

# Magazine

## The Law of Cause and Effect

Lewis Willis

There is a law or rule which states that every effect must have an adequate cause. There is an effect playing itself out in the American Roman Catholic Church, and the leadership is supposedly searching for the cause which produced that effect. A meeting of their bishops in Dallas, Texas, the week of June 13-15, explored their situation and what they might be able to do to regain some measure of respect after months of negative publicity. The *Beacon Journal* (06/14/02) reported that 250 priests and four bishops have resigned or been dismissed since January of this year over the sexual scandal of pedophilia which has swept through their church.

The head of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Wilton D. Gregory, stated the depth of their problem with sexual abuse of young people by priests and bishops, saying, "The church in the United States is in a grave crisis, perhaps the gravest that we've faced." This situation is a public disaster for this human church.

In any other organization, the perpetrators of these criminal acts would have landed in jail, both the offenders and those who "covered up" their crime. With the popular Catholic Church, however, this despicable situation is only a public relations problem.

### What Is The Cause?

We know the effect, but what caused it? An article in the journal *Firm Foundation* (06/02/24) clearly identified

the cause of their dilemma. The author, Phil Brennan, of NewsMax.com, identifies the cause as homosexuality. Brennan quotes the liberal priest, Andrew Greeley ("... often called the church's resident pornographer for his racy novels. . ."), who says the cause of pedophilia is the "Lavender Mafia," which he identifies as "... a homosexual underground within the Catholic Church in America that has managed to dominate many of the seminaries and must bear the largest share of the blame for the sex scandals afflicting the church."

**In both testaments  
God has consistently  
condemned the  
abomination of  
homosexuality.**

Donald B. Cozzens, rector of St. Mary's Seminary in Cleveland, Ohio, warned in his book, *The Changing Face of the Priesthood*, that the priesthood is becoming a "gay profession." Cozzens said "a disproportionate number of homosexually-oriented persons," including faculty, are dominating their seminaries. He wrote that several studies have con-

cluded that about half of priests and seminarians are gay. Cozzens says the "gay subculture" propositions, harasses, and even molests, the "straight" seminary students.

The *Boston Globe* (03/4/02) printed the comments of Vatican spokesman for Pope John Paul II, Joaquin Navarro-Valls. He stated, "... a growing body of research suggests that a large proportion of Catholic priests are gay. . ." For-

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## Why Churches Are Not Strong

Mike Willis

I recently read an article by this same title in the December 2004 issue of *Therefore Stand* by Earl P. Stevens. It started me to thinking and I would like to amen the ideas brother Stevens expressed in his article and add a few of my own.



Periodically churches need to assess where they are. We take our autos in for a tune-up, we go to the doctor for a check-up, and we ask our financial advisors to review our portfolios. College teachers get feedback from their students in every class to evaluate the teaching process. Elders need to take the lead in doing a similar “check-up” on the spiritual status of the church. Unfortunately, too many churches are content to “keep house” for the Lord and never make any plans for growth, both spiritually and numerically. The churches in Asia were advised by the Lord to consider their strengths and weaknesses so that they could better serve the Lord.

There are some things about the failure of churches over which we have no control. The population shifts in our country cause people to relocate. Because there are no new jobs to hold people in an area, some of the rural congregations are dwindling and some have closed their doors. The little church where I grew up is suffering this problem. All of their young people move to Houston to find jobs and the little rural church is growing older and slowly growing smaller. However, these are not the kinds of things which I want us to consider in this article about why churches are not strong. I want to address those things which we can control. Here are some reasons why churches are not strong:

**Assemblies are regularly forsaken.** Look at the attendance board of practically any church in America. The Sunday AM assembly is the largest weekly assembly. A chunk of people do not return for evening worship and midweek services. In the church where I attend this is around 25%. When gospel meetings occur, sometimes about 40% do not attend any given night (except Wednesday) of the meeting.

The Lord commanded the church not to forsake its assembly, saying, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day ap-

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# Editorial Left-overs

Connie W. Adams

### Can Man Destroy the Universe?

I alternate between being amused and annoyed at the rantings of environmentalists who periodically issue dire warnings about how man is destroying the planet with industrial emissions into the atmosphere. God made the world and the universe for the use of man. That means that he ought to be a proper custodian of what God has entrusted to him. I think we all want clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. But let's get something straight: man did not create this universe and he is not powerful enough to destroy it. This notion of such power in the hands of mortal man is part and parcel of the secular humanist worldview that "man is the measure of himself."

The Lord asked Job some questions we ought to ponder as well. "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth! Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who set its measurements, since you know? Or who stretched the line on it? On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who enclosed the sea with doors, when bursting forth, it went out from the womb; when I made a cloud its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band, and I placed boundaries on it, and set a bolt and doors, and I said, Thus far you shall come, but no farther, and here shall your proud waves stop?" (Job. 38:4-11, NASB).

Paul said of Christ that "all things were created by him, and for him" and then added "and by him all things consist" (Col. 1:16-17). Christ was not only the creator of it all, but he is also the sustainer as well. The word "consist" means adhere or cling together. As one writer said that is why we have a cosmos and not a chaos. Every now and then we are reminded of forces in the universe about which we have no control — earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, tidal waves, blizzards, and floods. Man does not cause them and he is powerless to stop them. You don't need to worry about saving the planet. You did not make it and you cannot control it. But the God who made it and who presently sustains it has warned about the time when it will come to an end. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (2 Pet. 3:10-11). The God who made it and sustains it will, in his own time end it. Man can do none of that.

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## Meeting Schedule

The writer will be in meetings at the following places in 2005 and would be pleased to greet any of our readers who might be able to attend.

March — 2nd and Walnut, Paragould, Arkansas (6-11)  
River Bend, Florence, Alabama (20-25)

April — Cyclone, Kentucky (3-8)  
Danville, Kentucky (17-22)

May — Boston St., Aurora, Colorado (1-6)  
Beaverton, Oregon (11-15)

June — Batesville, Arkansas (5-10)  
Winchester, Ohio (19-24)

July — Truth Lectures, Bowling Green, Kentucky (11-14)  
Deckerville, Michigan (24-29)

August — Richmond, Missouri (7-12)  
Bethel, Hamden, Ohio (21-26)

September — Humboldt, Tennessee (11-16)  
West Lafayette, Ohio (25-30)

October — Cambridge, Ohio (2-7)  
Edna, Texas (16-21)

November — Spring Creek, Tennessee (Oct. 30- Nov. 4)  
St. Leon's, Indiana (13-18)



## One Note Songs

How long would it take you to grow weary of a song with one note? It might be delivered with accuracy, precision, and a rich, full voice. But one note? We used to say that a preacher who harped on the same theme, over and over, was a hobby rider. It might be that every word he said was true, delivered with conviction, power and even eloquence. But when every sermon (or article) reverted to that one theme, then the truth is not served when other subjects or equal value are neglected. Paul said he had not “shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” and that he kept back “nothing that was profitable unto you” (Acts. 20:20, 27). Paul wrote “so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ” (Rom. 15:19). So should we.

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# Optimism in the Face of Adversity

Kyle Pope

The Holy Spirit can paint word pictures more beautiful and stirring than any master artist could ever produce. In 2 Corinthians 4:8, 9 Paul, through the direction of the Holy Spirit, paints such a picture demonstrating the overwhelming optimism that can characterize the Christian life. Consider what is written:

“We are hard pressed on every side but not crushed” (v. 8). The word translated “hard pressed” is *thlibo* meaning “to press (as grapes), press hard upon, properly a compressed way, i.e. narrow, straightened, contracted, metaphorically to trouble, afflict, distress” (Thayer 291). The picture here is that of being squeezed (much like a bunch of grapes) by trials and persecutions. Yet, even so, in Christ Paul was not “crushed.” The word for “crushed” is *stenochoreo* meaning “to crowd together into a narrow place, straiten; passively to be in straits, to be cooped up, to be cramped from action, to be cramped in feeling” (Moulton 375). In spite of many pressures the Christian is not restrained by such pressures.

“We are perplexed, but not in despair” (v. 8). The wording here is subject to a few different interpretations. Paul may refer to his state of mind or his material status. The word translated “perplexed” is *aporeo* meaning “to be without resources, to be in straits, to be left wanting, to be embarrassed, to be in doubt, not to know which way to turn — Middle to be at a loss with one’s self, be in doubt; not to know how to decide or what to do, to be perplexed” (Thayer 66). The word translated “despair” is *exaporeo* meaning “to be at a loss. To be wholly without resource, to despair utterly” (Zodiaties 600). “Be in great difficulty, doubt, embarrassment, despair of living” (BAG 273). If we take it to refer to Paul’s material status Paul suggests that he is virtually without resource, and yet he is not utterly without resource. In Christ we can learn a contentment with the basic needs of life (see 1 Tim. 6:8).

“Persecuted, but not forsaken” (v. 9). In Greek the word for persecution is tied to the idea of being pursued by one’s

enemies. The word rendered “persecuted” is *dioko* meaning “1. To make to run, to run or flee, put to flight, drive away; 2. To run swiftly in order to catch some person or thing, to run after, 3. In anyway whatever to harass, trouble, molest one, to be maltreated, suffer persecution on account of something, 4. Without the idea of hostility, to run after, follow after some one; 5. Metaphorically, to pursue i.e. seek after eagerly, earnestly endeavor to acquire” (Thayer 153). Just as Paul had once pursued the church trying to destroy it, he now finds himself “pursued.” Yet in Christ, he could have the confidence that the Lord had not left him to himself to face such trials alone. The word for “forsaken” is *egkatalaipo* meaning “to leave in a place or situation, to leave behind; to forsake, abandon; to leave as a remnant from destruction” (Moulton 113). The picture here is that Paul is pursued by the enemy but not left behind by the Lord.

