endless" to list all that Jesus said about His own second coming.

Three leading end-time prophecies found in the New Testament letters are 1 Corinthians 15:12-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13 to 5:11; and 2 Peter 3:1-13. Then there is 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, which basically is not an end-time prophecy. Rather, it is a case where we must study with the Bible in one hand and a history book in the other.

There is probably no book of prophecy that so

ignites the imagination as the last book of the Bible! Yes, much of it is difficult. However, if God had wanted his final message to be an easier message, He could have made it so. If He had wanted His final message to be something other than prophecy, He could have made it so. But it is prophecy to the very end, making the triumphant announcement, "Surely I am coming," and the reply, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

## **PROPHECY IS INTERESTING**

Prophecy does arouse interest. No sooner had Daniel received the vision of the ram and goat, than he "was seeking the meaning" (Daniel 8:15). When Jesus prophesied "not one stone shall be left here upon another," his disciples took the first opportunity to ask him, "when will these things be?" (Matthew 24:2,3).

Peter tells us that the prophets of old "inquired and searched diligently ... searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow" (1 Peter 1:10,11). The prophets of God longed to understand the words of their own mouths. However, Peter goes on to explain that the prophets did not prophesy for their own benefit, but rather "to us they were ministering." Peter ends the verse by saying, "Things which angels desire to look into."

Prophets interested. Angels interested. But it was meant for us! Sounds like something worth looking into, does it not?!

## **It Satisfies**

"Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen diligently to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance" (Isaiah 55:2). Our soul needs to listen diligently to God so we can delight in what truly satisfies.

Listen to what? Delight in what? This verse is surrounded by God's prophecy! Who does not know Isaiah 53, which precedes it? It is perhaps the greatest prophecy of the Old Testament. In addition, the verses immediately following 55:2 prophesy a coming New Testament along with the salvation of the Gentiles. Thus, the context of Isaiah 55:2 is saying that God's prophecies satisfy!

## **God Gives a Blessing**

More is involved here than merely satisfying curiosity. Studying prophecy carries the blessing of God. Many think that the prophecies of the book of Revelation, for example, can simply be ignored by the Christian. However, the book of Revelation begins with these words: "Blessed is he who reads and

those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it" (1:3). When we hear, read and keep the word of prophecy, we invite the blessing of Almighty God upon our souls.

The Psalmist said, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Psalms 119:11). Prophecy carries that blessing, that power. By strengthening our faith, it helps us to resist sin.

**PROPHECY IS A FAITH-BUILDER**

God does not require blind faith. In fact, blind faith is a characteristic of false religion. Faith has to do with things unseen. Nevertheless, the faith that God requires has its foundation in what we *can* see. By faith, we move from the seen to the unseen. Look at Romans 1:20. It teaches that by observing the creation which *we can see*, we can learn about the power of the Creator whom we *cannot see*.

**Proof that the Bible is God's Word**

The creation can only tell us so much about God. To know more about Him, and to know what He requires of us, we must have further information. That's where the Bible comes in. The question then arises: how do we know that the Bible is God's inspired message to mankind? By faith. Yes, but what is the basis of that faith? Throughout the history of God's dealing with man, the two great lines of proof have been 1) miracles and 2) prophecy. It is only the latter that we are considering in this writing.

Fulfilled prophecy demonstrates knowledge that is beyond human capability. It is proof God has spoken. In Isaiah 41, God challenges the false gods to prove they are gods. "'Present your case,' says Jehovah. 'Bring forth your strong reasons...Show the things that are to come hereafter, **that we may know that you are gods**'" (41:21-23).

Consider prophecies of the fate of various cities and nations. There are detailed prophecies of Tyre, Babylon, Jerusalem, Egypt, Edom, Israel, Greece and Rome, among others. The fulfillment of some of these prophecies is recorded within the pages of Holy Writ. Others find their fulfillment only in the pages of "secular" history. Some of the fulfillments extend even to our twentieth century. No book in the world has proof of divine origin as the Bible has, with the fulfillment of such prophecies!

**Proof that Jesus is God's Son**

As we have noted, the Gospels are full of prophecy. Why? Surely prophecies were given so that Israel would look forward to Jesus' coming. They were also certainly given so that, when He did come, Israel would have a strong basis for faith in Him.

It was not easy to believe that Jesus was God's son. The concept of "God in flesh" was totally foreign

to Jewish thought. There was a need for strong proof to support such an unbelievable declaration as "he who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). A rational person should not accept such a claim. That is, unless there was very substantial proof of the right to make the claim.

That proof came in the form of miracles and fulfilled prophecy. Prophecies made centuries in advance! Some examples have already been given. Here is one more example: an example that embraces *all* the prophecies about the Messiah.

The afternoon of Jesus' resurrection, He was walking with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They did not recognize Him. They were very discouraged because "we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). Jesus did not at this point offer proof that it was He who was talking with them. Rather, He turned their attention to prophecy.

"Then He said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?' And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:25-27). Their problem was unbelief. His reply was fulfilled prophecy!

**PROPHECY FILLS IN THE GAPS**

Between the Old and New Testaments there is a gap of about 400 years. Between the end of the New Testament and the end of the 20th Century there is a gap of 1900 years. Has God nothing to say during such large gaps of time?

