

A Quarterly Journal

(A presentation by email)

“Light For Our Age”

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*“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”
Psalm 119:105*

Feature One: Guest Editorial

Editor's Note: Brother Rimmy Miller sent the following comment to me concerning the editorial from the January issue. I thought it was worth sharing.

“While reading the young minister's comments I see why we need to have lessons for young people on rightly dividing the Word of God. I have used this example before:

There are three phases of human growth and development- the infant, the child and the adult.

God has chosen three phases of spiritual growth and development in His relationship with mankind:

The Patriarchal period dealt with mankind as infants with God speaking to the fathers through covenants. People were like infants. Genesis 8:15; Genesis 15; Genesis 35 and many other references in Genesis and Exodus.

God gave the Law as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Galatians 3:24). Children go to school where lessons are presented using history, examples and mechanical assistance to teach them. The Law given to Moses incorporated all of the above to provide physical examples of what God expected of His people in the development of their relationship with Him. Exodus 26-37 details this along with many other examples throughout Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Worship of God was centered around the Temple and the roles of people were clearly defined with a limited priesthood and a few leaders.

In the fullness of time according to God's plan, Jesus Christ fulfilled the law (Matthew 5: 15-17). The Law being a shadow of things to come and the blood of bulls and goats being unable to take away our sins, Jesus Christ became the complete and perfect sacrifice for us (Hebrews 10). This gives everyone, not just the families of the patriarchs or the Children of Israel, the promise and opportunity of a higher and more mature relationship with God- that similar to one of an adult (Acts 2:38 and 2:47)".

Christians have a spiritual relationship with God as a unlike those before us. Jesus told the woman at the well the time was near when people would worship God in spirit and in truth and not in a temple in Jerusalem or on some mountain (John 4:23,24). When we become a

Christian, the body of the Christian becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19,20), All Christians, both men and women, are priests (1 Peter 2:5) with duties and work detailed in God's Word. Under Christ, we no longer are bound by new moons, sabbaths, holy days or the food laws of the Law (Colossians 2:16-23). Only singing and making melody in the heart (the body, the temple) is to be offered in worship to God (Ephesians. 5:19). Mechanical devices and man made things are no longer needed in this new and better relationship with God through Christ.

Knowing this, why would anyone want to return to the imperfection of the Law? (2 Peter 2) or try to blend the law with worship today (Matthew 15:9)?

Feature One: Editorial

God's Ways Are Not The Ways Of Man

Isaiah 55:7-9 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

It is so natural to think of God in terms of "manhood". We visualize God as a man in that is what we are. I believe we also find it natural to believe that God thinks the same way as we do. A Christian lady justified leaving her husband and family by saying, "God would not want me to be this unhappy."

It is so easy to justify doing whatever we want by believing God thinks just like we do. I want you to consider just one story in God's

word to see God's judgment. In 1 Kings 13 we find a story that has shocked many readers.

The Kingdom of Israel had just been divided. God had allowed Jeroboam to take most of the kingdom away from Rehoboam, David's grandson. This was due to his father, Solomon's sins. God had told Jeroboam that if he would obey his commands that He would be with him. But Jeroboam feared if the people went back to Jerusalem to worship, they would go back to Rehoboam, now the King of Judah. God had instructed all of Israel to worship in Jerusalem and Jerusalem was in Judah.

Jeroboam decided to make two golden calves and place one in Dan, a city in the north, and one in Bethel, a city toward the south. He told the people that these were the gods that brought them out of the land of Egypt.

Jeroboam was going to have a feast at the time the Jews were going to Jerusalem for a feast. He was going to offer sacrifices to the golden calf in Bethel. So God chose one of his prophets and gave him an order to go before Jeroboam at the site of the sacrifice and cry out against the altar.

The man of God went and stood before the king and all of the people and obeying God, cried out against the altar as God instructed. Jeroboam was furious and reached out to have him arrested and his hand "dried up" or was paralyzed. Jeroboam then asked the man of God to pray that God might restore his hand and arm. God listened to his prayer and restored the arm to King Jeroboam.

The grateful king then invited this man of God into his palace to be refreshed, but the man of God refused. He told the king that God had instructed him to return to Judah using a different road from the one he used to come into this land, and to have nothing to eat or drink while there. His work done, he then began his trip back to his home in Judah.

