

The Sword AND Staff

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

LOST! LOST!

• BY JAMES E. GIBBONS—1535 Fairfield Drive
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"LOST!" That is a word that seems to be increasingly in disuse as part of modern man's religious vocabulary. When we talk to people, we are confronted with a muddled picture and a fuzzy mentality. To imply that people of a non-Christian religion, or even people in the world outside of the Lord's church, are lost is an insult to many in our humanistic and multi-cultural society. To suggest such is to be instantly labeled as being judgmental and unloving. Subsequently, and perhaps consequently, the "church" of today seems to be more preoccupied with social programs.

What It's All About

Thus, it appears that many have forgotten what Christianity is all about (if they ever knew). The very symbol of the cross implies that men are lost. That is why Christ died. The words "love" and "grace" are not properly understood unless understood in connection with lost humanity. To say that Jesus is the Savior is to imply that men are lost (and need saving). And the word "gospel" means good news (that man can be saved). This is what the religion of Christ is all about. The Lord himself expressly declared, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was *lost*" (Luke 19:10).

The Greek Word for "Lost"

As we look into this matter of being lost, and what it entails, perhaps it would be good first to check out the Greek word itself translated "lost." That word is *apollumi*. It means to destroy, to perish, or to be

lost. It is represented in the English New Testament with such words as "destroy," "marred," "perish," "lose," and "lost." We find non-religious usage of the word in abundance (examples: Matthew 2:13; 8:25; 9:17; 12:14; etc.), and uses where the word decidedly takes on specific meaning religiously. Such passages as Luke 19:10 (already mentioned), John 3:16, I Corinthians 1:18, II Corinthians 2:15 (4:3), and II Peter 3:9 stand out. The 15th chapter of Luke has three great parables of our Lord about being lost (the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son). Perhaps these parables were preliminary in crystallizing a technical concept in the word. Someone aptly has pointed out: "The idea [in the word] is not extinction but ruin, loss, not of being, but of wellbeing."

The Religious Significance Of Being Lost

The significance of lost can be seen in the context and usage of the word. We find the words "saved" and "lost," as well as many other words like "salvation" and "damnation," thrown over against one another in bold relief. Their juxtaposition emphasizes the meaning of each word and the teaching of the Bible on this subject.

The apostle Paul in Romans 1:16 declares, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it the power of God unto *salvation* to every one that believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek [Gentile]." Next he proceeds to give a backdrop for such a statement. The rest of this chapter shows the sinful depravity of the ancient Gentile world. Then in the second chapter of Romans, Paul points his finger at the Jews. Although they had the Law, they were likewise nonetheless guilty before God. The third chapter sums it all up. "For all [Jew and Gentile] have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). So, this matter of being lost has to do with sin and separation from God.

In Romans 2:6-11, Paul unveiled the eternal consequences of being lost and salvation. He wrote that God "will render to every man according to his

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—THANK YOU—

Proverbially *SPEAKING...*

THEY WHO live in hope will abound in optimism.

An empty tomb is the unique message of Christianity.

A game has no meaning unless played by the rules.

We need grace to save us from a life of sin and disgrace (Ephesians 2:1-10; Titus 2:11,12).

Our hearts must reach out to people before we can reach them for Christ.

Having become the favored objects and recipients of God's mercy and grace, we are to be channels of this mercy and grace to others.

Even as God is one, our devotion to Him should be singular (Deut. 6:4,5).

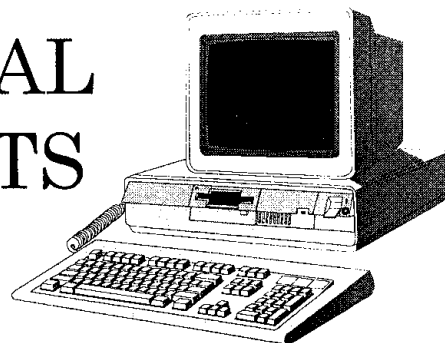
By victoriously abstaining from the bad we enhance our capacity to enjoy that which is good.

Meekness is not weakness, but strength subdued and under control.

Showing partiality is a sin because the command to love your neighbor as yourself is not selective (James 2:8,9).

A hope that's sure will produce a life that's pure (1 John 3:1-3). □

EDITORIAL COMMENTS



THE GREATEST COMMANDMENTS

THE WISDOM of the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ is seen firsthand over and over again in the gospel records, as well as in the Spirit-inspired epistles that follow. Whether it is the Sermon on the Mount, any of His profound teachings during his ministry, or how he handled the questions of his insincere inquisitors that last week leading up to his crucifixion, our reaction is the same. Like the people back then, we never cease to be amazed (Matthew 7:28; 13:54; Mark 1:22; 6:2; 12:28,33; John 7:45,46; etc.)

One question in particular that was thrown at Jesus that last week gets our attention for this writing. On the heels of the others with their feigned sincerity, trying to trip up Jesus, one of the scribes (lawyers) asked Jesus a question about the greatest commandment. "Then one of them which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:35-40).

The *greatest commandment involved loving God*, and so that the whole picture could be seen, the Lord also told which was the *second greatest commandment, loving one's neighbor*. We believe this twofold answer is very significant. It not only sums up "the law and the prophets," but also anticipates the New Testament where we find parallel thought and applications, only in a more amplified way. These are the twofold categories of love in which we are to exercise ourselves.

The Commandments And Their Practical Outworking

In pointing out the greatest commandment, Mark's account (Mark 12:29,30) more exactly identifies the Old Testament Scripture alluded to. It is Deuteronomy 6:4 and 5. The command to "love the LORD thy God with *all* thy heart, and with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy might," is preceded with, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our *God is one LORD*." What is the significance of this statement? Even as God is one, (there is no other), their devotion to Him should be singular. He was/is the Supreme Deity. There are no others. He is everything. Therefore, they were to love Him with *ALL* of their heart, their soul, their might, etc. (their whole being). He was the supreme object of all of their love.

The practical outworking of this commandment is implied in Exodus 20:1-17 in the giving of the Ten Commandments (and seen in Deuteronomy 10:12 and 13). Here God assertively identified Himself before giving the Commandments. This seems to be parallel in thought to Deuteronomy 6:4. The LORD their God was one, singular, and obedience to the Ten Commandments should be accordingly. Now notice Deuteronomy 10:12 and 13. "And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for good?" Loving God with all of their hearts would produce obedience to all of the other commandments of God. Therefore, in relation to the others, this commandment would be the greatest.

The Ten Commandments can be broken down into two categories, the first directly involved God and the second, man. We have already noticed that the greatest commandment about loving God would produce obedience to all of the other commandments. The second great commandment, loving one's neighbor as self (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39)), likewise would produce obedience to the other commandments that involved their fellowman. If they loved their neighbors as themselves, they would not kill, commit adultery, steal, lie, or covet, etc. They would treat them as they would want to be treated themselves. Thus, the second category of the Ten Commandments would be accomplished. So, we can easily see why the Lord would say this was the second great commandment. What great wisdom!