“Struck down, but not destroyed” (v. 9). Paul (in the writing of these words) had already faced thirty-nine lashes five times, beatings with rods three times and stoning once (2 Cor. 11:24, 25). Yet none of that had (or could) effect his soul! The word for “struck down” is *kataballo* meaning “to throw, cast. To cast down, used transitively for example from heaven, In the sense of to prostrate. In the middle to lay down a foundation” (Zodiaties 826). One can picture the blessed apostle thrown prostrate before his enemies in persecution. Yet even so his relationship to the Lord and hope of salvation endured. Jesus taught, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28, NKJV). The word for “destroyed” is *apollumi* — “1. Actively — a. ruin, destroy, b. lose; 2. middle. — a. be destroyed, ruined. Of persons perish, die, of things be lost, pass away, be ruined, b. be lost” (BAG 95). Nothing man can do can “destroy” the soul if we ourselves stay true to the Lord.

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# Preparation to Hear God's Word

Harry Osborne

**We must always remember that we come into the presence of God as we listen to his word and let that recognition move us to hear with humble reverence and solemn determination, understanding the eternal implications of the occasion.**

One of the first lessons we must teach children is how to listen. In most cases, they have no problem learning to talk, but learning to listen is not so easy. We must teach them to cease other activities and concentrate on the things being said by those in authority. It is only after one has heard that he can properly react to the message. Yet, learning to listen to parents, teachers, and other figures of authority is not the ultimate point of preparing our children to hear. The ultimate aim of such training is preparing them to listen with true respect and reverence to the instruction of God. As we begin any gospel meeting, it would be good for all of us to examine ourselves even closer about our readiness to hear God's will proclaimed.

The account of Cornelius' conversion contains an example of preparation to hear God's word. After relating the things that led up to his sending for Peter, Cornelius said, "So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all things commanded you by God" (Acts 10:33). The passage states three essential qualities that must be a part of every prepared hearer. First, they were all present. One cannot hear all that is said if one is not present when the speaking begins. Absence or tardiness make proper hearing impossible. Second, they assembled with the recognition that they were in the presence of God as they heard. One cannot properly hear if his focus is on other humans present in the assembly. We must always remember

that we come into the presence of God as we listen to his word and let that recognition move us to hear with humble reverence and solemn determination, understanding the eternal implications of the occasion. Third, they were ready to hear all things commanded by God. One is not properly prepared to hear if he only wants to hear selected parts of the truth rather than the whole counsel of God (cf. Acts 20:20-27). Neither is one properly prepared to hear if he or she comes to be entertained by jokes, stories or other crowd gathering techniques of human origin. Our purpose in coming to each service should be to hear the whole truth with its reproofs, rebukes, and exhortations solidly based upon the Scripture.

Jesus taught that the hearer of spiritual truth must learn to listen properly. He said, "Therefore take heed how you hear" (Luke 8:18). If we are to listen as Jesus wants us to listen, we must "take heed" regarding how we hear. Where can we go for instruction on how to hear God's word?

One place we can go for such instruction is to James 1:19-27. The previous verse in the context focuses our minds on the proper source for all spiritual nourishment by reminding, "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (Jas. 1:18). The inspired writer then teaches us several divinely-guided principles about becoming acceptable hearers of that word of truth.

### **The Priority of Listening**

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God” (Jas. 1:19-20). God clearly says that listening comes first to one who is aiming at the righteousness of God. Of course, those who place a priority on their own desires and pursuits will not place the proper value on listening to God’s word. Instead, they will be given to speech that pursues their selfish ends through self-justification, gossip, slander, or other base means. The result of such actions will not be of benefit to the cause of God, but will end in wrath and its consequent detrimental effects to the cause.

When one truly seeks the righteousness of God as his goal, he properly values the need to listen to God’s word and humbly seeks its instruction. His life will evidence the attitude of the psalmist: “His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates both day and night” (Ps. 1:2). Solomon even noted the priority of hearing by urging, “be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools” (Eccl. 5:1). Did this denigrate all sacrifice? No, it affirmed the necessity of hearing God’s will first to properly instruct about acceptable sacrifice before offering according to one’s own thoughts and being found a fool as a result. All proper obedience is prompted from the instruction found in God’s word. Hence, we see the priority of hearing.

It must also be noted that there is a vast difference between being “swift to hear” and desiring that the time given to hearing be swift. Our age is filled with too many of the latter and too few of the former. How can anyone hope to spend eternity in reverent praise to God and yet complain if the teaching of God’s word goes longer than thirty or forty minutes? If we place the proper value on hearing God’s word, we will desire the opportunity to study and grow from its

teaching as much as possible. If we think it too taxing on us that we be here at each opportunity to learn, we best rethink our priorities.

### **Purity and Meekness in Listening**

“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jas. 1:21). We cannot receive the word of God as we ought if filthiness and wickedness abide in our lives. The message of Christ reproves such evil and cannot coexist with it.

Just as filthiness and wickedness are inconsistent with God’s truth, “meekness” is an essential quality for all who desire God’s word to have a lasting impact upon their lives. The word translated “meekness” in our Bible refers to the strength of character which is brought under the controlling harness of God’s will. It is the willingness to let God direct our path.

### **Active Listening**

James does not stop at that point. He goes on to instruct, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (Jas. 1:22). God wants us to be the kind of hearers who put his instruction into action. He does not want his truth to merely change our intellect. Proper hearing of God’s word should change our lives! Notice how useless non-active hearing is to God:

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was (Jas. 1:23-24).

Why would we look in a mirror if we did not intend to correct that which is amiss? It would make looking in the mirror a waste of time. So it is with those who read the Bible or listen to it being proclaimed, but never intend to change that which they find to violate the will of God. The word of God is designed to scrutinize our heart and prick us to change our ways

(Heb. 4:12-13). It was never meant to satisfy mere intellectual curiosity.

James goes on to show the way we should react to God’s message. “But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (Jas. 1:25). God demands that his message be remembered in our day-to-day activities, not forgotten when we close our Bible or leave the assembly where it has been preached.

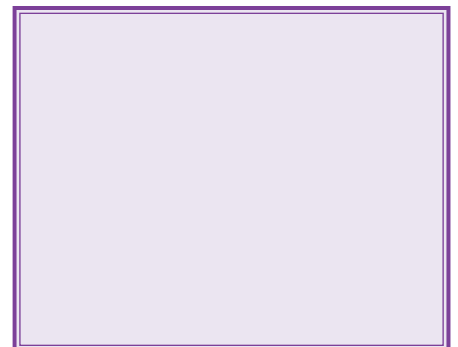
James shows how we must “continue in” God’s word. “If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world” (Jas. 1:26-27). According to the Bible, proper hearing demands the cessation of actions not approved by God and doing those things approved by God within his word. We must be seeking to let God direct our actions to please him as instructed within his word. It is just that simple.

### **Conclusion**

If we claim to hear God, we will not reject any instruction found within his will for us today. We may not put evil into our lives and still be true hearers of God. Let us learn to listen and take heed how we hear his word of truth.

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# Joseph's Good Example

Irvin Himmel

Enviied and hated by his brothers, Joseph cruelly was sold into slavery when seventeen years old. Jacob loved Joseph more than his other children because he was the son of his old age. No attempt was made to hide his partiality. When a parent shows partiality toward one child, the siblings feel resentment. In addition to this factor, Joseph had prophetic dreams in which he was exalted above his brothers. They “hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words” (Gen. 37:8).

When opportunity arose, his brothers sold Joseph to a band of merchantmen for twenty pieces of silver. They took him to Egypt where he was bought by Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh's guard. Imagine how he must have felt. Rejected, despised, and mistreated by his own brothers, he was now far away from home in a strange land. His noble example in that foreign land commends itself to our reflection.

## He Resisted Temptation

Although forsaken by his brothers, Joseph was never abandoned by the Lord. To the contrary, the Lord was with him and blessed him, causing all that he did to prosper. Potiphar made him the overseer of his house and all that he had. “And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured” (Gen. 39:6).

But Potiphar's wife had her eye on this handsome young Hebrew slave. She attempted to seduce him to commit fornication with her. He responded, “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” Some in his situation would have rationalized and given in to the temptation. Not Joseph! He saw fornication not merely as a sin but also as “great wickedness.” Call it “an affair,” or a “tryst,” or whatever term one might choose, it is still “great wickedness.” And to Joseph it was “against God.” Had he succumbed to illicit relations with Potiphar's wife, he would have sinned against Potiphar, against Potiphar's wife, and against his own body, but foremost against God.

The overwhelming and ultimate offense of sin is against God. When David confessed his sin with Bathsheba, he said, “I have sinned against the Lord” (2 Sam. 12:13). “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight” (Ps. 51:4).

The persistence of Potiphar's wife strengthened the temptation. She spoke to Joseph day by day in an attempt to break down his will. Then one day when no other men were in the house, she took hold of his garment. Abruptly, “he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out” (Gen. 39:12). His prompt action reflected his deep convictions about right and wrong. He was vigilant, never letting down his guard. The New Testament warns us to “flee fornication” (1 Cor. 6:18). Joseph's example teaches us that resisting this particular temptation requires immediate flight. Delay is dangerous. Get out quickly. Linger not. Escape!



