

I AM NOT WORTHY!

*"I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies,
and of all the truth,
which thou hast shewed unto thy servant" (Genesis 32:10).*

We all know intellectually that we are not worthy of all the blessings the Lord has bestowed upon our lives. We are all willing to say, "I am not worthy," because we know it is true. However, I wonder if we really FEEL that we are not worthy.

When we have troubles, and say or feel, "I don't deserve this!" then we are saying we are worthy of better things in our life! When we are not content with the things we have, we are saying, "I deserve better than this," or "I am worthy of much more than this in my life!" Therefore, I submit, we all need to better understand the words of Jacob, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant" (Genesis 32:10).

I AM NOT WORTHY

Why should we feel and say, "I am not worthy"?

We are sinners. God is Holy! We are not worthy to call upon His name, except for the blood of Jesus. There is nothing in us, in our flesh, that causes us to be worthy! **The Centurion** understood and felt this truth when he said,

"Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed" (Matthew 8:8). **John the Baptist** felt the same way when he began preaching about Jesus and said, "He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear:" (Matthew 3:11). Likewise, said **Peter** (Luke 5:8); **Paul** (I Corinthians 15:9). These are some of the most "worthy" people who have ever lived, but they all truly felt and said they were

not worthy!!!

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6).

I AM NOT WORTHY OF THE LEAST OF ALL THE MERCIES

Jacob does not merely say there are some things I do not deserve, or there are some things I have that I am not worthy to have. He does not say, "I am not worthy of a bass boat, or Mercedes automobile, or million-dollar house."

He said and felt, "I am not worthy of the LEAST of all the mercies!"

What are some of the **bigger, larger blessings** (mercies) you have? things you have? Eternal salvation, health, family, friends, the Church, the truth, and food are some major mercies and blessings from God. We do not deserve those things! What are some of the "**LEAST**" **blessings or mercies** from God? Would you agree that we might consider an old car, old furniture, old shoes or clothes, some food we do not like to eat as some of the least of the mercies from God? Well, the text says, "I AM NOT WORTHY OF THE LEAST OF ALL THE MERCIES!" Have you ever really felt unworthy of your old shoes? Have you even felt unworthy of the air you breathe (and that is not a small item!!!)? **I AM UNWORTHY OF THE LEAST OF ALL THE MERCIES!**

I AM NOT WORTHY OF ALL THE TRUTH WHICH THOU HAST SHEWED ME!

Any truth we understand is because God has shown it to us! We are not smart enough to understand truth with-

out God revealing (showing) it to us! Do you realize how much truth God has shown to you? Do you realize and feel that you are not worthy to understand that truth? Do you know how blessed you are to have God come to you and show you His truth?

After Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus' response was "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (see Matthew 16:13-18). If you know Jesus, if you understand the truth about the kingdom of heaven, if you understand the truth that salvation is of the Lord, THEN **GOD HAS SHOWN IT TO YOU!!!** He has shown us so much truth.

I AM NOT WORTHY OF ALL THE TRUTH WHICH THOU HAST SHEWED ME!

I AM NOT WORTHY OF ALL THE TRUTH WHICH THOU HAST SHEWED UNTO THY SERVANT!

Aha! Now we notice that the one speaking is a **SERVANT!** This is a child of God who has humbled himself to be a servant...a servant of the most high God. This person is much like the prodigal son who said, "**Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants**" (Luke 15:18,19). How do you feel about yourself? How do you really feel? Can you honestly say, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant"? May God help us to always have that attitude, and to daily be reminded of this truth.

No preacher should dare enter the pulpit to 'rightly divide the Word of Truth' who has not followed Paul's instructions: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God." (II Tim. 2:15) Raymond W. Barber

Keep Your Eye On The End of The Row

by Elder Jason S. Solomon
Cumming, Georgia

When I was a boy, I spent most every weekend on my grandfather's farm playing in the creeks and woods when my father let me get away from helping with the cows and the crops. I look back on that time with great fondness, and I thank our Heavenly Father often for the privilege of having both a rural and suburban upbringing. One of the reasons that I am so thankful for this time in my life is the great lessons that I learned during those years.

One particular lesson came while I was sitting in my uncle's lap while he was plowing. I watched as the powerful tractor pulled the heavy metal blade and cut the earth to prepare for cultivation. The earth was hard and red, but the steel blade of the plow brooked no resistance as it turned over the clay in a curling, crumbling wave. Row after row, I watched as he skillfully maneuvered the machinery around the field.

