

Gospel Truths

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Front Page

by H. E. Phillips

Jehovah's Witnesses Cult # 3

Part 3

Watch Tower Is Powerful

The majority of people today thinks of the Watch Tower Bible And Tract Society as a small and insignificant organization, and Jehovah's Witnesses as a small, harmless group of fanatics. Nothing could be further from the truth. They are one of the most dangerous groups to the truth that exists today because they are more aggressive. Like Mormonism, Seventh-Day Adventism, and Unity, Jehovah's Witnesses have an American origin. They were sparked into existence by the fanaticism of materialism and "prophecies" of the second coming of Christ.

The Watch Tower Society is not just a printing plant. It is the "Vatican" of the Jehovah's Witnesses' cult. It is the final authority in all matters: translations, interpretations, organizations, etc. It forbids and directs the activities of its members. It is like Catholicism in that it requires its workers to work for nothing.

Jehovah's Witnesses are very zealous. They stand on street corners selling *Awake*, *The Watchtower*, *The Golden Age*, etc. They go from house to house selling and giving away their literature and trying to convert people to Russell's ideas. They thrive on the fleshly appeal to a material existence on this earth during the "reign of Christ on earth." They use the Bible as if they really believe

it, but they are trained experts at perverting passages and taking them out of context. They have a system of brainwashing the uninformed in the Scriptures by attacking translations, faith in the Bible, and religion in general. They then build upon Watch Tower as a faithful witness.

Nathan H. Knorr followed closely the doctrines of Russell and Rutherford. He was a great organizer and under his rule Jehovah's Witnesses have grown more than 400 percent. In 1950 they were listed as "America's fastest growing religion." The Watch Tower Bible And Tract Society operates Radio Station WBBR in Staten Island, New York, with a power of 5,000 watts. Knorr created the Gilead Bible School at South Lansing, New York in 1943. They have sent out thousands of "missionaries" from this school. Watch Tower publishes and distributes millions of books and tracts each year in more than 60 languages and sells them at amazingly low prices. Every Jehovah's Witness is a worker and distributes literature. This is one of the keys to their rapid growth.

The Name Jehovah's Witnesses

The name "Jehovah's Witnesses" was suggested by J. F. Rutherford and adopted in 1931 at a convention in Columbus, Ohio. "In 1931 their representatives from many countries, assembled in a convention in America, resolved that they 'desire to be known as and called by the name which the mouth of the Lord God has named, to wit, Jehovah's Witnesses': 'Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah.' (Isaiah 43:10; 44:8, ASV)" (*Let God Be True*, page 213).

The passages in Isaiah were spoken of Israel and do not refer to the name which God would give to His people (Isaiah 62:2; Acts 11:26; 26:27-28; 1 Peter 4:16). The name "Christian" is the one authorized in the New Testament for God's people. The only witnesses in this dispensation are the

apostles of Christ (Acts 1:8,21-22; 10:39-42).

Jehovah's Witnesses On The Godhead

Some Holiness groups teach that there is only ONE God and He is Jesus alone. They deny any idea that there are three persons in the "Godhead." They have great difficulty in explaining the many passages that show a Father-Son relationship. Jehovah's Witnesses contend that there is only ONE God and He is Jehovah God. Christ is simply "a god" and the Holy Spirit is only the spirit (power) of Jehovah God.

Following are a few quotes from Watch Tower publications to show their belief on the Godhead:

"Jesus is a god, but not Jehovah God." (*Studies In The Scriptures*, Vol. V, page 84).

"Verily, if it were not for the fact that this trinitarian nonsense was drilled into us from our earliest infancy . . . nobody would give it a moment's serious consideration." (*Studies In The Scriptures*, Vol. V, page 166).

"The origin of the 'trinity' doctrine is traced back to the ancient Babylonians and Egyptians, and other ancient mythologists . . . It follows, then, that God was not the author of this doctrine . . . The obvious conclusion, therefore, is that Satan is the originator of the 'trinity' doctrine." (*Let God Be True*, page 82).

"Jesus Christ does not address his heavenly Father as a mystifying 'triune' God, but as 'The only true God'; and he speaks of himself as the inferior one, the Son whom the Father sent forth from heaven." (*This Means Everlasting Life*, page 11).

"Jesus and Jehovah God are not the same person, nor is Jesus equal to God. Jehovah alone is supreme." (*This Good News Of The Kingdom*, page 6).

"The doctrine of the trinity is a false doctrine and is promulgated by Satan for the purpose of defaming Jehovah's name" (Rutherford in *Uncovered*, 1937, page 48).

"Only the religious trinitarians are presumptuous enough to claim, without Scripture basis, that two other persons are equal with Jehovah God; but Jesus does not himself claim to be one of such persons." (*The Kingdom Is At Hand*, page 50).

What The Bible Teaches

We must be as brief as possible to get this information in this paper. The following passages prove that there are three divine persons in the Godhead:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh . . ." (John 1:1,14). Very clearly this says Christ, "the Logos," was God. But Jehovah's Witnesses will not have it so, hence, they look until they find some translation that will give assistance to their doctrine. They go to "the interlinear reading of The Emphatic Diaglott" which says, "and a god was the Word." But they did not tell that this translation renders the phrase: "and the Logos was God." This passage still says, "AND THE WORD WAS GOD."

Jesus said this of himself: "Before Abraham was, I AM." (John 8:58). This same expression is used of the Father (Exodus 3:14). In Isaiah 9:6 Jesus was the "Son" that was given and "his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." The Son was to be called The mighty God, The everlasting Father.

Jesus commissioned his apostles to teach and baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matthew 28:19). In Matthew 3:16-17 all three persons are present: Christ was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended like a dove, and the voice of the Father sounded from heaven.

In Hebrews 1:8 the Father speaks: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever . . ." This is from Psalms 45:6. The Father called the Son, "O God." Is

it possible that the Father did not know His Son was not God?

In Matthew 1:23, speaking of Jesus, ". . . they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." This name as applied to Christ calls him God. Yes, Christ is equal to God in nature - he is divine. (Philippians 2:6).

The Holy Spirit Is Not A Person

Watch Tower Society teaches that the Holy Spirit is not a person. Russell said: "But nothing in connection with this narrative in any sense of the word necessitates the thought of a personal Holy Spirit, separate from the Father and the Son . . . The Holy Spirit is not a person, but an influence of God exerted by a person" (*Studies In The Scriptures*, Vol. 5, page 210).

"When a man has the spirit of God upon him it means he has been authorized by God to do a certain work, whatever that work may be. The holy spirit is the invisible active force of Almighty God that moves his servants to do his will" (*Let God Be True*, page 89).

In speaking of Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4-5, Watch Tower says: "Such language by Jesus gives us to understand that the Spirit is a power, and not a person. It is God's holy active force of which he is the inexhaustible source . . . It is not a trinitarian person coequal with God and Jesus" (*This Means Everlasting Life*, pages 165-166).

What The Bible Teaches

When Ananias kept back a part of the price of a possession he had sold, pretending to give it all, Peter said to him, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost . . . why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou has not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3-4). If language means anything at all, Ananias lied unto God when he lied to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God. Many passages clearly describe the Holy Spirit as a person.

