



GRACE & TRUTH

MAGAZINE

- **Lessons From The Book of Titus**
- **Suicide And The Believer**
- **Is Christianity A "Blind" Faith?**

October 2018
Vol. 85 • No.9

EMPHASIS

1 Matters Need To Be Addressed

Paul Alberts

WORSHIP

2 Thine Is The Love, Lord, That Draws Us Together

Agnes Mary Harding

FEATURES

3 Good Health In Crete

Martin Girard



6 Lessons From The Book Of Titus

Alfred Bouter

13 Some Thoughts On The Epistle To Titus

Alan H. Crosby

DISCOVER

17 The Unsearchable Riches of Christ

Alan Groth

UPLOOK

19 Several Points About Trials

Hamilton Smith



ISSUES

20 Suicide And The Believer

Timothy P. Hadley

SERIES

27 Why Did Jesus Come? - Part 3

Shereen Ghobrial

FAMILY

32 What Is Your Attitude Toward Your Household?

H. A. Ironside

RESPONSE

33 "Your labor is not in vain in the Lord"

OVERVIEW

34 2 Thessalonians

Leslie M. Grant

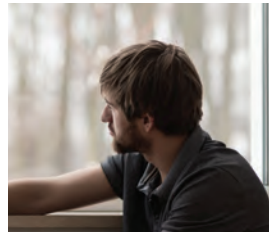
YOU•ASKED

35 Is the Christian faith a "blind" faith?

Eugene P. Vedder, Jr.

GOOD•NEWS

38 What Is At The Bottom Of Our Troubles?



NEXT MONTH: THE OFFICES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

GRACE & TRUTH MAGAZINE

PUBLISHER
Grace & Truth, Inc.
210 Chestnut Street
Danville, IL 61832-2699
USA

Grace & Truth Magazine is prepared with the help of an editorial staff and counsel from several advisers. Use of an article does not imply agreement with other teachings by the author.

Paul Alberts
MANAGING EDITOR

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Grace & Truth Magazine is sent free to all who request it. Annual cost to produce and mail is: \$10.00 (USA) and \$15.00 (Foreign). Donations to support this ministry are needed and appreciated.

Permission is granted to reprint unaltered portions of this magazine. Credit as follows: "From *Grace & Truth Magazine*, Danville, IL USA. Used by permission."

Grace & Truth Magazine is published monthly (except July/August is a combined issue) by Grace & Truth, Inc. Printed in USA.

ISSN 1061-2521

MATTERS NEED TO BE ADDRESSED

Unsaved or saved, there are things that need to be addressed. For the unsaved, the central issue is salvation. Eternal separation from God and people awaits every person who refuses to accept God's gift. The redemption of a soul is costly, but the Lord Jesus paid that price for all who will put their trust in Him. "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10 NKJV).

For the saved, there are issues to be dealt with individually, in the family and in the assembly. Many of these things are brought up in articles this month, but I am reminded of a few verses in Hebrews 12: "You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, 'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the LORD, nor faint when you are reproved by Him; for those whom the LORD loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives'" (vv.4-6 NASB).

In addition, God will deal with the nation of Israel, His earthly people, in years to come. We see much of this in the prophecies of Scripture, especially in the Old Testament. One matter of great significance is Israel's rejection of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him" (Jn. 1:11 NKJV).

What things do you need to address? Or, what is the Holy Spirit doing about your taking on things in your life that are not pleasing to God? It is not my desire to tell of things I am aware of in my own life, as recognized through reading the Bible, but I would ask that you pray for me. In fact, let us pray for one another. Certainly there are thousands who read this magazine who are struggling even at this moment in one way or another. Pray that the Lord would be allowed to do His work in the lives and churches of each one as to the matters that need to be addressed. He knows them all, even the ones in your own life.

To Him be the honor and glory in all things!

Paul

Thine Is The Love, Lord, That Draws Us Together

Thine is the love, Lord, that draws us together,
Guiding our steps from the wilderness ways;
Soon face to face we'll adore Thee for ever,
Now our glad hearts would be filled with Thy praise.

Faithful Thy grace o'er our pathway has waited,
Deep the delight we have found, Lord, in Thee;
Now with this treasure our spirits are freighted,
Bowed at Thy feet, and the fragrance set free.

For us, Lord Jesus, Thyself Thou hast given;
Sufferings unfathomed for us Thou hast known;
Now, in accord with the homage of heaven,
Rises a song from the hearts of Thine own.

Jesus, Lord Jesus, we love and adore Thee,
Glorious Thy name, all our praises above;
Peerless Thy beauty, we worship before Thee;
Hushed are our spirits, at rest in Thy love.

— Agnes Mary Harding (1887-1966)

Good Health In Crete

by Martin Girard

“A treasure trove of history, rugged beauty, gorgeous beaches and sizzling summer temperatures.”

These words were used in a holiday brochure to describe the island of Crete. Today if you visit any international airport in Western Europe specializing in holiday flights, you may well see “Chania” and “Heraklion,” the two largest cities on Crete, on the flight arrival and departure screens. It is hardly surprising that people would want to visit such resorts. If the averages are anything to go by, you can expect temperatures of 75 degrees Fahrenheit and seven hours of sunshine each day, even in the autumn! Crete is the most southerly island in the Mediterranean, with the result that tourists are

guaranteed a deep tan in the strong sunshine.

A long, narrow island, Crete is about 160 miles from end to end. Although there are plenty of sandy beaches, the island scenery is spectacular with a wild landscape and mountains rising 8,000 feet above the sea. There are olive groves and vineyards, and oranges can be seen growing. The island also boasts of Europe’s longest gorge – the Samaria Gorge.

Crete is steeped in history and is said to be the birthplace of western civilization some 5,000 years ago. The population is a little more than half a million, and the island is easy to reach today by air. However, journeys 2,000 years ago were not as simple. Artemas or Tychicus, when sent to Crete by the apostle Paul (Ti. 3:12), would have had to make a sea crossing – probably from Greece. As we know from the account of Paul’s shipwreck in Acts 27, dangers could be encountered when weather conditions suddenly deteriorated.

A Letter Sent

Long before the days of established postal services or electronic communications, a man sent a letter to his young friend in Crete. It is preserved for us in the Word of God as Paul’s *Epistle to Titus*. Times may have changed, but the message of

this inspired letter has not. Matters that are relevant to life today can be discovered within this brief epistle.

Titus was an uncircumcised Greek (Gal. 2:3) who was evidently led to the Lord by Paul – hence he is called “mine own son” by the apostle (Ti. 1:4 *KJV*). He had accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem and was also involved in service for the Lord in Corinth. There are a number of references to him in 2 Corinthians. Afterwards he had helped Paul to evangelize Crete and then stayed on for follow-up work (Ti. 1:5). When Artemis or Tychicus arrived in the island, Titus was to leave Crete and meet Paul on the Greek mainland.

In brochures today we are told that the local people in Crete are “warm and friendly,” but that was not always the case. The reference to them being “liars, evil beasts, slow bellies [lazy gluttons]” in Paul’s day (v.12) is hardly flattering. However, a work needed to be done there, and Titus was an experienced individual who could be entrusted with the ministry Paul had in mind.

The Need For Elders

After Paul’s introduction, in which he confirmed the divine

authority that he possessed, this servant of God turned to the task that was urgently needed. Certain things were not right. Disorder prevailed in some places, which was why Paul instructed Titus to “set in order” the things that were lacking (v.5). How easily things can lapse into an unthinking routine that has no sense of spiritual urgency! It was vital that true men of God, who could lead the church according to the divine pattern, be recognized. In every

God is most concerned with having leaders who know the truth as given and cling to it.

city where believers met together God intended that His flock should be shepherded by suitably qualified men. In order for Titus to identify them, Paul listed the features that should be evident in their lives (vv.5-9).

Men of the same calibre are needed to lead the flock of God today. All too often churches treat a passage like this casually and appoint as leaders men – or wrongly, women – because of their business abilities and social skills. Paul’s list mentions no such qualities. Instead, it describes a man “holding fast the faithful Word as he hath been taught” (v.9). God is most concerned with having leaders who *know* the truth as given and *cling* to it. He has no use for goals to

modernize or make it more fashionable for the current day.

