



Seek The Old Paths

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE LOST?

James E. Rogers

It is the responsibility of the church to preach the Gospel to the world (Matt. 28:18-20). The work of evangelism consists of the faithful Christian finding the lost and bringing them to the Christ. Everything done by the church is to contribute toward the salvation of the souls of men. We have great opportunities before us to teach the Gospel to the world. We must have Christians who will busy themselves as faithful finders of the lost. I am unable to give proper credit for the following but it illustrates the point as to the concern a Christian must have for the lost.

The late Foy Smith used to tell the following story, and added a few thoughts to drive the point home. A preacher was sitting in his study one Sunday morning. It was time for him to go into the pulpit and a person tapped on the door to see what was causing the delay. There the preacher sat in his chair looking out the window. He could see for miles down into the valley below. When asked why he was weeping, the preacher replied: “I was sitting here looking out over the valley. I see thousands of houses. People are going about their business. Most of them are lost, and I can’t do anything about it.” The friend replied, “Quit crying, you will get over it.” The preacher responded, “I know it. That’s why I’m crying.”

Have we forgotten how to cry over lost souls? We are so used to seeing millions around us who are all but

impossible to reach with the Gospel and, with a shrug, we learn to let them go on with a “so what?” dismissive attitude.

Our Lord wept as He looked over the city of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). His agony is also evident in the reading of Matthew 23:37-38. If Jesus wept over lost souls, so should we. May we never try to comfort the soul winner by saying, “Dry your eyes; quit crying. You’ll get over it.” Benjamin Franklin once said: “Nothing dries sooner than a tear.” But it was the apostle Paul, who by inspiration, said, “*Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel*” (1 Cor. 9:16). Is it not time we started shedding these kinds of tears?

Perhaps a reading of Luke 15 will provoke some ideas for carrying out our responsibility to the lost. Here, Jesus talks about lost things and lost people. May we suggest the following thoughts!

My responsibility is to recognize when people are lost and go to find them (Luke 15:4). John 1 tells about the activities of faithful finders of the lost. John the Immerser, Andrew and Philip were finders of the lost (John 1:35-37; 3:1-6; 1:40-42; 1:43-51).

My responsibility is to see clearly, sweep thoroughly and search diligently for the lost (Luke 15:8). I must have my life in order that I might help others (Matt. 7:1-5). I will leave no lawful method unused in bringing the Gospel to the lost. Each individual may favor a certain method of teaching

and he should use it to his best ability. Others may approach the task differently. But All must approach the task.

My responsibility is to live in such a way as to be attractive to the lost (Luke 15:17). It was the memory of the conduct of his father toward the hired servants that helped bring this lost boy home. Peter recommended a lifestyle as an evangelistic tool to be used to “gain” a lost one (1 Peter 3:1-6). We teach more than we know by what we do.

My responsibility is to go to the lost and entreat them (Luke 15:28). Sometimes this means I will leave pleasant activities to fulfill my task (15:22-24). Seeing the importance of a lost soul and understanding my responsibility to that soul will motivate me to move when the time is right. I do not know the outcome of this effort by the father with his elder son, but I do know the father did everything in his power to convince this boy. When I have done all I can to teach the lost, I have delivered my soul (Ezekiel 33:7-16).

A study of the book of Acts shows the activities of first century Christians as they carried out their responsibility to the lost. As one examines these Scriptures, he will observe three things:

1. **Their message was The Christ** (Peter, Acts 2,3,4,10; Philip, Acts 8:5,12,35; Paul, Acts 13:1-14:28;

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Christian’s Responsibility...



Editorial...

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE TRUTH

Garland M. Robinson

Jesus said to those Jews that believed on him: *“IF ye continue in my word, THEN are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:30-32). How is it that Jesus told these disciples they could be free? Free from what? “Free” implies constraint, restriction, bondage, confinement. Jesus was referring to their bondage in sin. Paul wrote about being *“...dead indeed unto sin...Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you...”* (Rom. 6:11-14).

