

June Gospel Truths

Front Page Article

Lying

by H.E. Phillips

Lying is a deadly evil. Most people do not think so, but its evil and painful fruits are everywhere to be seen. In this generation men, women and children will lie repeatedly, and then lie about lying. From the highest officials of this nation, and the nations of the world, to the lowest peasant in the smallest country will lie about many things. Lying is des-roying family life, business and government institutions, education and religions.

What is lying? Because of the general view that lying is not telling the truth under oath in court, or when it inflicts severe pain upon another, most people lie about everything and anything.

Lying is falsehood: fabrication, prevarication, mis-representation, untruth, deceit, dishonesty. Prevari-cation is deception, to falsify, to fib, to lie, to perjure one's self. To misrepresent is to distort, exaggerate, falsify, misstate, pervert. An untruth is intentionally placing false information in the place of truth, to mislead. Deceit is cunning, chicanery, deception, fraud, trickery. The intent is to blind one to the true facts. Dishonesty is deception, duplicity, chicanery, fraud, immorality, mendacity.

Most people regard lying as insignificant and harmless if it does not damage the person or property of others. The fact is, lying on any level beguiles the person who hears and believes the lie, and also destroys the person who tells the lie, in this life and in eternity. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and murderers, and whore-mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). This verse says ALL LIARS will live eternally in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone: the second death. It makes no difference about the size or nature of the lie, or who tells it. The consequence for lying is universal and timeless. There is never an excuse or occasion for lying about anything.

A liar does not long hide his lying. True facts will emerge sooner or later and he will be exposed for his lying. Truth enlightens and makes one free

from sin (John 8:32). Lying is the cloak that a deceiver tries to use to conceal his evil ambitions and sins.

Of course, all liars do not lie to conceal their sins; some lie to entertain, misdirect efforts to learn of the truth, and to simply make people "love" them more. Many "nice, good" people will lie to make conversation, entertain, make favorable impressions, and get approval from people who are important to them. A sluggard will lie to make people think he is industrious; a stingy person will lie to keep or obtain money; an envious person will lie to get revenge on one he hates; a criminal will lie to escape justice, and a self-centered person will lie to get attention. Of course, little children learn to lie about many things to escape correction and punishment for their disobedience and misconduct.

Lying: A Sure Passage to Hell

Lying is of the Devil. The Holy Spirit predicts that in this dispensation "some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (I Timothy 4:1-2). To give heed to "seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" is to be deceived and to respond to the call of these doctrines of devils. They speak lies in hypocrisy: plain lying for the purpose of deception; pretending to be what they are not. That is hypocrisy.

The scribes and Pharisees were clever purveyors of deception. They used many approaches to mislead people and turn them away from the truth of Christ. A long dialogue between Jesus and these Jews is recorded in John 8. Some very strong language is used in these verses by Jesus to these scribes and Pharisees. Of the truth he said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Truth will release one from the bondage of sin and deception. Of lying he said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not" (John 8:44-45).

Every individual who lies in any matter, to any degree, is of the devil. Satan is the father of lying. Lying began with the devil in the garden of Eden. God put Adam, whom He had created, into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it. God told Adam that he could freely eat of every tree in the

garden except "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Of that one, God said; "for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 3:16-17). Satan, in the form of a serpent, approached Eve in his subtle manner with his proposition for her to disobey God. He is described in this inspired language: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world" (Revelation 12:9). This old serpent, the Devil, made his effort to get Eve to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree. She refused at first, saying, "God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it . . ." Satan said to the woman, "Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:2-5).

That temptation caused the woman to look at the forbidden tree in a different light and with disregard for what God had commanded. She SAW that the tree was good for food; she saw that the tree was pleasant to the eyes; and she desired to have it to make her wise. That is what the inspired John said was of the world. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I John 2:16). Eve saw that the fruit of the tree forbidden to her was "good for food" -- lust of the flesh; it was "pleasant to the eyes" -- lust of the eyes; it was "desired to make one wise" -- the pride of life. She took of the fruit and gave to her husband. The result was that they were both driven from the garden and separated from the tree of life. Man and woman were sentenced to death and the tree of life was taken from them. Now the "tree of life" is in the presence of God.

"...To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7).

"In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:2).

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

Those who will not enter into the city are sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Revelation 22:15). All liars shall have their part in the lake that

burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death (Revelation 21:8). That refers to eternal hell, after the judgment.

God hates a lying tongue. A Supreme Immortal Being who can love so much can also hate much. God hates a lying tongue. "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19). Of seven things mentioned here, three have to do with lying. "A lying tongue," "a false witness that speaketh lies" and "he that soweth discord among brethren." Misrepresentation is necessary to achieve discord among brethren. Truth will accomplish exactly the opposite: unity. 卐

Editorial



J. T. Smith

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 4:4-6 "There is one **body** and one **Spirit**, just as you were called in one **hope** of your calling; ⁵one **Lord**, one **faith**, one **baptism**; ⁶one **God** and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

The Scriptures mention five baptisms.

1. John's baptism – To the Jews only - Command
2. Baptism of Suffering – Promise of Christ
3. Baptism of Fire – For those who do not obey
4. Holy Spirit Baptism – Promise
5. Christ's Baptism – Command for every creature

What is meant by the word baptism? According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, "baptism, noun, the Christian religious rite of sprinkling water on to a person's forehead or

of immersing them in water, symbolizing purification or regeneration and admission to the Christian Church.” We all recognize that definitions of English words are given according to their usage which may or may not be the way the word is used in the Bible.

The *Koine Greek*, the language in which the New Testament Scriptures were written, is a dead language. This means that whatever a word meant when the New Testament was written, it still has the same meaning today. “*baptisma*, baptism, consisting of the processes of immersion, submersion and emergence (from *bapto*, ‘to dip’), is used (a) of John’s “baptism,” (b) of Christian “baptism,” (from *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*). At least two passages explain to us what the word means.

Romans 6:4 “Therefore we were **buried** with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Colossians 2:12 “**buried** with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”

Two Occasions of Holy Spirit Baptism

According to definition, the baptism of the Holy Spirit would be an overwhelming of a person by the power of the Holy Spirit. This would be done without the “power being transferred by the laying on of the apostle’s hands”. We have two accounts of this happening in the New Testament.

Acts Chapter Two

Jesus told His apostles, “Acts 1:8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Matthias was chosen to take Judas’ place as an apostle. Luke, the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, says in Acts 1:26 “And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the **eleven apostles**.” Acts 2:1-4 “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, **they** were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole

house where **they** were sitting. ³Then there appeared to **them** divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of **them**. ⁴And **they** were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave **them** utterance.”

Twelve or One Hundred and Twenty

It has often been said that the 120 who were gathered in the upper room received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If you will look at the pronouns in bold type in the above paragraph, you will see that the antecedent of these pronouns is the noun – Apostles. According to the text, then, the twelve were the ones who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and not the 120.