Good Health

An interesting expression occurs five times in this epistle. The Greek word *hugiaino* (v.9), translated as “sound doctrine,” gives us our English word “hygienic.” A strong rebuke was needed so any local believers who were living unruly lives would become “sound in the faith” – meaning spiritually healthy (v.13).

Titus himself was to teach truths that would promote “sound doctrine” (2:1). While it is important to be correct scripturally, Paul’s concern was not simply for an academic grasp of the truth. Spiritual health is a very practical matter, as can be seen in the second chapter of Titus. The older men in the churches were to be “sound in faith” (v.2) and reflect it by their godly lives. Older women also were to exemplify holy living and teach younger women how to conduct their lives in a God-glorifying way. Younger men were to be pure in their relationships (vv.1-6).

All of this is very practical and applicable to life today. Titus himself was to set an example to the young men and use “sound

speech” in his conversation with them (2:7-8) in order to promote their spiritual health.

Good Works

In addition to good spiritual health, this epistle developed the theme of good works. Those who merely profess to know God are “reprobate,” or wicked, and unable to display good works in their lives (1:16). The life of Titus was to be “a pattern of good works” (2:7) which others could follow.

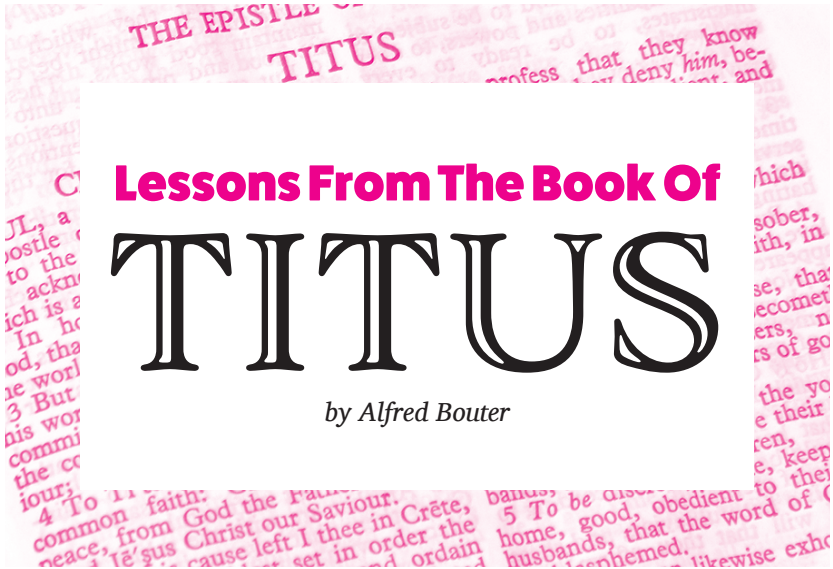
Although “works of righteousness” (3:5) play no part whatever in our own salvation, believers should be “zealous” for good works (2:14). We need to be “ready” to do what is good (3:1) and seek to “maintain good

works” (v.8) in our daily lives. Good works are part of fruitful Christian living (v.14).

The Christian life must be lived out in the context of an ungodly world. The carnal – worldly and fleshly – spirit that characterized the Cretans is with us still and needs to be rebuked. God, by His mercy, saves souls, and His grace is constantly available to equip His people for every task they face each day. **GT**

This article has been adapted, with permission, from material published by www.skywaymessages.co.uk

The carnal – worldly and fleshly – spirit that characterized the Cretans is with us still and needs to be rebuked.



Lessons From The Book Of

TITUS

by Alfred Bouter

How amazing is God's Word! No matter how we look at it, search and study it, we will always find that it is wonderful because God is Wonderful (Isa. 9:6). This includes the epistle that the apostle Paul wrote to Titus.

The name Titus probably means "nurse," which fits his service quite well. Even though Titus was not Jewish, Paul called him his "true child" (Ti. 1:4 *NASB*), as he was saved early in Paul's public ministry as apostle to the Gentiles (see Gal. 2:8). Some years later Titus and others accompanied the apostle to the Jerusalem council meeting (Acts 15), although this may not have been his first time there (Gal. 2:1-3).¹ During the

apostle's third missionary journey, Paul sent Titus, as a useful servant, to Corinth (2 Cor. 2:13, 7:6,13-14). Titus also helped organize a special collection for the poor in Jerusalem and Judea (8:6,16,23, 12:18). The donations were collected in Macedonia and Greece and brought to Jerusalem near the end of Paul's third journey (Acts 20-21; Rom. 15:25-27).

However, shortly after his arrival there Paul was arrested and put on trial, first in Jerusalem, and later for at least two years in Caesarea. The trial continued, eventually ending in Rome² (Acts 22-28), where he remained for two full years (28:30-31). After his release from prison the apos-

tle must have traveled extensively (Rom. 15:24,28), of which we have no details in Acts and only some hints in a few Epistles. At some point Paul left Timothy in Ephesus, while he traveled further (1 Tim. 1:3).

Titus accompanied the apostle during his ministry in Crete,³ a large island situated in the Mediterranean Sea southwest of Greece. For a long period of time, beginning about 4,000 years ago, Crete had been considered to be a place of cultural greatness. Having ministered there, Paul left Titus on the island with instructions to put certain things “in order” (Ti. 1:5).

A few years later Paul was arrested and sent to Rome to be put on trial, having been falsely accused of a serious crime (2 Tim. 1:8,12,15-18). He found himself in difficult circumstances, much harder than the two years in Rome about five years earlier (Acts 28:30-31; Phil. 1:15-18). Several people visited him between the various sessions of this trial (see 2 Tim. 4:16-18), including Onesimus (1:16) and others (4:10). Many departed from Paul’s teachings – which

were and still are from God – in those days (2 Tim. 1:15), and Demas forsook him completely (4:10). After visiting Paul, others went on to serve elsewhere, while Luke remained faithfully with the apostle. Paul expected Timothy to arrive from Ephesus, bringing Mark (v.11). At some point during this difficult period Titus must have come to visit Paul in Rome on his way to Dalmatia (4:10).

That region is on the eastern side of the Adriatic Sea, where Paul may have been during his third missionary journey, having referred to Illyricum (Rom. 15:19).

A special bond existed between Paul and Titus. This is an example and encouragement for older and younger believers

spiritually to walk, grow and serve the Lord together, in a relationship of mutual appreciation and commitment.

This is an example and encouragement for older and younger believers spiritually to walk, grow and serve the Lord together, in a relationship of mutual appreciation and commitment.

To Put Things In Order

When Paul had left Titus in Crete, he gave him specific instructions to put things in order among the assemblies – in the homes and in the community. As an apostle, Paul had God-given authority to

appoint elders in the assemblies he had started together with Barnabas (Acts 14:23). Now he delegated this authority to Titus for the assemblies they had visited in Crete. From Acts 20 we know that the Holy Spirit placed elders *in the midst* of the flock of the Lord's people as overseers, *not over* the flock (v.28).

The apostles and their delegates are no longer with us to choose or establish elders, but the Word of God and the Holy Spirit are present. God's thoughts have not changed, and the resources needed to practice His desires are still with believers and will remain here until the Lord's return. This implies a challenge for us today: Rely on Him in all things, instead of on man's institutions or devices.

In his letter Paul introduced himself as a "bond-servant of God" (Ti. 1:1) – an example to Titus and to all believers to truly serve God, the Lord Jesus and His people. While being subject to the Emperor, as explained in Romans 13 and elsewhere, Paul was first and foremost God's servant.

He described believers as God's chosen or elect ones, having the knowledge of the truth

and living godly lives with a sure hope (Ti. 1:1-2) in a world without it (Eph. 2:12). This reliable hope is good now and for eternity for all those who have received eternal life (Jn. 3:16) and are linked with God's counsel, or purpose, from before the world's foundation. It rests in "God, who cannot lie" (Ti. 1:2), and it is connected with His promise from before the ages (2 Tim. 1:1,9; Eph. 3:5-9) and His "eternal purpose" (v.11). All this gave

Titus the right context in which the things that remained were to be "set in order" (Ti. 1:5). It is the same for us as we rely on help from the Savior-God.⁴

This short epistle with instructions to Titus for the benefit of the believers in Crete is of great significance

to all believers. It contains precious gems and practical instructions. The believers are left in this world to represent God and, as children of God, to reflect His qualities and features. This applies especially to those in leadership positions, for the more they have received the more responsible these ones are and the clearer their light should shine.

