

# MAGAZINE

# TRUTH

## “A Tasty Little Snack”

Bobby Witherington

This article is being written high above the ground somewhere between Austin, Texas and Los Angeles, California. The friendly stewardess has just served myself and fellow travelers with Airline “Fast Food,” further described as “a tasty little snack served at jet speed.” The description was correct. It was served “at jet speed.” It was a “snack.” It was “tasty.” And it was “little.”

Yes, I received it “with thanksgiving” (1 Tim. 4:4). And, yes, I ate it “asking no questions for conscience sake” (1 Cor. 10:27). And, having previously thought that this was a “peanut flight,” I must admit that it was better than I expected.

But “what is the point?” you may be asking yourself. The “point” is this: What I have just put into the “earthly house of this tabernacle” (2 Cor. 5:1) is analogous to what many professed Christians want to receive into their “inward man” (2 Cor. 4:16). They seem to delight in “fast food,” and would prefer to hear sermons that are neatly packaged into “tasty little snacks” served “at jet speed!” And it suits their spiritual taste buds if the preacher is able to verbally soar high above the ground in flights of oratory and eloquence, even though the message may contain nothing of real

biblical substance.

I admit that not every sermon has to be a “full course meal” slowly cooked on an old fashion wood stove — though I must admit that if you have never eaten a full course meal “slowly cooked on an old fashion wood stove” you have missed out on one of the great culinary delights of what some people wistfully refer to as “the good old days.” Perhaps the “point” I am trying to make may be

further stated in these words: Physically speaking, to a great degree, you are what you eat. A regular diet of junk food, a regular diet of “tasty little snacks” (high in calories, but low in food value) will produce “junk” bodies which require many visits to medical repair shops. By way of contrast, a regular diet of wholesome food, coupled

with good attitudes, good health habits, and proper exercise, generally results in good health and a better quality of life. Hopefully, by now, the parallel should be evident. Spiritually speaking, to a great degree, you are what you eat. God wants his people to develop healthy appetites for the “milk” and “meat” of the word (2 Pet. 2:2; 3:18; Heb. 5:12-14). Preachers should focus on preaching “the word,” doing so both “in season”

see “Tasty Snack” on p. 568

*“And ye shall  
know the truth,  
and the truth  
shall make  
you free”  
(John 8:32).*

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## The Chronology of the Bible (1)

Mike Willis

In recent years, brethren have opened discussion about the creation account and this has subsequently triggered discussion about the age of the earth. Brother Shane Scott conducted a discussion in *Sentry* magazine (XXI:1) in which he argues that the days of creation cannot be six twenty-four hour days and accepts the timetable of the universe being 15 billion years old and the earth being 4+ billion years (“An Open Letter: The Creation Account and Florida College,” *Truth Magazine* [August 3, 2000], 19). Brother Hill Roberts also presents the old earth theory in CD-ROM articles entitled “A Harmonization of God’s Genesis Revelation With His Natural Revelation” and “Genesis and the Time Thing.” That a few brethren have accepted the big bang/old earth position is not nearly so alarming as is the number of brethren who have indicated that holding that position is inconsequential. To my understanding, the old earth position undermines the teaching of Scripture and ultimately denies the inspiration of Scripture.



Those who are denying a literal interpretation of Genesis 1-2 appear to be influenced by what they see as unanswerable scientific evidences of an old earth (4.5 billion years old). The approach to Bible interpretation which allows the pronouncements of science to determine Bible exegesis results in science having superior authority to the revealed word of God. What science says about the age of the earth is to be believed rather than what the Bible teaches about the same subject. If this approach is followed on the age of the earth, it must also be followed on the following:

- The pronouncements of science must be believed over what the Bible says about a universal flood.
- The pronouncements of science must be believed over what the Bible says about the virgin birth.
- The pronouncements of science must be believed over what the Bible says about Joshua’s long day.

Every miracle related in the Bible will eventually be suspect on the very same grounds that the literal interpretation of Genesis 1-2 is rejected.

see “Chronology” on p. 568

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## Two New Versions of the Bible

Marc W. Gibson



In the last century, a number of new English versions of the Bible have been produced, some excellent and others not so good. The 1901 American Standard Version was an excellent and accurate version, which was followed by the New American Standard Version (1971). The King James Version has always been a good and popular version of the Bible, along with the more recent New King James Version (1979). The New International Version (1978) caused some concern when it appeared because of some questionable translation, but it has still become a widely used version. Along

with these have come various popular paraphrase versions (Good News for Modern Man, Living Bible, etc.) that do little to nothing to help the serious Bible student gain an accurate knowledge of the verbally inspired word of God. Two new versions have appeared recently — *Today's New International Version* (TNIV) and the *English Standard Version* (ESV). One appears to be a good translation, while the other raises serious concerns.

### *Today's New International Version (TNIV)*

The advertising blurb for the TNIV should give certain danger signals:

The TNIV opens God's Word to a new day in Scripture evangelism and discipleship. It's a translation targeted for a generation that God wants to speak to through his unchanging Word in the contemporary English spoken today (International Bible Society, Church Resource Catalog 2002, 12).

When an English version of the Bible is produced so that it can "target" a certain generation with "contemporary" language, it is a prescription for trouble. Now please understand, all translating is an exercise of carrying written material from one language into another language. But there is a difference in translating into normal, accurate English, and jazzing a translation up to target a certain crowd with a certain contemporary use of the language. Understanding the difference in translation philosophies is critical:

Is a translation of a text supposed to provide what it says or what it means?  
Or what the translator thinks it means, or wants it to mean?

One translation approach — whether of the Bible or anything else — is the  
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“formal equivalent” method. This approach seeks words in the English language that replicate as closely as possible the words in the original language.

The other approach is the “dynamic equivalent” method. This approach seeks to replicate not words but meanings.

A good translation, of course, will do both, but “the dynamic equivalent” approach, favored by most contemporary Bible translators, carries with it a certain philosophy about the text that can easily be abused — as secular linguists with no theological ax to grind are pointing out.

... *Today's New International Version* (TNIV) take the approach to an extreme that reveals the limitations of the dynamic equivalent method.

... A dynamic equivalent translator must substitute what he thinks something means for the literal expression, instead of leaving the exegesis and interpretation for readers and pastors (“Does it mean what it says?” Gene Edward Veith, *World Magazine*, February 23, 2002, 24).

The major problem with the translation of the TNIV is a “gender neutral” philosophy that allows the making of gender changes. The Greek language is very precise about gender in its language, much more than we are used to in English. The male gender is often used when men and women are considered together (“I will make you fishers of *men*” [Mark 1:17]). Many today are *offended* when the male gender is properly used to refer to men *and* women. It is not a mistranslation for the TNIV to render Mark 1:17 as “catch people,” for the Greek word here is *anthropon*, a general term that can mean “person” (but is usually translated “man,” meaning mankind). But serious problems arise in passages such as James 1:12 where the singular “man” is changed to the plural “those.” This changes the specific Greek word for a singular male, *aner*, to a general plural pronoun. The context of Scripture would teach us that the principle of persevering under trial applies to both males and females, but it is wrong to change the precise translation of the words of this verse. The same objection would apply to the TNIV translation of Acts 17:22 as “people of Athens” (and Acts 20:30 “some will *arise*”). Concerns arise with the translation of Hebrews 12:7 from “son” disciplined by “his father” to “children” disciplined by “their parents.” Leave God’s word alone and translate the specific Greek words as they are; we can understand God’s will without man’s “politically correct” changes in translation.

Our society’s desire to pacify all sensibilities, no matter how senseless, is pressuring translation efforts to make these changes in the Bible. *Though some may think these to be small, insignificant modifications of the biblical text, it continues to open a door to tolerating and accepting more radical changes in future translations based solely on our modern human “sensibilities.”* Human wisdom is

allowed to change the text to fit our preconceived beliefs and opinions, rather than letting the simple words of God influence our thinking and actions. This is a prescription for apostasy. Such philosophies have arisen in previous translations, and it continues today. This Bible version is not for the serious Bible student who wants an accurate translation of the words of Scripture without the theological or philosophical tampering of man.

### *English Standard Version (ESV)*

Just last year, a new version was introduced that appears to be an excellent translation for the Bible student. The *English Standard Version* (ESV) continues the mainstream of English Bible translations that have included the King James Version of 1611, the English Revised Version of 1885, the American Standard Version of 1901, and the Revised Standard Version of 1952 and 1971. According to the translation oversight committee of the *English Standard Version*, this stream of translations were characterized by “faithfulness to the text and vigorous pursuit of accuracy . . . combined with simplicity, beauty, and dignity of expression. Our goal has been to carry forward this legacy for a new century” (Preface, *English Standard Version*, vii).

The following selection from the Preface of the *English Standard Version* clearly sets forth a translation philosophy that makes for an excellent translation of God’s word:

The ESV is an “essentially literal” translation that seeks as far as possible to capture the precise wording of the original text and the personal style of each Bible writer. As such, its emphasis is on “word-for-word” correspondence, at the same time taking into account differences of grammar, syntax, and idiom between current literary English and the original languages. Thus it seeks to be transparent to the original text, letting the reader see as directly as possible the structure and meaning of the original.

In contrast to the ESV, some Bible versions have followed a “thought-for-thought” rather than “word-for-word” translation philosophy, emphasizing “dynamic equivalence” rather than the “essentially literal” meaning of the original. A “thought-for-thought” translation is of necessity more inclined to reflect the interpretive opinions of the translator and the influences of contemporary culture.

Every translation is at many points a trade-off between literal precision and readability, between “formal equivalence” in expression and “functional equivalence” in communication, and the ESV is no exception. Within this framework we have sought to be “as literal as possible” while maintaining clarity of *expression and literary excellence* (vii-viii).

In contrast with TNIV’s gender-neutral translation, please note the ESV’s “gender” position:

The inclusive use of the generic “he” has also regularly

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# Drive Out, Destroy, Demolish

Steven F. Deaton

Now the Lord spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their engraved stones, destroy all their molded images, and demolish all their high places; you shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to possess’” (Num. 33:50-53).