There was an old prophet living in Bethel and his sons had witnessed this event. His sons knew which way the man of God had traveled, so the old prophet went after him. When he found him he invited him to his home to be refreshed, but the man of God relayed to him God's instruction that he must not eat nor drink while in this kingdom. The old prophet then said, *"I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water."*

So the man of God went with him and was refreshed and ate and drank water. But the Bible adds a phrase to verse 18. It says, *"But he lied unto him."*

If you were God who would you punish and why? Most would punish the old lying prophet. If you continue reading you will discover that it was the man of God that was punished, for God placed a lion in his path and it took the man's life.

Do you think as God thinks? In Romans 15:4 we are told:

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

It is lessons such as this that teach us that we must be careful to consider what God thinks. God told the man of God what he could and

could not do. He listened to a man, and did not turn to God. For that, God punished him. Let us be careful of what we do and why.

Feature Two: *an article by R. C. Oliver from his radio work*

What Must I Do To Be Saved

We will begin our study by considering the Biblical passage in Acts 16:25-31.

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. 26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. 27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. 29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

A jailer in the city of Philippi, a chief city in Macedonia raised the question in verse 31. Two ministers of the gospel, Paul and Silas, who had been made prisoners because of the preaching the gospel, gave the answer. Some of the more outstanding incidents leading up to our lesson proper were as follows. Paul and Silas had been picked up for preaching the gospel, and brought before the Magistrates. Here false charges were registered against them, and condemned them. The rulers then caused them to be severely beaten, and with their backs lacerated

and bleeding, “cast them into prison charging the jailor to keep them safely; who, having received such a charge thrust them into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks.” (Acts 16:23-24).

In such unpleasant circumstances you would think these preachers would have been two very unhappy men, but they were not. They rejoiced in tribulation. Their hearts were so filled with joy that at midnight they “prayed, and sang praised unto God.” (Acts 16:25). And so loudly did they praise Him that their fellow-prisoners in the other cells were able to hear them.

Then suddenly a terrible thing happened. There was a great earthquake. So great was this “act of God” that the very foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors of the prison were opened and the bands of all the prisoners dropped off.

Up to this time the jailor had been sleeping but the noise of the earthquake awakened him out of his sleep, and upon awakening he saw that all the prison doors were opened and he thought that the prisoners had escaped. He drew his sword with the intent of suicide, but Paul cried out to “Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.” (Acts 16:28). Then the jailer called for a light, and ran immediately into the inner prison where Paul and Silas were. After bringing them out he inquired of them saying, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30). A more pregnant question has never been asked by man, neither can be. It is a question every person should ask. The answer given to this question by Paul and Silas was clear, plain, and to the point. Undoubtedly the jailor correctly understood it. Unfortunately I do not believe that there is any statement in the entire Bible more miserably misunderstood today than

is this answer to this most important question. For this reason I insist that you give this subject our undivided attention, as we shall consider these two important parts of our text. First, consider the sinner's question; and secondly God's answer to that question.

Now look at the question. Though it is a short question yet it is full of meaning. As we carefully examine it we see within it the language of conviction. The jailor has been convinced that he is a sinner. He is cognizant of his guilt b4or God, and so enquires, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved." Recognition of the fact that I am a sinner, lost and undone before God, is one of the first things necessary in converting a sinner from the error of his way.

There are many people today who are ill and should be under a doctor's care. But they are not. Why? Because in most cases they do not realize they are in poor health. Convince them of their illness and of the seriousness of their case, and it will then become an easy matter to get them to consult a physician. Even so, today there are many people, both religious and non-religious who are lost in sin, and should come to Christ for salvation. But in many cases they do not come because they do not know that they are lost. This reminds me of an incident that took place some time ago. It was pointed out to an elderly lady who had lived better than sixty years, and who thought she was saved most of that time that one must be baptized in water in order to be saved. This she had not done. When it was pointed out to her that Jesus said in her Bible in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." She said, "I want to be baptized just like the Lord commanded me to." We went with her and I baptized her

in the name, or by the authority, of Jesus Christ for the remission of her sins.