The good qualities mentioned in this letter are to be

Reading slowly through the text, asking the Lord to bless His Word to us today, we will receive His blessing and encouragement.

seen in all believers, but first of all in the elders (overseers) and deacons (servants). God's standards are very high; in fact, only the Lord Jesus as a perfect Man on this earth fully answered to them. However, God desires that all believers, not only elders and leaders, follow these norms and imitate our Lord's perfect example even though we are not perfect.

The following outline shows how all believers are addressed in this epistle, and Titus in particular, in view of the tasks to instruct, help, lead, correct and encourage. In fact, God's Word addresses all believers, giving lessons in all its instructions whether we are directly addressed or not. Reading slowly through the text, asking the Lord to bless His Word to us today, we will receive His blessing and encouragement. He can and will use what we read to instruct us about something that is on our minds.

Brief Outline of Titus⁵

- I. Salutation (1:1-4)
- II. Qualifications Of The Elders (1:5-9)
- III. Characteristics Of The False Teachers (1:10-16)
- IV. Godly Behavior For Different Groups (2:1-10)
 - A. Older men (2:1-2)
 - B. Older women (2:3)
 - C. Younger women (2:4-5)
 - D. Younger men (2:6-8)
 - E. Slaves (2:9-10)

- V. Role Of Grace In Promoting Godly Behavior (2:11-3:11)
 - A. The educating power of grace (2:11-14)
 - B. The gracious behavior that results from grace (2:15-3:2)
 - C. Grace as a motivation for godly living (3:3-8)
 - D. Behavior inconsistent with grace (3:9-11)
- VI. Final Instructions And Greetings (3:12-15)

A Few Remarkable Nuggets

Obviously in this short paper we cannot deal with all the different matters this epistle addresses. However, what becomes apparent when reading Titus is God's desire that all Christians function according to His thoughts and plans, as His disciples and witnesses. His desire represents a tremendous challenge for all true believers, because Satan is totally against it as long as we are in his world. The place where we live today is in enemy territory; he is the "ruler of this world" (Jn. 14:30) and the "god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4 NKJV), opposing God's testimony.

In this spiritual battle, he uses the same tactics (1 Jn. 2:16) as he did with Eve in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-6). This is allowed by God, but with Him in

firm control, for He is sovereign and above all. Trials allowed by God led Job, for example, to recognize God's greatness (Job 42:2), and so it is for believers today. God wants all believers to be His witnesses. This is beautifully explained in Titus 2:11-15. First, *the grace of God* has appeared to all men. In other words, every man, woman and child is addressed by God in grace with His special offer of salvation. Those who accept it by faith, whether slaves or princes, are then *instructed* to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, just as 1 John 2:15-17 and many other passages explain. Right and upright conduct, in true self-judgment, is needed and will lead to *further instruction* in God's school. This is intended for all believers.

We are in God's school every day, and His teaching will lead us to:

- Become *sober*, sensible, honest with ourselves, and self-controlled.
- Act *rightly* with others, both Christians and non-Christians.
- Be *godly*, or pious, with the right attitude in relation to God. This implies introducing

God into every part of our lives and depending on Him.

- Have the correct outlook on the future in accordance with God's teaching on Christ's coming *for* the Church, the Church *meeting* Him in the air, and being *with* Him forever in glory (1 Th. 4:14-17).

- Understand *in truth* the work of redemption and its results.

- Realize that we *belong* to Him.

- Manifest the zeal of *true love* that expresses itself in actions for His honor.

Instead of teaching social activism, Paul took the difficult situation which believing slaves experienced as an opportunity for them to promote God's interests – to be living testimonies of the true Master.

The overall context of this passage is Paul's teaching that Titus should urge the bond slaves to be subject to their own masters (Ti. 2:9). Instead of teaching social activism, Paul took the difficult situation which believing slaves experi-

enced as an opportunity for them to promote God's interests – to be living testimonies of the true Master. Such a behavior (see vv.9-10) would powerfully speak to their earthly masters, better than Paul could say in words. With a conduct of faith and faithfulness (v.10) the Christian slaves would adorn, or beautify, the doctrine of God our Savior. Their changed

attitude would be a powerful testimony to their unbelieving masters of the power of God's grace that changes lives (vv.11-15). Paul explained elsewhere that a slave may buy himself free; a master who has become a believer may even free his slaves, but rebellion, or rioting, is never an option.

God's Desire For Us All

It is not only slaves who are placed in this world to shine for God. In Titus 3, Paul taught that all Christians need to be subject to rulers, including any authority placed over us by God, while showing respect to all fellow men. The apostle used seven key expressions to describe the right attitude (vv.1-2):

1. Be subject,
2. Obedient,
3. Ready for every good work,
4. Not maligning,
5. Not contentious, but
6. Gentle and
7. Meek

These seven points summarize our new lifestyle, in contrast to the one before we were saved.

The old lifestyle is summarized by seven other keywords in verse 3:

1. Foolish,
2. Disobedient,
3. Deceived,
4. Enslaved,
5. Wasting time in evil and envy,
6. Hateful and

7. Hating one another.

These new and old lifestyles do not only refer to the slaves but to all human beings saved by the grace of God. Paul then summarized this grace with seven characteristic terms, as shown by the Savior-God in His kindness and love for mankind:

1. He *saved* us, not by works of righteousness we did or might have done,
2. But according to His *mercy*,
3. Through the *washing of regeneration* by God's Word ...
4. And by the *renewing* of the Holy Spirit ...
5. Whom He *poured out* abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.
6. As a result, we have been *justified*, or declared righteous, through God's grace ...
7. As He made us *heirs* according to the hope of eternal life.

Eternal Life

This is a wonderful gift, because the Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of God, is the true God and the eternal life (1 Jn. 5:20). He is the Gift as well as the Giver. The moment we believed, God gave us the right to become children of God (Jn. 1:12) and we received eternal life (3:16). Furthermore, we wait for the Lord Jesus to come again (1 Th. 4:14-18), when He will take us to where eternal life

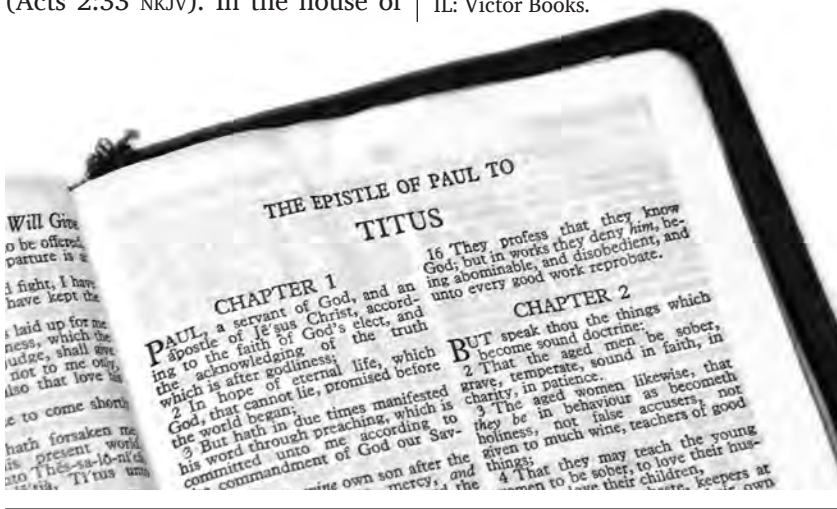
dwells (Jude 1:24). That is why Paul speaks about “the *hope* of eternal life” (Ti. 1:2, 3:7). This is not a contradiction, since at the moment we believed we *received* eternal life. At the same time we were *put on a path that leads* to eternal life – to the realm where the eternal life dwells and where we will dwell with Him.

