

The Sword AND Staff

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

"Grace, Mercy, and Peace"

● By JAMES E. GIBBONS

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IT IS VERY INTERESTING to notice the salutations in the epistles of the New Testament. Unlike our practice today, the writer signed his name first, identifying himself and usually saying something about himself that would have meaning to the recipient of the letter. Then he directed his words to the would-be-recipient and in some way wishes them well. These words were not just an empty formula, but usually represent great spiritual truths into which they had entered.

Let's look into this. Perhaps the most common mode of expression in the epistles involve the words "grace" and "peace" (Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:3; II Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2; I Thessalonians 1:1; II Thessalonians 1:2; Philemon, v. 3; I Peter 1:2; II Peter 1:2). Typical of this are the words of Paul in II Corinthians 1:2, "*Grace* be to you and *peace* from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." The epistles of James and III John are a little different. James uses a very simple formula, and simply says, "Greeting" (reminiscent of the epistle in Acts 15:23-29). John in III John, verse 2 is more expansive: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou

mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." Then there are two epistles that omit the "well wishes" (as such) altogether, Hebrews and I John (perhaps due to the nature of the material).

The three words, "mercy," "peace," and "love" are found joined together in Jude, verse 2. But the words of triplet combination that we wish to take note of now are "*grace, mercy, and peace*" (I Timothy 1:2; II Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; II John, v. 3). They are full of much meaning.

Of two of the words here, it has been said, "*Grace* was the Greek and *peace* the Hebrew salutation." That may be true. But in making a Christian application of these terms, we find they have a much deeper meaning than that.

"Grace" and "mercy" are two of the great words of Christianity (as well as "peace"). Grace is used in several different ways in the New Testament. Its basic meaning is favor. In its more limited use, having reference to our salvation, it means unmerited favor. God has bestowed favor upon us that we do not deserve. How great is this word! Mercy is the other side of the same coin. Because of the enormity of sin and our sins, we deserved punishment. We deserved to die and to suffer the eternal consequence. That punishment which was deserved has been withheld. That is mercy.

Mercy (punishment withheld) and grace (favor bestowed)—put them together, and we have a wonderful combination in dealing with our human situation. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). And we are told that "the wages of sin is death" in Romans 6:23. So, it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). However, God has no pleasure seeing us die in our sins and facing Him in judgment. Consequently the apostle Paul said that

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—THANK YOU—

Proverbially SPEAKING. .

A PRAYERFUL Christian is a powerful Christian.

We will become more alike, and our differences will vanish, when we become like Christ.

Your energy is uselessly spent unless it is spent on that which is useful.

The real Christian experiences that sense of well-being which the world artificially seeks through drugs and drink but finds illusive.

In the sight of God, a little is a lot when that's all you've got (Luke 21:1-4).

Christian, if you will discipline yourself to read the Word of God regularly and prayerfully, then you will find power to discipline yourself to live the Christian life.

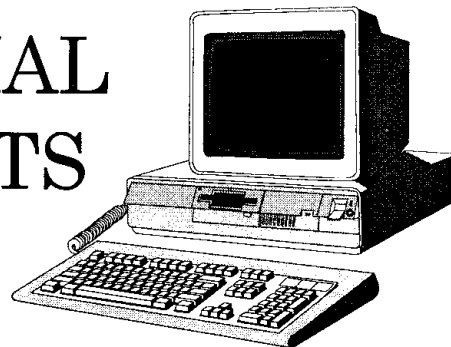
If your life seems empty, try putting something into it.

If you know what you stand for, and where you stand, you will still be standing there when all others have gone.

If you have a good heart, you will not have a bad mouth (Luke 6:45).

People who live it up have a hard time living it down.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS



THE ANTITHESIS OF LOVE

WHEN we speak of love, we usually think of hate as being its opposite. No doubt this is true if we think of it as a negative feeling expressed in a positive way. However, thinking of it more in a negative sense negatively contained, we conclude that selfishness is the antithesis of love. True love is unselfish and reaches out to others. It expresses itself in giving.

This can be seen in the Heavenly Father and in Christ, the Son of God. John 3:16, that familiar Scripture, reads, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The Lord Jesus himself said, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:12,13). This is ultimate giving. This is utter unselfishness. This is love.

This love should be seen in Christians. After all, we are supposed to be Christ-like. Consequently, John says, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (I John 3:16). Paul notes in II Corinthians 5:14 and 15 that being a Christian should result in a life of unselfishness, "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." Ephesians 5:25 accents this theme, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." How natural then for Paul to admonish in Galatians 6:2, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Unselfishness, that's what love is all about.

But self, that part of us which is basically selfish, must be crucified and gotten out of the way. Paul declared, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). The Greek word for "I" is *ego*, from which we directly get our word "ego" used in English. Somewhere we read that the word for "I" is only spelled with a capital letter in the English language. All of the other languages of the world

spell their word for "I" with a little letter. If this is true, perhaps it is indicative of the arrogance of the English-speaking people. Regardless of how this may (or may not) be, in coming to Christ self must be crucified. Self must be gotten out of the way. Strike a big mark through the "I" and make a cross out of it. Then make the great declaration of self-crucifixion that Paul made above (Galatians 2:20) and live accordingly.

It has been said that if we want **JOY** in our lives, we should acrostically take the letters of this word "**JOY**" and do the following with them. With "**J**" standing for Jesus, "**O**" for others and "**Y**" for yourself, you should unselfishly put Jesus first, Others second, and Yourself last. In liberating ourselves from self (and selfishness), and in experiencing true love, joy and peace will be ours (by-products of love). □



THE SWORD AND STAFF WEB SITE

FOR SOMETIME NOW we have been hooked on to the Internet with our computer for purposes of E-mail (and especially to expedite getting out the Spanish edition of *The Sword and Staff*). Just recently we happened to notice that our Internet service provider provided free space for personal Web pages. Therefore, we have seized upon this opportunity to post some material from *The Sword and Staff*, making it accessible on computers all over the world. Creating a Web page has not been an easy task, but we were determined to do this ourselves and had to learn everything from "scratch." But finally we are posted. Those who have computers, and are connected to the Internet, can find us at the following address. Tell others about this.

<http://web.infoave.net/~jgibbons.htm>

Already we have gotten E-mail responses from some who have visited our site. We share a few of their comments with you.