Purpose of the Baptism of The Holy Spirit

The purpose of the baptism of The Holy Spirit in Acts 2 was to convince the Jews on that occasion that these men were speaking the Word from God. The Jews were convinced them that occurrences they were witnessing were fulfillments of the prophecies of Joel and David. In fact, in Acts 2:16 we read, “But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:”

The purpose of the baptism of The Holy Spirit in Acts 10 was to convince the Jews that the Gentiles had also been granted “repentance unto life” (Acts 10:18).

Many have suggested that Holy Spirit baptism was sent to the house of Cornelius to save them. This is pure conjecture. In fact, that is just the opposite of the facts. In Acts chapter 11:3 Peter is accused by his Jewish brethren of violating the will of God by doing what he did “saying, ‘You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!’” Peter then explains the situation that brought this all about.

Acts 11:4-17 “But Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning, saying: ⁵‘I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. ⁶When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. ⁷And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ ⁸But I said, ‘Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time

entered my mouth.' ⁹But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.' ¹⁰Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. ¹¹At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. ¹²Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. ¹³And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, ¹⁴who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.' ¹⁵And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. ¹⁶Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

Let's list some of the main points in this reading:

1. Peter is rehearsing this "in order" from the beginning. Verse 4

2. The great sheet (as it were) was let down by four corners with "all manner of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air." The lesson – uncircumcised Gentiles are accepted by God to receive the gospel. Verses 5-12

3. Peter had six witnesses. Verse 12

4. The angel told Cornelius to send men to Joppa and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, "who will **tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.**" Verses 13-14

5. As Peter "**began to speak**, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Verse 15

6. Peter's remembrance of the words of the Lord ("John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit") indicating that the Gentiles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Verse 16

7. Peter said, "God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the

Lord Jesus Christ," that is the gift of speaking in tongues. (Acts 2)

We understand, then, that the baptism of the Spirit was NOT TO SAVE THEM. Peter was to TELL THEM WORDS that would SAVE THEM. Besides, what did they know about The Christ? Peter said, "¹⁵And AS I BEGAN TO SPEAK, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning.

An interesting point is made by some who claim Cornelius' house was saved BEFORE they were asked, "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days" (Acts 10:47-48).

"It's Included In the Word Faith"

This statement is often heard, "There are many passages that show we are saved by 'faith only'." Yet, I recently read where one person who was trying to prove we are saved without baptism said, "Finally, the entire third chapter of John is summed up in John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." "Notice: the emphasis is placed on believing in Jesus. (Repentance is understood in the meaning of belief in Jesus which brings salvation)."

The aforementioned usage is described by the word "Synecdoche - a figure of speech in which a part is made to represent the whole or vice versa," (The *OXFORD Dictionary OF ENGLISH*). This figure is often used with the word "faith," or "belief." It includes everything else that is involved in our faith or belief in God, Christ or the Word for one's salvation.

So even though many say we are saved by "faith only," they themselves do not believe it. They believe that one must repent (Acts 17:30) and confess his faith in Christ (Romans 10:9-10). And some even believe that those who "believe and are baptized shall be saved." They contend, however, that the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is Holy Spirit baptism which one receives when he believes and is saved. They contend that the baptism

of I Corinthians 12:13 teaches Holy Spirit baptism. (More on this later). ㄹㄹ

Mission Journal And Humanism # 2

By James P. Needham



The Manifestoes And Atheism

Brother Hughes makes this incredible statement,

"It is inaccurate to claim that the central thrust of the humanist manifestos is an espousal of atheism. Such a claim represents a serious misreading of these documents." (page 13, paragraph 5)

It almost makes me send him a copy of the manifestos because I can't help but wonder if he has read them! Let's look at a few excerpts from the manifestos and see who is guilty of "a serious misreading of these documents." ...no deity will save us, we must save ourselves..." (HUMANIST MANIFESTO 1, 11, page 4).

Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existent and not created. (First, page 8).

Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process. (Second, page 8).

Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected. (Third, page 8).

Humanists still believe that traditional theism, especially faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to love and care for persons, to hear and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them, is an unproved and outmoded faith...(page 13, paragraph 3).

Free thought, atheism, agnosticism, skepticism, deism, rationalism, ethical culture, and liberal religion all claim to be heir to the humanist tradition. (page 13, paragraph 2).

We believe, however, that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place...God...above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species, (pages 15,16).

We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural..." (page 16, paragraph 16).

We can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species...No deity will save us; we must save ourselves, (page 16, paragraph 3).

Any person who can read these direct statements from the manifestos, plus the many other atheistic implications and say that "It is inaccurate to claim that the central thrust of the humanist manifestos is an espousal of atheism. Such a claim represents a serious misreading of these documents" (page 13, paragraph 5) is fooling nobody but himself, and is really hard-pressed, for some unknown reason, to place humanism in a better light that facts will allow.

Abstracting

Brother Hughes makes quite a point about "the new Christian right's" abstractions that imply that all humanists are atheists. He thinks this is unfair, but I would remind him that it is no more unfair than his implication that all who are opposed to humanism in the schools, etc. are identified with PTL and the 700 club (page 13, last paragraph). I have about as much in common with false teachers as with humanists, though I am no less opposed to humanism! It is true that they are opposed to humanism as I am, but I sometimes fear it is a rallying point for them enabling them to fleece the public of millions of dollars. While I rejoice that they are retarding the progress of a monstrous evil, I am not otherwise identified with them or their efforts.

At the same time, it is not far wrong to say that all humanists are atheists, and the humanists pretty well agree with this. I don't understand why brother Hughes chooses to be a "die-hard" to the contrary.

Censorship

Our brother makes much of "the Christian right's" so-called book "censorship." Here he takes advantage of the emotional appeal of certain "buzz" words. Censorship is a real prejudicial label, and he uses it to characterize the efforts of many concerned parents and religious organizations to maintain some kind of decency in school text books, and library acquisitions. I don't really care if people want to call it "censorship," keeping this trash out of the reach of children is the right thing to do. Giving a right cause a bad label doesn't make it bad a cause. Somebody will control the type of books used in the schools and libraries. Who has a greater

right to do so than parents? Would brother Hughes say that there should be absolutely no control whatsoever exercised over the kind of literature available to our children? Are there any books he would "censor"? If so, then it just becomes a matter of whose "censorship" shall prevail, his or mine, or someone else's! That this is the case is seen from this admission from brother Hughes,

"Admittedly, some of the censorship is sponsored by ideological liberals. But much of it is spawned by the kind of thinking characteristic of the new, political Christian right wing." (page 12, paragraph 11).

Now, if he is condemning what he calls "censorship" from both sides, then he must be condemning all control of such literature, so he must be in favor of no control. Can you feature this? Brother Hughes would you approve of putting PLAYBOY, PLAYGIRL and PENTHOUSE in the children's section of the library used by your children? Tell us now! We are anxious to know your thoughts on this important issue. If you say, no, then you are guilty of "censorship," the very thing you are condemning!