## He Remained Faithful To God When Falsely Accused

Potiphar's wife showed spite toward Joseph after he rejected her advances. She lied by saying he had attempted to rape her, and she cried out with a loud voice and he got away, but in his haste he left his garment behind. She used his garment as evidence against him. Potiphar believed his wife's lie, and his wrath was kindled against the young Hebrew slave. Joseph was bound and imprisoned (Gen. 39:20).

Often people become resentful and bitter when falsely accused. Their hearts are filled with malice. They feel sorry for themselves while longing to take vengeance on those who wronged them. Joseph's unhappy experience did not transform him into a resentful, bitter, and malicious soul. All indications are that he remained faithful, trusting in God. And the Lord was with him, showing him mercy, and giving him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. All the prisoners were committed to Joseph's hand. That which Joseph did, the Lord made it prosper (Gen. 39:21-23).



Joseph's example reminds us that we must not waver when falsely accused. False witnesses testified against Jesus and against Stephen. Paul instructed Titus to tell the elderly women not to be "false accusers" (Tit. 2:3). It is painful to be falsely accused. Remember, we must put away all bitterness, wrath and anger, and all malice (Eph. 4:31).

### **He Kept Humble When Given Power**

God enabled Joseph to interpret the dreams of the king's baker and butler in prison and later to explain the strange dreams of Pharaoh. At age thirty, the Hebrew slave was catapulted from prison to rule all of Egypt. Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have set thee over all the land of Egypt" (Gen. 41:41). Pharaoh's ring was put on his hand, and he was arrayed in fine linen. Wearing a gold chain about his neck, Joseph rode in the second chariot, outranked only by Pharaoh, and the people were told to "Bow the knee." What a striking and spectacular change in Joseph's position.

A sudden rise to high rank may "go to one's head." Some people cannot handle positions of authority without becoming high-minded. King Saul was humble at first, but in time he became haughty, proud, arrogant, and stubborn. Joseph kept his feet on the ground. He remained humble and true to God. He did not turn into an overbearing, tyrannical, ruthless ruler.

Christians are taught to be clothed with humility (1 Pet. 5:5). Whatever our station in life, and whatever changes may arise, we are reminded that "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" (Jas. 4:6). It is immensely important that we remain humble even if elevated to a position of honor. The Master's action in washing the disciples' feet was designed to be a lesson on humility and service. Joseph's example commends itself to us. It is unlikely that any of us will ever be exalted to rule a nation, but many circumstances will test our ability to avoid thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think.

### **He Was Forgiving Toward Those Who Wronged Him**

Joseph's brothers were afraid when they learned that

he was alive and was a powerful ruler in Egypt. Having tested them in several ways, Joseph finally made himself known to them on their second trip to Egypt to buy grain. He told them not to be grieved nor angry with themselves for selling him into slavery, for God sent him before them "to preserve life" (Gen. 45:5). How stunned his brothers must have been! Joseph was yet alive and was governor over Egypt. He was most cordial toward them! The whole family of Jacob moved to Egypt and lived in the land of Goshen.

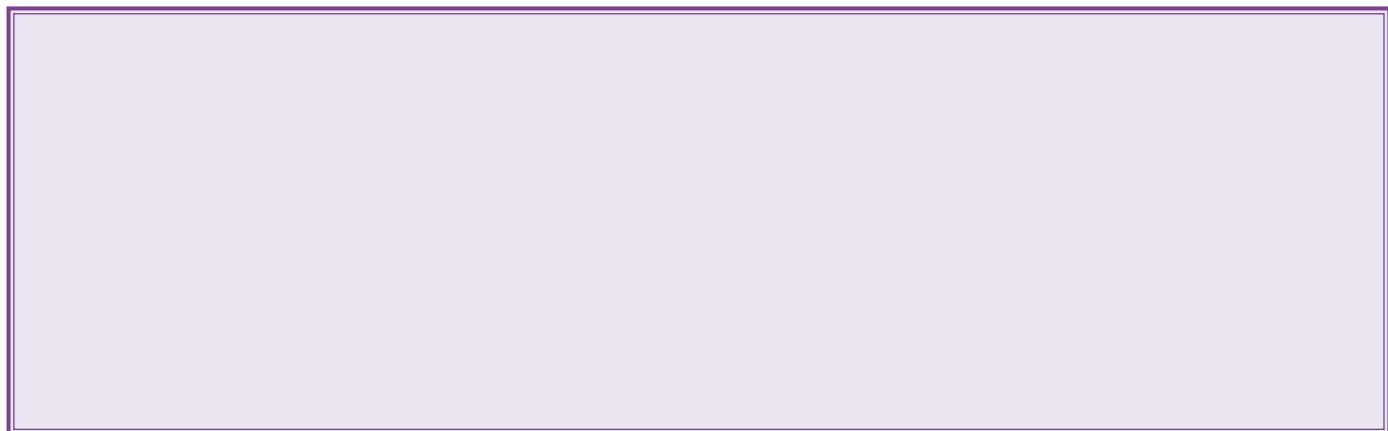
Following Jacob's death, his brothers feared that Joseph would attempt to repay them for the evil they had done to him. They sent a messenger to plead that he would forgive their trespass. They went also, "and fell down before his face." Joseph said, "Fear not: for am I in the place of God?" He saw vengeance as that which belongs to God. What they did as evil against Joseph, God used to accomplish good. He comforted his brothers and spoke kindly to them (Gen. 50:15-22).

Forgiving others who have wronged us is not always easy. Call to mind the words of Jesus on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). No one has wronged you and me to the point of nailing us to a cross. Stephen was stoned to death. In his dying cry, he said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60). We have not faced what Stephen encountered. Brethren, we must learn to forgive. If we do not forgive others, the Father will not forgive us (Matt. 6:14-15). We have not been sold into slavery, as was Joseph. Why can we not forgive when wronged, rather than holding a grudge and being bitter?

Joseph's example is a remarkable one for young and old alike. Ponder the four main points of this article and resolve to be influenced by the actions and attitudes of a good man who lived by faith.

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# She Was Ready

Donald P. Ames

To get the full impact of this account, I need to back up and give a little background. The setting was the Eastside Church of Christ, here in Indianapolis. The young lady involved was Kimberly Garrison, four-year-old adopted daughter of Curtis and Alicia Garrison. Kimberly was born with some problems which required she have a trachea in her throat, and was unable to speak because of it for the first couple of years. She is now getting on with her life, and gaining new confidence almost daily. She loves church, but due to the problems she had, she also has to wear hearing aids, and thus gets things slightly mixed up at times because she cannot hear correctly all the time. Still she wants to be involved and joins in the singing (though sometimes an entirely different song from what the others are singing).

On this particular Sunday morning, the song “There’s A Great Day Coming” had been selected as the invitation song. As we entered the chorus, the question is sung by the congregation, “Are you ready? Are you ready?” Suddenly I heard this clear raspy voice answering with gusto and resolve, “Yes, I am.” I turned about to see who it was, and there was Kimberly, singing with all the sincerity she could muster, and answering the question “Are you ready?” “Yes, I am.” “Are you ready?” “Yes, I am.” And so it went through each verse of the song. As we reached the chorus, in deadly earnest, she responded each time to “Are you ready?” with a loud and firm, “Yes, I am.” She wasn’t interested in being funny or clowning around, but was very sincere in what she was saying. I must admit I had to chuckle (in fact, I could barely finish the song I got so amused).

But she was right — she was ready! And she wanted everyone about her to know she was! First of all, she was ready because as a little child, she was free from all sins, and if anything happened to her, she was assured of the promises of God for a beautiful home in heaven. How thankful we can be that the doctrine of inherited sin is not so (Ezek. 18:20; Matt. 18:3; 19:14; Deut. 1:39; etc.), that

we have a God who is fair and just, and will not condemn the children because of what their fathers (or Adam) did! Not saved, but safe! And that the false doctrine of Calvinism, “Predestination,” is not so. That God doesn’t look down before we are every born, and decide who he is going to save, and who he will condemn — despite the sins and/or doubts they may have going through life. Yes, he does “predestinate,” and he has predestinated that all who obey him will be saved (Heb. 5:9). I can remember our son, Mark, when he was a little boy sitting about and saying, “I wish I could die.” At first we thought we had done

something horribly wrong, or that he had some kind of mental problem we needed to focus in on. Then one day we just sat down and asked him why he had this obsession for dying. His reply was clear and forthright: “If I die now, I can go to heaven. If I wait until I grow up, I might have a lot of sins that would keep me out of it!” Yes, “safe in the arms of Jesus”! She was ready, because she was prepared (safe) to meet her Maker, and was ready for that “great Judgment Day”!



She was also ready because she had two wonderful Christian parents who had been busy teaching and showing her the love of God, the love of Christ, the beauties of heaven, and the privileges of going to church. She liked going to church, she liked to sing praises, and she was ready to go if anyone were going to get up a load to go to heaven. She sang it out with the same determination she would answer if anyone would ask if she was ready to go see Grandmother and Granddad DeBerry! She wanted others to know she was ready. She did not know everything that there was to know, but she was ready to go. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could all have that same sort of determination? Despite some physical handicaps, she did not resent God or his church, she did not just sit back and feel sorry for herself and wonder why all these things had to happen to her. In fact, she may have felt even more loved by God because of them. Here was a special family that picked her

# Is Sunday Part of the Weekend?

Marc W. Gibson

I will never forget the discussion I had with a friend of mine in high school about whether Sunday or Monday was the real first day of the week. My friend was insistent that Monday was the first day simply because that was when people went back to work and school. Since it was the first day of the work/school “week,” he was convinced that it was the first day of *the* week. The only thing I could do was to take him to a calendar hanging on the wall and show him that Sunday, not Monday, was the actual first day of each week. He still had trouble believing it, even with a calendar staring him in the face.