**An Amplified
New Testament Parallel**

As we turn to the New Testament proper, the injunction to love God and our fellowman are still intact, but only more so, expanded and amplified by greater spiritual depth and meaning. God is still the One Supreme Being who is to be the object of our undivided devotion. We still are to love our neighbors as ourselves. But Christ, the Son of God, enters the picture. In a sense now more fully revealed, we see that God is love, and God is our loving heavenly Father. As reclaimed children of God, we love our Father, and consequently love our brothers and sisters who are likewise children of the heavenly Father. Love of the brotherhood is inseparable from the love of the Father and the fatherhood of God. Loving the Father comes first, and all other love emanates from this. The apostle Paul calls love the "greatest" (I Corinthians 13:13), resonate of the words of the Lord Jesus. Further emphasizing the

priority of love, Paul admonished, "And above all these things put on charity [love], which is the bond of perfectness" (Colossians 3:14).

The apostle John makes it plain in I John 4:7-5:3 that love and love's practical outworking come from the Father, who is love. John asserts, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." Jesus had said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). (On the day of Pentecost, "they that gladly received his word were baptized," Acts 2:38-41, and then "they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine," verse 42). John further elaborates, "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (I John 2:5). Also, the practical outworking of the love of God is seen in loving our brothers and sisters. John questioned, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20) Then he states, "Every one that loveth him that begat [God] loveth him also that is begotten of him" (I John 5:1). Paul says that we are "to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:8-10). Consider the 13th chapter of I Corinthians.

YES, loving God with all of our hearts and loving our neighbors as ourselves are the greatest commandments, whether looking at it from the viewpoint of the Old Testament or the New Testament. From God's perspective, the purpose of true religion will be accomplished when we do this. The commands are all inclusive. It will find us right with God and submitted in loving obedience to His will for our lives. What Divine wisdom! Truly this is a subject deserving of much study. Let us love as He would have us love, even as John admonished, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:18). May our love be real. Amen! □

RESEMBLANCE

"LORD, somewhere I read that when two people love deeply, when they live together sharing, caring, giving, forgiving, eventually they begin to resemble each other. Lord, how long will it be before I look like You?"—SUBMITTED □

Can Love Be Commanded?

WE HEAR people say that love can't be commanded. Is this true? Can love be commanded? The answer is *yes*. The answer is *no*. It is just according to what kind of love you are talking about.

In the New Testament we find two words for love, *agapao* and *phileo* (both verbs). *Agapao* becomes a noun in the well-known word, *AGAPÉ*. On the other hand, we find no noun for *phileo* love (interestingly, noun spin offs are seen in words translated "friend" and "kiss"). *Agapao* (*AGAPÉ*) love involves the intellect and the will; it involves esteem and purpose; it involves choice. However, *phileo* love is the love of natural inclination; it is instinctive; it is the love of emotion. It is spontaneous, involuntary; it just happens.

Therefore, *agapeo* love (involving the intellect and the will) can be commanded, and it is commanded (as in the great commandment, loving our enemies, and elsewhere throughout the New Testament). But *phileo* love, in its basic inherent meaning, is not commanded (except indirectly). It is more of a natural and spontaneous response; it just happens. We are to love (*agapeo*) our enemies, but it is hard to be emotional about it (*phileo*). We can have high esteem (*agapeo*) for them (in the sense of respecting God's image in them and wishing them well) and not even (like) *phileo* them (it would be hard to be emotional about it).

Can love be commanded? *Yes*, and *no*. These are our conclusions from a word study. □

EDITORIAL Byways

ANSWERING A WEB PAGE RESPONSE ON THE QUESTION OF BAPTISM AND SALVATION

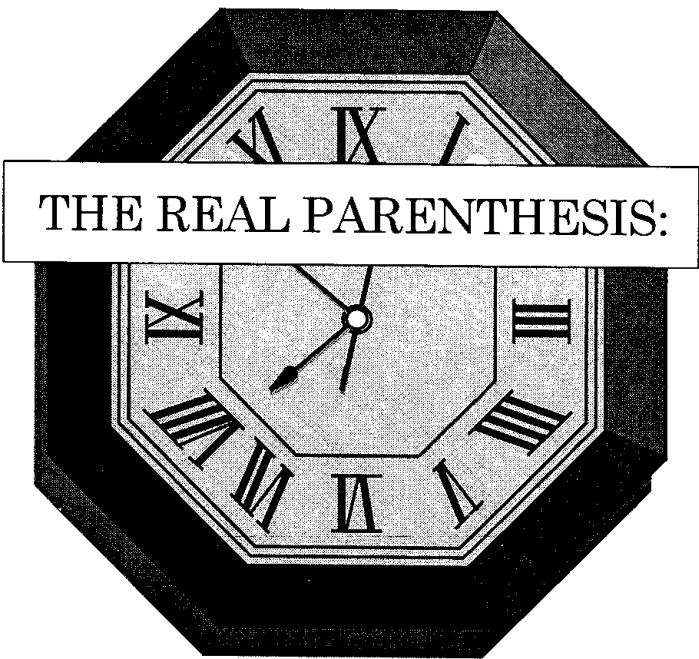
THIS IS my humble understanding... In I Corinthians 15:1-4, in a nutshell, the apostle Paul declares what *the gospel* is: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel...how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." Likewise, with you [web page respondent], "I believe in salvation by the grace of God through faith in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ." [but not "faith only"]; Yes, Paul has defined the gospel as the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. We are to personally accept these truths and thereby accept the cleansing blood of Christ. Paul tells us in Romans 10:9 and 10 that we are to confess with our

mouth and *believe IN our hearts* that God has raised Jesus from the dead. In this same epistle, Paul states, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have *obeyed FROM the heart* that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Romans 6:17). Romans 1:5 and 16:26 speak of God's plan to accomplish the "*obedience to the faith*" among all nations. In the early days of the church, the record says "a great company of the priests were *obedient to the faith*" (Acts 6:7). We are not only to believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ *in* our hearts, we are to obey it *from* our hearts. We personally believe it, and now we personally identify ourselves with it. As Christ died, we die to sin in repentance; as Christ was buried, we are buried in the watery grave of baptism; and as Christ arose from the dead, we arise from the waters of baptism to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:1-6). Paul also wrote in another place to the Colossians (2:12), "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through *the faith* of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Then he says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above..." (3:1). Paul speaks of those who had not become Christians in Romans 10:16, referring to them as those who had not "*obeyed the gospel*" (had not obeyed the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ). Those on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2, were to "know assuredly" (they were to assuredly believe, trust) that Jesus whom they had crucified was now both Lord and Christ (2:36). The benefit of these wonderful truths were to be realized in their lives by repenting and being baptized for the remission of sins and thereby receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit (2:38). (Yes, the blood of Christ is the only thing that remits sins [that's what he is talking about], Revelation 1:5; Acts 22:16). Notice. We are not talking about sacramental, baptismal regeneration [like practiced by the Catholics], but an exercise of faith in accepting Christ. Inasmuch as we can't single out any one of the truths of the gospel (the death, burial, or resurrection of Christ) and say "this only," we cannot leave out any one of the facets of believing, repenting, or being baptized (and say "this only"). Peter sums up being saved as being accomplished "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (I Peter 3:21, read the whole reference). Then from the viewpoint of our response and God's accomplishment, this same Peter who spoke Acts 2:38, wrote, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying *the truth through the Spirit* [he is talking about the same thing as spoken in Acts 2:38] unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but by the word of

God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Peter 1:22 & 23). [Then Galatians 3:27 is accomplished] James said it was not by "faith only" (an inactive faith), James 2:17-26, but by one that moves, changes, and produces works (not works of righteousness on our part, but by responsive works of faith). And all of this is in the context of the grace and mercy of God. [Salvation has been attained]. There is no room for boasting.—**J.E.G.** □



A Series Involving the Bible and Prophecy...