These actions could not be applied to an impersonal force, but only to a person. Let us notice a few of them. Note the pronoun "he" and "him" as it refers to the Holy Spirit, and note also the things which "he" is capable of doing. These actions can only be applied to persons.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26). "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:13). "For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say" (Luke 12:12).

"While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee" (Acts 10:1-9). "Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me" (Acts 20:23). "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:27). " . . .for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10). "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual words" (1 Corinthians 2:13). "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me" (Romans 15:30). "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly . . ." (1 Timothy 4:1).

The New Testament ascribes to the Holy Spirit the same personal attributes that belong to the Father and the Son. The passages just read give attributes that can only belong to a person. He can teach, testify of Christ, guide into all truth, speak, hear, show, bear witness, has a mind, can make intercession for others, search the deep things of God, love, and speak expressly. One can do despite unto the Spirit (Hebrews 10:29). One can quench the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

The Spirit is identified by various terms in the Bible. He is called "the Comforter," "Holy Spirit," "Spirit," "Spirit of God," "Spirit of the Lord," "Spirit of Truth," "Holy Spirit" and "Spirit of Jehovah."

H. Leo Boles says in his book, *The Holy Spirit*, page 33: "A person, then, is the indivisible self which is and acts as a self-conscious being and free moral agent; his personality is that which makes him a person rather than a brute or a thing; his nature is the sum total of the traits of mind and heart which the self possesses and expresses more or less perfectly, consciously and unconsciously. Personality in God is the sum total of the infinite attributes resident in the inmost depths of his one divine nature; the three persons in the Godhead are the three individualities, the three personal centers of consciousness, the three separate self-conscious and self-determining persons or selves."

The three persons of the Godhead are spoken of together in several passages. For example: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen" (II Corinthians 13:14). ☩

Editorial



by J. T. Smith

A.D. 70 Doctrine

THE A.D. 70 doctrine is a new doctrine. It is listed with several designations — A. D. 70 doctrine, Realized Eschatology, and the Max King Theory (so named because Max King of Warren, Ohio is the father of it). His views are set forth in two books, **The Spirit of Prophecy** (1971) and **The Cross and The Parousia of Christ** (1987). When I heard about it a number of years ago I dismissed it as being so far-fetched that no one in their right mind would deem it worthy of serious consideration. Since that time some of our younger brethren, even among conservative churches of Christ, have "bought into it." As a result, some in Ohio have had their support dropped as a result of this teaching.

The doctrine, "in a nutshell" is that when the destruction of Jerusalem took place in A. D. 70, all Bible prophecy was fulfilled including: the second coming of Christ; the resurrection of the dead; the judgment day; and the end of the world! If this theory doesn't make sense to you, it is because these common biblical terms have been *redefined* by King as he presents his theory. For example:

1. The kingdom of Christ was not fully set up until A.D. 70.

1. The "second coming" has nothing to do with a literal returning of Christ in the future, but a spiritual invisible coming in A.D. 70.

2. The "resurrection" does not involve the physical body; instead it refers to a resurrection of the Christian system (the church) from the persecution inflicted by the

Jews between A.D. 30-70.

3. The "end of the world" is not the passing of the earth, according to the theory, but is a reference to the dissolving of the Jewish world.

4. The "judgment day" is not a time in the future when all will give account to God for the deeds done in the body, instead it is the destruction of Jerusalem.

Definition of Words

The words Realized Eschatology are used to describe this theory. The word *realized* means, "to make real or fulfill" (*The American Heritage Dictionary*). Therefore things which have already occurred are realized.

Second, the word *eschatology* "A belief or a doctrine concerning the ultimate or final things, such as death, the destiny of humanity, the Second Coming, or the Last Judgment" (Ibid). Thus the doctrine of *Realized Eschatology* is the concept that all things in the Bible that we generally consider to be things that are "yet to come to pass" have *already happened*.

The Kingdom Of Christ

The first aspect of this theory we will study is that of the kingdom of Christ. When we say King teaches that The kingdom of Christ was not fully set up until A.D. 70, we must preface that by saying that King says "it did not come in *glory* and *power* until A.D. 70." The two words *glory* and *power* are the key words in this theory. We must be careful to represent him correctly. King and his followers theorize that the kingdom of our Lord came into existence on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the death of Christ. This point they concede. They believe that the kingdom of Christ came on Pentecost, but *not in its glory; not in its power*. It was not complete on Pentecost. It did not receive its *glory* and *power* until God destroyed Jerusalem, the Jewish Temple and all that it entailed, in A.D. 70.

First of all let's consider the fact that the

kingdom and the church are composed of the same people (John 3:3-5 cf. Acts 2:38, 41, 47). In Ephesians 3:20-21 Paul said, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." Notice that both "power" and "glory" are mentioned as being in the church *before* A.D. 70.

Second, if the kingdom did not come in glory and power until A.D. 70, then obviously it was because The King of this kingdom had no power until A.D. 70. However, Jesus said after His death, burial and resurrection, "... 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'" (Matthew 28:18). Was it actually given then? "*and declared to be* the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). But again, "and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:19-23). All authority was His — when? Notice verse 19 "according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ *when* He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places* . . ." When did The King and the kingdom receive power? "*When* He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*." This was before A.D. 70 — Max King to the contrary notwith-

standing.

God knows the end from the beginning. Therefore, He knew every false doctrine that would be advocated by man and gave the Scripture that will negate it regardless of who teaches it. That includes Max King. Since the kingdom did not come with power and glory in A.D. 70 but on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, let's go to the next point.

The Second Coming Of Christ

What about the second coming of Christ? Is it yet future, or has it already past (A.D. 70)? Paul told Titus, "Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). But according to this theory we need look no longer. It has already happened.

First of all we must take one very important point into consideration. There are many times in the Scriptures that the "coming" of Christ is used in a figurative, symbolic, or spiritual sense

— not a literal one. The first coming was literal when Jesus was born of the virgin Mary. This was prophesied in the Old Testament. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people" (Genesis 49:10). "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). To my knowledge none of King's disciples deny that this is the first coming of Christ.

There is only one passage that specifically says that Christ will come a "second time." "So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation" (Hebrews 9:28). The question when will (did?) this "second time" take place? Those who advocate "Realized Eschatology" say the *second* appearance of the Lord as stated

in Hebrews 9:28 is figurative.

Since it is almost impossible to discuss the second coming of Christ without discussing the resurrection (and since King believes both took place in A.D. 70) I am going to include the resurrection in this segment.

Who (Or What) Is To Be Raised?

When King and those of his disciples speak of the resurrection, they talk about the resurrection of "the body." However, when they speak of the resurrection of the body, they are not talking about the physical body of man. They are speaking about a spiritual body, the church. The theory is that the Lord's church (The Body) had been suppressed until A.D. 70 by the Law of Moses and its followers. At the time of the destruction of Jerusalem the church was released from that suppression and in a figurative sense was "raised up." Therefore, what we read about the resurrection in the New Testament has reference to this figurative resurrection. In order to determine the truthfulness of this, let's look at some of the passages in the New Testament that speak of the resurrection.