The question in our text is likewise the language of desire, an earnest sincere desire. As the natural man cries out for food, drink and clothing so the awakened soul cries out for salvation. He sees his guilt and knows he is lost; therefore, the one thing most needful now is pardon. All things else are vanity compared to salvation.

Finally, let us consider this question as the language of submission. What a wonderful spirit the jailor manifested in his question. He was willing and ready to acquiesce to whatever conditions the preachers might recommend. It is as if he had said, "Show me my duty and I will obey. I am willing to go through fire or water, so that my precious soul may be saved." That must be the spirit of any man who anticipates salvation. He must be convinced that he is a sinner. He must desire salvation, and he must be willing to submit to the terms of pardon as taught in his Bible. The jailer possessed all of these characteristics and waited patiently for the answer; which answer is given in the latter part of our text, and it is that answer that we shall now consider.

The answer is simple, plain, and of few words. It is simply: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...." What's more, this is the only correct answer that can be given to the question asked. Notwithstanding, as I said in the commencement of this lesson, I do not believe there is any one statement more miserably misunderstood, and more misconstrued today than is this answer to the jailer's question. Consequently, due to this misunderstanding, there are

many good people in the world today, who believe themselves to be saved, when actually they are lost. Therefore seeing the need of a proper understanding of this answer, I suggest that we ask and answer three questions concerning it in order to a proper analysis of the same. The questions I desire to ask are:

1. What does it mean to believe on the Lord?
2. Can a man believe on the Lord who has no knowledge of what Christ teaches?
3. Can a man believe on the Lord and deny anything he has said?

These questions, properly answered, will assist us in understanding what it means to "Believe on the Lord." Therefore, let us study them in order. Observe then, "What does it mean to believe on the Lord?" Certainly more than "faith only" is implied in this answer, for if "faith only would save men, those chief rulers mentioned in John 12:42-43, who believed on Christ, but refused to confess him would have been saved. We are forced to conclude then that believing on the Lord implies obedience to his commands.

Can a man believe on the Lord who has no knowledge of what Christ teaches? Certainly not! It is just a preposterous for a man who knows nothing about what the Bible teaches to argue that he believes on the Lord as it would be for a man who knows nothing about what I teach to say that he believes what I say. Therefore, away with such erroneous ideas!

Now our third question: Can a person believe on the Lord and deny what he says? Again our answer takes a negative form. No man who believes on Christ will deny anything that he has said.

Consequently when a man does deny something the Lord says, that denial is proof that he does not believe on the Lord. Now in order to get this lesson squarely before us, and in order to help you judge yourself as to whether you do or do not believe on the Lord, let us together observe some things the Lord has said, in view of asking ourselves if we believe it. If we believe what He says, fine. But should we deny something He has said we stand condemned as those who do not believe on the Lord. At this point I would like to point out some of the things Jesus said.

Jesus has said that there is but one body, but one church. It is His church, the church of Christ. Consider the following passages as proof of this:

Matthew 16:18 "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Ephesians 4:4 "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;"

1 Corinthians 12:20 "But now are they many members, yet but one body."

Colossians 1:18 "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

Now, do you believe the church of Christ is the only church that God recognizes? If so you believe on the Lord. But if you do not believe the church of Christ is the church of the Bible, or if you believe that one church is just as good as another, then, you do not believe what Jesus said. You remain an unbeliever, and as such you stand condemned!

Again, Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. (Mark 16:16). Through Paul He also said, "Baptism washes sins away." (Acts 22:16). Do you believe that baptism is a condition to salvation? Do you believe that baptism washes sins away? If you do, fine! But if you do not believe that baptism is a condition to salvation, then you have denied what Jesus affirmed, hence you are an unbeliever and remain condemned.

But we are not through. Jesus through Paul, the apostle, affirms that there is but one baptism and that it is a burial in water. For proof consider the following verses of scripture.

Ephesians 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

Romans 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Acts 8:36-38 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

Now do you believe that there is one baptism, and that it is a burial in water? If so, fine. If you believe that God will accept either sprinkling or pouring water on the head as soon as he will accept a burial in water, you again deny what Jesus affirmed. Hence you stand condemned as an unbeliever!

