

Magazine

Let's Talk About Remembering Our Creator in the Days of Our Youth

Brian Anderson

“Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. Remove vexation from your mind, and put away pain from your body; for youth and the dawn of life are vanity. Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when you will say, “I have no pleasure in them” (Eccl. 11:9-12:1).

God wishes our youth to be a time of fun and happiness. Many have the wrong impression about God. Some are like the little school boy that was once asked what he thought of God. He answered, “As far as I can tell, God is someone going around the world looking for people who are having a good time and putting a stop to it.” Is that your impression of God? Is God someone that you think is just trying to cut into your good time? If it is, this is a false impression painted for you by the devil. Listen to what the wiseman, by the Spirit of God, says:

Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes (Eccl. 9:11a).

That certainly doesn't sound like the admonition of someone that is looking to ruin your good time. However, the wise man does add this caveat:

But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment (Eccl. 9:11b).

During all of our fun and frolic, we must not forget God. God is still our Creator and he is still going to be our judge. Some are under the impression that this warning is an effort to temper our good time, or to make us feel guilty about having a good time. Nothing could be further from

the truth. God is our Creator and he knows what's best for us. Therefore he has laid out a pathway where all joy, happiness, and fun can be enjoyed without bringing heartache into our lives. When young people rebel against God's boundaries,

what they find is that the momentary thrill of sin has lead them to days, weeks, years or sometimes a lifetime of heartache. My father once told me that you can mess your entire life up in five seconds. How true that is! God, being the loving Creator that He is, doesn't want your life to be a mess. He wants it to be a thrilling joyous adventure, that not only you can be pleased with, but he can be pleased with as well.

To appreciate God's concern for your happiness and fun, the wiseman further states:

Remove vexation from your mind, and put away pain

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Conclusion Special Issue — Because We Love You . . .



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Because We Love You . . .

Let's Talk About Gambling

Keith Greer

For thirteen years, my family and I resided in Las Vegas, Nevada. During that time, we observed the numerous temptations associated with the legal, lucrative gambling industry. Even if a person completely avoids the famous two and one-half mile *Strip*, he encounters slot machines in virtually every grocery store, gas station, convenience store, bowling alley, and even in K-Mart! It isn't unusual to stand in the grocery line and hear a young child beg his mother, as she continues feeding quarters to the slot machine, to take him home. Sadly, this picture is quite different from a picture of the "fun pastime" many associate with gambling.

In the 1990s, gambling was the number-one problem for our country's teenagers:

Just as teenagers are beginning to show signs of curtailing risky sex, illicit drug use, and drunk driving, another potentially destructive behavior — gambling — is threatening to become the teen vice of the 90s. . . . The most popular forms of gambling among teenagers include betting on sports, card playing, lotteries, and slot machines. . . . For teenage and other problem gamblers, betting fever may lead to serious crimes as well as self-destruction. . . . The social and personal factors that cause compulsive gambling, such as widespread materialism and unstable families, continued unabated" (*U.S. News & World Report* [June 18, 1990], 51).

In America, forty-eight states and Washington D.C. have some form of legalized gambling. Only Hawaii and Utah do not. More than half the states have casinos. Almost all of the states have their own lotteries. It has been estimated that more than 100 million Americans legally gamble a total of over \$500 billion per year. Sadly, gambling is one of the most difficult sins to recognize. Unfortunately, not only do some brethren gamble, they also attempt to prove that it is right in God's sight. No longer is this a problem for only those who are outside the church.

We begin by asking some questions and defining our subject.

1. What is good about gambling?
2. What about gambling is so attractive that it entices so many to participate?
3. Does gambling, in any form, damage a Christian's influence and example?

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The Uniqueness of the Bible

David Morrison, Jr.

The Bible is certainly unique. If you were to take all the volumes of books and line them up in a row, you would need to set a place apart by itself for the Bible. It is the one and only of its kind, it is single, sole, different from all the others, having no equal. Hebrews 4:12 states its uniqueness, "The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

It is unique for it is "the word of God." Yet, we live in a time where this distinction is taken for granted. Even God's people have lost sight of the uniqueness of God's word. It is like the days of the divided kingdom prior to King Josiah, when God's word was lost. 2 Kings 22:8 proclaims, "I have found the book of the Law in the house of the Lord."

How is the word "lost" in this generation? There are copies to be found in nearly every home. The Bible is lost if we take it for granted. Is it an ornament for the coffee table? Something to leave in the car or on a shelf until we carry it dutifully into the presence of others who do likewise? Fathers are to "raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph 6:1-4). Fathers have we taught our children the uniqueness of God's word? Is it more "unique" in their minds than hunting, sports, education, television, employment?

Is the Bible lost in the pulpit? It is if we are not "preaching the word" (2 Tim. 2:4). It is lost if we have become preachers of fanciful yarns, fine story tellers, and exhorters of fables. The Bible is just as lost if the attitude is one of unconcern and apathy. The Bible is lost if we have "knowledge without zeal." We know what we should do, but we do not do it. God's word is not unique if we are "lukewarm" in its presence (Rev. 3:15-22).

When zeal and commitment wanes the first thing that suffers is Bible knowledge. How can we not only obtain that knowledge, but also maintain it? The key is found in Ezra 7:10 "Ezra set his heart to study the Law of the Lord and to practice it and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel." Please note the three steps:

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Set His Heart to Study Practiced Truth Taught Others

If we leave off any of these then the uniqueness of God's word is no longer evident in our lives. 1 Peter 3:15 says, "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone that asks you to give an account of the hope that is in you."

Christianity is not a leap into the dark! True Bible faith is not "blind" faith. In fact, it is just the opposite. The unique position of the one who opens God's word is that of "stepping into the light." Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free" (John 8:32) and "Sanctify them in thy truth, thy word is truth" (John 17:17). 1 John 2:8 "The darkness has passed and the true light shineth." "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts" (1 Pet 1:19). And finally, Psalm 119: 105 makes it clear that it is God's unique word that is "a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

It is not blind faith when we serve God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind (Matt. 22:37). When we walk in the unique light of God's truth, then we can proclaim "I know whom I have believed" (2 Tim. 1:12). 1 John 5:13 "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God: that ye may know that ye have eternal life and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." God's word is in the unique position of providing faith (Rom. 10:17) and strengthening that faith (Acts 20:32).

Consider again the beauty of God's unique word in light of its continuity, its survival, and its teachings.

Continuity

The Bible is actually a library of sixty-six books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament. It was written over a span of some 1500 years, forty generations, and forty authors from kings to peasants, fishermen, poets, scholars. Moses was a political leader. Amos was a herdsman. Solomon was king. Luke was a doctor. Matthew was a tax collector. The Bible was written in many different places, wilderness, prison, hillside, etc. It was written at different times (i.e. King David during war and King Solomon during peace). The Bible was written during different moods, from the heights of joy to the depths of sorrow. It was written on three continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe) in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek). It covers literally hundreds of controversial subjects yet does so with such harmony and continuity it is as if one hand picked up one pen and wrote it in its entirety in one setting. That is the uniqueness of God's word, for it is "inspired" (2 Tim. 3:16) "God breathed." The Holy Spirit searched out the mind of God and used the process of revelation to pen the "truth" in words that we can read

and understand (1 Cor. 2:9-15; Eph. 3:1-4). And so we pick up this library and it reads of one tremendous theme — the redemption of man. Therein we find upon its every page that sweet crimson thread woven by the creator for the salvation of His creatures.

Survival

Voltaire said the Bible would be extinct by 1850. He died in 1778 and fifty years later the printing press was used to produce stacks of Bibles. Throughout time there is more manuscript evidence to support its authenticity than any other historical document. Yet at the same time the Bible was more persecuted than any other book written. No other book as been so criticized. The Bible has been meticulously sifted and scrutinized and yet it not only survives it flourishes!

Teachings

The Bible is unique in its teachings. Consider the historical accuracy, every date, name, place and event is accurate. For instance, the forty kings from 2000 B.C. to 400 B.C. are in chronological order with references to each other and the kings of other countries. The mathematical chance that they just got "lucky" is one in 750 with "21" zeros after it!! Nothing compares with the "Table of Nations" in Genesis 10. Consider the prophecies that have been fulfilled and the uniqueness is even clearer. But now add to this the "moral" teachings of this unique book we call the Bible. Indeed if all men were to follow its precepts in whole there would be no war, no famine, no crime, etc., a virtual paradise on earth.

This book of books is truly unique. It is the only book that tells man where he came from, how to live on the earth, how to die, and be prepared for eternity after death. It gives us our origin, our mission, and our destiny. It is a guide for the soul, a roadmap back to the garden of Eden!!

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Must I Sin?

Randy Blackby

A simple “yes” or “no” isn’t adequate answer

Every now and then a question arises in Bible class over which brethren vigorously disagree. One such question is: “Does a man have to sin?” At the heart of the question are some very important issues, but the answer doesn’t come with a simple “yes” or “no.”

There are at least two different issues in this one short question. The first involves human volition or the free moral agency of man. God has created us in his image with the ability to make our own decisions. God does not directly control us. We have the choice of doing right or wrong. That we have choice in whether to sin or not is clearly taught in Scripture in passages such as Deuteronomy 30:9-20; Joshua 24:14-15; 1 Corinthians 10:13 and James 1:13-16.

These passages destroy the idea of John Calvin and many denominationalists today that man must sin because he has inherited a “fallen nature” from Adam. If a man has no choice but to sin, he would not be accountable for his sin and God would not be just in condemning him for something he couldn’t help.

So, our brethren who say “no” we don’t have to sin are correct from this point of view. But, let’s not stop the discussion here. There is another point of view that must be examined to get the whole picture.

The latter point of view is God’s. He is omniscient or all-knowing, sees the future and even predicts it through prophecy. And, if God says something, it must come to pass. God, with his foreknowledge, has said that all men will sin. Through Solomon, in Ecclesiastes 7:20, God stated this fact. “For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.” This point also is made in Psalms 14:1-3.

These Old Testament verses are quoted by the Apostle Paul in Romans 3:10-12 as he declares the universality of sin among both Jews and Gentiles and the need all have

for a savior. So, from the standpoint of fulfilling Scripture and from God’s ability to know what happens before it does, yes, man must sin. Their free will is not removed. They (we) choose to sin. God knew this would happen in advance.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us,” we are told in 1 John 1:10. The only way to be right with God is by obtaining God’s grace or forgiveness. We can’t earn righteousness by perfect living. “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men” (Tit. 2:11).

Some questions that men propound can’t be answered simply with a “yes” or “no.” For example, “Did Jesus have to die?” We could say “yes” and cite Matthew 16:21. But we could say “no” also and quote what Jesus said in John 10:17-18. Jesus told Peter in the garden of Gethsemane as he was being arrested that he could pray to God and have twelve legions of angels summoned to rescue him from death (Matt. 26:53).