Did God Stop The Prophetic Clock?

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DANIEL'S 70-WEEKS PROPHECY is one of the greatest proofs that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah! It is one of the clearest prophecies to detail the work of the Messiah. It is also an outstanding prediction of God's final judgment upon Jerusalem and the temple.

As seen in previous articles, the final 70th week of Daniel 9 is at the heart of this prophetic message. We gave proofs that this "week" was fulfilled from 26 to 33 A.D. Jesus' death for our sins occurred in the very middle of those years, in 30 A.D. We gave further proofs that the balance of the prophecy was fulfilled by the year 70 A.D., when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. Daniel 9 has been totally and wonderfully fulfilled.

"Not so," say today's popular religious teachers. "They" say that Daniel's final week is yet future!

"The Prophetic Clock Stopped"

According to this popular view, God's clock ran flawlessly for 69 weeks (483 years). Then suddenly the clock stopped and has not ticked once since.

Another metaphor frequently used says that our present church age is in a parenthesis or gap. By this "they" are saying that God's major work of the ages is that which relates to Israel.

Hal Lindsey is one of the main spokesmen for this popular view. In his best-selling book *The Rapture* he says: "God obviously stopped 'the prophetic stopwatch' after it had ticked off 483 years. . . . Because Israel failed to accept her Messiah and instead 'cut him off' by crucifying him, God stopped the countdown seven years short of completion. During the ensuing parenthesis of time, God turned His focus to the Gentiles and created the Church" (pages 3,4).

Lindsey is saying that when the Jews crucified Jesus, God had to change His plans! God's millennial kingdom for the Jews had been on the launching pad for 483 years without a problem. The launch was just 7 years away. Suddenly, God had to stop the countdown. Everything went on hold. It has been on hold for over 1900 years! That is what Lindsey teaches.

"At the Rapture, The Clock Will Start Again"

Today's popular view further says that God cannot continue His plans with Israel as long as the church remains in the world. "They" say the "rapture" must take place before God's prophetic plan can get back on track. To quote Lindsey again: "The Lord will Rapture the Church believers before the beginning of Daniel's Seventieth Week" (page 184).

With the church out of the way, "they" say, God can resume His dealing with the Jews for seven more years—the final week of Daniel. "They" call this seven-year period "the tribulation." Daniel 9, by the way, is the only text from which "they" get seven years for the tribulation. *The Rapture* tells of "this period, which will last seven years. Students of prophecy have commonly called this time 'the tribulation'. . . . The prophet Daniel gave the framework for the Tribulation era in Daniel 9:24-27" (pages 1,2).

The popular claim is that the 70-weeks prophecy foretells all the following. That the antichrist will make a covenant with the Jews for 7 years. That before or during the early part of that period, the Jews will rebuild the temple. That in the middle of the 7 years, the anti-Christ will break this covenant and stop the sacrifices. That Jerusalem and the third temple will be destroyed.

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THE REAL PARENTHESIS: *Did God Stop the Prophetic Clock?*

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"They" further say that none or only some of the 6 items mentioned in Daniel 9:24 were fulfilled by Jesus' first coming. "They" say Jesus must return to make fulfillment possible. "They" teach that the church is not the kingdom, that Israel is still God's chosen nation, and that the millennium is a future earthly Jewish kingdom which will begin after the tribulation.

In short, this popular premillennial view (Lindsey, et al.), places a good share of Daniel's 70-weeks prophecy in the same category that "they" place most of the book of Revelation and most of all Bible prophecy—somewhere in the future.

Some Arguments "They" Use

"They" claim that since the six items listed in Daniel 9:24 were not fulfilled through Jesus' first coming, the fulfillment must take place at His second coming. Therefore, "they" say, a parenthesis between the 69th and 70th weeks is required. Their arguments basically run like this (taking the second item of Daniel 9:24 as an example): "The prophecy says 'to make an end of sins.' Since there is still sin in Israel, the prophecy is not yet fulfilled; it will not be fulfilled until the Millennium."

The major portion of a former article of this series, *The Jews' Time Has Run Out*, showed how all six items of Daniel 9:24 were fulfilled through Jesus' first coming to earth. Numerous New Testament texts were quoted. In answer to the example given above: consider a parallel text. John the Baptist said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" If we would force John's beautiful words as "they" force Daniel 9:24, then we would have to say that John's words were not fulfilled at Calvary. Why? Because there is still sin in the world. Who would dare teach that?

Another argument "they" use deals with the order in which things are mentioned in the text. "They" notice that the 69th week is first mentioned, then the death of the Messiah, then the destruction of Jerusalem, then the 70th week. "They" claim that everything must take place in the order in which it is mentioned. Therefore, "they" say, some events happen between the 69th and 70th weeks, thus proving a gap.

This very text, however, proves their argument to be fallacious. To appreciate the following, you may need to open your Bible and look at verse 25. It first mentions 7 weeks, then 62 weeks, then the building of the street and wall. Neither "they" nor

anyone would claim that this word order proves the events were to take place in that order. All agree, and history confirms, that the building of the street and wall took place during the first 7 weeks, not after the 62 weeks. Their argument does not work.

The Prophecy Does Not Say "350 Weeks"

The proponents of the gap/parenthesis theory—premillennialists/futurists—explain that literal interpretation is one of the bedrock principles of their system. Prophecies about Israel must be interpreted literally, "they" say. The 70-weeks prophecy is one of the major texts about Israel.

How do "they" apply the literal principle to the 70-weeks prophecy? "They" claim that days represent years. We agree; but this is not a literal interpretation. "They" claim that 483 is a literal 483 years, reaching from the order to rebuild Jerusalem unto the Messiah. Agreed. "They" claim that the final 7 years are literal years. Agreed. But then "they" place a gap between the 483 years and the final 7. Is that a literal interpretation?