Such were the instructions God gave to Moses and Israel concerning Canaan. If the nation of Israel was to be established on firm footing, then the pagans were to be wiped out. God said get rid of them and all that is connected with their sinfulness. He warned, that if this was not done, the inhabitants would be irritants, and Israel would experience the same fate God intended for the idolaters (Num. 33:55-56).

The New Testament does not authorize us to conquer land or to engage in carnal warfare for the advancement of the kingdom (cf. 2 Cor. 10:3-5). However, the church is the

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been retained, because this is consistent with similar usage in the original languages and because an essentially literal translation would be impossible without it. Similarly, where God and man are compared or contrasted in the original, the ESV retains the generic use of “man” as the clearest way to express the contrast within the framework of essentially literal translation (ix).

The ESV can be heartily recommended for serious use by the faithful Christian who wants an accurate and readable translation. With good translations like this one on the market, there is no reason one should be studying God’s precious word with versions that are not trustworthy translations, like the TNIV. God’s providence has preserved his word for us today in excellent English translations. Obtain one, study it, learn divine truth, and live it daily in the faith and hope of eternal life.

holy nation of God and its territory is to be defended with all diligence (1 Pet. 2:9). Our war is no less critical than Israel’s, in fact, ours has greater stakes: the souls of men and a home in heaven. Therefore, the Lord does teach us to fight with single-mindedness: destruction of the enemy and all the sinfulness connected to him.

Our chief enemy is the devil. He is described as our adversary who desires to devour our souls (1 Pet. 5:8). He does not rest in his diabolical designs, but is ever seeking to corrupt us, individually and collectively. Sadly, the devil is not alone in his evil pursuits.

Satan enjoys the help of those who willingly or unwittingly contribute to his cause. Usually, they are in disguise, appearing as ministers of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:13-15). They are detected by examining what they teach and practice in the light of God’s word (1 John 4:1-6).

The nation of God is to take new territory. The Lord commanded the gospel to be taught in all nations, baptizing men and teaching them to observe all things he commands (Matt. 28:19-20). Doing this is a constant battle with the devil and his legions. Therefore, Christians must put on the armor of God (Eph. 6:10-17). With this armor comes God’s help, so we should not be shy about attacking the citadels of error (cf. 2 Cor. 10:3-5).

Further, it is the duty of faithful Christians to keep the nation of God pure. When men begin to teach or practice error, it must be exposed and they must be rejected, if they will not repent (Eph. 5:11; Gal. 1:8-9; 2 John 9-11). Error on the plan of salvation, the church, Christ, hell, creation, fellowship, or divorce and remarriage cannot be tolerated. If error, or its promoters, are tolerated, they will become an irritant and spread (cf. 2 Tim. 2:16-18).

No doubt, the battle for Canaan was daunting and difficult. Still, God commanded Israel to go in and take it, ridding the land of unrighteousness. Our fight for the souls of men and purity of the church is, at times, overwhelming, but rewarding. Remember, it can be done with God’s help!



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# Winning Attitudes

Phillip A. Owens

Recently I came across the following statements and copied them. While intended primarily for sports teams, the “winning attitudes” have spiritual parallels. Below are the “winning attitudes” and what follows are spiritual applications. The author of the “winning attitudes” was unnamed.

- Winners become excited, confident, and enthusiastic about goals.
- Give yourself permission to be a winner.
- Winners have the ability to look inside themselves and find that special dream.
- The winner always has a goal.
- The winner stresses solutions, not problems.
- Winners have plans to reach their goals.
- Winners make total commitments to their goals.
- Winners have positive attitudes in all elements of their lives. The more you think about, talk about, and write about a thing happening, the greater the certainty of that thing happening.
- Winning is an inside job.
- Self-discipline is the winner’s creed.

— author unknown

 At this time of year, just before the football season begins, our favorite teams have the opportunity to go undefeated. They haven’t lost a game, yet! Most players are excited about their opportunities. Whether it is a state championship for Athens High, an SEC title, or national championship for Alabama, Auburn, Tennessee, etc., all have goals, and all are “excited, confident, and enthusiastic” about them because the possibility to attain those goals exists.

Likewise, Christians should have long and short-term goals. How much more “excited, confident, and enthusiastic” Christians should be whose long-term goal is heaven! It is absolutely attainable because God is on our side. He desires that we be saved (2 Pet. 3:9) and has done all that is necessary for that salvation (John 3:16; Heb. 7:25).

Just as athletes go through strenuous training and have short-term goals to attain the long-term ones, so should Christians. Daily Bible reading, memory work, prayer, faithful attendance at Bible classes and worship, helping those who are in need, and encouraging others to be faithful are all within everyone’s reach, and will help to attain our long-term goal of heaven! How great are these prospects! Further, the fact that we can take people with us should make us that much more enthusiastic.

Sadly some believe they have done too much evil, have lived hypocritical lives too long, and have been immoral to the point that God will not forgive them. How untrue! Each one of us is important enough for the Lord to have died on our behalf. Concerning weak brethren Paul said, “Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died” (Rom. 14:15). Christ died for each of us individually, his death is completely sufficient to remit every past sin (Heb. 7:25), and the gospel is powerful enough to change the life of anyone who believes it (Rom. 1:16). The devil would have us believe we can’t be saved, just as a losing attitude causes athletes to believe they can’t win! Such an attitude causes one to give up rather than develop his potential to the fullest!

Christians should also look introspectively. “Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith” (2 Cor. 13:5). What special service can we render? What special place can we hold to help the cause of Christ? Never say, “I can’t do anything.” Each one has his own particular sphere of influence. Each has his own particular group of people which knows him well and which he knows well. We all have the ability to do something well! Let each of us use his abilities and allow them to be “knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working of each several part,” which will make the “increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love” (Eph. 4:16).



For an athlete, a short-term goal might be to increase his ability to lift twenty pounds on a particular lift over a summer.

Christians should never stagnate, but be constantly growing spiritually, moving nearer to God, and have more understanding of God's will (1 Pet. 2:1-2; 2 Pet. 3:18). Paul said, "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus . . . forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before me, *I press on toward the goal* unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12-14). Obviously, the long-term goal is heaven. But what are your short-term goals? What about a determination to teach one person per month whom you know about the gospel? What about memorizing one verse from each of the psalms we are reading through publicly? What about opening your home, extending hospitality to different people once a month? These are not unattainable goals; in fact they may be too easily attainable. However, if no goals are set, you know what often happens along these lines? That's right — nothing! It has been said that management must plan a work and then work the plan. We all need a "plan," a goal spiritually, or else we will stagnate.



The word "gospel" means "good news." But it is good news only when we understand and believe how bad the bad news is — sin! The

gospel is the solution to the problem of sin! While everyone has problems, dwelling on them can cause us to become morose, disheartened, and discouraged. Regardless of the circumstance, whether it be problems in relations between husbands and wives, parents and children, employees and employers, or even the church, the New Testament provides us with instructions as to how to conduct ourselves righteously in every relationship! (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The instructions provide the *solutions* to the problems. Hence, emphasis should be on doing what is right in every circumstance. A constant complainer, whiner, and one who discourages a good work in a congregation will never convert anyone to the truth — he stresses problems, not solutions.



most athletes. They cover everything from a proper diet to how many repetitions of a particular exercise should be done on a particular day. Their lives are often

"planned" for them. This is covered in part in a previous point. One may talk about what "needs to be done around here." We do that in families concerning home life. But

to see a job finished definite plans need to be made, especially for those with busy schedules. And those plans need to be followed in order for goals to be met. Do you have a particular time of day scheduled to read the Scripture, pray, call or write others? Do you have a particular person in mind you want to teach the truth? What about making specific times to talk with him for that purpose? While everyone's schedule is different, you can see the wisdom in having a plan.

Athletes train in good weather and bad, when they feel like it and when they don't. They don't allow people or things to interfere with their plans to reach their goals.



Similarly, Christians are to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, and mind (Matt. 22:37). Jesus said we are to seek his kingdom and righteousness first! (Matt. 6:33). While these passages do not mention the phrase "total commitment," that is exactly what they mean. Nothing should come between a Christian and faithful service to God. What if close family comes to visit and they are not Christians? What if a superior requests that you lie. Our commitment should be to the Lord — he is first and we are to follow his law.



Christianity concerns the training or cultivating of the mind to think in a particular way and on particular things. Our speech betrays us. "But the things

which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart" (Matt. 15:18). We talk and write about a thing about those things that are on our minds. We are to "seek the happening, the greater the things that are above," and "Set your mind on the things that are above" (Col. 3:1, 2). The more we "think about, talk about, and write about" spiritual matters, converting the lost, and how the gospel can overcome the power of sin, "the greater the certainty of that thing happening" becomes.

True great athletes who are "winners" are "self-starters." They don't have to be "made" to do every-



thing. In other words, they have made up their minds that they are going to excel, do the very best they can, and they plan their work and work their plan. Similarly, if a person becomes a Christian for any reason other than love for the Lord and a desire to please him and dwell with him eternally, his motive is wrong, and when difficulties arise

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# “Suggestions For Personal Evangelism”

Jarrood Jacobs



In considering a Christian’s duties before God, we understand that part of our duty is to spread the gospel to other people. Christ told his apostles: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Paul wrote to Timothy, instructing him to teach others. He said, “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many

witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2).

We know these passages well. Perhaps we have quoted and thought of them often. Yet, there is still some reluctance on the part of many to tell others about Christ. What keeps us from doing what we ought to do and teaching others?

**Is fear keeping us from obeying the Lord’s command?** Some fear rejection by others. Some have the fear of saying the wrong thing. Related to this is the fear of being asked a question to which you have no answer. While these are legitimate concerns, we must not allow such worries to paralyze our efforts to talk with others. We must not allow fear to control us. This is a tactic of Satan.