Another example is the question, “Can a person save himself?”

Brethren can argue vehemently either side if a simple “yes” or “no” answer is demanded. When someone says “yes,” he will be accused of discounting the atoning blood of Christ. But if you answer “no” be prepared to deal with passages like Acts 2:40 where Peter urged those on the day of Pentecost to “save yourselves from this perverse generation.” And Paul urged the Philippians to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

All of this does not prove that God’s word is ambiguous or that there aren’t any right or wrong answers. God’s word is clear and truth is singular. What it does show is that sometimes we ask the wrong questions or we construct questions that don’t seek the whole truth of a matter.

Lawyers are renowned for such questions. If a lawyer asked a man, “Have you quit beating your wife?”, how

Second Cycle: Contents of the Periods of History

Bob Waldron

As you begin this cycle, remember that we are reinforcing the first cycle, but we are also adding the content of these periods, so that you will have a grasp of what is in each period. Remind yourself of the things that link these periods together. If you are teaching this material, always beware of overloading the student's memory. You will see that the list of events in each period is not necessarily exhaustive. At this point we are not interested above all in the student's memorizing every event in the period. The idea is to give the class some idea of what is in this period. If they have a good smattering, all you will have to do is to remind them of these events and show how they are grouped. If they do not have even a smattering, then it is necessary to give little thumbnail surveys of the stories. Emphasize constantly: if you didn't get it the first time, don't worry. This is not the last time we will go over this material. But it is extremely important not to start in trying to memorize all these events from the beginning.

This cycle will take several classes. Each cycle doubles or triples the time necessary to learn the material. How you allot the classes to each cycle depends on how many class periods you will have in the quarter. If both Sunday morning and Wednesday night are devoted to the study, you can do it adequately. If only one class per week is devoted to

could he accurately answer? If he says, "no," that implies he is still beating her. If he answers "yes" that presupposes that he beat her in the past. If he never beat his wife, either answer will be less than the whole truth.

But let's return to our original question. "Does a man have to sin?" We've seen that he has the choice not to and has the ability not to sin. However, God foreknew that we would. And he provided for our redemption.

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it, you will not be able to get the job done unless there is already a good Bible knowledge among the students. Drill on the first cycle, but drill on the second cycle more. Each class, drill what you have covered, then add some more. Toward the end of the study of the second cycle, emphasize more heavily the ability to recite the list of events provided in this material.

The first four of the periods are simple and are better known by most people. So do little more than mention the stories, unless you find you are dealing with people with no knowledge at all. Guard against going into much detail.

Before the Flood

Creation of the world.
Adam and Eve in the garden.
First sin.
Cain and Abel.
Generations: transition from creation stories to Noah and the flood.

The Flood

The flood itself.
Meat given for food.
Law of capital punishment.
Covenant of the rainbow.
Curse on Canaan.
Generations: transition from flood to the scattering of the people.

Scattering of the People

Tower of Babel built.
Languages divided.
Generations: transition to patriarchs.

The Patriarchs

Abraham
Isaac
Jacob

Story of Joseph: transition to the period of the Exodus.
Remember to distinguish the book of Exodus from the period of the Exodus.

The events in the next two periods will be less familiar to your students. They may have heard of a lot of the stories, but they will often have little or no idea when these things happened.

The Exodus

Israel in bondage.
Moses' birth.
Raised as son of Pharaoh's daughter.
Rejected by his people.
Flees to wilderness.
Burning bush.
Plagues.
Crossing of the Red Sea.
Trip to Sinai.
Events at Mount Sinai.
Trip to Kadesh.
Spies sent into the land.
Israel refuses to go in.

Wandering in the Wilderness

The events in the wandering in the wilderness are scattered through Numbers with a very few in Deuteronomy, and in the first few chapters of Joshua. My point is that these events are a little difficult to search out and will be among the most unfamiliar to students in general.

Israel sentenced to wander in the wilderness.
Korah, Dathan, Abiram.
Aaron's rod that budded.
Miriam dies.
Sin of Moses and Aaron.
Passing by Edom.
Aaron's death.
Fiery serpents.
Conquer Sihon (Amorites).
Conquer Og (Bashan).
Balaam.
Fornication with Midianites.
Second census.
Slaughter of Midianites.
Speeches of Moses in Deuteronomy.
Moses' death.
Crossing of the Jordan.
Observing the Passover.

Invasion and Conquest

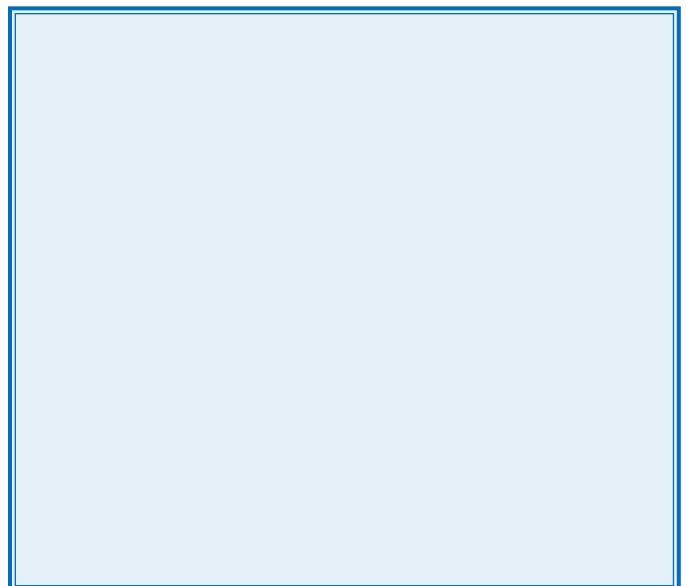
Central campaign:
They take Jericho, Bethel and Ai.
They stake their claim on the land at Shechem.
Southern campaign:
They make a treaty with the Gibeonites,

Then fight the kings of the south.
Northern campaign:
They fight the kings of the north, led by Jabin king of Hazor.
Land distributed among the tribes.
Trans-jordanic tribes return home.
Joshua challenges Israel to keep from the idols and to be faithful to God.
Joshua challenges Israel to choose whom they will serve;
They renew their covenant with Jehovah.

Judges

Most people will know very few of the judges, if any. Emphasize the best known, such as Gideon and Samson, but as the drill continues, include more, with a few identifying facts about them.

Othniel.
Ehud.
Shamgar.
Deborah.
Gideon.
Abimelech (not a judge, but a leader).
Tola.
Jair.
Jephthah.
Ibzan.
Elon.
Abdon.
Samson.
Eli.
Samuel.
Story of Micah.
Levite's concubine.
Book of Ruth fits into this period.



There is so much information in the next few periods I do not try to list all the events. Just get in mind who and what these periods are about.

United Kingdom

- Saul.
- David.
- Solomon.

Divided Kingdom

Kingdom of Israel in the north.

Kingdom of Judah in the south.

Period lasts 200 years until Israel in the north is taken away into captivity.

Obadiah, Joel, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah prophesy.

Isaiah continues into the time of Judah alone.

Mention these prophets just to let the students know they fit into this period. As you continue to drill, you can work on remembering them a little more, but such things are not our present emphasis.

Judah Alone

Kings: Hezekiah, Manasseh, Josiah.

Prophets: Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Nahum.

Captivity

Daniel and Ezekiel.

Return

Start out emphasizing the three returns, one under Zerubbabel and Jeshua, one under Ezra, and one under Nehemiah. Place Esther. Drill on these simple points first. Then associate the year of each return. Then add the other names, such as Haggai and Zechariah, Mordecai, Haman, Malachi. Remember how important it is to introduce the information a bit at the time, and review often to incorporate it into your knowledge. Continue to emphasize oral drill rather than everyone frantically writing everything down.

Zerubbabel (536 B.C.) along with Jeshua the high priest, with around 50,000 Jews.

Prophets: Haggai and Zechariah.

Jews started building the temple,

Were stopped after one year.

Enemies waited until Cyrus was dead, then wrote to Cambyses about Jerusalem.

He ordered building stopped.

Prophets Haggai and Zechariah stirred the people to build the temple (520-516 B.C.).

Esther fits in between Ezra chapters 6 and 7, about 485 B.C.

Ezra leads a return (458 B.C.).

Concentrates on purifying the worship.

Nehemiah comes to build the walls of Jerusalem (445 B.C.).

Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament (432 B.C.).

When you teach this period, emphasize the people, then the dates. This time through, do not worry about fixing the dates in mind. Use them only as a frame of reference. Have the people be able to name the people in connection with the first return (Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Haggai, Zechariah), with the story of Esther (Esther, Mordecai, Ahasuerus, Haman), the second return (Ezra), and the return of Nehemiah (Nehemiah, Malachi). Sometimes I do not even include Haman and Ahasuerus just to simplify. Then I can say we have nine people to remember during this period.

Remember that this second cycle takes more time to fix in mind than the first. When you deal with a period as little known by most people as the Return is, it is far better, to go over it several times. Start out first emphasizing that we have four episodes or parts in this period: the first return under Zerubbabel (536 B.C.), next the story of Esther (485 B.C.), then the second return under Ezra (458 B.C.), and fourth the story of Nehemiah's rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem (445 B.C.). Make sure everyone knows these episodes, and can recite them effortlessly. Then go back and add Jeshua the high priest to Zerubbabel during the first return, add Mordecai to Esther, and gradually go back and add the prophets, etc.

Years of Silence

Generalize at first. Make it simple. This period is also one of the least familiar to Bible students. The Persian empire was the one under which all of the characters listed in the Return lived. That empire lasted almost exactly a hundred years after the writing of Malachi.

At the end of the Persian Empire Alexander establishes the Hellenistic (Greek) empire. His conquests took about twelve or thirteen years. When he dies the empire fell into several warring parts. For our purposes, the conflicts between the kingdoms of Syria and Egypt are most important. Their struggles place Judea in the middle, and, when Syria wins out, and seeks to convert the Jews to the worship of the Greek God Zeus rebellion breaks out led by the family of Mattathias. The Maccabean revolt comes as Rome is extending its power eastward. In the last century before Christ, more and more, Rome plays a dominant part. Just go over this basic, simple story over and over until you have it in mind. Then you will have no problem with the events listed below. It will help to use a map, and remember, keep it simple. Do not go into any detail about Alexander's horse Bucephalus, or any other detail you can leave out. Remind the people they do not have to memorize all these names; just get a feeling for what was going on during the period.

Fall of the Persian Empire.
Rise of the Grecian Empire.
Splintering of the Grecian Empire.
The Seleucid empire (Syria and Mesopotamia) battles the Ptolemaic kingdom (Egypt) for control of Palestine.
Beginning of the Maccabean revolt.
The development of parties such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes.
Rome comes to the Eastern Mediterranean.
Herod the Great is given the kingdom of Judea, which includes virtually all of Palestine.