The prophecy foretells 70 weeks. Seventy times seven equals 490. It is a prophecy about 490 years. But "they" stop the prophecy at 483 years, interject more than 1900 years, and then claim the last 7 years are yet in the future. Nearly 2000 years interjected! That's more than 4 times the total 490 years the prophecy is all about! To be literal numbers, Daniel should have said, "350 weeks are determined." "They" simply are not as literal as "they" would have us believe: "70 = 350"?

The concept of a "prophetic clock" is itself a figure and indeed a figure nowhere found in Holy Scripture. What happened to this "clock"? Why did it stop? Did it fail or was it a deceptive device? Which? Stated another way, did God know the clock would stop or did He not know? Neither choice is pleasant. According to "them," for over 1900 years God has not repaired the clock. What happened, anyway? Which scenario would you be willing to defend?

Words

A careless word may kindle strife;
A cruel word may wreck a life.
A bitter word may hate instill;
A brutal word may smite and kill.
A gracious word may smooth the way;
A joyous word may light the day.
A timely word may lessen stress;
A loving word may heal and bless.

—Author Unknown

First scenario: The clock failed; it did not work right. God did not know it was going to stop and was powerless to remedy the situation. The clock stopped; it was out of God's control.

Second scenario: The clock was built to deceive. God knew it was going to stop but did not want to fix it. God allowed the clock to act for a while as a trustworthy timepiece, knowing from the start that it was a faulty product.

Which scenario could you live with? When you seriously consider the implications, it is preposterous to say that God's prophetic clock did not work right! Was it a surprise to God? Or, did God know that His plan failed but was a helpless victim? Or, was it God's plan to deceive the Jews and all mankind?

Does Seventy Equal Seventy?

Someone has explained the gap theory this way. You plan a trip from Los Angeles to Chicago. As you leave Los Angeles, you see a sign that says: "Chicago – 70 miles." You travel for 69 miles and see another sign. Pointing back in the direction you came, it says: "Los Angeles – 69 miles." Pointing forward the sign says: "Chicago – 1 mile." Under that, there is another line that says: "(plus 2000 miles)."

Here is another way to look at it. Take a ruler. Cut off the last inch. Attach the inch to the rest of the ruler with a piece of elastic. Now you have a new ruler. Just stretch the elastic as little or as much as you like. Now this ruler is a very literal ruler: it contains 11 literal inches plus one last literal inch, total 12 inches. A literal ruler, right? Oh, the elastic in between? But it's still a good ruler, isn't it?

When this writer was in Guatemala, I was weekly teaching a young man in his home. Since he was very knowledgeable in the Bible, prophetic questions kept coming up, including Daniel 9.

One day I asked him: "Julius Caesar, what would you think if I asked you to lend me 1000 quetzals? [A quetzal is the national money. It takes about 6 to equal one dollar.] I promise to pay you back in eight weeks. When seven weeks pass, I come to you and say, 'Julius Caesar, there is a little matter I didn't tell you. Between the 7th and 8th weeks of our agreement, there is a space of 10 years.' What would you think of me?" Without hesitation, Julius Caesar said, "You would be a swindler."

Do you remember that it was Jesus' apostles (not Jesus himself) who thought that everything came to a halt when their Master was crucified? Jesus then had to appear to them, not only to prove His resurrection, but also to prove that nothing had stopped. Everything was on time exactly as God had prophesied. "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of

sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47). No clock stopped. No plans changed. Nothing was thrown in parenthetically. Everything was exactly on schedule, exactly as "it is written."

Other Problems With the Popular View

Besides the "clock" element, there are other problems with the popular premillennial interpretation of Daniel's 70-weeks prophecy.

For example, many of the things "they" claim are found in Daniel 9:26,27 simply are not mentioned at all. There is no mention of the tribulation, nor of a second rebuilding of the temple, nor of a second restoration of sacrifices, nor of anti-Christ making a covenant with the Jews, nor of him later breaking a covenant, nor that Jerusalem is to be destroyed two times. None of these things are mentioned. Rather, they are theories that are imposed upon the text.

Then there is verse 24, which clearly says that six items are to be fulfilled during the 70 weeks. "They" say they agree with this; but in fact they do not. Please notice: "They" claim a gap is necessary after the 69th week precisely because "they" think the 6 items were not fulfilled. "They" invent a gap of more than 1900 years to try to get 9:24 fulfilled in the 70th week. But "they" still do not get it fulfilled in the 70th week.

Now, some futurist interpreters agree that one or more of the six items were fulfilled by Jesus at the cross. According to the usual theory, the 69th week ended at the triumphal entry, five days before Jesus' death. Therefore, according to the gap which "they" place between the 69th and 70th weeks, Jesus died in the gap.

According to their own interpretation, the 70th week is a future tribulation followed by the millennial kingdom. Whichever of the 6 items "they" do not see as fulfilled at the cross, "they" claim will be fulfilled in the millennial kingdom. But that is after the 70th week.

Thus, "they" say they need a gap in order to get 9:24 fulfilled in the 70th week. But in reality "they" get 9:24 fulfilled either before or after their 70th week. Their gap simply does not fulfill its purported purpose. Rather than accept such a theory, it is much easier to believe that God knew what He prophesied and that 9:24 was fulfilled by Jesus right on schedule.

The New Covenant Temple

The futurists admit that nowhere does the Bible prophesy the rebuilding of the temple after 70 A.D. On what, then, do "they" base the assumption that there will ever be a third temple. "They" say that

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THE REAL PARENTHESIS: *Did God Stop the Prophetic Clock?*

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Daniel 9, Matthew 24, 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 11 cannot be fulfilled without a rebuilt temple.

The first two texts are excellent examples of the need to examine prophecy in context. Futurists agree that Daniel 9:26 refers to the destruction of the second temple in 70 A.D. However, "they" believe that 9:27 refers to the destruction of a third temple in the future. However, even "they" know that Daniel 9 mentions only one reconstruction of Jerusalem. Until someone finds a Scripture that clearly predicts a second reconstruction, we will have to understand that verses 26 and 27 both refer to 70 A.D.

In Matthew 24, any statements that Jesus makes about Jerusalem and the temple must be understood in the light of the context. While Jesus and His disciples were observing the second temple, Jesus said: "not one stone shall be left here upon another" (24:2). Jesus talked only about destruction; He gave not the slightest hint of a later reconstruction. Until someone finds a Scripture that clearly predicts a reconstruction after 70 A.D., anything Jesus said about the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple must refer to the temple He and the apostles were looking at when He made His remarks.

The latter two texts (2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 11) are excellent examples of the need to settle sound Scriptural doctrine before attempting to interpret prophecy. Both texts speak of "the temple of God." Both texts are part of the New Testament. The stone temple in Jerusalem ceased being the temple of God when God himself tore the inner veil in two at Jesus' death. As both Daniel and Jesus prophesied, that temple was doomed to destruction. No Scripture prophesies a rebuilding after that.