It would seem that a lot of people think Monday is the real first day of the week. When the world talks about the “weekend,” aren’t they referring to the latter half of Friday through Sunday? Yet, the weekend should only include Friday and Saturday, for these are the two days at the *end* of each week. Sunday is the first day of the week, not part of the “weekend.”

Of course, we know why the world lumps Sunday in as part of the “weekend.” It is included with Friday night and Saturday as free time for recreation, travel, parties, sleeping-in, and lounging around the house. Most worldly-minded people give no mind to the fact that Sunday has important spiritual significance. The spiritually-minded person knows that it is the Lord’s day, the day Jesus was raised from the dead, and a time when saints gather to worship God. Recreation, travel, and personal matters are to be laid aside in order to fulfill our responsibility to worship God.

It is tragic that some who claim to be Christians think nothing of using a Sunday here or there solely for their “weekend” fun. Social activities are planned right through Sunday, leaving no time for worship. Travel is not planned so that one can meet with the saints at times of worship. The Lord’s work is treated as a trivial thing when there are people to see, places to go, and games to play. Dear friend, Sunday is not part of the weekend — it is the first day of the week, the Lord’s day (Rev. 1:10). We can have our fun on the “weekend” (Friday and Saturday), but then we must *start* the next week right by worshipping God on the first day of the week as he has commanded (Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7).

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out and loved her despite these handicaps. Truly she was blessed. Yes, she loved her family, but “she was ready” to go (Matt. 10:37-38). Yes, she “loved her Jesus too!” How many times are we caught up in the things of the world to the extent we are not sure we are ready yet? Or even to the extent we dread facing our Maker in judgment. Paul said, “For me to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). Jesus assures us he has gone to “prepare a place for us” (John 14:3), and indeed we need to be watching (Matt. 25:1-13).

So, if the song were sung, and you were answering that question at that moment, would you have the same confidence, determination, and zeal she has? She is ready and she wanted every to know she is ready! “Yes, I am.” How will you answer this question? Truly, out of the mouths of babes.

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# “Be Perfect”

Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

Brother Willis forwarded to me the following request from a reader:

I would like to see an article on Matthew 5:48, “Be Perfect.” I am told that man sins and therefore cannot be perfect. Did God give a command that cannot be obeyed. As I read Matthew 5:42-48 it seems man can be perfect. I also notice the word “perfect” in Ephesians 4:13; Colossians 1:28; 4:12; James 1:4; 3:2; Philippians 3:15.

On the surface it might seem that the command, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,” is commanding the impossible. We only have to look at human experience and the Scriptures to know that no one has ever lived a sinlessly perfect life except Jesus. In fact, John says that anyone who says he has is deceiving himself and makes God out to be a liar (John 1:8, 10).

The key to understanding is to understand what Jesus meant by “perfect” in Matthew 5:48, and what the apostles meant in the other verses referenced by the questioner. “Perfect” in these passages and others does not always refer to absolute perfection, but to a relative or comparative perfection, like in Hebrews 9:11 where “more perfect” is used. Strong defines the word (*teleios*) used in these verses as “complete (in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc.); neuter (as noun, with 3588) completeness: KJV — of full age, man, perfect.”

Vine says of the word *teleios*: 1. *teleios* NT:5049 signifies “having reached its end” (*telos*), “finished, complete perfect. It is used (I) of persons, (a) primarily of physical development, then, with ethical import, fully grown, mature,” 1 Cor 2:6; 14:20 (“men”; marg., “of full age”); Eph 4:13; Phil 3:15; Col 1:28; 4:12; in Heb 5:14, RV, “fullgrown” (marg., “perfect”), KJV, “of full age” (marg., “perfect”); (b) “complete,” conveying the idea of goodness without necessary reference to maturity or what is expressed under (a) Matt 5:48; 19:21; James 1:4 (2nd part); 3:2. It is used thus of God in Matt 5:48; (II), of “things, complete, perfect,” Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 13:10 (referring to the complete revelation of God’s will and ways, whether in the completed

Scriptures or in the hereafter); James 1:4 (of the work of patience); v. 25; 18.

Albert Barnes comments on Matthew 5:48:

[Be ye therefore perfect . . .] The Saviour concludes this part of the discourse by commanding his disciples to be “perfect.” This word commonly means “finished, complete, pure, holy.” Originally, it is applied to a piece of mechanism, as a machine that is complete in its parts. Applied to people, it refers to completeness of parts, or perfection, where no part is defective or wanting. Thus, Job (Job 1:1) is said to be “perfect;” that is, not holy as God, or “sinless” — for fault is afterward found with him (Job 9:20; 42:6); but his piety was “proportionate” — had a completeness of parts was consistent and regular. He exhibited his religion as a prince, a father, an individual, a benefactor of the poor. He was not merely a pious man in one place, but uniformly. He was consistent everywhere. See the notes at that passage. This is the meaning in Matthew. Be not religious merely in loving your friends and neighbors, but let your piety be shown in loving your enemies; imitate God; let your piety be “complete, proportionate, regular.” This every Christian may be; this every Christian MUST be.

The context governs the type of perfection that is meant in a particular reference. The basic idea of the word is complete, as Barnes points out, complete in its parts. It may refer to completion of a child’s growth and development, thus refers to maturity or being full grown. It may refer to completion of an endeavor such as race or project. It may refer to the totality of the parts of a thing (a perfect car would have every part that it is supposed to have). Thus translators of various versions have variously translated the word as “complete,” “mature,” “full grown,” as well as “perfect.” It seldom has reference to absolute moral or spiritual perfection when referring to man. Even when it does have such a reference, it is determined more by the context than by the word itself.

With all of this information in mind, let look now at the command “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” The context shows that Jesus was answering a common idea of love among many in his

day. In verse 43, he said, “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.” Then he shows the evil and folly of that concept by showing that the Father loves both the evil and good — those who are his friends as well as his enemies. He teaches his disciples to imitate the Father in this (vv. 43-47). Then he concluded with verse 48. The perfection of the Father that we are to imitate is the perfection or completeness of his love. His love has two parts — love for friend and love for enemy. Thus it is complete in its parts, so our love is to be perfect or complete in its parts. Imperfection in this verse is the absence of love toward either object — friend or foe. It is to embrace both our friends and our enemies. It is this kind of “perfection” that Jesus is commanding — a “perfection” to which we can all attain. Thus, he is not commanding the impossible.

Now as to the other verses, let’s notice the perfection referred to in other versions (I will underline the word translated “perfect” in the King James):

**Ephesians 4:13** in the ASV reads: “till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a *fullgrown* man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

**Colossians 4:12** in the NIV reads, “Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, *mature* and fully assured.”

**James 1:4** in the NIV reads “Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be *mature* and complete, not lacking anything.”

**Philippians 3:15** reads in the NIV (and similarly in the NKJ) “All of us who are *mature* should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.

**Colossians 1:28** and **James 3:2** are consistently rendered “perfect” by the most used versions and are among the few texts that may allow for the idea of absolute perfection. But even here, perfection is not from our having lived perfectly but having been made so by redemption. Looking at the context of both passages, it seems to me that a good case could be made for rendering the word “complete” in these verses as well.

There are other passages, though they are translated from a different word, that show that “perfect” can be used in a relative sense — that a thing can be more or less perfect. I will italicize the relative part: **Acts 18:26**: “And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God *more* perfectly.”

**Acts 23:15**: “Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would inquire something *more* perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.”

**Acts 23:20**: “And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would inquire somewhat of him *more* perfectly.”

**Acts 24:22**: “And when Felix heard these things, having *more* perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.”

The word “perfect” is used relatively in writings outside the Bible. The preamble to the U.S. Constitutions reads: “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a *more perfect* Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America” (Italics mine, EOB).

Thus, we are commanded to “be perfect” in several ways in the New Testament. But, none of these commands envisions absolute moral and spiritual perfection, rather maturity and completeness in the areas discussed by the context. No human on the earth can attain to the absolute perfection of God or his Son nor are we expected to by our God, but we can attain to the maturity and completeness commanded by the Lord.

There was an elderly brother in a congregation, where I was a member and served as preacher, who would say often when we would come to such passages as discussed in this article, “God does not require perfection of us, but he does require faithfulness.” Of course, by “perfection” he meant absolute. I believe he was right about the matter.

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# Outline For Classes

Bob Waldron

## How To Use This Information

Like most extensive studies, this one evolved. And like most extensive studies, it is very difficult for someone who has not done the background study, and who has not done the extensive thinking about the subject, to be able to understand the material thoroughly, or to understand how to present it to others. Though, without doubt, the information in this work can be learned more easily by someone who already has an extensive knowledge of the Bible, I also firmly believe that one who does not have this knowledge can use this information to prepare himself for future Bible study.

I am very aware that some who read this work will do so to teach it to others. The very reason why I have decided to publish this material is because it has been requested so many times for use in a class. But there are those who will obtain this booklet for their own study. I must keep this in mind as we go along. I would like to hope that even someone who obtains this work for his own study will eventually teach it. Therefore, in presenting the material I have decided to follow the format that I use in teaching it, including all the little techniques that I use to do it. The student who is studying the information for his own use can ignore these teacher's suggestions to the extent he wishes. Likely, however, he will find them helpful even for his own personal use.