Finally, one day he asked if I would like to drive, and I gleefully took the broad wheel of the old farm tractor. Running over the rough ground, the wheels of the tractor bumped around from left to right. No matter how hard I focused on holding the wheel perfectly straight, the hard, ridged ground pushed it back and forth. My uncle told me to keep it straight, but try as I might, I could not do it. I was just not strong enough. Then my wise uncle told me something that had never dawned on me. He said, "Keep your eye on the end of the row. That way no matter how the tractor jumps around, you keep it straight." He went on to tell me that if I focus on the ground right in front of the tractor, I will not be keeping it straight, but reacting to every little twist. This advice made all the difference.

I began focusing my attention on the end of the row across the wide field.

It seemed strange at first, because my natural tendency was to look for the obstacles directly in my way. The more I relied on the end of the row to be my focus, the straighter my rows. The straighter rows made subsequent rows easier, because the tractor began to have grooves to follow. In the end, I learned a profound lesson that has affected my perspective on most everything. It has shaped my personal relationships with family and friends. It has shaped the way I work. It has shaped the way I worship, and it has changed the way I pray.

"Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Peter 3:8).

You see, God takes this view when He sees us and the world. This long perspective is similar to that of our Heavenly Father and that exhibited by Jesus Christ, the Son, when He dwelt among us in His earthly ministry. God takes a long view, in fact an eternal view, of time. While we see each day leading into the next, and year into year, God is not bound by time. It lies out before Him as one great strand with each end in His great hands.

As He said to Moses, "I am that I am." He needs no other name. He simply is and always will be and always has been. This perspective becomes available to the saint upon regeneration as he is in-dwelt by God the Holy Spirit. As long as the child of God does not quench the Holy Spirit through sin and neglect, it provides assurance of a hopeful future with the King.

"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah 46:10).

Herein lies the peace that passes

understanding, that eternal perspective. When the child of God goes forth in faith, she experiences confidence and joy in simple obedience. This obedience leads to a closer walk with God and increasing conformity to the image or likeness of Jesus Christ.

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren," (Romans 8:29). You see, it is the destiny of each and every saint to be like Christ. God ordained this truth from before Creation.

Keeping that long view of life, and knowing that what you do now will bear fruit in times to come, is an assurance. Even though the present may be filled to bursting with sore trials of the heart and faith-testing difficulties, keeping eternity in view brings hope when there seems nothing is hopeful. Like those crops that I helped my uncle prepare for, we work now not for the present, but in hope of what comes. Hope is our inspiration and motivation to every good work, and as long as this hope rests in Jesus, we have confidence that it will bear good fruit through the Holy Spirit. Jesus had this same hope that even in the death of the body He would be delivered. So too, each and every true Christian has the same hope through intimacy with God the Father.

It is easy to say these things, but we all know that it is also very easy to become discouraged by life's many trials. Here we should look to the Word, the testimony of God Himself, as an encouragement. The letter to the Hebrews was excellently delivered to the saints among the Jews knowing that, like most Christians in America today, most of them grew up hearing about Jesus and God and the various heroes and villains of the Bible. This book

captures many of the challenges that continue to challenge the church. To this end, the Hebrew letter was written, to encourage and enlighten the saint, saying,

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our

faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Hebrews 12:1-3).

Countless children of God have come before the present generation, and have not only survived the continual vain onslaughts of the powers

of the air, but their own personal struggles with sin and temptation. As the Scriptures say, we are surrounded by a "cloud of witnesses" that testify to the victory of Jesus Christ and His eternal Kingdom. Therefore, we have the privilege today and every day until the King of Kings returns for His bride to celebrate His victory and live in His service. May the saints keep their eyes on the end of the row and rejoice, for the King approaches!

Wanted: A Heart Repairman

*Needed one heart surgeon;
apply within,
To heal a heart full of
haughtiness and sin.
To put the valves and lobes
back in sinc,
Calm the quivering and
rushing in a wink.
For years this heart has
been racing wild,
Slow it down a bit
as the heart of a child.
Give it the proper blood flow
to stabilize the soul,*

*Cause it to yearn
for forgiveness as in
the Bible we are told.
No New remedy is needed
to make this heart beat
with joy and love,
Only the gentle touch
of God's grace from above.
His healing is like no other
and the warranty
is sweet and pure.
Guaranteed as long
as life endures.*

*Psalm 51:10
"Create in me a clean heart,
O, God and renew a right
spirit within me."*

*Ezekiel 36:26
"A new heart also will I give
you, and a new spirit will I
put within you; and I will
take away, the stony heart out
of your flesh, and I will give
you a heart of flesh.*

*Gale G. Smith
Statesboro, Georgia*

Grow in Knowledge

1. "As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that _____ from his place."
2. "For man that wandereth out of the way of _____ shall remain in the congregation of the dead."
3. "For it shall be, that, as a wandering bird cast out of the _____, so the daughters of Moab be at the fords of Arnon."
4. "they have wandered as _____ men in the streets, they have polluted themselves with blood, so that men could not touch their garments."
5. "They cried unto them, Depart ye; it is unclean; depart, depart, touch not: when they _____ away and wandered, they said among the heathen, They shall no more sojourn there."
6. "Lo, then would I wander far off, and _____ in the wilderness."
7. "Let them wander up and down for _____, and grudge if they be not satisfied."
8. "Thus saith the Lord unto this _____, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the Lord doth not accept them,...."
9. "With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from they _____"
10. "He _____ contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness where there is no way."