Paul explained that “the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us” (Rom. 5:5) and that the Holy Spirit was “poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Ti. 3:6 NASB). On the day of Pentecost, Peter said that Jesus of Nazareth had been “exalted to the right hand of God” and that “having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear” (Acts 2:33 NKJV). In the house of

Cornelius, Peter testified that “the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also” (10:45). Praise God for the riches of His grace, manifested by the triune God through our Lord Jesus Christ! **GT**

Endnotes:

1. Before he started his missionary journeys, Paul, together with Barnabas, brought financial support from Antioch to Jerusalem (Acts 11:29-30). Perhaps Titus went along with them, if Galatians 2:1-3 refers to that trip. Others think that this last quotation refers to the Jerusalem council described in Acts 15.
2. This journey to Rome is sometimes called Paul’s fourth missionary journey.
3. The New Testament refers to Crete or Cretans seven times by name (Acts 2:11, 27:7,12,13,21; Ti. 1:5,12).
4. Six times in the pastoral epistles Paul refers to God as our Savior (1 Tim. 1:1, 2:3; 4:10; Ti. 1:3, 2:10, 3:4).
5. Litfin, A. D. (1985). Titus. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 761). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.



Some Thoughts On THE EPISTLE TO TITUS

by Alan H. Crosby

Paul began this letter with a reminder that as an apostle he had been sent with the message of eternal life – a blessing God had planned for mankind even before the “ages began” (Ti. 1:2 *ESV*). This was similar to what he told the Ephesians: “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:3-4). In Titus, Paul pointed out that his preaching of this fact is something with which he was “entrusted by the command of God our Savior” (Ti. 1:3). To Paul, Titus was his “true child in a common faith” (v.4).

Point Out Elders

The apostle left Titus in Crete “to set right what remained unordered” (*JND*) and to point out (Greek: *cheirotoneo*) “elders in every town” (v.5 *ESV*). Paul described those who were to be pointed out as elders, particularly those who should serve as overseers, or bishops (*KJV*): They should be “above reproach” (*ESV*),

be “discreet” (*JND*) and “hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that [they might] be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (vv.7-9 *ESV*).

We should note that the words “appoint,” “ordain,” “minister,” “bishop” and a few others reveal the theological bias of the translators. “Appoint” and “ordain,” for instance, do not mean *creating* elders but merely recognizing “those who had already been raised up and qualified by the Holy Spirit and had given evidence of this in their life and service” (Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p.67).

Elders who would serve as overseers were to have some spiritual leadership abilities. These leaders would be men who could see what needed to be done and do it, possibly with the help of others. Therefore those who were gifted in “helping [and] administering” (1 Cor. 12:28) would be involved.

Rebuke The Judaizers

Titus was to “silence” those of the “circumcision party” – presumably Judaizers – and those who would “turn [people] away from the truth” (Ti. 1:10-13). Judaizers do not believe God’s Word about salvation being by grace alone (Eph. 2:8-9; Gal. 2:16). They errantly think we must do or practice certain things like Jews otherwise we cannot be saved. The work of Judaizers has resulted in today’s church altars, special clothing and positions for those who are called “clergy” (consider the priests in Ex. 28:1-40), and in “questions of food or drink, or with regard to a festival [“holiday,” *KJV*] or a Sabbath” (Col. 2:16).

There are Christians who have set up a “church calendar” which involves the commemoration of various aspects of Christ’s life – particularly His birth, death and resurrection. These are not found as festivals or holy days in Scripture; instead we find the “breaking of bread” (Acts 20:7; Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-25). Our Lord asked us to remember Him in this very special way. In remembering Him each week, the bread leads us to think on His becoming flesh (the focus of Christmas), and the wine leads us to think on His death and resurrection (what Easter celebrates). Paul said that by remembering Him in the manner

in which He instructed, we “proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes” for us (v.26). By contrast, the Galatians were rebuked for observing “days and months and seasons and years” (Gal. 4:10) as part of a church calendar.

Beware Of Those Seeing Nonexistent Evil

Paul said, “To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their minds and their consciences are defiled” (Ti. 1:15). In other words, these “defiled and unbelieving” assign the worst possible interpretation to motives and actions. They will be very persuasive. We should never allow ourselves to be ruffled by their talk until we investigate for ourselves and obtain the facts in their true light.

Teach According To Sound Doctrine

Paul wrote to Titus, which we can also apply to ourselves: “Teach what accords with sound doctrine” (2:1). Such teaching will be full of truth and wisdom yet differing according to the maturity of the hearers. Older men were to be taught “to be [serious], dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and steadfastness” (v.2). Younger men were “to be self-controlled,” and Titus was to teach them as a model

to “show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned” (vv.6-8). Older women were “to be reverent in behavior,” not destroying or harming the reputation of others, but teaching the younger women (vv.3-4). The younger women were to be taught “to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, *working* at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands” (vv.4-5, italics added) – but this *does not mean wives were to be servants to their husbands!* “Bond-servants,” or what we might call “employees,” were “to be submissive to their own masters in everything; ... well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering” (vv.9-10). They were not to call in sick

just to take a day off or extend a bathroom break beyond what was necessary, for example.

In every case the guiding principle is to be: “Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus (Col. 3:17). In this way we will “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior” (Ti. 2:10).

Be Ready To Do Good Work

We are to be submissive and obedient to the “governing authori-

ties” (Rom. 13:1). It is very difficult to do good works with your income when you have to pay it to the government as fines, or in your home when you are confined in jail! In short, conduct your life so you are always “ready for every good work” (3:1).

We are warned against speaking evil of people (v.2). Here, the Bible uses the Greek word *blasphemeo*, from which we get our English word “blaspheme.” Therefore we notice that we can “blaspheme” – speak evil of or irreverently of – people as well as God. This sin is not uncommon among believers, including those who are well-versed in Scripture and sound in doctrine. A colleague of mine once described

This sin is not uncommon among believers, including those who are well-versed in Scripture and sound in doctrine.

his Bible-believing relatives: they emphasized avoiding “worldly things” but they would speak badly of others in their absence. As a consequence, one was afraid to leave the group even for a brief period for fear of what they would say of him or her.

We are not prohibited from passing on news about the comings and goings of others, but we are to avoid giving accounts of people’s doings that make the talk evil. Scripture tells us, “Whatever

is commendable ... if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Phil. 4:8). Talk that fits these descriptions would encourage good works in others.

We are also told to avoid “controversies” and “quarrels” (Ti. 3:9). Our religious flesh gets ego-pleasing pleasure from gathering followers, especially if we get them to follow us into a division. Those who do this are called “heretics.” Paul wrote: “quarrels about the law ... are unprofitable and worthless” (v.9); “the law is holy ... and righteous and good” (Rom. 7:12). Thus a person who uses “truth” to cause dissensions and quarrels is “warped and sinful” (Ti. 3:11).

Live In The Grace Of God

The grace of God is both an impressive fact and an extraordinary person, namely “our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (2:13). In coming into this world to die in our place He made salvation available to everybody. This salvation brings not only deliverance from eternal punishment but also the power “to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age” (v.12)

Meanwhile, we are to be living as though we are expecting

the Lord Jesus to appear on this earth in glory (v.13). This is what the devout Jews were looking for when Christ came the first time, but they did not realize that the Christ would have to suffer death and be resurrected before He would “enter into His glory” (Lk. 24:26). We, now, “being justified by His grace we ... become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Ti. 3:7). Jesus Christ “gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for

Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works” (2:14),

In closing, Paul made the simple request, “Let our people learn to devote themselves to good works ... and not be unfruit-

ful” (3:14). We become unfruitful by allowing foolish controversies and dissensions to stir up divisions. The Lord earnestly desires us to be one (Jn. 17:22), but nowhere does Scripture tell us that our purpose in this world is to be a “representation of His one true Church.” Instead, are we not told to “be careful to devote [ourselves] to good works” (Ti. 3:8)? We are “created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10). **GT**

**We become
unfruitful by
allowing foolish
controversies and
dissensions to
stir up divisions.**

The purpose of this column is to help you study the Bible on your own. Look up the Bible references and think about them before writing your answers. Do not send this study to us, as this is not a correspondence course.

A background graphic showing a map of the world with a dotted line tracing a path across it, and a compass rose in the lower right corner. The text is overlaid on this graphic.

The Unsearchable Riches Of Christ – The Theme Of The Bible

by Alan Groth

Christ The Lord

In Luke 2:10-11, we hear an angel saying to shepherds, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” Christ is the Lord. The Greek word for Lord is *Kurios*. A lord is a person who has authority over people or things that are his.

Let’s look at some Bible passages where we see the riches of Christ as the Lord.