"Old fashioned Morality"

Our brother says, "Many of these people uphold an old-fashioned morality for individuals, but fail to grasp the moral implications of an accelerated militarism with its capacity to destroy human life. And many of these Christian apologists want a stronger and wealthier America, but at the same time oppose caring for others less fortunate than themselves through welfare and foreign aid." (page 13, paragraph 10). While I have very little to say about politics in this paper, this paragraph makes very obvious our brother's political philosophy. It is palpably false to accuse the so-called "Christian right" of being opposed to "caring for others less fortunate than themselves through welfare and foreign aid." That is a scandalous charge. Neither brother Hughes nor anyone else knows of anybody who does not believe in caring for the deserving needy. What political conservatives and so-called "right-wingers" oppose is using tax money to care for people who refuse to work (II Thessalonians 3:10), and supporting political corruption at home or abroad. Foreign aid is alright if it is aiding what we believe to be right and good.

He further implies that it is immoral for our nation to have the military capacity "to destroy human life." If he is for unilateral disarmament;

would he have us de-story our arsenal while those who despise us and hate everything we stand for keep theirs? Would he have our government passively to capitulate to atheistic Communism? I might say to him and others of his stripe that while they deplore an arsenal that will de-story human life, they espouse a philosophy and a moral standard that would destroy every human soul on earth! Which is more important, the body or the soul? He sounds more and more like a humanist, though I am very reluctant to call him one, or to think he is one.

Communism

Brother Hughes bemoans the fact that humanism even gets "...blamed...for the spread of international Communism." (page 11, paragraph 3). I wonder why? Does he think there is no link between humanism and Communism? If so, then he needs to be careful about branding others as ignorant! Both the humanists and the Communists claim each other as allies! They are both atheists, and they both believe in socialistic one-world government. (See HUMANIST MANIFESTOS I, II, Under "World Community," page 21. The Humanists claim Karl Marx as their own, and Marks claimed to be a humanist.

Humanism is the denial of God, and the total affirmation of man...Humanism is really nothing else but Marxism. (Karl Marx, ECONOMIE POLITIQUE ET PHILOSOPHIE, Volume I, page 38-40).

Marx is a humanist because he rejects theistic religion and defends atheism. (Paul Kurtz, THE FULLNESS OF LIFE, Prometheus Books, Buffalo, N. Y. page 36).

It seems passing strange that in naming those who signed the Humanist Manifestos I, 11, brother Hughs mentioned "scholars, scientists, industrialists, and public servants of various sorts who are committed to the welfare and betterment of mankind and to the extension of individual liberties to all persons, not just in America, but around the globe"(page 13, par.4), and didn't say a word about the Communists, both in America and Russia, who signed them. Did he forget it? or did he not know about them? (that's hardly possible) or did he deliberately omit it? Only he can answer!

I now ask the reader, do you think the Communists who signed the manifestos are interested in "the welfare and betterment of mankind and to the extension of individual liberties to all persons, not just in America, but around the globe"? If anybody thinks so, I recommend

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn as one who can give you an insider's view of the matter! But, now, I have even a tougher question for you, please tell me how can a person who claims to be a Christian and a gospel preacher write such a thing as this?

Morals and Discipline

Brother Hughes attributes the lack of morals and discipline in our society in general and our schools in particular to "the Christian rights" preaching "the gospel of power and wealth." (page 14, paragraph 3). He says,

Perhaps the crises of our times have a great deal more to do with the failure of Christians to be authentically Christian than they do with the influence of the humanists, (page 14, paragraph 3).

There is no doubt that today's portrayal of the religion of Christ leaves much to be desired, and there is no doubt that such has an impact upon society, but to say that this has a greater cause-and-effect relationship to lack of morals and discipline in our society than does a philosophy that says man is just matter in notion, there is no such thing as a correct moral standard, and that all truth is relative, has to be the height of absurdity. Humanist ethics sanctions murder, euthanasia, abortion, rape, homosexuality, fornication, adultery, incest, pornography, drug abuse, rebellion against authority, and every other sin in the devil's catalog of evil deeds, in fact, in the humanist philosophy there is no such thing as sin in the Biblical sense. How could there be since they foolishly this I am ready to meet him or anyone else at any place or time in the polemic arena, written or oral, on any fair proposition. If someone wonders if that is a challenge, it most definitely is. That's how strongly I feel about humanism, and especially any person who claims to be a Christian, to say nothing of a gospel preacher, who sets his hand to defend this Godless immoral system that has already wrecked a generation of our young people, and is well on its way with another. I don't claim to be any kind of an expert debater, but I don't have to be to prove this proposition! And I certainly do not want to appear arrogant or unkind. I am just exasperated that a brother would labor so diligently in a nationally circulated magazine in behalf of humanism, from *Torch Magazine*, 1985

Women's Page Marriage

by Geneva Brown Smith



“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

Love-A Feeling

Psychologist Abraham Maslow said, “Falling in love is a peak experience.” Harry Stack Sullivan, Psychiatrist, said, “When the satisfaction or security of another person becomes as significant to one as is one's own security...then the state of love exists.” Psychiatrist Smiley Blanton said, “True love between a man and a woman may be defined as a relationship in which each helps to preserve and enlarge the life of the other.”

Not Only A Feeling

Feelings can be produced by sunshine, hormones, how much sleep the baby got, the time of the month. There are a lot of good feelings in a genuine love relationship, but over the long haul, there are some bad feelings also. Modern culture pushes us toward “falling in love.” We are told that we need the right education and other special talents, stylish dress and grooming. We buy the right advertised products and own the right possessions which are displayed. It's true that physical attractiveness will make one more “falling in love,” but it is far-fetched to say that some tooth paste or cologne will make one irresistible to the opposite sex.

Counterfeit Versions

Physical Conquest-----One sees the other as a source of physical pleasure, as in sex. One may be viewed as a sex object.

Psychological Conquest---Partner can be seduced psychologically to get him/her to fall in love...to be dominated and submissive, not just as a body, but as a person.

Projected Image-----Person falls in love...not with what the other person is, but with what he/she wants the other person to be.

Infatuation-----The temporary state of being in love. It implies deception...shallow relationships. Many people call this “love” in the early stages and “infatuation” when it ends.

Romance-----Falling into this counterfeit version of love is beautiful, wonderful, mysterious, incomprehensible, and always magical. Romantic love is blind, distorted by beautiful clothes, makeup, moonlight, candlelight, firelight, no light, perfume, music, exotic places, and enchanted evenings. All marriages thrive on the romantic dimension, but romance alone is counterfeit love.