Life of Christ

Drill the students until they can list the seven periods of Jesus' life. Remember, it will accomplish nothing if they simply have this material lying in a drawer at home. Oral drill in class is of vital importance. There are other outlines of the Life of Christ, but this is a simple one, and variations can be learned later.

Years of Preparation.
Beginning of his ministry.
Great Galilean Ministry.
Periods of Retirement.
Close of his ministry.
Last Week.
Resurrection Days.

Early Church

Stories of Acts.
Book covers a span of about 30 years.

Acts 1-12: Primarily the work in Jerusalem, Palestine, and the eastern end of the Mediterranean.
Covers about 15 years.
Acts 13-28: Primarily the work of Paul.
The spread of the gospel into all of the Roman empire.
Covers about 15 years.

The point here is not to learn the chapter divisions of Acts, but to help the student learn what the book is about. If they can learn that the book of Acts tells about the history of the early church covering about thirty years, they will have learned what they need to know in this cycle. Nevertheless, exposing them to this information here will help them when they are exposed to it more emphatically in the third cycle.

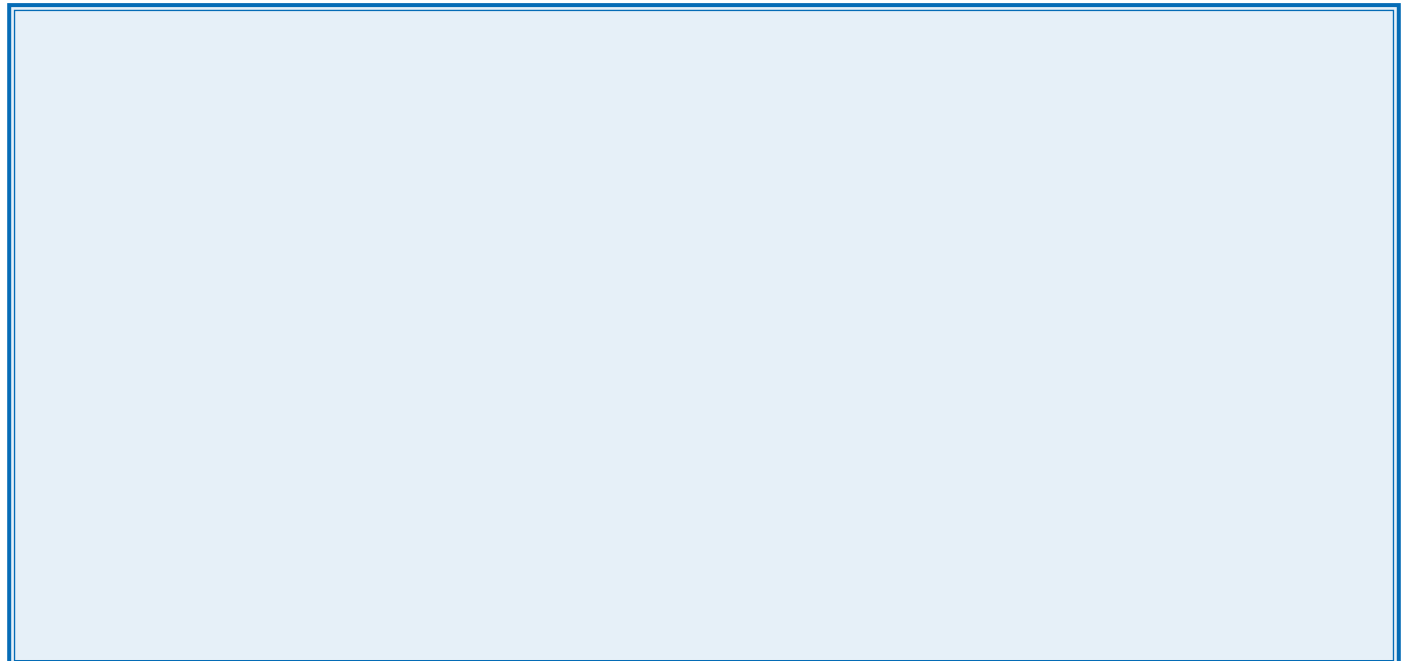
Letters to Christians

Includes all the epistles and Revelation because all of these were written to Christians, some to churches and some to individuals, but all to Christians.

Six of these were written during the time described in the book of Acts:

1 and 2 Thessalonians,
Galatians,
1 and 2 Corinthians,
Romans.

(This series will be concluded in the next issue of *Truth Magazine*.)



Did Moses Write the First Five Books of the Bible?

David Dann

The apostle Paul issued a warning, saying, “But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13).

While the apostle’s statement is generic, it is certainly true that those who seek to criticize and cast doubt on the trustworthiness of the Bible continue to “grow worse and worse” in their efforts to overthrow the faith of those who would believe in the testimony of the Scriptures. There seems to be no limit to the attacks of the skeptics and scoffers as they make every attempt to discredit the Bible.

Over the past two centuries these destructive critics of the Bible have constantly sought ought ways to undermine the integrity of God’s word. One of their most prominent attacks concerns the authorship of the first five books of the Old Testament. These books, Genesis through Deuteronomy, are often referred to today as the “Pentateuch,” which means “five books.”

While for centuries it was understood that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, modernistic and liberal scholars have now advanced the idea that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses at all. Instead, they insist that the Pentateuch is a compilation of the work of many writers who lived, perhaps, as late as one thousand years after the death of Moses.

Is it possible to determine whether or not Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible? Does it make any difference what one believes about these matters? What answers shall we give to these questions?

1. The first five books of the Bible claim Moses as their author. That Moses was the inspired penman whom the Holy Spirit moved (2 Pet. 1:20-21) to write the Pentateuch is affirmed throughout its pages. When Israel was given the law at Mt. Sinai the text says, “And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord... Then he took the Book

of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people” (Exod. 24:4, 7). As Israel journeyed in the wilderness the Bible says, “Now Moses wrote down the starting points of their journeys at the command of the Lord” (Num. 33:2). The Bible records the completion of Moses’ work in this regard as follows: “So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying: ‘Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there as a witness against you’” (Deut. 31:24-26). There are numerous references throughout the Pentateuch affirming Moses as the one responsible for recording the things written therein (see Exod. 17:14; 34:27-28; Lev. 1:1-2; 6:8-9; Deut. 31:9). If the critics are right then the Bible is full of lies. But if the Bible is right, then it is the critics who are “deceiving and being deceived.”

2. The rest of the Old Testament claims that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. After the death of Moses God commanded Joshua to lead Israel, saying, “Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe and do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you” (Josh. 1:7). At Mt. Ebal Joshua “wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written” (Josh. 8:32). During the reign of Josiah, “Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses” (2 Chron. 34:14). The Old Testament consistently affirms Moses’ authorship of the Pentateuch (see also Josh. 22:5; 1 Kings 8:56; 2 Kings 21:8; 2 Chron. 33:8; Neh. 9:14; 10:29). One would have to reject the entire Old Testament in order to reject Moses as the author of its first five books.

3. New Testament writers and individuals claim that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. The apostle John states that “the law was given through Moses” (John 1:17). The apostle Philip affirmed that Moses wrote the law

The Book Of Genesis

John Henry Sr.

The book of Genesis is one of the most important books in the Bible because it forms the foundation of all revelation that will now proceed from the mind of God. Think of it this way, the beginning is like a tree. Genesis is the root whose trunk and branches extend through the rest of the Bible.

Through the years many attacks have been made on the credibility of Genesis. Some think the creation account was produced by some unknown author of the eighth-seventh century B.C. and pawned off as the work of Moses. Others believe that the author of Genesis borrowed from and revised a Babylonian epic (Enuma Elish) of creation and/or some Greek mythology. Another group, called the “harmonists,” try to harmonize the Bible account of creation with scientific theories that accept evolution and an old earth (thought to be anywhere from 4.5 to 20 billion years old). If one rejects the Genesis account as history it results in treating the creation, the flood, and other miraculous things in Genesis as simply a myth. By way of introduction to the book of Genesis we want to prove these theories and philosophies wrong.

The Name Genesis

The first book of the Old Testament is called Genesis. Its name is taken from the Septuagint (Greek) translation and means “*origin*,” or “*source*.” The Jews were accustomed to naming the books of the Torah by using a single Hebrew word derived from the very first verse. The first book was called “*Bereshith*,” which means ‘In the Beginning’ (Gen. 1:1). The second was called “*Shemoth*,” i.e. ‘Names’, for the first verse says: “Now these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt.” The third book received the name “*Wayyiqra*” which means, “And He called” taken from the opening words “And the Lord called unto Moses.” The fourth was entitled “*Bemidbar*,” “In the wilderness,” because the first verse reads, “and the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai.” The fifth received the title “*Debarim*,” or “Words” because “These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness.”

The Greek translation (Septuagint), which originated in Egypt in the city of Alexandria during the third and second

(John 1:45). The Jews of the first century A.D., including the Pharisees and Sadducees, believed Moses wrote the Pentateuch (Matt. 19:7; Mark 12:19; John 8:5). The early Christians believed it as well (Acts 15:21). The apostle Paul refers to the Pentateuch as that which Moses wrote and spoke (Rom. 10:5, 19; Acts 26:22). One must reject the words of all of these individuals in order to reject Moses as the author of the Pentateuch.

4. Jesus Christ claims that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. To the unbelieving Jews of his day, Jesus said, “For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me” (John 5:46). In making reference to the law Jesus speaks of that which Moses permitted (Matt. 19:8), that which Moses commanded (Matt. 8:4; Luke 5:14), that which Moses said (Mark 7:10), that which is in the book of Moses (Mark 12:26), and that which Moses

showed to be true (Luke 20:37). It should be evident that one must reject the testimony of the Son of God himself in order to reject Moses as the author of the Pentateuch.

Conclusion

Did Moses write the first five books of the Bible? Every reliable source on the matter says that he did. Does it make a difference whether one believes Moses wrote the Pentateuch or not? Well, if he did not, then the Old Testament is filled with lies, the New Testament is based on error, and perhaps most significantly, Jesus Christ cannot be trusted. But thanks be to God that, “He did not leave himself without witness” (Acts 14:17) on this, and all vital matters of truth.

