

# Back To Basics

Volume 6

JULY 2008

Number 7

**A Monthly Journal Dedicated To Teaching First Principles**

## **THE EARTH: BURNED UP OR DISCOVERED?**

*Lanny Smith*

**J**ehovah's Witnesses teach that the earth will endure "forever." They use at least three arguments to establish this point:

**THE BIBLE SAYS, "THE EARTH ABIDES FOREVER" (ECCL. 1:4).** This statement is part of a contrast made by the writer. "One generation passes away, and another generation comes; But the earth abides forever." In context, this statement is true, for in contrast to the passing generations, the earth continues to remain. Further, the word translated "forever," in this verse, can be limited by context to simply meaning "for a long time." Sometimes we say to a friend whom we have not seen for a long time, "It's been 'forever' since I've seen you!" This usage is found many times in Scripture.

**SINCE THE EARTH WAS NOT TOTALLY DESTROYED IN THE FLOOD, NEITHER WILL IT BE TOTALLY DESTROYED BY FIRE (2 PET. 3:5-7).** Our friends miss the real point of the text! Peter is not comparing the destruction of the flood to that of the coming fire! What he is saying is that God is always true to His word! "For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which (the word of God, *is*) the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the

earth which now exist are kept in store by the same word, reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." Further, note that in the flood, "the world (i.e., its inhabitants) that then existed perished (was ruined, *is*), being flooded with water" (2 Pet. 3:6, cp. Jn. 3:16). By contrast, "the heavens and the earth" (the entire material creation) are "reserved for fire" (2 Pet. 3:7). Clearly, "the world" which "perished" is NOT "the heavens and the earth" which are "reserved for fire!"

**BASED UPON A TEXTUAL VARIANT IN THE GREEK, "THE EARTH AND THE WORKS THAT ARE IN IT WILL BE FOUND," INSTEAD OF "BURNED UP" (2 PET. 3:10).** I fail to see how this proves anything! Even if we accept the variant reading, it does not change the teaching of the text, except to add to it the fact that the "works" of men will be "found" or "discovered" on that great judgment day! But we already knew that (1 Cor. 4:5)! Further, the verse **STILL** says, "the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat."

Three strikes, and you're out! Once again, J.W. doctrine has been tried and found wanting!

**NOBLESVILLE, IN**  
orlandomsmith@sbcglobal.net



# THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT IN THE BIBLE

John Isaac Edwards

**T**he most comprehensive statement in the Bible was made when Moses addressed Israel in these words:

“And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?” (Dt. 10:12-13).

**TO FEAR THE LORD.** To fear the Lord is to respect and reverence Him for who He is. Fear of God motivates us to do the will of God. Solomon recorded, “Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl. 12:13).

**TO WALK IN ALL HIS WAYS.** God’s ways are on a far higher plane than our ways, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways...” (Is. 55:8-9). If you don’t think so, try measuring the distance between the earth and the heavens! It’s not that we’re to walk in some of His ways, but ALL His ways. How are we doing in this regard?

**TO LOVE HIM.** “This is the first and great commandment” (Mt. 22:38). To love God is to obey God. “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments...” (1 Jn. 5:3). “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 Jn. 2:4).

**TO SERVE THE LORD THY GOD.** Joshua appealed to the Lord’s people to serve the Lord “in sincerity and in truth” (Josh. 24:14). David admonished his son, Solomon, to serve God “with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all

hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts” (1 Chr. 28:9).

**TO KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD.** God’s commandments for us today are found in the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17; Ps. 119:172). The gospel contains facts to believe, commands to obey, and promises to receive. May we believe its facts and obey its commands so as to receive its promises.

Will you do what God requires?

<b>The Earth: Burned Up or Discovered?</b> Lanny Smith.....	1
<b>The Sower’s Seed</b> Respect for the Word.....	2
<b>The Most Comprehensive Statement in the Bible</b> John Isaac Edwards.....	3
<b>Jepthah’s Daughter</b> Melba Edwards.....	4
<b>In Few Words</b> .....	5
<b>The Plagues; The Death of the Firstborn; The Passover Feast</b> David Eldridge.....	6
<b>From Egypt to Mount Sinai</b> Shane Williams.....	7
<b>Jehovah Makes a Covenant</b> John R. Gentry.....	8
<b>The Ten Commandments; The Molten Calf; The Covenant Renewed</b> Keith Welch.....	9
<b>Characteristics of Bible Miracles</b> John Isaac Edwards.....	10
<b>The United Church of Christ</b> David Eldridge.....	12
<b>Kids Activity Page</b> Aleisha Edwards.....	14
<b>Things to Flee</b> Ryan Thomas.....	15

## JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER

*Melba Edwards*

**D**uring the time between Joshua and the kings of Israel, “The Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them” (Jud. 2:16). Among those judges was a man named Jephthah. Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, “If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord’s, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering” (Jud. 11:30-31). The Lord delivered the children of Ammon into Jephthah’s hands (Jud. 11:32). When Jephthah came to his house, his daughter came out to meet him, and she was his only child (Jud. 11:34). Jephthah was very troubled because he could not take back the vow he had made (Jud. 11:35). We can learn many lessons from Jephthah and making rash vows. We can learn some lessons from Jephthah’s daughter as well.

