SOUNDING OUT THE WORD MINISTRIES

"A MINISTRY OF THE GRACE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH - HOUSTON, TEXAS"

GOD’S GIFT TO US!

II CORINTHIANS 9:15 "THANKS BE UNTO GOD FOR HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT."

As we turn our attention toward this season of the year our minds are centered on "Thanksgiving," "Christmas," and "Gifts." Today, I want to speak about God’s unspeakable Gift to us. A Person’s reflection upon this Gift will cause them to be so thankful unto the Lord. The reason why some do not really appreciate this Gift is that they do not comprehend it’s true value. We have diversified feelings or attitudes about many of the Gifts that we receive. Some speak, but rather our ability to comprehend its true value leaves us speechless. This simply means that the Gift of God to us, in the Person of Jesus Christ is so great that we can’t really comprehend with our finite minds such an infinite Gift - therefore we are left speechless when it comes to really being able to express in words, our deepest appreciation and gratitude for such a wonderful gift. It’s unspeakable because the natural man cannot truly comprehend the spiritual significance of the Son of God. It’s unspeakable because the sin payment is so are beyond our amount of power that it really took to liberate us from the slave market of sin and satan. It’s unspeakable because the provision of this Gift has such an eternal significance that we’re not able to intellectually express the true worth or value of it. It’s unspeakable because it’s hard of these gifts are value or treasured by us, due to our likes or dislikes about the object itself; and others because of the feelings we have toward the person who has given us this Gift. Therefore; the value of a gift is determined by the love that prompts it or what it cost to the giver. In regards to God’s Gift to us, we can see this value. "God so loved.....that He gave His only begotten son." The gift that is referred to, in this text, is the Gift of His Son - Jesus Christ.

I. THIS GIFT IS UNSPEAKABLE.

This does not mean that the gift itself is not able to capacity of true understanding that it’s impossible for us to speak in terms worthy enough to truly and thoroughly express our real gratitude. It’s unspeakable because only eternity will reveal the enormous for us to grasp, with our finite minds, that a King would be willing to take our place and punishment at the cross. It’s unspeakable because it’s hard for us to comprehend how one who is so great and glori-
ous would be willing to represent us at the throne of God. It's unspeakable because we think, that a gift like this could not be free. Surely something this wonderful must cost something. It was 'unmerited and unwarranted, but surely there must be something that we must do besides repent and believe. But; according to the Bible, that's all we must do in order to receive this gift - therefore we are left speechless.

II. THIS GIFT IS UNCHANGEABLE

The Word declares this fact in Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." How refreshing and rejuvenating it is to realize this fact, especially when we are living in such a changing society, which is filled with so much uncertainty.

III. THIS GIFT IS UNDEFEATED

This characteristic is declared in Hebrews 7:26-27. "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made high than the heavens; who needeth not daily as those high priest, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once when he offered up himself."

IV. THIS GIFT IS UNQUEALED

He is unequal because he brings LIFE. Jesus said in John 10:11, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." A person without Christ only exists. One does not know what living is all about until they meet the Life-giver, and this is Jesus Christ. He not only gives us eternal life, but also sets forth principles whereby we can enjoy the Abundant Life. He not only gives us joy, peace, and a purpose to live for, but also gives us a cause to live and die for.

He is unequal because he brings LIGHT. Jesus is the Light of the World. Men are considered to be in darkness and love darkness because their deeds are evil. Light not only causes us to see things as they really are, but it also dispels darkness and illuminates the darkened minds. We cannot see or grasp the things of God, while in darkness. Therefore, when Christ saved us, He came to dwell within us, and as a result of this transaction, we become the children of light. We begin to see things in their true perspective and discern spiritual truths. As such, we become Gods' vehicles or vessels to spread this light unto all the world. Notice these verses: Matthew 5:14-16, Eph. 5:8 and I Corinthians 2:14/15.

He is unequal because He brings LOVE. Romans 5:5 declares, "And hope maketh not ashamed: because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." When I became a recipient of this unspeakable Gift, I found contained in this package, a wonderful and glorious love. I found myself loving the things He loved. There's something wrong with a child of God when they do not love God, the Bible, the Church, Gods Men, Gods Children, and the Lost.

He is unequal because He brings LIBERTY. John 8:36 declares, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." The Saviour has liberated us. He has set us free from the slave market of Sin and Satan. He set us free from the penalty of sin, the pains of guilt, the power of sin, and praise God, one day - from the very presence of Sin.