Milk Versus Meat

by Elder Chris Hill
Thomaston, Georgia

"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrites, and envies, and all evil speakings. As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." (1 Peter 2:1-3). The word of God can be classified into two broad categories: milk and meat. Here, we see the sincere milk of the word. The work of God's ministers who feed the flock of God with the word of the gospel is compared to the natural food that a child receives in order to make him grow and be strong. This analogy makes the purpose of the gospel easier to understand, and brings to light some very precious spiritual truths.

When a baby is born, its digestive system is not capable of handling harsh foods. It must eat easily digested foods that can immediately be absorbed into the blood stream to provide the nutrition necessary for normal growth and development. Milk is the primary source of nutrition for a newborn baby. We have all been exposed to the television commercials which emphasize milk as a major source of calcium for building strong bones. This is especially necessary for newborn babies. Their bones are very soft and not well developed. Milk helps to strengthen and harden the bones, thus insuring a well developed skeletal foundation on which the body rests.

The spiritual parallel that Peter is drawing in the text is clearly evident. Those who are new-born babies in Christ must be fed with a gospel that strengthens their foundation. That foundation is none other than the fundamental doctrines of the Church: the total depravity of man, unconditional election, predestination, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the final preservation of the saints in glory.

These doctrines are the sincere milk of the word. Once a child of God has been enlightened to the truth, these fundamental doctrines are easily digested. They are easy to digest because they are the only hope a poor sinner has. One who realizes that eternal salvation is completely out of the hands of men, can rest on the foundation that Christ has done a work for him that he could not do for himself. The religious world at large preaches a doctrine that cannot be digested. For this reason, many of God's children today have "spiritual indigestion." They wrestle within themselves and wonder if they have done enough to merit a home in heaven. When this kind of food is eaten, there will be no spiritual growth. When the true gospel is preached, however, there will be a sure foundation on which the child of God can stand.

In 1 Corinthians chapter three, Paul tells us about some brethren who were babies in Christ. He says in verse two, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." Paul had preached the fundamental doctrines of Christ to these brethren, yet they had begun to fall away. Some were saying "I am of Paul" and others "I am of Apollos." For this reason, Paul said these brethren were still carnal. They needed to hear more of the milk of the word.

Hebrews 5:13-14 says, "For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." The brethren at Corinth did not have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. They were not ready for strong meat.

Let us now consider the question: In

terms of the gospel, what is strong meat? To get to the answer, let us continue reading where we left off in Hebrews. Hebrews 6:1-3 says: "Therefore leaving principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit." Notice that the writer mentions the foundation, the principles of the doctrine of Christ, or the milk of the word; but he is saying for those who are already strong in milk of the word to leave that where it is (on the foundation), and go on unto perfection. The word "perfection" here implies full development, growth into maturity of godliness, **not sinless perfection**. The meat of the gospel, therefore, involves our daily walk in the kingdom of God. It involves such things as are mentioned in Matthew 5:39-48. (Pease read).

It is easy to accept the finished work of Christ, but it takes one who is spiritually mature to "love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." A baby cannot do these things. It takes one who is grown up in the gospel. Jesus ends this passage by saying, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Again, the word "perfect" is speaking of spiritual growth and maturity. Jesus is telling us that **it takes spiritual maturity to do those things mentioned in the previous verses!**

Walking in the Kingdom and growing into spiritual maturity involves working in the Master's kingdom. Lis-

ten to a familiar passage of scripture in II Timothy 3:16-17. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: **That the man of God may be PERFECT, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**" This verse says the purpose of the scripture is so the man of God may be perfect, or spiritually mature, and thoroughly or completely furnished unto all good works. Titus 2:14 says, "Who (Christ) gave himself

for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, **zealous of good works.**" The babe in Christ feeds on the sincere milk of the word because he is not yet ready for strong meat. He, as a natural baby, cannot do for himself. He is dependent on someone else. In the fundamental principles of the doctrine of Christ, God does for us what we cannot do. **But one must not remain a babe.** When the babe in Christ begins to grow into spiritual maturity,

he, like a natural baby who begins to "work out" and exercise his body as he grows, must "work out" his own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure (Philippians 2:12b-13). May God help us to work out our own salvation, leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ where they are (on the foundation), and go on unto perfection or maturity in the kingdom of God.

Being A Foster Child

by Sis. Kristen Yvette Warner
Tampa, Florida

My name is Kristen Yvette Warner and I'm going to talk to you about foster care.