One other suggestion on how to use this material: it would be better not to read and pore over the entire work to begin with. The amount of material can be frightening and intimidating. Rather, study the first cycle. When you have learned it, and can recite it from memory, move on to the second cycle. By the time you have reached the third cycle, you will be getting quite comfortable with the earlier information.

## Objectives

This section will not be long, but anyone who plans to teach this material needs to think about these points until they are clear, and until he sees the importance of them. But I usually do not start out my class by listing

these objectives. I do, however, incorporate them into my presentation as I go.

There are several objectives. First, we want to etch into the students' minds the basic facts of Bible history. It is a well-established fact that effective repetition is more helpful in learning than one prolonged exposure. Learning done in cycles that are repeated provide for this effective repetition. In this material we set forth three cycles of repetition. Notice how we emphasize this objective in our presentation.

Second, this material provides organization for the knowledge that is gained from Bible study. Through this organization we hope to provide better access to the knowledge one has. This organization also helps a more nearly permanent retention of knowledge. This is probably the most specific and important objective in this study. We will stress this point graphically in our presentation.

Third, we want the student to see that the Bible records the fulfillment of a plan, God's plan for the ages. This study takes the student through the Bible three times, and it does it in such a way that the student has to look at the Bible story as a whole.

## Presentation

I am going to present thoughts for you, the reader and user of this system, that I do not necessarily give in my classes on the subject. I will put these thoughts in italics. I teach the subject under all kinds of circumstances, sometimes in a quarter of study, sometimes in a week of morning classes, sometimes in three classes during a meeting, sometimes in a fifteen minute session before each evening sermon during a gospel meeting. But if circumstances permit, I like to recommend that the study be the prelude to a three or four year course of study through the whole Bible.

When I can have a whole quarter to teach the material in these pages, I spend a lot of time in drill and practice. I also spend a lot of time, to begin with, explaining the purpose of this organizational material.



This material is effective by itself to help people be prepared to remember what they learn, but it is especially effective if used to prepare a class to study the three and a half to four year course of Bible study we advocate. One of the things that make this such an effective learning system is that each succeeding cycle reinforces the preceding one. In so many cases we study something and then stash it over in a corner where we have no exposure to again for years. No wonder we have trouble learning. Envision this system as one in which we lay down a track or pattern, then we go back and retrace the pattern and build a framework on the track or pattern. As the framework goes up, we do not forget the pattern; we reinforce it.

So often we learn facts that are isolated. They are never integrated into our “web” or network of Bible knowledge. The result is that we tend to forget the fact and have no idea where it is. Let me use two illustrations to show how the approach in this material helps solve this problem. One involves an enormous warehouse. Someone brings a vase to be stored. We put the vase in an unmarked box. We put that box into a much larger box that contains lots of other boxes. This box is also unmarked. Then we take the whole box on a forklift back to the innards of the warehouse and stack it on other boxes just like it. The warehouse is not divided into sections, or rows, or anything. Six months later, the person comes back and asks for his vase. We have no memory that there was a vase, and we certainly have no idea where it is. If we had marked the box with the vase, and labeled the contents of the bigger box, and had divided the warehouse into sections, rows, shelves, etc., we could go right to the vase.

Many of us are now familiar with computers. They have something called a hard disk drive, capable of storing vast amounts of information. Without organization, however, one would have no idea at all where something is on his hard drive. In fact, even with organization, sometimes one can forget how he filed a document. For this reason, a document needs to have an easily remembered name, a name that is very specific in describing the document, so that when one thinks of the document, the name will come to mind, and he can remember how he filed it. Once one is very familiar with his own hard drive, he knows how he has it organized, and can look up his files with comparative ease. What we are discussing in this work is the creation of an organizational framework in the mind. With this framework, information can be stored in the mind so that it can be recalled with more success.

It is necessary for students to see the need for this approach, and to see how this approach will solve the need. This approach is based on a good deal of study about how learning takes place.

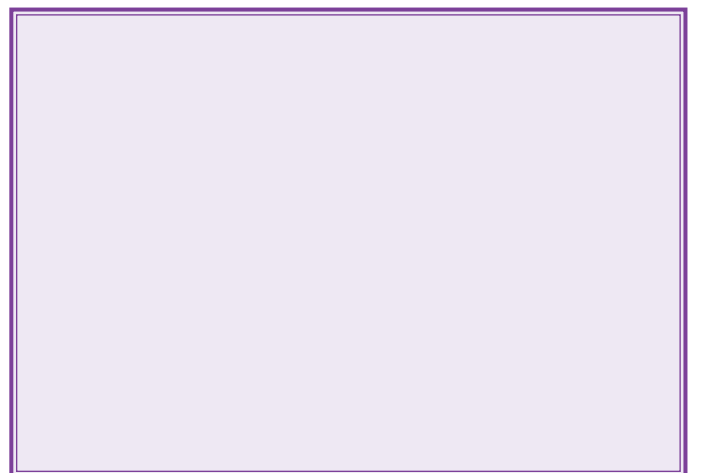
Effective learning means having impressive repetitions of the material to be learned; it requires linking what is

learned into a network. The more our new information is linked with facts already in our minds, the stronger the network. And it requires good drill work. Imagine an object suspended by single strand of a spider’s silk. That object’s position is very fragile. This object corresponds to a fact that we wish to store permanently in our memory. The more threads that are attached to that memory, the less fragile its place is in our memory. The threads are associations. The more associations we have with a fact, and especially the more “cross references” there are, the more securely that fact will be in our mind. This phenomenon also explains why it is easier to learn one fact about something one already knows than to learn a fact in a subject about which one knows nothing. When one has a network of knowledge already established, it is simple to incorporate another fact into it.

I do not start out handing out notes to the students. Nor do I let them write notes at first. We usually write things down, place them in a forgotten drawer, and never learn them. So I take the students at least through the first cycle before anything is written down, and then I stress that the only reason for writing anything down is to have the information so that one can use it to drill the memory. I tell them that they do not need to be writing anything down, because shortly I will give them a full set of notes.

It is important to create the feeling that this is all easy, because it is not the difficulty of this information that makes it hard to learn; it is how we feel about learning that information that makes it hard or easy. So I do a lot of pep-talking during these weeks. Also, as we go along, and as the students begin to accumulate some knowledge, I like to use examples to show how this information is helping them to use the Bible more effectively.

I usually take a couple of classes on this first cycle, and when we have finished the second class, I have them name the periods and categories backwards. I coach them along a little by asking the right question, but they will be able



to do it remarkably well. If you are studying this material for yourself, you will be able to do also.

### First Cycle: Periods of Bible History

The objective in this cycle is primarily to learn the list of periods of Bible history and how they link together. Do not just memorize them, but seek to understand how they are related, how one leads to the next. Here I draw on the technique of “linking” information together so that to think of one suggests either the one before or the one after as well. These topics are mostly periods and events of the Bible, but at least one is a category of information. I make the point that the Bible is not just historical material; it also contains doctrinal material, such as the epistles. Our goal is to create a directory, or a pigeon hole, for every fact in the Bible. Sometimes one may choose to modify these periods/categories. Remember that there is a fine line between having too many of the periods on the one hand and having too few on the other. We could break Bible history into 79 periods, but if you faced the task of learning 79 things in order, or if you informed a class that they now had the task of learning 79 things, they would immediately write the task off as impossible. On the other hand, we could divide the Bible into two categories, say, the Old and New Testaments, but this organization would be too general to do us any good. Before you alter this list, give it at least as much thought as I have.

Following is a concise list of the periods and categories of Bible history. Please understand that the purpose for this list is just so you will have the names of the periods and categories together so that you can quickly review them. Do not start in to learn them from this list. Skip the list for now and go through the first cycle.

#### Periods of Bible History

1. Before the flood
2. The flood
3. Scattering of the people
4. The Patriarchs
5. The Exodus
6. Wandering in the wilderness
7. Invasion and conquest of the land
8. The Judges
9. The United Kingdom
10. The Divided Kingdom
11. Judah alone
12. The captivity
13. Return from captivity
14. Years of silence
15. Life of Christ
16. Early church
17. Letters to Christians.

**Before the flood:** These stories occur at or near the time of the creation. Our link is the idea that “before the flood”

suggests that the next period is the flood, because this first period includes everything *before* the flood. Some might be tempted to call this period the “Ante-deluvian Age.” Thus we have a word that sounds very intellectual instead of an easily understood one. I know what it means, but since my desire as a teacher is for people to understand me, I would never use the word in a study like this.

At this point, I pretend to be very serious, and I call upon the class to see if they can name the periods we have learned thus far. Can everyone handle one period? Everybody smiles, but the point I am really making is: “This is easy.” If people are frightened by the difficulty of learning, they will not do it, so I spend a lot of time assuring them that this is easy.

If the first period in the Bible is “Before the flood,” what would the next one be? Sometimes people say, “After the flood.” The problem with that designation is it is too broad, because the day we live in is “after the flood,” too. Besides, “before the flood” and “after the flood” skips the flood itself, so the next period is:

**The Flood:** Almost everyone has heard of Noah and the flood. The link with the preceding period is the name of that period. “Before the flood” reminds us that next comes “The Flood.” The link with the next period is that Noah and his family grew and moved down from Mount Ararat until his descendants came to the plain of Shinar where they built the tower of Babel. An association does not have to be logical, just so it works. With gestures I merely indicate the height of Mount Ararat, then down to the valley of Mesopotamia, then the height of the tower of Babel. This helps to create the link with the next period or episode. Okay, let’s try naming both periods we have learned so far. Can we handle that? At this point, I lead the class in saying, “Before the flood,” “the Flood.” That was no problem, was it?