In the New Covenant there is a new temple. Paul tells the church in Corinth: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Corinthian 3:16). He told the Ephesian church: "Now, therefore, you are... built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:19-21). With sound apostolic doctrine, there is no warrant for fabricating another rebuilding of the Jewish temple. Both 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 11 contain prophecies of the Lord's church. That church is not in parenthesis. That church is where God now dwells. It is His temple.

The Real Parenthesis

The parenthesis or gap theory is upside down and backwards. Why? Because the premillennialists/futurists have placed God's eternal plan in parentheses, while making God's parenthetical plan His major plan. According to "them," God's plan with the Jews is the major theme of Bible prophecy. According to "them," the Gospel age in which we

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BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. What two men in pre-New Testament times did not experience death and were taken by God without dying?
2. Where is the first place the word "covenant" appears in the Bible?
3. What were the names of Joseph's two sons?
4. How many sons and daughters did Job have?
5. In what unusual way did the angel of the LORD make his departure after talking with Manoah and his wife (parents to be of Samson)?
6. Who was the last judge of Israel?
7. Which king of Israel was married to Jezebel and engaged in the heathen worship of Baal?
8. What three men of antiquity are listed by Ezekiel as outstanding men of righteousness who, when God's judgment is set to come upon a nation, could only deliver themselves and not be able to hold back the judgment?
9. How many years were the Jews in Babylonian Captivity, and in particular why that number of years?
10. How much longer is a long cubit than a regular cubit as mentioned in the Old Testament?
11. Which three pairs of the disciples of Christ had the same name?
12. What good friends of Jesus lived at Bethany just outside of Jerusalem?
13. Where is the only place the word "HELL" (*Gehennah*, representing the place of eternal punishment) is found in the New Testament outside of the first three gospel accounts?
14. What were the distinctive differences in the beliefs of the Sadducees and of the Pharisees?
15. According to the New Testament, when did the New Testament begin?
16. According to the New Testament, what is the purpose of New Testament baptism?
17. What man, after hearing the apostle Paul speak, responded with the words, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"?
18. Love is presented as the greatest even when listed with what other two outstanding things in 1 Corinthians 13?
19. Which epistles were written by Paul while he was in prison?
20. In particular, where were the seven churches in Asia located (in what cities) to whom the book of Revelation is addressed?

(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. □

UNITED STATES:

■ "I have just been introduced to your web site by a friend of mine from church. I look forward to this study... Thanks." (E-mail)

■ "I have been going through your web site and it is wonderful. I have bookmarked it so I can return..." (E-mail, web page response)

FLORIDA:

■ "I was recently showed one of your papers. I was amazed at the truth it shared. I would like to be on your mailing list..."

■ "[I] have been receiving *THE SWORD AND STAFF* for a number of years. Appreciate the in-depth articles. Glad to know that you are on the Internet. Will check it often..." (E-mail)

■ "All I can say is, 'Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful,'—your article on Daniel's 70 weeks..."

"May the Lord bless you. Just couldn't resist writing you about your article. Daniel 9:24-27 is the crux of Old Testament prophecy, as you and I well know."

GEORGIA:

■ "Find enclosed a check to help on the fine paper you put out. Keep up the good work."

NORTH CAROLINA:

■ "Please take the following [church] address off your mailing list."

■ "Thanks for sharing your publication over the years. It's been a real blessing. May God continue to bless you and your labors for Him."

■ "[I] have read the third in your series about Daniel's 70 weeks. It is very thorough and insightful."

"Please send me all of the series as I would like to study and file them for reference. Thank you very much."

■ "Thank you very, very much for remembering us and being faithful to send us *THE SWORD AND STAFF* over the years without pay, and I apologize for being so neglectful. Thank you for persevering with us. We appreciate the paper very much..."

VIRGINIA:

■ "I would be interested in receiving a complimentary copy of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*...My wife and I publish the monthly newsletter for...Methodist Church. If I find an article in *THE SWORD AND STAFF* that I would like to share, may I have your permission to reprint, with credit, in my church newsletter? I would be happy to send a digital or hard copy for your review..." (E-mail, web page response)

WASHINGTON, DC:

■ "...I visited your web site, and read your letters to the Mormons. I just wanted to say I appreciated your stand for truth. I certainly hope God uses your site to reach those lost in cults and other false religions. God bless you!" (E-mail, web page response)

MARYLAND:

■ "You are doing a great job writing *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Very good information. Enclosed is a check to help continue the good work."

DELAWARE:

■ "...We enjoy *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. It is so edifying, and true to God's Holy Word; no **ifs** and **ands**, but **only** thus saith the Lord God."

"Thank God for servants such as you, who stand firm and boldly on God's Commandments."

"This is a gift to help on the expenses of the magazine you send to us."

PENNSYLVANIA:

■ "Keep up the good work. You're doing a great job!"

■ "Thank you, thank you, and thank you for the wonderful conservative work you do for Jesus and His Kingdom. **MANY ARE STRENGTHENED, MANY ARE WON**..."

KENTUCKY:

■ "Please mail your 1995-1996 bound volume of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* to a friend of mine... Also, mail me 2 books of *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*... your rightly dividing the Word is an inspiration to me. Keep up the good work! God surely has your reward awaiting!"

■ "I enjoy *THE SWORD AND STAFF* so much, and I thank God for people who have the time and talent to do the wonderful work involved. May you live long and continue to bless so many people who need to know what the 'Old, Old Story of Jesus' is really all about."

"I took a copy of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* to my work place and left it on a table in the break room. I don't know how many people read it, but I can assure you it did cause some kind of discussion..."

"I have no idea how much a subscription to *THE SWORD AND STAFF* is (It is Priceless), but accept this [to add a new reader]..."

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

OHIO:

■ "I enjoy *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Thanks for keeping and defending the faith."

■ "Thank you for your magazine. We thank God for your faithfulness in producing it..."

■ "You have been a blessing to many people. We look forward to every issue of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. We pray for you as you endeavor to continue serving Christ... May God bless you all."

■ "I just wanted you to know that I just visited your web page. This is the first time that I am using the Internet and yours is the first site I tried. It was very informative and easy to use. I'll be checking in regularly. Keep up the good work..." (E-mail)

■ "Would you please add me to your mailing list. I saw an issue of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* at my workplace and read it in its entirety. I was very impressed by the way you deliver New Testament Christianity messages in a non-denominational manner. I would be interested in passing issues on to my friends who are not Christians. God bless." (E-mail)

■ "Enclosed is a check as a gift for *THE SWORD AND STAFF*."

"Just received the last issue and especially appreciated the message on 'The Truth: Love It or Lose It.' That is certainly true. It is sad to think that many have lost it. Many, many that claim to be true Christians have changed so much of the Word and true Christianity. They want a Bible that fits their style, worship that fits their ideas (the contemporary with two services when not needed), and a faith that is their belief (as opposed to the faith once delivered to the saints).

"Not only has the truth been lost to them, but salvation and eternal hope in Christ...He is truth."

INDIANA:

■ "The last *SWORD AND STAFF* was a real winner. And your article on God's Timetable was right on; even if most millenarians would not agree..."