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centuries before Christ, provided the books of the Pentateuch with new names, which have come down to us through the Latin Bible. So the first book received the name of *Genesis*, which is the Greek word for ‘birth’ or ‘origin’ because the book presents us with the record of the ‘birth’ or ‘origin’ of heaven and earth, of the human race, and the people of Israel. The second book was called *Exodus*, the Greek word meaning ‘departure’, as the book pictures the departure of the people of Israel from Egypt. The third book was entitled *Leviticus*, which indicates that it is particularly devoted to the services performed at the sanctuary of the Lord by the tribe of Levi. The fourth book was headed with the Greek word *Arithmoi*, and so in the English Bible it is called *Numbers*. This name was chosen on account of the two numberings of the people, related in chapters 1 and 26. The fifth and last book got its name *Deuteronomy*, which means ‘repetition of the law’, because it contains the addresses given by Moses to his people in the land of Moab; these were a repetition of the law promulgated at Mount Sinai.

The name of the book tells us about its contents and points to God as the creator of all things. Genesis relates the beginning of matter, the world, the first marriage, the beginning of the family, the beginning of sin, the beginning of worship, the beginning of Covenants and promises between God and man, the beginning of language and prophecy, the beginning of nations and the beginning of weeks. In Genesis we find the first principles of how God began to deal with the human race.

The Author of Genesis

Moses is the author of the book of Genesis. Yet, many modern theories deny the idea that the law of Moses is a revelation from God to man. One theory says that man did not know how to write in Moses’ day.

The Jews call the first five books of the Bible, Genesis through Deuteronomy, the Torah. This section of the Bible contains and is called the “*law of Moses*” (Josh. 8:31-32; John 1:17).

Jesus believed the book of Genesis was inspired, and that the Father breathed into the mind of Moses the thoughts and words that he should write (John 7:19, 23; Luke 16:29, 31; 24:44).

1. Jesus believed in creation (Mark 13:19).
2. Jesus believed in the creation of man (Matt. 19:4).
3. Jesus believed in Noah and the flood (Luke 17:26-

27).

4. Jesus believed in Sodom and Gomorrah and their destruction (Matt. 10:15; Luke 17:28-32).
5. To reject the Genesis account is to reject the testimony of Jesus (Matt. 19:4-6).

Jesus quotes from Genesis 2 and calls it “*the beginning*” and says that God made them “*male*” and “*female*.” If God made them male and female in the beginning, this rules out all possibility of evolution. If the Genesis account is not literally true, Jesus was teaching a falsehood. What then, are some of the consequences of rejecting the testimony of Christ?

1. Jesus is not omniscient if he was mistaken here.
2. Jesus is not what he claimed to be but rather an imposter.
3. Jesus cannot be relied upon regarding anything else.

Not one voice among the Jews was ever raised in denial of the authority or author of Genesis in Jesus’ day! This proves that man did not corrupt the *true creation story*, as some suppose. The reason for this is the longevity of life in the beginning. Adam was 687 years old when Methuselah was born. That means, Methuselah could have and probably did, talk to Adam

for 233 years about God and creation, and then passed that information on to Noah who passed it on to his sons. Shem, Noah’s son, was contemporary with Abraham, therefore, Abraham could have talked to Shem and learned the truth first hand about creation and the flood, since belief in one God, Jehovah, had turned to a belief in polytheism, idols, myths, and magic among the people of the world at this point in history. Genesis and the Bible are true in indicating that man started with one God, and soon added many gods. This is interesting:

Babylonia was long known as the “Land of Nimrod.” It is said that “many cities and nations had for their chief god their founder: as Asshur, father of the Assyrians, became the chief god of the Assyrians; and Marduk (Nimrod), founder of Babylon, became the chief god of Babylon. And, to make their gods more real, images were made to represent the gods; and them the images themselves came to be worshipped as gods. Thus, man took his nosedive from Original Monotheism into the abyss of innumerable polytheistic idolatrous cultures, some of which, in their practices, were unspeakably vile and abominable.” (Halley’s Handbook 95).

Genesis, and the Old Testament Canon

Genesis is a part of the Old Testament canon. Canon refers to the books of the Bible that are authentic, that is, a product of divine inspiration, and therefore accepted as Holy Scripture. God communicated his will to man through inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16-17). So, there can be no doubt that the book of Genesis is an authoritative revelation from God. Josephus wrote:

We have not a multitude of books among us, disagreeing and contradicting one another, as the Greeks have, but are confined to twenty-two, that we are bound to believe. And those twenty-two books comprise the history of the world from the beginning to this day. Five of them treat of the creation of the world, and the generation of mankind, and so to the death of Moses, in a series of little less than three thousand years” (The Complete Works of Josephus 609).

Josephus speaks of twenty-two books comprising the Old Testament, while today we have thirty-nine. The difference lies in how we divide and count the books of the Old Testament. They divided the books into the Torah, Prophets and Writings while we divide the books of the Old Testament into the Law, History, Poetry, and Prophecy (Major, Minor). The Jews counted the twelve Minor Prophets as one book. They also combined 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles into one book each. Therefore, one can see how they would arrive at a lower number of books in the Old Testament.

There is no doubt that the book of Genesis was a part of the Old Testament canon that was accepted by the Jew’s and the Lord himself as the inspired word of God. Mike Willis wrote:

The text of the book of Genesis is well preserved in the Massoretic texts which go back to the 9th century A.D. These ninth century texts reflect a more ancient text because the Jews had a tradition of destroying their old texts once a new one had been copied. The Dead Sea Scrolls reflect a text dating 200-100 B.C. and confirm that the existing text has been accurately transcribed since then. Textual critics generally agree that the Bible has been faithfully transmitted down to this generation. Only the unlearned or those who willfully misrepresent the truth question the authenticity of the text of the Bible” (Gen. 2).

Genesis Is Scientifically Accurate.

Moses knew information that no man at that time could have known without divine revelation. He knew that the whole earth was covered with water in the beginning. Then, God gathered the waters together into one place. All the oceans on earth are actually “*in one place*,” or literally, “*in one bed*” (Gen. 1:9). The oceans are actually just one ocean. How did Moses, who had never traveled the globe, know this, unless God revealed it?

Genesis says, creatures reproduce “*after their kind.*” (Gen. 1:11-12). “The word translated “*kind*” (min) here apparently refers to the general reproducing groups of organisms (1 :21, 24-25). The term probably does not refer to the term *species* in most cases, but it may refer to what we call genera, families, orders, or other taxonomic categories. The word may have no exact twentieth-century equivalent. And, while there may be some uncertainty as to what is precisely meant by “*kind*”, it is plain that the word does have a definite and fixed meaning. One “*kind*” could not transform itself into another “*kind.*” We can infer that all the changes which take place (and we admit that some do take place), happen only within the boundaries set by the creative hand of God, because organisms reproduce “*after their kind.*” Hence, no change is capable of causing an organism to move to a kind different from that of its ancestors. On the evidence of these texts, and given the fact that evolution’s advocates have not been able to produce examples of the very thing which they are obligated to prove, there are many very substantial reasons to reject the evolutionary account of man’s origin:

1. Eve was formed from the body of Adam.
2. Adam was molded by divine transmutation from some type of earth.
3. Descendants of the original man and woman (as well as other creatures) must have been subject to change in a limited sense by diversification, which would account for such things as racial variations.

This clear teaching of Genesis 1 is accepted and confirmed in other parts of the Bible. For example, consider 1 Corinthians 15:38-39: “. . . God giveth . . . to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.” (This material taken from an article, “The Biblical Account of Creation,” written by Dan King).

Genesis 1:1-2 contains the five basic facts of science and they are in scientific order.

Time - “*In the beginning*”
Space - “*God created the heavens*”
Matter - “*And the earth*”
Force - “*And the Spirit of God*”
Energy - “*Moved upon the face of the waters*”

Genesis Has Many Idioms

The book of Genesis contains some of the oldest idioms known to man. An “idiom” is “A speech form or an expression of a given language that is peculiar to itself grammatically or cannot be understood from the individual meanings of its elements, as in *keep tabs on*. Regional speech or dialect. A specialized vocabulary used by a group of people.” (American Heritage Dic.). Some examples of

“Used-Car” Religion

Steve F. Deaton

When you think of used-car salesmen, what comes to mind? Do you think of cheap suits, fast talk, less-than-honest dealing, or a “puffy” pitch? This is the typical impression we get from advertisements and dealings with such men. Most of us despise such. Surprisingly, many who avoid used-car salesmen often prefer a “used-car” preacher, except for the cheap suit.

Used-car salesmen will tell you what you want to hear. They will be positive about the car, while avoiding anything negative. “Used-car” preachers say what makes people feel good inside. They do not condemn them for their sins. Their “pitch” is free from pain and sacrifice. That is, they do not tell people they must give up sin, change their lifestyle, and wholly submit to God’s commands (Acts 2:38; 3:19).

Paul warned Timothy about such men.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears from the truth, and be turned aside to fables (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

“Used-car” preachers are filled with razzle-dazzle — and the people love to have it so! They are flashy, charismatic, and can “sell” the gospel to anyone, and will use many “gimmicks” to get the job done. Fourth-of-July celebrations, pizza parties, softball teams, bicycle give- aways, and many other things are used to draw in the children. Adults are appealed to with financial seminars, divorce recovery groups, singles dances, and “it’s a great place for your kids.” It is all carnality.



When a person buys a car from a stereotypical used-car salesman, what do they soon find out? The car is a lemon. Friend, if you have a “used-car” religion, pawned off on you by a “used-car” preacher, you have a lemon. What is the remedy? Get rid of it and search for quality in religion by studying the Bible (Acts 17:11).

The religion of Christ as revealed in the New Testament is without defect or deceit. It is the new and living way, not the worn-out product of men (Heb. 10:20; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). It will take you down the narrow road and help you avoid the potholes of sin (Matt. 7:13-14). Too, unlike the lemon religions of men, it will not break down on you and leave you stranded on the way to your destination — heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-9; 2 Pet. 1:3-11).

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“idioms” found in Genesis: “Vagabond” which means wanderer and “meat” which means produce, i.e., fruit and vegetables. Man did not begin to eat the flesh of animals until after the flood (Gen. 9:3).

Conclusion

We have no reason to reject the book of Genesis as un-

inspired or that someone else, other than Moses wrote it. I believe we can clearly see upon the evidence provided that Genesis and the rest of the Torah is exactly what it claims to be – the inspired record of the history of man from the

beginning and how God deals with man.

“Increasing In Strength”

Jarrold Jacobs

Spiritual growth is something that is required of all children of God. Unlike physical growth, one can control his/her spiritual growth, and does so on a daily basis. In fact, the Bible commands men and women to grow spiritually. Peter said, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: . . . But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen” (1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18). In the book of Hebrews, those Jewish Christians were chastised and rebuked for not growing as they should. “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:12-14).

Based on these two passages, we can learn some vital points concerning spiritual growth. We learn that spiritual growth: (1) Begins at an early spiritual age. Even those who are babes in Christ can “grow.” (2) One grows through a diet of “milk” (or “the first principles”) and the “meat” of God’s word. (3) One grows from a babe in Christ to mature in Christ through “exercising” and using the senses. (4) One’s growth and maturity

in Christ is seen as one is better able to discern “both good and evil.”

