

God's Care of His Flock

by Bro. Richard Lee
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(Please read Ezekiel 34:1-17 before reading this article.)

In Ezekiel 34:1-10, we read where some shepherds feed themselves instead of the sheep in their flock. These shepherds carry out none of their responsibilities toward these sheep. As a result of these sheep having no shepherd, the sheep are scattered and become meat for the beasts of the field. God took these lost sheep and scattered flocks away from these shepherds that the flock would no longer be meat for these shepherds.

In verses 11-16, God says He will both search His sheep and seek them out. He will gather his sheep to their fold upon the high mountains and will even feed his flock and cause them to lie down. God has told us that he will watch over us and give us intimate care.

At the end of verse 16, God says that he will “destroy the fat and the strong” of this flock that he has just gathered, that he will feed them with judgment. In verse 17, God addresses this flock and tells them, “Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats.” God tells us that, as fat cattle, it is not good that we have eaten the good pasture and have walked on what we didn’t eat and have left poor grazing for the lean of the flock. He also is rebuking us when we have drank of the deep waters and fouled the rest of the water after we drank our fill.

I think God is saying to His people, though you are of the flock that I saved and took to the mountain-top fold, I will judge you who do not consider the things which I have said are important. We must remember the things that the shepherds failed to do: they did not heal the sick, they did not bind that which was broken and they did not go bring back those who were

driven away, or seek those who were lost. To some degree, we are responsible in the same way to each other. God specifically says in verses 21 & 22: “Because you have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; Therefore will I save my flock, and they no more shall be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle.” God will protect His humble children.

After reading this, we have to consider how we treat others. What kind of example do we set as Christians? Do our actions lead others to want to follow us? Are we following the example that Jesus set?

I think God is telling us in this chapter to, above all else, consider our fellow servant. As we feed on the blessings that God provides, do we take time to pause and look around us to see who is feeding beside us? Do we take special care to be sure not to push them away? Many of us have seen cows eating at the feed trough and have seen the greedy, dominant cow chase away the smaller and weaker ones, though they can’t eat it all. How do we feel about these greedy cows?

We have to ask ourselves (so we can make corrections in our way), “What are some ways that we push our brothers or sisters away?” I can see in myself that I sometimes ignore God’s children, I fail to take the time required to let them know that I care about the things that are troubling them. I fail to listen to the problems. I am too quick to tell my story of how something similar happened to me several years ago. What that brother or sister needed was to have someone who really listens, who cares, someone who genuinely wants good for them and offers help,

no matter the cost, just like I would want when I need help.

Another way that I see myself pushing those away is when I give up on someone too soon. I find too often that I will quickly categorize someone into a group of “not dependable”, or “lazy” and at that point, I don’t want to waste my time working with them anymore. This is one of the devil’s devices. Maybe I was to be the one that was to work with that individual and teach him the value of a good work ethic. I was blessed with great examples of hard workers and have learned a good work ethic. If God had not blessed me to have strong leaders, I may be one of those that I have considered lazy. In Corinthians 4:7, Paul asks, “For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”. I must be very careful not to overlook ways I can serve God by helping His little sheep who stand in special need!

Read verse 19. It says “And as for my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.” It seems that there is a distinction being made between his flock and the ones who tread on the residue of the pasture and foul the water. I believe that those “in God’s flock” are those who are in intimate fellowship with God and dwell in the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth. If we are of those cattle who are pushing the weaker ones away from the good pasture, we will be judged by God and put out of the Kingdom of Heaven, but will be able to once again rejoin His flock when we become humble and once again truly love our neighbor as ourselves.

A Peace in the Storm

by Sis. Tisha F. Griner
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I have always had a great fear of being caught in a tornado and not knowing what to do to protect my family. I have a particular dream that I have dreamed more than once where a tornado is about to hit my childhood home, but as I look out the window of my room, I see it go past the house and on down the road. When I dream this dream, I always wake up with my heart racing and find it difficult to go back to sleep.

Not long after I got married, I had this dream once again. This time, I was living about 230 miles from my childhood home. In this dream, however, I awoke just as the storm hit my childhood home in the dream. Later that morning, I was talking to my Mother. She surprised me when she said that she and Daddy had almost driven in the path of a tornado while driving home from visiting family in another town. The month was January. I thought it strange that a tornado would hit at this time of year. It was also unusual that I had not dreamed about the tornado in a while, and that in the dream the tornado actually hit the home. My mother also commented that they surely would have driven in its path had they not had to stop with car trouble down the road. I told my mother about dreaming the dream earlier that very morning. We both decided that the Lord might have been preparing me to keep my parents in prayer even though I

had no knowledge of their potential danger.

More recently, a couple of weeks ago, I was talking to my four year-old about how Jesus was on a boat with some of His disciples during a storm. Jesus was asleep while the boat tossed and turned (please read Mark 4:35-41). The men were troubled that Jesus was sleeping while they felt their lives were about to come to an end. They woke Him and asked Him if He cared about their lives. He responded simply saying, "Peace, be still" to the sea, and by rebuking the wind. Knowing the power of God, even this action was not necessary, but it amazed the disciples that the waters suddenly became calm.

I was wondering if my son was listening to the Bible story. He confirmed that he was listening by asking me a question the following week. We were on our way to school and the weather was very turbulent to say the least. He asked "Mama, can you put your hand up like Jesus and make it stop raining? I don't like this rain." I explained to him that this would not be a good idea because only Jesus had the power to do that, and besides, we needed the rain to water the spring flowers we were anticipating. This seemed to calm him.

That very night the storms continued, and there were reports of several tornadoes that had touched down in Alabama

and parts of Georgia. These tornadoes had already taken lives of some of its victims. My fears grew as I watched the storm come closer on the weather radar. I again feared the safety of my family, and knew this was real and not a dream. My husband and I prayerfully prepared a closet in case we needed to get our sleeping children to shelter quickly. As the wind grew stronger, I prayed more fervently for the storm to pass. Amazingly, the clap of thunder that sounded the climax of the storm did not even wake my four year old son. I thought of the dream, the Bible lesson God had placed on my heart to tell my son earlier that weak, and how I had been so afraid while my child slept gracefully. At about 3 a.m., the time the storm should have hit our area, my 2 year old daughter and I fell asleep on the couch, all fears subsided. The storm had been guided to go completely around our area. This was not a coincidence, but the hand of God.

A neighbor called the following morning and said, "Wasn't that some storm last night? It was amazing how it completely bypassed us!" I replied, "Yes, the Lord really blessed us last night, didn't He?"

Many times the "storms" in each of our lives can be calmed when we simply look to the Lord and watch Him take control. It is then that He will help us find a peace in the storm.

God Is Come into the Camp

by Elder Greg Phillips
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“And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore” (1 Samuel 4:7).

If this verse could be separated from its context and taken alone, it would present a wonderful scene. God’s chosen nation, Israel, besieged by her perpetual enemy, the Philistines, have brought the Ark of the Covenant into their camp. “Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again” (verse 5). At their shout, the Philistines knew something was different. They assumed that Israel’s God had come among them. They cried, “Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness” (1 Samuel 4:8).