Read Acts 2:22-36

1. On the day of Pentecost, Peter concluded his sermon by declaring that God had made Jesus, “_____.”

Read Philippians 2:5-11

1. What will God have everyone do at the name of Jesus? _____

Read Revelation 4:8-11; 1 Corinthians 10:26

1. What is the Lord worthy of? _____

2. Why is He worthy of these things? _____

Read 1 Corinthians 8:5-6; Ephesians 4:5.

“For us there is ... _____ Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.”

Read Romans 10:8-13

1. Do the Jew and Greek have the same Lord? _____
 2. What happens when someone calls on His name? _____
-

Read Romans 14:7-9

1. When are we the Lord's? _____

Read John 13:3-17

1. What did the Lord teach His disciples? _____
-

Read Colossians 3:23-24; Romans 12:11; 1 Corinthians 15:58

1. What are we to be doing for the Lord? _____
-

Read 1 Corinthians 1:7-9

1. What did Paul say about our Lord Jesus Christ in these verses? _____
-

Read 2 Corinthians 8:5; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:8

1. In these passages, what was done or to be done for the Lord? _____
-

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9; Revelation 17:14, 19:11-16

1. What will the Lord do to those who oppose Him and His people? _____
-

Read 2 Timothy 4:8

1. What did Paul declare about the Lord? _____

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

1. Where will we be meeting the Lord? _____
2. How long will we be with Him? _____

Read Revelation 22:16-21

1. Who is desirous for the Lord to come? _____

In our next month's *Discover Column* look for more riches of Christ.

Several Points About Trials

by Hamilton Smith (adapted)

In Psalm 118:5-21 the Holy Spirit used the experiences of a delivered individual as representative of God's way of intervention on behalf of the nation of Israel. A godly man called upon the LORD in his distress, and the LORD answered and brought him into a large place, which speaks of much blessing. He thus learned in his distress that the LORD was on his side, and the LORD being for him who could be against him? (Rom. 8:31). He asked, "What can man do unto me?" (Ps. 118:6 NKJV). The man learned moreover that it is better to trust in the LORD than in man or the great people of the earth.

The psalmist then wrote about the trials through which he had passed and the LORD'S dealings to bring about his deliverance. First, all the nations had surrounded him, but in the name of the LORD they were destroyed (vv.10-12).

Second, the enemy of his soul, the Devil, was the one who had energized the nations (Rev. 12:15-17) and pushed him violently; but the LORD intervened

to his help and had become his "strength," "song" and "salvation" (Ps. 118:13-14). As a result, the song was heard in the dwelling of the righteous, the strength was seen in the right hand of the LORD and the salvation in deliverance from death (vv.15-17).

Third, behind the opposition of the nations and the power of Satan there was, in these trials, the chastening, or disciplining, from the LORD. The enemy had sought his fall (v.13), but in those struggles the LORD had chastened him "severely" for his good (v.18). The enemy would oppose him to bring him into death; the LORD chastened him to save him from death. The LORD chastened only to remove all that was contrary to Himself, in order to open a righteous way into His presence to be there for His praise.

The Devil is behind the outward enemies of God's people, but the LORD is above the power of the Devil, and there is no one above the LORD. "Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever" (v.1). **GT**

SUICIDE AND THE BELIEVER

by Timothy P. Hadley

The term “suicide” was coined in 1651 from the Latin words *sui*, signifying “one’s self,” and *cide* or its variations, meaning “to kill.” Simply then, suicide is to purposefully take one’s own life, and this is out of a misdirected self-love.

Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death globally. Worldwide, the suicide rate has gone up by 60% over the last five decades – mainly in industrialized nations. According to the *World Health Organization*, approximately one million people commit suicide each year, that is about one death every 32 seconds or 2,740 per day. Globally, suicide’s mortality rate is 16 per 100,000 people. For each individual who takes his or her own life, at least 20 attempt to do so.

In the United States, according to the *Center For Disease Control*, there were 44,965 suicides in 2016, compared to 19,000 murders and 13,000 AIDS related deaths. It is the third leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 15 to 25 years, but in 2016 the highest suicide rate was among adults between 45 and 54. The second high-

est rate occurred in those 85 years or older. Younger groups have had consistently lower suicide rates than middle-aged and older adults.

Females are more likely to attempt suicide, however males are four times more likely to successfully commit suicide. In the USA, firearms accounted for 51% of all suicides in 2016, and many of the total, 16.5%, were alcohol-related. Individuals who are misusing drugs are 10 to 20 times more likely to take their own lives than the rest of the population.

Hope For A Hurting World

What is behind suicide? It is a loss of hope. People can live without food for a long time. We can live without water for less time, but we cannot live without hope. Once hope is gone, men and women look for ways to end their lives. This is a work of the enemy, Satan – the Devil and the destroyer! In Psalm 42:5 we read: “Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance” (NKJV). Simi-

larly, Psalm 42:11 and 43:5 say, “Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God.” In difficult days – for every day – there is hope for the follower of Jesus Christ. It is a hope that is anchored in heaven – sure and steadfast – and promised by a God who cannot lie (Heb. 6:13-18).

Accounts In Scripture

The Bible tells us that Satan tempted the Lord Jesus to commit suicide (Mt. 4:5-6; Lk. 4:9-11). The Philippian jailor, wrongly thinking his prisoners had escaped, was about to commit suicide, but he was stopped and led to Christ (Acts 16:27-34).

Some of the servants of the LORD became so frustrated in their service that they asked God to kill them, including Moses (Num. 11:10–15), Elijah (1 Ki. 19:1-4), and Jonah (Jon. 4:1–11). Many will attempt suicide during the great tribulation, but will be unable to find death (Rev. 9:6).

The Bible mentions at least six people who committed suicide: Abimelech (Jud. 9:54), Saul (1 Sam. 31:4), Saul’s armor-bearer (vv.4-6), Ahithophel (2 Sam.

17:23), Zimri (1 Ki. 16:18) and Judas (Mt. 27:5). Five of these men were noted for their wickedness, the exception is Saul’s armor-bearer as nothing is said of his character. Some think Samson committed suicide because he knew his actions would lead to his death (Jud. 16:26–31), but Samson’s goal was to kill Philistines, not himself.

A Biblical Perspective

The Bible views suicide as equal to murder, which is what it is: the murder of self. God is the only one who is to decide when and how a person should die. We, instead, should say with the psalmist, “My times are in your hands” (Ps. 31:15). God is the giver of life – He gives and He takes away (Job 1:21).

Suicide, the taking of one’s own life, is ungodly because it rejects God’s gift of life. No man or woman should presume to take God’s authority to himself or herself and end his or her own life!

Certainly there were those in the Bible who felt deep despair in life. We have already mentioned how Elijah was fearful and depressed, yearning to die (1 Ki. 19:4), and Jonah’s anger at God, wishing for death (Jon. 4:8). To them we can add Solomon who in

Suicide, the taking of one’s own life, is ungodly because it rejects God’s gift of life.

his pursuit of pleasure reached a point where he “hated life” (Eccl. 2:17). The apostle Paul, too, at one time declared, “We were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired of life” (2 Cor. 1:8). However, none of these men committed suicide. Solomon learned to “fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all” (Eccl. 12:13). Elijah was comforted by an angel, allowed to rest, and given a new commission. Jonah received admonition and rebuke from the LORD. Paul learned that, although the pressure he faced was beyond his ability to endure, the Lord bears all things: “Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead” (2 Cor. 1:9).

A Sin That Leads To Hell?

Suicide is a sin, but it is not the “greatest” sin. *It is no worse than other evils in terms of how God sees it, and it does not determine a person’s eternal destiny.* However, suicide definitely has a deep and lasting impact on those left behind; the painful scars left by a suicide do not heal easily. May God grant His grace to each one who is facing trials today (Ps. 67:1), and may each of us take hope in His promise, “Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13).

Scripture teaches that from the moment we truly believe in Christ we are guaranteed eternal life (Jn. 3:16). According to the Bible, Christians can know beyond any doubt that they possess this life (1 Jn. 5:13). Nothing can separate a Christian from God’s love (Rom. 8:38-39), not even a Christian who commits suicide can be separated from God. Jesus died for all of our sins; if a true Christian, in a time of spiritual attack and weakness, commits suicide, his sin is still covered by the blood of Christ.