He is unequal because He brings LEADING. John 16:13 presents this truth, "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." The Lord has given us His Spirit for the purpose of leading us in the right paths, precepts, and principles. He has not left us down here alone - without a helper or leader. He offers us a great invitation to follow him and learn of Him. A person who will follow the leading of the Holy Spirit will find out that the more he knows and learns about Christ the more he will love the Lord and the more he loves the Lord the more he will want to serve the Lord. To know the Lord more clearly will cause you to love Him more dearly and follow Him more nearly.

Season's Greetings

He is unequal because he brings LIKENING. Col. 3:9-11 states, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds: and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

V. THIS GIFT IS UNSEARCHABLE

This gift is so unique glorious, and incomparable, that even in the ages to come continued on page 8.
THE BELIEVER’S RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

TEXT: LUKE 24:13-15, 32
D.B. WRIGHT

INTRODUCTION:
A. The "relationship" of Jesus to the believer is a wonderful experience!
B. A "knowledge" of such relationship brings comfort and great assurance!
C. The "right relationship" with Jesus changes one's NATURE, OUTLOOK, & DESTINY!
II Cor. 5:17

I. THE BELIEVERS ENJOY THE "PRESENCE AND "PERSON" OF JESUS IN ONE'S SELF!
A. This is the believer's "HOPE" of glory.
Col. 1:27
B. This is the believer's LIFE!
1. Eph. 2:1
2. Gal. 2:20
C. Jesus IN us equals POWER and STRENGTH for SERVICE, for RESISTANCE, and for PERSEVERANCE!
Phil. 4:13

II. THE LORD'S STRONG AND SAFE HAND IS BENEATH THE BELIEVER!
A. Deut. 33:27
B. John 10:28
C. In His Grace.
Romans 5:1-2
D. Psalms 37:23-24
E. Jesus is underneath as a "SOLID ROCK" and "SURE FOUNDATION."
1. Psalms 40:1-3
2. Psalms 18:2
F. To me...a Pastor.
Rev. 1:20

III. JESUS, AS SHEPHERD IS BEFORE US!
A. Matthew 4:19 "Follow Me."
1. Such as follow Him are assured of Light for the Journey!
John 8:12
B. John 10:4
1. He know the way that is RIGHT!
a. Jer. 10:23
b. Prov. 3:5-6
C. He LEADETH!
1. In paths of LIGHT!
2. In paths of RIGHT!
Psa 23:3
3. To places of PEACE, CALM AND TRANQUILITY.
Psa. 23:2

IV. JESUS IS ABOVE US MINISTERING ON OUR BEHALF.
A. Psalms 121:1-2
B. Above us KEEPING US!
Col. 3:1-3
C. Above us PLEADING OUR CAUSE.
1. Rom. 8:34
2. I John 2:1-2
D. Above us PROTECTING US AS A MOTHER HEN
DOTH HER LITTLE ONES.
Luke 13:34
E. Jesus is ABOVE US to OVERSHADOW US!

V. JESUS IS WITH US!
A. To reveal Himself to us!
1. Luke 24:30
2. To His obedient He promises - John 14:21
3. To His obedient Church He promises -
Matthew 28:20 Hebrews 13:5
B. Jesus in with us in FEELING FOR US!
1. Hebrews 4:14-15
2. Jesus is more than a cold lifeless, emotionless IDOL, made of stone, or precious metals.
3. Jesus is not a stone-hearted tyrant without feeling or compassion.
C. Jesus is with us like a CARING, FAITHFUL SHEPHERD.
1. To give LIGHT IN THE DARK VALLEYS.
2. To COMFORT US IN THE MIDST OF FEAR AND FRUSTRATIONS.
3. TO CALM THE WINDS AND THE WAVES IN TIME OF STORM.
4. To lift the sinking, fallen ones!
5. To provide the NECESSITIES OF LIFE!
a. Green pastures.
b. Still waters.
c. Table in presence of enemies.
d. Goodness and mercy in life.
e. To bring us safely into the fold of His Eternal Abode.
D. Jesus IS WITH US as a LOVING, SYMPATHETIC Brother.
1. He knows the Believer. John 10:14
2. He knows our make-up, nature, etc.
Psalms 78:39
3. He knows our two-fold nature.
a. Matthew 26:41
b. Gal. 5:17
c. Romans 7:21-24
4. He knows our temptations.
5. He is able to MINISTER, COME TO THE RESCUE OF HIS BELIEVERS IN SUCH TIMES.
a. Heb. 2:18
b. I Cor. 10:13
6. He is the SHEPHERD WITH THE "ROD AND STAFF IN THE VALLEYS OF THE SHADOWS.
PSALMS 23:4