**Is ignorance keeping us from speaking to others about their salvation?** Perhaps, instead of fearing we might not know the answer, we are *sure* we do not know the answer! In such a case, let us understand that overcoming ignorance with knowledge and wisdom is a command of God. Paul told the Ephesians, “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17). How does this wisdom come? It is through reading God’s will that we can be wise (Eph. 3:4). It is the Scriptures which make a man “wise unto salvation” (2 Tim. 3:15; Ps. 119:98-100). Ignorance of the Bible (or anything else) can

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the likelihood is that he will fall away. No one can make up your mind for you. While others may encourage you, the motivation to be faithful to the Lord must come from within.



Denying oneself rest when he is tired, tasty but unhealthy foods when he is hungry, a few days off when training demands a rigorous schedule,

all take self-discipline for a winning athlete. Winning in athletics demands it. Jesus said, “If any man would come after me, let him *deny himself*, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mark 8:34). *Denying self is self-discipline.* Through elementary and high school parents may awaken children, ready them for school, check on their homework, etc. Regardless of courses taken, attending college away from home for young people necessitates a degree of self-discipline. They must learn to do for “self” what parents earlier did. Discipline involves learning and training in what is right, and punishment in what is wrong. We become self-disciplined when we learn to teach ourselves, make ourselves do right, and keep ourselves from doing wrong without someone over our shoulder demanding this

of us. It could truthfully be said that self-discipline is the Christian’s creed.

In athletics where there is a winner there must be a loser. Thanks be to God that doesn’t have to be the case in our relation with him. Paul said, “There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8). Everyone on earth has the opportunity to be an eternal “winner” with God.

A key verse to the book of Revelation is chapter 17:14: “These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they also shall overcome that are with him, called and chosen and faithful.” Webster defines a winner as one who is “victorious, succeeds, and triumphs.” In the ultimate sense of the word, a Christian who is faithful not only has “winning attitudes,” but is an eternal “winner.” Are you a **winner in the sight of God?**

*From Admonisher, Athens, Alabama*

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be overcome if we're willing to work at it!

Perhaps some are not willing to tell others about the gospel because they say they cannot speak in public situations. While it is true that not all people are cut out for "public" speaking, can we not speak to someone one-on-one? This is what Andrew did (John 1:40-42). Philip did this as well (John 1:45). Much of our Lord's teaching was done in "private" settings, wherein there were one or two, or a few people present to hear him speak. Can we not speak to a family member, or co-worker about the Lord, or will we allow fear to stop us? Perhaps all we do is get the sinner in contact with someone able to teach him. Yet, this work will not go unnoticed by God! To be interested in a sinner and be responsible for that person hearing the truth is something that must not be taken lightly.

Having said these things and dealt with some common problems in teaching others, let us consider some suggestions to help us in our personal evangelism.

### **Remember To Whom You Belong**

Forgetting whom you serve is a major contributor to fear. Remember, we "serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:24). We are citizens in his kingdom (Col. 1:13), and joint-heirs with him (Rom. 8:17). We are serving the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (1 Tim. 6:15). How can someone *not* get excited about that? How can one keep such wonderful news from others? We're not trying to sell someone a car, or trying to get him to commit to some get-rich-quick scheme! Our purpose is to tell him about Christ and his need for becoming his child while there is still time and opportunity (2 Cor. 6:2). Therefore, let us remember to whom we belong, and tell others how they can belong to him, too (Mark 16:16).

### **You Must Have Faith In God's Word**

There is no question that we must have faith in Christ (John 8:24; Heb. 11:6), but we must also have faith in the gospel to save (Rom. 1:16). Do we really believe the words of Paul that the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation"? If we do, then we understand that there is nothing else that will save men. With this knowledge, then let us tell others about the only thing that will lead them to Christ and salvation — the gospel!

Many do not have faith in the gospel. How do I know this? It is apparent when we find people using gimmicks, games, food, ball teams, skits, dramas, and other carnal appeals in order to "bring in" people. While such things

might attract the masses, it will never convert them to the truth. The only thing that will convert and save people from their sins is the gospel of Christ — the word of God that is revealed on the pages of inspiration (Rom. 1:16)! Anything else is vain!

The word "gospel" means "good news," and can we think of any better news than the news which tells dying sinners what to do to be saved and have eternal life? You and I were once in that situation ourselves until someone taught us the truth. Why not return the courtesy, and tell someone the truth today? Tell them that the gospel is God's power to save, and by obedience to his word, one can have the forgiveness of sins (Heb. 5:8-9)!

### **Live As A Christian**

We will never get started if people we know and love do not see us living what we say we believe! In both Old and New Testaments, we find examples of those who first obeyed, and then taught others to do the same. One example is Ezra (Ezra 7:10), and another is Christ (Acts 1:1). Both are examples of people who first did (obeyed), and then taught! This is what the world needs to see in us!

Jesus made clear that our example and influence have a profound impact on people. Christ said, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:13-16). Please, note that we're not talking about people who merely wish to "be seen" by others, and have people talk about how "pious" they are. When we sincerely allow our light to shine before men, the world will know that we truly believe what we are teaching, and they will be more inclined to listen. One who is hypocritical will not be respected by others! If we wish to have success at personal evangelism and leading souls to Christ, then *don't* be a hypocrite!!

### **Persevere!**

Don't be fooled into thinking that each and every person you talk to will automatically listen to and obey the gospel. How I wish that this were so, but it is not like this. In the parable of the sower, Christ spoke of only one of four "grounds" that brought forth fruit (Matt. 13). Our Lord did

not have 100% success at teaching others, so let us not give up when people will not listen right away! People make their own choices, and they will be judged accordingly (2 Cor. 5:10). Yet, let us not give up before we start, thinking that “\_\_\_\_\_ will never listen.” This is the wrong attitude to have! Let us persevere, and if the first one does not listen, then go to the next, and then the next, and the next until someone will listen. This is what Christ told his disciples (Matt. 10:13-14), and he also promised that the honest soul is out there and wanting to know the truth if we will just take the gospel to him (John 4:35-36)! If this were not true, he would have never told his apostles to go and preach to “all nations” and “every creature” (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15)! Therefore, let us be strong, dedicated to the Lord’s work, and not lose heart (Gal. 6:9)!

### Pray!

We’ll never get anywhere without communication with our Father (1 Thess. 5:17). Therefore, let us pray for opportunities to teach (as Paul did, Col. 4:3; 2 Thess. 3:1) as well as pray that we might say the right thing and lead a lost soul to Christ. Prayer is absolutely necessary to successful personal work! With this in mind, let us do as Christ said. Let us pray for others, and for opportunities to teach “and not lose heart” (Luke 18:1)!

### Give God All The Glory

Let us remember that, without God, we are nothing. Therefore, whatever success we might have in personal evangelism, let us remember that God deserves the credit, and not us! God placed us here (Gen. 1-2), and it is God’s plan we are teaching (Rom. 1:1, 16). Therefore, let us not be “puffed up” and proud concerning our efforts to teach,

but be humble, realizing that we are simply doing what God expects us to do (Luke 17:10; 1 Pet. 5:5).

### Conclusion

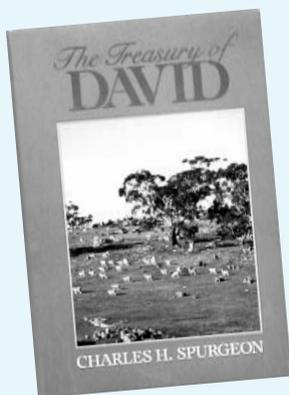
Perhaps these suggestions will stir us up to do the work of the Lord. Let us resolve that we will not allow another week to pass without talking to friends, co-workers, or neighbors about the gospel. Some may not listen, but some might! Some might turn you away, but then again, some might say, “I’ve been thinking about the Bible and my soul lately. Let’s talk.” You’ll never know until you try.

The disciples’ personal evangelism and their taking an interest in the souls of others is what caused the Lord to add to the church daily in the first century (Acts 2:47), and it is what causes growth in the Lord’s body today! That fact has never changed. We all have responsibilities along this line, and all have work to do. Therefore, let us be about doing it! We can work alone, or perhaps someone is needing a little “spark,” and you’re just the one to help! Perhaps you could get a Bible study started with a friend, and invite someone from the local congregation to help you. Now, two are involved, and perhaps the one you invited to help will begin to think of others who need to learn the gospel as well. All this does is cause the Lord’s people to grow (spiritually and numerically). Let’s all be involved in the work of leading lost souls to Christ, be fervent in prayer concerning this effort, and may God receive all the glory.

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# Two Resurrections?

H. Osby Weaver

It seems to me that a great many people fail to come to a knowledge of the truth because they approach the word of God with preconceived ideas. Then it follows that, instead of seeing what God actually says, everything they see looks exactly like what they already believed about it, at least to them.

A good example of this is found in a so called explanation of 1 Thessalonians 4:16. You see the explainer of the theory that before the end of time, Christ will return to the earth, set up a kingdom, and reign for a thousand years. At the beginning of his return, the righteous will be raised from the dead and at the end of his 1,000 year reign, the wicked will be raised, hence two resurrections. Now with this conception, it was incumbent upon the advocate of this theory to find two resurrections taught in the Scriptures. So without looking at the context, when he came to 1 Thessalonians 4:16 where it is said that the righteous dead shall be raised first, he jumps to a conclusion that if there is a first resurrection then there must be a second. "Ole, I found it!" He reached this determination, not on the basis of what the passage says, but on the grounds of what he already believed and resolved to establish.

When he came to the expression, "The dead in Christ shall rise first," instead of stopping to see what the second was, he supposed that he had found two resurrections which his theory called for.

Let it be noted that two resurrections are not even under consideration in this passage. In fact, the wicked are not even being discussed in any degree. The Thessalonian Christians were concerned about their dead — those who had fallen asleep in Jesus. They wanted to know if those

alive at the second coming of Christ would precede those who had died in Christ. Paul answered by saying, "Those that are alive unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise precede (prevent, KJV) them that are fallen asleep." The reason is that the dead in Christ shall rise first, before the living are caught up, then together they shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall they ever be with the Lord."

The contrast is not between two resurrections, but whether there is any time between the time that the living saved are caught up and the dead saved are raised. Paul told them that the living would not be caught up first, but the dead would be raised *first*. The dead would not be put at a disadvantage at the second coming of Christ. The living saints would not have a running start to meet Christ over those who had died in Christ. There are no two resurrections in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, or any other place in the Scriptures.