On many occasions God did come among His people, causing them to rejoice, and causing their enemies to fear. Even in modern times God has been pleased to manifest Himself in great ways to His church. That was not the case at this time, however. God warned Israel (and us) of the consequences of disobedience. “And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins” (Leviticus 26:27-28).

If only the assumption of the Philistines had been true! The following events prove that God had not come into Israel’s camp to save, but to judge. “And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen” (1 Samuel 4:10).

Israel at this point was backslidden

and under God’s judgment. God’s judgment was primarily against the sons of Eli, the priest, for their wickedness and against Eli for “he restrained them not” (1 Samuel 3:13). Israel also had sinned in that some followed the sinful example of Eli’s sons. Others “abhorred the offering of the LORD” as they saw their abuse. They hated to bring an offering to the temple because they knew their offering would be misused. Why bring an offering at all if wicked priests violently took it for themselves?

God’s judgment would be severe against the house of Eli, but all of Israel would taste God’s wrath. “In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever” (1 Samuel 3:12-14).

The only thing that could have prevented God’s judgment was repentance. There are few instances in Scripture, however, that men repented before God’s judgment came. Usually it was only after they had felt God’s wrath that they turned from their sin. Little has changed; most of us are still that way. There are, in fact, many similarities of God’s people today with Israel of old. If we will prayerfully consider the events in 1 Samuel chapter four, we will surely see much of ourselves. I pray we will learn from these events and turn to God before we lament, “...the glory is departed from Israel” (1 Samuel 4:22).

God’s judgment came to Israel at the

hands of the Philistines. “And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men” (1 Samuel 4:2). Israel’s reaction was “...Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies” (verse 3).

Israel had placed their trust in the ark rather than the One whom the ark represented. Their confidence was in the visible rather than “him who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:27).

Instead of seeking God, the Israelites set about devising superstitious means of securing the victory over their foes. In this respect most of us have imitated them. We think of a thousand inventions, but neglect the one thing that is needful. The Israelites thought that if they could get the ark of the covenant, which had been the symbol of God’s presence, and bring it into the midst of their camp, they would then be certain of victory. As the ark was carried into the camp, the earth rang again with their shouts, while the Philistines, hearing their shout, were greatly afraid. The enemies said to one another, “God has come into the camp. Woe unto us! For there hath not been such a thing heretofore.”

The ark was the sacred place where God revealed himself in the days when his people truly served Him; but it had no power without the presence of God. Israel transformed it into a sacred object to be worshipped and trusted. They attributed to the ark what could only be done by God Himself. This is the tendency of us all. We want some symbol, some token.

We lean upon the arm of flesh: we trust in man, though it is written plainly

enough, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord" (Jeremiah 17:5). Many today think that God has come into the camp merely because some outward religious ceremony has been observed, or because they are in some sacred place.

Another mistake of Israel, which is also often made today, was calling upon men rather than God. They sent for Hophni and Phinehas simply because they were priests. These men were not even moral men, much less were they spiritual men. They dishonored the Lord before all Israel. Yet, because they happened to hold the office of the priesthood, Israel trusted them to bring what they thought would save them into the camp.

Many today would prefer an eloquent entertaining speaker, rather than a God called preacher who faithfully declares God's word. They think if only they can get the right pastor, all will be well. If the pastor of the church does not walk with God, where will he lead you? "...If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matthew 15:14).

Israel shouted with great enthusiasm, but enthusiasm cannot replace faith and obedience. Most Christians today seem to be satisfied with a cheerful, enthusiastic service with outward excitement. The Philistines soon stilled the shouts of Israel, and the enemy will soon silence all our happy enthusiasm if it is not attended by the power of God.

There should be a fervency and even a passion in the worship of the living God. If worship is, as we believe, a meeting with God, how could the experience not move us? Worship of the Father "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23) will produce zeal and enthusiasm in the worshipper and give new power against the enemy. Carnal, man-made excitement will quickly leave us when the Philistines come.

"The Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And

they said, Woe unto us! For there hath not been such a thing heretofore." Israel probably made the same mistake, expecting this new method of fighting the Philistines to bring them victory. We are all prone to think that new things are better than the old, but it is not necessarily so. If the new thing is good, why has the Church of God not been led this way before? The writer of Hebrews reminds us, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8) and cautions us to "... Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines...(verse 9).

David's experience in moving the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:1-8) illustrates the danger of new inventions. God had, through the Scriptures, given instruction for moving the Ark, and He strongly disapproved of any new method of handling it. If we cannot find Scriptural authority for our actions, we need to forsake those actions. The Apostle Paul wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Because Israel trusted in an object rather than the living God, and because God had not come into the camp, Israel was defeated. "And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain" (1 Samuel 4:10-11). Upon hearing this news, Eli "fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died" (verse 18). Phinehas' wife gave birth to a son at that time "...and she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel" (verse 21). The glory had truly departed from Israel long before when they turned from God and went their own way. With God's judgment, it was made very evident that the glory

had departed. God did not forsake His people; rather Israel forsook God.

Through Moses, God had told Israel what would happen if they forsook Him. "When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of anything, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger: I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you" (Deuteronomy 4:25-27).

God would not, however, forget His people. "But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them" (Deuteronomy 4:29-31). God will come into the camp of His people when they seek Him with all their heart.

That is the great need of the church today—God in the camp. We need His manifest presence and His power. Without Him, we can never stand before our enemies.

When God comes into the camp, there is true joy which the enemy cannot take away. Israel's shouts and enthusiasm lasted only a few minutes. Joy in the Lord never fails.

When God is in the camp, there is new zeal in serving Him. No longer are we simply going through the motions of religion. When God is present, we, from the heart, seek to serve Him and His people, and to further His king-

dom.

There is new courage for those who have become downcast. There is comfort for those who mourn. There is deliverance for those bound by sin. When God is in the camp, there is new power in the preaching and in prayer. The saints enjoy fellowship with one another; Jesus reveals his love to them, and they rejoice in it. Hearts are also cheered as they turn their eyes toward the cross of Christ.

To experience God in the camp, we must first confess to ourselves that we can do nothing without His presence. Jesus said, "...without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). As we are helpless without Him, we should diligently

seek Him.

We should have a sincere desire for His presence. More than simply desiring His blessings, we should desire Him. If we really love God we will have a strong desire to be in His presence.

To experience God's presence, we must be obedient to His word. We must adhere to His doctrine and precepts, to the whole of Christ's rule and law. We must be careful to follow every step that he has taken. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

We must also separate ourselves from the world. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness

with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Corinthians 6:14-16). Further, God promises, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).