- *"I found your Web site. I am impressed..."*
- *"I really like your new Web site. This should really help the furtherance of the gospel!"*
- *"Thanks for your corrected Web address! It looks really good! For not knowing very much, you did a great job!...Keep standing for the Truth! I'll do the same!"*
- *"Great Web site! What an opportunity! Others and I will be able to copy from THE SWORD AND STAFF and directly paste it into our sermons or lessons!"*
- *"Finally got here!! It's a good-looking page. I can see you have spent a lot of time and thought on this. Will look forward to visiting here more often."*
- *"Well Done...I love the clean look of your pages and I look forward to visiting them often to see what you've done..."*
- *"I had a look at your Web site; it is first class. We have put a link from ours to yours. I wish you every success."* □



The Nature of the Religious Gathering in Acts Chapter 15

SOME SEE in Acts Chapter 15 an official assembly of leaders and theologians from different churches meeting for the purpose of making and regulating matters of doctrine and creed. Thus they see an approved precedent for the subsequent church councils that have convened through the centuries to make creeds and creedal declarations. Others see in this people coming together from various churches to have a regular church convention (in the modern sense of this expression). But what really is the situation here? Are either of these views correct (or warranted)?

Let us read this chapter very carefully, and then let us sort out what we have read.

First we notice: "Certain men which came down from Judaea [and in particular, Jerusalem] taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (15:1). The ending of chapter 14 has Antioch as the place where this took place (14:26-28). Paul and Barnabas were there and confronted the teachers for teaching such a thing. The brethren at Antioch wanted Paul and Barnabas to go up to Jerusalem and consult the apostles and elders about this. This was more than a little disruptive to their thinking, being Gentiles. They sent them on their way, helping with the expense of the trip.

But why talk to the apostles and elders about this? Not because they doubted what Paul had taught (for he was an inspired apostle like the rest, and his words were authoritative). But from all indications these Judaizing teachers were presenting themselves as representing the apostles and the church in Jerusalem in what they taught. This is intimated in the letter sent out from the Jerusalem church after the meeting to deal with the problem. They said, "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and

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The Nature of the Religious Gathering in Acts Chapter 15

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keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment" (15:24). The Antioch brethren wanted to get right at the source of the problem. Did the church at Jerusalem send these men out to teach what they were teaching? Did they correctly represent the apostles' teaching?

This epistle from the apostles, elders, and the church at Jerusalem cleared this up and showed what was expected of Gentile Christians. In essence, they didn't have to become Jews before they became Christians. What Paul preached and what the brethren in Jerusalem stood for were the same thing. The Judaizers did not represent the church at Jerusalem. Along with the epistle, Judas and Silas personally were sent to accompany Paul and Barnabas to bear the good tidings.

No, this chapter does not support the concept of church councils meeting to formulate denominational creeds and to make creedal declarations by uninspired men. Neither is it a parallel to denominational conventions beyond the boundaries of the local, autonomous church. It is wistful thinking to try to make it be either. □

What is Love "One to Another"?

Love is an attitude—
love is a prayer,
For a soul in sorrow,
a heart in despair.
Love is good wishes
for the gain of another.
Love suffers long with
the fault of a brother.
Love giveth water
to a cup that's run dry.
Love reaches low,
it also reaches high.
Seeks not her own
at the expense of another.
Love reaches God
when it reaches our brother.

—
"LOVE ONE ANOTHER"
—

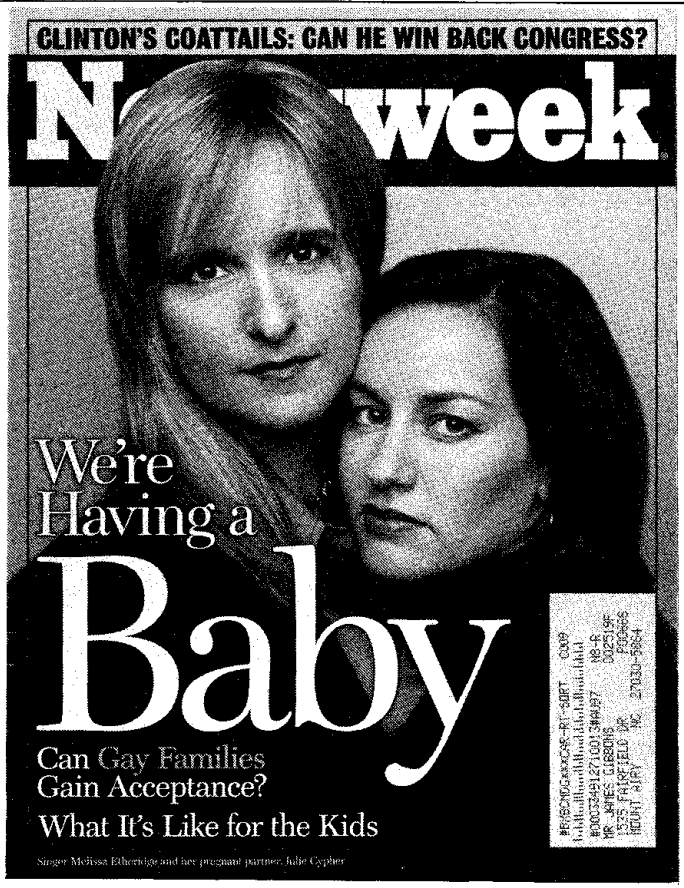
PERILOUS TIMES IN WHICH TO BE ALIVE!

IN II TIMOTHY 3:1 the apostle Paul prophetically states, "This I know also that in the last days perilous times shall come." (Read all of this sobering chapter). What were the "last days" that were in the apostle's eye? And what does he mean by "perilous times"? As to what he had in mind by "last days" we do not speak dogmatically. But we can positively see what he means by "perilous times." He means "perilous times" for people spiritually and morally speaking. Timothy's safety in avoiding being shipwrecked spiritually and safeguard in moral steadfastness would be assured by taking heed to Paul's admonition: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of..." Then Timothy is pointed to the Spirit-inspired Scriptures, the Word of God. His soul would be anchored to absolutes.

Today we are living in most strange and unusual times. Men have largely divorced themselves from God and the Bible. The old landmarks of morality, of right and wrong, are being bulldozed and pushed aside. It is a dangerous time in which to be alive. It is later than we think. Such a basic concept as marriage meaning only a relationship to be entered into by the opposite sex is belittled and made fun of (consider the cartoons from secular newspapers below). Those who oppose "same sex" marriages (!) are pictured as hatemongers. Every way that we turn it seems the media hits us in the face pushing the homosexual agenda. When sex and marriage are no longer considered and respected in the context God placed them, the very foundation of civilized society is gone. It is time to wake up, America!