Faith
the sustainer.
A CHURCH ON THE GO

BY CHARLES SWILLING

TEXT: ACTS 1:1-8

INTRODUCTION:
The Commission to the Lord's New Testament Churches is to go. Matthew 28:19-20. They are to give witness of what the Lord has done for them and wants to do for all men. A church that goes must realize some things. They must do some things.

I. BEHOLD THE SINNER'S CONDITION.
A. The Sinner is dead in sins. Eph. 2:1
B. The sinner is deceived. II Cor. 4:4
C. The sinner is depraved. Eph. 2:2-3

II. BEWAIL THE SINNER'S DESTINY.
A. He is separated from God and saved loved ones. II Thess. 1:8-9
B. He will suffer pain and torment. Luke 16:19-31
C. He will solicit God's help in vain. Luke 16:19-31

III. BELIEVE GOD'S PROMISE TO SAVE.
A. God loves the lost sinner. John 3:16
B. God longs to save lost sinners. II Pet. 3:9
C. God languishes to salve lost sinners. Matt. 23:37

IV. BESEECH THE SINNER TO RECEIVE CHRIST AS SAVIOUR.
A. We must be bold to tell them. II Cor. 5:20
B. We must not be cold in telling them. I Cor. 9:16
C. We must lead others to the fold.

V. BORROW OF GOD'S GRACE TO PERFORM THIS DUTY AND PRIVILEGE.
A. God's grace is sufficient. II Cor. 12:9
B. God's grace is necessary. Heb. 4:16
C. God's grace is enabling.

VII. BEWARE OF SATAN'S ATTEMPTS TO KEEP US FROM GOING.
A. Satan desires all people to go to hell.
B. Satan does all he can to catch all he can. II Cor. 4:4
C. Satan dares God's people to go.
   1. He causes us to doubt the need and benefit of going.
   2. He deceives us into thinking that someone else will tell them.

There is nothing more pitiable than a soulless, sapless, shriveled church, rooted in barren professions and bearing no fruit for Christ.

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

BY GEORGE CRAWFORD

TEXT: MATTHEW 21:28-32

INTRODUCTION:
A. So now we have gotten back to Bethel or have gotten to Bethel - we are saved and worshipping God - what else can we do? In our text, Jesus introduces us to a word "vineyard." It is used over 75 times in the Bible. It denotes Work. No one has ever had a vineyard, maintained a vineyard or received the fruits of a vineyard without work.
B. Notice some practical lessons.

I. THE PLACE OF THE VINEYARD.
A. In a sense, the world at large is the vineyard.
   1. Parable of the Sower - "The field is the world."
   2. To the Church - Go into all the world. Matthew 28
B. Then, notice Israel was in a very real sense, God's vineyard. Isa. 5:1-7
   1. She was a very special, chosen vineyard.
   2. Yet she produces "wild grapes."
   3. Isa. 5:5-6 - God tells what He will do.
   4. Matthew 21:41b also tells what He will do.
   5. It was when Israel adopted the attitude - "We want a king LIKE OTHER NATIONS."
C. Now notice the Church of Jesus Christ is also called a vineyard. I Cor. 3:9
   1. Let us apply the scripture in this sermon to the New Testament Church - local, observable, approachable, bought with the Blood of Jesus, baptized with Holy Spirit, such as our Church.
   2. God doesn't claim every vineyard that has been hedged up - purchased by man or woman.
   3. What He wants today is for His children to Work in His Vineyard - His Blood bought Church.

II. THE PERSONNEL IN THE VINEYARD - "SON."
A. There must be APPROVED PERSONNEL - Sonship.
   1. The husbandman does not employ unsaved persons to labour in His vineyard.
a. God's Work can only be done by God's people in God's power.
b. God's WORK TODAY is being done by God's OWN.
c. His own are those who have trusted Jesus Christ - and His approved workers are those who believe the Word of God is infallible, inspired, inerrant, and eternal.
d. His own preach the Gospel - not some other gospel - and do so for God's honor and glory.