Suicide is not what determines whether a person gains entrance into heaven. If an *unsaved* person commits suicide he has done nothing but expedite, or hasten, his journey to hell. That person will ultimately be in hell *for rejecting salvation through Christ* – not because he committed suicide (see Jn. 3:18). We should also point out that no one truly knows what was happening in a person’s heart in the moments before death. Some people have deathbed conversions and accept Christ in their last portion of time in this world. It is possible that a person who commits suicide could have a last-second change of heart and cry out for God’s mercy. We leave such judgments to God, the One who “looks at the heart.” (1 Sam. 16:7).

The suicide of a believer is evidence that anyone can struggle with despair and that our enemy, Satan, is “a murderer from the beginning” (Jn. 8:44). Suicide is still a serious sin against God: murder. It is always wrong. Christians are called to live their lives for God, and the decision of when to die is God’s and God’s alone. Put your hope in God!

Five Simple Truths

What we have seen so far can give us a firm biblical foundation, but let’s consider these five simple truths.

1. *The people of God sometimes feel so bad that they want to die.*

Moses was under tremendous pressure from the people of Israel to take them back to Egypt. They were dissatisfied with his leadership, and their complaints stirred the LORD to send fire against them. Moses eventually said, “I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me. If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now – if I have found favor in Your sight – and do not let me see my wretchedness” (Num. 11:14-15).

Elijah, in his days, endured the incredible strain of

single-handedly opposing 450 prophets of Baal, the people of Israel and the king. God vindicated Elijah’s faith, and he ran exuberantly for miles, faster than the king’s chariot. Then he heard that the king’s wife, Jezebel, vowed to kill him. In his fear and exhaustion the prophet went into the wilderness, sat down under a broom tree and said, “It is

enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers” (1 Ki. 19:4).

The prophet Jonah displayed one of the most selfish attitudes of all the prophets, being irritated that God had mercy on the pagan city of Nineveh. Therefore, God rebuked him with a

desert wind: “When the sun arose ... God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah’s head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, ‘It is better for me to die than to live’” (Jon. 4:8).

Like these three men of God, sometimes we lose sight of the hope we have, and discouragement becomes depression, depression turns into despair, and despair leads to thoughts of giving up.

Sometimes we lose sight of the hope we have, and discouragement becomes depression, depression turns into despair, and despair leads to thoughts of giving up.

2. It is sin to fulfill that desire by taking your own life.

Committing suicide is sin for at least three reasons. First, it is disobedience to the command of God, “You shall not murder” (Ex. 20:13). Disobedience to God’s commands is sin.

Second, it is sin to intrude on God’s sovereign right to give and take life. God alone can create a human person, and therefore personhood belongs to God. We have no right to dispose of ourselves or others as we please. The Lord has sole rights over what he has made. Murder and suicide intrude on the sacred ground where God alone is the giver and taker.

Third, it is failure to trust in God for the help needed to survive and cope. The Bible says that whatever is not from faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). If a Christian takes one’s own life, he or she will give an account for this before the Lord. It is not the fault of those left behind!

Truly, we are on firm biblical ground when we say, “It is sin to take your own life.”

3. Faith can be so weak at times that the heart gives way to grievous sin.

Romans 7 describes how Christians struggle with the remain-

ing corruption in our lives: “For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do” (v.15).

First John 1:8 says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

But this does not mean that the saving relationship with Christ goes in and out of existence with each of our sins. When a believer yields to temptation his faith in

Christ is weak, and the enticements of sin and the power of Satan get the upper hand. But there is a great difference between Satan getting a temporary upper hand and Satan being the lord of your life, between yielding with resistance to an evil that I hate to do and doing

that evil as part of a usual pattern.

Believers may take their eyes off of the Lord and lose hope, but the Lord never takes His eye off of them. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand (Jn. 10:27-29).

4. The only way sin can be forgiven is in our relationship to Jesus Christ by faith.

People’s last decisions do not define their lives or determine their eternal destinies. Our destinies depend on whether or not we are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ.

But there is a great difference between Satan getting a temporary upper hand and Satan being the lord of your life.

Every one of us is a sinner. The Bible tells us, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). It also says, “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (6:23).

Read what the Bible says in Ephesians 2: “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (vv.1-9). This is

why the Lord Jesus came to die on the cross!

In Isaiah we read: “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (53:4-6).

Jesus Christ came into the world to give His life as a ransom – to pay the price for our sin – that we might have the forgiveness! Therefore the question for every one is: Do you have a relationship of faith with Jesus Christ and are your sins are forgiven? It is the most precious gift in the world. The shed blood of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, is the *only* way for a sinner to get to God.

5. Do not let the suicide of someone be in vain.

We may never understand an individual’s suicide, no matter how long we ask “how” or “why” this could happen; but let us not let such a death be in vain. A believer has a hope that is beyond this world. He may temporarily lose sight of his Hope – the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 1:1) – but his

Hope will not lose sight of him.

The Bible tells us that before Christ we were without hope and without God (Eph. 2:12), but when we confessed with our mouths the Lord Jesus and believed in our hearts that God has raised Him from the dead we were saved. “With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10).

Having put our faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, “there is ... now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus” (8:1). “Neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (vv.38-39).


He is able to pull you out of the pit you are in. There is no pit so deep that His love cannot reach you and pull you out.

Where do you stand? The psalmist said, “I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps” (Ps. 40:1-2).

This is what the Lord can do for each one reading this article.

For the believer who feels that they are in a pit of discouragement or despair, cry out to Him, don't lose heart! To the person who has no hope, cry out to Him! He is able

to pull you out of the pit you are in. There is no pit so deep that His love cannot reach you and pull you out. There is no problem too big or sin too strong from which the Lord Jesus cannot rescue you. Just cry out to Him today! Cry out to Him now! **GT**



*I love You, Lord; You heard my cries, and pitied every groan;
Long as I live, when troubles rise, I'll hasten to Your throne.
I love You Lord; You bow Your ear; You're ever good and just.
Then let my heart feel no despair! Your power has all my trust.
—Isaac Watts (1674-1748)*

Why Did Jesus Come?

– Part 3

by Shereen Ghobrial

He Came To Call Sinners

And when Jesus heard it, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

—Mark 2:17 *ESV*

“I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” —Luke 5:32

“Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

—Matthew 9:13

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

—Luke 19:10

Biel/Bienne¹ is a city in Switzerland that is very much associated with precision and micro mechanics, especially in the watch making industry. Many watch-making companies started in this city,

including big names such as Swatch, Omega SA and Rolex. A number of other cities in Switzerland are involved in watch making, but most of them get their “movement” parts from Biel/Bienne.

I have not visited Biel/Bienne, but I imagine the people there to be very punctual and neat. They are probably overall precise and accurate in their communication and manner of life. How am I making such a conclusion? By knowing what they produce and what they are good at doing. Their personality and style of life are reflected in the industry in which they excel.

Why would a watch company be picky regarding the precision of the movement parts of its watches? The main goal and function of a watch is to give the time in a very precise way. Imagine having a watch that is made of gold and looks very nice, but it

advances one extra minute every hour. That means by the end of the day your watch will be ahead by 24 minutes, and after two days it will be ahead by nearly one hour. If you get such a watch from a reputable company you would consider the watch to be no good and seek a replacement. In spite of the beautiful looks of the watch, it would be considered defective for it does not meet the purpose for which it was made.

Now let us consider man instead of the watch, and use the word “sin” instead of “defective.”

What Is Sin?

God created man in His image to rule the world and reflect the moral glories of God; for example, to be intelligent, loving and holy. By reflecting God’s glories, or displaying His attributes, man would glorify God. However, man missed that goal, deciding to seek his own desires instead. The result is every one of us was diverted to a different path.

The Bible says, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – every one – to his own way” (Isa. 53:6). By going my own way, I have missed the main goal for which I was created, and that is what the Bible calls “sin.” “Sin is lawlessness” (1 Jn. 3:4), which means I do not abide by any law, but by my own desire and will instead.

The Result Of Sin

God warned Adam regarding the result of sin when He told him, “[From] the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die” (Gen. 2:17). Because Adam sinned, mankind was put under the judgment of death in all aspects of life: physically, spiritually and eternally.

When a child is born, he immediately starts experiencing death in his or her body. Old cells die; germs and viruses attack the weak human body, and the body ages. In time, signs of death creep into the wrinkled skin and the gray hair. Finally, “it is appointed for man to die once” (Heb. 9:27). This is the physical death which is a result of sin, “for the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23).