Having understood these things, let us study about one specific case of spiritual growth in the New Testament. Saul (Paul) is a prime example of one who grew spiritually, and grew fairly quickly in the faith. We find the record of his conversion in Acts 9. There, Christ told him to go to Damascus and it would be told him what he “*must do*” to be saved (Acts 9:3-6). Saul entered the city and for three days and nights fasted and prayed before God (vv. 9, 11). Once Ananias told him what he must do, Saul was baptized (vv. 17-18). Then, “he took food and was strengthened” (Acts 9:19).

Following this, we see Saul with the disciples at Damascus. “And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ” (Acts 9:20-22).

Notice that in the text of Acts 9:19-22, the words “strengthened” and “strength” have been used in reference to Saul. Do these words refer to the same thing? No. One time, Saul “was strengthened” after

having received food. Remember, he had gone without food or drink for three straight days (Acts 9:9). The next time the word was used, we find Saul increasing “the more in strength” as a result of his preaching Christ (v. 20), and confounding (baffling) the Jews (v. 22).

Now, what was the difference between the first use of the word “strength” or “strengthened” and the second? The difference was that Saul was strengthened physically the first time, and spiritually the second time.

How did Saul increase “the more in (spiritual) strength”? It came through proclaiming the truth concerning Christ; it came through standing for the truth even when it contradicted his former life (Acts 9:21). It also came through controversy, i.e., confounding the Jews concerning Christ. What we read in Acts 9:20-22 is a specific application of Hebrews 5:14 which encourages us to have our “senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

A problem that is plaguing the Lord’s church in many places is a lack of maturity on the part of the Christians. Too many congregations have 20, 30, and 40 year-old babies when it comes to spiritual growth. They cannot teach, they cannot lead the worship services, they cannot talk to someone about their soul one-on-one, they have little interest in spiritual matters, they know very little about the Bible, (other than what the preacher has said) and they certainly want nothing to do with controversy or with having to maintain the lines God has drawn against sin and error, i.e., “discerning good and evil” (See also: Ezek. 22:26)! It seems rather than increasing “the more in strength” as Saul did, they are satisfied to be baptized, and then “live and let live.” They are spiritual weaklings (some call them “spiritual invertebrates” — no backbone!), spiritual babies who need to be rebuked for their lack of growth (Heb. 5:12-14).

Brethren, we must not have this attitude if we are going to be what God wants us to be. Let us have the fire and zeal of Saul. In fact, he would later write to Titus and say that Christ died “that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit. 2:14). He would tell the Romans that Christians must be, among other things, “fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” (Rom. 12:11). We will not be what God wants us to be if we do not have that fire and fervor to stand for God’s word, to proclaim it far and wide, and let the chips fall where they may.

It is past time that we got busy on our spiritual growth. Brethren, this is not something that you wait for like a teenager’s “growth spurt.” Spiritual growth is something we must work at on a daily basis.

Why did Saul increase “the more in strength”? It was not because someone else did his work, nor because he let people think what they wanted to about Christ and his church. He did not grow as a result of “taking his seat” and waiting for strangers to walk in the door at Damascus. He did not grow by saying that he and the Jews were “worshipping the same God.” Saul stands out as a good example for all of us, because when we do what he did, we will grow as he did!

Was this all Saul did in order to become strong spiritually? Of course, not! We see Saul consistently in prayer with God (Eph. 1:15-23; 3:13-21; Phil. 1:3-4; Col. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:3). We see sacrifices Saul made for the Lord (Acts 15:25-26; 16:22-23, 21:13; 23:12-13; 2 Cor. 11:8, 23-28; 12:15; Col. 4:10, 18). We also find Saul concerned about his brethren, and being a good example toward them (2 Cor. 11:28; 1 Thess. 2:2-12). All of these things played a part in Saul’s spiritual growth; and in Acts 9:20-22, we find a living example of Hebrews 5:14.

By the way, how is our growth? Are we still a ways off from where we would like to be as a Christian? I know of no person who would say they have grown as much as needed, do you? Therefore, let us get to work and be busy in our spiritual growth.

Let us follow the righteous example of Saul (Paul) who shows us what true strength is (1 Cor. 4:16, 11:1; Phil. 3:17). Let us not merely tolerate, but demand that strong, sound gospel preaching thunder forth from the pulpit. Let us challenge ourselves to bring others to Christ by explaining the truth to them. Let us not back down from the devil when he rears his head and challenges us. Let us not apologize for controversy between truth and error. Let us, with a determined resolve, stand as Saul stood, and do what he did. Let us “confound the Jews” of our day and discern both good and evil that we might lead others to Christ. “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

Conclusion

Who knows the untold numbers of people that came to the Lord as a result of Saul’s work (Acts 19:10, 28:23-24, 30-31, etc.). But, he could have done nothing had he sat on the sidelines and been satisfied to occupy his space, and not challenge error in her strongholds and citadels. Had he not been increasing in strength in his early days as a Christian, he may not have done all that he did.

You may never (physically) grow more than five feet tall, but you (and I) can be giants for the Lord when we increase in our spiritual strength and grow as a Christian should!

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A Faithful Saying

Lewis Willis

Have you ever stopped to think of the number of “sayings” people use in daily conversation? Notice some of them. “Haste makes waste.” “A stitch in time saves nine.” “Neither a borrower nor a lender be.” “Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.” I suspect you have already thought of several similar “sayings” which you have heard or used through the years. Would you be surprised if you learned that the Bible also speaks of “sayings”?

This is *a faithful saying*, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief (1 Tim. 3:15).

The apostle Paul makes this statement in the broader context of his own life and experience. He affirms that God had chosen him especially for the work of apostleship and preaching which he was doing (v. 12). Furthermore, he affirmed that he was a most unlikely candidate for such a responsibility; he had not been a friend to the cause of the Lord. To the contrary, the apostle said he had been “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious” to that cause (v. 13). So, what could possibly be the explanation for his selection by Christ for the great work he was doing?

Things Involved In His Selection

1. Mercy. Paul said he had obtained mercy from the Lord of glory, which explained his role in the ministry of Christ. The Greek word translated mercy, *eleeo*, is a word meaning “to feel sympathy with the misery of another, and especially sympathy manifested in act...to have pity or mercy shown one” (Vine 61). Obviously, Paul perceived the sympathy and pity God bestowed upon him in redeeming him from the sin in which Paul was involved.

The apostle further explains this mercy and its effects. “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting” (v. 16). God is said to be “rich in mercy” (Eph. 2:4). Fortunately, this is true, for without his mercy, we would all be hopelessly lost.

2. Grace. Next the apostle said God’s grace was abundant to him. In fact, he said it was exceedingly abundant. Without God’s grace, there would have been no forgiveness for Paul, nor would he have been out preaching and promoting the Lord’s kingdom.

To the Ephesians, Paul affirmed salvation by grace through personal faith (Eph. 2:5, 8-9). In our context, Paul also associated the “exceeding abundant” grace with “faith.” God bestows his grace and favor upon those who believe in him. Without faith, we can neither please God nor receive grace (Heb. 11:6).

3. Love. In explaining what had occurred in his own life, Paul said that God’s love was at work toward him. The great message of the Gospel is that God loved mankind, giving his own Son to die to redeem us from our sins (John 3:16). This same truth is affirmed in Romans 5:8. Where would we be without his love?

Now, The “Faithful Saying”

Paul said there is a “faithful saying” which was commonly known and understood, to wit, “. . . that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (v. 15). The explanation for the life of Christ on the earth, like the explanation for Paul’s personal selection to apostleship, was predicated upon the truth that Christ came to save sinners. To that end, Christ died at Calvary, shedding his blood to wash away our sins. Also to that end, Paul was selected to take this gospel of salvation to a lost and dying world. This “faithful saying” is still the treasure of every believer who is seeking salvation from his sins.

In that same verse Paul said, this “saying” is “worthy of all acceptance.” That is to say, all sinners must accept that salvation from sin is available to us all in Christ Jesus, as a result of the mercy, grace, and love of God who had Jesus die for us. What could men do that is more “worthy” than to accept the marvelous, soul-saving blessings which God bestowed upon them through Christ?

This “*saying*” is called a “faithful” saying. Why? The explanation lies in the fact that it is in perfect harmony with the character of God. Name the things which pass through your mind when you think of God. Do you not immediately think of his gift of his only begotten Son, dying for our sins? Do you not think of his Mercy? His Grace? His Love?

While men sometimes will show mercy, grace, and love toward each other, none can ever attain unto these blessed things in the likeness, or to the degree, of Almighty God. These are things we reserve to explain all that God has done for us. Herein lies whatever hope we have for present forgiveness, and for eternal happiness and rest.

Paul, the “chief” sinner, received the salvation of his soul, as a result of these expressions of God’s benevolence

to him. In like manner, you and I must find our salvation in the same place. When Paul was confronted with the truths about Jesus Christ, he renounced his rebellion against him, and embraced him in humble obedience to his commands.

If we are to be saved today, we must do the same. The burning question is: “Have I accepted the offer of salvation from Christ, by my personal obedience to his commands?” We may do many great things in life, but unless we have the salvation that Christ alone gives, our lives are empty and vain. We must not allow this gracious gift of eternal life to pass us by.

address?

Will The Kingdom Be Established At Christ’s Second Coming?

John Isaac Edwards

Many today are looking for the kingdom to come as they have been made to believe Christ will establish his kingdom when he comes the second time. The Bible teaches the kingdom has already been established.

The Kingdom Was At Hand In Jesus’ Day

When Jesus preached in Galilee, he preached the coming kingdom. Matthew 4:17 records, “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom is at hand.”

Some Lived to See the Kingdom Come

The Lord declared, “Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power” (Mark 9:1). If the kingdom is yet to be established, then either Jesus is a liar or there must be some pretty ancient people roaming the earth today! If not, why not?

People Said To Be In the Kingdom

Paul wrote the Colossian Christians, “translated into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col. 1:13). The beloved apostle John stated, “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom” (Rev. 1:9). How could these be said to be in the kingdom, if the kingdom hasn’t been established yet?

When Jesus Received His Kingdom

The prophecy of Daniel 7:13-14 has Christ receiving his kingdom when he “*came to the Ancient of days,*” which occurred as recorded in Acts 1:9-11. The false theory that Christ will come back to earth, set up his kingdom and rule and reign in Jerusalem for 1,000 years, has Christ receiving his kingdom when *he comes from* God, the Father. If you can understand the difference in “to” and “from,” you’ll have no difficulty with this.

When Christ comes the second time, he will not come to set up his kingdom (for he did that when he came the first time); he will come to deliver up the kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24). Do you know the difference in set up and deliver up?