**SHE CAME OUT TO MEET HER FATHER.** She was happy to see her father because she came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances. Young ladies, are you happy to see your father when he comes home? Do you meet him with joy? “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother...” (Eph. 6:1-2)

**SHE TOLD HER FATHER TO DO THAT WHICH HE VOWED.** “And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth...” (Jud. 11:36). She would never marry nor have her

own children. Her life would shortly come to an end. How many young daughters would have this attitude that whatever was vowed to the Lord must be done? What respect she had for her father and the Lord!

**SHE WAS A VIRGIN.** Today, many young ladies don’t hold on to something that is very precious to them; their virginity. Once it is gone, it is gone. It is something one can never get back. A virgin is an unmarried woman who keeps the purity of her body. Paul wrote Timothy, “...keep thyself pure” (1 Tim. 5:22). Young ladies, treat your virginity as a special treasure. Protect it. Put up a strong fight to keep it. Some day when and if you marry, you’ll be very glad you did. Jephthah’s daughter bewailed or wept her virginity.

**SHE WAS LAMENTED.** “...And it was a custom in Israel, That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year” (Jud. 11:39-40). The thing that happened to Jephthah’s daughter made quite an impression on Israel in that she was lamented yearly. Even now she makes quite an impression on us. When we die, how will we be remembered? If you should die as a young daughter, how will you be remembered by your parents, peers, and others?

The story of Jephthah’s daughter gives us much to think about, especially young ladies. Some things that happen to us are the results of rash thinking or doing of others. What is our attitude? Young ladies, how are you living your lives?

# In Few Words

## WHO RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT ON PENTECOST?

A reading of Acts 1 & 2 will convince the honest and good heart that the Holy Spirit fell on the twelve apostles in Acts 2:1-4, not on the 120 disciples mentioned in Acts 1:14-15.

**The Holy Spirit was promised only to the twelve.** The promise of the Father, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, was given “unto the apostles” (Acts 1:2-5). In the context of John 14-16, in which Jesus promised the Holy Spirit, the Lord was speaking to the twelve.

**The pronoun “they” in Acts 2:1 refers back to the apostles in Acts 1:26.** A basic rule of grammar is that a pronoun refers back to the previous noun with which it agrees in person, number, and gender. The eleven apostles, with Matthias, is the nearest noun!

**Only the apostles spoke and worked miracles on Pentecost.** Those who received the Holy Spirit “began to speak with other tongues” (Acts 2:4). All those who spoke were “Galileans” (Acts 2:7). Peter stood up with the eleven (Acts 2:14) and the audience directed their question to “Peter and to the rest of the apostles” (Acts 2:37), not the 120! “...many wonders and signs were done by the apostles” (Acts 2:43). If the 120 received the Holy Spirit, why were they silent and totally inactive in performing miracles on the day of Pentecost?

## SIMPLE ADDITION

Many Bible truths are as easy as simple addition. If you can understand “ $1 + 1 = 2$ ” (law of mathematical addition), then you should be able to understand:

**First Covenant + Second Covenant = Two Covenants.** If you can add  $1 + 1$ , you should have no difficulty understanding that the Bible identifies two major covenants. “For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second” (Heb. 8:7). The first covenant (the Old Testament) has been “done away” and “abolished” and the second covenant (the New Testament) “remaineth” (2 Cor. 3:6-14).

**Father + Son + Holy Spirit = 3 Persons in the Godhead.** Understanding the number of persons in the Godhead is a matter of simple addition. Read Matthew 28:19 and add the number of persons mentioned: “...the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” How many did you come up with: 1 or 3?

**Belief + Baptism = Salvation.** If you can understand  $1 + 1 = 2$ , you should be able to understand belief + baptism = salvation (Mk. 16:16). Could understanding how to be saved be that easy? Yes! The hard part is getting folks to believe and obey it!

## DID JESUS REALLY RISE FROM THE DEAD?

Is the resurrection of Jesus a fabrication of the followers of Jesus? Was it a hallucination? Is the resurrection a myth? Consider some resurrection evidences showing Jesus really did rise from the dead.

**The sealing of the sepulchre.** The chief priests and Pharisees “went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch” (Mt. 27:62-66).

**The empty tomb.** Those who came to the sepulchre of Jesus “found the stone rolled away” and “found not the body of the Lord Jesus” (Lk. 24:2-3). The empty grave proves Jesus lives.

**The grave clothes.** Peter and John “saw the linen clothes lying...and the napkin, that was about his head” (Jn. 20:5-7).