Grow in Knowledge

1. "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob and he that formed thee, O Israel not _____, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."
2. "For I the Lord thy God will _____ thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee."
3. "Fear thou not; for _____ am with thee..."
4. "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand _____, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you today..."
5. "And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the _____, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

6. "But straightway Jesus came unto them; saying, Be of good _____; It is I; be not afraid."
7. "And Jesus came and touched them, and said, _____, and be not afraid."
8. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the _____ according to his purpose."
9. "...Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours but _____."
10. "Be _____ and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the King of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him:"

Why Did they Go?

1. Why did Adam and Eve leave the garden of Eden?
2. Why did Joseph's brothers go to Egypt?
3. Why did Ruth go to Bethlehem?
4. Why did Saul go to the Witch of Endor?
5. Why did Hannah go with little Samuel to Eli?
6. Why did Esther go before the king of Persia?
7. Why did Elijah go into the wilderness after the contest on Mt. Carmel?
8. Why did the Wise Men go to Jerusalem?
9. Why did they go home another way?
10. Why did Joseph and Mary take Jesus to Egypt?
11. Why did Jesus go to Jerusalem when He was twelve?
12. Why did Jesus go to Cana?

13. Why did Nicodemus go to see Jesus by night?
14. Why did Jesus often go to Bethany?
15. Why did Jesus and the disciples go to Jerusalem the last week of His life?
16. Why did Paul go to Philippi?
17. Why did John go to the island of Patmos?
18. Why did Jonah try to go to Tarshish?
19. Why did the Hebrews go to the Promised Land?
20. Why did Jacob go to his uncle Laban's home?
21. Why did Abraham's servant go to Mesopotamia?
22. Why did Daniel go to Babylon?
23. Why did Naomi's family go to Moab?
24. Why did Abraham leave his home in Ur?

The Reunion of Joseph and His Family

by: Elder McKinley Wright
Jacksonville, Florida

Devotional Reading: Psalm 51:6-17.
Background Scripture: Genesis, Chapter 42,43,45,46.

Memory Selection: Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. Genesis 45:5

Real Love

Genesis 45 1. Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

2. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

3. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

4. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

6. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.

7. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in earth, and to save your lives with a great deliverance.

8. So now it was not that you sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

9. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all

Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:

10. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy Children and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast:

11. And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

12. And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you.

13. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.

14. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

15. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

46:29. And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.

30. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.

Introduction

The story of Joseph has a special appeal for children. It shows in a most forceful way the difference between real love and imitation love. If Joseph had returned evil for the evil done to him, he would have been like other men. He did not do that. It is in this that his greatness lies. Not only was Joseph great in love, but he was also great in wisdom. His wisdom caused him to be great among the people of the world, but his love made him great among the people of God. Although Jesus had not yet come into the earth, Joseph was very much like Jesus in many ways.

Comments on the Printed Lesson

Joseph was a wise man. But his wisdom did not come from himself. It was given to him by the Lord. Joseph used the wisdom that the Lord gave him in the way that the Lord intended that it should be used. God first used Joseph's wisdom to set Joseph up in the kingdom of Egypt. Egypt had a king who was called the Pharaoh, but when that Pharaoh saw how wise Joseph was, he made him the ruler over the whole country. Pharaoh knew that Joseph was wise because Joseph had interpreted his dream. None of the fortune tellers in Egypt could tell him the meaning of the dreams, but Joseph did because God told Joseph what the dream meant.

God wanted Joseph to be the ruler that he might save his own people from starving to death. There was going to be a famine and God was going to make them safe from the famine. So, He raised up Joseph for that purpose. Isn't it wonderful how God looks after the welfare of His children!

It was a different sort of wisdom that caused Joseph to be so kind toward his brother. They had been real mean toward him, but Joseph's heart was filled with love. When he saw them come to buy food, he must have wanted to send them away or put them into prison, but they were his brothers and he loved them. So, instead of treating them badly, he sold them food and then gave their money back. He still did not tell them who he was. The only way that they could really enjoy knowing that he was their brother was for them to be made to see his mercy very clearly. He caused this to happen by requiring that they bring Benjamin to Egypt and then threatening to place Benjamin in prison. Then, when he told them that he was Joseph and set them free, they were glad that he was

Joseph instead of someone else who would not have loved them.

Joseph loved his brothers so much that he cried when he saw how troubled they were thinking Benjamin would be put into prison. Joseph then sent everyone else away and told his brothers who he was. Joseph explained that God had sent him to Egypt to preserve their lives. He told his brothers to go back home and get their father

and bring him to Egypt, and he gave them the best part of Egypt for a home. When his brothers came back with his father, he went to Goshen to see his father. Neither Joseph nor his father had ever expected to see the other again, so they were really happy to be together again.

Questions

1. What was the name of Joseph's father?

2. What was the name of Joseph's grandfather?

3. Where was Joseph's home before he was sold?

4. Why was Joseph sold and who sold him?

5. What was the name of the place where Joseph's father lived in Egypt?

6. Name as many ways as you can in which Joseph was different from other people.

7. Would you like to be like Joseph?

Let Us Give Thanks Daily!

by Elder Don McWilliams
Brownsburg, Indiana

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (I Thessalonians 5: 18).

What have you received this year for which you are very thankful? Wealth, health, fame, fortune, great job, or a long sought after dream? Each day, even each moment of our lives, has been filled with great blessings far more than we realize. Many blessings are very easily recognized, others are much more subtle and can only be realized when we admit that "every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17).

It is a sad commentary of our lives when we count success by OUR AC-

COMPLISHMENTS. We often hear, "I did this or that," "I made a six figure wage so I must be very successful," "I have holdings in many companies," etc., etc. Human nature causes us to grade ourselves by financial gain, and not by the gifts of God.

As we enter the season of thanksgiving, I wonder how many will acknowledge, through heartfelt thanks, that they realize where **all** of our blessings truly originate. Only God should be thanked and praised for our daily and, thus, yearly blessings.

However, there is a far greater blessing than our daily storehouse, and of course, that is our moment by moment and throughout eternity blessing of "**GOD WITH US**". When Jesus promised to send another comforter after

His ascension, He gave a very precious gift to all of His people. Try to imagine how devastating it would be not to have the comfort of God's Spirit during times of trials and sorrow.

God has blessed us so greatly, not only with the comforts of life, food, raiment, and shelter, but also with His Spirit which blesses us to know and believe all that the Bible relates to us of His precious Son.

As we enter this Thanksgiving season, I pray that we will take time to truly, from the heart, thank God from whom all blessings flow.

"Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord." ".....think on these things." (Philippians 4:8)

The Love of Money

by Elder Gary Toole
Uvalda, Georgia

Something that is often misquoted is, "Money is the root of all evil." It's really the love of money! The love of money, not money itself, is the root of all evil. Money is good and needful as a means of exchange. The barter system wouldn't work too good nowadays when you are buying a \$25,000 vehicle or a house. I don't think the car dealer could use 25,000 dozen eggs. Money, of course, is necessary, and God talks about the concept of money.