God's Construction Work

Marc D. Gibson

There seems to be construction and repair going on everywhere around us. Old buildings are being torn down and replaced with new ones, roads are being constantly widened to handle more traffic, and constant maintenance and repair is required to keep present structures in decent shape. We learn to live with all this activity because it is necessary. God speaks of the *church* in construction terms. We should take a moment to observe this spiritual activity.

Building

Jesus said that he would build "his church" (Matt. 16:18). The construction material would not be physical materials like stone and wood, but obedient believers in God. To Christians Peter wrote, "You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5). The church is God's spiritual house to uphold and teach the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). The church is also described as a holy temple: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (1 Cor. 3:16-17). God laid the perfect foundation, Jesus Christ, and those in Christ are the material built upon it (1 Cor. 3:9, 11). The pattern for this building is found in the Scriptures, the word of Christ. A building built from any other pattern will not belong to Jesus. "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it" (Ps. 127:1a).

Maintenance

Every structure must be maintained in order to keep it from developing problems that would threaten its existence. All the parts of the building must be kept in good working order. In the church, each Christian is to be functioning in spiritual work. "This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men. . . . And let our people learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful" (Tit. 3:8, 14). The church is compared to a physical body where each mem-

ber does its share for the good of the entire body (1 Cor. 12:14-27; Eph. 4:16).

There may be a need to repair a problem that would threaten the structure of God's house. Those who are spiritual are to restore the one who is "overtaken in any trespass" (Gal. 6:1). When one member of the church at Corinth continued to live in sin, Paul told them to "deliver such a one to Satan. . . . Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore, purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened" (1 Cor. 5:5, 6-7). Tolerating or overlooking sin and error endangers all who make up the spiritual body of Christ.

Tearing Down

There are certain circumstances when it is necessary to tear down a structure either because it is no longer useful or it is not what was supposed to be built. The church at Ephesus was told to "repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place" (Rev. 2:5). This would be a divine rejection of a structure (local church) that was no longer functioning as it should. Jesus also said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted" (Matt. 15:13). Any church not built after the pattern revealed in the New Testament will be destroyed on the last day, and those who did not obey the will of God will be rejected (Matt. 7:21-23).

Our Lord has designed and revealed the construction of his spiritual house, the church. We must submit to the will of Jesus who was made "head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23). Let the church be exactly what Christ built, and let us faithfully maintain our role as spiritual stones in that house.

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“Creator” continued from front page

from your body; for youth and the dawn of life are vanity (Eccl. 11:10).

It's very hard to have a good time when you're mentally tormented by sinful behavior. There is nothing fun about fear and anxiety about “getting caught” or “getting into trouble” because your actions have been evil. Try having a good time when your actions have caused injury to your body, or worse yet, to someone else's. It's impossible. Our youth should be a time of fun and joy, without the burden of stress, anxiety, and bodily injury. Many a young person has tainted their most fun and exciting years with stress and injury that only comes when one seeks to follow after sin and folly in their youth.

Notice the prescription that the wise man gives to ensure our joy and happiness:

Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when you will say, “I have no pleasure in them” (Eccl. 12:1).

While we are enjoying our youth and relishing in the adventure of our new lives, we must *remember* the creator. This literally means “to bring *him* to mind.”

Why should I remember my Creator in the days of my youth? Let's talk about that.

God's Laws Are For My Good

As God spoke his commands through Moses to the children of Israel Moses said, “And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, *for our good always*, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day.”

God desires only good for us. The things that he has commanded us to do, or the things that he has commanded us to avoid, are only for our good. God wishes not to withhold anything that is fun or enjoyable that resounds to our benefit. It is only the things that promise us happiness, that actually provide us heartache that he warns us to avoid.

A tactic of the devil is to try to get us to think that God is trying to withhold something from us. This device is as old as creation itself. The serpent in the garden tried to get Eve to believe that God was actually trying to withhold something from her that would resound to her benefit or enjoyment. Listen to the serpent, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” (Gen. 3:1). In asking this question, the devil was laying the ground work to convince Eve that God's commands were really holding her back from something more enjoyable. Read Genesis 3:1-19 and see what not listening to God's advice did for Adam and Eve.

Following God's commands in our youth will keep us from having to try to find our own way in life. The wise man said, “There's a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the ends thereof is death” (Prov. 14:12). God has given us a guide book in life so that we can know where the pitfalls are so we can avoid them, and where joy, happiness, and success are so we may obtain them. David said “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Remembering your creator and his law in your youth will bring about the ultimate in happiness and success. Jesus himself said, “If you know these things, happy are ye if you do them” (John 13:17).

See The Great Potential You Have In Your Life

Many times when we are young we fail to see the great opportunities we have to do good in our lives. Many think because they are young they cannot contribute significantly to the family, community, or to their local church. Our Creator has made it abundantly clear that you are significant and you are very important in his Son's kingdom. Paul exhorted the young man Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth, but be though an example of the believers” (1 Tim. 4:12). Consider some of the great Bible characters that were quite young yet very profitable in the Lord's service.

Joseph

Joseph was only seventeen years old when he was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers (Gen. 37:2), yet he was a giant in the Lord's service. While working for his master, Potipher, his master's wife tempted Joseph with adultery. Because of his remembrance of his creator (Gen. 39:9), he overcame the temptation, and later became the ruler over all of Egypt.

David

Who wouldn't want to be as brave as David? David, while a youth, withstood the intimidating giant Goliath that had all of Israel shaking with fear (1 Sam. 17:24). What allowed David to become the great savior of Israel on this occasion and later one of the greatest kings of Israel? His remembrance of his Creator while he was young. Note where David secured his courage and strength and subsequently his victory. “You come to me with sword and spear and javelin; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This very day the Lord will deliver you into my hand” (1 Sam. 17:45-46).

Josiah

It is said of Josiah, “Before him there was no king like him . . . nor did any like him arise after him.” Why could this be said of him? Was it because of his old age and experience? No, notice what the Scripture says, “Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign . . . He did what was right in the sight of the Lord . . . For in the eighth year of his reign (when he was sixteen years old, BA.), while he

was still a boy, he began to seek the God of his ancestor David” (2 Chron. 34:1-3). This young man became one of Judah’s greatest kings because he remembered his Creator while he was yet young.

Jeremiah

The great “weeping prophet” so named for his emotional pleadings for Judah to repent. Jeremiah overcame threats on his life, and the emotional turmoil of watching his beloved nation becoming slaves by remembering his Creator in the days of his youth. Jeremiah was called to this his great work while yet a youth. After God called him to be a prophet, Jeremiah protested, “Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.” But the Lord said to him, “Do not say, I am only a boy, for you shall go to all to whom I send and you shall speak whatever I command you, do not be afraid of them for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord” (Jer. 1:6-8).

Many other examples could be cited to make this point. Space will not allow me to speak of Miriam, Esther, Mary the mother of our Lord, or the young evangelist Timothy. However, these examples should stand as forceful reminders that you can accomplish great things in your youth. Don’t use your youth as an excuse not to excel in the Lord’s Kingdom. Understand that there is much you can do, seize your grand potential, and remember your Creator in the days of your youth.

A Misspent Youth Can Curse Your Future

Many a young man or young lady have yearned to sow their wild oats, only to later plead and pray for a crop failure! This simply will not work. The Apostle Paul declared, “Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you shall reap whatever you sow” (Gal. 6:7). And again the Scriptures confirm, “. . . and be sure your sin will find you out” (Num. 32:23). There is a great danger in spending your youth in rebellion to God.

Young people are often inclined to rebel against all forms of authority (parents, teachers, police etc.). This lends itself to trouble and heartache as many a young person find themselves branded as trouble makers or worse yet in prison for acts of rebellion. Remembering our Creator in our youth will cause us to submit to authority (Eph. 6:1-3; Rom. 13:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:13-14).

Many young people think nothing of lying. Once you are caught in a lie, your credibility is shattered. Your word will always be questioned. This adversely effects your ability to carry on relationships and find enjoyment. God advises us to put away lying (Col. 3:9; Rev. 21:8).

During the days of their youth many sow the seeds of stealing. Shoplifting and other such crimes are rampant among the young. If caught, others will be suspicious of

you and you will not be given positions of responsibility. God strictly forbids taking what rightfully belongs to others (Eph. 4:28; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Sex among young people is very popular. God calls this activity fornication and it is a grievous sin that God shall punish (Heb. 13:4; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8). Many do not consider the eternal consequences of this sin, not to speak of the temporal consequences. Sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, and early marriages that generally end in divorce are all life long consequences of this fleeting moment of pleasure.

Finally, drug use is something that many youths participate in to “go along with the crowd.” These drugs, even taken once, have possible life long consequences. Most of these drugs are illegal, setting one up for arrest and incarceration. Many of these drugs are life threatening even if take for the first time. All of these drugs are destructive to the body and mind, and could cause one to be physically or mentally impaired for life. Many a young person has lost a friend, or even accidentally caused the untimely death of themselves or others by the use of drugs including alcohol.

There are a good number of people who cannot enjoy a good portion of their life, because of all the bad choices they made while young. Hear the wise man when he warned to refrain from sin, “Lest you give your vigor to others, And your years to the cruel one; Lest strangers be filled with your strength, And your hard-earned goods go to the house of an alien; And you groan at your latter end, When your flesh and your body are consumed; And you say, ‘How I have hated instruction! And my heart spurned reproof!’ And I have not listened to the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined my ear to my instructors!” (Prov. 5:9-13).

Don’t be deceived into thinking that you can sow your wild oats in your youth with no consequence. You can ruin your life, or the lives of those around you, by sinning against your Creator. Life is hard enough as you get older, don’t saddle yourself with the shackles and weights of youthful indiscretions that you will have to carry with you all the days of your life.

The Young Have No Guarantee of the Future

I see many young people driving with the sign “No Fear” on their cars. They think they’re invincible. They seem to think that just because they’re young they’re guaranteed to live to be old. This is not the case. The wiseman said, “Boast not of tomorrow, for you know not what tomorrow will bring” (Prov. 27:1). James said, “For what is your life, it is but a vapor that appears for a little time then vanishes away” (Jas. 4:14). Death frequently strikes the young. As I grew up I witness many deaths of my young class mates. A young man that I played basketball with drowned in

his grandfather's pond at the age of thirteen. Three school mates died in car accidents. One died from cancer. No one knows how long they'll live, and no one knows when the Lord will return (Eccl. 9:12; 2 Pet. 3:9-11). What we do know is that we must be ready whenever death comes. "Its appointed unto to men once to die, and then the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). Young people don't live like you'll live forever because you won't. Don't live your lives like you'll live to be old, for you are not guaranteed that. Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, and you'll be ready to meet your Lord.

