

The Sword AND Staff

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

Sojourners, Strangers and Pilgrims

● By JAMES E. GIBBONS—1535 W. Fairfield Drive
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TO GET the most out of reading the epistle of 1 Peter, notice how the apostle addresses his readers and the underlying theme that surfaces throughout the letter. And perhaps both elements are directly related (or even interwoven).

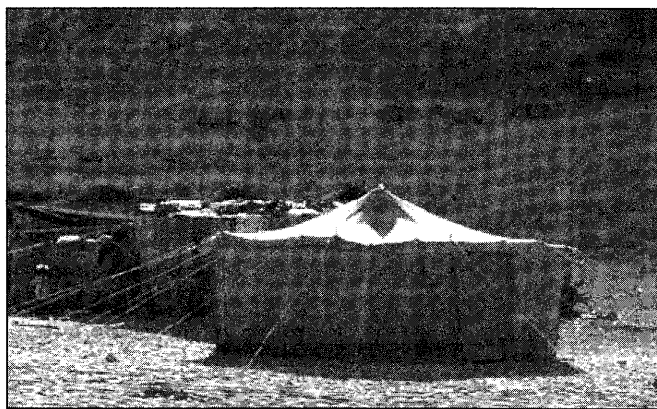
The Salutation

The salutation in verse 1 of the first chapter reads, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the **strangers** scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." In 2:11, he even more explicitly addresses them with this admonition, saying, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as **strangers and pilgrims...**" Perhaps everything that Peter says in this epistle should be understood from this perspective. In 1:17, he speaks about passing the time of their "**sojourning** here..." This connects with the concept of "strangers and pilgrims." Christians while living in this world are to look upon themselves as sojourners, strangers and pilgrims who are just passing through.

The Underlying Theme

And the underlying theme that keeps surfacing throughout this epistle is persecution and suffering (1 Peter 1:6-7; 2:11-12, 18-24; 3:14-17; 4:1,4, 12-19; 5:7-10). By choosing the life of a Christian, in the real sense, we become aliens in an unfriendly and sometimes hostile environment. As "strangers," we are looked upon as being strange (1 Peter 4:4, 12). Our lifestyle, by way of contrast, becomes a rebuke to an ungodly world (and who likes to be rebuked and especially worldly people?). Mild opposition, first from non-Christians feeling guilt-ridden and intimidated, turns into overt persecution. This was true in the early days of the church; especially when the local authorities in league with the Roman government finally began to clamp down on Christianity, regarding it as *religio illicita*. (And perhaps the apostle Peter was getting these Chris-

tians in these outlying Roman provinces ready for "spill over" persecution coming directly from Rome itself by the emperor Nero).



A Bedouin Tent

The Needed Lesson

In this article let us consider a lesson on "sojourners, strangers and pilgrims." We believe this concept needs to be revived and reinstated among professed Christians today. We are all wrapped up in materialism, the here and now. Too many times, it seems, the so-called church has gone out of its way to blend in with the world and even to accommodate the world (thus, losing any distinctiveness, seeming to cringe at the thought of being different). (Who wants to be stigmatized as some kind of religious "nut"?) We no longer look upon ourselves as being "sojourners, strangers and pilgrims." We are part of the establishment. We are the *status quo*. We hardly can say, "This world is not my home; I'm just passing through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue."

I. BACKGROUND AND ORIGIN OF THIS MODE OF EXPRESSION

Meaning of Words

Our English words ("Strangers," "Pilgrims" and "sojourning") well represent the words in the original language of the Scriptures in what they mean.

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—THANK YOU—

Proverbially *SPEAKING...*

IF YOU want to be acceptable to God, you must accept Christ.

Character is not just the principle thing in life, it is everything.

We are blessed to be a blessing (1 Peter 3:9; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

If we take time for prayer, we will not have to take time for a lot of other things.

The best defense is a good "offense" (and this is especially true in dealing with the devil).

If you are always true to yourself, you will never be false with anyone.

When life gets ugly, it is then that Christianity seems even more beautiful.

A lot of kneeling keeps us in good standing with the Lord.

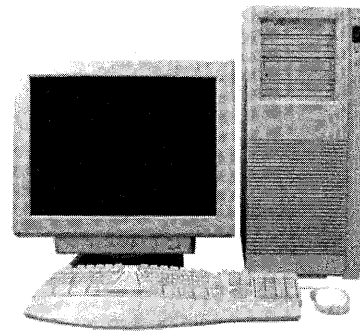
What is gained by prayer should always be followed by thanksgiving.

A Christian's worst days are better than the best days of a sinner because he has hope.

When times are trying is no time to quit trying.

Worshipping God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24) means that our worship corresponds to the attributes and likeness of God.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS



VICTORY THROUGH DEFEAT (WINNING THROUGH SURRENDER)

THIS may sound ironical, contradictory or even ridiculous, but it is the way things are in Christianity. You become victorious through defeat. You win through surrender. You begin to live through dying. It is in losing your life you find it. And by being last you are in a position to become first.

In the preceding paragraph, the second person pronoun "you" was used. More appropriately, we should have said "we" (third person), that includes all of us, and even more personally, the first person "I" could have been used. (And in English, we arrogantly capitalize the personal pronoun "I"). Obviously, self is our big problem. Collectively and individually, *we* "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Consequently, in our rebellion against God, we must be dethroned. Self must be gotten out of the way. Then victory, salvation and blessings will be ours in many ways.

Following are some very interesting Scriptures that illustrate these paradoxical and remarkable truths as stated in the first paragraph of this article.

- *"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).*
- *"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:39).*
- *"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).*
- *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).*
- *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).*
- *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn [grain] of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12:24-25).*
- *"So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen" (Matthew 20:16).*

By becoming "poor in spirit," we recognize our defeat. We see our spiritual need. We recognize and declare our spiritual bank-

ruptcy and throw ourselves upon the mercy and grace of God. Like Paul, in doing this we are “crucified with Christ.” The “old man of sin,” self, is put to death. In total surrender, we are “buried with Christ” in baptism to arise to “walk in newness of life.” We are “new creatures” in Christ Jesus. In losing our lives, we have truly found them. We have meaning and purpose in living. Christ lives within us as we unselfishly and victoriously live for him. And in genuinely putting ourselves last, the Lord will put us first.