The love or lust of money is the root of all evil because the love of it makes you greedy, and greed is sin. If you have a modest amount of money, but are greedy, stingy and love the money, then it is evil to you. On the other hand, you can have millions and billions and be free hearted and have a giving spirit. Then it can be a blessing. You can be that big word, "A Philanthropist!" and the money be good for you and for others, and it will not be evil or sin-

ful. So it's not how much money you have that makes it evil or sinful to a person, but it's how giving we are with what we have, how charitable we are, and how we treat others as far as how we make our money and use our money. Most importantly is that we give God what's His in our tithes to the church, and then above that true giving, cheerful giving is in our offerings to God. May God help us not to love money, but use it wisely.

Purposes of the Gospel

"Thy Word Is A Lamp Unto My Feet, and A Light Unto My Path."

by Elder William M. Mullis
Waycross, Georgia
(6th in a series)

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

We all get hungry. Just as the natural body hungers for natural food, the spiritual body or soul hungers for spiritual food. One of the purposes of the gospel is to feed the people of God, to give them strength to carry on, to encourage them, to sustain their lives. Natural food does not give or cause natural life, it sustains natural life. Likewise, the word of God does not give or cause spiritual life, it sustains spiritual life. Praise God for the nourishment and strength we get from His Holy word! "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Mathew 5:6).

Jesus points out the necessity of food from the word of God for God's people when he says, "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Once a child of God has been born of the Spirit of God, he needs the milk of the word first! "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2). As the child of God matures, he needs to begin to feed on more than just the milk of the word. He needs strong meat if he is to become a mature Christian! "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the

time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:11-14).

Jesus explained to Peter that if he really wanted to show his love for Jesus, he must do so by feeding the lambs and sheep, teaching and preaching the word of God. "Feed my lambs....Feed my sheep." (See John 21:15-17.)

The Apostle Paul explained to the elders at Ephesus that he had not failed to declare unto them all the counsel of God, preaching the kingdom of God, giving them milk and meat! Then he exhorts the elders to "Feed the Church of God." (See Acts 20:25-28.) He also warned that others would enter in among the flock to teach perverse things to draw disciples away unto them. The only way they could be saved from the corrupt, poisonous, contaminated food was to be able to discern between good and evil food.

Jeremiah writes of how God will feed the people of God with the word of God if they turn from their wicked, backsliding ways! He says, "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with

knowledge and understanding" (Jeremiah 3:14,15). What did the people of God have to do before God would give them pastors to feed them with knowledge and understanding? They had to turn from their wicked ways, return unto the Lord. Unless they repented, he would not feed them! Jeremiah knew how delicious the word of God was! "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts" (Jeremiah 15:16).

What happens when God's people do not repent, do not return to the Lord, do not serve Him? God will stop feeding them with His word!! They will perish without the word. They will cry because of their hunger, but God will not feed them. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst. They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beersheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again" (Amos 8:11-14).

The only people who hunger after the word of God and seek the word of the Lord are those who have been born of the Spirit. When those who are born of the Spirit do not serve the Lord, they will experience a hell on this earth for their disobedience! They will starve.

They will perish! God will burn them with hunger! "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations they provoked Him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters. And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the

mountains. I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them. They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust" (Deuteronomy 32:15-24). This whole passage is clearly talking about God's severe judgments on His disobedient children. They were burnt with hunger! There is a famine of hearing the word of God in America today. We have a famine in the land...a famine of hearing the word of the Lord! Unless we repent and return unto the Lord with all our hearts, we shall certainly perish!

The word of God is of vital importance to God's dear children. We need to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We need the word in order to grow! We have plenty of Bibles, but are we studying them as we should? We have numerous Churches, but is the preaching of the word being done in the Church? Do we realize how important the word of God is to our spiritual well-being? Do we esteem the word of God as being just as important to our lives as natural food. How many times

a day do we eat natural food? How many times a day do we eat spiritual food?

Job said, "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). The Psalmist said in Psalm 119:103, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" Is the word of God that precious to you? To me? To the Church today? If not, is it any wonder that we perish for a lack of being fed the word of God? Unless the Holy Spirit is in the preaching of the word, it is nothing more than pulp, fiber, and roughage. But under the blessings of the Holy Spirit, reading and hearing the word of God becomes a great source of spiritual food for our souls! Under the blessings of the Holy Spirit, we are filled, and we grow stronger thereby!

God has prepared a great supper for His people while they live in this world. He has called us to come and dine with Him, come partake of this spiritual food for our souls. Jesus tells us of a people who made excuses about why they would not come to the supper. (Study Luke 14:15-24 and Matthew 22:1-14.) There are serious consequences to neglecting His word!

Answers To Why Did They Go?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They were driven out in punishment for sin. 2. To buy grain during a famine. 3. To be with Naomi. 4. For advice. 5. To fulfill her vow that the child should be dedicated to the church. 6. To plead for her people, the Jews. 7. Because Queen Jezebel threatened to kill him. 8. To find the newborn King of the Jews. 9. They were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod. 10. To save Jesus from the wrath of Herod. 11. At twelve, every Jewish boy entered into manhood and assumed certain religious duties and privileges in the Temple at Jerusalem. 12. To attend a wedding. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. He did not want his friends to know that he believed any of Jesus' teachings. 14. To visit his friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus. 15. To keep the Passover. 16. In answer to the plea, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." 17. He was exiled. 18. To escape from God. 19. It was the land of their ancestors, to which God had promised they would return from slavery in Egypt. 20. Esau threatened to kill him, so he left home. 21. To get a bride for Isaac. 22. He was taken there as a captive of war. 23. To escape a famine in Bethlehem. 24. God told him to go to a new land. |
|---|--|

ATTENTION ALL READERS!

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! We trust this finds you rejoicing in the Lord and in the power of His might.

As we begin a new year, we feel it is important to update our mailing list for the magazine. Due to our magazine now being available online and through e-mail, we would like for all readers to fill out the questionnaire below to let us know your preferences.

If you have a different address than what we have on file, please use the questionnaire to update your information with us.

Postage costs have risen tremendously since we began our magazine.

Currently, we spend about \$2.65 to send each magazine overseas. If you prefer to receive The Trumpet of Truth online or through email, it would reduce these costs.

Most importantly, it is crucial that we hear from ALL overseas recipients. Please return the questionnaire by April 15, 2008, to keep your name on our mailing list.

If you receive more than one magazine, if it is possible to duplicate more copies, you are more than welcome to do so.

If you can help with our expenses in any way, we will greatly appreciate your manifestation of interest.

Our web site address is www.trumpetoftruth.org. Here is where you can read the magazine and listen to streaming online audio of preaching and other Bible Study materials.

Thank you for your help.

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Your brothers in Christ Jesus,
Elder McKinley Wright
Elder William M. Mullis

A Letter to my Friends

Dear Friends,

My how time flies. It seems like just yesterday I was wishing you a Happy New Year. What do we have on the agenda for February? Lets see, Valentines Day comes to mind; but that doesn't warrant much explanation. Besides, you can get away with wishing someone Happy New Year a little late, but a late Valentine just doesn't carry much weight. How about Presidents' Day? With all the primaries and caucuses going on right now, I couldn't avoid the subject if I wanted to.