Indeed He does! Prophecy fills the gaps. It is especially Daniel who prophesies many details of the period between the two testaments. Of special interest are the prophecies about Judas Maccabeus, who liberated Jerusalem and cleansed the temple (Daniel 8 and 11). He is not named any place in the Bible. Secular history must be studied to learn the fulfillment.

It should be noted that to study "the Bible alone" is often insufficient when studying prophecy. Many prophecies do, of course, have their fulfillment recorded in Scripture. However, we often must study with the Bible in one hand and a secular history book in the other. Only thus can we learn the rich detail of fulfillment.

The Bible nowhere records the history of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 A.D. However, this outstanding event *is foretold* in prophecies both by Daniel (chapter 9) and the Lord (Matthew 24; Luke 21). A study of these two

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# Why Study Prophecy?

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prophecies and their historical fulfillment (especially using Josephus) is very important in understanding God's dealing with the Jews.

As Daniel fills the gap between the two testaments, so Revelation fills the gap from the end of the Bible up to today. Rome plays an important part in these prophecies. Again, secular history sources are a must. Through studying these prophecies we gain insight into how God views many of the world's events since the death of the last apostle.

## PROPHECY SUSTAINS TRUE HOPE

The study of prophecy already fulfilled confirms our faith. The study of prophecy yet to be fulfilled sustains true hope. Our confidence that God will fulfill prophecy in the future is based on the evidence that He fulfilled prophecy in the past.

The desire to know the future seems inbred in mankind. For many people, prophecy is the most interesting part of the Bible, especially prophecy of events not yet fulfilled. What plans does God have for our times? When is Jesus coming back and what will it be like? Just as prophets and angels sought to understand prophecies of the first coming of the Messiah, so we seek to understand prophecies of His second coming.

We cannot expect to understand it all before it takes place, but we do need to know enough to sustain us. We do need to know enough so that we are not misled by false hopes. "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24: 26,27).

Paul dealt with the false teachers who in his day said that Christ had already come. He exhorted the brethren "not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled...as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you" (2 Thessalonians 2:2,3). We need to study prophecy yet unfulfilled so as not to be led astray by false teachers. We need to understand enough to remain in the truth.

We need to know what our hope actually is, because there is only "one hope" (Ephesians 4:4). Paul warned Timothy that there was a message "like cancer." It came from men who "have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some" (2 Timothy 2:17,18).

Did you catch that? We need to understand what part of God's program is past and what part is fu-

ture. What prophecy has been fulfilled and what is yet to be fulfilled. To mix up God's past and future can result in overthrowing our faith. An understanding of prophecy—fulfilled and unfulfilled—is a matter of walking in the faith. It is a matter of abiding in the true hope.

## Hope with a Warning

Prophecy of the future has to do with hope. If hope is one side of the coin of prophecy not yet fulfilled, warning is the other side. "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (Matthew 25:13).

"But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). Every text that deals with hell is a prophecy! Every text that deals with the Judgment Day is a prophecy. When Mark 16:16 says "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned," that is prophecy!

If you took prophecy out of the Bible, you see, you would effectively destroy the Bible's message. Not only that, you would damn your soul! Strong words? Listen: "If anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:19).

## WHY STUDY PROPHECY?

Why study prophecy? Indeed, what good reason could there be for *not* studying Bible prophecy? It's too boring? Not on your life! It's too hard? Things of value cost! There is not enough time? We make time for what is important to us!

Is Jesus of Nazareth the promised Messiah, or is He not? The answer is in Bible prophecy. How is the world going to end? The answer is in Bible prophecy. Why are the Jews so persecuted? The answer is in Bible prophecy? When will the Anti-christ come? The answer is in Bible prophecy.

Prophecy can give us a reason for faith; it can enrich the faith we have. Prophecy can set our sights on things that really matter in life: on things eternal. Prophecy *is* the Word of God. If you value your soul, if you seek after God, you will study God's prophetic Word. God will bless you for it! □

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Let your word be your bond,  
and then be bound by your word.

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# MEDITATIONS ON THE 23RD PSALM

(Continued from Page 1)

boy as well as the Shepherd of the king of Israel. Isaiah 57:15 reads, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."



Perhaps this story is not new, but it serves as a good illustration. A well-known actor had come to town and to the delight of everyone was giving public recitations of outstanding literary pieces. Among the recitations he gave was the 23rd Psalm. His presentation was flawless. Everyone was impressed. However, at the gathering an old saint of God was recognized who had been known to recite the 23rd Psalm at times. Upon the friendly prodding of the people, and the consent of the actor, he was finally coached into giving his recitation too. As all eyes were fixed upon him, with deep feeling and emotion he began, "The LORD is *my* shepherd; *I* shall not want. He maketh *me* to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth *me* beside still waters..." On and on he continued emphasizing each personal pronoun as his own until he had finished the great psalm. As he sat down everyone was visibly moved, including the actor. Without hesitation, but with exclamation, the actor responded, "I know the psalm, but this man knows the shepherd!" Yes, "The LORD is *my* shepherd." He is personal.