Commitment

“Love is an activity...not a passive effect,” states Erich Fromm, Psychologist. “It is a standing in...not a falling for.” Christian marriage affirms that love is a conscious decision to yoke yourself with another person through thick and thin, in sickness and in health etc. In the marriage ceremony the minister does not ask, “Do you love this person?” He asks, “Will you love this person?”

Sacred

Marriage is sacred because it is regulated by God. The New Testament describes marriage as a union terminated by death (Romans 7:1-3). Marriage is sacred because violations of the man-woman relationship will be judged by God. “Marriage is honorable among all and the bed undefiled, but fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Hebrews 13:4).

Conclusion: Those who are married should consider this union a permanent one broken only by death or fornication of the mate. It is an exclusive union to be taken seriously. God does not permit this kind of relationship with anyone other than the spouse. Not only that, Christians should be careful how they relate to one another. Those (men or women) who try to seduce the mate of another are guilty of adultery. “But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery

with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5:28). Have you been guilty of this?

Much of this material was taken from other sources. ❧

Human Suffering - II

by Maurice Barnett



Many people, even Christians, seem to have a lifelong struggle with suffering. Some allow such to destroy their mental and emotional stability. Yet, others gain our admiration in the way they remain loving and lovable people. The last face life with joy rather than curses. We all have to face the suffering; we had best learn to handle it. Even spiritual gifts in the first century were not intended to take away human suffering, even for Christians. This is evidenced by Trophimus, II Timothy 4:20, I Timothy 5:23, and Paul himself. Many others suffered many things, but took them patiently. We should view suffering as an opportunity for betterment.

I. A Testimony Of One's Faith.

Jesus warned the disciples, in Luke 21:5-19, of what was to occur in their future. They would be persecuted and suffer many things. In verse 13 he says, “I shall turn out unto you for a testimony.” It would be an opportunity to evidence their faith before others and thereby focus attention on the Lord. Just as Jesus used instances of suffering and death to bring the attention of people on the power of God, we can take the attention our suffering may receive and, instead of trying to keep that attention on ourselves, make God stand out. People can then see our faith in God. In Acts 8 we know of Stephen, in the midst of his suffering and imminent, horrible death, who nonetheless focused attention on the Lord. And what are we to think of the multitudes of disciples in that first century who went through torture and death with a song on their lips. Paul and Silas in a Philippian prison, after being beaten, had the prisoners listening to them praying and singing hymns, Acts 16:24. I can imagine the effect this had

on others, rather than the picture of a self-pitying complainer.

Man is to do his best to conquer illness, or any other problem he has. The advances that medical science has made comes from man's intelligence. But, man is created in the image of God, and that includes intelligence. Therefore, any advances man makes is a reflection of the creator, and we thereby glorify God. We further glorify God in the realm of suffering by helping those who suffer. "Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good words, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Matthew 5:15. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2. "And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it;" I Corinthians 12:26. And what are we to say of the good Samaritan who went out of his way to help a suffering fellow human. His example is emphasized in the scriptures. Or Dorcas, who spent much time and energy in helping others. All these things glorify God and testify to our faith. We use suffering thereby instead of being used by it.

II. Make Us Stronger.

Even as an Apostle, Paul was not promised, nor did he enjoy, freedom from suffering and distresses. II Corinthians 11:23-28 notates the many things he went through to preach the gospel. At Philippi he was beaten, imprisoned, locked in the stocks, and yet *before morning he had converted the jailor and his family*. To the Philippians he wrote:

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:11-13.

We must realize that we can put up with anything this life has to dish out to us and remain faithful to God. He is there, He cares, and we have something far better waiting for us. By feeding on His word we become stronger and sufferings become easier to bear. Paul speaks of this again in II Corinthians 12:7-10:

"And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart

from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Whatever we have to go through can be a source of strength. We can use it to our benefit and eternal welfare.

III. Miscellaneous Passages.

Hebrews chapter 11 lists several prominent people and their attitude of faith. Verse 32 to the end of the chapter enumerates things they went through:

"... who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens. Women received their dead by a resurrection: and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth."

These people could meet all these afflictions, not just with patience and resignation but with joy and happiness. We can learn from their example. Much the same thing is said in I Peter 1:6-7:

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Or again in James 1:2-4 we hear it:

"Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations; knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing."

The "temptations" here could be translated "trials." We may undergo many things, put up with much suffering, and yet we should use it to

strengthen our faith. But, perhaps, one of the best statements of this joy in the face of affliction is made by Paul in II Corinthians 7:4:

“Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying on your behalf: I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our affliction.”

In the verses following this is a statement of another source of comfort in afflictions, yet not just of comfort, but rejoicing also. Note:

“For even when we were come into Macedonia our flesh had no relief, but we were afflicted on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless he that comforteth the lowly, even God, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but also by the comfort wherewith he was comforted in you, while he told us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced yet more.”

We are instructed that “where one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.” (I Corinthians 12:26) Or, “Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep.” (Romans 12:15) The care and concern we show toward those in suffering can lighten their load, provided they have the right attitude. It is difficult to give comfort to a Porcupine. In times of suffering, people can be brought closer together and we gain strength from one another.

It may be objected that the passages pointed to in this article speak, primarily, of suffering that results from duty to God, and not accidents, disease, and other things that come by simply being human. Yet, if those who suffer in the cause of Christ are to meet suffering in the way revealed in the Bible then that is the best way to meet it. Whatever the cause, this way is still the best. ❧

The Facing Jihad Conference in Jerusalem by Geert Wilders

Dear friends,

Thank you very much for inviting me.

I come to America with a mission. All is not well in the old world. There is a tremendous danger looming, and it is very difficult to be optimistic. We might be in the final stages of the Islamization of Europe. This not only is a clear and present danger to the future of Europe itself, it is a threat to America and the sheer survival of the West. The United States as the last bastion of Western civilization, facing an Islamic Europe.

First I will describe the situation on the ground in Europe .& nbsp; Then, I will say a few things about Islam. To close I will tell you about a meeting in Jerusalem .

The Europe you know is changing.

You have probably seen the landmarks. But in all of these cities, sometimes a few blocks away from your tourist destination, there is another world. It is the world of the parallel society created by Muslim mass-migration.

All throughout Europe a new reality is rising: entire Muslim neighborhoods where very few indigenous people reside or are even seen. And if they are, they might regret it. This goes for the police as well. It's the world of head scarves, where women walk around in figureless tents, with baby strollers and a group of children. Their husbands, or slaveholders if you prefer, walk three steps ahead. With mosques on many street corners. The shops have signs you and I cannot read. You will be hard-pressed to find any economic activity. These are Muslim ghettos controlled by religious fanatics. These are Muslim neighborhoods, and they are mushrooming in every city across Europe . These are the building-blocks for territorial control of increasingly larger portions of Europe , street by street, neighborhood by neighborhood, city by city.