There are a lot of folks campaigning for the job right now, and they should all be carefully scrutinized. You know me, I have an opinion about this, and I don't mind sharing it with my friends (and anyone else who will listen). I don't intend on boring you with my opinions on each individual, but I would like to leave you with a few things to consider before coming to a hasty decision.

I was reading in the book of Kings the other day, and I came across an interesting passage. It contains the advice that King David passed along to King Solomon when he was transferring the kingship to him. In I Kings 2:2-4, David states, "I go the way of all the earth: be strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: That the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel."

Please notice that the verses above address two different things. The

first is the requirements placed upon the new King. There were eight requirements, starting with "be strong" and ending with "keep...his statutes". The next subject is the requirements placed on those being ruled. They MUST "take heed to their way, to walk before me (God) in truth with all their heart and with all their soul". If the king does what is required of him, and the people do what is required of them (as explained above), then the promise from God was that the king should not fail.

From this, we can easily derive a several facts that are very pertinent to the upcoming presidential election (or any election for that matter). One is that we, as Christians, are even more responsible for the success of our rulers than most people will acknowledge. You see, If we don't walk before God in truth with all of our heart and soul, we have already discarded much of what is necessary for us to have a fail-proof leader. Secondly, unlike the transition from David to Solomon, we have the responsibility of choosing our leader. That choice most likely won't be the correct choice if we are not walking before God in truth with all of our heart and soul. And at last, we have found the criteria by which to judge the quality of the candidates. Many of the current candidates haven't lived up to the responsibilities required of them as listed above. The chances of them turning from their wicked ways and upholding their responsibilities, as outlined above, once they take the oath of office, is next to zero. (For those of you who are interested, I have included the oath of office at the bottom of this letter)

Before I leave you to try to discern which of the current crop of candidates lives up to the criteria given us in I Kings 2:2-4, I would like to give you some advice. There are candidates running in

both major political parties that obviously don't make the cut! They don't even adhere to the first four of the eight responsibilities listed. Among those that make it past that point, you will have to spend more time and be more diligent in your study. Please don't depend on what you hear from the mainstream media (T.V., major newspapers, etc.) as the final authority in this serious matter. In fact, you shouldn't even depend entirely on the recommendation of "Christian" commentators, newsletters, or leaders. Don't even take every word you hear from the candidates as the truth. Some of the candidates may just be wolves in sheep's clothing.

You should check into the candidates' personal lives and their voting record yourself. Please be advised that you can't rightly judge a person's voting record if you don't understand the Constitution. I say this because all leaders in this country must work within the confines of the law. If ordinances are not constitutional, then they shouldn't be voted for. A competent statesman will actively try to find a lawful means to advance Biblical principles or try to change the law using ONLY the processes authorized by the Constitution. For if he advances a good rule in an unlawful manner, he knows that he is paving the way for the heathen in government positions to advance evil rulings using the same unlawful tactics.

I know this is a monumental task. Please do not be discouraged, for we have been given Biblical instructions on how to proceed. Please read I Kings 2:2-4 again, and then start the process of praying and investigating for yourself.

May God give us wisdom and grace as we proceed in our short journey on this earth.

Uncle Neal
(President's Oath on next page.)

Oath of Office for the President of the United States

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will

to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." - Many presidents have elected to add the phrase "So help me God" at the end of the oath.

The oath is very similar to the oath required to be taken by all elected gov-

ernment officials. Most presidential candidates are current or past elected officials. Therefore, with understanding of the Constitution and a little research, we can come to a conclusion about their dedication to the oath and to upholding the Law.

* * * * *

From Freedom to Slavery

by Dr. James Dobson
Colorado Springs, Colorado

I recently saw a fascinating television documentary on the subject of elephants and their behavioral characteristics. The program was videotaped in India, where the magnificent pachyderms are trained to serve their human masters. Of course, if elephants knew how it strong they were they would never yield to the domination of anything, but they are subjected to a stressful form of brainwashing," which takes the fight out of them. The process begins with three days of total isolation from man or beast. Female elephants and their young are remarkable social animals, and they react to loneliness in the same way humans do. They grieve and fret and long for their peers. At that precise moment of vulnerability, they are brought to a light time ceremony of fire. Then for many hours in the flickering light, they are screamed at, intimidated, struck and ordered back and forth. By morning, half crazed, the elephants have yielded. Their wills have been broken. Man is the master.

Even though I understand the economic need for working elephants in India, there is still something sad about their plight. These wonderfully intelligent animals are transformed from freedom to slavery in a single evening. Their fragile emotions are manipulated to destroy their independence and curb their individuality. Somehow, I wish it weren't true. It

Then as I watched the documentary I was struck by the parallel between these elephants and us fragile human beings.

We too are social creatures, born with irrepressible needs to be loved and accepted by our parents and peers. In fact, to deprive us of this emotional support during early childhood is to risk crippling us for life.

But if our needs for love are great during childhood, they can't compare with the soul hunger we feel with the arrival of adolescence. Like the elephants staked in a distant field, teenagers are subjected by their culture to a period of intense desolation and loneliness. Even those who are moderately successful during these years often feel rejected, ridiculed and ignored. Unfortunately for the most tender and pliable among us, the pain of adolescence can be incalculable. These youngsters slink through the halls of their schools, looking at the floor and fearing the wrath of their peers. they are, at the moment, prime targets or brainwashing.

Adolescent society will do the rest. Anyone who has worked with teenagers, has surely witnessed this mind-bending process at work. Television and movies hammer away at moral values and principles. Friends and acquaintances ridicule any form of self discipline or restraint. But the analogy to the conditioning of elephants becomes even more striking. Rock concerts subject masses of needy kids to deafening noises, strange lights, wild emotions and godless philosophies. Like an elephant during the night of fire, an adolescent begins to lose his grip on reality. His fight to preserve individuality slowly

ebbs away. A passion for conformity rises from deep within. His peer group becomes lord and master, until finally, the wonderful freedom of youth is traded for slavery and domination.

This conditioning process helps explain the irrationality of youth. Why else would healthy boys and girls inject wretched drugs into their veins --or give sexual factors to a virtual stranger --or dye their hair orange and green --or even commit suicide? Their behavior has been warped by enormous social pressures in an environment of unmet needs. Now obviously, teenagers possess a free will and I would not excuse those who engage in irresponsible behavior. But they are also victims --victims of a peer-dominated society that can only leave them lost and confused. And my heart goes out to them.

How passionately I feel about the plight of today's children. How sorry I am for the pressures we have allowed to engulf them. How regretful am for the sexual enticements that reach their ears during elementary school --teaching them that virginity is a curse and sex is an adolescent toy. How I grieve for the boys and girls who have been told, and now they believe, that they are utter fools and will fail in each of life's endeavors. How tender I feel toward the wounded children, the blind or deaf or retarded or cerebral palsied, who believe themselves to be cursed by God and man. Somehow, we must make a new effort to reach this generation with a message of confidence and hope and love and respect.