2. Some workers are disapproved.
   a. Workman and work must face testing on high.
   b. Neo-evangelicals are not working in God's Work in God's Way for God's glory.
   c. Ecumenists are not qualified Biblically to work in God's vineyard - it does make a difference what you believe.
   d. The cults and tongue movements are not approved of God. Matthew 7:22-23

3. So what does God approve? "Son, go work..."
   a. God's program is the work of regeneration, not socialization, reformation, education, or hospitalization.
   b. Unless you are born again and doing God's work in God's way, according to a "thus saith the Lord" you are not doing God's work.
   c. Many who are FLAILING around, like the ACTIVISTS on Mt. Carmel who were involved in a lot of emotion and commotion but little devotion.
   d. That puts entertainment evangelism out the window.
   e. New Testament Churches are not running evangelical Disneylands.

4. So the approved work, one who is a son, one who is born again -
   a. Working in God's vineyard - His Church.
   b. Doing it for God's honor and glory - not mans.
   c. Will you "work today in his vineyard?"

III. LET US TALK ABOUT THE PERIOD OF WORK.
   A. Go work - when you feel like it? After you have played away half of your life?
      Go work tomorrow?
      1. Many have been crucified between two thieves - Yesterday and Tomorrow.
      2. God says - GO WORK TODAY!
   B. Three reason for working today.
      1. Because of the SWIFTNESS OF TIME.
         a. John 9:4
      b. Time flows constantly, unceasingly - we cannot store it or stop it. Either use it or abuse it.
      c. If we abuse it, we lose it.

2. Because of the SINFULNESS OF THE HOUR.
   a. II Thess. 2:7
   b. The mystery of iniquity does already work.
   c. Evil men and seducers are waxing worse and worse.
   d. So men of iniquity work as well as mystery of iniquity.

3. Because of the SHORTAGE OF LABORERS.
   a. Lk. 10
   b. Are you work or shirking?
   c. Your work must be done by you or someone.

CONCLUSION:
   A. Souls are damned and don't know it.
   B. Sin, darkness and despair cloud the earth and souls are plunging over the Christless chasm into the bottomless pit.
   C. Let us hear their cry and snatch them as brands from the burning.
   D. Friend, work while it is day!

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GOD'S WORD TO THE WOMAN

BY JOHN PAUL JONES

TEXT: I PETER 3:1-12

INTRODUCTION:

A. Many jokes have been made about Women and the role they play in life.
   1. In a women's lib meeting not long ago, one of the women's libbers was speaking, and she asked, "Where would you men be if it weren't for the women?" a man in the back of the room stood up and said, "In the Garden of Eden, that's where we would be!"

B. R. Laken said Adam was the world's first electronics engineer. He furnished the spare parts for the world's first loud speaker."

B. This is no joking matter. The happiness of the woman and her family is involved.

C. In the Genesis account it will be noticed that God first created Adam. God saw that it was not good for man to be alone so He took a rib from Adam and made Woman. She was to be a help mate for him.

D. Today some people who believe what the Bible says are called "male chauvinist."
E. It is not my purpose in this message to slander anyone or to cause any ill feelings. It is my purpose to make you aware of God's Word about this matter. I believe the key to having happier homes lies here.

F. I speak from years of experience when I say that Bible principles work in everyday living. I have been happily married for 28 years to the same woman.

G. Many of the great men of the past gave credit to their mothers or to their wives for their accomplishments.

I. THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE OF THE GODLY WOMAN.
A. Woman to wear modest apparel or dress. I Tim. 2:9-11
1. Before sin entered, Adam and Eve were naked and felt no shame. I saw a sign that said "Adam and Eve were the first streakers and God clothed them.

B. Clothing should not detract from the show of the inner character. What you wear is an index to your character.

C. Words used about the Godly Woman and their meaning.
1. Shamefacedness means a tendency to refrain from a bad act.
2. Sign - "You've come a long way - baby"
   a. Does it mean, "You can smoke like a man?"
   b. Does it mean, "You can cuss like a man?"
   c. Does it mean, "You can drink like a man?"
   d. Is this progress?