A judicious reading of John 5:28, 29, would keep one from placing the wrong conception on 1 Thessalonians 4:16. "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." There are only two classes in the tomb — the good and the evil. And they both will be raised at the same hour! This hardly leaves room for 1,000 years in between them.

In discussing the resurrection of the saints, 1 Corinthians 15:52 says that they will be raised at the last trump. If the righteous are raised at the last trump, what will wake up the wicked dead, unless they are raised at the same time? If they are not to be raised until 1,000 years later, will they wake up accidentally? Seeing that the righteous dead are raised at the last trump, if the wicked dead are not raised for another 1,000 years, will they wake up without an alarm clock?

Always stand for the right;  
then you will win if you

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*From The Informant, South Houston Church of Christ*



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# Finding a Wife

Bobby L. Graham

**I**n Genesis 24 the Lord has provided a manual on how to find the right kind of wife.

- Wisely
- Seriously
- With God in first place

“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord” (Prov 18:22). It is the wish of many young men to find a wife. Among Christians also this desire expresses itself, for they are God’s creatures, constituted with the same basic characteristics and desires of others. The finding of a wife is not merely the acting out of some biological urge that inexplicably became a part of the human race at some indeterminable time in the distant past, nor is it the most recent phase of social adaptation in the evolutionary development of the species.

## The Need for a Wife

Finding a wife has ever been the need of men from the time of divine creation; it became the impetus for the creation of woman, a helper suitable for man (Gen. 2:18). The Bible assures us that man and woman were made for each other, not for another of the same sex. From the time of Adam and Eve God has willed the marriage of man and woman in a lifelong relationship called marriage. To this end God decreed that the young man should leave parents, cleave to his wife, and become one with her (Gen. 2:24). From that time to this, men have found wives, though some have not succeeded in their search.

## Need the Right Kind

Just as the Bible shows in the first book of Genesis, it is the right kind of wife that parents desire for their sons and that sons need. It is no coincident or accident that men like Abraham and

Isaac arranged for their sons to marry wives whom they judged to be best for them (Gen. 24:1ff; 28:1ff). Though young men do not always understand such a need as they later will, they need to have good wives, wives who will benefit them in all good ways.

“A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones” (Prov 12:4). Wives can be the virtuous kind, who contribute good to their husbands as did the wife in Proverbs 31, or they can be the kind that later makes him ashamed, as did the untrustworthy wife in Proverbs 7. They do not upon marriage suddenly acquire the character, disposition, or potential that destines them to such an end; but they manifest such tendencies even in their single years. It is foolish for young men to think that they can magically and quickly transform a character that has been molded for years. They must understand that they need the right kind of wife and look for her, not for the wrong kind.

## Where to Find One

Where would you think you could find a wife? Would you look for her at the dance, the night club, or the swimming pool? If so, you probably would get one who would later share herself and display herself in the wrong way. Would you seek her in the work place? If so, you might get one who places her career ahead of husband, home, and family (I am not discounting the need for unmarried women to work). Why not ask counsel from the Lord

about this important quest? What does he say about the matter?

“House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the Lord” (Prov 19:14). Young men, you can acquire material things from those who have them and can bequeath them to you upon their death. You can also get a wife from a number of sources, if you are not really concerned about the spiritual verities that relate to your life, your wife, your relationship with each other, and the family that you will rear. On the other hand, if you desire a prudent wife, one who wisely trusts the Lord and in whom you can safely trust, then you need to seek her from the Lord. In his providence he will provide her for you.

#### How to Find Her

If we can say something definite about the way to find such a wife, then perhaps we will have helped many young men. Here again, the Lord supplies the answer to our question. It is evident that he knows more about this matter than we do. After all, has he not been dealing with such matters much longer than any of us has even lived in this world? Did he not institute the marital relationship and wisely seek to govern it with his will?

In Genesis 24 the Lord has provided a manual on how to find the right kind of wife.

**Wisely:** When Abraham sent his oldest servant on the trip to find Isaac a wife, he was enlisting wisdom for the search (24:1). This was a mission that he did not leave to the younger ones, for their judgment perhaps was yet immature and their ideals still unfixed. Young men, talk to someone older, wiser, and more knowledge-

able concerning the kind of wife you need. Best of all, ask the Lord and let him speak to you through his Word. He knows!

**Seriously:** The search for the right kind of wife is the second most serious undertaking of your life, coming after the decision to serve God as a disciple of Jesus Christ. It was so important to Abraham that he had his servant swear by the Lord that he would not find Isaac’s wife among the Canaanite women (24:3). This father knew that the right kind of wife for one who would serve Jehovah would not likely come from among the wicked pagans of the surrounding country. You need to be serious about seeking your wife. It is more important than trading cars, getting an education, planning a career, or even planning your funeral. In fact, it is more important that all of these tasks combined.

**With God in first place:** The Lord knew that with a woman of Canaan having a significant place in Isaac’s life, he would likely be out of the picture (24:3, 8). They were known for their licentious rituals and their lewd ways, often performed in homage to their pagan gods. He also made it clear that even the woman found in Mesopotamia, Abraham’s homeland, must be willing to come with the servant back to live in the land with Isaac.

Such willingness would indicate her amenability to Jehovah rather than the gods of her own land, even as Ruth would later acknowledge her faith in Jehovah rather than the gods of Moab. You will never go anywhere you need to go, young men, unless you put God in the place that he deserves in your life. A marriage formed around your own selfish whims and based upon your own human ideals will not be the kind of marriage that pleases and honors God. It probably will not even last.

**With proper focus:** The focus of the servant as he approached the moment of decision was on the right thing. He arranged it with the Lord in prayer for him to make it known which one should be Isaac’s wife (24:13-14). She would be a willing, submissive, generous, considerate and helpful woman, as demonstrated by her offer to give the servant water and then to draw more for his camels. The servant was not looking for the village beauty, the town whiz kid, or the community rich girl, but for one with solid character. He considered this matter to be so important that he prayed to God for his help in finding her.

This is the divine guide in how to find a wife. You can never do any better than the Lord did in this instance, nor will you ever improve on any of his ways. You can learn much from a study of his Word about such matters, even more than this short article points out.

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# Where We Have Been — Where Are We Now — Where Are We Going (12)

Bill Cavender

I have been so fortunate all of my life, blessed exceedingly abundantly by our God and Father in heaven, above all I could ever ask or imagine. He allowed me to be born and to live my life in the United States of America, still, by far, the most exceptional country in the history of the world; to be born in a small community among farming and cotton-mill (Bemis Brothers Bag Company) working people, who had little of this world's goods but who were rich in morals, honesty, truthfulness, hospitality; and good works; to be born to the type and kind of parents I had, who were poor people materially but rich in kindness, stability, generosity, discipline, hard work, humility, and tremendous love between my father and mother, and parents and the children; in a family where there was never any verbal nor physical abuse, never any cursing nor ugliness in words or deeds; to "grow up" in the times of "the great depression" and under the circumstances of responsibilities and cooperation among the family members, each member doing his chores and helping in the economic survival of the family; of feeding the livestock, milking the cows, for many years selling milk and butter, drawing the water from the well, cleaning out the stables, slopping the hogs, cleaning out the chicken houses, splitting the firewood, killing the hogs, curing the meat, rendering the lard, making the lye soap, hoeing the garden, peddling and selling vegetables from the garden and fruit from the orchard; mowing the big yard with a reel-type push mower (no gasoline mowers in those days), and all the numerous other chores necessary in a large, country family; of no electricity, no television, no automobile, no "indoor plumbing," a "crank-type, party-line" telephone and a "crystal-set" battery radio; of going to school to learn, to be taught by God-fearing, patriotic teachers; having a mother who loved her husband and her children, who loved to read and play the piano, and who taught the six living children in the family (four children, all girls, died early in their lives) to read, to study, and to appreciate music; having a father who was firm, quiet, hard-working, patient, a strict disciplinarian, and truly the head of his family; and to preach the gospel of Christ in the years that he has given me thus far. I thank God each day

for his mercies and his blessings all through these many short years, and for all those blessings which are far too numerous to mention or to refer to in this essay.

I thank my God and Father in heaven each day, through our Lord Jesus Christ, for my faithful and beautiful wife of fifty-four years, for our four sons, for our godly daughters-in-law, for our seven grandchildren, and for a grandson-in-law and a granddaughter-in-law, both of whom are Christians. I thank God for the good physical health that all of us have had through all these years, with a minimum of medical problems and expenses. I thank God that there has been no loss of life of our children and grandchildren. I thank God for the faith and obedience that prevails in the family, with only one young grandchild not having yet obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our great sadness in our family is the loss of our youngest son to sin and Satan, having become unfaithful to the Lord, to the church, and to the family some years ago. Our daily prayers to our Father in heaven include petitions for him, and for his repentance and restoration.

As a young preacher (I was age 20 when I first began "to make talks" in the winter of 1946-47 at Bemis, Tennessee), I was truly fortunate in the abundance of preaching opportunities which were "early-on" offered to me. Godly, older brethren, such as W.A. Hardy, Mike and Gretchen French, Harold V. Trimble, the elders of the Bemis church, and so many others, encouraged and helped me, giving me books, opportunities to speak, and driving me (Mike and Gretchen) to preaching appointments in Carroll County, Tennessee, since I had no automobile. My parents never owned an automobile in all my "growing up" years.