IOWA:

■ "Thank you for sending *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I love God and want to be a follower of Jesus Christ. I love to read the Holy Bible from Genesis to Revelation. I love to read material about God and Jesus Christ. Please keep sending it..."

KANSAS:

■ "Just tuned in to your web site. I have received *THE SWORD AND STAFF* for ten years or more. Always enjoy your writings and your stand...May God's blessings be with you." (E-mail)

ARKANSAS:

■ "I sure do like this paper and always pass it on when I am through."

TEXAS:

■ "Your paper has been and is a real blessing to me!"

■ "Please accept the enclosed contribution to help further your good and very outstanding work by speaking the truth. May God bless you."

CALIFORNIA:

■ "Just discovered your page [web site]...very good! Please send a free copy of your publication ... I'm an old lady now, don't get out much, but I like good reading. And writing."

"I enjoyed your letter to the Mormons, too. I well remember that 8-page ad in the Reader's Digest...I have in my possession a book called 'Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon,' published by IVP and written by two college students who did a creditable job of researching their book. They make a really good case for the source for the 'Book of Mormon' being a stolen manuscript, written by a retired preacher as a novel, stolen by Sidney Rigdon and Joseph Smith and turned into the 'holy book' of their claims! It contains some highly interesting material."

"It is truly one of the 'lying wonders' of Satan that such a reprehensible character as Joseph Smith could be the 'sacred prophet' of millions of people!..." (E-mail, web page response)

AUSTRALIA:

■ "Your [WEB PAGE] links have been added to our site..." (E-mail, web page response)

■ "This time when I clicked on your URL, it filled up the whole monitor screen—much easier to handle and appreciate."

"I have read your article 'A Most Somber, Serious Matter,' and endorse it wholeheartedly. I was particularly impressed with your comment: 'But if a person does not respect his sexuality, how can he respect what his sexuality produces, other human beings? Consequently there is a lot of cheap humanity today, as the quality of life degenerates.'"

"Having read 'Warning: Be Not Deceived,' I too, was sickened by the thought of beautiful classical music being sponsored by a group that is an abomination to our Holy God. Have these people ever read Romans chapter 1?"

"God is giving me, through a mutual friend, the opportunity to get to know a person who is a homosexual. His own family has rejected him. He is desperately lonely. I totally reject his lifestyle, but I am trying to reach out to him in the name of Christ."

"Do you have any copyright on your articles, or am I at liberty to quote you freely?"

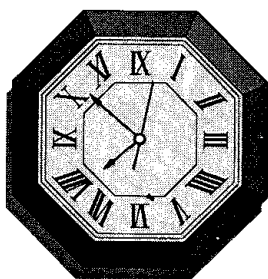
"Re President Clinton—my heart has gone out to my Christian friends in the States over these last few months—for obvious reasons. Our Prime Minister, John Howard, certainly does not have a 'charismatic' personality in the sense that Bill Clinton does, but he is a staunch family man, and there has never been a breath of scandal against him."

"Keep up the good work!" (E-mail, web page response) □

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TELL OTHERS ABOUT IT

THE REAL PARENTHESIS: *Did God Stop the Prophetic Clock?*

(Continued from Page 8)



live is just a parenthesis between God's former and future dealings with Israel.

However, the Scripture clearly sustains the opposite view. The main theme of the Bible is God's eternal plan for this church age. It is the

Old Covenant of the Jews that was in parenthesis. The book of Galatians was written because some early Christians did not understand the proper place of the Mosaic Law. They did not grasp what the promises to Abraham were all about. The third chapter details the true Biblical gap doctrine.

"And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, *saying*, 'In you all the nations shall be blessed'" (Galatians 3:8). Scripture foresaw the salvation of the Gentiles. All nations are blessed in Abraham. How? Through the preaching of the Gospel. The Jews were a vessel used by God to bring us the Savior. In verse 16, Paul says: "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ." The promise was made to Abraham. The fulfillment came through Christ.

The real parenthesis in the Bible is the space of time between Abraham and Christ. Listen to the next verse: "the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect." Here is the order of events:

- 1 - the covenant and promise to Abraham;
- 2 - the Jewish nation receives the law;
- 3 - Christ fulfills the promise to Abraham.

The law filled in the gap. So the question comes: "What purpose then *does* the law *serve*? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Galatians 3:19). There you have the gap (parenthesis) that the Bible teaches. The law of Moses is the parenthesis between the promise to Abraham and the fulfillment of that promise through Christ.

God's real parenthesis did not involve any clock stopping. There was no change of plans. Everything happened according to schedule. "When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those

who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons" (Galatians 4:4,5).

God's Clock is Trustworthy

Jesus' death was not the start of a parenthesis. It was the end of the Divine Parenthesis between Abraham and Jesus. When Jesus died, God's prophetic clock did not stop. The Mosaic law stopped! It was nailed to the cross. Acceptable temple sacrifices stopped! The veil of the temple was rent in two. It all happened according to God's timetable.

The Jews were given 70 weeks (490 years). No trick clock can extend that time. Jesus told the Jews: "For days will come upon you when your enemies . . . will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation." (Luke 19:43,44). Before the 490 years ended, their doom was sealed. There was no problem with God's clock. The problem was with the Jews. They could not tell time!

God knew ahead of time that men would reject His Son. It was prophesied in Psalm 2 "Why do . . . the people plot a vain thing? . . . And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed [Messiah, Christ]. . . . He who sits in the heavens shall laugh." If you are not sure that this was fulfilled in Jesus' first coming, read Acts 4:25-28. God stop His clock? God change His plans? Not at all! Rather, God laughed at them.

But wait! This is not the whole story. Throughout the Bible God has always worked with a remnant, and such is prophesied numerous times regarding the Jews. So notice: It was in Jewish Jerusalem that the church began. The 12 apostles were all Jews. The first 3000 converts were all Jews. Soon after that it was 5000 men, all Jews. Most of the New Testament was written by Jews. Like Paul asked and replied: "has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin" (Romans 11:1).

The church and the Gospel are not merely a parenthetically inserted program. They are God's real eternal program, open to Jew and Gentile alike. They are what the promise to Abraham was all about. They are the reason Jesus came to earth. Daniel's 70-weeks prophecy has been gloriously fulfilled. Praise God! □

Note by author: *This is the fourth article regarding Daniel's seventy-weeks prophecy and Jesus' enlargement upon it. Look for more in future issues.*

(Scripture in the preceding article is taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.)

LOST!

(Continued from Page 1)

deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, **eternal life**: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and aslo to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God."

Therefore, being lost involves (1) a present state of alienation from God as man lives a selfish life of sin to himself and (2) a coming dreadful reality, as mankind must face God in judgment, resulting in dreadful eternal consequences. To be plain, it is a matter of heaven or hell. Let us further notice Scriptures that verify this.