**Scattering of the People:** Tower of Babel. The link is that after the tower of Babel, the families separated. Shem’s family stayed more or less in the vicinity of Mesopotamia. From Shem comes Abraham, and Abraham was one of the patriarchs. If you are working with a group, and you can see that they do not have any knowledge of a particular period or event, you will have to give them a very tiny thumbnail sketch of the story, but ruthlessly resist the temptation to turn this first cycle into a six week study. If you do not heed this advice, you might as well take a gun and shoot yourself in the foot right now and get it over with. Remember! Multiple exposures to the forest will help learning and retention better than long, protracted study of the leaves.

Another problem is that some want to combine this period with either the flood or the patriarchs and have sixteen periods. The problem is that the tower of Babel does not fit

with the flood or with the patriarchs. It is a very significant development that does not belong with the period before or after. It defeats the very point of having a separate category for every significant period of the Bible story.

**The Patriarchs:** Patriarch means “Father-Ruler.” In the day of the patriarchs, there were many, but when we talk about the patriarchs, we are talking about three: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. In addition to these characters, we include Joseph. The story of Joseph connects Genesis to Exodus. In his day the family of Israel moves down into Egypt. His story explains why, at the beginning of the book of Exodus, the Israelites are in Egypt. The link with the next period is that the Israelites did not stay in Egypt forever. At some point they *exited* Egypt, and Exodus is just a word meaning “going forth.” Often, it is good to say, “If you didn’t get everything this time, don’t worry. This is not the last time we will go over this. Remember that the next cycle will reinforce this one, and you will be able to learn everything. Say the periods again.

**The Exodus:** In this period we include from the opening of the book of Exodus until the events at Kadesh-barnea because during all this time Israel was “going forth” toward Canaan until they reached Kadesh-barnea. The sin they committed there required punishment, and that punishment was *wandering in the wilderness*.

**Wandering in the Wilderness:** This period includes such stories as Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and Balaam and his donkey. Since this is one of the most poorly known periods, I mention a few well known stories, but be careful here not to jump into the second cycle, which deals with the events of this period. Mention just enough stories to help the students to know a little about what went on during this time. We call the period the wandering in the wilderness until the Israelites cross Jordan into Canaan. At that point, they cross into the land of Canaan. Our link here is the idea that the Israelites did not wander in the wilderness forever; something brought the wandering in the wilderness to an end. It came to an end when they got where they were going, in other words, when they invaded and conquered the land of Canaan. Say the periods again. Remind them that we have two new ones to add: the Exodus, and the Wandering in the Wilderness. Don’t forget them when we have said the first four. This is just a little memory help.

**Invasion and Conquest of the Land:** This period includes from the crossing of the Jordan until the death of Joshua. Our link with the next period is that, after Joshua, another generation arose that knew not the Lord. Israel became unfaithful. They repented and cried out for deliverance, and God sent them the \_\_\_\_\_? I am very alert to the knowledge level of a group as I teach. Many times, if I think they may know a fact, I will let the class fill in a blank. This technique helps to fasten the sequence in their

minds. I always insist on saying the full name of the period during the learning process, even though, later, it can be shortened to merely “Invasion and Conquest.” Name all the periods.

**The Judges:** From Othniel, the first judge, through Samuel. Link: Samuel was the last judge. In his days the people asked for a \_\_\_\_\_? Again, you have to have some idea of the capabilities of your class. If you do not think that they know that the people asked for a “King,” then do not ask the question, but usually they will be able to fill in the blank. Name all the periods. Do not run a race saying them. Get into a rhythm and stick with it. Be sure to have everyone repeat the periods each time you add a new one.

**The United Kingdom:** If you name a kingdom the *United Kingdom*, that might suggest that something happened to that kingdom — that it *divided*. Over the United Kingdom three kings ruled: Saul, David, and Solomon. The link with the next period is that Solomon’s unfaithfulness caused the kingdom to divide, resulting in the \_\_\_\_\_? By such broad hints and by vocal emphasis one can lead a group to see what comes next.

**The Divided Kingdom:** Now we have two kingdoms, Israel in the north and Judah in the south. This lasts for 200 years. Link: Here are Israel and Judah (I say this with a simple hand gesture in which I hold my hands one above another as if I were holding apples in them). The Assyrian empire came down and took the northern kingdom away leaving Judah alone. At this point I remove my upper hand and leave my lower hand in place. This gesture helps in drill work, because when I get to this point, using the simple hand gestures, I can say, “Assyria took Israel away leaving?” and the class can fill in “Judah alone” with no difficulty.

**Judah Alone:** Israel went away into captivity because of her sins. Link: Judah remained alone until they were taken into captivity, but Judah was taken away captive by the Babylonians. This mention of captivity prepares the way for the next period to be called the Captivity.

**The Captivity:** Judah in captivity: Here is where we have the stories of Daniel. Link: the people of Judah did not remain in captivity forever. At some point they *returned*. So what do we call the next period?

**The Return:** First return under Zerubbabel, with Jeshua, Haggai, and Zechariah. Story of Esther. Second return under Ezra. Followed by Nehemiah and the prophet Malachi. Link: after the return, the people failed to measure up to God’s plan for them. He had no further vision or revelation for them until the time for Christ. Amos the prophet foretold a famine of hearing the word of the Lord (Amos 8:11). In other words, there would be a time of silence. The next period, because of the absence of any revelation

from God, is called “The Years of Silence.” Remember that at this point you are not trying to remember the names of all these people. They are being given so that you have a little understanding of what the “Return” is about. If you don’t get it all this time, don’t worry; this is not the last time we will go over this material. All of these things will be further reinforced.

### The Years of Silence

The four hundred years between Malachi and Matthew. We could call these years “The Inter-testamental Period,” but the term would be intimidating to many beginners. Besides it really was not an “inter-testamental period,” since there was no gap of time between the Old Law and the New Law. Nor was it “Between the Covenants.” The language of Amos 8:11 leads us to the simple, but descriptive, name by which we call this period. Link: the years of silence were brought to an end when God began his revelation again in connection with the life of? Most any class could answer this question. For this first cycle, you need very little emphasis on the designations for the last three periods.

### The Life of Christ

As the term says, here we have the life of Christ recorded in the four gospel accounts. Our link is to emphasize that one of the principle things Jesus came to do was to establish the church.

### The Early Church

The history of the early church is described in the book of Acts. Our link with the next period is that during the time of the writing of Acts, and afterward, for the rest of the first century, various letters were written to Christians.

### Letters to the Christians

The letters were written to churches and to individuals, but they were all Christians. Since “Christians” is the more inclusive term, we use it for this last heading.

After saying all of the periods and categories forward maybe a couple of times, lead the class to say them backwards. If the linking has been done properly, they will be able to do it backwards as easily as forwards. Say, Letters to the Christians. But before there could be Christians, Christ had to establish the \_\_\_\_\_? (Early Church.) Pause before each heading and let the class fill in the blank if they can. And before the early church we have the life of? And before the life of Christ we have the years of? And before the Years of Silence, we have the *Return* from Captivity. Before the Return from Captivity, we have the Captivity. Before Captivity, we have Judah Alone, and before that the Divided Kingdom. Before the Divided Kingdom comes the United Kingdom. Before the United Kingdom comes Judges Alone. Before Judges Alone, we have the Invasion and Conquest of the Land. Before the Invasion and Conquest, we have the Wandering in the Wilderness, and before that the Exodus. Before the Exodus we have the Patriarchs, and before the Patriarchs was the Tower of Babel. Before the Tower of Babel we have the Flood, and before the Flood, we have Before the Flood. The way we introduce these last two brings a smile, but it also makes the point that these terms are not just cold facts. These names of the periods are linked together to help remember them.

(This series will continue with Cycle 2 in the next issue of *Truth Magazine*.)

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# What the King Said

Frank Himmel

Premillennialism is the doctrine that Jesus will one day return and reign on earth for a thousand years. The theory says that Jesus came to establish his kingdom 2,000 years ago, but postponed it when the Jews rejected him. Nevertheless, he will be successful next time. Following a horrific war, the battle of Armageddon, he will transform the earth into a utopian society.

These elaborate predictions are the product of overflowing imaginations and a handful of out-of-context Scriptures. Such false conclusions could easily be avoided by simply listening to Jesus, the king, discuss the kingdom. After all, who knows the subject better than he?

## Nature of the Kingdom

“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm” (John 18:36). Does that sound like it is ushered in via a great war with saints fighting for Christ?

“The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’ For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst” (Luke 17:21). Why, then, do so many insist that “signs of the times” point to the kingdom’s imminence?

Jesus likened the kingdom to a mustard seed: small in the beginning, yet growing larger than others (Matt. 13:31-32). How can a kingdom initiated by his return in world conquest be described as growing from a small beginning?

At the conclusion of another parable, in which Jewish rejection of him is central to the story, Jesus clearly said, “The kingdom of God will be taken away from you (the Jews) and given to a nation producing the fruit of it” (Matt. 21:43). Yet contrary to that plain declaration, premillennialists argue that Israel as a nation is still central to God’s kingdom plans.