My first opportunity to speak "in a gospel meeting" came August 15-29, 1948. I had completed one year at Lipscomb College in Nashville, Marinel and I had married in June, "summer school" was over, and the small Millersburg church, in Rutherford County, Tennessee, about three miles southeast of Christiana, Tennessee, invited me for a meeting

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— three Sundays, fifteen days, services every night and Sunday morning(s) services, a Bible class and worship. So there were eighteen sermons to preach in the meeting, plus three lessons for the three Sunday(s) morning Bible classes. Brother Windell Wiser, a young preacher, schoolmate at Lipscomb, and friend, arranged this meeting for me. The Millersburg church had quit meeting. They were a group of about twenty older brethren, living in a rural area, scattered to their homes and farms, worshipping with various nearby churches, or not at all. Windell “rounded them up,” got them meeting again in their abandoned small wooden building with “slat pews” (a building which still had four beautiful old, antique Aladdin lamps sitting on small shelves on the two side walls of the building; nowadays thieves would very soon have broken into the building, taken the lamps, and burned the building). The brethren cut and clipped the bushes, briars, brambles, weeds, thistles, and sumacs (“sumachs”) on the outside; and on the inside knocked down the “dirt-daubers’ homes, killed the wasps and yellow-jackets, brushed down the spiders and their webs, and swept the building clean. They opened the windows every service, had “funeral home” fans, and we had a great meeting. The house was full of folks every night. People came from all around: Christiana, Fosterville, Bell Buckle, Hoover’s Gap, Fairfield, Crescent, New Zion, Deason, Rockvale, Murfreesboro, Shelbyville, etc. We baptized the two children of sister Ida Earp, a widow in the church. Her son is still living, as far as I know, and after some years became an elder of a church. I do not know whatever happened to sister Earp’s beautiful daughter, who looked like “Daisy Mae” in Al Capp’s famous cartoon strip, “Lil Abner,” though she dressed more modestly than “Daisy Mae” in the comic strip!

At that time I was preaching nearby at Deason on the second and forth Sundays; at Fosterville on the third Sunday; at Philadelphia in Maury County on the first Sunday; and Fairfield on the fifth Sundays. We had purchased an automobile, a beautiful blue 1946 model Plymouth, mint-condition, 4-doors, 26,000 miles, from a business man in Nashville, for \$1,700, which my parents had loaned me. Now we could drive to preaching appointments instead of riding Trailways buses. We arrived at Millersburg on Lord’s Day morning, August 15, for the services, having spent the previous night with brethren at Deason. About

twenty “home folks” were there. We worshiped, I taught the class and preached, and we went home for Sunday dinner with a widow lady and her family. There were no screens on the windows, dinner (fried chicken, black-eyed peas, tomatoes, creamed potatoes, cornbread, onions and pickles, with cake and mashed strawberries for dessert) had been cooked and/or prepared, and left on the table while we were at worship. The flies and gnats covered the food. Having no screen door for the kitchen, a few chickens hopped up into the kitchen while we ate and had to be “shooed” back out. The hound dog came in and snoozed on the kitchen floor, drowsy, I suppose, by our chatter at the table, as we waved the flies away and tried to get to the bottom of the dishes of food where it would be relatively “fly free.” Before eating we offered thanks for the food and for the many blessings that God gave us on that Lord’s Day.

That afternoon we drove the mile or so over the gravel, dusty road to the house of brother and sister \_\_\_\_\_ whom we had met that morning at worship and who had volunteered to “keep the preacher and his wife for the meeting.” His name was Oscar; her name was Pinkie. He was in his sixties; she in her late fifties. They had a small farm, milked a few cows, sold “grade B” milk to the cheese plant in Murfreesboro, had two hogs and mules, a dog in the yard, and a four room(s) frame house (two bedrooms, a kitchen, “sitting” room), with a water well in the back yard, and an outdoor toilet further out from the house in another direction from the well. Their house was about sixty yards south of the barn. We drove through two gates to get to the house from the gravel road, unloaded our garments and items for a fifteen day visit with Oscar and Pinkie, and began to “settle in.” They became our friends from that day forward.

The evening service was at 7:30. Supper time was about 5:30 P.M. Oscar and Pinkie came back from milking, set food on the table, and asked us what we would drink with the meal, I took milk and Marinel took water, we sat down to eat and offered thanks. I loved milk, having been raised with parents who milked Jersey cows for years and sold milk and butter. I began to drink my glass of milk, it was warm, straight from the cow, not refrigerated, unstrained, with trash and specks of cow manure in the bottom of the glass. It was right then we discovered that Pinkie could hardly see. She had pie (“chess” or “buttermilk pie”) for dessert, the pies had been in the “pie safe” for a day or

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two, and little “sweet” ants were all over the pies and Pinkie could not see them. We brushed them aside and ate the “ant” pies as best we could. Pinkie knocked the scraps out of the soiled plates after we ate, put the dirty dishes in a dishpan with water about 4-5 inches deep, washed the dishes, squeezed the dishrag, wiped the plates with the dishrag (no rinse water nor drying cloth), and put them on the shelf for use the next morning. Marinel offered to help with the cooking and dishwashing after that, and did so the remainder of the time she was there. I took her to the bus in Murfreesboro on Friday. She left and went back home to her parents. This was our first separation after our marriage on June 17. I made the last nine days of the meeting by myself, with Oscar and Pinkie.

We discovered on Monday morning that both Oscar and Pinkie had “consumption” (“T.B.” — tuberculosis). Her aged parents lived in a small house on one corner of the farm, they were ill, and I learned, when I visited them, that they also had “consumption.” On the second or third night of that first week, a polecat (“skunk”) got under the little house, under our bedroom, and expelled his terrific odor. It drifted up through the loose flooring (one layer flooring; no sub-floor), and permeated our clothes, the bed sheets, and almost stifled us. That skunk smell stayed with us for several days. We took a “sponge” bath each day in the kitchen, with a wash pan of water, soap, and washcloth, as there was no water or bathroom facilities in the house. One night, in the wee hours, the little house began to shake, as if there was an earthquake. We awoke, laid there, expecting the roof to fall in upon us. The next morning we concluded that one of the mules had been rubbing himself on the “guide wire” of the electric light pole near the house and the pulling of the electrical lines to the house from the pole shook the fragile house. If that was not the explanation, then there must have been an earthquake!

Each morning Pinkie would prepare a breakfast of biscuits, eggs, salty cured hog meat, gravy, jelly or jam, and Oscar would eat a hearty breakfast. About an hour later, his stomach would begin to swell and become bloated, as if he were “great with child.” He would go out in the yard and vomit. This was his daily routine. I had never seen any thing like this. There was a big pear tree on their farm. As good fortune would have it, it was full of pears. Each afternoon I would sit under the pear tree with my Bible and a volume of *Hardeman’s Tabernacle Sermons*, filling my stomach with pears and my mind with Scripture and with *Hardeman’s Sermons*, and then I would preach that night! Several days there was a noon meal appointment with different brethren.

On the first Saturday of the meeting, Marinel was gone, and I was hungry. It was difficult for me to eat Pinkie’s cooking, as she was not that clean in the kitchen. I told brother Oscar and sister Pinkie that I needed to go to

Murfreesboro to take a suit to the cleaners to be pressed. I did need to do that, but I also intended to buy myself a big mid-morning chocolate milk shake. To my surprise, Oscar said he needed to go to town, so off we went. While I was in the cleaners, he bought two pints of ice cream at a drug store. We sat in the car, ate the ice cream, I got my pressed suit, he stopped by a store, and we drove toward Millersburg. At the south city limits of Murfreesboro, he began to have his morning vomit. He vomited all over my pretty car — over the dashboard and down the air vents, the seats and cushions, on the windshield and window glass and down into the window-well of the door as he rolled the glass down, all over the outside of the car on the passenger side, on the floorboard, etc. He got over that spell, we drove on a bit, and he began vomiting again. It was a hot August day. By the time we drove the ten miles to his house, the car was stinking. Poor man! He was so sorry and I felt for him and for my car. He got a pan of water and began to try to clean the car but he could not. He only “smeared” it and made it worse. I had a dinner (“lunch” to city folks; I was raised on breakfast, dinner and supper) appointment that day with brother and sister Rolle Pruitt on their farm. They had barbecued goat for dinner. I parked the car in front of their barn, walked up the hill to their house, ate the meal, and came back to the parked car. It was a black car with flies on the entire passenger side, a solid sheet of swarming flies! I drove on over to Deason, to the home of Caleb and Euda Smith, where there was “running water,” a hose, cleaning materials, etc. Sister Smith and I spent several hours washing, cleaning, scrubbing, deodorizing, and sanitizing that car. The foul odor never did entirely leave the car. In 1951, when I traded it in on another car, it brought \$500.00.

I held another meeting at Millersburg the next year, in August 1949, this time for eleven days, including two Sundays. One was restored in the second meeting. We stayed with brethren in the Deason church during that meeting. The little Millersburg church disbanded again, with finality, about a year afterwards. These meetings were so helpful to me and were wonderful experiences. I met many, many brethren and made many friends. Abundant opportunities to preach other meetings came as a result of these two meetings. At the end of the first meeting brother Oscar gave me a brown paper sack with \$87.00 in change and mostly one dollar bills, as compensation for the meeting of fifteen days. I would have been paid \$75.00 for the three Sundays had I kept my regular appointments and not held the meeting. And I would not have suffered the great devaluation of our car. At the end of the second meeting, he paid me \$100.00. Oscar and Pinkie both died within three years of these meetings. Her parents died shortly after the first meeting. (I have related this beginning of my “meeting” history, hopeful that our readers will find an item of interest, but mainly as an introduction to other interesting

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# Faith and the Gospel (2)

## How Far Does The Gospel Reach in Doctrine?

Frank L. Smith

The term “the faith” is often in the New Testament used to mean the same thing as the “gospel” or to speak of the whole of Christ’s will making known to us the good news of salvation by his righteousness. In Romans 1:16-17 Paul says the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, for in it is revealed this righteousness of God that we must live by to be justified by faith. Before “faith” came we were under the law (Gal. 3:3). But when Jesus revealed the gospel, or faith, we since are no longer under the law. In the contrast between the law and the faith, Paul is showing that we are not under the Old Covenant (Gal. 4:24-5:1) but under the New Testament of Christ, which he and other writers refer to as “the faith” (Jude 3:20; Col. 1:23; Acts 6:7; Gal. 1:23).

Those today who seek to separate between “the gospel” (as the good news about the deity of Jesus and the commands of faith, repentance, and baptism that put one in Christ) and the doctrinal matters of the church and the Christian’s worship and service find no foundation for such claims when they “contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3).