Another type of death is spiritual or moral death, which resulted from the separation from God. When man sinned he lost his open communication with his Creator, and as a result he lost the enjoyment and privilege of reflecting God’s moral attributes. This is the reason we see evil in the whole world, because we have people who are spiritually dead.

Paul gave a good description of them in Romans 3:13-18: “Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their

lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.” These are whom the Lord Jesus referred to when He said, “Follow Me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead” (Mt. 8:22). He was saying to let the spiritually dead bury their own relatives that are physically dead.

The third type of death is eternal death in the lake of fire. The apostle John wrote: “Then I saw a great white throne ... And I saw the dead, great and the small, standing before the throne ... and they were judged, each one of them according, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-14). After living a life marked with spiritual death and ending with physical death, the unrepentant sinner will end up in eternal death by suffering judgment in the lake of fire.

Going back to our watch analogy, think of the watch that advances one extra minute every hour. Is the watch defective because of what it does, or does the

watch advance one extra minute every hour because it is defective? It is the latter option. The fact the watch is malfunctioning is a mere symptom of the internal defectiveness of the watch. For mankind, our physical, moral and eternal death is the natural result and divine punishment for our internal defectiveness, meaning our sinful nature. It is the nature we acquired because of Adam’s sin and not because God made us this way.

Who are sinners?

The Bible gives a clear, but hard answer: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). This includes you and me – all human beings with the one exception being the heavenly Man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That means we are under the judgment of:

- Physical death – suffering from diseases, aging and bodily death,
- Spiritual death – immorality and bad habits, and
- Eternal death – in the lake of fire.

Can Religion Help Me To Escape Death?

Although people associate religion with God, the Bible clearly indicates it was man who invented religion, not God. This is seen

Although people associate religion with God, the Bible clearly indicates it was man who invented religion, not God.

in the first religious man, Cain, when he tried to approach God by his human effort and in his own way (Gen. 4:1-5). Man uses religion to give himself a false feeling of security.

In the Old Testament, God had given the children of Israel a great privilege, which was His law. He gave them instructions to regulate their relationship with Him and among themselves. That worship included sacrifices, a tabernacle, a temple and, most importantly, the Levites and priests. In all the instructions and regulations, God was always looking for *worshippers*, not the worship itself.

For example, the tabernacle had many pieces that would be disassembled and carried during the desert journey. Most, but not all, of those pieces could have been carried on carriages. However, the pieces in the Holy and Holiest of Holy had to be carried by the men of a certain family of a particular tribe; not on horses, carriages or any other means. It was one of God's ways to communicate His desire to have this intimate relationship with the worshippers. He even declared His ownership over them, saying, "The Levites shall be Mine" (Num. 3:12).

We may ask, "How about sacrifices, singing and praise, and other rituals that were practiced in the tabernacle and the tem-

ple?" They were only needed to express what was in the worshiper's heart. A sacrifice is an expression of a repenting heart; a prayer is an expression of a needy heart, and praise is an expression of a heart in awe and delight. David realized this truth when he said, "For You will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; You will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise" (Ps. 51:16-17).

The Lord Jesus clearly indicated that point in His discussion with the Samaritan woman. When she asked Him about the required details of worship, He answered her question and added, "The Father is seeking such people to worship Him" (Jn. 4:23). He did not say the Father is seeking "such *worship*," but "such *people* to worship Him." The Darby translation says, "The Father seeks such as His worshippers."

Religion cannot help because it provides mere rituals, which is what Cain offered and was rejected. God is seeking a repentant and broken heart, one that realizes the total uselessness of self-effort and work, for "we have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment" (Isa. 64:6 *ESV*). Repentance

is the first step to escape death, but it is not enough.

He Came To Call Sinners

Jesus came to call sinners (Mk. 2:17). He is the only One who can make that confident call – a call to come to Him. Once we realize our inability to escape from death, we see our need of the Savior. Jesus is the Savior, having paid the debt of our sin by His death on the cross. God considered Jesus the ultimate sin offering, and because He offered Himself He can call on every sinner to escape from death.

God is calling everyone, but it is our individual responsibility to accept this call. The Bible clearly states that God “desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). However, He respects our wills. Sin is our own responsibility if we do not accept His call and invitation.

Are you a sinner? Jesus came to call you! Now is the right time to accept Him into your life. **GT**

Endnote

1. Biel is the German name of the city and Bienne is its French name. Since 2005, the city’s official name has been “Biel/Bienne.”



**Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
calling for you and for me;
See, on the portals He’s waiting and watching,
watching for you and for me.**

**Chorus: Come home, come home,
ye who are weary, come home;
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
calling, O sinner, come home!**

**Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,
pleading for you and for me?
Why should we linger and heed not His mercies,
mercies for you and for me?**

**Time is now fleeting, the moments are passing,
passing from you and from me;
Shadows are gathering, death-beds are coming,
coming for you and for me.**

**Oh! for the wonderful love He has promised,
promised for you and for me;
Though we have sinned, He has mercy and pardon,
pardon for you and for me.**

—Will Lamartine Thompson (1847-1909)

What Is Your Attitude Toward Your Household?

by H. A. Ironside

“And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.” —Joshua 2:13 KJV

In this request Rahab showed a remarkable understanding of the desire of the God of Israel, for all through Scripture we see it is the purpose of God: His desire and will is to save His people in families, in households. If He shows mercy to one person in a household it is an indication that He wants to save every member of that family. Speaking of the coming judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, God said of Abraham, “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? ... For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him” (Gen. 18:17,19).

Oh, Christian fathers and mothers, what about your attitude toward your households? Have you recognized your responsibility? Are you acting for God in the home to command your children after you? I know we live in a day of self-expression when we are taught that we should not quell the natural desires of our children, and most of us have given way to this teaching. As a result we have unconverted children

in our homes, whose ways are the expression of their vile, wicked, corrupt natures. Scripture says, “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (Prov. 22:15).

Mrs. William Booth, wife of the first general of the *Salvation Army*, who reared a large family of eight children, claimed every one of them for God before they were born. She used to say, “I refuse to bring any child into the world to be damned in hell at last” (See 2 Th. 2:12). In their early days some of those children thought their mother was rather stern and hard because she would not allow them to go into the things of the world like other children, but the day came when every one of them thanked their mother for standing between them and the world, and all grew up to preach Christ and seek to bring others to Him.

A tremendous responsibility rests on parents in these matters. Too many parents say, “I will let my child go just so far in the ways

of the world, and I hope eventually he will come to God,” only to learn that later on he does not desire to know God at all. Your child may rebel against your correction, but he will thank you for it later on when he has come to know the Lord. Your child may look upon you as old-fashioned, but when at last he has turned to Christ for salvation then he will indeed thank you for ever having sought to lead him in the way of righteousness.

Rahab was a poor woman who had gone down into the depth of sin, but now had turned to God, and her heart cried out for the deliverance of her loved ones; so she pleaded for her household.

In the New Testament we read of the Philippian jailor who came thinking only of himself.

He cried out, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Apparently his family was gathered about him, and Paul said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:30-31). That night there was great rejoicing in that house. The whole household was brought to faith in Christ and they confessed His name in baptism.

If you are the only saved member in your household, lay hold of God and in faith cry to Him for salvation for the other members of your family. Live Christ before them and look to God to bring them all to Himself. In this we may closely emulate the faith of Rahab. **GT**

(Adapted from “Addresses On The Book Of Joshua,” pp.32-34)



RESPONSE

I just finished reading the magazine and was blessed by every article. Be assured, I am praying for everyone of you and this literature ministry always.

– *Benue State, Nigeria*

I am very glad for the July / August 2017 magazine, and want to thank God for using you and your ministry as a blessing to me.

– *Johannesburg, South Africa*

Just last week my nephew told me that he is encouraged by your magazine. He wants to let you know. I want you to know that many people have been blessed by it. “Be steadfast ... your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58 NKJV)

– *Yangon, Myanmar*



by Leslie M. Grant

“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.” —2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 NKJV

Second Thessalonians, like 1 Thessalonians, is pastoral in character. It deals with those subtle influences that so soon threatened to rob this young assembly of its fresh, ardent affection for the Lord, as well as its vigorous faith and endurance of persecution. Faithfully the apostle warns of the future coming of the Antichrist, but even at that time, the “mystery of lawlessness” (2:7) was at work to undermine what was of God. Therefore added to the refreshing encouragement of the first epistle are faithful admonitions, the seasoning of salt, to preserve the testimony of God.