## Time of the Kingdom

Early on, Jesus preached that the kingdom of heaven

was at hand (Matt. 4:17). In the final year of his ministry, when Jewish rejection of him was evident, the message was still the same (Luke 10:10-11).

Mark 9:1 is unmistakable: “Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.” Where are these 2,000-year-old people?

## Setting of the Kingdom

Several of Jesus’ parables address the setting of the kingdom.

The parable of the tares makes the point that “sons of the kingdom” live side-by-side with “sons of the evil one” in the world. Separation does not come until the end (Matt. 13:24-20, 36-43). There is no hint of a renovated, utopian earth.

In the parable of the pounds or minas, Jesus likened himself to a nobleman going away into a far country to receive a kingdom (Luke 19:11-27). Jesus said he has now taken his seat on his throne (Rev. 3:21). It is in heaven, at God’s right hand, not in Jerusalem or any other earthly capital.

## The Kingdom’s Entrance Requirements

How does one become a citizen in Jesus’ kingdom? “Repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). That changed character is depicted in the Sermon on the Mount, in which the king vividly describes the attitude and conduct of his disciples in contrast with contemporary standards.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). The new birth requires baptism as well. All of this points to the spiritual nature of Jesus’ kingdom.

## Conclusion

Did Jesus tell the truth about the kingdom? If he did, popular millennial notions are completely off base. It makes no sense to ignore these straightforward statements from the king himself while weaving fantastic theories based

# A Productive Father

David Charles Morrison, Jr.

How can I be a “productive” father? The Bible is a complete book. God provides instructions and principles of fatherhood. In addition, God has blessed us with many examples of fatherhood. Let’s look to one such example to answer our question.

“There was a certain man in Ceasarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band. A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway” (Acts 10:1-2). Cornelius stands out as a godly father in the midst of an ungodly world.

## He Was a Devout Man

“Devout” means that Cornelius was pious toward God. He maintained the right attitude in regards to his heavenly Father. It is reverence (awe) in action. Here is a man who is willing to listen to God’s instructions. But not only does he listen — he obeys!

A productive father will rub off on others. It is no surprise to find he is “declaring” God’s will to others in verses 7-8. The devout father is a true man of God. He not only listens and obeys, but he declares God’s will to others. His words are not empty because he is living the life of one who is “devout.” Fathers, who want to be productive will be devout in their service to God.

## He Was One Who Feared God

Reverential fear was the controlling factor of his life.

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on more obscure passages. Do not interpret Old Testament prophecy so as to contradict Jesus’ teaching.

The Bible says the kingdom is composed of those who are purchased by Jesus’ blood (Rev. 5:9-10). Acts 20:28 identifies that group as the church. What about you? Have you accepted Jesus’ rule? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

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He did not simply fear God’s power, wrath, and judgment. Cornelius has a “wholesome dread of displeasing God” (Rom. 8:15; Eccl. 12:13).

Children need real men — real fathers — real dads, who fear no one in this realm, but genuinely fear God.

I came home after a hard day and told my young sons to clean their room. My oldest son was about four years old at the time. He looked at me and said, “Why?” Like most parents, my first reaction was to say, “Because, I said so!” Instead, I thought about how God has dealt with me over the years. I said, “Because, it pleases me!” My boys never questioned that. They picked up their room that day. Then a few days later, I came home. The boys met me at the door and told me to close my eyes. They walked me to their room. It was picked up and they did it all on their own. Why? Simply because they knew it would please me. I learned something about “reverential” fear that day. You see, my boys have a “wholesome dread of displeasing me.” Reverential fear is seen in actions that please the one who is the recipient.

Fathers, your children need to see that fear of God in your life. When they do, they will not question your authority, they will understand it and appreciate it.

## He Feared God with “All” His House

Here is a man who is leading his family to worship God. Notice verse 33, “Now therefore are we all present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” This is the quality of headship in action (Eph. 5:23). A family under the direction and guidance of the “head” of the family. A productive father does this with an “iron” disposition — not an iron fist! (Josh. 24:15). Headship is leadership. Are you leading your family to worship? Are you leading your family in getting their lessons, Bible studies, prayers?

## He Gave Much Alms

Have you ever disciplined your children for not sharing? They need clear examples of sharing. What do they see us spend our wealth on? What about our example of “sacrifice” and service to others?

# How Can a Church Raise Its Funds?

Heath Rogers

The church is a divinely ordained organization with a divinely ordained purpose. The local church is authorized to spread and defend the gospel (1 Tim. 3:15), to teach and edify its members (Eph. 4:11-16), and to relieve its needy members (Acts 6:1; Rom. 15:26; 1 Tim. 5:16). Just like any other organization, the church needs money to do this work.

The question of how a church can raise its funds is not a trivial one. If God's word were silent on this subject, we would be free to use any means we deemed necessary, convenient, expedient, and tasteful. Some churches obviously use this freedom in fund raising. They engage in things like carnivals, car washes, car shows, pancake breakfasts, bingo games, bake sales, calendar sales, rummage sales, etc., without giving a thought to whether or not God approves. Some churches will even solicit funds from area businesses, asking them to "invest" in worthwhile projects that their regular budget will not allow them to do.

These practices are common and acceptable among many churches today. However, we can't find any churches in the Bible doing things like this. Certainly these fund raising opportunities were available in the first century. The church in Joppa had a member named Dorcas who made clothes for some of the members there (Acts 9:36-39). Why didn't she and some of the other ladies there make clothes for a church sale? Silver shrines were a hot item in Ephesus

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## He Prayed to God Always

Prayer reflects an attitude that acknowledges our need and dependence on God. Fathers when we do not pray with our children we are saying, "You don't need God!"

Fathers if you want the respect of a loving wife and the respect of your children, then apply the principles of God's word on fatherhood and follow the example of Cornelius.

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(Acts 19). Why don't we read of the church there tapping into this opportunity by selling silver "JESUS" fish decals to put on the back of chariots?

Not one word is said about the churches in the Bible engaging themselves in any sales or economic ventures. Churches never solicited funds from people who were not members. Neither did they plan projects that were larger than their budget would support, then turn and ask other churches or businesses to help them with the cost. We never read of the elders or deacons assessing the income of the members and telling them how much they had to give. This approach may seem bold and far fetched to some of you, but it exists. Not only have I heard of it being used by some denominations and the Catholic church, it was also advocated by J.W. McGarvey (see *McGarvey's Sermons* 275-279).

The only means of fund raising we find the church of the Bible using is the freewill offerings of its members. The apostle Paul wrote: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Cor. 16:1-2). In Acts 4:34-37 we find Christians bringing money and laying it at the apostles' feet. These brethren were not commanded to do this, neither were they told the amount they had to give. This was their own choice, which is made clear in the next chapter. Ananias and Sapphira's sin was not in failing to give all the proceeds of the sale of their land, but in lying in order to make people believe that they had. Notice what Peter told Ananias: ". . . why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not *thine own*? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" (Acts 5:3-4). The apostles didn't have the authority to tell him how much he had to give. Ananias was the one with the "power" to choose how much to give. Paul said that we are to give as we purpose in our hearts (2 Cor. 9:7). When the church determines the exact amount that the members must give it has gone beyond the teachings of Christ. Such

## “Cause and Effect” continued from front page

mer priest, A. W. Richard Sipe, has studied the sexuality of priest for 25 years. He says, “If they were to eliminate all those . . . the number would be so staggering that it would be like an atomic bomb.” Sipe said that if the Catholic Church eliminated homosexuals from their leadership “. . . it would mean the resignation of at least a third of the bishops of the world.” (Keep in mind that the bishops are the ones who are going solve their church’s homosexual/pedophilia problem.) According to the *Boston Globe* article, Sipe said that “many Popes had gay orientations.”

If the problem of the gay priesthood were not bad enough in itself, these statements indicate that the Catholic Church has known about this moral cancer within their ranks for years and did absolutely nothing about it until the crimes of predatory priests hit the headlines! This is a disgrace.

A *Dallas Morning News* reporter told MSNBC that most of these homosexual priests were not practicing homosexuals. They are homosexuals, but do not practice their sexuality? What? Really?

I’m trying to figure out how a man can know he is homosexual without practicing the sin! This would be like telling someone he’s an alcoholic who has never tasted liquor! Or telling someone he’s a drug addict who has never used drugs! Or telling someone he’s an habitual liar who has never told a lie! Or telling someone he’s a kleptomaniac who has never stolen anything! No, the only way to know one is an alcoholic, drug addict, habitual liar, or kleptomaniac is for him to have engaged in the acts. In like manner, the only way these priests can know they are homosexuals is to have practiced the sin. Furthermore, that’s what it is; homosexuality is a sin!

The *Beacon Journal* (06/16/02) printed a letter to-the-editor in which a writer explained how ridiculous it would be to apply the Old Testament prohibition against homosexuality. Leviticus 20:13 says, “If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them

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a contribution is no longer a freewill offering. It is a bill that has to be paid to stay in the church’s good graces.

The Bible says nothing about these kinds of practices. We must learn to be content with God’s pattern, and remember that the silence of Scripture is prohibitive, not permissive. The local church is designed and equipped to do the work that God has ordained it to do. When the members are giving as they should (2 Cor. 9:6-7), the church will have the funds it needs.

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have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death, their blood shall be upon them.” The writer certainly did not want this judgment pronounced against modern homosexuals!