D. Women used to blush at bad words and gained respect because of it.
E. Not to take a teaching position over the man. I Tim. 2:11-12

F. Grace, sober means calm and collected - dispassionate not easily riled up.

II. THE ATTITUDE OF THE GODLY WOMAN TOWARD HER HUSBAND.
A. Wife to be in subjection even if the husband is not a Christian. v-1
1. Conversation means behaviour - It is to be clean and pure - coupled with fear.
2. Wives are to submit to their own husbands. Eph. 5:21-24
3. Wives are to be obedient to their own husbands. Titus 3:5
4. Head of the woman is the man. I Cor. 11:3
5. Eve told that Adam would "rule over thee."

B. This has been recognized by the world in the past.
1. Woman takes man's name and children take his name.

C. At the time the Bible was written the hair of the woman indicated whether she was subject to her husband. I Cor. 11:5,10

D. God intended that women bear children.
1. I Tim. 5:14
2. Many today have abortions. This is sin and murder.

III. THE ATTITUDE OF THE GODLY WOMAN TOWARD HER FAMILY.
A. By nature the woman is not as strong physically. I Pet. 3:7
B. Man is responsible to provide for the family in so far as is possible. I Tim. 5:8
C. A Godly woman is industrious. Prov. 31:13-15,20
   1. Example of Ruth taking care of Naomi.
   2. Ruth 2:2,23

CONCLUSION:
A. No woman or man can measure up to God's standards without Jesus Christ as Saviour.
B. Will you accept the fact that God knows best and give it a try!

WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS

BY GENE YATES

TEXT: II COR. 3:17

INTRODUCTION:
A. This statement will require some sobering thoughts from all who observe and read it.
B. From King David we are told whether he was up, down, North, South, East, or West, the Spirit of the Lord was always there.
C. Man may ignore, deny and reject the fact of God, but he cannot avoid Him.

I. DARKNESS IS EXPELLED AND LIGHT PREVAILS.
A. What fellowship does light have with darkness?
B. It is impossible to have both at the same time.
C. No backsliders, no matter how far he or she may go, every experience total darkness again in their soul.
D. But a lost, hell-bound sinner is totally blackened with sin.

II. IGNORANCE IS EXPOSED AND TRUTH GLOWS.
A. We are not of those who draw back into perdition.
B. If the Gospel be hid it is hid unto them that purposely believe not.
C. They are blinded by choice by the god of this world.
D. Ignore the truth will not put out the light of God.
III. DEATH CANNOT REIGN AND LIFE EVER SPRING
A. Oh, death, where is thy sting?
B. Oh, grave, where is thy victory?
C. And Stephen looked steadfastly up into Heaven, saw Christ standing.

IV. SIN IS DISPOSED AND RIGHTEOUSNESS GROWS.
A. My little children sin not, but when you do sin, you have an advocate.
B. Beloved, now are ye yet the Sons of God.
C. You know that He was manifested to take away our sins and help us overcome the cominon of sin.
D. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, who is he that overcometh the world?
E. It is He that believes to the saving of the Soul that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

V. SATANS DOOM IS PROCLAIMED AND CHRIST'S GLORY IS EXCLAIMED.
A. Unto us this day a saviour is born. Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.
B. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.
C. Who has the keys of death, hell and the grave?
D. Rev. 20:10 "AND THE DEVIL THAT DECEIVED THEM WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE, WHERE THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET ARE, AND SHALL BE TORMENTED DAY AND NIGHT FOR EVER AND EVER."

VI. WHERE THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS — —
A. There is life.
B. There is liberty.
C. There is peace.
D. There is joy.
E. And the present happiness is not vain nor void in Christ Jesus.

CHRISTMAS

This year many of us would like to take this means to extend our love and Christmas Greetings to all of our friends. Your prayers, contributions, and words of encouragement mean so much to us.

we wish, for each of you, the joy of Christmas time, the continued love of the Christ Child in your heart, and happiness now and forever.

The Staff
we'll be viewing the splendor of His Glory. Look at these verses:

**EPH 3:8** "unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

**EPH 2:7** "that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Jesus Christ."

VI. THIS GIFT IS UNMERITED.

There is no way that we deserved this gift. Nothing that mankind has ever done could merit such a wonderful gift as this.

Unworthy am I of the grace that He gave.
Unworthy to hold to His hand.
Amazed that a King would reach down to a slave.
This love I cannot understand.
Unworthy, unworthy, a beggar in bondage and alone.
But he made me worthy and now by his grace,
His mercy has made me His own.
"THANKS BE UNTO GOD FOR HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT."