Did you know there was an S.P.C.A. (Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) before there was foster care for children who were left, not taken care of, or abused by their parents?

In 1636 Benjamin Eaton was the first foster child. At that time, foster children were being treated as slaves. They were being bought and sold. In 1853 Charles Loring Brace founded the New York Childrens Society. He is also known as the father of foster care. There was a movie made about this a year ago and it was on TV. It was called "The Orphan Train".

In 1860 the State of Massachusetts decided it was cheaper to pay people to keep foster children than to keep foster children in institutions or orphanages. Today, we also know it is better for the foster child to be in a foster family than in institutions. All children need a home.

In 1909 during the White House Conference on Children, Theodore Roosevelt said, "For a normal child, a carefully selected foster home is the best substitute for his own family."

I was a foster child in a foster home. I was blessed. The laws were changed and my family was able to adopt me. I love my parents and family. We have had 97 foster children in our home. Sometimes it is nice. Other times, the kids cause lots of problems and we spend lots of time in family discussions. Some kids run away. Sometimes we get real sick babies. It is lots of fun when they settle down. I like being in a foster family. We must all work together to help these children.

In Hillbrough County there are about 500 foster children and about 160 foster families. Foster families are needed to give their home to children.

PLEASE PRAY FOR US AND LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

ETERNAL SALVATION IS NOT BY OUR WORKS!

(Romans 9:11; Titus 3:5)
(Ephesians 2:9; II Timothy 1:9)

PLEASE SUPPORT THE TRUMPET OF TRUTH FINANCIALLY!

Rejoice in your darkest hour. The world may think you are crazy, foolish; but keep trusting God, keep building your faith on the Word of God. Rest in that Book. Do what He says do. He will help you, lead you in the same way He led Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, David, Peter, James and John and the apostle Paul. Lee Roberson

Mercy; Then Punishment!

by Elder McKinley Wright
Jacksonville, Florida

Before beginning to read this article, it is suggested that the first nine verses in the seventh chapter of Amos (Amos 7:1-9) be read. It is also suggested that the reader keep his/her Bible open to this passage and refer regularly to the Scripture that has been cited.

In these verses, we are given the record of two of God's distinguishing characteristics. First, there is a prophetic record of His mercy. Then, there is the record that He sets requirements for those who are the objects of His mercy, and judges them as to how well they measure up to the requirement that He has set. When they follow His rules, He rewards them. But when their performance is not satisfactory, He punishes them. Verses one and four, and the verses following each of them, refers to the mercy of God in no uncertain terms. Verses eight and nine present just as vivid a picture of His punishment of failure!

Before any person can exercise mercy, that person must first have exercised judgment. When that judgment takes place, the person being judged must of necessity have been found guilty. The withholding of punishment from one who has not been found guilty is not mercy. It is the right of the person who is not guilty. The fact that the one who judges exercises judgment means that he has set requirements which, in turn, means that he has the right to do so. If a person sets requirements without having the right to do so, he is a usurper of authority. Sooner or later, the usurper will be exposed.

Many people do not acknowledge that God has the right to set requirements! The natural man does not desire to feel indebted to God, so he makes up the idea that he has earned those pleasant things that he receives from God. In fact, the natural man does not even acknowledge that the pleasant things that have come his way came from God. He claims to have earned them himself. But in these two passages (verses 1-3, and 4-6) God declares prophetically that He has (1)

set requirements, (2) judged the behavior of those upon whom he set the requirements, (3) found them guilty of failing to pass His examination, (4) pronounced punishment aside even though that punishment was deserved. When a person who has the right to set requirements upon another pronounces impending punishment upon the failure of that person to meet the requirements, but then withholds that punishment, **he is exercising mercy!** This series of actions is the very definition of the word mercy. Someone has said that the difference between mercy and grace is that whereas mercy withholds deserved punishment, grace goes a step further and gives some positive gift.

Does God have the right to set requirements upon people? The answer is an enthusiastic "YES"! He is sovereign, and as the sovereign king, He has the right to place whatever requirements He desires on His subjects. This right is based solely on His sovereignty. Some have the idea that He does not have the right to place requirements on the people until He has done something that places them in His debt. This is not true. His sovereignty gives Him the right. His creation of the human race places all of its members in His debt. But this in no way suggests that God had to make them indebted to Him before setting requirements upon them.

He created the universe and the people in the earth to glorify Himself. He told those people to not eat the fruit of a certain tree. He had the right to place this requirement upon them. They ate of the forbidden fruit, thereby failing to meet the requirement that God had set. They were, therefore, worthy of whatever punishment God chose to send upon them. When he placed the requirement upon them, He told them that their failure would result in their death (complete separation from Him). When Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, the entire human family was in him; so when he died, the whole human family died with him. God had the right to pronounce this

sentence of death upon him and his posterity because He was (and still is) sovereign. Thankfully, this is not the whole story.