I Corinthians 15. In his letter to the brethren in Corinth, Paul the subject of the resurrection in chapter 15. He begins in verses 1-8 by showing that the facts of the gospel are very important. They consist of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus which he says must be believed. As far as I know, King and his followers would not deny that this is speaking of the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

Paul then continues by showing that the resurrection of Jesus guarantees our resurrection. He says, "And if Christ is not risen . . . Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished" (Verses 17-18). Notice Paul did not say that if Christ is not risen then the church has perished. He said "*those*" (individuals) who have fallen asleep (died) have perished. But Paul

affirms, "But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (I Corinthians 15:20). Notice he did not say "that (the church) which has fallen asleep," but "of *those* who have fallen asleep."

But again, "But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" (I Corinthians 15:35). Again observe that Paul did not say "with what body does *it* (church) come." He said, "with what body do *they* come." He replies, "So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. *The body* is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. (I Corinthians 15:42). Question: Was the church sown in corruption? that it might be raised in incorruption? I think not! But again, "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (I Corinthians 15:44). Was the church sown a natural body and raised a spiritual one? "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality" (I Corinthians 15:51-53). I wonder if according to King's theory the church was corruptible before A.D. 70?

John 5:28-29. Here Jesus is speaking of the resurrection. He says, "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." Who is coming forth? "All who are in the *graves*" (plural) — not "the church that is in the grave." Friends, one does not have the brain of a rocket scientist to be able to see the utter foolishness of King's theory. That being the case, someone might say, "why spend time refuting it."

Well actually, King and his followers are like those we read about in II Timothy 2:16-18. "But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some." Obviously this same thing is happening today. Many other passages could be given, but I believe the above is sufficient.

(Next: "the end of the world" and "the judgment day" as taught by those who promote Realized Eschatology). ☞

Women's Page



Respect

by Geneva Brown Smith

The day was dark and gloomy. The cold wind sent a chill to the bones by blowing against the rain that was coming down outside. You wouldn't have known it from the warmth inside the church auditorium, however. Besides, every light in there was on to its full capacity. The subject for ladies' class was RESPECT.

In dealing with this subject, of course God is the first and most important one that was discussed. Then the discussion turned to some of our members whom we believe have gone on to Heaven. There was our old class teacher of many years. She was a wonderful lady who never had children of her own, but was partial mother to many. She was always present at the services and did what she could to live the Christian life.

She sent funds to many preachers as well as to young people who were away from home.

Then someone mentioned our “Dorcas”...not her real name, but we thought of her that way because she was a faithful Christian and a seamstress. She reared a daughter who became a faithful Christian and the wife of an elder. She made baptismal garments for the church. You could look around on Sunday mornings and see many of the Christians wearing her creations. She had a wonderful sense of humor and was loved by all.

Another who had been the wife of an elder in years past was remembered. She was a beautiful older lady inside as well as outside. She was a faithful Christian and had reared her children and grandchildren to be the same. She enjoyed inviting preachers and other Christians to her home for her famous chicken and dumplings.

We, the younger women at that time admired and respected these ladies because of the examples they set.

This word respect means “to feel or show esteem for, to honor. To show consideration for; avoid violation of; treat with deference.” (*American Heritage Dictionary*)

Those for whom we are to have respect include:

(1) God-- “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him” (Psalm 89:7).

(2) The elders- “And we beseech you brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake, and be at peace among yourselves” (I Thessalonians 5:12-13).

(3) Parents-- “Furthermore, we have had fathers in our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence” (Hebrews 12:9).

(4) Those in authority-- “Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God” (Romans 13).

(5) Older Christians-- “Rebuke not an elder, but entreat (ask earnestly, implore) him as a father; the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers; the younger women as sisters with all purity” (I Timothy 5:1-2).

This writer can remember a time when children at an early age were taught to give honor and respect to older people. We were to speak to them with a “yes-mam” and a “no sir.” We dared not call them by their first names. It was “Mr.” or “Mrs.” Today, things have changed. Most people are not quite so formal in their conversations. However, we are commanded by God (Scriptures above) to show older people respect. We dare not chastise or belittle an elderly person (I Timothy 5:12). If we believe one, either young or old, has sinned against us, we are explicitly told in Matthew 18:15-17, “Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between him and you alone. But if he will not hear, take with you two or three witnesses that every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.” Do we obey this command? ❏



New Testament Example For Caring For Widows And Orphans

by L. L. Applegate

Ruling power begins, and ends with the local congregation. Acts 20:28 Elders are told to feed the church He purchased with His blood. I Peter 5:2 Feed flock among you, taking the oversight thereof.


In the 6th Ch. Acts verses 1-6 we have example of caring for widows. Such was within the framework of the local church at Jerusalem. Notwithstanding, many depart from the New Testament example and build centralized homes (Institutions) separate and apart from the local church to care for widows and orphans.

Such homes (Institutions) were unknown in the days of the Apostles . . . Are not recorded in New Testament. Many thousands of dollars are spent for buildings (Institutions) for the aged so that children or nephews may send their mother or father there, thus freeing them of responsibility of caring for them in their own house. Read I Timothy 5:3, 4. Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any **widow** have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety .at home, and to requite their parents: for that is goon and acceptable before God. Let us hear what Apostle Paul said relative to those who would not care for their own. I Timothy 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and *is* worse than an infidel. These scriptures tell us how to care for widows and orphans. We have members among us today who say we have no New Testament example for such work so it is left to man's own judgment how such work is to be done. Read what the Prophet Jeremiah said. Jeremiah 10:23 O Lord, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. Let us learn not to go beyond what is written I Corinthians 4:6 Those who transgress and go beyond the New Testament example have not God II John. 9th verse. Churches of the Lord who send money out of church treasury to Institutional homes, whether it be for widows or orphans, are

sinning, whether they realize it or not. There is no Bible authority for such. But we do have Bible authority for what we do. Colossians 3:17.

Institutional homes such as home for aged and orphan homes *as we* have them among us must come to an end. They originated in the heart of man and not of God.

Hear a small boy as he asks his father this question as they were on the way to old folks home. Father, where are you taking grandpa? Father's reply. Son, I'm taking him to the old folks' home. The boy said to his father, Is that where you want me to take you when you get old? The father's answer. We're taking grand-pa back home with us. Please note the truth brought home to this father by his son.

Christian reader, would you prefer going to an institution rather than being home with loved ones? If you have no one, children or nephew, then make your home with a Christian family in your home congregation where you may be able to worship God in spirit and in truth. John 4:24. 

"In The Days of Noah"

by **Dan Richardson**

"...that aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved through water" (I Peter 3:20). Please consider some lessons the Bible teaches about the days of Noah.