Yes, it is only in surrender that we can gain the victory (surrender to God). But it must be a total surrender. A good illustration of surrender can be seen in the ending of the 2nd World War. The 1st World War ended in a stalemate and ceasefire, called an Armistice. There was no surrender. It wasn’t long until Germany under Hitler was disposed toward war again. The 2nd World War is history. The Allies in the defeat of Germany agreed that there must be an unconditional surrender, not another armistice. Germany would be occupied. The same conditions would be demanded of the Japanese. There had to be an unconditional surrender. Likewise, this is how we end all hostilities with God. But in totally surrendering, there is victory in defeat (from our perspective). We enter the good life. And in being totally surrendered to God we can get the victory over Satan.

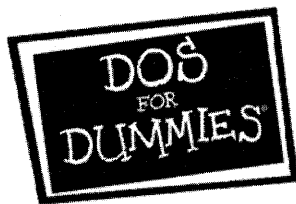
Let us always remember, “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble” (James 4:6b); “Strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9); “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13), and, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31b). □

EDITORIAL

Byways

GOD’S “DOS FOR DUMMIES”

BACK in the early days of the computer, to get into the programs and move around was no small task for many. With the C prompt and all of the connecting coded commands that had to be precisely typed in, it was indeed a chore (and with many people there was the element of fear and being intimidated). Not everyone mastered it. The setup and process was called DOS (Disc Operating System), which was an uncom-



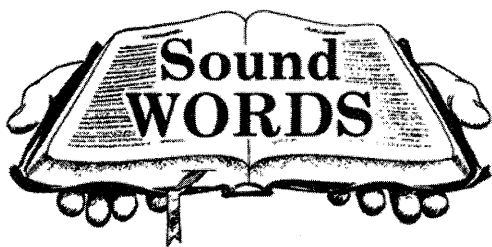
promising necessity to operate your computer and to use the programs. However, with the introduction of WINDOWS, and the use of icons to be “clicked,” what had to be done became quite simple. But in the meantime many books appeared on the scene to be helpful for those who had problems operating the system. The first one that came out, perhaps, was DOS FOR DUMMIES. Of this book, it was said, “If all this talk of memory and megabytes has given you a headache, take two aspirin and, in the morning, buy a copy of DOS FOR DUMMIES.” And it was called, “A Reference for the Rest of Us!” This book was to simplify things for simpletons (that is, for “the rest of us”). A lot of other “for dummies” books followed.

Did you know there is a book in the Bible that could be called DOS FOR DUMMIES? No, it is not about operating computers, but about the greater and more important operating system of life itself. In particular, we are talking about the book of Proverbs. Its avowed purpose is “to give subtilty [shrewdness] to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion” (Proverbs 1:4). This purpose is reaffirmed throughout the book. Much of this is from the Old Testament perspective. Fear is not intimidation, nor is it a hindrance in mastering this operating system, but it actually is that which assures its mastery. The introductory section of the Proverbs begins with this affirmative statement, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge...” (Proverbs 1:7) and it ends with, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10). And the next verse reassuringly says, “For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased” (9:11).

Beginning with chapter 10:1, the C prompt has already been typed in for us, wisdom has already been extolled, and now each individualized proverb lays out for us many and great truths about how life should be lived (and the pitfalls in not living this way). Here we see the good and meaningful life. To remain uninformed, and to turn down what has been said, is not only to remain a foolish simpleton, but to become a hardened and scornful fool (never coming to know or really experiencing what life is all about).

God has simplified things for us. Just simply read and follow His “DOS FOR DUMMIES,” the book of Proverbs. It is not hard to understand. It will make living life much easier. “Good understanding giveth favor: but the way of a transgressor is hard” (Proverbs 13:15). □

"Hold fast the form of sound words..."



*"...Sound speech, that cannot be condemned"
(2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 2:8).*

THE ELDERSHIP

READING in the Bible, we find local New Testament churches that had reached a certain stage of maturity were placed under the oversight and care of qualified men (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:2-7) called "elders" (Acts 14:21-23; 20:17, 18, 28). As it is our desire to be restored to that church in its purity, the kind of church government they practiced and what the leadership was called is important to us. Today our terminology is muddled, as well as the way the church is governed, while many would mimic and be copycats of any and everything in the denominational world (Scriptural or not).

"Elders"

As we said, "elders" is the primary word used to identify this "office" in the church. Following are all of the places in the New Testament where this word is found and unquestionably used in this sense: Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2,4,6,22,23; 16:4; 20:17; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; and 1 Peter 5:1. But 2 John 1 and 3 John 1 are possibilities. In the older King James rendering of 1 Timothy 4:14, the word "presbytery" actually is a transliteration of the Greek word for "eldership" (*presbuterion*, the elders as a group). So, this falls under the heading of elders, as we think of Scriptural terminology. And, of course, "elder" means older.

"Bishops"

The next designation, referring to the elders, that gets our attention is the word "bishop" (KJV). Following are all of the Scriptural references where this word is rendered "bishop," having to do with the elder: Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:2; and Titus 1:7. In Acts 20:28 this word that above is rendered "bishop" (Greek: *episkopos*) is translated "overseers" (which is the exact meaning of the word). In 1 Timothy 3:1, we have "office of a bishop." This represents a single Greek word, basically coming from *episkopos*, meaning "overship" or superintendency (we might say). Titus 1:5-7 and Acts 20:17, 28 make it plain that the word

"bishop" (overseer) is talking about the elders, as the terms are used interchangeably (referring to the same person). The term is applied to them.

"Pastors"

Ephesians 4:11 tells of different gifts (positions of leadership) that were given by Christ for the ongoing of the church. Among those listed are "pastors." The word "pastor" (*poimen*) simply means shepherd. We know that a shepherd takes care of sheep. In 1 Peter 5:1-4, Peter addresses the elders of local churches. He admonishes them to "feed the flock of God which is among you" and to take the "oversight" of the flock (doing the work of shepherds, pastors). Then in verse 4 he says that "when the chief Shepherd [Christ] shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." The expression "chief Shepherd" is a translation of one Greek word, *archipoimen* (archi + *poimen*). The underling shepherds (pastors), who are the elders, one day will have to give an account to the chief Shepherd, Christ himself. They will be especially recognized and rewarded for doing a good job. Acts 20:28 speaks of elders taking care of the flock. They are the pastors of the church. The word "pastor" refers to the elders.