The forgiveness of one’s sins is paramount in view of the fact that none are righteous, not a single one, because *“all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. ... There is none righteous, no, not one”* (Rom. 3:23,10) — *“For the wages of sin is death...”* (Rom. 6:23). The “death” spoken of here is “spiritual death” — separated from God for eternity. God has every right to send sinners to that place prepared for the devil and his angels (cf. Mat. 25:41). He is “just” in doing so because there shall in no wise enter into heaven *“...any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie...”* (Rev. 21:27).

The TRUTH (God’s Word) is that which saves sinners from the eternal loss of their soul. When Pilate examined Jesus on the night of his betrayal he ask, *“what is truth”* (John 18:38)? There is no record of Jesus answering him. However, earlier that night, Jesus prayed that the Father would *“sanctify”* the apostles *“through thy truth: thy word is truth”* (John 17:17). In order for God’s word (truth) to save sinners from the penalty of their sins, they

must be forgiven of their sins. Forgiveness is given by God WHEN **one believes the truth**; and, **obeys the truth**. A sinner may sincerely pray for forgiveness, but its only WHEN a sinner OBEYS the commands of the truth that he/she is saved.

There are many different ideas and attitudes that men have toward the Bible, God’s TRUTH.

SOME DO NOT LOVE THE TRUTH

*“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because **they received not the love of the truth**, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness”* (2 Thess. 2:10-12). When you don’t love the truth, God allows you to work your own evil in opposing the truth and believing lies instead. *“For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and **their eyes they have closed**; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them”* (Matt. 13:15).

SOME RESIST THE TRUTH

*“Now as **Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses**, so do these also **resist the truth**: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith”* (2 Tim. 3:8). *“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in”* (Matt. 23:13). *“But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) **withstood them**, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith”* (Acts 13:8). *“And even as **they did not like to retain God in their knowledge**, God gave them over to a reprobate*

mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (Rom. 1:28, becoming, fitting).

SOME TURN AWAY FROM THE TRUTH

*“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And **they shall turn away their ears from the truth**, and shall be turned unto fables”* (2 Tim. 4:3-4). *“Demas hath **forsaken me**, having loved this present world...”* (2 Tim. 4:10). *“Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for **he hath greatly withstood our words**”* (2 Tim. 4:14-16).

SOME SPEAK EVIL OF THE TRUTH

*“...There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom **the way of truth shall be evil spoken of**. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not”* (2 Peter 2:1-3).

SOME DESPISE THE TRUTH

*“If ye shall **despise my statutes**, or if your soul **abhor my judgments**, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague [burning, fever], that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it”* (Lev. 26:15-16). *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but **fools despise wisdom and instruction**”* (Prov. 1:7). *“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, **despise not** thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him”* (Heb. 12:5; cf. Isa. 30:12, Malachi 1:6).

SOME WELCOME THE TRUTH

“Philip ran thither to him, and

heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And **he desired Philip** that he would come up and sit with him” (Acts 8:30-32). In Acts 10 and 11 an angel of God appeared unto Cornelius and told him to send for Peter who would come and tell him what he ought to do — must do (10:6). More specifically, Acts 11:14 says that Peter would come and tell him “**WORDS, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.**” While his servants had gone to bring Peter, Cornelius gathered his kinsmen and friends to hear the “words” that Peter would speak (10:24). When Peter arrived, Cornelius said “...*thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God*” (10:33). Cornelius heard God’s saving words that day and readily welcomed the truth by being baptized (10:47-48).

SOME RECEIVE THE TRUTH

“*He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me*” (Matt. 10:40). “...*He that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty*” (Matt. 13:23). “*And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea*” (Matt. 18:5-6). Those of Berea “...*were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few*” (Acts 17:11-12). Jesus said: “*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*” (John 12:36-48).

SOME OBEY THE TRUTH

“*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit...*” (1 Peter 1:22). “...*He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that*

his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (John 3:21). “*And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith*” (Acts 6:7). “*By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name*” (Rom. 1:5). “*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being THEN made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness*” (Rom. 6:17-18). Jesus is the “...*author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*” (Heb. 5:9). “*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went*” (Heb. 11:8). “*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments*” (1 John 2:3). “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*” (Matt. 7:21).