Predestination

by Elder W. H. Durrence
Brooklet, Georgia

There are some people who dislike the word **predestination** and have become enemies of this doctrine of grace. Such individuals would probably refuse to read this lesson because of its title. Perhaps if they understood more about this doctrine, many would have a different feeling. Unfortunately, some of them have never taken the time to search the Scriptures which deal with the words **predestinate** or **predestinated**. In fact, many may not even know that these words are a part of Holy Scripture and are not the imaginations of the minds of men. Every truth which is set forth in Scripture should be diligently studied (2 Tim. 2:15). We should never allow preconceived ideas to prevent an open-minded study of the Word of God, for preformed ideas may be the result of misinformation. Those who close their minds and refuse to search the Scripture (John 5:39) may deprive themselves of truths which otherwise would have blessed their hearts. Such a loss has been incurred by many who have refused to read and study the Bible with regard to this doctrine. They have not only denied themselves the joy and benefit of such knowledge, but have also deprived God of the glory which this doctrine gives Him, for it declares the sovereignty of God.

Although Primitive Baptists and others who believe this doctrine are definitely in the minority, we should not allow this to cause us to abandon it. If a majority is all that is necessary to establish the will of God and truth, then sinful carnality would become the standard, since multitudes walk in the "broad way" which leads to destruction (Mt. 7:13-14). We should all realize that truth and righteousness cannot be dictated by public opinion; but only by the will of God as set forth in Scriptures.

Predestination becomes an impor-

tant subject by virtue of the fact that the words **predestinate** and **predestinated** are biblical words. **Predestinate** is found in Romans 8:29 and 30. **Predestinated** is used in Ephesians 1:5 and 11. Since they have a place in divine revelation, we cannot ignore them. Since God deemed them important enough to occupy a place in the holy record of the Bible, we should consider them important enough to warrant a diligent study so that we may understand the message God conveys by them.

The word Predestination has reference to that which is determined or ordained beforehand. In the Bible, the words **predestinate** and **predestinated** both deal specifically with the sovereign act of God whereby He planned or settled beforehand. His plan is far superior to that of man, for we often work out the intricate details of our planned events only to have them be interrupted and fail. With predestination, there is a plan which is decreed (ordered or settled by authority), and there is no way possible for it to fail, since it is guaranteed by the sovereign powers of an omnipotent God. More specifically, predestination is the act of God whereby He predetermined the final destiny of His people.

While many falsely believe that predestination deals with things and events, the Scriptures inform us that it deals specifically with people. The four Scriptures which were previously mentioned in Romans and Ephesians all have reference to people, not things. The use of pronouns like **whom**, **them**, and **us** all declare plainly that people are predestinated. This is noteworthy since some who oppose this doctrine do so because they dislike the idea that predestination determines all events which transpire in time. They

cannot believe that the holy God would predestinate such things as crime and sin. I join with them in denying such an idea. I am certain that God knows all events before they transpire, for He is an omniscient Being; however, He does not predestinate or cause them to happen. Predestination deals with God's direct involvement in saving His people so that they will be conformed to Jesus in heaven, and this He does because He is an omnipotent Being. Once you understand that predestination is involved in the salvation of people, you may also wonder how such a blessed doctrine could ever be spoken of in a despicable way. It is indeed beautiful, when seen in the light of divine truth.

Another mistaken idea which some people have about this doctrine is that God has decreed that certain souls will be saved and others lost. Such an idea is only half right, for God does not predestinate anyone to be lost. Predestination is a positive teaching having to do only with salvation, not damnation. People are lost because of sin, and apart from grace **none** would be saved. By our own efforts, all humanity is doomed and hopelessly lost, for all have sinned (Rom. 3:23), and the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Therefore, the only hope of salvation for any of us is by the grace of God, and predestination is one scene in the panorama of grace.

Remember that this doctrine is but one link in the chain of grace by which God has eternally bound us to Himself. It denies the works of man as a means of securing salvation and openly exhorts the works of God's grace (Eph. 2:8-9). Therefore let us stand firmly for the doctrine of predestination and those doctrines to which it is inseparably bound: election, effectual call, justification, and glorification. Notice

in Romans 8:29-30, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." God foreknew a people as His own (the elect). He called and justified them, and their glorification is as certain as if already performed. Notice that those embraced in this work of grace are predestinated to be changed and conformed to the image of the glorious Son of God Jesus! It is predestination which **guarantees** that we shall be changed from the imperfections of our present being to become like Jesus (Phil. 3:21). God predetermined that the elect will be adopted into the divine family, made partakers of an eternal inheritance, and at last be made like Jesus as they reach their destination of heaven. Such blessed hopes of the soul should make us cherish this doctrine and teach it to others so that God's people everywhere may rejoice. May God's name be glorified

for the wonderful things which He has done!

Look closely at what Paul wrote to the Ephesian saints about predestination. He said, "...Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will..." (Eph. 1:5). The pronoun us refers to those chosen (the elect) which are mentioned in the previous verse and to those "accepted in the beloved," who have redemption (verses 6- 7). God predestinated people to be adopted into the family of God by Jesus Christ. They shall be heirs and shall obtain an inheritance, being predestinated (Eph. 1:11). We can only imagine the beauty and blessedness of the inheritance which we will someday receive because of God's work of predestination.

Predestination affects the saved in a variety of ways, but since it is an act of God it also helps us gain a greater understanding of God. Predestination teaches us that God does things with a purpose and "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1:11). Predestination is therefore both

the "work" and the "will" of God (Eph. 1:5). It is in no way dependent on the work or will of depraved man, for if it rested in any measure upon the frail will of fallen man, then it most certainly would fail. I certainly would not want my eternal destiny to rest upon a chance or a possibility; therefore, I rejoice to know that all chance has been replaced by divine certainty. The surety of God is embraced in predestination.

It is God's will for all the elect to be made like Jesus and live with Him in glory; therefore, God has worked all that is necessary to assure our possession of such an eternal state, and predestination is an irreplaceable part of that which God has done for our salvation from sin.

Such blessings of God and gracious works as expressed by the doctrine of predestination should cause us to live in awe and reverence before God. Bowing humbly and gratefully before Him, let us live for His glory and testify to this wonderful doctrine of predestination.

Different "Drug" Problem!

Submitted by a concerned citizen

Editors note: The following letter has appeared on the internet and was viewed by many readers. Many felt it would be appropriate for the readers of The Trumpet of Truth.

The other day, someone at a store in our town read that a Methamphetamine lab had been found in an old farmhouse in the adjoining county, and he asked me a rhetorical question, "Why didn't we have a drug problem when you and I were growing up?"

I replied I had a drug problem when I was young: I was drug to church on Sunday morning. I was drug to church for weddings and funerals. I was drug

to family reunions and community socials no matter the weather.

I was drug by my ears when I was disrespectful to adults. I was also drug to the woodshed when I disobeyed my parents, told a lie, brought home a bad report card, did not speak with respect, spoke ill of the teacher or the preacher, or if I didn't put forth my best effort in everything that was asked of me.