**THE BIBLE AND ASTROLOGY**

True and perfect justice is in God. One needs to be concerned with his relationship to God rather than what "sign" he is born under, lest in the judgment, he be "weighed in the balances and found wanting.

**SCORPIO**

From Greek mythology comes Scorpio, the Scorpion, the eighth constellation in the zodiac. The Akkadians called it GIRTAB, the stinger, and the Hebrews, AKRABH, an arrow-tail. In ancient astrology it was an illomened constellation bringing in its wake darkness, storms, duels, fights, and accidents. Present-day Scorpions have been described as "capable of hurting deeply, capable of being deceived, most emotional, and moody."

In the Word of God, Scorpions are associated with that which is the enemy of man. Of the Israelites it is said, Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness where-in were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water..." Deut. 8:15. To His disciples, Jesus promised to give them "power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy," Luke 10:19 And in tribulation days, from the bottomless pit shall arise locusts, "and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power," Rev. 9:3. These locusts with the sting of a scorpion will torment men five months in such a way that the men shall seek death but shall not find it, shall desire to die, but death shall not come.

Men today should be admonished to be more concern with their spiritual standing with God and with the judgment to come than they are what "disasters" and "ill omens" might be connected with their daily lives because they happened to be born under the sign of the Scorpion.

But let's close with a positive note. It is said that Scorpions are blessed with an intensity for life, that they have insight, perception, and desire to experience, to do. Scorpions are said to want to know things no one else had done. Teddy Roosevelt, a Scorpio, one said, "For better to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even through checkered failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat."

What an indictment of many of the Lord's churches today. There are too many churches who are enjoying no victories and who are not suffering any
defeats. They are in a twilight zone of mediocrity, sameness, dull routine. God grant us, not the spirit of the zodiac, but the living Spirit of God, to shake us from our apathy and indifference, and to fill us with a desire to "dare mighty things" for God.

**SAGITTARIUS**

Sagittarius, Latin for "Archer," is the ninth constellation in the zodiac, and is the zodical sign for those born November 22–December 20. Its symbol is a Centaur, a half-horse, half-man creature. In the coat of arms is included the eagle, king of birds, symbol of magnanimity and fortitude. The motto on the coat of arms is "Give light to All."

Spiritual applications abound. Of the Sagittarian it is said, "To you is assigned particularly the qualities which induce you to strive for greater things. Your sign governs the aptitude for spiritual development and the skill to teach others." To the believer in the Lord's church is also assigned the particular quality and mission to "give light to all," the light of the Gospel. The believer's role is to let his life shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." This urgency is from the Holy Spirit which elevates this ministry to the most important in the world of revealing Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, to those who are entrapped in spiritual darkness. As the Bible is our rule of faith and practice, we are instructed to follow the Master Teacher, and Him only—not the stars.

The bow, the archer, the horse (Centaur), and the eagle are all symbols of a king's superior reign and strength of power. A greater influence in the life of a believer than the zodical influences would be the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings. The whole world is His footstool, Isaiah 66:1. All creation is subject to His control. He rules the universe; He rules the human heart, Acts 17:25-28.

Jesus Christ is preeminent, Col. 1: 15-19. He is Saviour, Acts 4: 12. He is Lord, Phil. 2: 9-11. And He is ultimate victor over sin and Satan. Rev 19: 11-16. May we accept Him as our Saviour and Lord, and "crown Him with many crowns."

"Hear the voice of your servant, a man sent of God, To bear witness of hope for the nations; There will be One come after whose message to us Will bring life from the Father in heaven. He is light that is come to a world that is dark; He is love and around Him is hatred. Even few of His own ever saw Him as truth; But He comes even now to forgive them. Hosannah! The whole world is singing. The hope of all ages is come. Sing His praises, sing His greatness; Let everyone know: He is the King of kings and Lord of lords!"

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**PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY**

by JOHNNY WILLIAMS

We continue our study through the book of James and take up a new subject. We leave the subject of "Trials From Without," and take up the subject of "Temptation From Within." James 1:13-16 says: LET NO MAN SAY WHEN HE IS TEMPTED, I AM TEMPTED OF GOD: FOR GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED WITH EVIL, NEITHER TEMPTETH HE ANY MAN: BUT EVERY MAN IS TEMPTED WHEN HE IS DRAWN AWAY OF HIS OWN LUST AND ENTICED. THEN WHEN LUST HATH CONCEIVED, IT BRINGETH FORTH SIN: AND SIN WHEN IT IS FINISHED, BRINGETH FORTH DEATH. DO NOT ERR, MY BELOVED BRETHREN.