So, what must we conclude from this study in reference to "sound speech"? Obviously the terminology of the New Testament has suffered much abuse (as well as not being correctly understood and practiced). Today in the denominational world instead of there being a plurality of "bishops" over one local church, the thing is turned around. There is a single so-called "bishop" over many (even hundreds) of so-called churches. Also, abuse of Scriptural language is seen in technically calling someone "pastor" other than the elders and not recognizing them as such.

We could go on talking about this, pointing out many other things. This should be enough to make you want to study further. If we claim to be New Testament Christians, let us use the language of the New Testament. Let us call New Testament things by New Testament names. □



To These I Commit My Day

"LOVE, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. To these I commit my day. If I succeed, I will give thanks. If I fail, I will seek His grace. And then, when this day is done, I will place my head on my pillow and rest. I choose God." □



Rules for Living

THE FOLLOWING rules are said to have been given to James A. Garfield as a young man by an elderly friend. He cherished these principles to the end of his life. He was the 20th president of the United States (and he was also a preacher and an elder in the church).

- Never be idle.
- Make few promises.
- Always speak the truth.
- Live within your income.
- Never speak evil of anyone.
- Keep good company or none.
- Live up to your engagements.
- Never play games of chance.
- Drink no intoxicating drinks.
- Good character is above everything else.
- Keep your own secrets if you have any.
- Never borrow if you can possibly help it.
- Do not marry until you are able to support a wife.
- When you speak to a person, look into his eyes.
- Save when you are young and spend when you are old.
- Never run into debt unless you can see a way out again.
- Good company and good conversation are the sinews of virtue.
- Your character cannot be essentially injured except by your own acts.
- If anybody speaks evil of you, let your life be so that no one believes him.
- When you retire at night think over what you have done during the day.—**Selected** □

Sojourners, Strangers and Pilgrims *(Continued from Page 1)*

“Strangers” mean aliens, foreigners, or emigrants (many times in transient). “Pilgrims” signifies people who travel about, or who are on a specific journey to a holy destination. Then, of course, “sojourning” speaks of people staying temporarily at a place, implying that they are not permanent in residence and will be moving on.

The Hebrews Reference

Perhaps this mode of expression had its beginning with the call of Abraham and the patriarchs who immediately followed him (Genesis 12:1-4ff). The writer of the book of Hebrews in the New Tes-

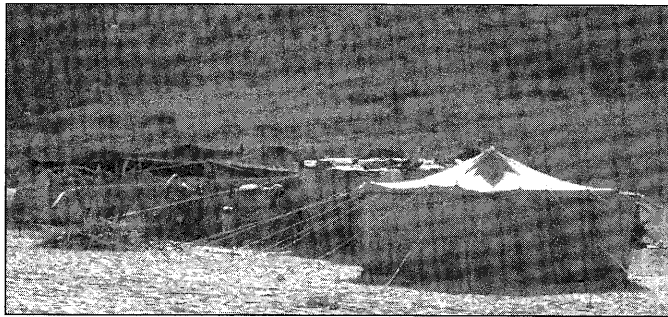
tament seizes upon this expression and this unfolding saga in reference to Abraham, and enlarges upon it to bring it to its ultimate Christian fulfillment. We quote from the book of Hebrews. “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he *sojourned* in the land of promise, as in a *strange country*, dwelling in tabernacles [tents] with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God...These [the old patriarchs] all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were *strangers* and *pilgrims* on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16).

A Pilgrim's Mindset

Abraham worshipped the true God of heaven in a world filled with idolatry. In God's plan of things, he was called from Ur of the Chaldees to go to the land of Canaan. He was promised this land, that his descendants would become a great nation, and that finally through him the Christ would come to bless the whole world (Genesis 12:1-4). Although this was true, it didn't happen all at once. Upon coming into the Promised Land, he and his immediate descendants practiced a simple nomadic lifestyle very much like the present day Bedouin, camping out in tents and temporarily staying at different places as strangers and sojourners. They were looked upon as aliens and regarded themselves as such in a land that was not theirs yet (Genesis 23:4; 37:1). They did not mix or integrate with the local population, and when some of them did, it caused unending problems involving God's plans for them as a people (Genesis 13:10-13 [chapter 19]; 26:34ff; 34:1ff; etc). Even in being temporarily separated from Canaan, like Abraham being in Egypt and later all of his descendants for 400-some years, they still had this mindset and thought of themselves as being strangers and pilgrims (Genesis 15:13; Exodus 6:4; 12:40). In fact, through experience their over-all mindset, even of life itself,

(Continued on Next Page)

Sojourners, Strangers and Pilgrims *(Continued from Previous Page)*



seemed to be in tune with this terminology. When old Jacob stood before Pharaoh in Egypt, and Pharaoh asked him how old he was, he said, “The days of the years of my *pilgrimage* are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their *pilgrimage*” (Genesis 47:9). Hundreds of years later, King David, nearing the end of his life, would pray, “For we are *strangers* before thee, and *sojourners*, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding” (1 Chronicles 29:15).

This is a brief background of the literal meaning and origin of this mode of expression. Fittingly, the New Testament writers adapted this expressive Old Testament language in talking about the life that we now live as Christians. We are sojourners, strangers and pilgrims in this present world. Our focus is on eternity, that which is yet to come. Let us never forget this.

II. THE APOSTLE’S USAGE OF THIS MODE OF EXPRESSION

Through Pilgrims’ Eyes

Now let us go back to 1 Peter where the apostle addresses his Christian readers as “strangers”; where he speaks of them “sojourning here” and further admonishes them “as strangers and pilgrims.” Perhaps what he goes on to say to them is not so much clothed in the language of the “strangers and pilgrims” figure as it is that they should look upon what he has to say and how they live through the eyes of “strangers and pilgrims.” They are pilgrims here. With that in mind, let us try to do the same for the purposes of this study.

The Pilgrim’s Destination

First, let us notice the compelling and motivating factors that place people in the category of being called pilgrims and that characterizes them as such. People are called “pilgrims” because they are on a religious journey with a distinctive goal and

holy destination ever before them. This is what inspires them and moves them on. This mindset was what captivated Abraham, the patriarchs and all who followed them. In the process, the promises of Genesis 12:1-3 were realized and the New Testament focus was brought into being.

“Reserved in Heaven for You”

With this in mind, and looking through the eyes of a pilgrim, 1 Peter 1:3, and the following verses, capture our attention. This is what sustains us, and keeps us going in this land of our pilgrimage here below. Our destination is yet ahead. And what a goal and destination it is!