## "I Shall Not Want"

Now having asserted that "the LORD is my shepherd," the psalmist does not hesitate to say, "I shall not want." The rest of the psalm follows to show what he has in mind. Although so much of the Old Testament has to do with the material, the thoughts are enlarged to include more than that here. There was no want of the presence of God in every circumstance of life, whether good or bad. It is easy to go from here to the New Testament where Jesus says, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. *I am the good shepherd*: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:10,11). The apostle Peter later wrote that God had "given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him [knowing him] that hath called us to glory and virtue" (II Peter 1:3). Then taking the figure a step further (the term Lamb is used), Revelation 7:17 projects us into eternity, "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

**VERSE 2: "He maketh me  
to lie down in green pastures:  
he leadeth me beside the still waters."**

This certainly is a refreshing scene that now comes before us. The good shepherd, considering the needs of his sheep, has brought them into choice pastures of tender, green grass. Here in contented repose they lie down. From this proximity they are led beside the still waters. A most beautiful picture of tranquillity, quietness, and well-being presents itself to us. It is no wonder that in the next verse the psalmist says, "He restoreth my soul."

From here it is easy for our thoughts to jump to the New Testament where our Lord said, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls [you will be rested up, refreshed], For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light [mild, pleasant]" (Matthew 11:28-30). Then, as pointed out, this thought is carried over into eternity when we read that he "shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Revelation 7:17).

**VERSE 3: "He restoreth  
my soul: he leadeth me in the paths  
of righteousness for his name's sake."**

As life has been restored and invigorated, he leads his sheep on "in the paths of righteousness for

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# Mistake Alert!

## BIBLE QUESTIONS

WE ARE sorry for this mistake, but in the 4th issue of *The Sword and Staff* 1995, page 8 (56), under "BIBLE QUESTIONS" question number 17 is worded like this:

17. Where is the only time John uses the word "grace" in all of his writings in the New Testament?

It would have been more correctly worded as follows:

17. Where is the only place (chapter) in the writing of the gospel of John in which the word "grace" is found?

Answer: Chapter 1 (verses 14, 16, and 17) □

### The Factor, Parental Faithfulness

I KNOW that "statistics" don't always tell all the story, but there must really be some good reason for studying them. Perhaps they do help us to get a realistic hold on the status of things, so that we might better understand the needs of the future. At the very least they tend to "grab" our attention. Such were the statistics presented several years ago on the subject of drop-outs among our young people. (I wonder where today's statistics would see things: would the figures be higher or lower?) Here's what they had to say:

"From the material that has been published on these studies, it seems to me that one great central truth has begun to emerge. Faithfulness of the young person to Jesus *doesn't have anything to do with special programs or teachers* [italics supplied for emphasis in article]. It is not dependent on whether they are members of a large congregation or a small one. The single most important value is their own immediate family.

"One congregation found that where both parents were faithful to the Lord, and that includes *active interest* in the local congregation's programs, 93% of the kids remain faithful. On the other hand, if only one of the parents was faithful, that figure dropped to 73%. Where the parents were what we would call only reasonably active in the Lord's work, only 53% of the young people maintained their faith.

"Now, here comes the shocker: In those cases where both parents attended *only infrequently*, the percentage of their children who remained faithful to the Lord dropped to 6%." (Joe Barnett)

Now, that tells us more than just saying we lose 50 % of our youth during the teen years, doesn't it? Let's quit blaming the church and the youth programs for the failures. Nor can the credit be given for those who remain faithful to the church and such programs. There may be other things—such

as the church needing to use the youth more—but I am certain that we, as parents, must shoulder the majority of the blame. After all, God gave the children to parents and made the parents responsible for their souls (cf. Ephesians 6:1-4) □

—The Biblical Messenger

## BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. Can you quote the first and the last verse in the Bible (quote them)?
2. How did Abraham graciously consent to a settlement when there was strife between his herdmen and the herdmen of his nephew Lot?
3. What man is described in the Bible as being "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth"?
4. Besides the angel of the Lord going before Israel in the wilderness, what did God send before them to drive out the Canaanites?
5. What were the different terms (names) applied to the remnant of the giants who lived in Canaan in ancient times?
6. Who said and under what circumstances was it said, "My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions"?
7. What prophet said, "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit" when the Word of the Lord came to him?
8. When Jesus sent the twelve disciples on the limited commission in Israel, what did he tell them to do when a city would not receive or hear them?
9. Where did Mary and Martha (and their brother Lazarus) live who were good friends of Jesus?
10. Of whom did Jesus say, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell"?
11. What two things did everyone who had received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost experience in common?
12. Who received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost?
13. Where are some non-Biblical sources quoted in the New Testament Scriptures?
14. The apostle Paul, being a Jew, was of what tribe of Israel?
15. Who was Paul's penman in writing the Roman epistle?
16. How many times is the quotation, "The just shall live by faith" (Habakkuk 2:4), found in the New Testament?
17. What were two occasions Paul used the saying in his writings, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," and to get across what points?
18. Do we know the names of any of the angels of heaven?
19. What were the names of the seven churches in Asia to whom the book of Revelation was sent?
20. In addressing each of the seven churches in Asia, what were the first and identical words the Lord said about each one?