I. THE SOURCE OF TEMPTATION

The first thing James wants us to understand about temptation is that it does not come from God. The word "tempted" in v.13 is the word "Peirazo" in the Greek, and means to scrutinize or "entice." God's Word tells us that the enticement to sin did not begin with God.

In Isaiah 14:12-17 we are given a brief examination of the beginning of sin. In that passage we see one called "Lucifer, son of the morning." Notice the five "I wills" of this fallen angel we call Satan. In v.13-14 we read: (1) I will ascend into heaven, (2) I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, (3) I will sit upon the mount of the congregation, (4) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, (5) I will be like the most high. Most Bible Scholars feel this passage records the beginning of sin and the fall of Satan. We do not know when this took place, but we do know it was the beginning of sin and temptation.

Another fact that must not be overlooked is this. In Genesis Chapter 3, we find satan coming into a perfect paradise, appearing as a serpent, and "tempting" Eve to commit the same sin that caused his fall, that of declaring independence from God. We will notice what that means in a few moments but right now we must understand the fact that all temptation comes from satan.
and not God. He tempted Eve in Genesis 3, he tempts us today.

II. THE SYSTEM OF TEMPTATION

Many times there will be long discussions about what sin really is. People sometimes focus on specific sinful acts and fail to see the root of the problem. Rom. 14:23 ends with these words: WHATSOEVER IS NOT OF FAITH IS SIN. Faith is "dependence" on God. I believe it does no injustice to scripture to define sin as "any act that is independent or apart of God's Will or God's Word." In the passage of scripture in Isaiah 14 we noticed before, the five "I Wille" of satan declared complete independence from God. That's satan's desire for himself, and he tempts us to do the same thing.

There are three areas in which satan tempts us and tries to convince us we can be independent of God. These are found in I John 2:16. That verse says: FOR ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD, THE LUST OF THE FLESH, THE LUST OF THE EYES, AND THE PRIDE OF LIFE IS NOT OF THE FATHER BUT IS OF THE WORLD. Satan tempts us with (1) Lust of the flesh-PASSIONS. (2) Lust of the eyes-POSSESSIONS, (3) Pride of Life-POSITION. The word lust means the "over desire." There are basic human desires which are built into our body by God that involve all these areas. What satan does is he turns the neutral desires into overdesires or lusts. When we understand this, we can take a giant step forward in making our life much more pleasant and pleasing to God.

III. THE SECRET OF OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

The best example we have for overcoming temptation is our Lord Jesus. Actually, he is the only example for the Bible declares HE WAS TEMPTED IN ALL POINTS AS WE ARE, YET WITHOUT SIN. Heb. 4:15. We can never reach sinless perfection, but we can use certain tools to make us stronger where we can "resist the Devil" James 4:7.

When Christ was tempted in the wilderness He was tempted in the same three areas we are. We find the account recorded in Matthew Chapter 4. In verse 3 of that Chapter satan said, IF THOU BE THE SON OF GOD COMMAND THAT THESE STONES BE MADE BREAD. Jesus said, MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDETH OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD, V.4. The devil then took Him to the pinnacle of the temple and said, IF THOU BE THE SON OF GOD CAST THYSELF DOWN: FOR IT IS WRITTEN, HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE CONCERNING THEE: AND IN THEIR HANDS THEY SHALL BEAR THEE UP, LEST AT ANY TIME THOU DASH THY FOOT AGAINST A STONE, V.6. Jesus just replied, THOU SHALT NOT TEMPT THE LORD THY GOD. Then satan took Jesus to a mountain and said, ALL THESE THINGS WILL I GIVE THEE, IF THOU WILT FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP ME, V.9. Jesus answered, IT IS WRITTEN, THOU SHALT WORSHIP THE LORD THY GOD, AND HIM ONLY SHALT THOU SERVE, V.10.

Notice, Jesus answered each temptation by quoting God's Word. Each time He quoted the Book of Deuteronomy. That's the secret of overcoming temptation. GET INTO THE WORD. Psalms 119:11 says: THY WORD HAVE I HID IN MY HEART THAT I MIGHT NOT SIN AGAINST THEE.
DEAD OR ALIVE

BY DEBBY RIPLEY

Dead or alive brings back to my mind the old west days. If you were wanted for some crime you had committed, it did not matter, in some cases, whether you were brought to the marshall dead or alive.