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively [living] hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations [trials]: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:3-9).

“The Time of Your Sojourning Here”

That being said, having looked to the end of their journey as strangers and pilgrims and what was in store for them, the apostle Peter continues with this fitting admonition, which follows. What he says now governs every aspect of their lives in their pilgrimage while here below, and everything that is said in 1 Peter should be looked upon through these verses; especially through that which we will highlight.

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lust in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [of living]: Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Peter 1:13-17).

“Holy in All Manner of Living”

The key verse that we want to highlight here is the one quoted from the Old Testament, “*Be ye holy, for I am holy.*” The word “holy” means that

which has been set apart, separate. As aliens (“strangers”) passing through a land that was not their final destination, they were to be a separate people. (1 Peter 1:22 and 23 tells when and how this initially took place). They were ever to be careful not to be integrated with the “citizenry” of this world (to think like they think, to act like they act). They were to pass the time of their “sojourning here in fear” (fear that they would not please God, ever being careful how they lived). That word “fear” occurs throughout this epistle (1:17; 2:17; 2:18; 3:15). This deep respect for God governs our every action and all of our relationships in our pilgrimage.

Getting Down to Business

The “wherefore,” the basis on which this solemn admonition was made, is the great hope and aspiration that is before us. This was (and is) the great compelling motivation that prompts us to “gird up the loins” of our mind and press on as pilgrims. The picture (and figure) is that of them pulling up and securing their long, robe-like garments around their waist, making them shorter, so they will be out of the way as they get down to business doing what needs to be done. Their old lives of sin were behind them now (and should stay there). As sojourning pilgrims, they were to get down to business in being **“holy in all manner of living”** (not carelessly going along with an ungodly world).

When Pain and Suffering Come

When pain and suffering come,
Which seem so very hard to bear,
Don't hesitate to turn, yea, “run,”
To God and plead your cause in prayer.

Hezekiah—*remember him?*
He turned to God and prayed in tears
When facing death with sickness grave—
Almighty God prolonged his life,
And blessed with fifteen extra years.

Remember how that Jesus died
That cruel death on Calvary;
In full he drank that bitter cup
To save our souls and qualify
As faithful priest for you and me.

When pain and suffering come,
Which seem so very hard to bear,
Don't hesitate to turn, yea, “run,”
To God and plead your cause in prayer.

—By James E. Gibbons

“A Holy Nation”

As we said, the figure of being strangers and pilgrims is not one that is rigidly followed throughout Peter's epistle, but is suggestive language as to how we should look at our situation. However, the concept of uniqueness and being a separate people is carried over in other things that he writes, being expanded beyond the simple figure of a pilgrim. Old Testament Israel (a people separated from all other peoples on the earth) is used as an antitype of the church. Christians are the spiritual Israel of God in the world today and constitute the kingdom of heaven superimposed, yet distinctly separate, among and throughout all of the nations of the earth. Notice what Peter says.

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:9-11).

Continued Instructions

The apostle continues. They should so live in this world that the people of this world can find no fault with them (2:11-12). Being such, and sojourners, Peter is quick to say that this does not exempt them from obeying the laws in the land of their pilgrimage (2:13-17). He singles out different categories of pilgrims to give special instructions to them: Servants (2:18ff); wives (3:1ff); husbands (3:7); all (3:8ff); and finally elders (5:1ff), the younger (5:5ff) and all.

Different from the World

In the midst of these various instructions and admonitions, we find these words that apply to all. Here again he reminds them of their past in contrast with their present circumstance in which they are situated as strangers and pilgrims (being different from the world). Indeed, they were different now (and so we will be).

We should no longer live the rest of our “time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us [it's been enough] to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness [lewdness], lusts, excess of wine [drinking], revellings [carousing], banqueting [partying], and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot [excessive living], speaking evil of you” (1 Peter 4:2-4).

In becoming “strangers,” we are looked upon as being strange, as we **“run not with”** the ungodly people of the world in excessive, unrestrained liv-

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The Old Testament in 1 Peter

WE are told that all of the Old Testament books are quoted in some way in the New Testament except Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. These quotations from the Old Testament take many forms and are variously applied. It would seem the New Testament writers extensively used the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), and at other times quoted directly from the Hebrew Scriptures. Sometimes their citations were paraphrases, as they adapted them for their purposes under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. With these writers having their heads full of the Old Testament Scriptures, their writings at times unconsciously would be sprinkled with the phraseology of the Old Testament as they wrote the New Testament (even though their intentions may not have been to make a quotation as such).

It is an interesting study to pinpoint such quotations as we read the New Testament Scriptures. In studying the book of 1 Peter, we were able to highlight nine different quotations from five different Old Testament books; namely, from Exodus, Leviticus, Psalms, Proverbs, and Isaiah (representative of three divisions of the Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus recognized, Luke 24:44). Although the New Testament is a different system, religiously speaking, it is interwoven with the Old Testament. Both books are from God, each serving its distinctive place in God's scheme of things. Although we are not under the Old Testament dispensation today, we cannot accept one book without accepting the other.

Following, check out these references in 1 Peter and where they come from in the Old Testament. This is highly interesting.

New Testament	Old Testament
1 Peter 1:16	Leviticus 11:44
1 Peter 1:24-25	Isaiah 40:6-8
1 Peter 2:5	Isaiah 28:16
1 Peter 2:9	Exodus 19:5-6
1 Peter 2:22-24	Isaiah 53:
1 Peter 3:10-12	Psalms 34:12-16
1 Peter 3:14-15	Isaiah 8:12-13
1 Peter 4:8	Proverbs 10:12
1 Peter 4:18	Proverbs 11:31

Invocation of a Blessing

The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:
The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be

gracious unto thee:
The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.—*Numbers 6:24-26* □