Many Were Wicked. "And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart " (Genesis 6:5-8). Consider

what this scripture says: 1) God saw man's wickedness. God is not indifferent to the activities of man upon this earth. He sees us all individually and nothing escapes his eye: "And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13). 2) Humanity was under law to God, or else they could not have been counted wicked: "...sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Romans 5:13). We are reminded that what makes man wicked/sinful is their transgression of divine law (I John 3:4). 3) God views us with regard to our relationship with him. He observed most of humanity as wicked in Noah's day, but, "Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah" (verse 8). All would do well to examine their lives and see ourselves as God sees us (II Corinthians 13:5). 4) God looks on the heart of man; it is here that sin against God or service to God begins. The heart is the inner man, the composite of intellect, will and emotions which make up who we are as individuals. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

God Gave Warning. "By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house..." (Hebrews 11:7). Warnings are given to alert of oncoming danger, resulting from our choices and actions. Because of the reality of sin in our lives (Romans 3:23), God's warnings are for our good, with the intent that we heed His word and escape the sorrows that sin causes now and in eternity (Galatians 6:7-8; Revelation 21:8). In Noah's day, He warned concerning something not yet seen - a devastating flood brought upon a sinful world. God has given man many warnings so that we may, "live life and see good days" (cf. I Peter 3:10-12): 1) "Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come and the

years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, 'I have no pleasure in them' (Ecclesiastes.12:1). 2) "...fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). 3) "but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not thy whole body be cast into hell" (Matthew 5:28-29). 4) "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son" (2 Jn. 9). God's warnings demand the proper response from man. If we make light of them, or neglect them in any way, it will be to our peril.

God Was Longsuffering. "...when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah" (I Peter 3:20). God waited in the days of Noah and provided precious opportunities for man's obedience. In like manner, God's longsuffering today gives man opportunity to study God's word and obey. Unfortunately, many despise God's goodness toward this end (Romans 2:4; II Timothy 2:25-26; II Peter 3:3-9). But, those who have a penitent heart, seeking God's will for their lives, do "account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation" (II Peter 3:15), using their opportunities to the glory of God.

Few Were Saved. "...wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved through water" (I Peter 3:20). Those who serve God are in the minority (Matthew 7:13-14). But, on a positive note, Noah did save his family, an endeavor many Christians today fail to do. How were these eight people saved? 1) They were saved through God's grace - Noah found favor with Jehovah (Genesis 6:8). Grace is the unmerited (undeserving) favor

of God. Divine grace has brought salvation to all in Jesus Christ (John 1:17), and has given us "the word of his grace" (Acts 20:32), so we may receive instruction unto salvation (Romans 1:16; Titus 2:11-12). 2) They were saved through faith. "By faith" Noah prepared an ark (Hebrews 11:7). Though Noah was surrounded by a wicked environment, he did not allow himself to be swept away by the tide of the "immoral majority" to become wicked himself. He moved with "godly fear" and he obeyed the pattern God gave him (Genesis 6:14-16, 22). His faith, therefore, was that trust and reverence for God which moved him to the proper response according to God's will. Such is characteristic of saving faith in every age. 3) They were saved through water. Noah and his family sought refuge by entering the ark, and the water that destroyed a wicked world was the means by which they escaped it - "eight souls were saved through water" (I Peter 3:20). But salvation from sin today is likewise accomplished through water - the water of baptism, "which after a true likeness doth now save you..." (I Peter 3:21). There is perhaps no clearer statement in the New Testament concerning the purpose of baptism than that found here. Does my faith in this verse - that baptism saves - in any way suggest that I am trusting in myself for salvation? Absolutely not! God saved Noah and his family through water but by his grace and through their faith in him. Likewise, to accept what the New Testament teaches about the essential nature of baptism does not negate faith in God, but rather affirms it because we are trusting in what God commands (Mark 16:16; John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5). Many stumble at God's command to be baptized and it has become as in Noah's day, the water that saves the few becomes the means whereby many perish. ☩

Oliver Murray Goes On to His Reward

Oliver Murray
(May 5, 1926 -
September 20,
2010)



Funeral services for Oliver Murray, 84, of Lufkin will be held Thursday, September 23, 2010 at 11:00 a.m. in the Carroway Funeral Home Chapel with Harold Hancock and Dean Bullock officiating. Interment will follow in the Largent Cemetery.

Mr. Murray was born May 5, 1926 in Columbus, Mississippi to the late May D. (Partain) and Luther Edley Murray, and died Monday, September 20, 2010 at his residence.

Mr. Murray, a loving husband and father, began preaching at age 14 and devoted the rest of his life to serving his Lord. He preached in Lufkin, Clute, Tyler, Nacogdoches and Huntington from 1954-1976, at which time he and his loving wife moved to Houston to work with the Lang Road Church of Christ. In 1980 he began full time meeting work, traveling throughout the United States. He was best known for his chart preaching which he fondly referred to as "his parchments".

A most humble gentleman, he was loved and respected by all who had the honor of knowing him. He will be sorely missed. ☩

Fence Straddlers

by James R. Dunigan



I guess as human beings we like to use terminology to describe things in our lives, perhaps we do that so we can better understand what we are describing. I use the term "fence straddlers" to describe those people or churches that try to have one foot in the world or liberal views (disobedient) of what they or the church should be and one foot on the conservative (obedient) side of the fence. I think one of the greatest problems in the church today is this very thing. Those who straddle the fence, those who claim to be following God but want what He says changed to please everyone who is listening. They call out names like ultra-liberal, liberal, conservative and ultraconservative but the bottom line is we are either following the Lord's Will or we are not, simple enough it would seem. God did not coin terms like those being used among people today, He simply states it as being unfaithful or faithful with nothing in between! One or the other! Disobedient or obedient. Fully following the Lord or fully following the world. The apostle John says in I John 2:15 "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Should be plain enough for those who claim to be following God, but yet time after time we see not only individuals but churches try to do this very thing! Straddle the fence! Straddling the fence is trying to love the world and God, and it just cannot be done! Straddling the fence is trying to obey God and the whims of man at the same time and it cannot be done!

Why is it so many churches, especially the ones who once courageously defended the truth and were standing on the Word of

God, have decided to follow the more liberal minded people of today? If the people who claim to be following God's word would simply stop straddling the fence many of the problem's we face today would go away. I know that solution sounds over simplistic but it is truly that easy, if people would just do it. Be on one side or the other! How do I know it is that simple, I do because Jesus says so! When He addressed the lukewarm church (fence straddlers perhaps?) of Laodicea in Revelation 3:15, He says "*I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.*" Pick a side Laodiceans, be hot or cold! Lukewarmness is the same as being cold because they are both unacceptable to Christ!

I can never even begin to go into all the reasons why churches have decided to open their doors to liberalism and false teachings. Many claim they have done so in an effort to be more loving and caring, to show they are more accepting. Many will tell you that because divorce is more prevalent in the church today they have "backed off" teaching on it so as to not hurt anyone's feelings. It amazes me to think their solution to sin when sin becomes more rampant is to stop teaching the truth. Is that the real solution to the problem? When people refuse to accept sin as sin simply stop teaching on it?