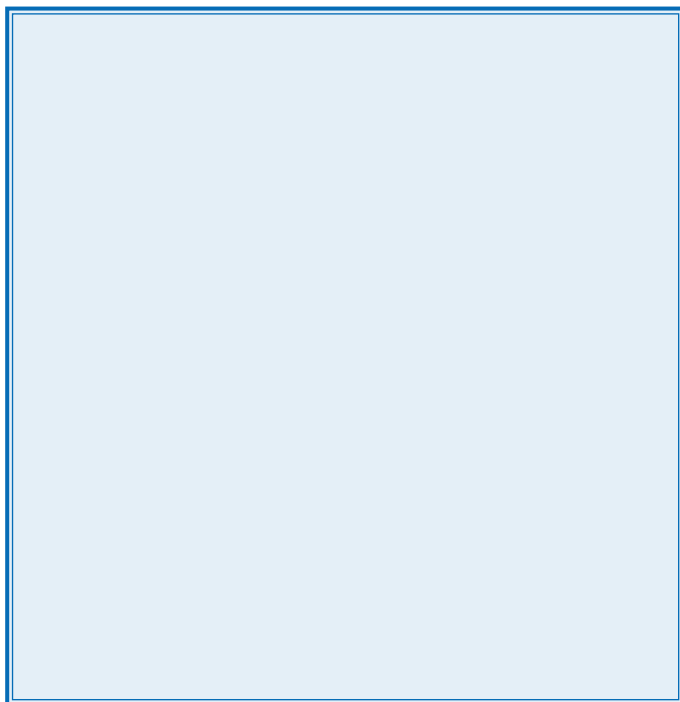
Conclusion

Young people remember your Creator in the days of your youth. Keep Him in your minds. Enjoy your life, bask in the beauty and adventure of your younger years, but do so within the confines of God's boundaries.

Remember that God wants you to enjoy your life. Remember that God's law's are there for your good and for your happiness and security. Remember that you have a great potential to do many wonderful things in your life if you follow your Creator's wisdom. Remember that a mis-spent youth can cause heartache for a lifetime. Remember that there is no guarantee what will be on the morrow.

Hear the wise man, "Remember now your Creator in days of your youth" (Eccl. 12:1). For in doing this, not only will you have memories that you can live with, but you will have memories you can feel comfortable dying with as well.

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"Gambling" continued from page 2

Gambling, by definition, means "to play a game for money or another stake. . . . Hence, to take money or other things of value upon an uncertain event; to hazard; to wager." (*Webster's N.I. Dictionary*). Gambling involves two essential elements:

1. The *stake* (one wins at another's expense).
2. The element of *chance* (if you play, there's a chance you'll win or lose).

One reason this sin seems so harmless and is so difficult to recognize is the plain fact that virtually every part of our society accepts some form or part of it.

Many denominational and secular groups, even some charity groups, not only approve, but also arrange for gambling events that raise money for the Lord or some worthy cause. Bingo and Monte Carlo Nights raise funds for various organizations (even some churches) that hide behind the "good" the money does. In Las Vegas, the gaming industry receives positive publicity because of the millions of revenue dollars it gives to the schools. Most states have passed and adopted lottery systems as acceptable means of raising revenues without raising taxes. Nevada doesn't even have a state tax.

When we examine some of the arguments offered by those who condone gambling, it becomes easier to see why these arguments are wrong.

Gambling is a form of entertainment. While preaching in a meeting in California, I learned that two couples that attended there had recently returned from a gambling weekend in Las Vegas. (One man was a former elder!) He tried to tell me that gambling was no different than hunting and fishing. He also said he did it only for entertainment. When I asked if he would give back any money he won, he said, "Of course not; it's mine." I told him I knew of a place in Las Vegas where they sold old slot machines. He could purchase one, put it in his home, save money, and still get the entertainment value. He answered: "No way, how can I win the jackpot by doing that!"

Gambling, just like driving, investing, or farming, is a risk. Yes, driving is a risk, but it is not a risk you choose or desire. If a man drives safely, how does he gain another's property? Will others lose anything if he drives safely?

Farmers often risk suffering losses due to weather, insects, low crop prices, diseases, etc. They do not desire the risks; in fact, they would prefer not to suffer the losses. Are they attempting to gain something for nothing? If they do lose, they lose their own — not someone else's — work, time, and money. Do farmers wish to take advantage of others by taking from them and gaining at their expense?

Is putting money into investments or bonds gambling? Does the investor hope someone else loses so he can gain? He invests his own money and time to make money, and if he loses, it's his money. The investor wins only if business prospers; he wants everyone to win.

Sadly, those who make such arguments need to understand the difference between "risk" and "chance." In life, many things are "risks." Gambling involves chance — not risk. Gambling is not one of the three legitimate ways to make money.

1. **Labor** — money paid and earned through either physical or mental effort.
 - a. Working for wages. Read Matthew 20:1,2; Luke 10:7.
 - b. Providing for our own. Read 1 Timothy 5:8.
2. **Exchange** — an item exchanged for its money value or other goods of equal value.
 - a. Buying, selling, or trading a thing for something of the same value. Read Luke 22:36; John 4:8. Paul made tents to help earn his living (Acts 18:3).
3. **Love** — money or other goods (gift or inheritance) received without expectation of a return.
 - a. **Giving or receiving a gift.** Read Ephesians 4:28; Acts 2:45; 4:36,37.

Is there a passage where God authorizes men to play a game of chance and risk something of value on the outcome, so that some will profit because others lose?

One day, while I was working in my Las Vegas office, I received a call from a Christian who had traveled from Texas to Las Vegas with his family. He had never been to Las Vegas and had never gambled. He just wanted to try it. After two days at the tables, he had lost all of his money. He was about to cash in his plane tickets when his wife and

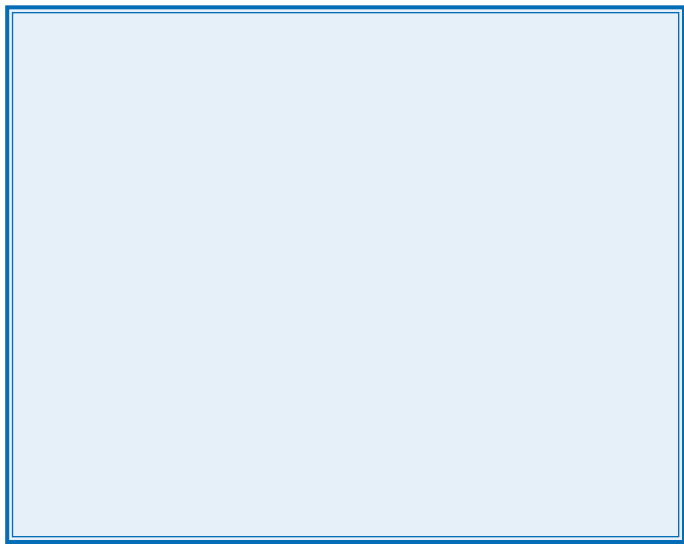
children finally persuaded him to stop. He cried and asked me to pray that God would forgive him for setting such a terrible example before his family. He couldn't understand how such a thing could happen to him. It happens when you put your first coin in the slot machine, or when you make your first bet!

During our time in Las Vegas, I had many discussions with people who were addicted to alcohol, drugs, and gambling. When asked to identify the mistake that triggered their becoming "hooked" on these addictions, each said the same thing: "It was the first drink, the first drug, or the first bet." If you don't start, you will not become an addict. Some people get the "gambling fever." One young man who was in the military is now serving ten years in a military prison for stealing government money to support his gambling addiction.

Does gambling destroy the Christian's influence? Absolutely! When I made this comment during a lesson on gambling in Las Vegas, one of the sisters took offense. When she bought groceries, she always used her change to play the slot machines. Later, she told me she planned to get her Bible and prove me wrong. For six weeks, she avoided the machines at the grocery store. One day, the change girl (the person who converts bills into coins) saw her and called her over. She told the sister she had not seen her at the machines for a while and was wondering whether she had been on vacation. The sister told her about my sermon and what I had said and that she had been studying and had purposely avoided the slot machines. The change girl looked at her and asked, "You're a Christian?" The sister repented to God and to me; since that time, she has not placed one quarter in a slot machine.

Yes, it may look like harmless fun; but gambling has destroyed many lives. There is not anything good about it. God said false prophets would be known by "their fruits" (Matt. 7:20). Gambling produces only bad fruit. It is attractive because someone gets something for nothing. What he gets may rightfully be yours, and vice versa.

During a flight home after a meeting, I sat beside a fellow who was about to begin his first Las Vegas visit. He was so excited; he couldn't wait for the plane to land. He asked if this was my first trip, and I told him I lived in Las Vegas. He thought that was great and asked if I could tell him the best places to gamble. "Sure," I said, "no where." As we flew over the strip, I asked him to look out the window. Then I asked where they got the money to build all those casinos. He assumed they were financed by individual investors or by financial institutions. He didn't understand that the people who gamble make the casino payments! Casinos are built with money that belongs to the losers — not the winners. When, against the odds, you win the jackpot, you take another person's money. The casino has already taken its share.



Just before we left, Las Vegas was going to attempt to improve its image so as to entice families to bring their children to visit. To accomplish this, many of the casinos built arcades and game rooms for the younger children. The idea was to get the children to pay money to play in an effort to win various prizes. From a business standpoint, it was a huge success. They were grooming the younger crowd to move upstairs to the big tables. Both places (upstairs and downstairs) have the same concept — gamble and take a chance on an uncertain outcome.

Bingo, raffles, fair arcades, as well as baseball and football squares at the office, are all forms of gambling. Christians who seek to serve God must make every attempt not to destroy their influence and open the door to further temptation by playing such games. Young people, do not allow yourselves to be taken in by the lights, the ease of playing, and the temptation to make easy money. Nothing is further from the truth. Gambling is a sin because it always involves someone who wins at the expense of someone who loses. How do we show brotherly love when we steal from others in order to gain for ourselves?

1021 Welford Dr., Beavercreek, Ohio 45434

Quips & Quotes

Teens Are Believers

“A recent poll taken among American teens ages 13 to 17 found that religion really does matter to them.

1. Affiliated with a religious congregation: 82%
2. Attend worship two to three times a month or more: 52%
3. Religious belief ‘very’ or ‘somewhat similar’ to mother’s: 78%
4. Religious belief ‘very’ or ‘somewhat similar’ to father’s: 72%
5. Had few or no doubts about beliefs in the past year: 80%
6. Feel ‘extremely,’ ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ close to God: 71%
7. Pray alone a few times a week or more: 65%
8. Definitely’ believe in divine miracles from God: 61%
9. Experience what was believed to be a miracle from God: 50%
10. Made a personal commitment to live life for God: 55%

11. Religious faith ‘extremely’ or ‘very important’ in shaping daily life: 51%
12. Experienced a definite answer to prayer or guidance from God: 50%
13. ‘Definitely’ believe in life after death: 49%
14. Attend religious classes a few times a month or more: 46%
15. Currently involved with a religious youth group: 38%

“Note: No margin of error was released, though the response rate of 57 percent in the 2002-03 telephone survey makes the results statistically significant with variations depending on the group being discussed.