God purposed to deliver some of Adam's descendents from the death into which they had fallen. Being sovereign, He had the right to do this. Because He is sovereign, He has the right to deliver some of them without delivering them all. From among Adam's descendents, God chose certain individuals (a multitude that no man can number) to be His own. He redeemed them and shed His grace on them in many ways. He told them to serve Him in whatever ways He commanded. He had the right to set this requirement upon them. Because God set this requirement upon them, the patriarchs of old brought offerings at various times and on many occasions. Most of the time, they offered animal sacrifices. But sometimes, God placed more stringent requirements upon them. An example is the requirement of God that Abraham offer his son, Isaac. Did God have the right to require Abraham to do this? Certainly He did He is sovereign! Abraham knew He had that right. Although his heart was breaking, Abraham submitted to God's requirement without any question.

At a certain point in time (determined by Himself), God chose a people (the descendents of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) to serve Him. He set them in a land and gave them specific instructions as to how they should serve Him. He had other children whom He did not include in this covenant of service. These instructions (requirements) included both the outward form their worship should (ought to) take, and the inward attitudes they should have in their hearts. Did God have the right to set these requirements upon them? He is sovereign, so He did!

God had the right to make demands upon Israel. He made those demands. Amos now sees and sets forth His judgment of their behavior. Amos sets it forth in two statements of God's displeasure. The first description of God's wrath against their failure describes

the grasshoppers that “made an end of eating the grass of the land.” In other words, they ate all of the grass. They made an end of eating because there was no grass remaining. The second setting forth of God’s wrath is described in terms of the fire that “devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part.” In both instances, God relented and withheld the penalty because of the intercession of Amos. Why did God prophetically set forth His wrath against them twice? Why did He not do so just once? Or why not three times? He has not told us the answer to these questions, so anything a person says on the subject is only that person’s idea. But there are lessons to be learned by meditating on it.

The three most often suggested reasons for describing His wrath twice are (1) The descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are known by the time Amos was prophesying by two names, Israel and Judah. God’s wrath was displayed against both of them. (2) Also, this display of His wrath would take place at two different times. So logic dictates that there should be two descriptions of the wrath manifested. Sometimes He shows His wrath by sending pestilence (grasshoppers) upon the people, and sometimes it is shown through extreme natural phenomena (fire). (3) He set His wrath forth twice to emphasize the fact that His judgment is sure and His mercy is abundant.

He passed judgment upon them twice, and both times He withheld the penalty. Verses seven through nine describe a third exercise of His judgment. This time the penalty is not withheld. It is the opinion of the writer that these three descriptions of judgment show how long suffering God is toward His people (He twice forgave), but that if and when they persist in their disobedience, the time will come when there will not be any more forgiveness for them. An outstanding example of the results of a people’s persistence in disobedience is the persecution of the Jewish people during the last two thousand years. There can be no doubt that the primary object for judgment described in this prophecy is the nation of Israel (Israel and Judah). As Amos made intercession in verses two and five, he asked God, “By whom shall Jacob

arise? For he is small.” He interceded for Jacob by name. Surely he was referring to the nation of Israel and not to Jacob literally. Jacob had been dead many years. Christ, the church, and the Christian dispensation are mentioned in the lesson. But the primary teaching about judgment has reference to the Jewish people.

In the seventh verse, Amos’s vision (or whatever it was that he was experiencing) continued. This verse begins with the words “Thus he shewed me: and behold...” He had begun verses one and four with the words “Thus hath the Lord God shewed unto me: and behold...” Clearly, then, what Amos saw in verse seven, eight and nine was a third segment in the overall lesson that God was teaching on the subject of judgment. Let us now look at this part of the lesson.

In the first two segments, God emphasized punishment, the result of judgment. The grasshoppers and the fire came because the judgment had already been made and their guilt had been established. Logically, punishment must follow, hence the grasshoppers and fire. But in this segment, God showed Amos a plumbline. A plumbline is used to determine whether something, that is being constructed is straight up and down, or whether it is leaning to one side. The plumbline is the instrument by which the judgment is made. It was not the instrument of punishment. The emphasis in the third segment is on the judgment itself rather than on the punishment.

In this segment of the lesson, God showed Amos “behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand” (verse seven). The wall was already built: therefore, this speaks of a work that has been finished. The wall was made by a plumbline meaning that it was straight up and down—perfect. This perfection is not a perfection that the stones of which the wall is made (children of God) have gained for themselves. It is the righteousness of Christ which God has imputed to them. The New Testament described the wall that Amos saw. It speaks in terms of a completed building of which Jesus is the chief corner stone. This wall is perfect. Its cornerstone (Christ) is perfect, and the other stones are conformed to His image. A wall made of perfect stones cannot help being perfect if

the builder had any skill at all. And God is a master builder!