In an effort to "keep the young people happy" or to prove how accepting their church is they teach a watered down version of the Gospel. When people won't accept the harsh reality of God's Light they try to slip into the semi-darkness of the world and try to make it acceptable to God. A watered down Gospel will not truly convict anyone because it teaches people and the sinner to accept themselves as they are, in sin or not, and whether God does or not! The watered down gospel offered by so many is not challenging and it IS NOT the Gospel Jesus

brought to the world! Matthew 10:34-35 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against his mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

Jesus, Himself, made it plain you cannot straddle the fence. Matthew 6:24 "No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." Jesus taught us about false teaching and teachers. He wanted to make sure that we, as His people stand on the right side of the fence. "Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles? And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you, depart from Me, You who practice lawlessness." (Matthew 7:21-23.) Have you ever just sat down and thought about what it is Jesus is saying, exactly? He is saying that there will come a day when some people who have been preaching and teaching in His name will learn the message they were delivering was NOT His message! On that day it will be too late for them to go back and change what they have done! In Galatians 1:6-7 "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ." In the scheme of time, Paul had to address this very problem of people preaching a perverted gospel in a few short years after Jesus warned of people doing that very same thing! Perverting His gospel! I think we forget just how huge what Christ is saying in Matthew really is. He is

using some very harsh words! He is telling people that they can be condemned for teaching in His name when they teach falsely. The end never justifies the means when it comes to salvation! Why would Christ tell people who are "working in His name" such a thing! Jesus makes why He says this clear for us and anyone who listens to what He says with honest and obedient hearts in the very next verse in Matthew 6:24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock." The teaching, the lesson is very clear! The wise man will not only hear Christ, he will do what He says, he acts on what he hears ! A wise man DOES NOT straddle the fence! The wise man defends God's word as truth and there is no variance in him! We are pressured everyday to straddle the fence. I am asked so many times in my life why don't I just back off of my stance a little bit. Why can't I teach a softer, more kind gospel. They aren't asking me to preach more on God's love and our assurances of heaven, because I do teach those things, what they really want me to do is teach a watered down gospel they find more pleasant and unchallenging to themselves to change. They want me to teach I am ok and you are ok, no matter how far away from God's truth you really are. The preacher who says his sermons can be taught in any church at any time is not teaching what God wants him too! We are encouraged daily to back off of our beliefs and our faith all in the name of tolerance. We cannot compromise God's word to please man and still be pleasing to God! When Peter and John were faced with the decision to "straddle the fence" they responded in Acts 4:19 "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than God you judge." And in Acts 5:29 all the apostles responded with something we are all aware of "We ought to obey God rather

than men." We need to be able to respond to man in the same way! We are here to obey God rather than man and we will not, we cannot teach anything other than His gospel

✠



Jesus As the “I AM” # 1

by Maurice Barnett

By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John’s writing of the life of Christ is unique and distinctive. He approaches his subject from a different perspective than that of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Taking all four writers together, we have as complete a picture as God wants us to have. John focuses on the nature of Jesus as God come in the flesh, 20:30-31. John leaves out large sections of Jesus’ activities that are negligible to this purpose. In one section, an entire year of Jesus’ work is passed over. John begins by discussing Jesus’ true nature as Deity and His purpose in coming in the flesh. After introductory remarks to establish His Deity, John immediately goes to John the Baptist and the beginning of the work of Jesus, skipping over the first thirty years of His life. But, from beginning to end, emphasis is on His Deity while he exists in a human body.

One of the statements made in John is regarding the Lord’s being “I Am,” John 8:24, 26 and 8:58. But, what does that mean? In the first two passages, translators have added the pronoun *he* in an attempt to “complete” what they consider to be the intended thought. But, is that justified?

“I am” is translated from *ego eimi*. *Ego* is a *pronoun* that stands for the one speaking. *Eimi* is a present, active,

indicative verb that means “I am.”

Thus, it is *ego* (I), *eimi*, (I am) and so is literally “I, I am.” Just the verb *eimi* alone can be used to express “I am” and is so found in numerous passages. *Ego eimi* as a double nominative places extra emphasis for some purpose on the person speaking.

Any form of the verb *to be*, as is *eimi*, is a *linking verb*. It does not take a direct object but rather an adjective or predicate nominative that links some idea or characteristic with the subject. Where the context shows it to be appropriate to complete the thought, “I am *he*” is an acceptable translation and is so found in several places. For instance, in John 18:5-8, Jesus says *ego eimi* and it is translated as “I am *he*” three times and that is the correct understanding *in that context*. But, *ego eimi* is a subject and a verb so it *can* stand alone as a complete sentence. *It is not required for I am to be linked to any other term in order to express a complete thought*. Translators have used their own opinion in providing a predicate nominative when it does not necessarily belong. So, let’s investigate this. John 8:58-59—

“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am. They took up stones therefore to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.”

The phrase, “*Before Abraham was born*,” is an accurate translation. “Before” is from *prin*, a temporal conjunction. It is *temporal* in that there is a time element involved; something occurs in time before something else happens. “Was born” is from *genesthai*, an *aorist infinitive*. For other uses of *prin* with the aorist infinitive, see Matthew 1:18, 26:34, John 4:49. The construction refers to action that occurs *after* the action of the main verb which, in John 8:58, is *eimi*, I am.

So, “*Before Abraham was born, I am.*” Or, to arrange the sentence in a way that

describes the actual temporal order, “*I am, before Abraham was born.*” It isn’t “I am the Messiah, before Abraham was born,” as some oneness writers insist that “I am he” means. He wasn’t the Messiah until He came into the world.

The phrase does sound strange because we would think it should be “I *was* before Abraham was born.” But, that does not express the truth of the statement.

Eimi is *present, active, indicative*. It refers to continued action at *whatever point in time it might be*. He was I Am before Abraham, I Am after Abraham and I Am in the first century and is to this day, I Am. At whatever time in history one wants to point to, He is still *I am*, eternal existence, yet, *more than that*. This preexistence is well said in Philippians 2:5-8—“Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.”

This portrays Jesus as He was *before* coming into the world in the flesh as Jesus. It is well said in Colossians 1:16-17—

“...for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; 17 and he is before all things, and in him all things consist.”

Both “existing” and “being” in Philippians 2:5 are present active participles and show that it was His constant characteristic to be equal in form with God. He emptied Himself only of the *form* of God when He took the *form* of a servant, when He came with a human body, John 1:14. He retained his eternal nature and changed only

His form so that He was still I AM even when He came in the form of Jesus. His nature did not change when He changed from the form of God to the form of man. Oneness writers attack John 8:58 in three ways.

First, by pointing out that *ego eimi* is used 48 times in the New Testament, even by others than Jesus, which is true. They say that this means the phrase could not refer to a claim for Deity or else the Apostle Peter was as much Deity as was Jesus. But, need I point out that both words and phrases can have different meanings in different contexts? The word “church” comes from *ekklesia* but the same Greek word is also used in the New Testament for gatherings of unbelievers.

Was the unruly mob of Ephesians, or the city council of Ephesus, Acts 19:32, 39, 41, actually local churches that belonged to Christ just because *ekklesia* is used? Of course not.

Most of the places *ego eimi* is found have a predicate nominative as a modifier. But, when *ego eimi* stands alone as a sentence, as in the passages we are viewing at the moment, we must take note of its meaning *in that context*. Something special is being said.

Second, oneness people insist that the phrase means that the man Jesus only existed in God’s mind and plans before Abraham. Graeser, Lynn and Schoenheit in *One God & One Lord*, page 481, say —

“There is no question that Jesus figuratively ‘existed’ in Abraham’s time. However, he did not actually physically exist as a person; rather he ‘existed’ in the mind of God as God’s plan for the redemption of man. A careful reading of the context of the verse shows that Jesus was speaking of ‘existing’ in God’s foreknowledge.”