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



# READERS'

## ...Response

**APOLOGY:** Please accept our humble apology for slowness in getting correspondence answered. "We" have no staff of secretaries, etc. to handle such, and this is done by the "editor" as time allows. Be it known that you are sincerely appreciated. ☐

### FLORIDA:

■ *"You are in my prayers that, Lord willing, you can be restored to good health so you can continue in the great work you are doing."*

### VIRGINIA:

■ *"Please remove us from your mailing list."*

■ *"We pray that your surgery went well and you'll soon recover."*

### KENTUCKY:

■ *"Keep up the good work. May the Lord continue to bless your ministry."*

■ *"I enjoy your paper so much. Keep the faith. There are so many publications that preach 'another gospel.' We all must strive to promote the true gospel."*

*"Please send me the bound copies I have checked. I look forward to reading them."*

■ *"Thank you for the many years of labor in the Word. I have read THE SWORD AND STAFF off and on since I was saved in 1977 at the age of 18. I have gained much valuable knowledge and insight into the Scriptures from your paper. My wife also enjoys the paper and we hope to share this very helpful resource with our two daughters who are also Christians."*

*"I would like to continue to receive THE SWORD AND STAFF regularly, so please keep me on the mailing list. Also, please send me one copy of any printed material you have available, especially any bound volumes of past issues. I am enclosing a contribution that I hope is adequate for this request..."*

*"I am troubled to hear of your upcoming surgery. We will be in prayer for you and your family. Our prayer is for your faith to be strong and your recovery to be swift."*

*Again, thank you for your example and teaching and may God bless."*

### WEST VIRGINIA:

■ *"Just received your fine SWORD AND STAFF today. I was delighted to receive it. Your articles are like a breath of fresh air. I look forward to each issue. Please use the small check to renew if needed my subscription or use as needed. Also send me the 1985-1986 bound volume. I somehow missed this one. I have all of the others. Don't stop! Preach the Word!"*

### OHIO:

■ *"Please remove from your mailing list."*

■ *"Here is a donation to help you with the Lord's work. We love your paper. It's so strong and true. God bless you and your family. Here is a list of families I would like you to send your paper to. I really appreciate it."*

■ *"Thank you for you SWORD AND STAFF newsletter. It was very distressing to read about your scheduled surgery. Needless to say you have been in my prayers."*

*"I know our Lord is with you and yours. I pray you will be as comfortable as possible after surgery and during your convalescence."*

*"We all (your faithful readers) need you to continue your work for our Lord. How great THE SWORD AND STAFF is with its strong writing! I learn so much from each issue..."*

*"Please have a good recovery."*

### MASSACHUSETTS:

■ *"We are certainly praying for your recovery from this prostate cancer. We are petitioning God...We thank God for what a wonderful work you have done and are doing."*

### INDIANA:

■ *"Around here there is a lot of pressure to go to Promise Keepers. I haven't been. I am in favor of a lot of the things they stand for but I don't go for the organization. I would rather spend my time doing the work of the church that Christ commanded us to do."*

*"Do you have any thoughts about Promise Keepers? I would be interested in hearing what you have to say about them. Thanks and God bless."*

**Editor's Comments:** Needless to say, the Promise Keepers are impressive in the things they have to say about the family and responsibility. However, isn't that what the church of Jesus Christ teaches all of the time? The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15). And Christianity involves more than that. The Promise Keepers are a mixture of denominational beliefs and unbeliefs. I don't support Promise Keepers for the same reason that I am not involved in joint denominational ventures such as Billy Graham campaigns. We are committed to all of the gospel.

(Continued on Next Page)

# READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

## ILLINOIS:

■ "I wanted you to know how much I enjoy *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. So many people do not want to hear the truth and have 'itching ears.' I am thankful for a publication that speaks the truth as revealed in the Scriptures. I truly enjoyed reading your editorial *BYWAYS*, Vol. 34, No. 1. I have heard the argument about 'when that is perfect is come' as being Christ. I do not believe that this means Christ and I am so glad that you have written such an excellent article. I am enclosing a check for all the bound volumes of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. If you have any older volumes or know where I can obtain some older volumes, I would appreciate knowing and I would send a check for them..."

■ "Please send me seven more *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*. I have already given away about 60 or more of your books, but I know five more who could use them. Thank you and God bless."

## OKLAHOMA:

■ "I'm sorry for the delay in sending my support. I look forward for each copy and appreciate your straight forward stand for truth. It is plain Bible teaching and all Scriptural—easy to understand..."

■ "You are in our prayers! Since God knows your needs at this time, I have all confidence that He will do more than we even think. Surely you will find comfort in knowing that your vast reading audience will be bringing you before the Lord in prayers. Also know that you are not allowed to be ill for very long. We will be waiting for those sermons. It's so rare any more to hear the truth in its pure form. God bless and keep you."

## MINNESOTA:

■ "Thanks for my copy of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*! I don't know who gave you my name and address, but I'm glad they did..."

■ "Greetings in the Lord! Thank you so much for the bound editions of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. When I received the first copy of your magazine, I was skeptical. As I read my copy, however, I didn't find any unbiblical teaching. As a matter of fact, it was great to find God's truth expounded! So, I wanted to be sure, so I ordered two of the bound volumes just to see if it really is what it seemed. Wow! This is a great Christ-centered magazine!

"Please send me the bound volumes for 1987-92 (3 X \$7.25). Would you have any pre-1985 volumes? It's a great source for sermons, church newsletters, etc. Thanks for being a blessing to me and the congregation here.