Lost—A Present State

- "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are **lost**" (II Corinthians 4:3).
- "For the preaching of the cross is to them that **perish** [*apollumi*, them that are lost] foolishness: but unto us which are **saved** it is the power of God" (I Corinthians 1:18).
- "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are **saved**, and in them that **perish**" (II Corinthians 2:15).
- "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that **perish** (are lost, *apollumi*); because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be **saved**" (II Thessalonians 2:10).
- "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be **saved**; but he that believeth not shall be **damned**" (Mark 16:15,16).
- "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

Lost—A Coming, Dreadful Reality

- "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not **perish**, but have **everlasting life**" (John 3:16).
- "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should **perish**, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9).
- "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things

done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men..." (II Corinthians 5:10,11a).

- "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye **blessed** of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye **cursed**, into **everlasting fire**, prepared for the devil and his angels...And these shall go away into **everlasting punishment**: but the righteous into **life eternal**" (Matthew 25: 34,41,46).

Objections

Some will admit that perhaps man indeed is lost, that he has strayed from God's purpose and plan for his life; that he has made pretty much of a mess of things. But it is a harder matter for them to "buy" the part about eternal punishment. They ask, "How could a loving God send a person to hell?" We heard a brother say that the wrong question was being asked. The question really should be, "How could an all-holy God let a sinner into heaven?" (Sin is more awful than we realize). Some will admit there is a hell, but would like to think that it involves annihilation of the lost, and then everything is over. They quote our Lord, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to **destroy** [*apollumi*] both body and soul in hell" (Matthew 10:28). They assert that everlasting life as promised in John 3:16 is in contrast with death. To not have eternal life is to experience eternal death (and by this, they mean ceasing to exist).

Answers

What about these assertions? "To **destroy** both body and soul in hell" does not mean annihilation. As we said, "The idea [in the word] is not extinction but ruin, loss, not of being, but of wellbeing." In Mark 1:24 some demons cried out to Jesus, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to **destroy** us? ..." Some demons, crying out in Matthew 8:29, also said, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Although lost men are doomed to go there, "everlasting fire" was originally prepared for the devil and his angels (demons) (Matthew 25:41). And as connective thought, Revelation 20:10 states, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone...and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Likewise, in another context, Revelation 14:11 says "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." Hell does not involve

(Continued on Page 14)

Our Lord Jesus Christ

IN HIS HUMANITY he was crowned with thorns; in his exaltation he is crowned with diadems. He came the first time meek, lowly, riding on a borrowed beast; he will come again in power and glory, riding on the clouds of triumph. He came the first time as the suffering Messiah, to his own who received him not; he will come again as the bridegroom for his bride, those who have been redeemed by his blood "out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation." He came the first time as the sin-bearer; he will come again as the conquering king, to rule in majesty.—*Selected* □



BARBS... with a Point



TO BELITTLE is to be little.

Brooding over your troubles will only hatch despair.

When sectarian fires intensely burn, the light and warmth of the gospel is not present.

We cannot expect a person to be levelheaded if his head is not on straight.

NOTE, It is pretty dumb to laugh at a dirty joke: **SIN IS NO JOKE**, "for the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

The modern church knows much about feasting and playing, but little about fasting and praying.

If preaching against sin offends you, there is a question mark about your repentance; if preaching against a particular sin offends you, there is a question mark involving your repentance and that sin.

Speed is of no consequence unless you are going in the right direction.

I don't care who you are; even if you are a person of renown, an old acquaintance, my dearest friend or close relative, I am not going to defend you or offer you comfort if you compromise God's Word and the purity of the doctrine of Christ.

The purpose of teaching is to teach; if we never say anything distinctive, people will never learn.

Some politicians would try to convince us that morality (right and wrong) doesn't really matter if we have a full stomach and the economy is good (and they remain in office).

False teaching thrives on ignorance (ignorance of God's Word), and educated ignorance is the worst kind.

Any "Christian unity" that does not come as a by-product of being united with Christ and following the Bible is artificial and humanly imposed.

Flesh, left to itself, seeks the lowest common denominator.

We have the mentality of a sect when we would try to draw attention to ourselves, as a religious group, instead of to Christ and his Word.

Soft words and gentle actions turn away wrath and eliminate the factions.

Some people when they become religious exchange one pride for another, a worldly pride for a self-righteous, religious pride (but it is still fleshly and worldly).

Many people who think they are open-minded really are empty headed.

If you "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," you won't have any problem in coming to all of the services of the church.

The more that we tolerate sin, the less intolerable it becomes to us.

The person who thinks that he can't quit smoking needs to realize there is a place that never quits smoking (Revelation 14:11; Mark 9:43-48).

When truth is compromised with error, truth is always the loser.

The Bible does not say to "earnestly contend for the faith" until you have trouble with your children and then change your convictions.

A doting, smothering kind of love is not healthy. □



SUCCESS

THE FATHER of Success is named Work. The mother of Success is named Ambition. The oldest son is called Common Sense and some of the boys are called Stability, Perseverance, Honesty, Thoroughness, Foresight, Enthusiasm and Co-operation.

The oldest daughter is Character. Some of the other sisters are Cheerfulness, Loyalty, Care, Courtesy, Economy, Sincerity and Harmony. The baby is Opportunity.

Get acquainted with the father and you will be able to get along with the rest of the family. □

—*Adapted*



WHEN you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life in such a manner so that when you die, the world will cry and you will rejoice.—*Selected* □



LOST! LOST!

(Continued from Page 12)

annihilation, according to these verses. Then Revelation 21:8 tells us about the wicked, likewise, being cast into the lake of fire (where the devil and the demons are cast), and it is called “the second death.” Before the judgment, in contrast with the “resurrection of life,” the resurrection of the wicked is called the “resurrection of damnation” (John 5:29). It is not annihilation, a ceasing to exist, but death in the sense of eternal separation from God.

More Awful Than We Can Imagine

Another person suggests that when the Lord mentioned hell fire, he really didn’t mean fire, but was using fire to represent something else. Although we may not understand all that is involved, we simply take the words as they are spoken. Even if fire were used to represent something else, it wouldn’t diminish the awfulness of hell. It would probably be something worse than fire, as we know it. The heavenly city is pictured as having gates of pearl and the street of gold, using that which man esteems to be of utmost value to represent something greater. No doubt, this is suggestive, and heaven is more wonderful than we can imagine. Likewise, hell would be more awful than anything that we could imagine.