**The testimony of the angels.** Angels said, “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen...” (Lk. 24:4-6).

**The post-resurrection appearances.** The fact that Jesus was “seen” after His burial is evidence He arose from the dead (1 Cor. 15:5-8).

**The testimony of the witnesses.** Read the testimony of the witnesses in the book of Acts (2:24, 32; 3:15, 26; 4:2, 10, 33; 5:30, 32; 10:39-41; 13:30-31, 33-34, 37; 17:3, 18, 31). Look at what they suffered for their faith. Would you have been willing to die for a lie?

# Thru-the-Bible

## THE PLAGUES; THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN; THE PASSOVER FEAST

EXODUS 7:14-12:36, 43-51

DAVID ELDRIDGE

**A**t 80 years of age, Moses, with his brother, Aaron, stood before Pharaoh, demanding that he let the Israelites go out of his land. However, “Pharaoh’s heart grew hard, and he did not heed them...” (Ex. 7:13). Therefore, the Lord brought plagues (a blow or strike) upon the Egyptians and against the false gods they worshipped.

**THE FIRST NINE PLAGUES.** Pharaoh did “not know the Lord” or fear Him (Ex. 5:2). God’s purpose for the plagues was to teach Pharaoh, Egypt, Israel, and even us today, “The Lord is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King...” (Jer. 10:10; Ex. 6:7; 7:5, 17). In Exodus 7-10, we read of the first nine plagues brought upon Egypt: water turned to blood, frogs, lice, flies, diseased livestock, boils, hail, locust, and darkness. Pharaoh and his people suffered much due to these plagues as each plague was more severe than the one that preceded it. Yet, Pharaoh’s heart was hardened with each subsequent plague. Let us also learn the lesson that the Lord intended—that He alone is the great and awesome Almighty God (Ex. 10:1-2).

**THE TENTH PLAGUE ANNOUNCED.** After the plague of darkness, the Lord told Moses that there would be one more plague after which Pharaoh will “surely drive you out of here altogether” (Ex. 11:1). Moses declares before Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord: ‘About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh...to the firstborn of the female servant...and all the firstborn of the ani-

mals...but against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue” (Ex. 11:4-7). Even after this warning of terrible destruction, the Lord told Moses, “Pharaoh will not heed you, so that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt” (Ex. 11:9).

**THE PASSOVER FEAST.** On the tenth day of the first month, each house was to take a year old male lamb that was without blemish. On the fourteenth day, all the Israelites were to kill these lambs at twilight. They were to take the lamb’s blood and place it upon the two doorposts and lintel of the house in which it was to be eaten. While quickly eating this meal, they were to wear their belt on their waist, sandals on their feet, and have their staff in their hand. God said this “is the Lord’s Passover...For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt...and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt” (Ex. 12:11-13). This Passover was to be a memorial throughout their generations which remembered their deliverance (Ex. 12:14-17).

**THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN.** Just as the Lord had promised, at midnight the most terrible of all the plagues was brought upon Egypt. We simply allow the text to speak for itself: “And it came to pass at midnight that the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead” (Ex. 12:29-30).

CARMEL, IN  
david@davidceldridge.com



## FROM EGYPT TO MOUNT SINAI

EXODUS 12:37-19:2

SHANE WILLIAMS

**I**n Exodus 12:37, the sons of Israel begin their journey out of Egypt.

**FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD.** The people were to observe the feast of unleavened bread to remember their liberation. For seven days they would eat of unleavened bread and on the seventh day there would be a feast to the Lord (Ex. 13:6). They were to instruct their children of its meaning for future generations. The firstborn were to be devoted to the Lord. This applied to both man and beast. The firstborn animal would be sacrificed to the Lord. The firstborn child was to be redeemed with 5 Shekels (Num. 18:16). This was to be a lesson for future generations also (Ex. 13:14, 16).

**“SEE THE SALVATION OF THE LORD.”** The Lord led His people as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Pharaoh had a change of heart and desired for Israel to return to serve him. Yet it was God’s plan for this to take place so that all would know “that I am Lord” (Ex. 14:4). As Pharaoh and his 600 chariots drew near, Israel became frightened. They cried out to Moses with fear and doubt. Oh how they wished they were back in Egypt serving the Egyptians again! Moses told the people to not fear. “Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today” (Ex. 14:13). Moses stretched his hand over the sea and the Lord swept it back by a strong east wind (Ex. 14:21). God continued to harden the hearts of the Egyptians and they carried on their pursuit. God persisted in helping Israel by causing the chariots of the Egyptians to

be difficult to drive. They understood the Lord was fighting against them (Ex. 14:25). The Lord then caused the water to go back to its normal state, thus covering the chariots, horsemen and Pharaoh’s entire army (Ex. 14:28). “The Lord saved Israel that day...the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses” (Ex. 14:30-31).