Admittedly the media, more than the rank-and-file people, are responsible for trying to make homosexuality acceptable. It almost seems like a concerted plot. Notice the picture below of a cover of *Newsweek* magazine. There is talk of making "same sex" marriages legal. Already it seems several cities and hundreds of companies are giving family benefits to "same sex"



partners. In line with all of this, the following, almost a facsimile of a wedding announcement, was recently sent out in a Mid-western city (a reader sent this to us). It involves two men entering into something resembling marriage (feigning respectability).

Please read Matthew 19:4-6. God's plan from creation calls for male and female. Now notice how the Old Testament dealt with those who violated this arrangement. "If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them" (Leviticus 20:13, NKJV). Read Romans 1:24-32 to see what God still thinks about this. Certainly mercy, grace and forgiveness can be found for those who have committed sodomy. Notice Paul shows the enormity of this practice (and other sins) and then the cleansing. "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor *homosexuals*, nor *sodomites*, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians

*We have experienced love . . .
in our parents, our families and friends
and now a new love in each other*
We,
[name of a male]
and
[name of another male]
*invite you to share with us,
our partnership in life*
*The Holy Union will be held
at seven o'clock in the evening*
on _____ [time] _____
_____ Church _____
_____ [place] _____

6:9-11, NKJV). Now the next verse shows the cleansing. "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." Now as Christians this kind of lifestyle was past tense: "such *were* some of you." They had been cleansed, sanctified, and justified (and now were living accordingly). Their unnatural, repulsive and perverted way of living was behind them.

Do not be intimidated (or brainwashed) by the media. Isaiah 5:20 reads, "darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Listen to Proverbs 17:15. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord." We may not go as far as some in pushing for and accepting the homosexual lifestyle or agenda, but beware! After telling of those of the same sex going against nature in dishonoring their bodies one with another (as well as other sins), Paul asserts in Romans 1:32, "who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them" (NKJV). The man of God, Paul, says that not only are the ones who practice such sins guilty; those who don't practice them, yet find no fault in those who do, share in their guilt.

Beloved, beware! Take care! These are dangerous times in which to be alive. □

When we experience and know God's grace personally, grace will govern our relationship to others.

“Grace, Mercy, and Peace”

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Christ “was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25), and God “hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (II Corinthians 5:21). Mercy and grace are interwoven. Then Paul, more explicitly stressing *grace*, said, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8,9). And, verbally putting the emphasis upon *mercy*, he says in 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]” (Titus 3:5; See I Corinthians 6:9-11; Acts 2:38). No, we could not be good enough to save ourselves. Yes, we need God’s grace and mercy and we receive it when we repent and are baptized for the remission of our sins. Punishment that we deserved has been withheld (this is mercy). Righteousness which we did not have has been imputed to us through Christ (this is grace). We are free from the penalty of the Law. We are forgiven.

Those to whom the New Testament writers are writing had experienced God’s grace and mercy. Now as they continue in the ways of the Lord, they are wished even a greater realization of these wonderful truths in their lives. Not only that, he adds peace to grace and mercy. Peace is the by-product of knowing God’s grace and mercy. Isaiah said that “the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (Isaiah 57:20,21). But a person at peace with God is a person at peace with himself (and others). Having enjoined prayer, Paul reassured the Philippians, “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep [guard] your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7). In all things now the peace of God should rule in our hearts (Colossians 3:15). And it will as we live for Him.

May “grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour” be yours. Furthermore, “Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen” (Romans 15:33). That is what we wish for you. □

The Man in the Pit

A MAN fell into a pit and couldn’t get himself out. A SUBJECTIVE person came along and said, “I feel for you down there.” An OBJECTIVE person came along and said,

“It’s logical that someone would fall down there.” A PHARISEE said, “Only bad people fall into a pit.” A MATHEMATICIAN calculated how he fell into the pit. A NEWS REPORTER wanted the exclusive story on his pit. A FUNDAMENTALIST said, “You deserve your pit.” An I.R.S. man asked if he was paying taxes on the pit. A SELF-PITYING person said, “You haven’t seen anything until you’ve seen my pit!” A CHARISMATIC said, “Just confess that you’re not in the pit.” An OPTIMIST said, “Things could be worse.” A PESSIMIST said, “Things will get worse.” But JESUS, seeing the man, took him by the hand and lifted him out of the pit.—*Selected* □

Where Were You?

THE DOORS of the church’s meeting place were open last Sunday morning. Where were you? If you were there, good for you! If you weren’t, why? The doors were open last Sunday evening. Where were you? You say you were there? Good! What about you who were not there? Why weren’t you? The doors were open on Wednesday evening. Where were you? (You know the rest of the story.) J.C. Penny once said, “If a man is too busy to worship God twice on Sunday and on Prayer Meeting night, he has more business than God intended he should have.” And that was from a man who was extremely busy.

“The man who doesn’t have time to go to church is like an automobile which doesn’t have time to stop for gasoline.”—*Western Recorder*. Having said all this, let me add: Don’t give me the answer to this question, for you don’t owe me any explanations. However, there is One who deserves to know why you were absent from the assemblies. And, He does know. When He asks you one day, “Where were you?”, what will your answer be? When you miss, we want you to know you were missed by all of us. We need you. But more important, you need the fellowship and communion with the Lord that is found in “assembling with saints.” See you next time the doors are opened! □

—*Adapted*

When we do what the Lord commands us to do, it makes it easier for us to refrain from doing the things he doesn’t want us to do.

A Series Involving the Bible and Prophecy...

"The King of the Jews"

● By DAVID VAUGHN ELLIOTT



THE SON OF GOD stood within before the Roman Governor. "Are You the King of the Jews?" The conversation that followed can be summed up in one word: "Yes." Pilate went out to the mob. He asked, "Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" The mob replied, "Not this Man, but Barabbas."

After Pilate whipped Jesus, the soldiers had a little fun with the King. They put a crown of thorns on his head, dressed him in a royal robe and mocked him: "Hail, King of the Jews!"

More heated discussion followed between the mob and Pilate. They cried out: "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar." Pilate then brought Jesus out before them and cried, "Behold your King!" More heated words. Then Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests replied, "We have no king but Caesar!"