I was drug to the kitchen sink to have my mouth washed out with soap if I uttered a profanity. I was drug out to pull weeds in mom's garden and flower beds and cockleburs out of dad's fields. I was drug to the homes

of family, friends and neighbors to help out some poor soul who had no one to mow the yard, repair the clothesline, or chop some firewood, and, if my mother had ever known that I took a single dime as a tip for this kindness, she would have drug me back to the woodshed.

Those drugs are still in my veins and they affect my behavior in everything I do, say, or think. They are stronger than cocaine, crack, or heroin; and, if today's children had this kind of drug problem, America would be a better place.

God bless the parents who drugged us."

Things to Remember

by Elder William M. Mullis
Waycross, Georgia

"Remember Lot's Wife"

Though we do not know her name, yet Jesus Christ says, "Remember Lot's wife." It is not her accomplishments, achievements, or good works that are recorded in the Scriptures! It is not her faithfulness or obedience that Christ says to remember!

God had commanded Lot and His family to flee from the city of Sodom: "Escape for thy life; **Look not behind thee**, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." (Genesis 19:17). "**But his wife looked back** from behind him, and **she became a pillar of salt.**" (Genesis 19:26).

Many of the people of God have a distorted view and warped understanding about God. They know the truth that, He is a God of love. In fact, HE IS LOVE. But too often it is forgotten that He is a consuming FIRE. HE IS A JEALOUS GOD! It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God! "WHOM THE LORD LOVETH HE CHASTENETH, AND SCOURGETH EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVETH!" (See Hebrews 12:6, 29, 10:30,31).

When we REMEMBER Lot's wife, we are REMINDED that our God does not beg for obedience, He commands it! "When we "REMEMBER Lot's wife", we see that though He is merciful and gracious, and long suffering, yet we can provoke God and grieve Him until He will manifest His wrath, and we will be destroyed!

What led to the destruction of Lot's wife? In what way did she DISOBEY GOD? She had been commanded to not look back. "But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."

Our sight, our vision, has a great effect on our lives! We read in I John 2:

16, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and **the lust of the eyes**, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." It seems that ALL SIN is connected to one of these three categories: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. What sin is there that is not connected to at least one of these three? REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE! The lust of the eyes -- looking back --resulted in her being turned into a pillar of salt. Oh, brethren! "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning!" (Romans 15:4). Let us LEARN from the mistake of Lot's wife. Let us REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE!

Many different lessons in the Scriptures teach us the importance of looking at the proper things. LOOKING includes our affections, thoughts, minds, hearts, as well as our eyes. When we read in Matthew 14:25-30 that Peter was walking on the water toward Jesus, we see that he began to sink and cry out, "...when he **saw** the wind boisterous, he was afraid!"

When Peter looked at the storm and raging sea, he began to sink! See the importance of sight and vision! When we focus on the storms, troubles, and problems of life, we begin to sink! We begin to perish when we look at difficulties! Depression and despondency is a result of **looking at trouble** --just like Peter.

When we can say with the Psalmist, "My heart is fixed!" (Psalm 57:7), then we are saying, "I will not look back; I will not look at the raging sea; I will not fear the roaring lion; because Thou art my shield and buckler, my ALL IN ALL!!"

In Colossians 3:2, the Apostle Paul was inspired to admonish, "Set your

affections on things above, not on things on the earth." This wise counsel gains in meaning to us when we **REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE!** Her affection was for Sodom, rather than toward the MOUNTAIN!

Going back to the garden of Eden for the first time Satan enticed through the eyes, we read, "And when the woman SAW that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the EYES, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." (Genesis 3:6). The lust of the flesh, **the lust of the eyes**, and the pride of life are all three seen in this one verse!

The devil SHEWED (there is the use of eyes) Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, but He did not yield to the temptation of them! Thanks be unto God for His faithfulness! Let us ever be found "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith!" (Hebrews 12:2). If we do that, we cannot LOOK BACK. REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE! Fear God and keep His commandments! "For whom **the Lord loveth, He chasteneth!**" Because of God's love, He chastens!

Jesus emphasized the **danger** of "looking back", and taking our eyes off Him, and ceasing to **press** into the Kingdom by His statement in Luke 9:62. "No man, having put his hand to the plough and **looking back**, is fit for the kingdom of God."

REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE!!!

"Where there is no vision, the people perish!" (Proverbs 29: 18). But there is a vision that leads to perishing!

"THINK ON THESE THINGS"

Upon what are you looking? Are you depressed or discouraged? Then

remember Lot's wife and STOP LOOKING in the wrong direction!

Be ever found LOOKING TO JESUS for leadership and guidance for strength and help!

HE IS OUR SAVIOUR! May God

help us fill our minds with things pleasing to Him!

KEEP A LIST OF THINGS TO REMEMBER! REMEMBER THEM!

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest,

whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Philippians 4:8)

The Blessing of Visiting

by Bro. Hal Fuller
Wakefield, Kansas

Over 30 years ago, my pastor in Columbus, Georgia, Bro. Bill Mullis, preached and taught us our responsibility, privilege, and the blessing of visiting. He set an example of visiting the sick, shut-ins, delinquent members, and those in the nursing homes. The Spirit of God kindled a fire in my bones to do what we were being taught. Bro. Bill took my wife, Ann, and me to do some visiting in the nursing homes to help us get started.

From that time, my wife and I spent so many years visiting beautiful people who are so alone except for the Lord. We went every week and found that we received the greatest blessing from serving the Lord by visiting with those less fortunate than we are. Though my wife has now gone home to be with the Lord, and I have had a stroke, my heart is filled with joy as I still visit every Tuesday and Thursday mornings. I am spending time with great and wonderful older folks, many younger than I (I am now 80 years old). I thank the dear Lord for a pastor who taught me

my responsibility, and helped me know the blessing of visiting in the nursing homes. I want to encourage more people to give a little time to honor God and the "senior citizens" by going to see them regularly.

I hope everyone will seriously think about the words of Jesus, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). Though in our confused society the elderly seem unimportant and "the least" significant, they are very important to God! It is important that we share what we have with others. Though many of us may not have money to give, we can take the time to share our love with others. Love costs us nothing and is a better gift than items we might buy and give! Love cannot be bought, but can be freely given. This is true brotherly love.

By the way, those people we visit, pray with, and bring a little kindness, they give back all that they have, which is again true love!

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:22-25).

I hope everyone reading this will find what a great treasure there is in the blessing of visiting!