"I'd like to ask if you could send copies of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* to the following persons..."

## CALIFORNIA:

■ "Thanks for your wonderful paper. Enclosed is a donation. Please send to following..."

■ "Sorry to hear of need for surgery. We will be praying for you, as well as for the production of the paper. Keep up the good work. If I may encourage you, God's word says, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness' 2 Cor. 12:9. Brother, may you be strengthened through this time, that you may do even greater things for the Master. May God give you a speedy recovery!..."

## OREGON:

■ "Please remove from your mailing list."

■ "Enclosed is a contribution for the work you're doing. We really enjoy your papers and pass them along when we're through. It's so refreshing to read Bible based material. Keep up the good work.

"Sorry to hear of your upcoming surgery. Hope you have a quick recovery and back on the job soon."

## WASHINGTON:

■ "I am sending some contribution for continuation of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*.

"God bless you for preaching His Word boldly. May His Truth enrich us all in the knowledge of His Son. Amen."

■ "We just want you to know that we have marked our calender to remember to hold you up in special prayer as you go to surgery the 18th [March]. We do trust that everything will go easily and well with a quick and complete recovery..."

"May God give you strength, trust, and hold you close! Deuteronomy 33:27, 'The eternal God is our dwelling place (refuge) and underneath are the everlasting arms.' □

## A Personal Note from the Editor

**AFTER** a routine checkup in December my family doctor referred me to an urologist. With further tests and a biopsy it was determined that I had prostate cancer. Surgery was performed on March 18th, involving a complete removal of the prostate gland (called radical prostate surgery). After surgery the doctor told my family that everything looked good (that it appeared the cancer was all contained in the gland and removed). When the lab work came back, it seems the cancer was a little more advanced than initially thought, but had not gotten outside of the gland. The doctor thinks everything will be all right, but he will keep check on things 3 or 4 times a year.

Recovery has been a bumpy road taking time and patience (especially with bladder blockage three times). I deeply appreciate those who, upon learning of my situation, called or wrote. We are thankful to be getting out another issue of *The Sword and Staff*. Your continued prayers are appreciated as we press on in the Lord's work.—**JIM GIBBONS** □

## What's Your Name?

**THE INDIANS** used to give their children the name they earned. Thus, some girls would be called Laughing Water, Sunshine or Timid One. A boy might be named Running Feet, Wise Owl or Black Hawk.

Suppose God gave His children the name they earned. Some would be Helping Hand, Faithful Teacher, Lively Stone or Generous Heart. But on the other hand, there would be many wearing names such as Unreliable, Worldly Minded, Never Attend, Evil Tongue, Luke Warm or Stingy Giver. If God named you according to your Christianity or lack of it, what name would you have? □

—from *The Christian Link*



## BARBS... with a Point

**IT IS** better to tell people than to tell them off.

*Sin must be dealt with as sin before people will repent and be born again.*

If we are saved not because of our righteousness, but as a condemned sinner who has been forgiven (and we are), where is the room for boasting except in the mercy and grace of God?

*Orthodoxy gone to seed is not the fruit of the Holy Spirit.*

When people can't get it straight on such a simple matter as followers of Christ being called Christians, and not some denominational name, we can't expect them to get it straight on more weighty matters of the gospel.

*The inactive "church member" is a "sitting duck" for the devil.*

Marriage is a good and honorable institution set up by a righteous, holy, and benevolent God; people who do not respect or honor it, as evidenced in divorce and immorality, are dishonorable, sinners, and will have to face an angry God in Judgment.

*We know that our relationship to God has soured when we no longer have a sweet and gentle disposition.*

A negative mental attitude draws negative things to it, as well as spilling over in a negative way toward others, bringing negative consequences in your life; keep a positive mental attitude.

*If you build a wall to shut others out, you at the same time are building one that shuts yourself in.*

If you find yourself in a place where there is no New Testament church, you are the New Testament church in that place (don't become a part of denominationalism).

*Many times arrogance and pride are glorified, and even deified, in what is called patriotism.*

People who are always harping on man-made religious issues do not harmonize with the sweet music of heaven and only produce disconcerting sectarian noise.

*The person who lives without God will die without God (and without hope).*

From the Christian perspective, the purpose of counseling is not accomplished unless the whole "counsel of God" is presented and accepted (Acts 20:27), not just that people are made to feel good.

*There is nothing more obnoxious than religious arrogance and pride.*

People preoccupied with subjective religious experiences independent of the Word of God find it hard to subject themselves to the Word of God if it conflicts with their religious experience.

*When people have no moral values, life is cheap (and we end up with a lot of cheap humanity).*

Separation, sacrifice, and commitment are not in style in church circles today but compromise, conformity, and self-indulgence are.