BIBLE QUESTIONS
(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. What happened in the Bible that prompted God to "confound" the language of man, which resulted in man being scattered throughout the world and different languages coming into being?
2. Upon fleeing the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, as they were being destroyed, what happened to Lot's wife when she looked back?
3. Where is the first time the word "holy" is found in the Bible?
4. Sons of Anak, Anakim, Emims, and Zamzummins were the names of what kind of people in ancient times?
5. Which one of the twelve tribes of Israel actually had its inheritance (territory) within the bounds of another tribe when they settled in the Promised Land?
6. What personal malady fell upon the Philistines when they took the ark of the covenant from Israel and kept it?
7. What happened to some mean boys who made fun of the prophet Elisha?
8. In the Bible, to whom did God give 15 extra years of life when he prayed?
9. Which psalm is David's prayer of repentance following the sin of adultery with Bathsheba?
10. According to Proverbs, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before" what?
11. What Old Testament prophet said, "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (in judgment)?
12. What Old Testament prophet said, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fall, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, and I will joy in the God of my salvation"?
13. What are the three occasions Nicodemus is mentioned in the gospel of John?
14. How many healings are recorded done by Jesus on Sabbath days, and what were they?
15. Who was the first person to whom the Lord appeared after his resurrection from the dead?
16. Where are three quotations from non-Biblical and Gentile sources found in the New Testament?
17. When Paul had the "Macedonian call" at Troas, how long did it take them to sail from there to Neapolis (the seaport town of Philippi), and years later on a reverse crossing of the sea here (from Philippi to Troas), how long did it take them?
18. Was Saul (Paul) of Tarsus involved in the death of other Christians besides Stephen?
19. Paul said, "Walk in the _____, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."
20. What two prophesy writers in the Bible, one in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament, ate books and found them sweet?

(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. □

SOUTH CAROLINA:

■ *"Please send this order and please add me to the mailing list. Thanks."*

TENNESSEE:

■ *"...We sure love our SWORD AND STAFF. Many thanks to your efforts. Keep on going. We need it! I am sending a check..."*

WEST VIRGINIA:

■ *"I'm sorry for our lack of support, but please know that all your work is appreciated..."*

■ *"Please remove us from your mailing list. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter."*

■ *"THE SWORD AND STAFF is one of the best publications I have ever received. I love to read it for the sermons and thoughts that it has. I know that this publication has brought and won many to Christ, and made many stronger in Christ. It grieves my heart to read where people call or write and ask that their names be removed from the mailing list. I can only say, 'shame on them.' Each time I see a name asked to be taken off, I pray for that person. In the times we live now we need more people not only using the magazine but also trying to get more people on the mailing list. It makes me think when they ask for their name to be removed, are they also asking God to take their name off of the Lamb's book of life? I can only pray that my name will always be in the book of life. And I believe with publications like this, this will be a great way to help keep it there. You do a great work and service for our Lord Jesus Christ... May God bless you here and much more in heaven! Here is a small gift and more will follow. Thanks again."*

PENNSYLVANIA:

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

■ *"I trust all is well with you. Keep up the great work for our Lord."*

■ *"...Thanks for such an inspiring paper. We look forward to getting it ever since we found out about it from a friend of ours. We turn to our favorite articles first then read what is left."*

"Thanks again."

OHIO:

■ *"Thank you for your faithfulness in spreading the Word! May the Lord continue to bless your efforts..."*

ILLINOIS:

■ *"Do not send any more."*

■ *"I have enjoyed your magazine through the years. Keep up the good work...Please send me a copy of NOBODY LEFT BEHIND."*

■ *"I hope this will help to spread the Word. My prayers are with you. I know God has blessed you with wisdom and knowledge for you to share the Word with the world. I hope you are able to keep up the good work for many years."*

LOUISIANA:

■ *"We have been getting THE SWORD AND STAFF for years. We really enjoy it and want to continue getting it. I also want a copy of NOBODY LEFT BEHIND. Here is my payment and contribution to THE SWORD AND STAFF."*

TEXAS:

■ *"Thank you so much for THE SWORD and STAFF. We are enclosing a check that may help your endeavor with this great publication...Thank you so much."*

ARKANSAS:

■ *"Thanks for THE SWORD AND STAFF. I really enjoy the material...Please send the book NOBODY LEFT BEHIND and bound volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF, starting with the 1989-1990 copy."*

OKLAHOMA:

■ *"Thanks for what you do for the kingdom. A small check is enclosed for these volumes."*

MISSOURI:

■ *"I enjoy your newsletter. Thank you. I am enclosing a small contribution to help out with your expenses."*

■ *"Enclosed please find a gift to help with the ministry of THE SWORD AND STAFF, as well as to continue my subscription. Would you please also send the noted resources on the enclosed form? Thank you, and may our Great God bless you richly."*

■ *"Thank you so much for THE SWORD and STAFF. Please send the book NOBODY LEFT BEHIND. I am soon to be ninety-two years old and a long time elder in the Lord's church but still love to grow and learn"*

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

His way for our lives. I am sending [contribution] to help your good work."

MINNESOTA:

■ *"I would like to receive those bound volumes that you have listed. I have been a sporadic reader of your publication but I am becoming more and more aware that good, true to the Bible, publications are getting to be more and more rare! As I get older, I find myself waking during the night; so, rather than fret about it, I have good publications such as your, on my night stand ready to be read!"*

"Thank you and keep up the good work and may you be blessed in your work as you have blessed others!"

OREGON:

■ *"I wish to continue receiving THE SWORD AND STAFF. It renews things I learned many years ago... May you be blessed and continue to uphold the Word of God."*

■ *"Thank you for your uncompromising faithfulness through the years, and especially during these times when so many are giving up the 'old' ways that God said we should seek for (Jeremiah 6:16). It seems everyone wants something 'new' and 'different.' We know that the only thing that works is the gospel no matter what generation we are in (Romans 1:16).*

"Thank you for the good articles you put in THE SWORD AND STAFF."

"Enclosed is a small donation. Hope it helps some."

UNITED STATES:

■ *"Please do not send any further material to me. Thanks." (E-mail)*

(Editor's Note: As you have requested, we will send you no more material. First, your name will have to be removed from our mailing list. But you failed to tell us your name and address. We will have to know this before you can be removed so you won't receive "any further material").

■ *"This is regarding the subscription to THE SWORD AND STAFF early this year that we had begun for ...our Pakistani evangelist and friend who returned home after being in the States...He said he only received one copy. We feel it best for his safety to suspend the subscription due to the turmoil in his homeland. Thanks."*

■ *"I am in prison with a life sentence according to man, but now...I'm a Christian...I have read a lot of Christian books. Some have made me cry and repent all over again. And that's good!! But I have never read anything like THE SWORD AND STAFF. It is absolutely awesome!!! I got one from a friend, and I started reading it, and it got so good, I couldn't put it down. I have been educated from it, I get more from the Word now, and I've gotten closer to God from read-*

ing these books. And I've changed because of the books. And I owe it all to God. I want to always be a vessel for God, and do His will. My light is much brighter now. Thanks to the knowledge and understanding of my God from your books.