Answers to Grow in Knowledge

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Fear - Isaiah 43:1 | 6. Cheer - Matthew 14:27 |
| 2. Hold - Isaiah 41:10 | 7. Arise - Matthew 17:7 |
| 3. I - Isaiah 41:10 | 8. Called - Romans 8:28 |
| 4. Still - Exodus 14:13 | 9. God's - II Chronicles 20:15 |
| 5. Palsy - Matthew 9:2 | 10. Strong - II Chronicles 32:7 |

Bible Reading Calendar for March

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
1	Num. 23,24,25	Mark 8:1-21
2	Num. 26,27	Mark 8:22-38
3	Num. 28,29	Mark 9:1-29
4	Num. 30,31	Mark 9:30-50
5	Num. 32,33	Mark 10:1-31
6	Deut. 34,25,36	Mark 10:32-52
7	Deut. 1,2	Mark 11:1-19
8	Deut. 3,4	Mark 11:20-33
9	Deut. 5,6,7	Mark 12:1-27
10	Deut. 8,9,10	Mark 12:28-44
11	Deut. 11,12,13	Mark 13:1-13
12	Deut. 14,15,16	Mark 13:14-37
13	Deut. 17,18,19	Mark 14:1-25
14	Deut. 20,21,22	Mark 14:26-50
15	Deut. 23,24,25	Mark 14:51-72

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
16	Deut. 26,27	Mark 15:1-26
17	Deut. 28	Mark 15:27-47
18	Deut. 29,30	Mark 16
19	Deut. 31,32	Luke 1:1-23
20	Deut. 33,34	Luke 1:24-56
21	Josh. 1,2,3	Luke 1:57-80
22	Josh. 4,5,6	Luke 2:1-24
23	Josh. 7,8	Luke 2:25-52
24	Josh. 9,10	Luke 3
25	Josh. 11,12,13	Luke 4:1-32
26	Josh. 14,15	Luke 4:33-44
27	Josh. 16,17,18	Mark 5:1-16
28	Josh. 19,20	Luke 5:17-39
29	Josh. 21,22	Luke 6:1-26
30	Josh. 23,24	Luke 6:27-49
31	Judg. 1,2	Luke 7:1-30

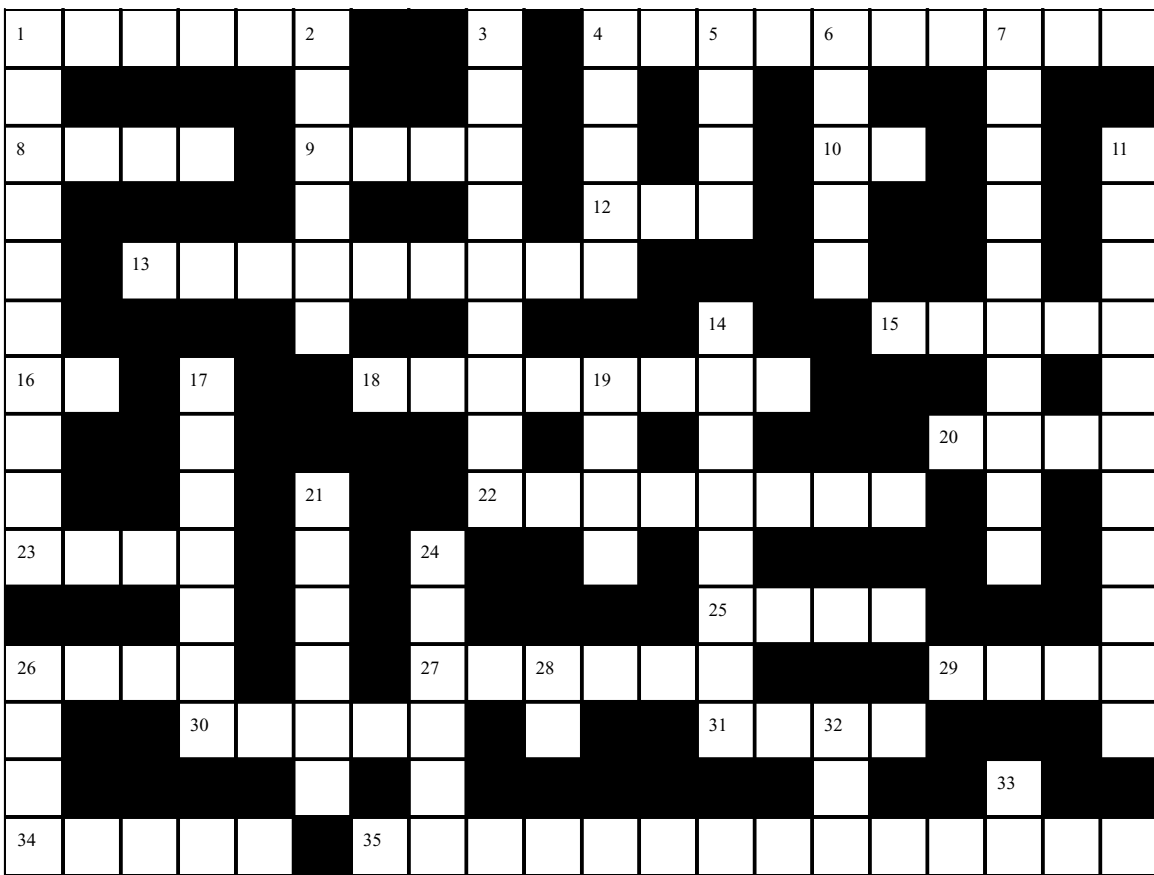
**ANSWERS TO
CROSSWORD
PUZZLE VOLUME
XXVII FEBRUARY
2008**

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Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. "...be ready always to give an _____ to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." 4. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are _____." 8. "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy, toward them that _____ him." 9. "The same _____ for a witness, to bear witness of the Light,..." 10. "But let _____, who are of the day, be sober; putting on the breastplate of faith and love: and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." 12. "Now _____ Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 13. "By him therefore let us offer the _____ of praise to God continually,..." 15. "... for the temple of God is holy, _____ temple ye are." 16. "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehend _____ not." 18. "...It is _____:..." 20. "We know that we have passed from death unto _____, because we love the brethren. ..." 22. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the _____ of things not seen." 23. "But his wife looked from behind him, and she became a pillar of _____." 25. "My heart is fixed, a God, my heart is fixed: I will _____ and give praise." 26. "If ye were of the world, the world would _____ his own:..." 27. "If any man defile the _____ of God, him shall God destroy;..." 29. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is of God:..." 30. "...He that loveth not his brother abideth in." 31. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh _____ from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." 34. "... and every one that loveth him that _____ loveth him also that is begotten of him." 35. "as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our _____ from us."



DOWN

1. "Set your _____ on things above, not on things on the earth." 2. "And I saw, and bare _____ that this is the Son of God." 3. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto _____ and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." 4. "Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others _____ him with the palms of their hands," 5. "There was a man sent from God, whose _____ was John." 6. "Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the _____." 7. "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our _____." 11. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto _____: by whose stripes ye were healed." 14. "Then _____ he Barabbas unto them:..." 17. "And when they had _____ a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand:..." 19. "And they _____ upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head." 21. "All we like sheep have gone _____;..." 24. "He that loveth _____ or mother more than me is not worthy of me:..." 26. "And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the _____ of God!" 28. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated _____ before it hated you." 32. "He _____ a burning and a shining light:..." 33. "Where there is _____ vision, the people perish:..."