Amos saw the wall as having been completed. It was made (not was being made) by a “plumbline.” The use of past tense might seem strange in view of the fact that redemption had not yet been accomplished. But the Bible frequently refers to things that God is doing as having been already completed. This makes sense, because God cannot fail. What he purposes to do is as good as done already. In Romans 8:30 we read, “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified them he also glorified.” All of the verbs (did predestine, called, justified and glorified) in this verse describe actions as having already been completed.

Nevertheless, the last one (glorified) will not be completed until the bodies of the saints have been raised in the likeness of Christ. But this is a work that God is doing. When He purposes a work, it is as good as done.

But if we conclude that the wall represents only the elect body of God’s people, we rob ourselves of a huge body of instruction in practical godliness. The wall also represents the nation of Israel, not modern Israel but Israel of old. God went on to tell Amos, “Behold I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel:...” When Amos wrote the words, the action described was still about the Jews. Jesus lived among the Jews for about thirty years. During the last three years, He and His disciples went all through the land telling the people how they should conduct themselves. The uprightness of His life shows the measure of devotion that God desired them to manifest. The example of His life shows them how they ought to serve God. When they rejected Him (We emphasize that their rejection had no bearing on their eternal relationship with God. They rejected Him only in terms of whom they would obey.) They destroyed the special fellowship they had with God. They are no longer the special people that God had called His name upon and chosen to serve Him. God said in verses eight and nine, “Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: **I will not again pass by them any more:** And the high places of Isaac shall

be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword." Listen to Jesus, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37). He went on to say, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matthew 23-38-39). Amos had said, "the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel will be laid waste." He told them what was going to take place. Jesus said, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." The word desolate means "without anything pleasant that pertains to life." Jesus declared that what Amos had prophesied had now come to pass. The Jews are being cast off forever as the Lord's special people. When God's people use His mercifulness as an excuse to withhold service (obedience) that He has commanded, they will soon surely experience His wrath. The persecutions of

the Jews during the last two thousand years bear witness to this fact. Our own nation and our churches are suffering today largely because we have done this very thing!

God was merciful toward Israel. They forsook the land that He had given them and went to Egypt. There they came into bondage. No one could have logically criticized God if He had left them there. But He did not leave them. Through His mercy, He brought them out and restored them to their own land. Again, they took His mercy for granted, and refused to do the things that He commanded. They were taken into captivity again. This time they went to Babylon. Again, He brought them back to their own land. They took Him for granted again. They might well have said, "God is merciful, so no matter how badly we behave, there will not be any unpleasant consequences for us. Let us eat, drink and be merry." They said it by their actions. But the time came that they saw Him as something other than the God of Mercy. They experienced His wrath. They will never again have the blessings of dwelling in the land of promise having a renewal of the covenant that God had made with them before. As individuals, they have

been born again, they can know the special blessedness of God's presence with them. When a Jewish individual comes to the point in his experience that he says, "Blessed is he (Christ) that cometh in the name of the Lord" he will be brought into the same covenant of service into which we (gentiles) have been brought. But as a people, they forsook God, and He cast them away.

We are told in the New Testament, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for **our** learning, that **we** through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15:4). This teaches that although the lesson we have been studying was written primarily concerning the Jews, there is a lesson there for us! God never changes. He is merciful toward us even as He was merciful toward them. But the Plumbline is in our midst even as it was in theirs. The plumbline is Christ. Let us look at the Plumbline, seeing His perfection. Let us pattern our lives after the example that He set for us. Let us live faithfully even as He did. If we neglect this duty, sooner or later we shall know something else besides God's mercy. We shall know His wrath. And His wrath is dreadful! May He give us grace to examine ourselves and change our ways.

THE BIBLE AND THE TV GUIDE

Author Unknown

They lie on the table, side by side;
The Holy Bible and the TV Guide.
One is well worn but cherished with
pride.
(not the Bible, but the TV Guide).
As pages are turned, what shall they
see?
Oh, what does it matter, turn on the
TV!

So they open the book in which they
confide
(No, not the Bible, it's the TV Guide).
The Word of God is seldom read
Maybe a verse e'er they fall into bed.
Exhausted and sleepy and tired as can
be.

Not from reading the Bible; from watch-
ing TV.
So, then back to the table, side by side,
lie the Holy Bible and the TV Guide. No
time for prayer, no time for the Word.
The plan of salvation is seldom heard.
But forgiveness of sin so full and free is
found in the Bible, not on TV.