There are now thousands of mosques throughout Europe . With larger congregations than there are in churches. And in every European city there are plans to build super-mosques that will dwarf every church in the region. Clearly, the signal is: we rule.

Many European cities are already one-quarter Muslim: just take Amsterdam , Marseille and Malmo in Sweden . In many cities the majority of the under-18 population is Muslim. Paris is now surrounded by a ring of Muslim neighborhoods.

The - Facing Jihad Conference in Jerusalem

Geert Wilders is a Dutch Member of Parliament.

In a generation or two, the US will ask itself: who lost Europe ?'

Here is the speech of Geert Wilders, Chairman, Party for Freedom, the Netherlands , at the Four Seasons, New York , introducing an Alliance of Patriots and announcing:

Mohammed is the most popular name among boys in many cities.

In some elementary schools in Amsterdam the farm can no longer be mentioned, because that would also mean mentioning the pig, and that would be an insult to Muslims.

Many state schools in Belgium and Denmark only serve halal food to all pupils. In once-tolerant Amsterdam gays are beaten up almost exclusively by Muslims. Non-Muslim women routinely hear 'whore, whore'. Satellite dishes are not pointed to local TV stations, but to stations in the country of origin.

In France school teachers are advised to avoid authors deemed offensive to Muslims, including Voltaire and Diderot; the same is increasingly true of Darwin. The history of the Holocaust can no longer be taught because of Muslim sensitivity.

In England sharia courts are now officially part of the British legal system. Many neighborhoods in France are no-go areas for women without head scarves. Last week a man almost died after being beaten up by Muslims in Brussels, because he was drinking during the Ramadan.

Jews are fleeing France in record numbers, on the run for the worst wave of anti-Semitism since World War II. French is now commonly spoken on the streets of Tel Aviv and Netanya, Israel. I could go on forever with stories like this. Stories about Islamization.

A total of fifty-four million Muslims now live in Europe. San Diego University recently calculated that a staggering 25 percent of the population in Europe will be Muslim just 12 years from now. Bernhard Lewis has predicted a Muslim majority by the end of this century.

Now these are just numbers. And the numbers would not be threatening if the Muslim-immigrants had a strong desire to assimilate. But there are few signs of that. The Pew Research Center reported that half of French Muslims see their loyalty to Islam as greater than their loyalty to France. One-third of French Muslims do not object to suicide attacks. The British Centre for Social Cohesion reported that one-third of British Muslim students are in favor of a worldwide caliphate. Muslims demand what they call 'respect'. And this is how we give them respect. We have Muslim official state holidays.

The Christian-Democratic attorney general is willing to accept sharia in the Netherlands if there is

a Muslim majority. We have cabinet members with passports from Morocco and Turkey.

Muslim demands are supported by unlawful behavior, ranging from petty crimes and random violence, for example against ambulance workers and bus drivers, to small-scale riots. Paris has seen its uprising in the low-income suburbs, the banlieus. I call the perpetrators 'settlers'. Because that is what they are. They do not come to integrate into our societies; they come to integrate our society into their Dar-al-Islam. Therefore, they are settlers.

Much of this street violence I mentioned is directed exclusively against non-Muslims, forcing many native people to leave their neighborhoods, their cities, their countries. Moreover, Muslims are now a swing vote not to be ignored.

The second thing you need to know is the importance of Mohammed the prophet. His behavior is an example to all Muslims and cannot be criticized. Now, if Mohammed had been a man of peace, let us say like Ghandi and Mother Theresa wrapped in one, there would be no problem. But Mohammed was a warlord, a mass murderer, a pedophile, and had several marriages - at the same time. Islamic tradition tells us how he fought in battles, how he had his enemies murdered and even had prisoners of war executed. Mohammed himself slaughtered the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayza. If it is good for Islam, it is good. If it is bad for Islam, it is bad.

Let no one fool you about Islam being a religion. Sure, it has a god, and a here-after, and 72 virgins. But in its essence Islam is a political ideology. It is a system that lays down detailed rules for society and the life of every person. Islam wants to dictate every aspect of life. Islam means 'submission'. Islam is not compatible with freedom and democracy, because what it strives for is sharia. If you want to compare Islam to anything, compare it to communism or national-socialism, these are all totalitarian ideologies.

Now you know why Winston Churchill called Islam 'the most retrograde force in the world', and why he compared Mein Kampf to the Quran. The public has wholeheartedly accepted the Palestinian narrative, and sees Israel as the aggressor. I have lived in this country and visited it dozens of times. I support Israel. First, because it is the Jewish homeland after two thousand years of exile up to and including Auschwitz, second because it is a democracy, and third because Israel is our first line of defense.

This tiny country is situated on the fault line of jihad, frustrating Islam's territorial advance. Israel is facing the front lines of jihad, like Kashmir, Kosovo, the Philippines, Southern Thailand, Darfur in Sudan, Lebanon, and Aceh in Indonesia. Israel is simply in the way. The same way West-Berlin was during the Cold War.

The war against Israel is not a war against Israel. It is a war against the West. It is jihad. Israel is simply receiving the blows that are meant for all of us. If there would have been no Israel, Islamic imperialism would have found other venues to release its energy and its desire for conquest. Thanks to Israeli parents who send their children to the army and lay awake at night, parents in Europe and America can sleep well and dream, unaware of the dangers looming.

Many in Europe argue in favor of abandoning Israel in order to address the grievances of our Muslim minorities. But if Israel were, God forbid, to go down, it would not bring any solace to the West. It would not mean our Muslim minorities would all of a sudden change their behavior, and accept our values. On the contrary, the end of Israel would give enormous encouragement to the forces of Islam. They would, and rightly so, see the demise of Israel as proof that the West is weak, and doomed. The end of Israel would not mean the end of our problems with Islam, but only the beginning. It would mean the start of the final battle for world domination. If they can get Israel, they can get everything. So-called journalists volunteer to label any and all critics of Islamization as a 'right-wing extremists' or 'racists'. In my country, the Netherlands, 60 percent of the population now sees the mass immigration of Muslims as the number one policy mistake since World War II. And another 60 percent sees Islam as the biggest threat. Yet there is a danger greater than terrorist attacks, the scenario of America as the last man standing. The lights may go out in Europe faster than you can imagine. An Islamic Europe means a Europe without freedom and democracy, an economic wasteland, an intellectual nightmare, and a loss of military might for America - as its allies will turn into enemies, enemies with atomic bombs. With an Islamic Europe, it would be up to America alone to preserve the heritage of Rome, Athens and Jerusalem.

Dear friends, liberty is the most precious of gifts. My generation never had to fight for this freedom, it was offered to us on a silver platter, by

people who fought for it with their lives. All throughout Europe, American cemeteries remind us of the young boys who never made it home, and whose memory we cherish. My generation does not own this freedom; we are merely its custodians. We can only hand over this hard won liberty to Europe's children in the same state in which it was offered to us. We cannot strike a deal with mullahs and imams. Future generations would never forgive us. We cannot squander our liberties. We simply do not have the right to do so.