*Unbelief does not change the fact of God.* □



## Daniel Webster Said It

**IF RELIGIOUS BOOKS** are not widely circulated among the masses in this country, and the people do not become religious, I do not know what is to become of us as a nation. And the thought is one to cause solemn reflection on the part of every patriot and Christian. If truth be not diffused, error will be; if God and His Word are not known and received, the devil and his work will gain the ascendancy; if the evangelical volume does not reach every hamlet, the pages of a corrupt and licentious literature will; if the power of the Gospel is not felt throughout the length and breadth of the land, anarchy and misrule, degradation and misery, corruption and darkness, will reign without mitigation or end.—*Daniel Webster* □



*"Keep your face toward the sunshine,  
and the shadows will fall behind you."*



MEDITATIONS ON THE 23RD PSALM  
(Continued from Page 7)

his name's sake." Blessings received, whether material or spiritual, should not be for naught. God leads us in deliberate paths for an expressed purpose or intention, "for his name's sake." The bottom line to all human experience is whether it will bring glory to the name of God or not. By deliberately leading us in "paths of righteousness," the LORD purposely seeks to encourage and accomplish this.

Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9). God's name is hallowed and His glory is accomplished when His attributes are reflected in us. But there is a problem. The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Even in the Old Testament the prophet Isaiah said, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way..." (Isaiah 53:6). However, the rest of this prophetic verse in Isaiah arouses hope, "And the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." That is where the good shepherd of the New Testament enters the picture. Jesus said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10; Luke 15:1-7). John had much to say about Jesus being the good shepherd (John 10:11-18). The good shepherd would give his life for the sheep. With grace and forgiven sins, we again have a chance to glorify His name. Through him we are led into the paths of righteousness "for his name's sake" as he goes before us.

**VERSE 4: "Yea, though I walk through  
the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear  
no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and  
thy staff they comfort me."**

When the psalmist speaks here of "the valley of the shadow of death," he is not talking about the experience of death itself, but the danger and possibility of death. During the visit to Bible lands one time, the dark shadows cast across the Kidron Valley by the towering walls of Jerusalem suggested such a shadow to this writer. Take that situation and put it in the wilderness. The danger of wild beasts lurking in the shadows as the sheep passed through was very real.

David as a young shepherd boy had dealt with such problems and had come to the rescue of his sheep. Thus looking to the LORD as the great shepherd, he says, "I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." With his rod and his staff David had guided his sheep safely through the valley and warded off the attack of wild beasts. The very appearance of the rod and staff

brought a feeling of security and comfort to the sheep. These thoughts from the human perspective are going through David's mind as he finds comfort and security in God (and how God will handle the situation). And looking to Jesus in the New Testament as the good shepherd, many reassuring things come to mind (John 10:10-13). He even gave his life, and has been raised from the dead, in coming to our rescue (Hebrews 13:20,21).

**Trust in God**

There is so much that we don't understand;  
So wisely let us leave it in God's Hand,  
The One who knows the ending from the start  
And what resides in each and every heart.

God can take that which seems so very bad  
And make it be in time with goodness clad;  
That which was bad had only seemed that way,  
And what we thought was night brought on the  
day.

So never let a child of God despair,  
But simply trust and leave it in His care;  
God sees it all, eternal in its scope;  
So trust in Him and live each day in hope.

*—By James E. Gibbons*

Some would see "the valley of the shadow of death" as death itself, and then they would bring forth beautiful lessons and applications from this angle. They would say that Jesus has gone through "the valley of the shadow of death," becoming the "firstfruits" of those who slept. Consequently, he has taken away the fear and sting of death as he accompanies us in this experience. While these things are true, that is not exactly what the psalmist had in mind when he wrote these words.

**VERSE 5: "Thou preparest a table  
before me in the presence of mine enemies:  
thou anointest my head with oil;  
my cup runneth over."**

Here it seems that David jumps from the vivid shepherd and sheep imagery to just plain language when he states, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." More than once during the lifetime of David this had happened. Two occasions come to mind. This happened when he was fleeing from Saul before he became king and later when he was fleeing from his own son, Absalom. Even in adverse circumstances it seems that God had openly provided.

(Continued on Page 14)

# Miscellaneous Reflections in Reference to Trials, Pain, and Suffering

## WHAT JOB SAID:

"What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil [bad]?" (Job 2:10).

"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away: blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21).

"Though he [God] slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15).

"If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come" (Job 14:14).

## NEW TESTAMENT:

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Corinthians 4:17).

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:7).

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4).



HE suffered for me, and it should be thought no strange thing that I be called upon to suffer for him.

*By prayer, and by the anticipation of the harsh realities of life, we insulate ourselves against shock and despair.*

We should not think it strange if we are stricken down in the midst of our years; we live in a world of sin and death—that is the reality of our situation.

*If you are "prayed up" your problems are not as likely to get you down.*

Instead of saying, "Why me, Lord?" it is more in keeping with the reality of the situation to say, "Why not me, Lord?" We all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (and the wages of sin is death).

*God does not always take away the trials, but He has promised to go with us through them.*

Physical pain is an alarm system in our bodies to let us know that something is wrong and that something needs to be done; psychological and emotional pain serve the same purpose spiritually.

*Hope is the ONLY THING that will sustain us through EVERYTHING.*

To the Christian the bottom line to all human experience, including suffering and death, is to how it can bring glory to God.

*Bad things that happen to us are bad only to the degree that we let them be; trust God, and keep a positive mental attitude.*

God may let you undergo suffering because He thinks you are able to handle it and be an instrument of His Glory.

*If you do not trust God when the weather is fair, do you think you will have faith to sustain you when the storms of life come?*

In suffering there are many swings of mood, but there never should be a swing away from God.