SOME CONTINUE IN THE TRUTH

“*Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers*” (Titus 1:9). Paul writes that the Lord will one day present the faithful to God the Father “...**IF we continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven...**” (Col. 1:23). *It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful*” (1 Cor. 4:2). The scriptures are written to the faithful (Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2). We must be faithful unto death in order to receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

Of all the points mentioned above, which do YOU embrace? Those who REJECTED the Truth or those who OBEYED the Truth? Only obedient lovers and doers of the truth will be saved!

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Correction: there was a deposit that was counted twice in the Feb. issue (4,690). This issue corrects it.

THE CONTROVERSIAL THIEF ON THE CROSS

Victor M. Eskew

There is a 3-minute reel going around the internet that involves the thief on the cross. The speaker says: “Just think about the thief on the cross.” He tells the story of the thief as he gets to heaven’s gate. An angel asks him: “What are you doing here?” The thief says: “I don’t know.” The angel replies in shock: “What do you mean you don’t know?” So shaken, the angel has to call in his supervisor who asks the thief: “Are you clear on the doctrine of justification by faith?” The thief responds: “I’ve never heard of it in my life.” He is then asked about the doctrine of Scripture. To which the thief answers with an ignorant stare. The last question the thief is asked is: “On what basis are you there then?” To this question, the thief replies: “The man on the middle cross said I can come.” The storyteller is both comical and engaging. One denominational “pastor” called the reel the best three minutes of preaching he has heard.

The question that must be asked is: “What is the preacher’s point?” Calvinists have always been quick to use the thief as an example of the doctrine of justification by “faith only.” Too, they affirm that this doctrine is taught in the Scriptures. Now, this preacher affirms that the thief was saved without a knowledge of the doctrine of justification by faith and without a knowledge of the doctrine of Scripture. The thief stood at the gate of heaven just because Jesus told him he could come. Is Jesus appearing to individuals today and simply telling them they can go to heaven? If so, which ones have been given this personal invitation? Again, we ask: “What is the preacher’s point?”

Let’s consider a few things in response to this story.

First, **faith is absolutely essential for a person to go to heaven.** “But without faith it is impossible to please him” (Heb. 11:6). Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus declared: “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). Was it possible for the thief on the cross to manifest faith in Jesus Christ? Certainly. Having gone through

the crucifixion experience with Jesus, the thief heard everything the Jewish leaders were saying at the foot of the cross. “He saved others; himself he cannot save” (Mark 15:31). “If ye be the Son of God, come down from the cross” (Matt. 27:40). The thief would have been well aware of the claims Jesus made about Himself from these and other comments. He hung beside Jesus for six agonizing hours. He heard the seven sayings of the Christ. He experienced the darkness that came upon the land. He witnessed the patient endurance of this man from Galilee. His heart could have developed a belief in the Christ. A Roman centurion came to such a belief (cf. Mark 15:39). Let’s recall the words the thief spoke to Jesus. He said: “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (Luke 23:42). It was the anticipated Messiah who was to rule over the coming kingdom. By his own words, the thief realized Jesus was the Messiah. He had faith in Jesus Christ.

Second, **repentance is also part of the plan of God.** Jesus affirmed this during His earthly ministry as well. “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3). Repentance begins with a change of heart. It leads to a change of one’s actions. It results in a reformation of life. Let’s read three texts consecutively that tell us about this thief. “Then were there two thieves crucified with him; one on the right hand, and another on the left” (Matt. 27:38). “The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth” (Matt. 27:44). “And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou art come into thy kingdom” (Luke 23:39-43).

There are several things mentioned in Luke’s account that prove the thief had a change of heart. He rebuked the other thief for maligning the Christ. He admitted he had committed crimes

worthy of punishment. He asked Jesus to bless him. There is no doubt this thief repented while on the cross. Paul tells us of the benefits of repentance in 2 Corinthians 7:10. “For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” By the actions of this thief, we know he repented of his sins.