We have to take the necessary action now to stop this Islamic stupidity from destroying the free world that we know. ❀

Reply To Paul Williams' Article On The Holy Spirit

by Patrick Donahue

Reply To Paul Williams' Article On The Holy Spirit

I highly respect my brother Paul Williams and his work, and have considered him a friend for a long time (and plan to for many more years to come, Lord willing). However he is incorrect when he states in his April Gospel Truths article "the Christian does not receive the Holy Spirit when he is baptized." How anybody could say this after reading Acts 2:38 is beyond me.

Acts 2:38 reads "... Repent, and be baptized every one of you ... for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Some might consider Acts 2:38 ambiguous regarding whether the Holy Ghost himself is promised as a gift or a gift from the Holy Ghost is promised. But Acts 5:32 clears that matter up for us as it reads "... so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." So this gift given upon obedience to the gospel is the Holy Spirit himself.

Mr. Williams thinks Acts 8:16 proves Christians don't receive the Holy Spirit at baptism, because the passage says after the Samaritans were baptized, the Holy Spirit "was fallen upon none of them." But this argument won't work because Mr. Williams would agree Acts 8:16 is talking about a miraculous measure of the Spirit (Acts 19:6), and Acts 2:38 can't be talking about the miraculous measure of the Spirit. This is not just a think so on my part, but can be easily proven beyond doubt. Acts 2:38 clearly conditions the Holy Spirit upon

being baptized in water. We can be as confident about that point as we are that Acts 2:38 conditions the “remission of sins” upon being baptized in water. But Acts 10:44-48 shows the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit can be received before water baptism. So the gift of the Spirit in Acts 2:38 cannot be the same as the miraculous measure of the Spirit in Acts 10:44. Therefore the necessary conclusion is that Acts 8:16 can’t be talking about the same thing as Acts 2:38. To summarize this point, a person has to get baptized to receive the Acts 2:38 measure of the Spirit, but the same is not necessarily true about the miraculous measure of the Spirit mentioned in passages like Acts 10:44 and 8:16.

Mr. Williams says “Peter’s promise was not a general one to all people who will be baptized until the end of the age.” But again, other scriptures prove this statement false. Mr. Williams is correct that not every Christian (even then) received a miraculous measure of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:29-30). But the Acts 2:38 promise of remission of sins and Holy Spirit (at baptism) was for all at that time (Acts 2:39b). Luke 11:13 shows it was for all that ask God for it (by obeying the gospel). John 7:38-39 shows it was for all believers (not just a select few). Ephesians 1:13-14, II Corinthians 1:22, and II Corinthians 5:5 teach the Acts 2:38 Holy Spirit measure was to be a seal for all believers, and human reasoning about it not being “seen, heard, felt, or tasted” would not negate God’s word on that. Romans 5:5, I Thessalonians 4:8 and John 4:13 show the Holy Spirit was for all that Paul and John were writing to (not just the apostles and a select few). Titus 3:5-6 indicates all who are “saved ... by the washing of regeneration” receive the Holy Ghost. That would include all being converted today, right? I John 3:24 proves the Acts 2:38 measure of the Spirit was for all that keep God’s commandments. Of course that would be all Christians, not just those who had received a miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit.

And the immediate context of Acts 2:38 shows the Holy Spirit was to be given conditioned upon baptism until the end of the Christian dispensation (which is not true of the miraculous measure – I Corinthians 13:8-13). Acts 2:39 says the promise of the remission of sins and the Holy Ghost at baptism was “unto you (those Jews, ptd), and to your children (their descendants - it wouldn’t stop in that generational timeframe, ptd), and to all that are afar off (all the Gentiles – Ephesians 2:13,17, ptd), even

as many as the Lord our God shall call” (that phrase definitely gets all of us today doesn’t it?). The dispensational Baptist says baptism for the remission of sins in Acts 2:38 was only for the Jews at that time, but our brethren agree Acts 2:39 proves them wrong. And by the exact same logic, Acts 2:39 also proves false any theory that says the gift of the Holy Ghost (of verse 38) was only for that time.

The scriptural evidence is overwhelming on this matter of whether or not the faithful Christian possesses a personal (not just representative) indwelling of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19). We should never let false Pentecostalism scare us away from plain Bible truths. ❏

www.BibleDebates.info

The Gift of the Holy Spirit Was Miraculous

by Paul K. Williams



I am very happy to be able to exchange views with my beloved brother and friend, Pat Donahue, because I respect him highly for his love of the truth and for his fairness in debate.

Pat has replied to my article “Do We Receive the Holy Spirit When We Are Baptized?” (Gospel Truths, April 2010). He kindly sent me a copy for review.

Frankly I was astonished at the amount of assertion without proof that is in his article.

After he correctly said that the gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38 is the Holy Spirit Himself (Acts 5:32), he then asserts that the gift of Acts 2:38 is for all Christians for all time. I say he asserts this only, and I will try to prove that. And I will try to prove that the gift of the Holy Spirit was miraculous—every time!

Acts 2:38

His first assertion is “Acts 2:38 clearly conditions the Holy Spirit upon being baptized in water.” I think he means that only the ones baptized

can receive the gift of the Holy Spirit here promised, and they will receive the Holy Spirit when they are baptized without anything else being done. But Peter does not say that. He simply said to the people on Pentecost, “be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” He did not say how they were going to receive the Holy Spirit, nor whether God might give the Holy Spirit to an unbaptized man. God did give the Holy Spirit to an unbaptized man (Acts 10), and nothing Peter says here contradicts that. Peter simply promises the gift of the Holy Spirit to the ones he was talking to.

Acts 2:39

In the next verse Peter promises the Holy Spirit to “you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord will call to Himself.” This does not necessarily mean “to all whom the Lord shall call for all time.” If God has limited the gift of the Holy Spirit to the time when the apostles were living, as I believe He has, we will have to find the duration of that promise from other scriptures. This scripture does not say “for all time.” If God has limited the time to the lifetime of the apostles when the New Testament was revealed and written, this fact will not contradict what Peter says in Acts 2.

Acts 8:14-18; 19:1-7

Read carefully with me. “Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles hands. . .”

Am I correct in saying that the disciples in Samaria did NOT receive the Holy Spirit when they were baptized? That is what the verse says! How can anyone who respects the word of God say that they DID receive the Holy Spirit when they were baptized?

And in Acts 19, Paul asked, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” He asked that question because no apostle had been in Ephesus to give them the Holy Spirit. And after they were baptized, “when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them.”

Earnest, Pledge and Seal of the Holy Spirit

Paul wrote to the Ephesian saints, “Having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance.” (Ephesians 1:13-14). “Who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.” (II Corinthians. 1:22). “Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.” (II Corinthians. 5:5). The word “pledge” is translated “earnest” in the King James Version.