In giving qualifications for the elders to Titus, Paul commanded they must “hold fast the faithful word” (1:9) to be

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meetings in my early years of preaching, and then to the cancellations of meetings in the late fifties by the very brethren who had so greatly encouraged and helped me in those earliest gospel efforts.) (To be continued)

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able to exhort in sound doctrine and convict the gainsayer. These gainsayers must be stopped and rebuked that they “may be sound in the faith” (v. 13). The “sound doctrine” of verse 9 we believe is the same as “sound in the faith” of verse 13, and this “faith” is the same as the gospel about Jesus and his authority as Lord of our lives. Paul commanded Titus to “speak thou the things that befit sound doctrine” (2:1). While in 1 Timothy 6:3 in condemning the false teachers, he equates “the words of Jesus’ doctrine” and “sound words.” So *the faith* includes sound doctrine, the words of Jesus as well as the facts about his divinity and the commands of faith, repentance, and baptism. Jesus said, “Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and *my words* . . . of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed” (Mark 8:38), but in v. 35 he speaks of the “gospel” in the same way. So the sound word and doctrine in 1 Timothy 6:3 is simply “the gospel of Christ.”

In Galatians 3:2 and 5 Paul contrasts “the Law” to “the hearing of faith.” And this hearing of faith involved the working of miracles and receiving of Holy Spirit, classed now as doctrinal matters. So *the faith* taught about these matters . . . in fact it is the whole revelation of the gospel as contrasted to the Old Testament law. We believe Jesus made the same contrast in Luke 16:16 when he said the law and prophets were until John, but since the gospel of the kingdom was preached. This included all the “But I say unto you” statements of Jesus; his new teaching on marriage and divorce (Matt. 19:9-10), the Lord’s supper, etc., all this is the gospel of the kingdom; it is part of *the faith* which comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). Paul in Romans chapter 10 speaks of Israel being lost because they ignorantly did not submit to the righteousness of God, which can come only by hearing the word of God and they did not hear, so they did not obey “the gospel” (v. 16). The Scriptures instruct us in the righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Tit. 2:12) of God, and when we do not walk therein we are not obeying the gospel.

“I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7). Since faith comes

from hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17), Paul had continued to do what God had by the Holy Spirit revealed to be God's will. While it meant loyalty to the Son of God as Redeemer, there is no way of knowing what pleases Christ but by the faith revealed which is the gospel. We must walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7) and this means by confidence in Jesus, that he alone is our Savior, but it cannot mean by what each man himself may have faith in. The faith by which every man must walk was preached and written by the apostles as they carried out the commission, preaching the gospel, faith in Jesus and obedience to "whatsoever I have commanded you!" The unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:4, 5) being a part of God's word is a part of the gospel. If we do not keep the unity of the Spirit, then we are not keeping the faith. To keep the faith is equivalent to fighting the good fight and running to the finish the race set before us.

In Acts 6:7 the *word of God* increased and numbers of priests were obedient to *the faith*. In Acts 13:5, 7, the *word of God* was preached but Elymas sought to turn away the deputy *from the faith*. Who can deny that *the faith* was the same gospel of Mark 16:15, 16? On the same trip it was said that they preached *the gospel* (Acts 14:21). But, they exhorted those disciples they made to "continue in the faith" (14:22). In Philippians 1:27 he exhorted them to let their manner of life be worthy of the gospel, striving for the faith of the gospel. So the gospel involves the manner of life we live and how we serve the Lord as Christians. Romans 16:25-26 gives glory to God who is able to strengthen us according to the gospel . . . unto the obedience of the faith. These Roman Christians needed to be established and could be by the gospel revealed and the preaching of Jesus Christ to them. They had already believed and been baptized but they needed to grow in the gospel way as Paul urged in the

sixth chapter. Stand fast in the faith (1 Cor. 16:13) required watching for danger to their spiritual lives, act as men should act in Christ. And in the next epistle he challenged them to try or prove themselves whether they were in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). Paul's work had been tested to show he was truly an apostle, now they were to prove whether they were doing the will of Christ.

Paul taught that he had begotten the Corinthians through the gospel so they were his children (1 Cor. 4:16). In verse 17 he spoke of Timothy, his son in the Lord, but in 1 Timothy 1:2 he is called his son in the faith and Titus is his son in the common faith (Tit. 1:4). Then he refers to Onesimus as

his son in bonds (Phile. 10) when he was preaching the gospel as a prisoner (v. 13). So from the exchange of these terms we learn one is in the Lord, a child of Paul by obeying the faith or the gospel as he preached it to their hearts.

The Spirit said that some would depart from *the faith* (1 Tim. 4:1) not by denial of Jesus but by following false teachers and doctrines of demons into practices contrary to the will of God. Such ones are to be marked and turned away from (Rom. 16:17). A like warning was given to the Ephesians in Acts 20:29-32 and they were commended to the word of God's grace as the protection against such departure. So fellowship in Christ demands more than just proper belief in Jesus as the Savior and obedience in baptism — it demands "walking in the light as he is in the light" (1 John 1:7); it demands our sharing a "common faith" and a "common salvation" which dictates our contending for "the faith, once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) Can two walk together except they be agreed?

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*From Truth and News, Huffman Church of Christ, March 8,*

## Smith's Bible Dictionary

by William Smith

The best-known Bible dictionary ever published. This edition is a revision by F.N. and M.A. Peloubet.

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# The Liberality of God

Olen Holderby

The word “liberal” is found in some form in eight verses of Scripture. Seven of those verses deal with the relationship of man to man, while one verse speaks of the liberality of God.

We here quote that one verse: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (Jas. 1:5). This verse is most often used in a study concerning prayer, or a study concerning wisdom; but we use it, in this article, to reflect upon a subject which we believe is much neglected — The Liberality of God. Just as God is a God of love and forgiveness, he is also a giving God. God has always been, and yet is, a liberal giver to man, and in many ways and things. Let us take a look at some of his liberality to man.

**Genesis 1:26-28.** In these verses we learn that man was created in the image of God. As a result man has intelligence, power, free will, and love (emotions). While these are limited in man, they, nonetheless, are there, since God possesses all these. But, think of the vastness of these attributes!

How very far the intelligence of man has taken him in all the various fields of endeavor. And, where did this intelligence come from? God gave it! The power possessed by man has become an awesome thing, yet it is traced to an omnipotent God. God has love and other emotions which were conveyed to man. All these are for the welfare, the benefit, the happiness, the joy of man. How many of us have seen a hog laugh? How many dogs have built automobiles or houses? How many donkeys have built computers? We observe that man, and only man, possesses the attributes of his Creator. God gave liberally of these to man.

True, it is, that man may, and often does, misuse or abuse the blessings of God, but this does not change the fact of their origin. Now look at Genesis 1:28 and notice what God placed at the disposal of man, as if to say, “Here is the whole earth, it is yours.” Indeed, God began his relationship with man as a liberal giver to man.

**Genesis 2:7.** “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” God gave to man the very breath he breathes. It is so completely from God that Job tells us, “. . . if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust” (34:14-15). From where does this breath come, and who keeps it there? Is it not obvious that it came from God?

**Matthew 5:45.** “. . . for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” Here are all the natural blessings, to be enjoyed by all mankind. Without “his sun” and without the “rain,” how could mankind survive? These are not given because of any worthiness on the part of man; they come from a loving and giving God, a liberal God.

**Blood.** “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son” (John 3:16). Peter tells us that we are not saved by things received by traditions from our fathers, “But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:18-19). This blood was not shed for a limited few, but “He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). How much of that blood do we need, and how often do we need it? “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). This bountiful supply of blood is ever there because “God gave”!

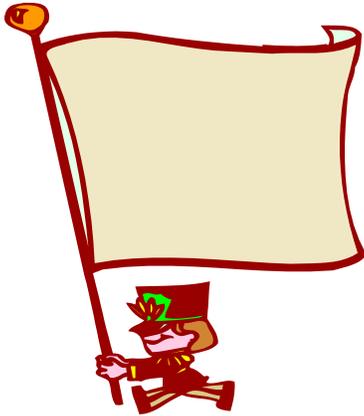
**The forgiveness of sins.** How many times have you asked God to forgive your sins. We are taught to confess our sins and pray to God (1 John 1:9; Acts 8:22). And, of course, we must repent of those sins. But how often is this necessary with you? Have you ever noticed the last four letters of the word “forgive”? Who does this “giving”?

**Prayer.** “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil” (1 Pet. 3:12). The very fact that the Lord answers our prayers shows him to be a

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# I Don't Mean to Gossip, But . . .

Kevin Maxey



Have you ever said this? You know you shouldn't gossip, but you make a quick disclaimer and do it anyway. Though God clearly condemns the talebearer (Lev. 19:16), the busybody (2 Thess. 3:11), the backbiter (Rom. 1:30), the slanderer (Prov. 10:18), the whisperer (2 Cor. 12:20), the evil surmiser (1 Tim. 6:4), the secret revealer (Prov. 20:19), and the gossip (1 Tim. 5:13), do you still try to figure out a way to justify your piercing arrows of verbal poison? You may quickly agree that gossip is a sin, but are you guilty of redefining terms, making excuses and calling your evil words good (cf. Isa. 5:20)? Here are eight common reasons people use to falsely justify gossip.

## The Blatant Denial

**"I don't mean to gossip, but. . ."** Putting a disclaimer in front of something sinful does not make it acceptable. The thief is not exempt from guilt just by saying, "I don't

mean to steal, but. . ."

The murderer is not absolved of blame by explaining, "I don't mean to kill, but. . ."

Saying, "I don't mean to gossip, but. . ." does not pardon you from the sin you are about to commit. Slanderers make this excuse because they know they are "saying things which they ought not" (1 Tim. 5:13). God charged Israel with slandering him, but they denied it. "Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against you?'" (Mal. 3:13-15). Though the Israelites denied their sinful speech, God still held them accountable. Denial does not change the truth.