I affirm unequivocally that no man can believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and at the same time deny the things that he says! Furthermore, there is no question in my mind as to what a man will be religiously if he really and truly believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is obvious that he will be a Christian only and only a Christian, a member of the church of Christ, the church he can read about in his Bible, being one who has dedicated himself wholly to the Lord, His work, His cause.

Feature Three: Sandy's Women's Corner

ARE YOU SMARTER THAN A FOURTH OR FIFTH GRADER?

I teach a terrific group of fourth and fifth grades students on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening. I love these children. They keep me challenged!

We are currently studying the Life of Christ. I have divided the quarters so that the subjects covered each quarter are similar. The first quarter is on the birth of John and Jesus and some basic teachings of Jesus. The second quarter is on the Miracles of Jesus. The third is on the Parables of Jesus; and the fourth is on the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus.

Sundays are devoted to the lesson, and Wednesdays are devoted to review. I really do want them to remember these lessons, so we play games to review what we have learned.

I am constantly surprised when they come up with an answer that I feel they may have forgotten. Such was the case when we had our Jeopardy Review at the end of the quarter. They remembered things

from the first quarter that really made me think we have really taught them a thing or two!

So, are you smarter than these fourth and fifth graders? Try these questions, and just see how many you know:

1. Which king ruled during the birth of Jesus? (Don't just answer Herod; which Herod was it?)
2. Which king ruled during the death of Jesus?
3. In which prophet's image was John the Baptizer?
4. Name the three ways Jesus was tempted.
5. What Old Testament king was in the lineage of Jesus?
6. When Jesus was an infant, what two people did Mary and Joseph encounter in the temple?
7. Name the countries that ruled over the Jews before Roman became the power.
8. Who is the Holy Spirit and what is His purpose?
9. In what forms did the Holy Spirit appear in the New Testament?
10. Over what does Jesus show His power in the miracles?
11. How and why did demons exist?
12. Explain the parable of the sower.
13. What was God's plan for marriage?
14. How often should I forgive my brother and why?
15. What is the difference between a disciples and an apostle?

The children in our class can also give you a description of Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, Elders, Priests, and the Sanhedrin. They can tell you some of what the Hadean Realm is like and what we can expect in either place. Do you know that?

You may know the answer to all of these questions. If not, you can ask a fourth or fifth grader and see if they know. If they attend our congregation, they will.

They love details. They like knowing more than just the average, ordinary, typical Bible story we usually teach to children. They like to know about things they have never heard before.

The Bible is a collection of fascinating books. It contains history, poems, love stories, battles, murders, mysteries, and many other types of stories. It gives us the instructions on how to become a Christian and how to live an obedient life. Why then do we fail to read it?

If you aren't a daily Bible reader, start today. Someday you may be smarter than a fourth or fifth grader.

Feature Four: Bible Question

What do we say when someone challenges our belief in the miracles of the Bible? Some will laugh and ridicule if you say that you believe that a fish could swallow a man, or the Nile River actually turned into blood.

In that a miracle is the breaking of a natural law, if they are atheistic, you might counter with the fact that they also believe in a miracle. Science has proven that “nothing” comes from nothing. Yet they believe that a particle (no matter how small) is what caused the “Big Bang”. Yet from

where did the particle come? Science has also proven that it had to have an origin. Their belief is that it just came into being. That would be a miracle. Think how much faith it would take to believe that our entire universe came from that one particle.

If they believe in God, just how great is their God? If they believe God could create the universe and everything in it, how hard would it be for them to believe that God could create a fish large enough to swallow Jonah, and to keep him alive? How hard would it be to change the water from the Nile into actual blood? Their problem is that they don't believe God is great enough.

Part Five: Our Communication

This is short and sweet, but effective. If you find yourself speaking in a large room, always speak to the people in the last row. If they can easily hear you, so will everyone else.

Humor:

After explaining the commandment to honor your father and mother, a Sunday school teacher asked her class if there was a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters.

One boy, the oldest in his family, immediately answered, "Thou shalt not kill."

In Closing:

It has been a full year since my cancer surgery. The doctor tells me it is all gone, and I am seemingly in good health. I appreciate all of the prayers

and cards that came my way.

Plan now to attend the Christian Training Series held at Freed-Hardeman University this July 13-17. I would love to see you there. Check their brochure at: <http://www.fhu.edu/CTS/index.aspx>

Bob