**THE LORD’S CARE.** Even as the people continued their journey and grumbled, the Lord cared for them. They finally found water in Marah but it was bitter. God made it sweet for them (Ex. 15:25). He told them that if they would heed His voice, He would care for them. In the wilderness of Sin, the people grumbled again. The Lord rained bread from heaven for them. They were to collect enough in the morning for each person. In the evening, God provided meat (quail). All of this was so they “shall know that I am the Lord your God” (Ex. 16:12). On the sixth day, they were to gather twice as much, do their cooking and put it aside to use on the seventh day. This would be a pre-Sabbath observance.

**“YOU CANNOT DO IT ALONE.”** Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro, came from Midian to the camp of Israel. Moses recounted all that the Lord had done. Jethro was able to observe Moses judging all the people. He advised Moses to teach some of the people the laws. The task is too heavy, “you cannot do it alone.” Moses appointed able men over minor matters and then judged the difficult disputes himself (Ex. 18:26).

After 3 months, Israel came to Sinai and camped (Ex. 19:2).

**KEWANEE, MO**  
shanewms@sheltonbbs.com

# Thru-the-Bible

## JEHOVAH MAKES A COVENANT

EXODUS 19-23

JOHN R. GENTRY

After having rescued Israel from Egypt, Jehovah led them to Mount Sinai. Here they would remain for nearly a year (Ex. 19:1; Num. 10:11-12) as they received the commandments of the covenant.

**ISRAEL PREPARED TO RECEIVE THE LAW.** Israel came into the Wilderness of Sinai and “encamped before the mountain” (Ex. 19:1-2). Jehovah reminded them how He bore them out of Egypt “on eagles’ wings.” He promised to treat them as His “treasured possession among all the peoples...a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” *IF* they would “obey my voice and keep my covenant” (Ex. 19:3-6). Israel responded, “All that Jehovah has spoken we will do” (Ex. 19:8). Jehovah then commanded that all Israel consecrate themselves for two days in preparation for His descension upon the mountain to deliver the commandments of the covenant (Ex. 19:10, 15). Limits were to be set to prevent man and beast from touching the mountain for “whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death” (Ex. 19:12). On the third day, Jehovah descended on the mountain. Moses described the mountain as being filled with smoke and “the whole mountain trembled greatly.” There was a very loud trumpet blast that grew louder and louder. “All the people in the camp trembled” (Ex. 19:16-19).

**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.** Jehovah then spoke the Ten Commandments to Moses. The first four pertained to their relationship with Jehovah, while the last six pertained to their re-

lationship with their fellowman (Ex. 20:1-17). After observing the terrible sights and sounds of the mountain as Jehovah spoke to Moses, the people requested, “do not let God speak to us, lest we die” (Ex. 20:18-19). Moses told them not to fear death, but to fear Jehovah and sin not (Ex. 20:20). Jehovah used the opportunity to remind them not to worship idols (Ex. 20:22-23). He then regulated the making of altars and warned of the immodesty of going up to the altar by steps (Ex. 20:24-26).

**VARIOUS JUDGMENTS.** Exodus 21:1-11 gives rules and conditions concerning the buying and selling of servants. Verses 12-27 speak of various forms of violence, including accidental and premeditated injuries, as well as injuring a pregnant woman during a fight. Verses 28-36 give laws concerning animal control. The punishment fit the crime. Exodus 22:1-15 discusses the restoration of stolen property. Verses 16-31 describe various moral and ceremonial principles. Those engaged in bestiality or the mistreatment of widows or the fatherless were to be put to death. Exodus 23:1-9 deals with law suits and justice. Verses 10-13 describe Sabbath laws, including the rest of the land every seventh year. The three annual feasts are given in verses 14-19: Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Harvest, and Feast of Ingathering. Verses 20-33 speak of when they would enter the Promised Land.

As the Israelites were to be careful in obeying all of these commands, let us strive to obey God in all things. He is “the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9).

GREENVILLE, IN

johnrgentry@sbcglobal.net





## 10 COMMANDMENTS; THE MOLTEN CALF; THE COVENANT RENEWED

EXODUS 24; 32-34

KEITH WELCH

**G**od told the people of Israel, “You shall not make for yourself a carved image...you shall not bow down to them nor serve them” (Ex. 20:4-5). Let us continue *Thru-the-Bible* and find out if Israel obeyed God or disobeyed Him.

**MOSES MEETS GOD ON THE MOUNT.** “Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments...then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, ‘All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient’” (Ex. 24:3, 7). Will they? God calls for Moses to come on the mountain (Ex. 24:1-18). Moses said, “the sight of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain...” (Ex. 24:17). “So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights” (Ex. 20:18).