Obviously, Paul is saying that the fact that Christians were given the Holy Spirit was proof that they belonged to God and that He would give them all the blessings which He had promised. How wonderful to have this proof, shown by speaking in tongues, prophesying, or the exercise of one or more of the other gifts (I Corinthians 12:8-10). God pledged (guaranteed) that all His promises are true, and were for them.

Here is a big question: How can the gift of the Holy Spirit in our hearts today, a gift which cannot be felt or known in any way through our senses, be a guarantee of God’s promises? Such a thing is not described in the New Testament, and it cannot by any stretch of the imagination be appealed to as proof that we belong to God and will inherit the promises. But it is easy to see how the gift of the Holy Spirit bringing miraculous gifts to the disciples was such a guarantee.

Romans 5:5; I Thessalonians 4:8; I John 4:13

Pat seems to think that the “miraculous” gift of the Holy Spirit was just for the apostles and a select few. He cites the above verses as proof that the Holy Spirit was given to all those to whom Paul and John were writing.

Pat, it was not a select few who received the Holy Spirit. All those whom Peter preached to, all those baptized in Samaria—in fact, all Christians who were in contact with the apostles—were given the gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of the apostles. If you read the book of 1 Corinthians, you will be convinced that many had these gifts.

“The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” (Romans 5:5). “So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.” (1 Thess. 4:8) “By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.” (1 John 4:13)

It is easy to understand these verses if we understand that Christians everywhere were given the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was revealing and confirming His will through them. He was directing their worship. The Holy Spirit was teaching them. They knew the revelations were from the Holy Spirit, therefore they were assured of God's love.

But Pat is in a hard place to explain how a gift of the Holy Spirit which cannot be sensed in any way can cause us to know that we abide in Him! It doesn't make sense.

Furthermore, it is dangerous. Many, many denominational people will testify that the Holy Spirit has assured them of salvation. Pat does not believe that there is some mysterious feeling imparted by the Holy Spirit to assure us of salvation, but I wonder how one can take his position which applies 1 John 4:13 to all Christians today, "By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit", without going in the direction of some mysterious feeling assuring us of our sonship.

Titus 3:5-6

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior."

These verses do not tell us for how long the Holy Spirit was to be "richly poured out" upon Christians. Paul is referring to the fact that Christians everywhere were given the Holy Spirit and therefore able to prophesy, speak in tongues, even to heal. (1 Cor. 12:8-10) He was truly richly poured out.

Conclusion

We have the same assurance that the early Christians had. We know that we are the children of God because of what the Holy Spirit has given us. Because Christians in the first century did not have the written word, the Holy Spirit revealed His word and confirmed it by the signs and miracles which He performed by their hands. They were able to know His will and be assured that they were following God because of what the Holy Spirit was doing in their midst.

We now have the written New Testament, completely proven by the Holy Spirit. We have the assurance that we are Christians because we know His will and follow it. We know that we are in the love of God—because of the word from the Holy Spirit.

Praise God for this assurance.

Recommended reading: The Work of the Holy Spirit in Redemption, by Franklin Camp, Guardian of Truth Foundation. ॐ

The Word Fellowship As Used In the New Testament

by Micky Galloway



Brethren, where have we missed it? I continue to receive social/recreational activity announcements that advertise them as fellowship activities. Following are two examples.

- In July of 2003, a church in northern California advertised their Third Annual Youth Gospel Meeting with Fellowship Activities, including such things as BB-Q, games/videos, sports, pizza and pipes, laser tag, and bowling.

- In March of 2005, a church in Central California advertised a Youth Forum with Activities.

In these instances, those who wished to participate in the Fellowship Activities were required to complete registration forms containing emergency medical information and submit \$10 registration fees made payable to _____.

More recently, I received an advertisement for a Women's Retreat. There is a scheduled time for a Get-Together and Fellowship. Of course, those who are interested in participating must complete the necessary registration form and submit a \$50 deposit made payable to _____.

In two of the above instances, the church sent the advertisement, accompanied by a disclaimer which stated that the Fellowship Activities would be provided by individual Christians. In the other

instance, the advertisement was published by a group of Christian women, all members of a particular local church.

Brethren, I fear that we've become so conditioned to the denominational/liberal practices of others, that we are blurring the lines of distinction between Scriptural terms and practices and resigned ourselves to being comfortable with the language and practices of Ashdod.

To be fair and clear, I am not opposed to arranging for Bible classes for the purpose of teaching young people the truth, or to special classes designed to teach men or women. That is not the issue. Clearly, we need these types of classes. The apostle Paul instructed Titus, "But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine: that aged men be temperate, grave, sober-minded, sound in faith, in love, in patience: that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good; that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, (to be) sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed: the younger men likewise exhort to be sober-minded." (Titus 2:1-6)

However, to avoid the "language of Ashdod" and be sure our practices are Scriptural, we need to be clear in our use of Bible terms. I fear that we have lost sight of the Bible meaning of the word fellowship and have been led to be comfortable with the denominational use of the term, i.e., get together and have a good time. How is the word fellowship used in the Bible?

Twelve different times in the King James Version, the word fellowship is taken from the Greek **koinonia**, which according to Thayer's Lexicon, means:

1. **"The share which one has in anything, participation"** 'fellowship of the Spirit' (Philippians 2:1). 'The fellowship of his sufferings' (Philippians 3:10). 'The fellowship of ministering to the saints' (I Corinthians 8:4). 'To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery' (Ephesians 3:9). 'Ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord' (I Corinthians 1:9).

2. **"Intercourse, fellowship, intimacy"** 'They gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship' (Galatians 2:9). 'For what fellowship hath light with darkness' (I Corinthians 6:14). 'They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship,' (Acts 2:42). 'For your fellowship in the gospel from the very first' (Philippians 1:5). 'That ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ' (I John 1:3). 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another' (I John 1:7). See also I John 1:1-6.

3. **"A benefaction jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution"** See I Corinthians 8:4 as referred to under Number 1 above. I Corinthians 9:13 renders the word liberal distribution, for the benefit of one. Hebrews 13:16 uses the term communicate.

The word **koinonia** is actually used some twenty times in the New Testament, but it is translated fellowship only twelve times (Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 1:9; II Corinthians 8:4; Galatians 2:9; Ephesians 3:9; Philippians 1:5; 2:1; 3:10; I John 1:3 twice; I John 1:6; I John 1:7).

In the other instances, it is translated communion four times (I Corinthians 10:16 twice; I Corinthians 6:14; I Corinthians 13:14); communication once (Philemon 6); contribution once (Romans 15:26); distribution once (I Corinthians 9:13); and to communicate once (Hebrews 13:16).