Third, **most individuals like to proclaim that the thief on the cross was completely ignorant of spiritual things.** We find this was not the case when we pay attention to his words. He said to Jesus: “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (Luke 23:42). He had some understanding of the kingdom. This is not surprising when we recall that John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1-2) and Jesus (Matt. 4:17) both proclaimed the coming kingdom in Jerusalem and Judea. John’s preaching was extremely popular. “And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem” (Mark 1:5). Eventually, Jesus’ popularity grew. In John 3:26, we are told: “and all men come to him.” It is highly probable this thief heard some of the things taught by John or Jesus or both. As he witnessed Jesus on the cross, his mind was convinced of the truthfulness of His claims and of His kingdom. Thus, the thief requested to be remembered when the Lord entered into His kingdom.

Jesus did not tell an ignorant, faithless, impenitent sinner that he would be with Him in Paradise that day. Instead, he told a man who had knowledge of the kingdom, a man who called him Lord, and a man who had a complete change of heart to be with Him in Paradise. Preachers and others need to quit using the thief as an example of “cheap salvation.”

Many will point out that the thief was not baptized. There are several responses that can be made to this argument. First, are those who make this statement sure the thief was not baptized? He could have been among those John baptized (Mark 1:5). Remember, he knew about the kingdom. Second, the thief did not live under the New Covenant of Jesus Christ. He lived under the Old Testament.

The Old Testament did not require individuals to be baptized. Third, while Jesus was on earth, He had the power to forgive sins at any time he desired (Matt. 9:6).

Now that Jesus has died and ratified the New Covenant with His blood (Matt. 26:28), the New Testament is the covenant under which we live. The New Covenant commands all men to *“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”* (Acts 2:38).

About three thousand on the day of Pentecost “gladly received” Peter’s words and “were baptized” (Acts 2:41). Those who desire to be saved today must give heed to the words of the apostle of Christ as well. Read Acts 22:16, Rom. 6:3-18, 1 Peter 3:21.

13695 Covington Creek Dr.
Jacksonville, FL 32224

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15:36-18:22; 18:23-21:16).

2. Their message was preached with constancy. The early chapters of Acts tell of the activities of the apostles in the early 30s of the first century, the middle chapters of their activity in the 40s and the later chapters of their activity in the 50s. In each decade the emphasis was on Christ.

3. Their lives characterized their teaching. Peter and John were pillars of the church (Gal. 2:9); men of prayer (Acts 3:1) and benevolence (Acts 3:6) and people could tell they had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13). The apostles were men of prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4). Barnabas was generous in giving (Acts 4:36-37), judgment (Acts 9:26,27) and heart (Acts 15:36-41).

This is the Christian’s responsibility to the lost. May each Christian take his responsibility seriously. No, May I take **my responsibility** seriously.

PO Box 2895
Cookeville, Tennessee, 38502

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THE DEAD DO NOT KNOW ANYTHING

Roger Campbell

What? Where did you get such an idea? Well, I read it in my Bible. It is found in Ecclesiastes 9:5: *“For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.”*

Some take this Bible statement and run with it, right into a fallacious claim. They affirm that when a person leaves this world, he/she is no longer conscious. They use this verse to try to justify their teaching. It is not supported by the Scriptures. Let’s take a look.

In the context of Ecclesiastes 9, we see the folly of a person focusing all of his attention on earthly activities. There is some sense in which it is better to be alive on earth than to be one who has departed from this life. Consider Ecclesiastes 9:4-6: *“For to him that is joined to all the living, there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun.”*

It is a fact that the living know that they shall die (9:5). Here is what we observe in life: one by one, folks leave this world through physical death. Yes, the Bible says it is appointed unto me once to die (Heb. 9:27).

In verse five, we also see that the dead no more have a reward. They did, but now they do not. This is not denying the possibility of receiving a reward after we leave this world — the reward known as *“the crown of life”* (James 1:12). Rather, it is acknowledging the reality that once a person leaves this world, he no longer has an earthly reward. As we consider this passage, it is imperative that we connect its meaning with the final part of verse six: Solomon is writing about things *“done under the sun.”*

Some look at the words *“the dead*

know not anything” and conclude that they are unconscious in their current environment. They couple that with *“the memory of them is forgotten,”* then claim the dead cannot remember anything that happened when they lived on earth.

Two serious thoughts apply here:

First, the dead do not know anything in regard to what? They are unaware of anything that is going on *“under the sun”* (9:6), that is, on earth, at this very moment. Once a person leaves this world, he does not see or hear activities that transpire on earth.