**ISRAEL MAKES AND WORSHIPS A GOLDEN CALF.** During those forty days and forty nights Moses was on the mountain, Israel grew impatient (Ex. 32:1-2). Israel proceeded to transgress God’s law by making themselves a golden calf and worshipping it (Ex. 32:3-6). As Moses made his way down the mountain at the command of God, he could hear the people. Moses came to the camp and saw the calf and the people dancing. Moses was angry and cast the tablets of stone to the ground, breaking them (Ex. 24:7-19). Moses said, “Whoever is on the Lord’s side—come to me” (Ex. 32: 26). As a result of Israel’s apostasy, three

thousand “stiff-necked” people were killed at the command of God. As Israel waited for Moses, we wait for the coming of the Lord (Acts 1:11). Are we erecting golden calves or being patient?

**ISRAEL RESUMES THEIR JOURNEY TO THE PROMISED LAND.** The Lord commands Moses and the people to leave Mount Sinai and go “to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your descendants I will give it’” (Ex. 33:1). God notified Israel that He was withdrawing His personal presence from them. Upon hearing this news, the people mourned and stripped themselves of their ornaments (Ex. 33:2-6). Moses prayed to God saying, “...consider that this nation is Your people” (Ex. 33:13). God responded, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” Moses asked God, “Please, show me Your glory” (Ex. 33:18). God answered, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live...you shall see my back” (Ex. 33:19-23).

**GOD RENEWS THE COVENANT WITH HIS PEOPLE.** God commanded Moses to cut two tablets of stone like the first ones and bring them to Him. God said He would write upon them “the words that were on the first tablets” (Ex. 34:1-9). Moses again is in the presence of God on Mount Sinai. God renews His covenant with Israel saying, “...I have made a covenant with you and with Israel” (Ex. 34:10-28). Moses descended Mount Sinai and the skin of his face shone. Moses spoke to the people being unaware of his shining face. The people “were afraid to come near him” (Ex. 34:29-32). When Moses was finished speaking to the people he placed a veil on his face (Ex. 34:33-35).

**HOBART, IN**  
kjewelch@yahoo.com

## CHARACTERISTICS OF BIBLE MIRACLES

*John Isaac Edwards*

**A** good way to see that miracles have ceased is to observe differences in Bible miracles and “miracles” purported today. Those who claim power to perform miracles as the Lord, His apostles, or those endowed with spiritual gifts need to explain these differences.

**IMMEDIATE.** When Peter took the man lame from his mother’s womb by the hand, “immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple” (Acts 3:7-8). The man did not receive strength progressively, but instantaneously! Why do “miracles” today not have the same immediate results as Bible miracles?

**FAITH NOT REQUIRED.** Today, faith is put as a condition of miraculous healing, and healing is in proportion to one’s faith. If one is not completely healed, then he did not fully believe, or so we are told. Really this is just a dodge! With Bible miracles, no faith is evident in many cases and there are cases where no faith was possible (Lk. 7:11-17; Acts 13:11-12). Why do “miracles” today require things not required by Bible miracles?

**ALL HEALED.** Jesus went about “healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people” (Mt. 4:23-24). Acts 5:16 records, “There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.” Nobody was culled out or turned away! At the “miracle” crusades and campaigns today, why are they not healed every one?

**EXPECTATION NOT REQUIRED.** Some are made to believe that in order to see a miracle they must expect a miracle. Bible miracles did not re-

quire expectation, but were often unexpected. A good example is when the lame man at the temple gate expected alms, but received a miracle of healing (Acts 3:2-7). Why should we expect today that which was unexpected in Bible days?

**NOT ADVERTISED BY THE ONE PERFORMING THEM.** Have you observed how modern “miracle workers” advertise and publicize their “great wonders”? Jesus did not heal for notoriety. In fact, on a number of occasions, Jesus commanded that the healed “tell no man” (Mk. 3:7-12; 7:31-37; 8:22-26). Why is a modern “miracle crusade” preceded by an advertising campaign, when Bible miracles were not advertised by the one performing them?

**NOT DONE FOR MONEY.** We read where the lame man of Acts 3 was expecting to receive alms of Peter and John, but where do you find Peter and John expecting money or charity from the lame man? Today’s “faith healers” have it backwards! I suggest that when the money stops pouring in that the “healing power” will stop flowing out! Why do “healers” today beg and plead for money, when healing in New Testament days was not done for money?

**PRESENCE UNNECESSARY.** The one doing the healing and the one being healed did not have to be together for the miracle of healing to take place. A good example is when “God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them” (Acts 19:11-12). Let’s see the “miracle men” and “wonder workers” do this today! If you have some handkerchiefs or aprons of healing, we have some with diseases we would like to see depart from them. How about it?

**DONE DESPITE PROTEST.** Opposition did not hamper or hinder the performance of miracles in Bible days. Luke 4:33-35 records, “And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.” Why do protestors get in the way of modern “miracles,” when they did not interfere with the work of the Lord?

**DONE DESPITE THE PRESENCE OF UNBELIEVERS.** This is seen in the record of Acts 13:10-12, when Elymas the sorcerer, who withstood Barnabas and Saul, was struck with divine pepper spray and “the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.” If you claim to have what Paul had or be able to do what Paul did, I am volunteering to let you cause me to be miraculously blinded that others might believe. When and where would you like to do this?