## The Secret Pact

**"Promise not to tell anyone. . . Can you keep a secret?"** Just because something sinful is kept secret does not make it right. God condemns "whisperers" (Rom. 1:29; 2 Cor. 12:20). Do not underestimate the damage of the cowardly whisperer, for a "whisperer separates the best of friends" (Prov. 16:28). Saying, "You didn't hear this from me" does not magically free you from accountability. If you don't want people to know you said it, why are you saying it in the first place? The slanderer will pull you off into a corner and check to make sure no one else is around before he sows his discord. The whisperer does his work in secret because he knows he is doing something shameful and wrong (John 3:19-20). No human whisper is so low that God cannot hear (Ps. 90:8; Jer. 23:23-24).

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"giving God." And with all the requests which we place at his feet, we can easily see him as a "liberal" giver.

The above does not exhaust the list of God's liberality toward man. Consider James 1:17, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Paul ask the Corinthians three questions in 1 Corinthians 4:7; two of them are: What do you have that you did not receive? Why do you act as if you didn't receive it? Enough said!

What does God expect, in return, for all his liberality toward us? Briefly said — he expects us to be "liberal" in assisting others and in giving to his matchless cause. The Christian is God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works (Eph. 2:10). James says, "By his own will begat he us with the word of truth" (1:18). And, it is by the use of our own freewill that we are to be like him.

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### The Truth Excuse

**“But what I am saying is true. . . .”** The sin of gossip is not isolated to the spreading of misinformation. While gossip can refer to spreading lies and rumors, it also includes circulating “intimate or private . . . facts” (*American Heritage Dictionary* 569). Just because the juicy tidbit you wish to reveal is true does not mean it is fair game for public conversation. Some love to dig up the past and say, “Did you know that she used to . . . ?” Paul told the brethren at Corinth not to dwell on the past sins of the restored brother. “This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that on the contrary, you ought to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow” (2 Cor. 2:6-7). Even if the information is true there is no justification for using it to tear someone down, cast evil suspicion, or revel in one’s personal problems. Some matters, even if true, are to be kept private. “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between *you and him alone*” (Matt. 18:15). Don’t go spread it to the church. Deal with it privately.

### The Praise Diversion

**“He’s a nice guy, but did you know. . . .”** Do you try to offset your gossip by throwing in some nice compliment to go along with it? “I can’t stand her, but she sure is a good cook.” “He is an excellent Bible student, but did you hear about the problems he’s having with his wife?” Do not think that throwing in a few words of flattery will diffuse your arrows of slander. How many times have you seen people just tear someone to shreds and then to ease their conscience they tack on one good comment at the end, as if that excuses their sharp tongue. The damage has been done. “He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips” (Prov. 20:19). “They speak idly everyone with his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak. May the Lord cut off all flattering lips” (Ps. 12:2-3). You can’t sugarcoat the poison of gossip with empty praise.

### The Partner-in-Crime

**“I only gossip with my best friend.”** Some contend, “Now, I don’t share these things with everyone. I only talk this way with my mother.” When does practicing sin become acceptable if you agree to do it with only one person? “Now wait a minute, I know stealing is wrong, but I only do it with my husband. I don’t do it with anyone else!” Agreeing to practice evil with a secret partner does not make it right; it makes it a conspiracy. There is no mother-daughter slander exemption clause or husband-wife gossip confidentiality privilege anywhere in the Scriptures. God will punish those who scheme evil in secret (Ps. 64:5-7).

### The Enemy License

**“But he did me wrong.”** Some brethren think the rules concerning gossip don’t apply to their enemies. No matter what someone has done to you Jehovah commands you

to “repay no one evil for evil . . . but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:17, 21; 1 Thess. 5:15). Though others may speak evil of you, you are “to speak evil of no one” (Tit. 3:2). God has not given you a license to slander your enemies. “But you don’t understand what he did to me!” Jesus understands. Follow his example, “who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return” (1 Pet. 2:23). This same one who was crucified by his enemies says, “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:44-45).

### The Counselor Privilege

**“I was just seeking counsel.”** The Scriptures teach that the wise man will seek counsel. “Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety” (Prov. 11:14; 24:6; 12:15; 15:22; 19:20). It is a blessing to be able to go to a respected brother for advice about a difficult situation. But be extremely careful not to turn your counseling session into a gossip session. Don’t be guilty of people bashing, evil surmising and revealing secrets under the cloak of “seeking counsel.”

### Conclusion

Are you guilty of using any of these excuses to justify your gossip? If so, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts” (Luke 16:15; 10:29). Repent and refuse to participate in any form of gossip. “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers” (Eph. 4:29).

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## Foxe’s Book of Martyrs

by John Foxe

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## “Tasty Snack” continued from front page

and “out of season” (2 Tim. 4:1, 2). They should not shun to “declare the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). They should keep the message simple enough to be understood (Eph. 3:3-5), “meaty” and practical enough to do some good. Elders must “feed the church of God” (Acts 20:28), always being prepared to “convince the gainsayers” (Tit. 1:9), being ready to fire any local preacher who insists on feeding people on the neatly packaged, Satanic sneeze weeds of error, instead of feeding them upon sweet clover of God’s revealed will.

As it relates to the person “in the pew,” it might be stated that intelligent people, with regards to the body, should be more interested in eating what is good for the body, instead of just foods that “taste good.” By the same token, sober-minded people should be more interested in messages that are good for the soul, than simply those delightful “snacks” that are pleasant to the ear. If you study the preaching of the Old Testament prophets, you will notice that they preached what the people needed — not what they wanted. If you study the preaching of Christ and the apostles, you will notice that they also preached what the people needed, not what they wanted. To be sure, they were not always appreciated. In fact, Stephen, referring to the Old Testament prophets, asked the Sanhedrin court, “which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?” (Acts 7:52). Jesus was crucified, and all the apostles, except John, died as martyrs. But they provided the spiritual food that was needed, and the Lord’s cause prospered as a result.

Perhaps it might be of benefit for each one of us to ask, “what kind of spiritual food do I prefer — wholesome food that nourishes the soul, or tasty little snacks which only provide momentary satisfaction?”

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## Born to Live, Born to Die?

by Shirley J. Earnhart

A mother who learned to cope with a son’s

illness and death, as well as her own grief, by prayerfully putting her feelings into words on paper, invites you to walk with her through the pages of this book. 203 pages. #17154

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## “Chronology” continued from page 2

Efforts to harmonize the pronouncements of science with the Bible always begin at the wrong end. The starting point that is adopted is this: The pronouncements of science are true and, therefore, one must restudy the Bible to see how it can be interpreted to fit what present day science affirms. Certainly this is true in the discussions about the age of the earth. Never does one begin by stating the following: The Bible is divinely inspired and, therefore, inerrant when it speaks about science. We must therefore restudy the scientific evidences to see wherein the interpretation given to them is mistaken.

In the beginning of this series of articles, I want to present my outline of study. I do not intend to look at scientific evidences of a young earth, although others have gathered scientific data to argue for a young earth. Their evidences should not be lightly dismissed by those who argue the age of the earth from a scientific point of view. There are limitations to arguing for a young earth on the grounds of scientific data, including that virtually every statement by one qualified scientist can be countered by a quotation from an equally qualified scientist who disagrees. Most of us, including me, are not qualified to sift through the technical scientific data. However, my belief in a young earth is not based on scientific data. I have an interest in the age of the earth discussion only as it relates to what the inspired word of God teaches. Consequently, this presentation is entitled “The Chronology of the Bible” because it is based on what God has revealed to us in his word. The Bible claims to be a revelation from God, an inspired document. I intend to show what the Bible teaches about the age of the earth and call upon men to believe, teach, and defend what the Bible teaches on the grounds that it is a revelation from God.

### The Bible and the Age of the Earth

Does the Bible tell how old the earth is? Yes and no. The answer is, “No,” if one wants a specific age of the earth. Nowhere does the Bible say that the earth is “x” years old in the same way that it says Jesus was in the tomb for three days (Matt. 12:40), the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years (Num. 14:33), and there were 480 years from the time of the Exodus to Solomon’s fourth year (1 Kings 6:1).

However, the answer is, “Yes,” if one means, “Does the Bible given an approximate age of the earth?” Certainly the Bible records the history of man from the creation and is very careful to put this in a chronological framework. There are limits on what the framework of Bible history will tolerate and, in this sense, the Bible does define the age of the earth.

### Common Agreement on Bible Chronology

The Bible and all Bible historians have common agreement on 99% of the chronology of the Bible. Let’s consider

what the Bible says about chronology and see where there is agreement. As we write this in A.D. 2002, we can look back and see these areas of agreement:

**We are agreed on the time when Christ lived.** The Scriptures place the life of Christ in the framework of the first century. Luke 3:1-2 records the beginning of Jesus' ministry, placing it within the framework of history: "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness." Historians are agreed with these dates for the life of Christ. Jesus is thought to have been born about 6 B.C. and to have lived to A.D. 27. Though there may be a variation of as much as 1-2 years, there is no serious disagreement with these dates. This means that there is no problem of chronology in the New Testament.

**We are agreed on the time of King Solomon.** Chronologists usually date the reign of King Solomon at approximately 970-930 B.C. Though there may be disagreements ranging to about five years, there is no serious disagreement about the period at which any of Israel's kings ruled. These dates are accepted by non-believing archaeologists, modernists, and Evangelicals. The agreement on these dates takes us back to the reign of King Solomon and, therefore, of King David and King Saul. There is no disagreement on chronology as far back as 1 Samuel; men are agreed about the chronology of 1 Samuel through Malachi.