That’s a clever attempt at misdirection. No one has argued nor even believed that

the physical Jesus of Nazareth existed before Abraham. The physical Jesus who “dwelt among us” did not appear until born of Mary. It is clear from the text of John 8:58 that Jesus is claiming to have existed before Abraham. Seeing that He could not possibly have been claiming preexistence for His physical body, He must have been referring to His existence as a personal spirit being who answered to I Am. He is revealing His real nature as Deity.

Another statement of this is John 1:1, which says, “*In the beginning was the Word.*” The *imperfect, active* verb, *een*, a durative imperfect, denotes continued existence from past time *before creation*. That was quite a long time before Abraham. The same verb, *een*, in the same form is also in the following sentence, “*and the Word was with God.*” I John 1:2 also has the same form of the verb and teaches the same thing. That verse refers to the Word as the Word of life, “*the eternal life which was with the Father and manifest unto us.*” The verb implies eternal existence. Jesus is identified by the title, Word, a spirit being who became flesh and dwelt in the world as Jesus, John 1:14. He came down out of heaven and went back to heaven. John 3:13 says—

“And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven.” ☩

Studies In Biblical History - In Search Of The Bible

by Bob Price

The Dead Sea Scrolls, Part 2 The Documents

Prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 - 48 our knowledge concerning the ancient text of the Old Testament in Hebrew was limited to a few scraps of papyrus and some inscribed stones and potsherds. From the early Greek

Septuagint translation a few more papyrus fragments were known to exist, but that was about the extent of our Old Testament textual resources from biblical times.

Several large parchment codices from the ninth and tenth centuries A.D. constituted our earliest extensive texts in Hebrew, thus leaving a thousand year gap in manuscript evidences for the Old Testament.

The oldest fragments of any part of our Bible known prior to 1947 were a few tattered papyrus pieces from a second century B.C. scroll of the Greek Septuagint text of Deuteronomy in the John Rylands Library of the University of Manchester in England. More recently a larger collection of similar fragments came to light in Cairo, Egypt, and are called the Fouad Papyri. They too are from a Greek scroll of Deuteronomy of about 150 B.C.

But the oldest fragment from the Old Testament in Hebrew was a small piece of papyrus inscribed with the Ten Commandments and the "Shema" (Deuteronomy 6:4). It is in the Cambridge University Library in England and is called the "Nash Papyrus." Its date has been greatly disputed, but it now seems certain that it was copied somewhere in Egypt at least in the first century B.C. and perhaps as early as 150 B.C.. It was this thousand year gap in textual evidence that the Dead Sea Scrolls bridged. The Dead Sea Scrolls entered the Biblical scene from 11 caves on the western shore of the Dead Sea. Comprised of 500+ documents (the great majority in fragmentary condition) of Biblical and non-biblical writings. About 100 of which, in scroll and fragment form, are all the books of the Old Testament in ancient Hebrew (some several times), with the exception of Esther.

The documents vary in size, from minuscule fragments to the great Isaiah scroll of 24 feet. Written in ink on the hairy

side of pieces of leather sewn together with threads of flax. On the larger documents distinct ruled pages or columns, separated 14 APRIL 1988 (86)

by vertical lines and blank lines to distinguish chapters are discernible. The pages were ruled horizontally by a sharp-edged metal stylus, and the letters all hang from the tops of these lines parallel lines. There are about thirty lines in each column. Dampness and vermin have affected all the scrolls in varying degrees, and there are pages which have been read only by the aid of infra-red and others are regrettably unrestorable.

Although the debate continues on the date of the scrolls, paleographic evidence (the study of ancient writing) has pointed the time of the scrolls to the first century B.C. and the first half of the first century A.D.. But the date cannot of course be precise and must vary from scroll to scroll. Of the 500 plus documents, found in the eleven caves of Qumran, seven are recognized as the most significant. The seven with a brief description of each is as follows.

The Isaiah "A" scroll. This is a complete copy of Isaiah, consisting of fifty-four columns of writing on seventeen sheets of leather sewn into a scroll approximately 24 feet long, and varying in width from about 9½ to 10½ inches. The writing is placed on the scroll with the long dimension of the scroll horizontal, as is customary, and the sheets have been scribed (ruled) horizontally with the writing hanging from lines. Writing in Hebrew is from right to left, hence the columns have straight right-hand margins. The number of lines per column varies from 28 to 32, and the number of columns per sheet of leather varies from two to four. The scribe made numerous errors, some of which he himself corrected, some of which were corrected in other handwriting. Paragraph divisions

correspond almost exactly to those in the modern Hebrew Bible.

The Isaiah "B" scroll. The second scroll is a poorly preserved copy of Isaiah containing portions of chapters 10, 13, 16, 19-30, and 35-66. The text of this manuscript is nearer to the Masoretic text (traditional Hebrew text in use today) than is the first Isaiah scroll from Qumran; this is particularly so in spelling.

The Habakkuk Peshier. This scroll contains the text of chapters 1 and 2 of Habakkuk with interspersed "interpretations" — actually the word "peshier" means something like "interpretation, application, and commentary." The scroll was made of two strips of leather sewn end to end, probably about five feet long (some of the beginning is now missing) and 71

4 inches wide (from one to two inches irregularly is missing along the bottom edge), and is ruled both horizontally (lines) and vertically (columns). The writing is very neat and legible, and the divine name, YHWH ("Jehovah"), is always written in the ancient "Phoenician" script.

The Manual of Discipline. This scroll was originally longer. At present, eleven columns remain, about 6½ feet long and ten inches wide, formed by sewing together five pieces of leather. The writing shows many corrections, erasures, and additions, and seems to have had much use— which is in keeping with its contents, for this scroll is in the nature of a book of rules, describing admission into the life of the Qumran community.

The Thanksgiving Hymns.

These "hymns" or liturgical compositions, much in the style of the Biblical Psalms, were doubtless the developmental hymns of Qumran. Originally there were two parts, one consisting of three pieces of leather, each of four columns of writing and about 39 lines per column, the other consisting of about

seventy fragments of varying sizes. It is estimated that the original scroll was at least ten feet long and about 12 inches wide. Two scribes can be distinguished, one who wrote the first ten and a half columns in beautiful script, and a second who wrote the balance in a markedly inferior kind of handwriting.

The Order of Warfare, also known as the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness, and the War Scroll. This work is unlike anything ever found in Jewish writings. It describes a war, real or spiritual, between the tribes of Levi, Judah, and Benjamin, on the one hand, and the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and others, on the other hand. The scroll consists of five sheets of leather, nearly ten feet in length and six inches wide, containing twenty columns of text, averaging about twenty lines to a page. The bottom edge of the scroll had decomposed. The columns were ruled both horizontally and vertically, and the scribe wrote beautifully, hanging his letter, as was the custom, from the line.