**PUBLIC.** Apostolic miracles were so public that the conferring council could say of the apostles Peter and John, “What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by

them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem” (Acts 4:16). If miracles are being performed today as they were then, why is it that we do not know about it? Why not perform a notable miracle manifest to all?

**COMPLETE HEALING.** Through Bible miracles of healing, lame men were given “perfect soundness” (Acts 3:16) and impotent men were “made whole” (Acts 4:9). The healing was total and absolute. There was no partial healing, nor was there any relapse. Why is this not true of “miracles” today?

**UNDENIABLE.** The council of Acts 4 could not deny the miracle of healing performed by Peter and John as they said, “indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them...and we cannot deny it” (Acts 4:16). Let those today who claim to be able to work miracles as in Bible days put forth a miracle that is unquestionably authentic and we will not deny it. The fact that “healing miracles” of today are denied is proof that they are not genuine, bona fide miracles.

That which was characteristic of Bible miracles is not characteristic of “miracles” alleged today. This one truth forever sets them aside as faked, forged, and feigned. Do not be deceived by “deceitful workers” or “lying wonders” (2 Cor. 11:13; 2 Th. 2:9). Believe and obey the truth!

## MIRACLES OF HEALING

There is a notable difference between New Testament miracles of healing and the “miracles of healing purported today. Take note of some different kinds of miracles of healing in New Testament days: leprosy (Mt. 8:2-3), palsy (Mt. 9:2-8), blindness and speechlessness (Mt. 12:22), missing limbs (Mt. 15:30-31), deafness and speech impediment (Mk. 7:32-37), a great fever (Lk. 4:38-39), a withered hand (Lk. 6:6-11), a blood hemorrhage (Lk. 8:43-44), and a severed ear (Lk. 22:50-51).

We deny that men today possess the power to work miracles of healing as the Lord, His apostles, or those endowed with spiritual gifts in the first century. Is there anyone willing to publicly affirm that they have such power? We challenge you to come forward and do what these did. We will let you know if anyone steps forward.

# THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*David Eldridge*

**R**ecently, you may have heard of the Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, Illinois, a congregation organized under the United Church of Christ denomination. Its former preacher, Jeremiah Wright, has been in the news of late due to remarks made in his sermons and the fact that presidential candidate Barack Obama and his family are members of this church. Unfortunately, some will hear “United Church of Christ” and think that is equivalent to the church of Christ of which we are members. Lest this be thought by any reading this article, and to help in teaching others, we note some reasons the United Church of Christ denomination is not the church of Christ you read of in the Bible.

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST WAS BUILT BY MEN.** “On Tuesday, June 25, 1957, at Cleveland, Ohio, the Evangelical and Reformed Church, 23 years old...and the Congregational Christian Churches, 26 years old...joined together as the United Church of Christ.” This “new church” just celebrated its “50th anniversary,” and claims “God alone is its author.” Yet the reality is that this church was built by the men who founded it some 50 years ago. Jesus said, “I will build my church...” (Mt. 16:18). The true church of Christ is the one built by Him alone. The church which Jesus built began in Jerusalem (not Cleveland) on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2. The United Church of Christ started about 1,925 years too late to be the church which is authored by God. The United Church of Christ was built by the wrong people, in the wrong place, and at the wrong time.

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IS UNSCRIPTURALLY ORGANIZED.** The United Church of Christ claims “Christ alone its head.” Furthermore, they state that “each congregation within the United Church of Christ is independent and autonomous.”

However, the true nature of their organizational structure belies their words. John H. Thomas is currently serving his third, four-year term as “General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ.” The United Church of Christ also has a “five-person Collegium of Officers,” a “90 member Executive Council,” and a General Synod which meets at regular intervals to pass resolutions for the church. It is also of note that the United Church of Christ’s Headquarters are located in Cleveland, OH. How can each congregation be independent and autonomous with the organizational structure described above? The Bible pattern is to have “elders in every church” (Acts 14:23) whose oversight is limited to “the flock of God which is among you” (1 Pet. 5:2). If the United Church of Christ truly believes that Christ is “to be head over all things to the church” (Eph. 1:22), why do they have a “President” of the church, “Collegium of Officers,” “Executive Council,” “General Synod,” and headquarters in Ohio? The United Church of Christ states that they are “a Biblical church,” but where in the Bible do you read of such organization and offices as they employ?