This phrase could also apply to our spiritual lives. There is one difference. It matters a great deal to the Lord that you be alive and not dead.

Let's examine some scriptures that reveal to us whether we are dead or alive spiritually.

I. Ephesians 2:1 "AND YOU HATH HE QUICKENED WHO WERE DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SIN."

II. I Corinthians 15:22 "FOR AS IN ADAM ALL DIE, EVEN SO IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE."

III. John 11:25 "JESUS SAID unto her, I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE: HE THAT BELIEVETH IN ME, THOUGH HE WERE DEAD, YET SHALL HE LIVE."

IV. Romans 6:11 "LIKENOWE RECKON YE ALSO YOURSELVES TO BE DEAD INDEED UNTO SIN, BUT ALIVE unto GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

It is very apparent in these scriptures that the Lord does not want us to be spiritually dead. By trusting in the Lord as our personal Saviour we will be made spiritually alive. It is our choice as to whether we will be dead or alive. Why be dead any longer? Christ is waiting to make you alive.

MISSIONS

BY RAY MEIGS

TEXT: ACTS 13:2-3

I. THE MAN

A. Qualifications of a bishop. I Tim. 3 Titus 2

B. A missionary must be saved.
C. He must be a leader.
D. He must have wisdom. Matt. 10:16
   1. Within his own congregation.
   2. With those outside a New Testament Church.

II. THE MISSION. MATTHEW 28:19-20

A. Preach the Gospel.
   1. The most needed message is Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
   2. We have no other message.
B. Baptize them.
   1. After salvation.
   2. By immersion through the proper authority.
C. Teach them all things.
   1. The missionary must be able to teach the Bible.
   2. The Bible needs to be taught today.
   3. Paul told Timothy to study. II Tim. 2:15

III. THE MESSAGE.

A. Our message is Jesus Christ.
B. People die every day and most have not accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour.
C. The determination of Paul. I Cor. 2:2
D. Our message has not changed.

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* We know that it will be better for us to suffer than to do wrong.
Short Sermon Outlines

BY GLEN E. TROPP

SUBJECT: "THE ROARING LION"
TEXT: 1 PETER 5:8
I. HE SEeks TO DESTROY THE SOULS OF MAN.
II. HE SEeks TO DIvERT OUR WORSHIP.
III. HE SEeks TO DISTURB OUR LIFE.
IV. HE SEeks TO DIM OUR LIGHT.

SUBJECT: "THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE LORD."
TEXT: JOHN 14:21
I. THE LORD WILL MANIFEST HIS POWER TO THOSE WHO PRAY. JER. 33:3
II. THE LORD WILL MANIFEST HIS PEACE TO THOSE WHO RELY UPON HIM. PHIL. 4:9
III. THE LORD WILL MANIFEST HIS JOY TO THOSE WHO ABIDE IN HIM. JOHN 15:10
IV. THE LORD WILL MANIFEST HIS KNOWLEDGE & PURPOSE TO THOSE WHO WILL DO HIS WILL. JOHN 7:17 ROM. 12:1-2
V. THE LORD WILL MANIFEST HIS GLORY TO THOSE WHO ARE TAUGHT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. 1 COR. 2:9-10

SUBJECT: "WHY DID FELIX TREMBLE?"
TEXT: ACTS 24:24-27
I. HE TREMBLED BECAUSE OF THE FORCIBLE MESSAGE.
II. HE TREMBLED BECAUSE OF THE FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN.
III. HE TREMBLED BECAUSE OF THE FACTS CONCERNING HIS CONDITION.
IV. HE TREMBLED BECAUSE OF THE FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN.

SUBJECT: "SOMETHING TO REJOICE ABOUT"
TEXT: HEBREWS 6:10-12
I. WHAT THE LORD IS NOT.
A. He's not FORGETFUL
B. He's not a FORSAKING LORD.
C. He's not a FAILING LORD.
II. WHAT THE LORD IS.
A. He's FAITHFUL.
B. He's FORGIVING.
C. He's FULFILLING.
III. WHAT THE LORD DESIRES.
A. He desires FULL Assurance. v.11
B. He desires FAITHFULNESS. v.12
C. He desires us to be FOLLOWERS OF HIM.

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