No Longer Be Lost

So, kind reader, if you are not a Christian, the Bible says that you are lost. There is no way that we can be saved until we accept the fact that we are lost—“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Every sin that we have committed is on the “books” against us. We cannot save ourselves. But John 3:16 tells us of God’s great love for the world in sending a Savior. He certainly “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Timothy 2:4). Christ died for all, and this being the case, Paul says, “...If one died for all, then were all **dead** [implying that all were **lost**]: 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” (II Corinthians 5:14, 15). The sinless one takes away our sin (II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 10:17) when we repent and are baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). We enter into salvation and the fellowship of the saved. We have the throne of grace which to frequent (Hebrews 4:14-16) as we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord (II Peter 3:18; 1:4-11). And at the end of life’s way “an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus

Christ.” If we don’t make it to heaven, we have no one to blame but ourselves. Hell was really prepared for the devil and his angels. □



ASHAMED OF JESUS

SOMEONE has commented that an old-fashioned girl blushes when she is embarrassed, but a modern girl is embarrassed when she blushes. Perhaps this is a commentary upon our confused society. It seems we have become ashamed of all that is right and pure and proper, while manifesting pride in our wrongdoing. We attempt to conceal our virtue, our religious faith and our going to church, but we brag about cheating on our income tax or putting one over on “ol’ Smokey.” Like those of Isaiah’s day, we are now calling good evil and evil good.

Have we really become ashamed of decency, integrity, morality and that which is right? If so, we have become ashamed of Jesus, for He is our example in all these virtues.

Listen to Jesus: “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38). Notice Christ makes no distinction between His words and Himself. Those who are ashamed of His words, His teachings, His doctrine, are ashamed of Him! □

Spiritual Food for Thought

~ By J. Andrew Gibbons ~
1034 Joyce Mill Road
Westfield, NC 27053

"In Daddy's Steps"

*I watched him playing around my door,
My neighbor's little boy of four.
I wondered why a child would choose
To wear his dad's old worn-out shoes.
I saw him try with all his might
To make the lace snug and tight.
I smiled to see him walk, and then
He'd only step right out again.
I heard him say, his voice so glad,
"I want to be just like my dad."
I hoped his dad his steps would choose,
Safe for his son to wear his shoes.
And then a shout and cry of joy,
A "Hello, Dad!" and a "Hi-you, boy!"
They walked along in measured stride,
Each face aglow with love and pride.
"What have you done today, my lad?"
"I tried to wear your shoes, like Dad.
They're big but when I am a man,
I'll wear your shoes, I know I can."
They stopped and stood there hand in hand.
He saw his son's tracks in the sand;
His words—a prayer—came back to me,
"Lord, let my steps lead him to Thee."*

—Selected



HOW MANY of us can relate to this poem? There are countless pictures to prove that many youngsters have tried to walk in their daddy's shoes, work boots, cowboy boots, fishing waders and on and on.

The sad fact also remains that many have followed in daddy's shoes literally; down the same road of dishonesty, drunkenness, immorality and ungodliness in general. The old saying, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree," is many times truer than we think.

Dads, live your lives in a way that brings glory to God and help set a godly example for your children and all of our children. Remember, you are leaving a legacy of ruin or redemption. It's up to you, what will you do?

Ephesians 6:4, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." □

From A Parent to A Child

I CAN share your life, but I cannot live it for you.
I can teach you things, but I cannot make you learn.
I can give you direction, but I cannot make you follow.
I can allow you freedom, but I cannot account for it.
I can take you to church, but I cannot make you believe.
I can teach you right from wrong, but I cannot always decide for you.
I can buy you beautiful clothes, but I cannot make you beautiful inside.
I can offer you advice, but I cannot accept it for you.
I can give you love, but I cannot force it upon you.
I can teach you to be a friend, but I cannot make you one.
I can teach you to share, but I cannot make you unselfish.
I can teach you respect, but I cannot force you to show honor.
I can advise you about friends, but I cannot choose them for you.
I can teach you about sex, but I cannot keep you pure.
I can tell you the facts of life, but I cannot build your reputation.
I can tell you about drinking and drugs, but I cannot say "NO" for you.
I can tell you about goals, but I cannot achieve them for you.
I can let you work, but I cannot make you responsible.
I can teach you to obey, but I cannot answer for your actions.
I can teach you kindness, but I cannot force you to be gracious.
I can warn you about sins, but I cannot make you moral.
I can love you as my child, but I cannot place you in God's family.
I can pray for you, but I cannot make you walk with God.
I can teach you about Jesus, but I cannot make him your Savior.
I can show you faith, but I cannot make you trust Christ.—Anonymous □

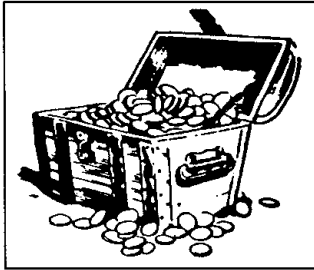
Answers to:

BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Genesis 5:24 (Hebrews 11:5); 2. Kings 2:11; 3. Genesis 6:18; 4. Genesis 41:50-52; 48:5; 5. Job 1:1,2; 42:12-14; 6. Judges 13:8-21; 7. I Kings 16:29-33; 8. Ezekiel 14:12-20; 9. Jeremiah 25:8-12; 29:10; 10. I Chronicles 36:21 (Leviticus 25:1-7); Ezra 1:1; 11. Luke 6:13-16; 12. John 11:1-5; 13. James 3:6; 14. Acts 23:6-8; 15. Hebrews 9:15-17; 16. Acts 2:37-40; Acts 22:16 (Revelation 1:5); Romans 6:1-7; Galatians 3:27; I Peter 3:21; 17. Acts 26:1-29; 18. I Corinthians 13:13; 19. Ephesians (3:1; 6:20); Philippians (1:7,12-14,16; 4:14); Colossians (4:18); Philemon (vs. 1, 9, 23); II Timothy (1:8; 2:9; 4:6,16); 20. Revelation, chapters 2 and 3. □

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And Who Are These?

Who are these motley ones clothed in such gorgeous robes of spotless white?
Who are these that surge forth upon the streets of gold in wild delight?
At first it seems they're out of place, unfit, as if they don't belong
As angels step aside somewhat aghast, they merge—a happy throng!
Just who are these that dare to stand before the Mighty God of all?
They're earthly creatures, born again, children of Adam's fallen race;
Saved forever by Jesus Christ, his precious blood, through God's amazing grace!

—By James E. Gibbons

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The Name "Christian"

Henry Ward Beecher: "Let me speak in the language of heaven and call you Christians."
Albert Barnes: "These divisions should be merged into the holy name Christian."
Martin Luther: I pray you leave my name alone. Don't you call yourselves Lutherans, but Christians."
John Wesley: "I wish the name Methodist might never be mentioned again, but lost in eternal oblivion."
Charles Spurgeon: "I say, of the Baptist name, let it perish, but let Christ's name last forever. I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living."
The Apostle Peter: "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (I Peter 4:16).
The Apostle Paul: "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (I Corinthians 1:12,13).
Luke: "...And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26).—**Pulpit Helps** □

➔ A Good Time to Do It ◀

THIS IS NOT a solicitation, but simply a note. Although we have our own print shop to help absorb expenses, getting out each issue of *The Sword and Staff* still involves several thousand dollars. If you have been considering sending a contribution, now as we go into a new year would be a good time to do it. All such help is deeply appreciated. Thank you.—**Editor** □

● **HELP US REACH OUT TO MORE PEOPLE AND CHURCHES WITH THIS PUBLICATION. Thanks!**

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