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST TEACHES ERROR AND ENCOURAGES SIN.** Though claiming to be “a Biblical church,” the United Church of Christ does not acknowledge the Bible as the objective standard of authority (Jn. 17:17). Instead, their churches “tailor themselves to fit the people they feel called to serve in their local community.” It is in this spirit that the United Church of Christ teaches and embraces much error. They state a belief “that baptism places each of us into the ‘body of Christ,’” but then go on to say that infant baptism and sprinkling accomplish that end. They include among their “many firsts”: “the first to ordain a woman” minister; “the first to ordain openly gay lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered” ministers;

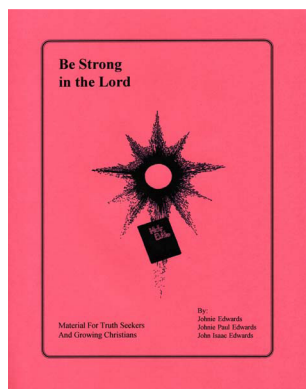
and publishers of “the only hymnal released by a Christian church that honors in equal measure both male and female images of God.” The doctrine and practice of the United Church of Christ makes it obvious that claiming to be “a Biblical church” does not a Biblical church make! The Bible teaches that “men and women were baptized,” but never mentions the baptism of sinless infants who are incapable of believing (Acts 8:12). Paul was divinely inspired to write, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man” (1 Tim. 2:12). The Bible teaches that homosexuality is a sin described as being dishonorable, vile, against nature, shameful, and deserving of death (Rom. 1:24-32). Though we may live in a “politically correct” society, the fact is that every Biblical reference to God, without exception, is in the masculine. The United Church of Christ would do well to heed the warning, “Woe to those who call evil good, and

good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness...” (Is. 5:20).

Obviously, there is a vast difference between the man-made denomination of the United Church of Christ and the church of Christ that our Lord built. The United Church of Christ cannot be the church belonging to Christ for they are not built by Him, not founded upon Him, not organized according to His commands, and do not follow in His truth! Our plea would be that those involved in such error would abandon it and simply be members of the church of Christ revealed in the Bible.

*(All quotations concerning the United Church of Christ are from their website, [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org))*

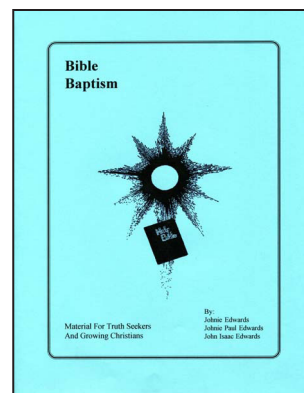
CARMEL, IN  
 david@davidceldridge.com



### BE STRONG IN THE LORD

**\$4.25**

Thirteen lessons designed to help Christians “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (Eph. 6:10).



### BIBLE BAPTISM

**\$4.25**

Thirteen lessons giving the teaching of the Bible on baptism in a well-arranged manner. Helps the student answer objections to Bible baptism.

**[WWW.EDWARDSPUBLISHERS.COM](http://WWW.EDWARDSPUBLISHERS.COM)**

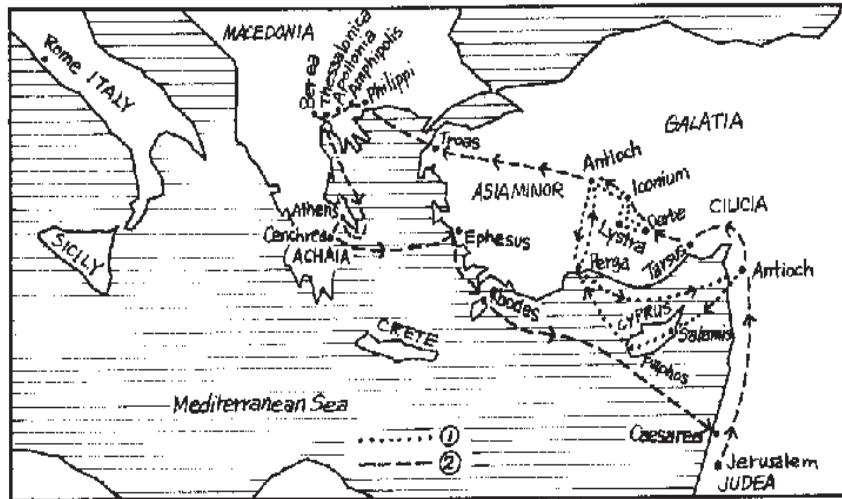
**1-800-889-0338**

# Kids Activity Page

Aleisha Edwards

## Paul's First Journey

Acts 13 & 14



### True or False?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul went alone on this trip (Acts 13:2)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Barnabas and John accompanied Paul (Acts 13:2-5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Elymas the sorcerer was a friend to Paul (Acts 13:8)
- \_\_\_\_\_ John returned back to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul and Barnabas were bold (Acts 13:46)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul preached to Gentiles (Acts 13:46-47)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul could not do miracles (Acts 14:8-11)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul was stoned (Acts 14:19)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul ordained elders in every church (Acts 14:23)

**"Suffer the little children to come unto me,  
and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).**

## THINGS TO FLEE

Ryan Thomas

If God came to you personally and told you to flee something, what effect would that have on you? If you're smart, you would avoid the thing mentioned at all costs. You would no doubt be terrified of both it and the consequences associated with it. In a sense, God has appeared to each and everyone of us and commanded that we flee certain things. This is done through His word which has been preserved for us in the Bible (Heb. 1:2; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). It is these things to which this article is dedicated.