Thus fellowship, Gk. **koinonia**, refers to our spiritual relationship with God, with Christ, with the Holy Spirit, with one another. In each instance, it is used to refer to the Lord's work and worship. This is a fellowship into which we are called. "God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (I Corinthians 1:9 ASV)

Fellowship is established and maintained on the basis of continuance in the declared message.

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

“If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” (I John 1:3, 6-7 ASV) ❏

The word never refers to a gathering for social, entertainment, or recreational purposes.

The Blame Game

by Steven Harper



OUR current society loves to play what I call ‘the blame game’ — shifting the blame onto someone else, rather than accepting or admitting personal responsibility. Young men who planned in advance to murder their parents so they could then inherit their millions blame their privileged upbringing; taxpayers who cheat on their taxes blame government for being too intrusive and confiscatory; young folks who steal songs by downloading without payment to the musicians or their recording companies blame society or the ease of technology; those who illegally install software blame the “obscene profits” of the software companies; and the driver who is pulled over and is being given a ticket for speeding explains that he was “only keeping up with the flow of traffic.” And we could go on and on.

Don’t we just love to play the blame game? Men and women have been doing it for centuries even though it has been clear from the onset that such attempts are futile, yet they keep on trying. Consider a few examples from the recorded history of the Bible:

Adam and Eve. (Genesis 3:1-13) When the tempter deceived Eve and she ate of the forbidden fruit, she then offered it to Adam and he likewise ate of it. When God discovered their sin and asked Adam if he had eaten of the forbidden tree, Adam responded, “*The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate*” (**verse 12**); in other words, “God, it’s YOUR fault because

YOU gave me this woman!” When God asked the woman, she said, “*The serpent deceived me, and I ate*” (**v. 13**); in other words, “The serpent is to blame — not me!” We see that, from the very beginning of sin, man has tried to shift the blame off of self and onto someone else.

It didn’t work. God handed down punishments to both the man and the woman for their sins (**Genesis 3:14-24**) and neither escaped by shifting the blame. Yes, the serpent received his due, but it did not release the man or the woman from their guilt. I’d like to say man learned from that example, but he did not.

Aaron. When Israel was being brought through the wilderness and toward Canaan and Moses was up on the mountain receiving the Law from God, the people came and complained to Aaron, demanding that they make gods that they might serve (**Exodus 32:1**). Aaron complied, taking gold from the people and fashioning a golden idol in the form of a calf. Later, when questioned by Moses about it, Aaron began by saying, “*You know the people, that they are set on evil*” (**verse 22**); in other words, “It’s the fault of the people!” He would go on to say that he had taken the gold and thrown it into the fire and out popped this golden calf (**verse 24**); in other words, “None of us is to blame; the fire did it!”

Needless to say, that excuse didn’t work, either. While Aaron was spared, God sent the sword against those involved (**verses 27, 28**) and, later, a plague (**verse 25**). While they may have thought the excuses and blame-shifting would work, it did not. And this was merely the beginning of the habit of the Israelites to shift the blame, instead of accepting responsibility for their choices and their actions.

King Saul. Much later, when Israel was established in Canaan and Saul had been proclaimed King, God gave him the task of utterly destroying the Amalekites (**I Samuel 15:3**). To Saul’s credit, he went and, before beginning the task, warned the Kenites to flee from the Amalekites so they would not be destroyed (**verse 6**) but, when he entered into the work of doing God’s will, he “*spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fattened calves and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them*” (**verse 9**). To put it plainly: He did not do the will of the Lord.

But when Samuel came to him, Saul greeted him by claiming, “*I have performed the commandment of the LORD*” (**verse 13**). When Samuel further challenged him by noting the lowing cattle and bleating sheep, Saul then said, “*The people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the LORD your God*” (**verse 15**).

Saul was, like many others, trying to shift the blame! When Samuel basically silences him by noting *his* disobedience, Saul again pleads, *“I have obeyed the voice of the LORD. I have gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal”* (verses 16-21). It would not be until Samuel delivered the decree that Saul’s kingdom would be taken from him and given to another that Saul would admit guilt (verses 23, 24). But it was too late. Shifting the blame would not remove his guilt, and Saul was removed from being King!

The Religious Leaders. And in one of the most famous [infamous?] displays of blame-shifting, we recall the words of the mob as they demanded Jesus be crucified. When Pilate saw that he would not persuade the crowd to release the innocent Man, Jesus, he washed his hands and told the crowd, *“I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves”* (Matthew 27:24). To this the crowd replied, *“His blood be on us and on our children!”* (verse 25). It seems clear that the people were more than willing to take the blame for this Man’s death. At least for now.

When the gospel first began to be preached, the apostles were brought before some of the main initiators of Christ’s trial and crucifixion and the apostles told them that they were the ones who had crucified the Christ (Acts 4:10). The next time the apostles were brought before them, the council said to them, *“You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this Man’s blood upon us”* (Acts 5:28). It seems they had a short memory! Did they not gladly welcome the blame for Christ’s death at one time? Why are they trying to deny it now? Through denial, they are, in effect, trying to shift the blame to someone else.

Later, when Stephen challenged some of these same men for their deeds and disbelief, he bluntly said to them, *“Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered”* (Acts 7:52). Upon this statement and after other words, the men *“were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him...they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him”* (verses 54, 57-58). I am fairly certain that many, if not all, of these men thought that absolved them of

the guilt [or at least kept it hidden], but it did not and does not. They **will** have to answer someday (II Corinthians 5:10).

The Lesson. Now, what should **we** learn from these examples? Is there a lesson for us today? Can we shift the blame and escape the consequences of our sins?

First, no one escapes responsibility. All men will face judgment after death (Hebrews 9:27) and we will each one answer for self (Romans 14:12). And in that judgment, nothing will be hidden from the eyes of the Righteous Judge, for all will be made known (Hebrews 4:13) — even our motives (I Corinthians 4:5). While we may escape consequences while living here on earth, such will not be the case once we die. **All** will be made known and all sins for which we have not been forgiven will have consequences.

Second, there is a better way — the only **sure** way — to escape the consequences for our sins: forgiveness! The simple fact is, all of us have sinned (Romans 3:23) and, thus, we all face certain condemnation. But God, in His infinite mercy, has granted to us a means of removing the consequences for our sins and being once again justified and righteous in His sight. He sent His Son to die for our sins, with Jesus paying the price for our guilt (I John 2:2) and, in this one act, God was both just and the justifier of those who have faith in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:25, 26). When we believe in Christ and obey His will, it is then that, at baptism, God does the work of washing away the guilt of those past sin (Colossians 2:11-13) and we can be reconciled to God. With that done, there is no need to shift the blame; our sins have been taken away!

Have you been making excuses for your sins and trying to shift the blame to someone else? It won’t work! The only sure way to be blameless is to be forgiven by God. The only way to forgiveness is by obedient faith. With the guilt removed, you can sleep soundly, and one day rest eternally with Him. ॐ