That was the end of the "trial." Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified. He wrote a title to be placed on the cross: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Not just in one language. It was written in three: Hebrew, Greek and Latin. The chief priests strongly objected. Pilate's reply? "What I have written, I have written." So they crucified the King of the Jews. (See John 18:28 to 19:23.)

A King is Born

Jesus died as the King of the Jews. Thirty-three years earlier, He was born as the King of the Jews. He would have been killed then, too, if God had not miraculously intervened. Killed precisely for being the King of the Jews.

When the oriental wise men arrived in Jerusalem, they figured that King Herod would know where the King of the Jews had been born. They were wrong. Herod knew nothing. Indeed, the news troubled him greatly. *He* was king! Any future king would have to be his own son! How could someone be born King of the Jews, when he knew nothing about it?

"Knew nothing"? As a matter of fact, Herod did know something. Although he was an Idumaean, he practiced the Jewish religion and knew something about it. He knew the Jews were awaiting their Messiah. Notice that the wise men asked Herod where the "*King of the Jews*" had been born (Matthew 2:2). But when Herod asked the priests and scribes about the birth, he asked them where the "*Christ*" was to have been born (verse 4). ("Messiah" and "Christ" are the same. See John 1:41.) Herod clearly equated "King of the Jews" with "Messiah."

The chief priests and scribes answered Herod's question by quoting Micah 5:2, which prophesied Bethlehem of Judea as the birthplace of "a Ruler." Herod accepted their reply.

Imagine! Herod equated "the King of the Jews" with the "Messiah," the "Christ." He knew His coming had been prophesied. He believed the prophecy as to the place of His birth. Herod thus knowingly dared to make an attempt upon the life of the very Messiah of God. At Jesus' trial, the Jews had cried, "We have no king but Caesar." At Jesus' birth, Herod, in effect, cried, "I have no king but myself."

Promised for Centuries

"Messiah" is a Hebrew word. The translation into Greek is "Christ." The translation into English is "anointed." In the Old Testament, men were anointed to be prophets, priests and kings. It seems the concept of anointing is most often connected to kings. Secondly it is connected to priests and least of all, to prophets. It is no surprise then, that the Jews so often considered the Messiah to be a King, just as Herod did.

The Micah text does not use either the word "Messiah" or the word "King." Other prophets do. Daniel comes near to using both. In his famous 70-week prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27), he speaks of a certain length of time "until Messiah the Prince." Apart from dates, Daniel makes it clear that Messiah the Prince would come before the second destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. This second destruction took place in 70 A.D. Messiah had to come before that date!

Zechariah also prophesied about the coming King. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O

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“The King of the Jews”

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daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9). The fulfillment of this prophecy is commonly called “the triumphal entry.” It is recorded in all four Gospels, with Matthew and John referring directly to the Zechariah text.

The Pharisees did not like the triumphal entry. They did not like to hear the people proclaiming Jesus as the King. “The whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying: ‘Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!’ And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, ‘Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.’ But He answered and said to them, ‘I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out’” (Luke 19:37-40). If the disciples had not praised Jesus as King, the stones would do it! *Jesus is King!*

Isaiah is often referred to as the Messianic Prophet because of his many prophecies of the coming one. One of the famous “King” prophecies is Isaiah 9:6,7. The specific words used in the text are “government,” “Prince,” “throne,” and “kingdom.”

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this.”

What a child to be born! What a Prince of Peace for Israel to look forward to! Only the zeal of almighty Jehovah God could accomplish this. Yet, when it happened, Herod, Pilate, the Roman soldiers, the Jewish leaders and the Jewish people fought against God’s power. But this, too, was prophesied!

Kings Cannot Stop THE King

What Herod and Pilate and the Jewish rulers did not realize was that they, themselves, were fulfilling prophecy. By rejecting and fighting against God’s prophetic Word, they fulfilled it.

“Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against Jeho-

vah and against His Anointed (Messiah, Christ)” (Psalm 2:1,2). Jesus’ disciples in prayer quote this prophecy and then explain it this way: “For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done” (Acts 4:27,28).

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BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. What other cities were destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah when God rained brimstone and fire down from heaven?
2. What are two ways in which the east wind was involved in the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage?
3. Why didn’t God drive out all of the Canaanite people at once as He brought the Israelites into the Promised Land?
4. What was a poetic name for Israel used a few times in the Old Testament, meaning the upright or beloved one?
5. What left-handed man from the tribe of Benjamin was one of the early judges of Israel?
6. How did Joab attain the position of being “chief and captain” of David’s forces?
7. In the Bible Lahmi was the brother of what person who is more well-known?
8. What was Job’s immediate reactions when word came of the calamities that had fallen upon him?
9. Which two psalms are almost identical in thought and content?
10. The writer of Proverbs said that a “word fitly spoken is like” what?
11. The prophet Hosea said, “Ephraim is joined to idols: _____.”
12. Which one of the gospel writers tells that Jesus was in the wilderness with the wild beasts when he was tempted?
13. In early New Testament times, instead of worshipping in Jerusalem where did the Samaritans worship?
14. What were the names of the good friends of Jesus who lived in Bethany?
15. What were the names of the people the apostle Peter and the apostle Paul raised from the dead?
16. The apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, “I have _____, Apollos _____; but God gave the _____.”
17. In writing to the Romans, and in reference to the Romans, what did Paul say that he was ready to do?
18. To whom was the epistle of James written?
19. In the epistle of James what teaching does he call a “royal law”?
20. Where was the apostle John when he received the book of Revelation from God?

(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:

■ "Please send me the 1995-1996 bound volume of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*—also 1 copy of *THE POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*...Enjoy reading *THE SWORD AND STAFF* as it does so much for my soul—food for the soul. God bless you all for the good work you do for the Lord."

TENNESSEE:

■ "I enjoy *THE SWORD AND STAFF* and I know that much good is being done through your effort in publishing it. Keep this great work going. A small contribution is enclosed to help with the printing cost..."

VIRGINIA:

■ "You have helped more people more times than you will ever know. God knows. Keep on keeping on—that's what every Christian does..."

MARYLAND:

■ "I want to receive information about the material you have...in Spanish. I saw last week in a library in Texas a Spanish magazine *LA ESPADA Y EL CAYADO*. Please send me a sample and let me know how I can help and receive more in the future."

PENNSYLVANIA:

■ "Really appreciated the latest issue of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. You always do a fine job, but this issue was of special interest to me."