Blessed be the God and the Father of Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. To the Praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved. Ephesians 1:3-6

Salvation By Fire!

by Elder W. M. Mullis
Waycross, Georgia

People often speak of salvation as if it can only have reference to one thing. Most everyone has had the question asked of them: "Are you saved?" Those who ask the question need to realize that there are many answers to such an ambiguous question. In fact, when the word **SAVED** is used in the Bible, it seldom has any reference to being **SAVED** from going to the eternal hell and going to the Eternal Heaven.

Let us establish the definition of the word saved. "**SAVED**" means **to be delivered!** We can be saved from ignorance, saved from chastening, saved from destruction, saved from hell, saved from our enemies, saved from suffering,...the list is endless. Let us now begin to look at the word of God to see a salvation by fire!

In I Corinthians, chapter 3, we read about the fact that we can be **SAVED BY FIRE!** Please read these verses carefully:

12. "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13. Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be **saved**; yet so as **by fire!**"

This passage of scripture in I Corinthians 3:12-15 is talking about the fact that **God judges His people according to their works.** (See Matthew 16:27, 28; II Corinthians 5:10; I Peter 1:17; Psalm 62:12; Luke 6:48). God is love! He loves us with an everlasting love! But His love for us does not mean

that He overlooks or condones our evil works. On the contrary, the scriptures teach that "**...whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth,** and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." (Study Hebrews 12:6-11!) Peter tells us, **God is our Father and our JUDGE!** (I Peter 1:17). So it is that Paul was writing to the church at Corinth and warning them that God was going to **burn** away the dross in their lives. **God purges us** from time to time, and it is a very painful experience to have our works "tried with the fire of God!" When our works have been for self-exaltation or glorification, those works are not pleasing to God, our Father and Judge! **All** of our works shall be judged by this fire of God.

Now, when the scourging fire comes, this **destroys** those works which have been false or pretentious. God knows **why** we do everything! "...all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do!" (Hebrews 4:13). God is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart! We may fool many people with "excuses" for our failure to serve God! We may fool many people into thinking we are serving God because we do many works! **BUT GOD CAN NOT BE FOOLED OR TRICKED!** He knows **why** we "DO" and "DO NOT DO" the things He commands. And it shall be made manifest when He tries us with **FIRE.** **If we purge ourselves** of those works of wood, hay, and stubble, then we **SAVE OURSELVES** from the fire of God destroying those works. Our works of faith and labors of love are referred to as "gold, silver, and precious stones!" They endure the **FIRE!** But other works are burned away and we suffer loss!

But the point is this: **God SAVES US** by burning away those works which

are carnal and temporal! When God begins to "turn on the heat," so to speak, we turn to **HIM!** We are made willing to serve, worship, pray, and praise God in the times when the **FIRE** comes in our lives. **WE** see the uselessness of all carnal things in time of physical sickness, spiritual sickness, or hunger, pain, and family troubles. When the storms of life come, how are we able to endure? How are we able to stand amidst losing a companion or child in death? If we have built our house upon the **ROCK,** if our works are works of gold, silver and precious stones, then our faith is strong, our confidence steadfast, and our house does not fall! (See Matthew 7:24-27.) We might not think that worshipping and serving God is so important; but when the storms come and the **FIRE** begins to destroy everything, we then will be crying out in anguish, making promises to serve **HIM** and Him alone! David says in Psalm 110:3, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power!" **We are saved** from our carnal ways, thoughts, and works **BY** the **FIRE** of God!

The people of God are most willing, in fact, better suited and fit for service to God, immediately after the **FIRE** of God has saved us. It may come many times in our lives because we repeatedly go backward. We walk close to Him, and walk with Him ever so carefully while we are mindful of that horrible experience of suffering. But we then begin to forget the loss we suffered, and go back to the weak and beggarly elements of the world. Then, again, God will **save us by fire!** Have you been saved? Have you been **saved by FIRE** and suffered the loss of many different things during your life? Well, one of the wise proverbs in the scriptures says, "**TAKE AWAY THE DROSS** from the silver, and there shall come forth a ves-

sel for the finer!" (Proverbs 25:4). The word "finer" here means "refiner or one who purges away." When God purges us with fire, He saves us, and we come forth a vessel ready and willing to serve Him and put Him first in our lives.

Please re-read I Corinthians 3: 12-15, and pray for God to give us grace to "RIGHTLY DIVIDE THE WORD OF

TRUTH" concerning this SALVATION BY FIRE which is taught in so many ways in the scriptures! (Please study Mark 9:43-48; I Corinthians 11:31,32; II Timothy 2:19-21; John 15:1-6; I Peter 1:7; I Peter 4:12-14; Malachi 3:1-4; Job 23:10; Isaiah 48:10; Isaiah 43:1, 2).

Let us all remember that our works **SHALL BE TRIED BY FIRE!** Though

we suffer loss, we shall be **SAVED BY FIRE!** I hope you see that this is an important salvation taught in the scriptures which needs to be understood by us all! God does save His people from the eternal hell to the eternal Heaven by the blood of Jesus Christ. But He also puts His saved people into a fire (hell) here on this earth to purge the ungodliness from their lives!