Letters supposed to have come from Paul had told the Thessalonians that the Day of the Lord (not “of Christ”) had come. These letters were a crafty deceit

of the enemy by which he sought to undermine their confidence as to Christ’s coming first for the Church (the rapture) before the awesome day of His judgment of the world. Paul corrected this, and chapter 2 is a most striking prophetic Scripture about the Day of the Lord, which cannot take place until the Church has been removed to heaven.

In contrast to the evil works and words of Antichrist, who will sit in the future temple as god (v.4), the saints are encouraged to be established in every good work and word. Second Thessalonians is a book therefore to give us spiritual discernment and firmness regarding those things that would tend to lower Christian testimony. Again, the Lord’s coming is prominent in every chapter. **GT**

This column is adapted from the book “The Bible, Its 66 Books In Brief.” It is available for purchase from: Believer’s Bookshelf USA (www.bbusha.org) and Believers Bookshelf Canada (www.bbcan.org).

Q&A

Is the Christian faith a “blind” faith?

“Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life’” —John 8:12 NKJV

The Christian faith is *not* another religion among the thousands of religions in this world. Instead, it is essentially a relationship with the One who in the verse above proclaims Himself to be the Light of the World and promises that anyone who follows Him will not walk in darkness. He was “the True Light ... which, coming into the world, is light to every man” (1:9 footnote, JND). Here we can fittingly apply the words of David in Psalm 36:9: “In Thy light shall we see light.”

“Light” is one of the key words in the *Gospel of John*, along with “life” and “love.” Throughout its chapters we see again and again the battle between light and darkness. Religious leaders were stumbling in darkness in chapter 1 and trying to pin down John the Baptist as to who he was. John pointed to One whom they did not know but was coming. A few verses after this answer, the Light came onto the scene. When John proclaimed Him to be

“the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (v.29) and “the Lamb of God” (v.36), the bystanders seemingly paid no attention to Him.

But two of John’s disciples, having heard his declarations, followed Him. When the Lord inquired what they were seeking, they answered, “Where are You staying” (v.38 NKJV). He replied, “Come and see” (v.39). These disciples then gave the same invitation to others to bring them to Jesus. Throughout this gospel, in one personal encounter after another, we hear this invitation repeated:

- Philip to Nathanael – “Come and see” (v.46),
- The Samaritan woman to the men of her city – “Come, see a Man who told me ...” (4:29), and
- Jesus to His listeners – “... comes to Me ...” (6:35,37, 7:37).

In John 9 we see a man born blind become seeing. Initially there was obedience to the word of the Lord. Then, as he was questioned by the enemies of the Lord,

we see him growing in his understanding of who the Lord is until finally the Lord revealed Himself to him, and he is found worshipping Him. The Lord built on this at the very end of John 9 and into chapter 10, showing that coming into relationship with Him is a pathway of increasing light, while walking according to the traditions of the religious teachers is a matter of following blind leaders.

Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead in John 11, came out of the cave where he had been buried, bound hand and foot with grave clothes and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus commanded that he be loosed from all these impediments. He could then walk intelligently, and consequently in John 12 we find him sitting at the table with Jesus, but he was also then an object of the enmity of the spiritually blind religious leaders.

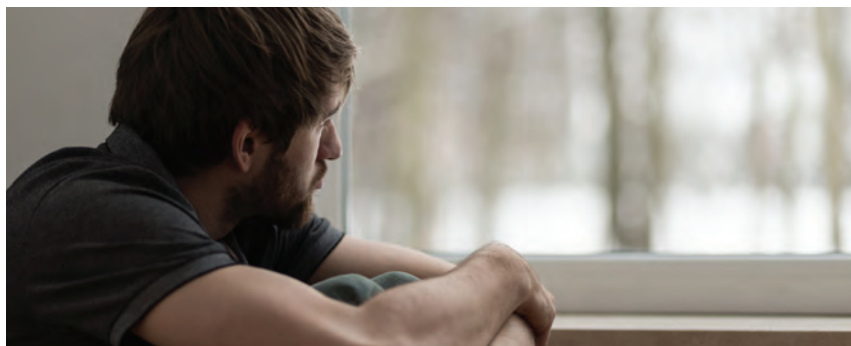
John 13 through 17 present us with the final hours of the day before the Lord's crucifixion. We see the Lord occupied with His followers, first showing them His loving concern by cleansing and refreshing them, then pointing out their weaknesses when they are self-confident. He went on to tell them about the dwelling places in the Father's house He was about to prepare for them and continued from there to tell them about the Holy

Spirit who would take His (Christ's) place in guiding and aiding them in His absence. He told them too of the Father, who loved them, who pruned them to make them fruitful, and to whom they could come in His name with their petitions and needs. He warned them that they, like He, will encounter the world's hatred and enmity, but they heard Him praying for them and expressing His appreciation for them as He prayed to the Father.

A little later that night Jesus was arrested and given a completely unrighteous trial by the Jewish Sanhedrin and then in the morning by the Roman governor. He was crucified, buried and rose again – appearing to different ones of His own. His final words in this gospel are “You follow Me” (21:22).

No, the Christian faith is not a blind faith. It is an intelligent walk with the Lord Jesus Christ – a pathway of joy and satisfaction while sharing the reproach and rejection of the One who came as light into this world, which lays in deep darkness. “Follow Me!” is something He still says to His own. You will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life. In the words of King Solomon in Proverbs 4:18, “The path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.”

—Answered by Eugene P. Vedder, Jr.



burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

We know men suffer now because of sin. But consider what sin will mean in the hereafter, when all this world’s interests, excitements and illusions are over, and the unrepentant soul experiences the dread reality of God’s judgment for sin!

We cannot save ourselves – our soul’s enemy is too strong for us. There is no remedy for sin in political changes, environmental changes, physical and mental changes or scientific advances. Codes of honor or ethics do not work either.

The Only Cure

Only the One whom we have sinned against can save us from the burden and penalty of our sin: “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven ... by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Only the death of Jesus Christ

could pay the overwhelming debt of sin and secure for us divine forgiveness: “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 Jn. 1:7).

Christ is eager to save you: “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk. 19:10). “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (Jn. 10:10).

The Choice Is Yours

Do you want to be free from the guilt and power of sin? Then come to the Lord Jesus now and confess your sins to Him, believing that He suffered and died to take them away. He promised, “The one who comes to me I will by no means cast out” (6:37).

Won’t you come to Him right now? **GT**

(This article is available in tract form from the publisher!)

**Would you like to receive this magazine every month? Contact us:
Grace & Truth, Inc.**

**210 Chestnut St, Danville, IL 61832 USA (In Nigeria: PO Box 4902, Kaduna Jct, Kaduna)
Email: magazine@gtpress.org • Web: www.gtpress.org**



WHAT IS AT THE BOTTOM OF OUR TROUBLES?

People have always struggled with this age-old question: What is at the bottom of our troubles?

No matter how hard we try, education and money never seem to erase our troubles. Instead, they seem to increase our awareness of them. The poorest as well as the richest are affected.

An inner voice keeps telling us something is missing. We feel out of tune with the Almighty God to whom we are accountable.

The Real Cause

Our troubles are only symptoms. The real cause is sin, or rebellion against God's will. Self-will rises up against God and His sovereign rights over us.

Sin in the heart works itself out in the life in different degrees and ways; but the results are the same – wrong doing because of wrong choosing.

Sin not only offends God, but it also harms the sinner: “He who sins ... wrongs his own soul” (Prov. 8:36 NKJV). We are warned that “whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Gal. 6:7). The effects of sin are sure, both here and in the hereafter.

Death No Cure

Men would like to think that all their troubles end when they die; but death is no cure for sin, nor does it end the misery of the sinner. According to Revelation 21:8, all unrepentant sinners “shall have their part in the lake which

- continued on inside back cover

www.gtpress.org

GRACE & TRUTH, INC. • 210 Chestnut Street Danville, IL 61832-2699