■ "I'm a new subscriber and praising God for your paper *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. It is very enlightening. I've been reading my sister in Christ's paper, but would like to receive them myself and to these other addresses,

please, also...Thank you very much."

NEW YORK:

■ "Is it possible or do you know where I can get bound volumes of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*, Volumes 1-17? I have Volumes 18-32."

(Editor's Note: I am sorry, but the only ones that are now available are the ones listed on the back page of this paper. The others are out of stock.)

OHIO:

■ "Please accept this small donation to help with your publication, *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. We truly enjoy receiving it and reading the articles, and the 'Proverbially Speaking' section..."

■ "Enclosed is my check...I do hope this will help you to print as many copies of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* as possible plus renew my subscription.

"It is such a good publication. I read each article with my Bible by my side so I can follow all the information contained in each one. Your editorial on 'Unity...' was superb!! Thank you for your writing..."

INDIANA:

■ "Enclosed is our donation for *THE SWORD AND STAFF* as we want to continue to be on your mailing list. Your publication is filled with so much 'food.' A big thank you to whoever submitted our names...May God bless you as you get His Word out in such a way as your publication does..."

ILLINOIS:

■ "I have received *THE SWORD AND STAFF* for close to twenty years, have been blessed with each and every issue. I greatly appreciate your efforts and persistence with getting this fine publication out. May God bless you and yours with good health, peace and prosperity. Keep up the blessings, it's Bible and you say it just like it is; very few today teach the Bible like you do."

MISSOURI:

■ "I am so glad to hear you have the 95-96 *SWORD AND STAFF* in book form. I have seven (7) already and think they are the best reference and reading I've ever studied.

"So I am ordering mine and also pray that your health stays good. We need men like you that tell it like it should be. God bless you with many more years.

"I feel that time is very short before Jesus returns."

TEXAS:

■ "Please send me the following [bound volumes]...I pass on the individual magazines to others, usually leaving them in the waiting rooms. The hospital I work with now has a chapel. I intend to put a couple in there. My husband and I enjoy your paper so much. Keep up the good work."

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

OREGON:

■ *"Thank you for your continuing work of printing. I wish more would accept the simple readings in THE SWORD AND STAFF. They give me pause and liberty in Christ. I really feel so sorry for the lost in our society today because they stumble over the logic of God..."*

WASHINGTON:

■ *"You have been sending me THE SWORD AND STAFF, but I didn't subscribe to it. I enjoy it immensely..."*

CANADA:

■ *"Got the last of 'SWORD AND STAFF.' It is GREAT as usual...Finished our study on angels and now doing James...we will be studying Revelation. Was thinking of using Vaughn Elliott's material on prophecy as an introduction. His work is good..."*

PHILIPPINES:

■ *"Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! ... Through a cousin who came from San Diego, CA., my husband and I were able to get a copy of your Vol. 23, 1985, No. 2, THE SWORD AND STAFF publication. We find it very edifying and nourishing to our spiritual growth. Could you please help us how we could have our own subscription...Thank you very much for your attention, and I look forward to your response."* □



"The King of the Jews"

(Continued from Page 8)

In this Psalm of David we have both the words "Anointed" (Psalm 2:2) and "King" (verse 6). In spite of the efforts of the leaders and peoples, "Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion." A millennium before Jesus came into the world, God spoke through David of his plans for His King. The kings of the earth would try to stop *the* King, but they would be powerless.

"The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was Jehovah's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes" (Psalm 118:22,23). When Jesus the Christ was rejected of men, He did not have to come up with a new plan of action. The rejection was in the plan! God knew from the beginning that the rulers and many of the people would not want the King. But God set Him up as King anyway.

Jesus IS the Christ—Messiah—Anointed King

The tomb could not hold Him! Death and Hades could not keep Him in their power. He was rejected of men but raised by God. Men rejected Jesus as

King over them, but God set Him up as King on Mount Zion anyway.

On the day of Pentecost, 30 A.D., ten days after Jesus' ascension into heaven, a great gathering took place in Jerusalem. Jews from many nations were gathered for the annual feast, little knowing that Pentecost that year would become so famous. When many people today talk of "Pentecost," the only one they have in mind is the one in A.D. 30. That was the Pentecost immediately following Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension.

Before Jesus ascended, He told the apostles that they would soon be filled with power. He commanded them to stay in Jerusalem in anticipation. As they waited, they appointed Matthias to take the place of Judas.

When the day of Pentecost arrived, suddenly the Holy Spirit came upon the twelve apostles. There was a supernatural sound like a mighty wind that caused a crowd to gather. The apostles began speaking in the languages of all the foreign Jews gathered there. The multitude was amazed and perplexed.

Simon Peter, to whom Jesus has given the keys of the kingdom, stood up and began his famous discourse. He spoke of the prophet Joel, who had prophesied these events. He spoke of the miracles of Jesus and of his death. Then in some detail he spoke of Jesus' resurrection and the events that followed.

Peter used four lines of argument to prove Jesus' resurrection: 1) the impossibility of His remaining dead; 2) fulfilled prophecy; 3) eye-witness reports; and 4) the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which the people were witnessing.

He quoted the 16th Psalm, a Psalm of David, and explained it in detail (Acts 2:25-31). David wrote the Psalm in first person. However, since David "is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day," David could not have been speaking of himself.

Rather, David was a prophet. David knew that the Messiah (Christ) would be a descendent of his and that God "would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne." Peter immediately follows these words with "he (David), **foreseeing this**, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ." Notice that sitting on the throne of David is thus linked to the resurrection.

And what happened following the resurrection? Christ ascended and was "exalted to the right hand of God" (verse 33). This, too, was prophesied by David, in Psalm 110: "The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand" (Acts 2:34).



"MESSIAH COMETH" "I AM HE"—John 4:25,26

After heaping evidence upon evidence, Peter summed up: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that **God has made this Jesus**, whom you crucified, **both Lord and Christ**" (verse 36). God has made him Lord and Christ. *Jesus is now Lord! Jesus is now Christ!* Ever since He ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of Almighty God. Since He is "Lord," He is Master and Ruler. Since He is Christ, He is Prophet, Priest and King. *Now!*

The Throne in Heavenly Zion

Jesus is *now* "seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Hebrews 8:1). Does this verse and Peter's preaching contradict what David said in Psalm 2:6? "Yet I have set My King on My **holy hill of Zion**." Does that mean earthly Zion or heavenly Zion? Earthly Jerusalem or heavenly Jerusalem? Which one is holy today?