The Genesis Apocryphon. This scroll was badly decomposed and at first could not be unrolled. On the basis of a detached fragment it was tentatively called the "Iamech Scroll." The scroll was unrolled with great difficulty, and although much of it was almost useless, the innermost portion was well preserved. Written in Aramaic, it tells in an apocryphal manner, the story of the birth of Noah, and the story of Abraham and Sarah from Genesis 12-15. Much legendary material, some of it fantastic, has been added to the Biblical account. In addition to the legends which are preserved in the scroll, several details of geography have been recorded in the account of the battle of the kings (Genesis 14).

These seven scrolls constituted the original "Dead Sea Scrolls." The historical and biblical value will be the topic of the next two articles. ❧

God or Evolution

by Luther Blackmon

The reader will note that we make no effort here to deal with "Theistic Evolution" — the theory that "God" created everything through evolution. The theory is a compromise with unbelief. With some it is an effort to escape the "stigma" of "rejecting scientific progress." We have what we consider valid reasons for this statement and for rejecting completely that hypothesis: (1) If God could create by evolution, He could create instantly by divine fiat. There are no limitations on Deity. (2) It contradicts the only historic record of creation, the Bible. It ill becomes men to repudiate records written nearly four thousand years ago when they have no better alternative than this. (3) Evolution is only an UNPROVEN theory. If anyone wants to dispute this statement, there is a standing challenge by men of recognized academic qualifications, to any scientist who will affirm the proposition: "Resolved that evolution has been scientifically proved." But do not hold your breath until the challenge is accepted.

No originality is claimed for the material here presented. We have followed the general course set by Paley in his "Natural Theology" with adaptations from many sources noted through the years. We desire no remuneration but the satisfaction that in the eyes of the readers it is a job well done, and the knowledge that some honest souls among our youth may be saved from the "Pied Piper" of a Godless theory, propped up with imposing names and titles.

The late Sir Arthur Keith, noted British anthropologist, said, "Evolution is unproved and unprovable, and the only reason we accept it is because it is the only alternative to special creation, and that is unthinkable." The latter part of

that statement could only be the product of a mind that had refused to examine the evidence for creation. To present to the readers some of that evidence, is the aim of this paper. I shall not discuss at length the technical pros and cons of the theory. That has been done by those better qualified than I, and their works are available. But I shall show that "special creation," rather than being "unthinkable," is the only reasonable explanation for things as they are. By "special creation"

I simply mean GOD CREATED.

But let us at least glance at this captivating theory. I think most everyone will admit that the following is a fair definition of the theory: "Evolution is the hypothesis that millions of years ago, lifeless matter, acted upon by natural forces, gave origin to one or more living organisms which have since evolved into all living and extinct plants and animals, including man."

Difficulties of the Theory

Even the definition presents questions which leading evolutionists frankly admit have no answers. First let us discuss *lifeless matter*. Whence came this matter? George Gaylord Simpson of Harvard University says, "Evolution casts no light on the ultimate mystery, the origin of the universe, and the source of the laws of physical properties, of matter, energy, space and time." (*Science*, April 1, 1960, page 972.) I saw a sign in the Field Museum in Chicago which read: "All present hypotheses regarding the origin of the earth have proven inadequate." Some say, "It can be of no interest to us to know the origin of matter." This is purely bluff—whistling in the dark. They are not interested in the origin of matter for the same reason that Fido is not interested in establishing himself as a great fighter by tackling a cage full of tigers. The whole theory of organic evolution can be laid beneath the daises on three points: (1)

Origin of matter; (2) Origin of life; (3) Order *in* the universe.

I. With Regard To The Origin Of Matter:

Either it was (1) Created, or (2) It is self-existent (eternal). If it was created, there is a Creator. This Creator has power — *power to bring into existence that which had no previous existence*. This is a quality only of Deity. Even if evolution were true, it does not claim this kind of power. It claims only to act upon that which already exists.

The Creator had also to be intelligent. The whole universe, the whole realm of nature, shows evidence of design, contrivance, planning. This is the function of intelligence. Intelligence is found only in a person; not in things. Certainly not in lifeless matter. So, creation presupposes Creator; Creator presupposes intelligence; intelligence presupposes personality, and personality presupposes God.

But, if there is no Creator, then the only alternative *is eternal matter*. And if matter is UN-created, self-existent, eternal, we have no choice but to attribute to matter the same qualities that are attributed to God the Creator. I did not say God the Saviour. But God the Creator. One thing is sure, *something is eternal*. Nobody but a fool would deny an axiom. And it is axiomatic that: "From nothing — nothing can come." But something is, therefore something also was. If there were ever a time in the past when *nothing existed*, nothing ever could have existed. Something is eternal. Take your choice, God or matter. Either way evolution has no explanation but an unprovable hypothesis.

II. Origin of Life.

The theory says that "lifeless matter," acted upon by natural forces, gave origin to minute "living organisms." Evolution

makes no effort to explain how these "natural forces" came to be. That is in the field of origins, and "origins" is not the favorite after dinner subject for the Evolutionist. Just about every book you will read by those fellows has a very short chapter at the beginning which quickly disposes of "origins." Then he gets into his favorite playground, fossils.

Give him a billion years and a basket of bones and he will have more fun than a monkey on a mile of grapevine. But do not mention origins.

Nevertheless, reluctant though they may be to face it, there was a FIRST CAUSE. You cannot have an endless chain of *dependent causes*. A chain with an infinite number of **links** would not support itself. **It** is the age old question, "Which was first, the chicken or the egg?" There was one hen not hatched from an egg, or there was one egg not laid by a hen. The strange thing about evolution is that it admits the premise and then denies the conclusion. The Bible says GOD was the first cause. The evolutionist says, "I do not know what was first, but I know it was not God. That is not a scientific conclusion." Then he turns right around and says, "*living* organisms came from *lifeless* matter." This is contrary to every known fact in this area of scientific research. Over a human embryo in the Field Museum, Chicago, you will see a sign which reads: "All life came from existing life." But in spite of the lack of any evidence, many "scientists" stubbornly insist that, at least once in the past, life came from dead matter.

These same men would look upon you in scorn or pity if you should affirm your faith in the virgin birth. In their philosophy no power could cause life to begin in the warm womb of Mary. But life originated in cold, dead matter! How about that?

I suppose no theory could be so ridiculous or farfetched or impossible that it would not be accepted by these people in preference to the 'simple statements, "In the beginning God created" and "God who made the world and all things therein giveth to all life . . . and made of one blood all men ..." (Genesis 1:1; Acts 17:24-26.) ❧

(Submitted by Virgil Trout)
Recent Virginia Church Service-Stimulus Sermon
Genesis 47:13-27

This short sermon, given by the Pastor of this predominantly black church in Virginia, takes less than a minute to read. This Pastor is obviously a leader. Perhaps we should each decide who our real leader is.....It is amazing to see that very little has changed in 4,000 years.

Good morning, brothers and sisters; it's always a delight to see the pews crowded on Sunday morning and so eager to get into God's Word. Turn with me in your Bibles, if you will, to the 47th chapter of Genesis, we'll begin our reading at verse 13 and go through verse 27.

Brother Ray, would you stand and read that great passage for us?(reading)....