**We are agreed back to Abraham.** There are small problems of biblical chronology between Solomon and the Exodus. Regarding the date of the Exodus, the two different positions are the early date of 1440 B.C. (based on 1 Kings 6:1, 480 years to 966 B.C. = 1446 B.C.) and the late date of 1250-75 B.C. The early date is supported by the following texts of Scripture: (a) 1 Kings 6:1, "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord." The dating of Solomon is generally agreed upon (970-930 B.C.). His fourth year (966 B.C.) is said to be 480 years after the Exodus. The face value of Scripture leaves the impression that the Exodus occurred in 1446 B.C. (b) Acts 13:19-20, "And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of *four hundred and fifty years*, until Samuel the prophet." (c) Judges 11:26. During the time of Jephthah, the Ammonites made war against Israel. In desperation, the Israelites turned to Jephthah to deliver them from the Ammonites. Jephthah tried to reason with the Ammonites

about attacking Israel, asking why they were attacking Israel. The Ammonites charged that Israel had taken their land during the conquest of Canaan (taking the area on the east side of Jordan between the Arnon and the Jabbock). Jephthah replied that Israel had occupied that land for 300 hundred years saying, "While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? Why therefore did ye not recover them within that time?" This figure poses a serious problem for those who take the late date for the Exodus (966 [date of Solomon] + 40 reign of David + 40 years reign of Saul + 300 years [remember that Jephthah was not the last judge] = 1346 B.C.). Those who take an late date for the Exodus face serious problems of Bible interpretation.

While there is heated argument about the late and early date, a difference of a mere 200 years is nothing in terms of the discussion of the earth being 4.5 billion year old. Whichever date is taken, there is only a disagreement of about 200 years with reference to the Exodus.

This disagreement in Bible chronology affects when Abraham lived. Evangelical scholars who take the 1446 B.C. date for the Exodus add the ages of the Patriarchs to arrive at 2166 for the birth of Abraham.

Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born (Gen. 21:5)	100
Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob was born (Gen. 25:26)	60
Jacob was 130 years old when he went down into Egypt	130
<b>Total:</b>	<b>290</b>

Adding these together one arrives at the following figures:

Date at Solomon's fourth year	966 B.C.
Years from Exodus	480
Years in Egypt	430
Years to time of Abraham	290
<b>Date at the birth of Abraham</b>	<b>2166 B.C.</b>

Other scholars date the Exodus about 1250 B.C. and the time the Israelites were in Egypt to 215 years, resulting in a date for Abraham at about 1750-1800 B.C. Their dating system relies more heavily on the conclusions of archaeology, harmonizing the list of kings in Egypt and in other surrounding countries, and the Bible itself. The differences that Bible chronologists have for the date of Abraham is a mere 300-400 years maximum, which again is a mere pittance of time when one is speaking of an earth that is dated 4.5 billion years old. Basically one can say that Bible scholars are agreed on the chronology of the Bible from Genesis 12 through Revelation 22.

That leaves a mere eleven chapters of the Bible in which one is trying to find 4.5 billion years! About the rest of the chronology of the Bible there is relatively little difference in dating because all are generally agreed about those dates within a range of 200-300 years.

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#### Study: Living Together May Lead to Breakups

"Couples in the United States who live together before marrying may be more likely to consider divorce than those who do not, according to a study released Wednesday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's health statistics division.

"The report on marriage, divorce, remarriage and cohabitation said 75 percent of American women have been married by age 30 and about half have lived with their partner outside of marriage.

"Couples who did not live together before marrying had a 31 percent chance of splitting up after 10 years, compared with a 40 percent chance for couples who cohabited before marriage, the study found.

"The CDC's National Center for Health Statistics report also compared the success rates for marriage and pre-marital cohabitation.

"It found that the probability of a first marriage ending in separation or divorce within five years is 20 percent, compared with the 49 percent probability of a pre-marital cohabitation breaking up within the same time period.

"After 10 years, the study found, a first marriage has a 33 percent chance of ending compared with a 62 percent chance for cohabitations" (The Indianapolis Star [July 25, 2001]).

#### Get Our Kids Out

"A movement among conservatives to end government involvement in education received a boost when broadcaster James Dobson encouraged parents to remove their children from public schools that offer pro-homosexual curriculum.

"In the state of California, and in places that have moved with the direction that they've gone with the schools, if I had a

child there, I wouldn't put that youngster in public schools,' the Focus on the Family president said during a radio broadcast in March. 'They're being taught homosexual propaganda and these other politically correct, postmodern views. I think it's time to get our kids out. We cannot sacrifice our kids on the altar of some kind of public school's ideal' (Christianity Today [August 5, 2002], 15).

#### Canadian Anglican Diocese Endorses Same-sex Unions

"Conservative Anglicans in Vancouver, British Columbia, declared a 'state of pastoral emergency' on June 15 after their diocese voted at its annual synod to permit the blessing of same-sex unions.

"The Diocese of New Westminster is the first in the global Anglican communion to officially endorse such blessings. The vote could lead to deeper division among the world's 67 million Anglicans" (Christianity Today [August 5, 2002], 18).

#### Gay United Methodist Keeps Job

"A United Methodist panel in May dismissed charges against Mark Edward Williams, who was accused of violating the denomination's regulation prohibiting 'self-avowed practicing homosexuals' from serving as ordained pastors.

"A committee of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference in Seattle determined there was no reasonable cause to forward the case to a church trial.

". . . Williams, pastor of Seattle's Woodland Park United Methodist Church, announced last summer that he was 'proudly as much a practicing gay man as [he was] a practicing United Methodist' (Christianity Today [August 5, 2002], 20).

#### "Hate Speech" Law Could Chill Sermons

"Sweden — Swedish lawmakers have given initial approval to a law that could have a chilling effect on preaching against active homosexuality. Voting in May, Sweden's parliament, the Riksdag, passed on first reading a bill criminalizing 'hate speech' against homosexuals. A final reading will occur this fall.

"While targeting Nazi and racist hate campaigns, the bill also addresses 'church sermons,' causing conservative Christian in Europe to sound the alarm.

"The bill clearly violates the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights,' said Johan Candelin, president of the Religious Liberties Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance and a Finnish Lutheran pastor. 'If the bill passes, it will place Sweden on level with China, with the state defining which theology is permissible.'

"Goran Lambertz, the Swedish chancellor of justice, declared in a formal note to the Riksdag that a church sermon describing homosexual practice as sinful 'might' constitute a criminal offense under the law. Anyone convicted would face up to two years in prison. The chancellor of justice monitors basic civil rights in Sweden.

“. . . Prominent homosexuals have said publicly that they will report preachers who ‘speak disparagingly’ about homosexuals from the pulpit” (Christianity Today [August 5, 2002], 22).

### Child Molestation More Common Among Homosexuals, Study Finds

“Child molestation is much more common among homosexuals than among heterosexuals, according to a new study to be published by the Regent University Law Review, out of Virginia Beach, Virginia, ‘Overwhelming evidence supports the belief that homosexuality is a sexual deviancy often accompanied by disorders that have dire consequences for our culture,’ researcher Steve Baldwin said in his article. The report found that homosexuals ‘sexually molest young boys with an incidence that is . . . five times greater than the molestation of girls” (Christian Standard [August 4, 2002], 13).

### Nevada Voters Weigh Legalizing Marijuana

“The Washington Post — Nevada thrives on gambling, winks at brothels and gave the world the dirve-through wedding. It could soon add another wrinkle to its anything-goes reputation by letting adults smoke marijuana just because they feel like it.

“State officials announced recently that a petition drive had succeeded in putting a measure legalizing limited amounts of the drug on the fall ballot. Nevada is one of eight Western states that recently decriminalized marijuana for medicinal purposes” (The Indianapolis Star [July 28, 2002], A9).

### Study Links Mom’s Working to Children’s Slower Learning

“Adding fuel to the debate over mothers who work, a new analysis of the largest government child care study has found that early maternal employment has negative effects on children’s intellectual development.

“‘What we found was that when mothers worked more than 30 hours by the time their children were 9 months old, those children, on average, did not do as well on school-readiness tests when they were 3 years old,’ said Jeanne Brooks-Gunn of Columbia’s Teachers College, the lead author of the study.

“‘In other work we’ve done,’ she said, ‘We’ve seen that those negative effects of early full-time maternal employment persist among children who are 7 or 8.’

“When the mother did not start working until the child was a year old, Brooks-Gunn said, no significant effects were found” (The Indianapolis Star [July 17, 2002], A8).

### Outspoken Welsh Cleric to Head World’s Anglicans

“London — Britain announced on Tuesday that Rowan Williams, a Welsh churchman outspokenly in favor of gay clergy and female priests and opposed to Western militarism, would be the new spiritual leader of the world’s 70 million Anglicans.

“Williams, 52, will become the 104<sup>th</sup> archbishop of Canterbury in October, succeeding George Carey, 67, who is retiring after 11 years in the post. He is the first Anglican leader from outside England since the church broke away from Rome in the 16<sup>th</sup>

century” (The Indianapolis Star [July 24, 2002], A9).

### Alcoholic Beverage Ads Reach Teen-agers

“Washington — Slick commercials for fruit-flavored alcohol drinks are luring millions of teen-agers — poof that the liquor industry’s voluntary advertising guidelines aren’t working, consumer advocates said Tuesday.

“‘Those ads put liquor brand names right in kids’ faces,’ said George Hacker, director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest’s alcohol policies project. He called for tighter guidelines to minimize youth exposure.

“A survey, taken by a polling firm for the center, estimated that 22 millions teen-agers — 3 our of 4 people ages 12 to 18 — watch television after 9 p.m. on school nights, when alcohol ads routinely air. Six in 10 youths could name a specific company or brand that advertises during that time” (The Indianapolis Star [July 17, 2002], A8).

## Preachers Needed

**West Frankfort, Illinois:** The West Frankfort Church of Christ is seeking to hire a full-time preacher as quickly as possible. The Church is able to pay \$400.00 per week and some support is available locally. The Church is willing to help with locating other support if needed. If you are interested, contact Robert Johnson, 2740 Charley Good Rd., West Frankfort, IL 62896, phone 618-627-2655 or Galen Dalton, 1427 South McKinley Ave., Harrisburg, IL 62946, phone 618-252-4561. The meeting house is located at 812 W. St. Louis Street, West Frankfort, IL 62896.

**Warne, North Carolina:** The church at Warne needs a full-time preacher. They have a home and some support. The average attendance is 20-30. If interested, please contact Warne Church of Christ, P.O. Box 82, Warne, NC 28909, phone 828-837-3167 or 389-8453.

## Renew Promptly!