Notice what the Apostle John, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says about earthly Zion-Jerusalem. Did he still consider it to be the Holy City? In Revelation 11:8 he wrote: "the great city...where also our Lord was crucified" "spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt." Imagine! The once Holy City, because it rejected and crucified the Messiah, is likened by God to that homosexual Sodom and that idolatrous, enslaving Egypt. Quite *unholy*!

Galatians 4:25-26 clearly distinguishes the earthly Jerusalem and the heavenly. "Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to **Jerusalem which now is**, and is in bondage with her

children—but the **Jerusalem above** is free, which is the mother of us all." God's Jerusalem today is the heavenly, not the earthly.

Where is Jesus today? "But you have come to **Mount Zion** and to the city of the living God, the **heavenly Jerusalem**,...to **Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant**...Therefore, since we are receiving a **kingdom** which cannot be shaken..." (Hebrews 12:22,24,28).

God the Father put Jesus at His own right hand in the heavenly Zion-Jerusalem. Is He now reigning? Is He now King? Listen to Ephesians 1:20-22: "which He (God) worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, **far above all principality and power and might and dominion**, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put **all things under His feet**, and gave Him to be **head over all things to the church**."

Peter later wrote in his epistle: "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him" (1 Peter 3:21,22). "*Having been made*." Past tense. Accomplished.

In This Age and the Coming Age

The Ephesians text speaks of all the dominion of Jesus "not only in this age but also in that which is to come." Consider reading it this way: "far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, *not only in the age which is to come but also in **this age***."

It is true that Jesus will exercise more power when He comes again. Hebrews 2 explains Psalm 8 as being ultimately fulfilled in the man Jesus. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death **crowned with glory and honor**" (Hebrews 2:9). Jesus is now crowned. However, verse 8 clarifies "But now we do not yet see all things put under him."

Psalm 110:1,2 says, "Jehovah said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.' Jehovah shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!" There is a process here. Christ is now ruling at the right hand of God, but all his enemies are not yet under his footstool. Christ is today ruling *in the midst of His enemies*. One day in the future they will all be put under his feet. Today they can choose to oppose Him. Tomorrow they will be forced under His power.

(Continued on Next Page)

“The King of the Jews”

(Continued from Page 11)

Paul certainly had Psalm 110 in mind when He by the Holy Spirit penned 1 Corinthians 15:22-28. These verses make it clear that Jesus does not begin to reign when all his enemies are put under his feet. On the contrary, “He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.”

Psalm 110:1 says “Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” 1 Corinthians 15:25 says “till He has put all enemies under His feet.” Certainly both speak of the same thing. According to the former text, what is Christ doing “till”? “Sit at My right hand.” According to the latter text, what is Christ doing “till”? “He must reign.” “*Sit at My right hand*” is equivalent to “reign.”

For the present, as Psalm 110:2 says, Jesus must “rule in the midst of (His) enemies.” His rule will be absolute but it is not so today. Nevertheless He is now ruling; He is now reigning. Today Jesus is reigning in the midst of His enemies. Tomorrow He will be the absolute “King of kings and Lord of Lords” (Revelation 19:16).

According to the Order of Melchizedek

There is more about Jesus in Psalm 110. Notice verse 4: “Jehovah has sworn and will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’”

Who was this Melchizedek? The only historical information we have about him is in three scant verses of Genesis 14:18-20. Who was he? “Melchizedek king of Salem . . . was the priest of God Most High.” Both a king and a priest.

The book of Hebrews directly quotes Psalm 110:4 three times, and several other times repeats the phrase “according to the order of Melchizedek.” What was his order like? Hebrews 7:1-3 agrees with Genesis and connects it all to Jesus. “Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, . . . first being translated ‘king of righteousness,’ and then also king of Salem, meaning ‘king of peace,’ . . . made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.” Jesus is both a king and a priest. Hebrews 8:1 again contains the view of Jesus’ double function: “We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” In the heavenly Salem (Jerusalem). Jesus is now reigning (in the midst of His enemies) and, as Priest, He is interceding for His people.

This double function of Jesus is referred to in one of the “Branch” prophecies. It says that both functions are exercised “on His throne.” Zechariah 6:12,13: “Thus says Jehovah of hosts, saying: ‘Be-

hold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne.”

Another Jewish temple could not fulfill this prophecy. The temple of the Lord today is Jesus’ church (1 Corinthians 3:16,17.) We know from many verses in Hebrews that Jesus is our Priest today. Where? On His throne. “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy” (Hebrews 4:16). Now, what is He also doing on that throne? He is doing what is the most common thing to do on a throne. He is ruling, according to Zechariah’s prophecy.

King of YOUR Life?

From Jesus’ birth to His death, many people did not like the idea of His being king. This was true as the Gospel spread throughout the Roman Empire. In Thessalonica, the mob accused the Christians of “acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus” (Acts 17:7).

The Jews were expecting their Messiah-King for centuries. However, when He came, because He did not fulfill their earthly expectations, many of them rejected Him.

Today, many still want Jesus to be their earthly King. They reject His spiritual kingship. They reject His reigning now from the heavenly throne.

It is so common today to say, “I take Jesus as my personal and sufficient Savior.” How often have you heard people say, “I take Jesus as my personal and sufficient King”? “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46).

Is Jesus Lord of your life? Is He your King today? Those who rejected Jesus’ kingship, by so doing fulfilled Psalm 2. It would be better for us to fulfill the last three verses of the Psalm. “Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.”

There is a difference between Jesus’ kingship today and Jesus’ kingship tomorrow. Today He rules in the midst of His enemies—and He invites everyone to accept Him as King. Tomorrow He will come in all His glory and He will impose His kingship with “a rod of iron” (Psalm 2:9). There will be no choice, no invitation. Those who reject Jesus as King today will become enemies under His feet tomorrow. Those who accept Him as Priest and King in their lives today will enter into His eternal glory. □

Don't Let Yourself...

WORRY when you're doing your best.

HURRY when success depends on accuracy.

THINK evil of anyone until you have all the facts.