"Now I want to know, is there any way I could get these books [the bound volumes] sent to me? I don't have any money. But I would love to have these books. They have helped me...and please think about it. I really want/need them. God bless you."

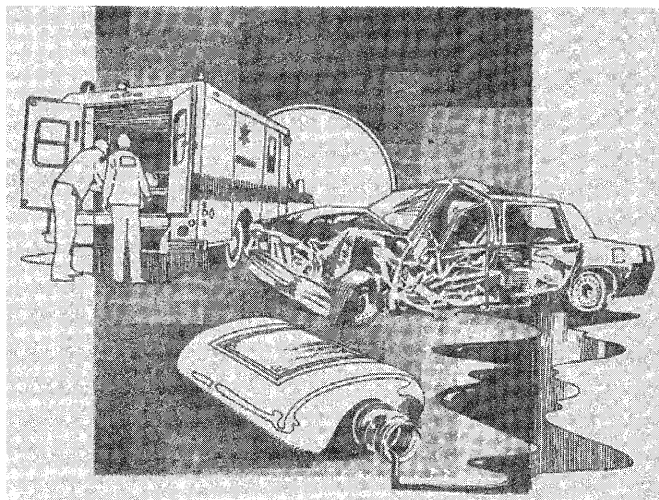
AUSTRALIA:

■ *"I have just read the article in THE SWORD AND THE STAFF, Volume 45 [Number 4] —'Random Thoughts and Suggestions on Love and Marriage' and noticed that it is available in printed leaflet. Please send it to me..." (E-mail)*

GHANA (West Africa):

■ *"I write to express my heartfelt gratitude to the way you have taken such a bold stand in defense of N.T. Christianity! Arguably your paper stands tall among so many publications I come across and I make sure I read every article! The latest on worship [Jn. 4:24] was very helpful! I should be most grateful if I could get a dozen copies of Random Thoughts and Suggestions on Marriage as well as any of your booklets for distribution to Church members. May God continue to bless your ministry." (E-mail)* □

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is..."



...Raging and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20:1)

Sojourners, Strangers and Pilgrims (Continued from Page 7)

ing. The word translated "**run**" here, in the light of the original Greek meaning, signifies to "run together," to "run along with others." It suggests a group action, perhaps like when we say that someone is running with a worldly crowd. All of this is

past tense now in our lives. Our identity is with a different group, who are not of this world, as we press on as pilgrims.

III. RELATED AND PARALLEL TRUTHS TO THIS MODE OF EXPRESSION

There are many, many other Scriptures that convey the same message as the “stranger and pilgrims” figure, but are spoken in more general terms. The truths are directly related, parallel and the same. We now call some of them to your attention. Personally examine them and make application. Be admonished, encouraged and continue to press on. Heaven awaits!

● “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

● “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Colossians 3:1-4).

● “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar [special] people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:11-14).

● “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17).

Closing Remarks

Yes, the apostle Peter said, “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as *strangers* and *pilgrims*...” (1 Peter 2:11a). We have taken up his admonition, esteeming it timely, to pass it on to you. Let us take to heart the truths examined in this lesson, not be-

coming too comfortable or at home in this present world. Let us ever have the mindset of a pilgrim. May the hymns that we sing really be a part of us and express what we really believe! “I am a stranger here, within a foreign land; my home is far away, upon a golden strand...” And in our journeying and sojourning here below, let us pray, “Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, Pilgrim thru this barren land; I am weak, but thou art mighty, Hold me with Thy pow’rful hand...” Amen. □



IF YOU CAN...

*If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs, and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting, too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good nor talk too wise;
If you can dream and not make dreams your master,
If you can think, and not make thought your aim,
If you can meet with triumph and disaster,
And treat those two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to bear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;
If you can make one heap of all your winnings,
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,
And never breathe a word about your loss...
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the will which says to them: "Hold on!"
If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my Son!*

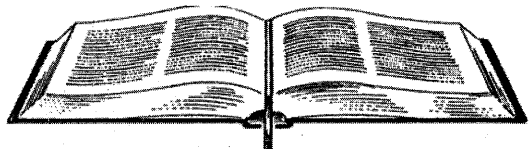
—By Rudyard Kipling



If you leave God out of your life to make a living, having no time for Him, you are leaving out the One who gave you life and the very reason to be living (and your whole life is out of kilter). □

~~BAPTISM~~

for the "Remission of Sins"



THE New Testament, which came in force with the death of Christ upon the cross (Hebrews 9:15-17), teaches that the baptism of the New Testament is for the "**remission of sins**." Carefully read Acts 2:38; then Acts 22:16 and Colossians 2:11-12. In instituting the Lord's Supper, using this same mode of expression, Jesus said, "For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the **remission of sins**" (Matthew 26:28) and Hebrews 9:22 says "without shedding of blood is no **remission**."

What does the word "**remission**" in "**remission of sins**" mean? (As we see above, it is used in reference to baptism and the blood of Christ. Whatever it means, it means the same for both). This word in the original language of the New Testament is **aphesis**. In its root meaning it signifies a sending away. In the King James Version it is translated "forgiveness" in Acts 5:31; 13:38; 26:18; Ephesians 1:7; and Colossians 1:14 (examples of its usage and meaning). Ephesians 1:7 explicitly says, "In whom [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the **forgiveness** of sins, according to the riches of his grace." In "**remission** of sins" there is forgiveness, the sending away of our sins.

This is plainly spoken in Acts 2:38 in connection with baptism. On the Day of Pentecost those convicted of their sins by the preaching of the apostles cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the **remission of sins**, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]." Likewise, Paul relates in Acts 22:16 how that Ananias came to him, following his being blinded for three days and praying (Acts 9:9-11), and said, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and **wash away thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord." Then Paul later in one of his epistles states, "In whom [Christ] ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in **putting off the body of the sins of the flesh** by the circumcision of Christ: 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." Parallel thoughts are found in Romans 6:1-5.