Thank you for that fine reading, Brother Ray... So we see that economic hard times fell upon Egypt and the people turned to the government of Pharaoh to deal with this for them. And Pharaoh nationalized the grain harvest and placed the grain in great storehouses that he had built. So the people brought their money to Pharaoh, like a great tax increase, and gave it all to him willingly in return for grain. And this went on until their money ran out and they were hungry again.

So when they went to Pharaoh after that, they brought their livestock -their cattle, their horses, their sheep, and their donkey - to barter for grain and verse 17 says that only took them through the end of that year..

But the famine wasn't over was it? So the next year the people came before Pharaoh and admitted they had nothing left except their land and their own lives. "There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our land. Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food and we with our land will be servants to Pharaoh.." So they surrendered their homes, their land, and their real estate to Pharaoh's government and then sold themselves into slavery to him, in return for grain.

What can we learn from this, brothers and sisters?

That turning to the government instead of to God to be our provider in hard times only leads to slavery? Yes. That the only reason government wants to be our provider is to also become our master?

Yes.

But look how that passage ends, brothers and sisters! Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen.. And they gained possessions in it and were fruitful and multiplied greatly." God provided for His people, just as He always has! They didn't end up giving all their possessions to government, no, it says they gained possessions! But I also tell you a great truth today and an ominous one.

We see the same thing happening today - the government today wants to "share the wealth" once again, to take it from us and redistribute it back to us. It wants to take control of healthcare, just as it has taken control of education, and ration it back to us, and when government rations it, then government decides who gets it, and how much, and what kind. And if we go along

with it, and do it willingly, then we will wind up no differently than the people of Egypt did four thousand years ago - as slaves to the government and as slaves to our leaders.

What Mr. Obama's government is doing now is no different from what Pharaoh's government did then and it will end the same. And a lot of people like to call Mr. Obama a "Messiah," don't they? Is he a Messiah? A savior? Didn't the Egyptians say, after Pharaoh made them his slaves, "You have saved our lives; may it please my lord, we will be servants to Pharaoh"?

Well, I tell you this - I know the Messiah; the Messiah is a friend of mine; and Mr. Obama is no Messiah! No, brothers and sisters, if Mr. Obama is a character from the Bible, then he is Pharaoh. Bow with me in prayer, if you will...

Lord, You alone are worthy to be served, and we rely on You, and You alone. We confess that the government is not our deliverer and never rightly will be. We read in the eighth chapter of 1 Samuel, when Samuel warned the people of what a ruler would do, where it says "And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day."

And Lord, we acknowledge that day has come. We cry out to you because of the ruler that we have chosen for ourselves as a nation. Lord, we pray for this nation. We pray for revival and we pray for deliverance from those who would be our masters. Give us hearts to seek You and hands to serve You and protect Your people from the atrocities of Pharaoh's government.

In God We Trust... ॐ

“The Dope Game”

It all started back, as a youngster in school;
I wanted to make money, and be “Scarface” cool.

I saw a lifestyle, that I wanted to live;
Money, fame and women, what else could give?

I nearly gave my life, to be a player of sin;
I thought it'd be worth it. Ha! think again.

Although it's all fun, it's a temporary high;
Don't listen to those "friends," they're telling you a lie.

It all seems so cool, lots of money in your pocket;
It's hard to enjoy it, when in a cell and they lock it.

You sit back and reflect, thinking about the ride;
Looking at twenty, suddenly, you'd rather die.

You got your one chance, to go big or go home;
So you made your decision, and home feels all alone.

I'm sure all your "friends", will come and visit you soon;
Oh wait, did you hear that?, it stinks to be you!

If you could go back, what life would you choose;
Play the dope game?, I promise YOU'LL LOSE.

--- Josh Allen

Writings From Yesteryear

DIVINE REVELATION

The present trend toward modernism is discernible in the emphasis that our school men are putting on philosophy. But philosophy is the product of human reasoning and therefore is no more infallible than the minds of men. Yet philosophy is being accepted as final and regarded more authoritative than revelation. When men will not accept the record of divine revelation unless it can be confirmed by philosophy, they are not men of faith—they are modernists.

Proof that the Bible is divine revelation and therefore infallible is not meager and scant—it is manifold and sufficient, both intrinsic and extrinsic in genus. The first exists in the character of the contents of the Bible, and the second in the demands of man's nature.

The Need Of Revelation. The very nature of man requires it. First, as a dying creature, unlike the animal, he possesses love of life and dread of death. He is dissatisfied with the thought of being born to die—with being brought into the world to begin to die the moment that he begins to live. In his nature there is a longing for a destiny beyond the limits of life here, a yearning for the revelation of his origin and his destiny. His nature demands a destiny. The Bible is the only book that answers his longing and reveals his destiny. It is therefore the only book that meets the demands of man's nature.

Second, as a worshipping being, his desire to worship demands an object of worship, which of necessity must be a superhuman object. But the inability of man to create renders it impossible for him to make or imagine such an ideal. The true object of his worship must therefore be revealed. The Bible is the only book that reveals the object of man's worship.

Third, as a rational being, all but destitute of instinct, he is unable to supply his own wants. His reason, affection and conscience, lifting him above the creature of automatic instinct, demand a revealed religion in acquired language. Being a universal creature, to obviate prejudice, this revealed religion must be non-sectional and international, overcoming sectional distinctions, and such is the revealed religion of the Bible.

The Character Of The Bible. Further proof that the Bible is direct divine revelation is discoverable in the character of its contents. First, in unique composition its pronouncements are profound, yet in the whole of its presentation its style is simple, and its lessons and duties are understandable. It is the longest line of thought woven in the loom of time, yet expressed in clear and easy words which translation does not weaken, proving it to be unlike other books, and certifying that it is superhuman, and demonstrating it to be the book from above.

Second, in its divine impartiality, unlike human books, it exposes the weaknesses in the lives of its characters and records the mistakes and misdeeds of its heroes. Adam sinned and was expelled from his primeval home; Noah's intoxication is related with all of its repulsion; David's transgression was revealed as an orgy of lust; and Peter's denial is mentioned as a trait of cowardice. Where is there a book of man like it? Let infidels account for the truthful impartiality of the Bible on mere human grounds of authorship.

Third, in its proffered rewards and threatened punishments revelation is written in every line, for man could not propose blessings or punishments higher than his imagination, nor write of the future longer than he himself could see enforced. The duration of rewards and punishments being eternal, man could not have conceived such. The teaching of the Bible concerning eternity projects man farther and deeper into the future than his imagination could invent or his mind conceive.

Fourth, in the vast quantity of its varied contents there are no conflicts. With no apparent effort on the part of its authors to avoid contradictions, there are none; but it does not propose to harmonize those which man fancies to discover; there being none in it, the discrepancies vanish in the light of all the facts. The fact that its authors were separated by time, clime and language, with no knowledge of each other, yet were agreed in all that is written, proves that the Bible is not the work of men.

Fifth, in its demands on the individual, the Bible claims the hearts, lives and reverence of all men of all generations, with no apology for the demand. The most inspiring of all human philosophers could never have dreamed of such a thing. Man did not write the Bible. It is the book of a universal and an eternal God.

By Foy E. Wallace, Jr. taken from TORCH, October – November, 1951