*Through patience and hope we possess our souls and are sustained in the darkest hour.*

Patience is a virtue that can only be refined through hardships and suffering.

*Pain purifies and invigorates the soul when experienced in the context of hope.*

We are refined by the fires of trial, and if we are not the kind of material that can be refined, we will be consumed by the fire.

*Suffering helps us separate what really matters from that which doesn't matter in life.*

Trials in a Christian's life have not accomplished their purpose unless we come away from them a better person (not a bitter, distraught person).

*The experience of suffering clears the air and settles the dust in a person's life.*

Trials try us to see what we are made of; if we are not made of the right stuff, we are thereby refined and purified to become what we ought to be.

*We know that our faith is real when hope sustains us in the hour of trial.*

The most intense joy comes after the experience of pain and suffering.

*The visitation of friends during sickness is better than any medicine.*

Accepting the "bad" things that happen as the will of God in our lives is hard, but by accepting them it makes it easier to go on living.

*The experience of suffering qualifies us to be a comforter of others.—J.E.G.*



# MEDITATIONS ON THE 23RD PSALM

(Continued from Page 12)

The verse as it continues could be mingled imagery. "Thou anointest my head with oil" could apply to sheep or human beings. Tender care of a torn sheep would at times prompt anointing with oil. But anointing the head with oil was one of the gestures of honor and hospitality offered by oriental people to their guests (Luke 7:46). Not only had David been fed, other acts of honor and hospitality had been bestowed upon him.

"My cup runneth over" further suggests the abundance and overflowing of blessings coming to him (even in the presence of his enemies).

**VERSE 6: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."**

Even in the face of adversaries, and them pursuing him, David thinks in terms of goodness and mercy following him. With God's presence he could only conclude, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

Now his thoughts go beyond this life, "And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever." The Old Testament that says so little about life hereafter at times has a few beams of light to shine through. It is mostly in anticipation of the fullness that would come in Christ who has "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (II Timothy 1:10). And the words about dwelling "in the house of the LORD forever" fit into this mold. The writer of Hebrews tells us that "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24). So, to dwell in the house of the LORD for ever would mean to be in heaven.

How wonderful to have such a shepherd in this life and then to be with Him forever!

Amen! The LORD is *my* Shepherd! □

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☞

## The Right Attitude

**GET** the right attitude to life—every day. It is easier to stay out of trouble than to get out of it. So plan your life so as not to get on the wrong side of the fence from the beginning. And when things do go against you, through no fault of your own, put a good face on it, and don't worry yourself into emotional unbalance. Learn to know your basic needs and work to see that they are fulfilled in such a way that they won't rebound on you.—*Time and Tide* □

# Answers to Our Prayers

**MUCH THAT** perplexes us in our Christian experience is but the answer to our prayers.

We pray for patience and God sends tribulation; for tribulation worketh patience (Romans 5:3-5).

We pray for submission and God sends suffering; for we learn obedience by the things which we suffer (Hebrews 5:8).

We pray for unselfishness and God gives us opportunities to sacrifice ourselves by thinking on the things of others, and by laying down our lives for the brethren (Philippians 2:4; Matthew 27:42; I John 3:16).

We pray for victory and the things of the world swoop down upon us in a storm of temptation; for "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4).

We pray for strength and humility and some messenger of Satan torments us until we lie in the dust crying for its removal (II Corinthians 12:7).

We pray for union with Jesus and God severs natural ties, and lets our best friends misunderstand us and seem indifferent to us; and calls on us to walk "alone" (Isaiah 51:2; 63:3).

We pray for love and God sends peculiar suffering and puts us with apparently unlovely people, and lets them say things which rasp the nerves and lacerate the heart, for love suffereth long and is kind, love is not impolite, love is not provoked. Love beareth, believeth, hopeth, and endureth all things. Love never fails (I Corinthians 13:4-8).

We pray for likeness to Jesus and the answer is: "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. Can thine heart endure or can thine hands be strong? Are ye able?" (Isaiah 48:10; Ezekiel 22:14; Matthew 20:22).

And in the furnace he melts us into something of His own tenderness and gentleness and teaches us how to bear one another's burdens and how to live to make intercession for the sick and sorrowful. (Galatians 6:2; Hebrews 7:25; Ephesians 6:18).

But this is only the transitory side. There is an everlasting reward of praise and honor and glory at the coming of Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:7). "For our present trouble, which is only for a short time, is working out for us a much greater weight of glory; while our minds are not on the things which are seen but on the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are for a time; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Corinthians 4:17,18).—*Selected* □