Friends, you do not have to go to the Old Testament to find a condemnation by God of this corrupt action. The apostle Paul wrote in the New Testament, “For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet” (Rom. 1:26-27). That comes pretty close to a New Testament condemnation of this sinful act, doesn’t it? The fact is, in both testaments God has consistently condemned the abomination of homosexuality.

### Conclusion

Now back to our cause and effect point. The web site, NewsMax.com, sums up their statement regarding this despicable sin and crime which is running rampant in the Catholic priesthood in this way: “What we are seeing today are the results of a gay priesthood being loosed upon parishes all across the nation, where they have abused impressionable young men they treated as ‘fresh meat’ to satisfy their unnatural sexual urgings” (*Firm Foundation* 25). This does, indeed, succinctly summarize the homosexual cause of the sexual abuse of innocent children by these ungodly men. They ought to all be thrown into prison for their crimes. Furthermore, it is a mystery that there is anyone left with any respect for the religious hierarchy controlling their organization which has harbored these wicked priests for years! They have abused hundreds of innocent children, and the web site of the Dallas newspaper says, “Roughly two-thirds of top Catholic leaders have protected” these criminals.

In 1059 Pope Nicholas II decreed that Catholic priests are to be celibate (*Dallas Morning News*, 6/14/02). The Holy Spirit had prophesied some would depart from the faith, forbidding followers to marry (1 Tim. 4:1-3). The biblical prophecy came to pass, and today we see the fruits of their error, both doctrinally and morally.

The Holy Spirit had Paul write, “Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:2). When priests who have been involved in fornication with women are added to the number of pedophile priests, we clearly see two things: (1) The Catholic Church has rebelled against God’s instruction (1 Cor. 7:2), and (2) We see the effect of their corrupt doctrine in the open fornication which has now erupted in their ranks. Yes, every effect has an adequate cause!

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“Churches Not Strong” continued from page 2

proaching” (Heb. 10:25). I recognize that the context of this passage is the worship assembly on Sunday. However, there is another principle at work in collective activity which needs to be considered.

In collective activity, the group agrees to abide by the decisions made by the group. For example, the Indianapolis Colts can have a successful play when every member of the team who is on the field commits himself to making the play called by Peyton Manning a success. The linemen have to block, the pass receivers have to run their pass patterns to the best of their ability (even when he is not the primary receiver), and the backs have to execute their fakes and/or block. Should one of the backs say, “Since I am not getting the ball, I will just go through the motions,” his poorly executed fake prevents the receivers from getting open and the play fails.

What we understand so easily about football, we forget about the Lord’s church. What happens when the church plans a worship assembly but 25% of the congregation makes a conscious choice not to attend? What happens when the church plans a gospel meeting but 30-40% of the congregation makes a conscious choice not to attend? Less good is accomplished than could be accomplished should each of us give 100%. I suggest that one of the reasons we have weak churches is because we have too many Christians who are not attending all of the worship assemblies.

**Preaching is Weak.** The pulpit in the Lord’s churches is moving away from doctrinal preaching to feel-good preaching. Those in the pulpit seem to have neglected the study of Paul’s method of building strong churches. Look at the Pauline epistles. Generally the pattern is similar to that in Romans — there are twelve chapters of doctrinal instruction followed by four chapters of exhortation to Christian living. In Ephesians there are three and one-half chapters of doctrinal instructions followed by two and one-half chapters of exhortation to Christian living. Similar surveys could be provided from other books, but these suffice to show that Christian living cannot exist without the solid foundation of doctrine on which it should be built. To the degree that we neglect doctrinal preaching, we develop weak churches.

The institutional churches are presently dividing as many churches are moving into the edgewaters, if not the mainstream, of Protestant denominationalism. The reason they are moving into Protestant denominationalism is because they have had almost fifty years of weak preaching. A generation has grown up which cannot distinguish the New Testament church from the denominations of men. Congregations are dropping the name “church of Christ” from their signs because they do not want to be identified with those who believe that baptism is essential for sal-

vation, that instrumental music in worship is sinful, and that there is only one church. Only a small percentage of institutional churches are resisting this movement.

As I witness this occurring among institutional churches, I am aware that doctrinal preaching is less popular among us than it was a generation ago. I perceive that we are not preaching enough on those things which distinguish the Lord’s church from the denominations of men. As a result, we have weaker churches than we ought to have.

**Bible classes are weak.** A person’s faith is built on his knowledge of the word of God. Paul said, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). To the degree that one does not know the word of God, he has a weak faith. He may believe the right things because of tradition (that is the way we have always done it), but his faith is weak unless he can show that he believes what he does because of the revealed word of God.

My perception is that churches are moving away from Bible class material that is rich in Bible content toward curricula that are graphically more attractive. I have taken the time to look at some of this material, inasmuch as we are in the publishing business. I can assure you that much of it has very little Scripture. (This is not to state that only what is published by the Guardian of Truth Foundation is worth using. I do recognize weaknesses in our publications and strengths in what some others are producing.) Whatever material is used, the churches should insist that it be rich in biblical content, not anecdotal stories.

Teachers are the key to good Bible classes. Unfortunately, my perception is that many of the teachers are unprepared. This is just one man’s assessment, but I want to give you my impression. The ladies are doing a better job than many of the men in their Bible classes. Drop in the pre-school through sixth grade classrooms and look at the effort being made by the ladies. They work on bulletin boards, think about how they can best present their material, and discuss with one another how best to teach a given class. Many of our teachers are trained elementary teachers in the public schools. About the seventh grade, we begin putting men in charge of our classes, most of whom have no or a limited amount of teaching experience. Unfortunately, too many teachers read their lesson book for the first time the night before they teach their class. In some cases, the class consists of reading to the students what the workbook says and then answering the questions in the workbook. By high school too many of our students have lost interest in Bible classes. This is a general statement and there are plenty of exceptions.

Some of our adult Bible classes are no better. Classes have no schedule. A quarter’s book of material can be drawn into a full year of Bible classes. This wears out the audi-



ence who says, "I studied this lesson four weeks ago. Why do I need to read it again?" Since the class has no ending date, the audience can become worn out by the prolonged study of the same material week after week. There is no organized curriculum in too many churches. Each teacher in the adult Bible classes is allowed to choose his own material and there is no organized plan for what the church wants to accomplish in its teaching program.

One of the major differences I can identify between the training I had as a lad and what we are doing today is our lack of emphasis on memory work. As a child we memorized the books of the Bible (we learned the NT frontwards and backwards), the divisions in both Testaments, the twelve tribes of Israel, the judges, verses that emphasized each of the conditions for salvation, verses that showed baptism is for the remission of sins, for the penitent believer and an immersion in water, verses that showed that the music of the church is not instrumental, and such like things. There were many things about today's Bible classes that are better than when I was a child, but one thing we did grow up understanding was the difference between the Lord's church and the churches started by men.

**Homes are unspiritual.** Too many homes of the members of the church are obviously unspiritual. This is evident from such symptoms as the following: (a) divorces in the church; (b) unmarried teenagers conceiving outside of wedlock; (c) immodest dress; etc. Too many parents are allowing their children to attend dances. Sports is consuming the free time activities of too many families – there is no time left for Bible study or other church activities.

We are being successful in rearing children who are active in sports, participate in band and/or choir, and who are outstanding academically. Unfortunately we are not raising many young Timothy's who want to devote their lives to preaching, young men who aspire to be elders, young girls who aspire to be Bible class teachers and to become godly mothers and wives to those who devote their lives to preaching.

Television is the primary activity of every evening (except Wednesday). We have time to watch all of the programs we wish to watch. We can even record them to watch them at our convenience should other activities prevent our watching the initial presentation. Without commenting about the content of television, we can surely admit that it has become a major consumer of time in most households.

How much time does the average family spend in Bible study and prayer? Let's be honest with God and ourselves? Just how spiritual do you think we are?

### Conclusion

I am confident that any elder or preacher who reads this, as well as concerned members, can add to the list of things that I have mentioned above from reading brother Stevens' good article. Talking about these problems, laying them on the table for open discussion among the members, may be the first step toward making the changes we need to make.

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## Quips & Quotes

### Catholic Church is Losing Large Numbers of Austrians

"Vienna, Austria — Austrians are leaving the Roman Catholic Church in record numbers, according to statistics released Monday.

"Church officials attributed the 44,852 dropouts during 2004 to a scandal involving the discovery of child and other pornography on computers at a seminary in the diocese of St. Poelten, the Austria Press Agency reported.

"The number is expected to rise further, since the St. Poelten Diocese has yet to report its 2004 statistics. The seminary when the pornography was found was shut down in August and a new bishop was installed in November.

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"The previous record loss of 44,300 parishioners occurred in 1995 when accusations surfaced that the late Cardinal Hans Hermann Groer molested youths at a monastery in the 1970s. Since then the Austrian church has lost almost half a million members, APA reported.

"The exodus means an income lost, since dropouts escape paying a tax collected by the government for church purposes, which averages more than \$325 a year" (The Indianapolis Star [January 22, 2005], B5.



## 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	Evidences: Historical Reliability David Dann	Evidences: Prophecy: Kevin Maxey	Evidences: Unity of 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
<b>Lunch Break</b>			
<b>Ladies Classes</b>			
10:00 - 10:50	How To Deal With a Husband Addicted to Pornography: Betty Wolfgang	Teaching Children to Respect Authority: Sherilyn Mayberry	Creating Peace At Home Violet McDaniel
<b>Auditorium</b>			
2:00 - 4:00	Open Forum		Elders & Work of the Church
<b>Singing 7:00 - 7:30</b>			
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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