Second, we know from other Bible statements that people do recall things after they pass from this life. In Jesus’ account about a rich man and beggar (Lazarus), He said the rich man remembered his own earthly circumstances, as well as those of Lazarus (Luke 16:25). The rich man also recalled that he had five brothers (Luke 16:27-28). In Revelation 6:9-10, we also read of those deceased saints who could recall the blood they shed on earth.

After a person’s demise, in the course of time, his love, hatred, envy, as well as his other attributes and activities, are forgotten. New generations come and the previous ones, in general, are forgotten — *“out of sight, out of mind.”*

The thought in Ecclesiastes 9:4-6 that stands out is that once a person leaves this world, he is no longer a factor in it. He is disconnected from the ongoing activities of humanity on earth. He no longer can influence them directly, though his works, good or bad, may continue to send a powerful message, like Abel’s faith does (Heb. 11:4).

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ONE DAY THE FAITHFUL WILL SEE THEIR ENEMIES NO MORE!

Marvin L. Weir

*One moment all can appear to be well
and the next moment one will find his feet swept out
from under him as he faces the judgment.*

The Israelites were God's people, and He had promised to be with them. Moses made sure his people understood their relationship with God, saying, "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else. Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever" (Deut. 4:39-40). God said to Moses, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever" (Deut. 5:29).

The children of Israel were in captivity in Egypt and at the mercy of their Egyptian taskmasters. But after witnessing God unleash ten plagues upon his people, the Pharaoh reluctantly let the Israelites start their departure from Egypt. Pharaoh quickly had a change of heart and made ready "six hundred chosen chariots" (Exodus 14:6-7) to pursue the Israelites. "And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD" (Exodus 14:10). It was at this moment that Moses told his people that the time was coming when they would never again see their Egyptian enemies (Exodus 14:13). May we as members of the Lord's body learn from this incident the great lessons contained therein.

First, Great Changes May Occur Very Quickly! The Egyptians were pressing the Israelites one moment and the next moment they were overwhelmed by the Red Sea. Such an incident can quickly occur today to

all who choose to cast underfoot, God and His Word! To escape the Egyptians the "children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left" (Exodus 14:22). After God's people were safe, Moses was told to stretch "forth his hand over the sea" and "the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, even all the host of Pharaoh that went in after them into the sea; there remained not so much as one of them" (Exodus 14:28).

The warning is clear today to those who rebel against God. The Hebrews writer records, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:12-13). Sin may appear to be profitable, but such is far from the truth. The Psalmist was perplexed at the wicked people's ability to prosper until he "...went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction" (Psalm 73:17-18). One moment all can appear to be well and the next moment one will find his feet swept out from under him as he faces the judgment.

Second, Our Opportunities May Suddenly Vanish! The Egyptians had witnessed the tremendous power of almighty God. The plagues were for the purpose of making believers of the Pharaoh and his people. Instead of believing in the true and living God, the stubborn Egyptians rebelled against Jehovah.

The apostle Paul said, "behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). Many put off until tomorrow what they know they should do today. To-

morrow may never come! The door of opportunity can quickly close! The apostle to the Gentiles also made it clear that "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). How many more opportunities will you have to obey the Gospel or to correct a sinful lifestyle?

Third, One's Self-confidence Can Lead To Ruin. The Egyptians followed after the Israelites, but they trusted in the strength of their own flesh. In so doing, they rushed to the place of their destruction. The Bible warns, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). The Holy Scriptures emphatically teach that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). No matter how confident one might be that he will succeed, he is doomed to failure when he refuses to partake of the abundant life (John 10:10). Coffman comments on this "abundant life" as follows:

The religious hierarchy of hardened Israel was the murderous thief intent on killing and destroying, and Christ is the true shepherd who came to bring abundant life to the people of God. **Abundantly** ... How grotesque and unreal are the ideas of those who think the Christian life leads to a life of boring inhibition, sitting out his years in the chilly twilight of monastic gloom, forbidden to do anything that everyone else wants to do, and always cowering in fear before an angry God! On the contrary, the Christian life is the happy life, free, abundant, and overflowing, adventurous and exciting beyond

any other kind of existence. Why cannot men believe their Creator, to the effect that the way of Christ is the way of joy and fulfillment?