# Spiritual Food for Thought

By Andrew Gibbons

## Most Important of Biblical Considerations

### THE BLOOD OF CHRIST:

ATONES FOR THE SOUL	LEV. 17:11
BRINGS US INTO THE COVENANT OF GRACE	MATT. 26:28
CLEANSES US FROM ALL SIN	1 JOHN 1:7
DELIVERS GOD'S PEOPLE FROM JUDGMENT	EX. 12:13
EVERLASTING IN ITS VALUE	HEB. 13:20
FURNISHES THE ONLY GROUND OF PEACE WITH GOD	COL. 1:20
GIVES US ACCESS INTO HIS PRESENCE	HEB. 10:19-21
HAS ALREADY OBTAINED FOR US REDEMPTION	EPH. 1:7
IMPARTS ETERNAL LIFE	JOHN 6:54
JUSTIFIES US IN THE SIGHT OF GOD	ROM. 5:9
KEEPS US IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES	HEB. 9:22-26
LINKS US TO GOD'S ELECTING PURPOSE	1 PET. 1:2
MAKES US NIGH TO HIM	EPH. 2:13
NEVER NEEDS TO BE OFFERED AGAIN	HEB. 9:12
OVERCOMES THE POWER OF SATAN	REV. 12:11
PURCHASES US	ACTS 20:28
QUENCHES THE RIGHTEOUS WRATH OF GOD	ROM. 3:25
REDEEMS US FROM OUR STATE OF RUIN	1 PET. 1:18,19
SPEAKS TO GOD AND TO US OF SALVATION	HEB. 12:24
TUNES THE VOICES OF THE SAINTS IN HOLY SONG	REV. 5:9
UNITES US IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNION	1 COR. 10:16
VICTORIOUS OVER TRIBULATION	REV. 7:14
WASHES US FROM EVERY STAIN	REV. 1:6
X-IAN'S HOPE, IS THE	1 TIM. 1:1
YIELDS THE PRICE THAT BOUGHT THE CHURCH	ACTS 20:28
ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS, MAKES US	TITUS 2:14



IT IS SAD to say that some people are offended by the blood of Christ. These are not just unbelievers but also ones claiming to be Christians. They have gone as far as to have all reference to the blood of Christ removed from their hymn books. After reading the above ABC's about the blood of Christ one can see that if the blood of Christ is left out, you are without hope. Let us not become so wise in our own thinking to disregard that what God has done through the cross and the blood that was shed.

I Corinthians 1:18, *"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."*

You can not have the cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ without having the blood. It is the means by which one has to be saved.

I Corinthians 1:27-31, *"God has chosen the foolish things of this world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty; and the base (lowly) things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption."*

Where is redemption? In the blood of Christ.

Ephesians 1:7, *"In Him [Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."* □

## Time, How Will You Use It?

TIME GIVES a sinner a chance to repent or to fill up his full measure of guilt.

Time gives the righteous person a period to exercise his faith, develop patience, and persevere. □

## Breakdown of the Family

TOO MANY TIMES today the government is involved with that which should be done by the private sector of society, and too many times it is thought that the church should be doing that which is purely a family function (in both cases, perhaps, because of the breakdown of the American family).

## Does It Make a Difference?

A FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN reasoned with a man who refused to obey the gospel and become a part of a congregation of faithful Christians. He maintained that it makes no difference what you call yourself as long as your heart is right.

The faithful Christian responded by saying that this might sound okay, "But what difference does it make if you change labels on an empty bottle?"

Suppose we had a bottle containing poison, and it was so labeled. Would it be all right to put a label over the whole thing and call it "cough syrup"? You see, you cannot change the contents of a bottle by merely changing labels.

Another good question: What good does it do to call a person a Christian if he is not one?—*Adapted*

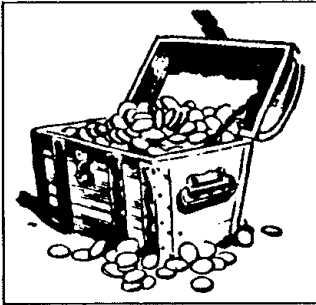
## Answers to: BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Genesis 1:1; Revelation 22:21; 2. Genesis 13; 3 Numbers 12:3; 4. Exodus 23:20,28; Deuteronomy 7:20; Joshua 24:12; 5. Numbers 13:33; Deuteronomy 2:11,20; 6. I Kings 12; 7. Amos 7:14,15; 8. Matthew 10:14; 9. John 11:1-3; 12:1,2; 10. Matthew 23:33 (13); 11. Cloven tongues as of fire sat upon each of them, and everyone of them was speaking in other languages—Acts 2:1-4; 12. The apostles—proof: (1) They were commanded to wait for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them (Acts 1:1-8); (2) They were the ones with one accord in one place when the Day of Pentecost came (Acts 2:1-4; 1:26—notice the antecedent of "they" is Matthias and the eleven apostles); (3) Everyone who had received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was speaking (Acts 2:4), and the apostles were the ones speaking—NOTE: Galileans were speaking, and the apostles were Galileans (Acts 2:7; 1:11); It says the apostles were the ones speaking (Acts 2:13,14,37); 13. Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12; 14. Romans 11:1; 15. Romans 16:22; 16. Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38; 17. I Corinthians 5:6; Galatians 5:9 (Read context); 18. Luke 1:19,26; Jude 9; 19. Revelation 1:11; 20. "I know thy works," Revelation 2:2,9,13,19; 3:1,8,15. □



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He may be tired and weary from the climb;  
But from the vantage point above the strife  
His life to him now seems almost a rhyme.  
  
He now can see each winding path he took  
To reach this high and panoramic view,  
And with each long and contemplative look  
He sees that which before he would eschew.  
  
As varied thoughts and moods engage his mind,  
He is content, and calm, and feels tranquil;  
But he is pleased to leave it all behind,  
And there beyond the heights descend the hill.

—By James E. Gibbons

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