**IDOLATRY.** Oftentimes, people associate idolatry as the worshipping of false gods. However, anything that takes the place of God, or comes before God, can be considered an idol. At the root of idolatry is an attitude of selfishness, the desire to worship God how one desires or "wills" (Col. 3:5; 2:23). This practice is severely condemned in the Scriptures (1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:20; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 21:8). Remember what happened to the Israelites as a result of their idolatry (Ex. 32:27-28, 35). Keep in mind that they were using the calf to worship the Lord even though this did not make it right! So whether you worship objects made of wood and stone, or simply fail to put the Lord first in your life, you are guilty of the sin of idolatry. The prophet Isaiah paints a graphic picture of the folly of idol worship (Is. 44:9-20). Let us heed the apostle's warning and flee from the sin of idolatry! (1 Cor. 10:14).

**FORNICATION.** This term is used to describe any unlawful sexual practice and it is something that all Christians must flee (1 Cor. 6:18). Of all the other sins Paul mentions, he makes special note of the sin of fornication. Why do you suppose that is? Could it be that it is the most prevalent of all sins? Young people are particularly susceptible to this sin. We always need to be careful how we

dress and act around others as to avoid enticing the opposite sex. We need to recognize that God has put into every person the physical attraction for the opposite sex. Fortunately, He has provided for the lawful means to satisfy those desires (1 Cor. 7:2; Heb. 13:4). Let us strive to always keep our thoughts in the right place! (Phil. 4:8).

**YOUTHFUL LUSTS.** A similar command can be found in 2 Timothy 2:22, where Paul told Timothy to "flee also youthful lusts." In this verse, Paul is referring to strong desires of any kind, not just the desire for the opposite sex. Such is certainly included, but so are others (food, drink, recreation, ambition, material possessions, etc.). Some of these desires are stronger in the days of our youth, however, the admonition is applicable to those of all ages.

**LOVE OF RICHES.** Not all who go to hell for riches will be rich. It is our attitude toward riches that is key. All those who put undue emphasis on riches will be condemned (1 Tim. 6:9-11; Lk. 12:13-21; 18:18-25). Let us make sure our treasure is in the right place! (Mt. 6:19-20).

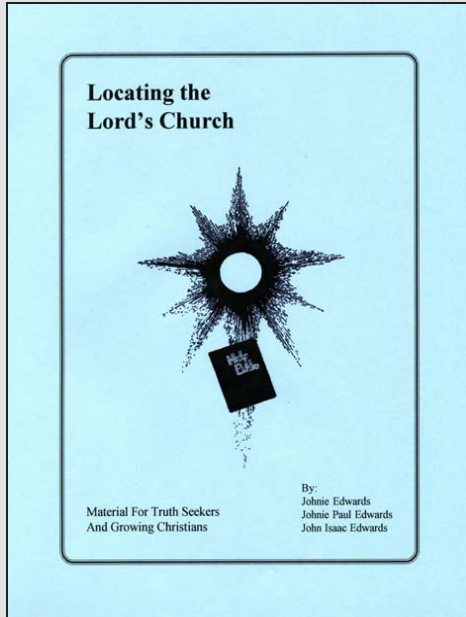
**WRATH TO COME.** In Luke 3:7, John the Baptist reminds the people to "flee from the wrath to come." This, of course, is referring to the final judgment. Even though none of us can avoid judgment (2 Cor. 5:10), we can certainly make preparation for it. Remember, heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. Are you ready for that day to come? (2 Tim. 4:6).

May we shun or avoid these things and "ever follow that which is good" (1 Th. 5:15).

FILLMORE, IN  
thomasr55@hotmail.com

# Locating the Lord's Church

*A Thirteen Lesson Study*



### *Lessons Include:*

- Learning About the Lord's Church
- The Origin of the Lord's Church
- The Relationship of Christ and the Lord's Church
- What the Lord's Church Is Not
- Figures By Which the Lord's Church Is Set Forth
- The Government of the Lord's Church
- The Name of the Lord's Church
- The Worship of the Lord's Church
- The Work of the Lord's Church
- Keeping the Lord's Church Pure
- Unity in the Lord's Church
- Members of the Lord's Church
- Apostasy in the Lord's Church

**\$4.25 ea**

### **Edwards Publishers**

P.O. Box 251  
Ellettsville, IN 47429  
**1-800-889-0338**

### **VISIT OUR E-STORE:**

**[www.edwardspublishers.com](http://www.edwardspublishers.com)**

Place secure orders online!

# Back To Basics

P.O. Box 251  
Ellettsville, IN 47429

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ELLETTSVILLE, IN  
PERMIT NO. 110