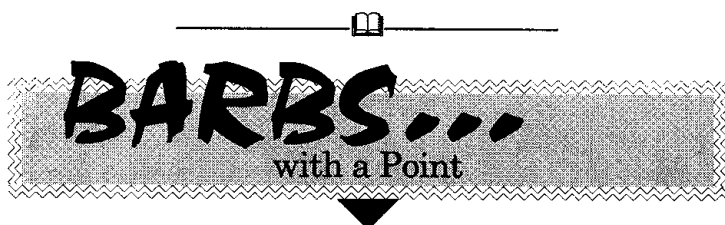
BELIEVE a thing is impossible without trying it.

WASTE time on trivial matters.

IMAGINE that good intentions are a satisfying excuse.

HARBOR bitterness toward God or man.

—Selected □



CLOSED MINDS can become awfully stuffy.

Right is always right if no one is right, and wrong is still wrong if everyone is wrong.

Those whose hearts are aflame with the gospel of Christ may at times seem inflammatory to the world.

The way that we dress shows our respect, or lack of it, for the people and the occasion (Matt. 22:12).

Some present a church-centered message, whereas the New Testament presents a Christ-centered message; the church is the by-product of accepting the Christ-centered one.

Religious leaders are supposed to lead the flock, not follow and accommodate the crowd.

To think and speak in terms of being a part of a religious movement (whatever it is called) instead of simply being the Lord's church (and that alone) would be like the children of Israel being in the wilderness and then not going on into the Promised Land.

Many who think that they are "cool" really aren't all that "hot."

It is hard to build a functional church with dysfunctional families (but that is largely the situation in our society today).

The person who has never failed, probably has never tried to do anything (and still is a failure).

It is really a sad commentary upon "Christianity" when so-called "Christian" nations have no scruples about going to war and killing those of another so-called "Christian" nation, whereas Moslems have a strong aversion to bearing arms against fellow Moslems of another country.

If you handle truth as mere opinion, you will lose hold of it, and it will slip through your fingers.

If some people were as concerned about counting the cost (Luke 14:25-33) as they are in counting the numbers, we would have a better church.

It is too bad that the message of some preachers when they get old becomes like their bodies, weak.

When church problems and personal problems in our lives are not faced up to and dealt with, they become the source of greater problems (and spill over into the lives of others causing them problems).

People on mind-altering drugs must go through some mind-altering to get their lives straightened out.

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

The sin that tempts us with an alluring smile, when once committed, laughs in mockery behind our backs. □

EXPECTATIONS

ELEPHANTS have been trained and used by humans as work animals for as long as 4,000 years. How is it possible for a 175 pound man to keep an 11,000 pound elephant in captivity?

When an elephant is very young, it is tethered to a four foot long wooden stake driven into the ground. This stake is physically able to hold the young, small elephant, despite the elephant's repeated attempts to escape it. After unsuccessfully trying many times to escape, the young elephant eventually comes to believe that escape is impossible. This belief is carried into adulthood. When the elephant is full grown, it could easily break free from the four-foot wooden stake, yet it never even attempts to do so. This intelligent, powerful creature is held captive, not by any physical restraint, but by its own thoughts.

Does it make you wonder what thoughts of your own might be holding you back? Are you tethered to circumstances from which you could easily break free, if only you knew you could?

Your thoughts can be your prison, or they can set you free to soar. If you think you can, or if you think you can't, you're absolutely right. In order to do anything, or become anything, or have anything, you must first believe that it is possible. It must exist in your mind before it can come to pass.

Expectations become reality, so expect the best of yourself.—**THE DAILY MOTIVATOR** □

An Exposition on I Timothy 2:9,10 and I Peter 3:3-6

● *By James E. Gibbons*
(written in 1960)

THE ABOVE SCRIPTURE references are some that most people are content to pass over, merely stating that they do not apply to us today, or give some other rationalization. We are living in a vain and materialistic age, and if we are not careful we will find ourselves caught in the human tide of lust and vanity. We must continually be on guard. We offer a commentary on these verses of Scripture for your consideration.

FIRST: I Timothy 2:9,10. The context of this reference seems to be the gathering and worship of the church, but teachings that he gives apply elsewhere also. **In like manner**—Even as the men are to pray and take the lead in the public worship, the women are to do the following. **That women adorn**—Why he mentions the women in particular, we do not know unless women are more inclined to be mindful about these things. The Greek word for adorn here basically means to arrange, put in order. Christian women are to arrange themselves as follows. **Themselves in modest apparel**—The Greek word for modest here means well-arranged, moderate, orderly, or seemly. The word for apparel, *katastole*, means properly a lowering, letting down, a garment let down, a long robe, a person's dress or attire. So from this it is evident that women should clothe or arrange themselves with seemly garments that actually cover the body. This means that shorts, low-necked dresses, and other immodest dress are taboo to Christians. **With shamefacedness**—The Greek word for this means having a sense of shame, bashfulness, modesty. Thayer has this to say about this Greek word *aidos* as he compares it with a synonym: "*Aidos* is prominently objective in its reference, having regard to others...It is often said that *aidos* precedes and prevents the shameful acts... *Aidos* would always restrain a good man from an unworthy act." In view of this, it is shocking to realize that the actual dressing style in the realm of the woman's world today is based on sex appeal. Women try to dress in an alluring fashion, and the coloration of their face tends to emphasize this too. Instead of manifesting shamefacedness, the trend is to present oneself to be as tempting as can be. Virtue evidently is no longer a thing thought worthy by those who set the styles in the fashion world, but rather the opposite. **And sobriety**—This word means prudence, self-control, temperance, chastity—all forgotten virtues in many circles. Next Paul continues by listing some of