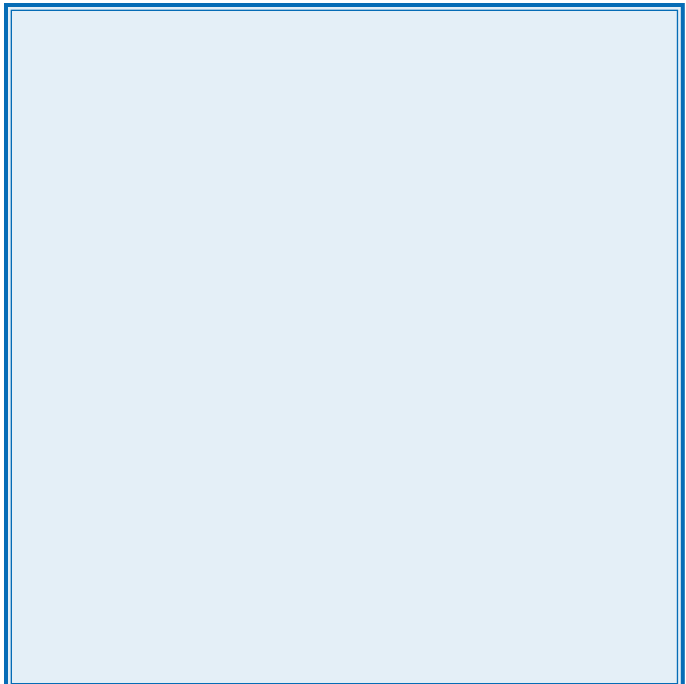
“Source: National Study of Youth and Religion (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill)” (The Indianapolis Star [February 24, 2005], A11.

“Churches to Leave Key Anglican Body

“London — Anglican primates agreed Thursday that the U.S. Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada would withdraw from a key body of the global Anglican Communion after failing to overcome church disagreement about the election of a gay U.S. bishop and the blessing of same-sex unions there and in Canada.

“The agreement marked the first formal breach in the communion on the explosive issues of sexuality and biblical authority.

“A statement from leaders of the Anglican national churches called on the two churches to explain their thinking on gay issues at another meeting in June.



"The presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, Frank T. Griswold, said that the debate would continue and that his fellow church leaders had made room 'for a wide variety of perspectives'" (The Indianapolis Star [February 25, 2005], A3.

LDS "Insider" Suspended

"Grant H. Palmer had expected to be punished by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for writing the 2002 book *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins*. But the delayed timing caught him off guard. Last December, Keith Adams, the leader of Grant's church in Sandy, Utah, dis-fellowshipped him. The sanction means Palmer may no longer speak publicly or take sacraments during the suspension of unspecified length.

"They felt [the book] had done some damage to people's faith by causing them to doubt Mormon foundational claims,' Palmer said. He is retired after 34 years as a college-level LDS educator.

"An Insider's View argues that LDS founder Joseph Smith didn't miraculously translate the Book of Mormon from golden plates. It also examines 'Smith's largely rewritten, materialistic, idealized, and controversial accounts of the church's founding.'

"Palmer joins an increasing number of Mormons and ex-Mormons publicly questioning the validity of the origins of the church, including Simon Southertron (CT, October

2004, 20) and Thomas W. Murphy (CT, March 2003, 24)" (Christianity Today [March 2004], 23).

Massachusetts Official Reverses Anti-gay Marriage Stand

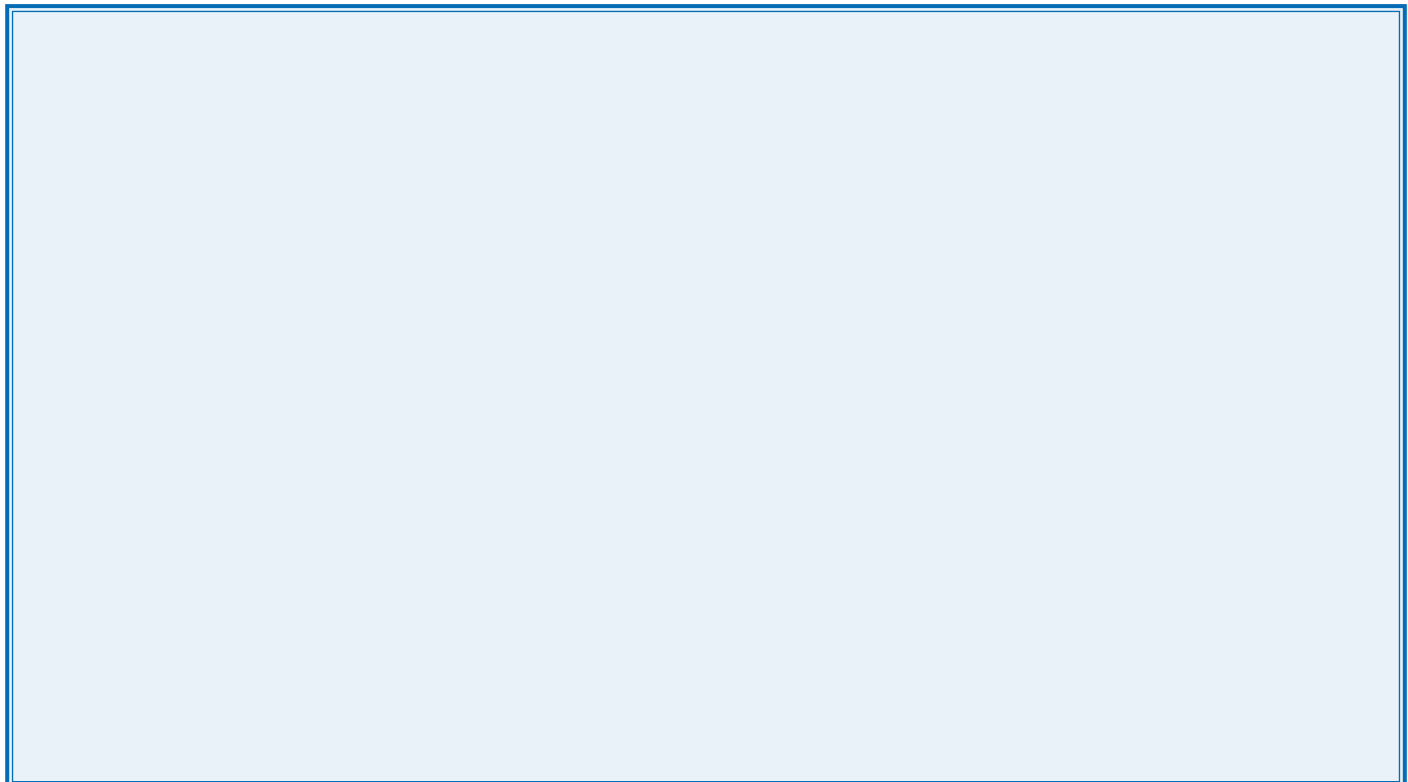
"Boston — The state attorney general, who played a key role in state efforts to fight the legalization of gay marriage a year ago, now says he favors same-sex marriage and will oppose any efforts to ban it.

"Thomas Reilly, an unannounced Democratic candidate for governor, said he would vote against a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage if it reaches the 2006 state ballot.

"Once rights are given, they should not be taken away,' Reilly told The Boston Globe for Saturday's editions.

Reilly fought gay marriage supporters in the case that led the Supreme Judicial court to rule that it was unconstitutional to bar same-sex couples from marrying. On May 17, Massachusetts became the first state to recognize same-sex weddings.

". . . Tim O'Brien, the executive director of the state Republican Party, said Reilly has 'completely flip-flopped' because he needs to answer to a special-interest group within the Democratic Party" (The Indianapolis Star [February 13, 2005], A5.



Second Annual Truth Magazine Lectures

The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible

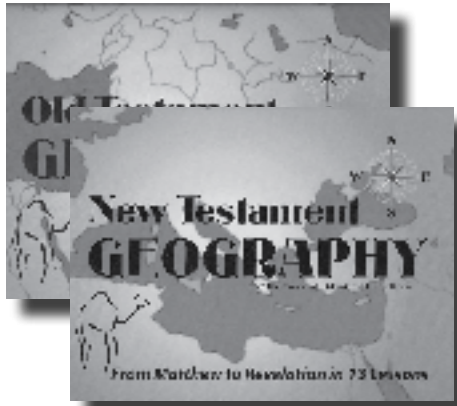
July 11-14-2005

Bowling Green, Kentucky — Convention Center

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
8:00 - 8:50	What About Islam and the Qu'ran? Kyle Pope	Is the Biblical Text Reliable? John Smith	Are There Lost Books of The Bible? Mark Mayberry
9:00 - 9:50	The Glorious Church Rody Gumpad	Evidences: Prophecy: Kevin Maxey	Evidences: Unity of the Bible Steve Wallace
10:00 - 10:50	Addictive Behaviors Pornography: Steve Wolfgang	Addictive Behaviors Substances of Abuse: Art Adams	Addictive Behaviors Gambling: Joe Price
11:00 - 11:50	Creation: Dan King	Genesis 3: Paul Blake	Genesis 6-8, The Flood: Tom O'Neal
Lunch Break			
Ladies Classes			
10:00 - 10:50	Dealing With Someone Addicted to Pornography: Betty Wolfgang	Teaching Children to Respect Authority: Sherilyn Mayberry	Creating Peace At Home Violet McDaniel
Auditorium			
2:00 - 4:00	Open Forum	No Forum	Elders & Work of the Church
Singing 7:00 - 7:30			
What Does the Bible Claim For Itself? Donnie V. Rader	Is the Bible Adequate to the Modern World? Walton Weaver	Oh How Love I Thy Law: Johnie Edwards <i>(After Wednesday evening Bible Study)</i>	First Century Morals for the Twenty-first Century: Andy Alexander



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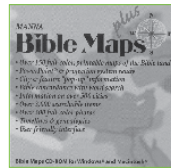
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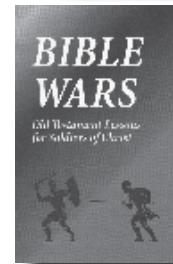


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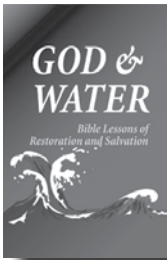


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