When we read that baptism is for the "remission of sins," it is not talking about an isolated act that is taking place. It is not talking about any merit in water (or water washing away our sins). Baptism is not something to be understood separate and aside from the grace of God. Everything about baptism is to be understood in the context of a larger picture. Baptism is for the "remission of sins" only as it is in conjunction with other things that have taken place and that are taking place. The larger context is the grace of God. And the things that have taken place are the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The things that are taking place from our perspective are faith, repentance and commitment. With all of this in mind, let us consider the following.

I. Baptism Must Be Preceded and Accompanied by Faith

In the Great Commission, the Lord said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that **believeth** and is **baptized** shall be saved..." (Mark 16:15-16a). In Acts 8:35-39, following the teaching of Philip and passing a pool, the Ethiopian said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Then we read, "And Philip said, If thou **believest** with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." The truth seen here is parallel with Colossians 2:12, "Buried with him in **baptism**, wherein also ye are risen with him through the **faith** of the operation [working] of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

(Continued on Page 14)

Denominationalism

THERE IS ONE

One Good
Matt. 19:17

One God
Eph. 4:6

One Lord
Eph. 4:5

One Spirit
Eph. 4:4

One Faith
Eph. 4:5

One Baptism
Eph. 4:5

One Way
John 14:6

One Head
Col. 1:18

One Body
Eph. 4:4

One Church
Matt. 16:18

One Fold
John 10:16

One Shepherd
John 10:16

One Mediator
1 Tim. 2:5

One Hope
Eph. 4:4

One Sacrifice
Heb. 10:14

One Foundation
1 Cor. 3:11

One Father
Matt. 23:9

One Saviour
Acts 4:12

One Lawgiver
Jas. 4:12

One Gospel
Gal. 1:6,7

1

BELIEVE THE BIBLE...IT IS ALWAYS RIGHT

is contrary to the Bible

The Strangest Man, Indeed!

THIS MAN that says he believes the Bible, but he never reads it. He says prayer changes things, but he never prays. He says he thinks well of the church, but never attends. He says people need the Lord, but he doesn't lead them to him. He says a man should be honest with God about money matters, but he gives very little. He says the church needs dedicated people, but he isn't one. He says the Lord is coming soon, but he lives as though he never will. He is a strange man, indeed!—*Selected* □



BARBS ...with a POINT

YOU aren't a Christian unless you are a Christian.

Unless we believe in the enormity of sin, grace will not mean much to us.

Trying to get some people interested in spiritual things is about like kicking a dead dog.

Some people who think they are "cool" really are not all that "hot."

When we do "as we please," the devil usually is the one who is the most pleased.

Sometimes we need our "toes stepped on" before we will walk with the Lord.

We cannot run the Christian race until and unless we have learned to walk with the Lord.

We win the victory in Christian living by surrender, a total surrender to Christ.

If Christians are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14), reflecting the light of Christ, their own world should be aglow.

You have to be different to make a difference.

The teachings of the Bible are God's commandments and are not to be subjected to man's amendments.

Worldly and fleshly people are drawn to certain kinds of music like flies are drawn to filth.

Just because we are imperfect is no reason to compromise God's Word, trying to accommodate our imperfect situation, and thus making God's Word an imperfect message.

The person who will not forgive destroys the bridge over which he must pass.

If you don't love the Lord enough to go to church, you don't love him enough to go to heaven, nor would you enjoy being there.

Churches that have yard sales and bake sales are not sold out to the Lord.

It seems strange, but people who don't believe in God or the Bible, will believe almost anything and everything else.

Some who are so eager for us to think "outside the box" may never have been in "the box" to start with.

There is a saying that "all roads lead to Rome," and this is true as far as ultimate religious apostasy is concerned.

The best way, and only way, to get anything done is to do it.

When you bend and twist the Scriptures, you are not just bending them; you are breaking God's commandments.

Strong drink still is the devil's brew any way that you look at it.

Christians should be the most highly motivated people in the world for they have found the purpose in living.

Problem people are people with problems (that's why they are that way).

When marital problems arise, don't ever consider divorce an option—"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mat. 19:6).

By being humble, we save ourselves from being humiliated.

If something is wrong, it is wrong and no amount of reasoning, rationalizing, theologizing or philosophizing can make it right.

By negative thought life becomes an aught. □



To Thine Own Self Be True

(Lord Polonius to Son Laertes in "Hamlet")

Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station

Are of a most select and generous chief in that.

Neither a borrower nor a lender be
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all: to thine own self be true
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

—William Shakespeare

Sharply Contrasting and Conflicting Pictures

THE TWO following pictures were taken of imagery found engraved on the stone-laid streets amid the ruins of ancient Ephesus (a city of the apostle Paul's labors). What we see here was intended to get the attention of people passing by who had two entirely different perspectives on life. What is seen in the first picture, coming in on Harbor Street (almost inconspicuous), unassumingly catches our eye. Looking at the extreme bottom left hand corner of this picture, almost indistinct, we see a fish and next a wheel. Then in the second picture we see a foot and a chiseled representation of a woman's head (and other carvings). This is found on Marble Street, the main street going into the city (with the imposing amphitheatre in view, facing the harbor). What these etchings represent stand in sharp contrast one to the other.

The Sign of the Fish, Ichthus



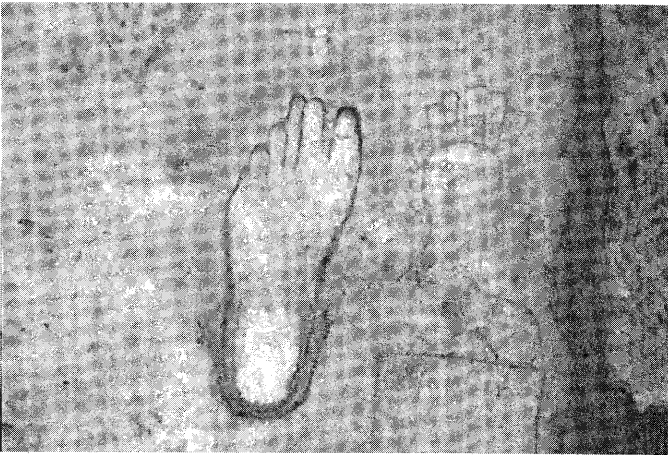
Picture taken by the editor of *The Sword and Staff* on Bible lands tour

The early church adopted the sign of the fish to represent great truths of Christianity. The Greek word for "fish" is *ichthus*. It is spelled with five Greek letters, ι (i), Χ (ch), θ (th), υ (u), and σ (s) = ιΧθυσ (*ichthus*). Each letter corresponds to cardinal truths accepted and believed by Christians. *Ichthus* (ιΧθυσ): [I]iesos, [X]hristos, [θ]theos, [υ]uios, [σ]soter (meaning Jesus, Christ, God, Son, Savior). All of these words respectively represent God incarnate worshiped by Christians.