Fourth, The Separation Between God's Children And Children Of The World Will One Day Be Forever Finalized. As the children of Israel stood in fear, Moses said to them, *"Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever"* (Exodus 14:13). The day had come when Israel would never again have to fear the Egyptians.

There will also come the day when the faithful child of God will never again have to fear *"the lust of the*

flesh, the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life" (1 John 2:16). The snares of the devil will have forever been defeated. The godly and ungodly have nothing in common (2 Cor. 6:14-17). The great gulf that will separate the two cannot be crossed (Luke 16:26).

Fifth, We Learn That We Cannot Deliver Ourselves! The strong arm of God was needed to deliver the children of Israel from the Egyptians. Today, the saving power of God is manifested in Christ Jesus, His only begotten Son (John 3:16). The Lord came to this world to *"seek and save the lost"* (Luke 19:10). Christ is *"able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them"* (Heb. 7:25).

The Israelites had to obey God and flee the land of Egypt. Today, to

receive salvation, all people must obey God and flee worldly sins. The Gospel is God's saving power (Rom. 1:16). Will you give up the sins of the world and obey the Gospel while it is still today?

484 CR 44700
Blossom, TX 75416

ONE ANOTHER CHRISTIANITY

God has made it abundantly clear that in His scheme of things, He wants Christians to be a part of each other's lives. How thankful we should be that such is the case. Interacting with each other is one of life's great joys. Take the time to read these passages that emphasize the "one another" aspects of the Christian life. We are to:

- Love one another (John 13:34-35; 15:12,17; Rom. 13:8; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 3:8; 4:8; 1 John 3:11,23; 4:7,11-12; 2 John 5).
- Greet one another (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Peter 5:14).
- Be kind to one another (Rom. 12:10; 1 Cor. 12:25; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:32; 1 Peter 4:9).
- Encourage one another (Rom. 15:14; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 3:13; 10:24-25).
- Forgive one another (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).
- Prefer one another (Rom. 12:10).
- Be like-minded toward one another (Rom. 12:16; 15:5).
- Receive one another (Rom. 15:7).
- Bear with one another (Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13).
- Submit to one another (Eph. 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5).
- Comfort one another (1 Thess. 4:18; 5:11).
- Consider one another (Heb. 10:24).
- Confess to one another (James 5:16).
- Pray for one another (James 5:16).

Are you too busy to remember your brethren? Are you so busy regarding things of this life that you neglect to lay up treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:19-20)? If so, then you're too busy.

— Eddie Parrish

GOD WILL ANSWER PRAYER IF...

Prayer is a privilege of the child of God. There are, however, conditions set forth by Holy Writ for acceptable prayer. God will hear our prayer:

If We Are Obedient! John records, *"and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gave us"* (1 John 3:22-24).

If We Are Righteous! Peter admonished, *"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil"* (1 Peter 3:12).

If We Ask According To His Will! John states, *"And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us"* (1 John 5:14).

If We Pray In Faith! Jesus taught His disciples, *"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive"* (Matt. 21:22). A non-believer's prayer is in vain!

If We Pray In Jesus' Name! John writes, *"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do"* (John 14:13).

If We Have The Right Motive! James taught, *"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts"* (4:3).

Prayer is a tremendous blessing that Christians have in their possession. May we pray to the Father on a regular basis with hearts of thanksgiving (Col. 3:17)!



S.E.E.K T.H.E O.L.D P.A.T.H.S

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BIBLICAL MATH PROBLEM

Take the number of chapters in Genesis. Multiply by the number of each kind of unclean animal Noah took into the ark. Multiply by the number of adults saved in the ark. Add the number of days the water prevailed upon the earth. Subtract the length in days before Noah opened the window in the ark. Add the number of times the dove came back. Divide by the number of times Noah sent out a bird. Multiply by the number of Noah’s sons. Subtract the breadth in cubits of the ark. Subtract the height in cubits. Subtract the number of letters in Noah’s name. The result is Noah’s age at the time of the flood. (Gen. 7:6)

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Editor: **Garland M. Robinson** – seektheoldpaths.com

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