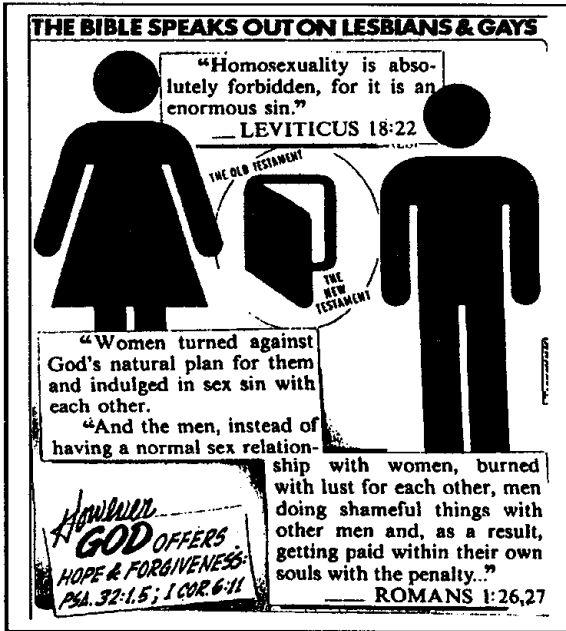
the outward expressions of vanity. **Not with broided hair**—This word for "broided" hair basically has reference to an interweaving...an elaborate gathering of the hair into knots. His point of objection obviously is the extreme, elaborate, and noticeable hair fashions of the day, which simply reflected too much [vain] attention given to the outer person. **Or gold, or pearls, or costly array**—all of these show that too much attention is being devoted to the outer man to the expense of the inner man of the heart. Such things worn [vain-gloriously] just for the sake of decoration [in a showy manner] are out of harmony with the teaching of the apostles. There is a needful and a holy purpose in wearing a watch and a wedding band. The returning prodigal son had a ring placed upon his finger, no doubt a symbol of authority in being restored as the son of his father. But the wearing of gold, pearls and costly clothing [flamboyantly] just for the sake of wearing them, just for the sake of decoration, is forbidden. **But which becometh women professing godliness**—It is expected that the women of the world will be vain. It is expected that the women of the world will endeavor to display their sexual attractions. But it is altogether out of keeping for a Christian woman to adorn herself in such a manner. She is to adorn herself in a more becoming way, that which "becometh" her as a Christian. The word for godliness means fear or worship of God. In other words, the woman professes that she fears and is worshipping the God of heaven. She proves it to the world by dressing in a becoming manner, showing that she has cast off vanity and now is modest in her life. **With good works**—What a glorious thing with which to be adorned! Read the New Testament and you will find the good works that should be wrought.

SECOND: I Peter 3:3-6. Here the apostle Peter is telling how the Christian woman must be under subjection to her husband, then he proceeds about modest apparel. **Whose adorning**—This Greek word for adorning, *kosmos*, means ornament or decoration. Thus he sets out to show what kind of decoration the Christian lady is to wear. **Let it not be the outward adorning**—He first shows the kind of decorating the Christian is not to do. The Christian woman is not to decorate or glamorize her outward person. The word **not** is emphatic. She can look nice and be well-groomed without being decorated. It is of significance and interest to note that this word *kosmos* (adorning) is the root word of the word cosmetic. The men who sought a name for their product went back into the ancient Greek and came up with the word "cosmetic," which is directly from the Greek *kosmetikos*, meaning "skilled in decorating" (and this is from *kosmos*, meaning "order, ornament"). One can at once see the connection. A word to the wise is sufficient. **Of plait-**

(Continued on Next Page, Column 2)

Spiritual Food for Thought

~By J. Andrew Gibbons~



IN A DAY AND AGE where “alternate lifestyles” are trying to be pushed as a viable option, let us realize that contrary to the politically correct thinking of today, homosexuality is wrong according to God’s Word. It is a learned behavior, not something you are born with. Many have heard this lie so long that they believe it.

To help the gay agenda the Hollywood left is trying to reinforce homosexuality in its shows, movies and advertizing by glorifying these sinful practices.

God created man and woman in the beginning, but when you leave God out things decay very fast. God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve or Ada and Eve. Let us not try to rewrite history and also disregard the natural laws of biology which are evidence that homosexuality can not reproduce; they can only seduce.

Don’t overlook the obvious. There is HOPE. I have worked with homosexuals who realized the bondage of their lifestyle and they wanted deliverance. Yes, there is deliverance in God through Jesus Christ. He can help us all become what we should be.

I Corinthians 6:9-11, *“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”*

Notice it is not just homosexuality that God is concerned about, but all unrighteousness. Verse 11 says that such were some of you, past tense. Let us not be deceived. God is deliverer and transformer. There is hope, but if one chooses to live in sin, that is their choice.

Just don’t try to use the Bible to justify your lifestyle in the Scriptures. God’s Word is clear, the question comes in as to whether we are going to stand or falter on what the Lord has spoken. Remember: “God’s terms are hope and forgiveness through repentance and obedience. We have a choice and also a way out.” □

ing of the hair—This has already been commented on in I Timothy. **And wearing of gold**—That which is of no purpose and is used for [showy] decoration. **Or of putting on of apparel**—That apparel which is merely for [showy] decoration...costly appearance, etc. The purpose of clothing is to cover the body, and it is not an ornament to get the attention of the eye [or to turn the head]. One should be conservative in dress. **But let it be the hidden man of the heart**—The kind of decorating that is to be done is to the soul in enriching our spiritual lives. This is our continual pursuit, and we continually look into the mirror of God’s Word to decorate our souls according to James in his first chapter [James 1:22-25]. **In that which is not corruptible**—The outward person is of this earth, earthly. He shall return to the dust of the earth. The desires of the flesh are sensual and vain; they are to be curbed as much as possible. However, we are to glorify God in our body and in our spirit (not glorify the body, but God in the body and spirit) according to Paul in I Corinthians [6:20]. **Even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit**—Nothing is any more lovely than an unpretentious and unassuming personality in a woman. This is the kind of decoration the Lord wants in our women, and not that which we see today in most of the cases, or many, shall we say—that of the elaborate and excessive appearance. **Which is in the sight of God of great price**—This kind of ornament is beyond the price of gold, pearls, or garments of great cost. God values this very highly. It will get His attention. Had you rather not adorn your soul for God, the one who made you, than to vainly adorn yourselves like the women of this world just for the sake of pleasing them and conforming to the standard of a degenerate society? Let us get our values straight. **For after this manner...**This is the way holy women throughout God’s history have adorned themselves, being under subjection to their own husbands. Sarah, wife of Abraham, is given as an example to follow. Christian women are admonished to follow the example of the holy women of the Bible, but many today had rather follow Hollywood and the lustful standards of this world.

This commentary is written from an unbiased viewpoint, except for the fact it strongly leans toward the Scriptures. If these words are truth it behooves our Christian women, who have not done so already, to conform their lives to this holy pattern. Do not dismiss these thoughts lightly from you mind. These words are submitted in kindness and humility. □

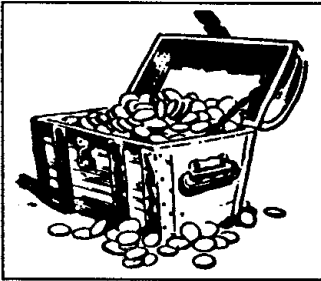
Three expressions

that should come often from our lips:

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