So the sign of the fish (with the wheel) greeted traveling Christians disembarking from the ships docking at Ephesus. The message probably was that they could make contact and have fellowship with fellow believers, sharing in their hospitality.

It points to the holy and brotherly relationship that binds all Christians together.

The Foot and Woman's Figure



The second picture of a single outlined foot, a woman's head and other engravings point to an entirely different message (although within almost a stone's throw of the sign of the fish). Here on Marble Street (the main street), directly across from the courtyard of the ancient library of Celsus, these engravings pointed the way to a brothel and sexual immorality. It is said that the left foot and the woman's figure indicated that the brothel was on the left side of the street.

These two pictures represent two sharply contrasting and conflicting views of life (or, should we say, of life and death?). It was very interesting to see and take these pictures while touring the ruins of ancient Ephesus. And the contrasting options of right and wrong as seen here engraved in stone are still with us today (with the one represented by the foot at times more glaringly evident).

—James E. Gibbons



BAPTISM for the "Remission of Sins"

(Continued from Page 12)

II. Baptism Must Be Preceded and Accompanied by Repentance

As pointed out in Acts 2:38, these people on the Day of Pentecost were told to "**Repent**, and be **baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the **remission of sins**..." This corresponds exactly to what is said in the Great Commission as recorded in Luke 24:47, "And that **repentance** and **remission of sins** should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Repentance, a change of heart, is a definite "must" before baptism can be for the remission of sins. The sins must be repented of and

forsaken. In repentance we die to sin, and in baptism we are buried and arise to walk in newness of life. Without repentance, baptism is invalid. We are still in our sins.

III. Baptism Must Actually Be Baptism to Be Baptism

This truth is so obvious it almost seems redundant to point it out. In the episode involving Philip and the Ethiopian in Acts 8:35-39, when the eunuch was told he could be baptized if he believed with all of his heart and he made the good confession, we read, “And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they *went down* both *into the water*, both Philip and the eunuch; and he *baptized* him.” Romans 6:4 says that “we are *buried* with him [Christ] by baptism...” All of this corresponds to the literal meaning of the word “baptize” (*baptizo*) in the language of the New Testament. It means to plunge, to dip, to immerse. To call something else baptism besides immersion does not make it immersion (baptism). We must actually be buried and raised in baptism.

IV. Baptism Must Be for the Remission of Sins

In Acts 19:1-5, some disciples of John the Baptist who had already been baptized (immersed) were baptized (immersed) again. John’s baptism was no longer valid and did not now correspond to the full revelation of the New Testament message and what baptism was all about. In partaking of the Lord’s Supper, it is not really the Lord’s Supper unless we are “discerning the Lord’s body” (1 Corinthians 11:29). It just becomes a common meal. It is not the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20). In parallel thinking, we ask these questions: In our mixed-up denominational world today, although immersion may be practiced by some, is baptism for the remission of sins really taking place? Is it taking place when “faith only” is being taught and preachers go out of their way to deny what the Bible says about baptism (that it is for the remission of sins), telling people that baptism has nothing to do with their salvation? Too much is at stake to not handle the Word of God aright. Let us take it for what it says.

YES, the New Testament teaches that baptism is for the remission of sins. But it is not an isolated act, and it is all in the context of the grace of God. Peter, who said that baptism was for the remission of sins in Acts 2:38, says in 1 Peter 3:21 that “baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Titus 3:5 states, “Not by works of right-

eousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost [Spirit].” Then Romans 6:3-5 reads, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.” Here we see that in baptism we are united spiritually with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (believing these great truths). Baptism is the acceptance of the grace of God. Being baptized into his death, it is for the “remission of sins.” The blood of Christ washes away our sins. We arise to walk in newness of life.—*J.E.G.* □



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Answers to:

BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Genesis 11:1-9; 2. Genesis 19:17-26; Luke 17:32; 3. Exodus 3:5; 4. Numbers 13:33; Deuteronomy 2:10, 11, 20, 21; 5. Joshua 19:1; 6. 1 Samuel 5; 7. 2 Kings 2:23-24; 8. 2 Kings 20:1-7; 9. Psalms 51; 10. Proverbs 16:18; 11. Amos 4:12; 12. Habakkuk 3:17-18; 13. John 3:1-13; 7:50-52; 19:39-42; 14. (1) Man with an unclean spirit (Mark 1:21-28); (2) Peter’s mother-in-law of a great fever; (3) Man lame 38 years at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-18); (4) Man with a withered hand (Matthew 12:9-14); (5) Blind man, using clay and spittle (John 9:1-41); (6) Woman bowed for 18 years; (7) Man with dropsy (Luke 14:1-6); 15. Mark 16:9; John 20:1-18; 16. Acts 17:28; 1 Corinthians 15:33; Titus 1:12; 17. One day (Acts 16:8-12); five days (Acts 20:6)—the winds were favorable for the first crossing, accounting for how fast they crossed; 18. Acts 22:20; Acts 26:10; 19. Galatians 5:16; 20. Ezekiel 3:1-3; Revelation 10:9-10. □

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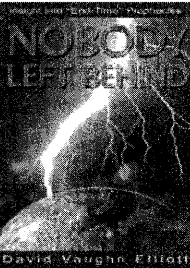
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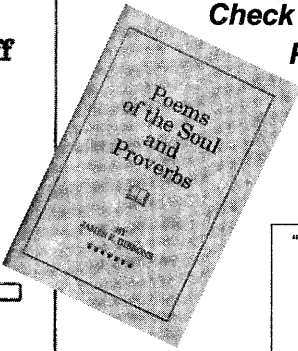
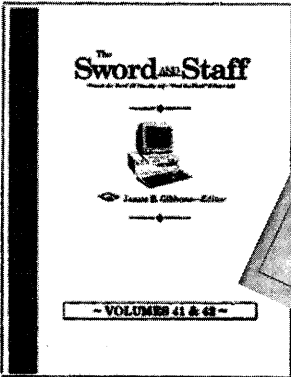
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