Maintaining Your Vessels

by Bro. Robert Varn
Jacksonville, Florida

As Christians, God has given us daily duties. Each person's duty may vary considering the gifts God has bestowed upon them. God's word teaches to whom much is given, much is required. Therefore God may put weaker vessels in our lives so that we may help them get down life's daily road. (See Romans 15:1). These weaker vessels could be any type of people. They could be the elderly, or the sick and afflicted, or children born and unborn. God may have called us to work with one of these weaker vessels.

In Numbers chapter one, God commanded Moses to number the tribes of Israel, and get them ready for War. Moses was to number the able-bodied males from 20 to 60 years from every tribe.

Every tribe was to be numbered for war except the tribe of Levi. For God had a separate task for the tribe of Levi. Numbers 1:50 tells the task of the Levites: "But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, **and over all the vessels thereof**, and over

all things that belong to it, they shall bear the tabernacle, **and all the vessels thereof**; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle." The Levites were to minister unto the tabernacle and all the vessels thereof. They were to keep the vessels of the tabernacle in line. Just as a pastor is to work to keep the church in line, just as parents are to keep their children in line, we are to work to **maintain our own vessels!**

Some days, it is hard enough to keep your own vessel in line. Our vessels are made up of many members: the mind, the heart, and the soul. Our minds are to think clean thoughts, our hearts are to remain pure, and our souls are to work to feel the presence of The Holy Spirit.

A ship is sometimes referred to as a vessel. Any vessel left unattended will rust and rot and will soon not be satisfactory for sailing. Vessels at sea must be attended, or in the time of a storm, the ship will be tossed around and become shipwrecked. If our vessels

are not maintained, we will be tossed into seas of the world and will become shipwrecked.

In I Thessalonians 4:3, 4 God's word says, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor." We should keep or maintain our vessels by prayer and Bible reading daily as well as other Christian works.

Mothers have an important job raising up the next generation. This is the greatest job in the world, and ungodly feminists have worked to destroy this.

If mothers keep not their own vessels in line, then how will they keep their children? If pastors keep not their own vessels in line, how will they keep their churches? If voters keep not their own vessels in line, how will they keep their elected officials in line? We as God's children must work daily to maintain our vessels so that our light may shine brighter and brighter.

Answers to Grow In Knowledge

1. Wandereth - Proverbs 27:8
2. Understanding - Proverbs 21:16
3. Nest - Isaiah 16:2
4. Blind - Lamentations 4:14
5. Fled - Lamentations 4:15
6. Remain - Psalm 55:7
7. Meat - Psalm 59:15
8. People - Jeremiah 14:10
9. Commandments - Psalm 119:10
10. Poureth - Psalm 107:40

The Sufferings Of The Saviour

by Elder W. H. Durrence
Brooklet, Georgia

If asked how Jesus saved us, most people would probably answer, "He died for our sins!" That is true, for the hope of our salvation rests upon the glorious fact that the Son of God came in the flesh and died for our sins (Mt. 1:21,23). The results of sin are numerous, but its most profound consequence is the penalty of death. In the beginning God announced this alarming fact to Adam, saying, "...But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). The New Testament confirms this truth by the words of Paul, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). Many are now the children of God by grace, because Jesus died to pay our sin debt and thereby saved us from the eternal wages and penalty of sin.

While we often focus our attention upon the death of Jesus, we sometimes forget the very important fact that Christ suffered before He died. The sufferings of our Saviour are a very vital part of Bible teaching and are inseparably linked to His death. Jesus did not just give up life and die a peaceful death; instead, He suffered untold pain and agony. In our behalf the blessed Saviour suffered, bled, and at last died. How important are His sufferings? No doubt they are far more significant than we have imagined. Notice these words, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit..." (1 Peter 3:18). It is the objective of this study to consider some of the sufferings of our Saviour. It is impossible for us to consider all the sufferings which He endured or to comprehend the severity of those which He

experienced, but, since many of them are listed for us in the Bible, we shall take a look at some of them.

First, let us think about the sufferings He endured because of the sacrifices He made. It was certainly a sacrifice for Jesus to leave heaven and dwell in a world filled with sin. He gave up the presence of the Father, the company of angels, and the riches of glory and in exchange endured a life among sinful men. We can only imagine the joys of heaven as a place with no sins, sickness, sorrow, tears, or death! Though Jesus knew the reality of that glorious abode from eternity past, yet He left it for a trouble-filled life on earth. Surely we can acknowledge that there was suffering in that sacrifice.

In the suffering of sacrifice, He exchanged wealth for poverty. We know very little of His childhood, but we do know that He was raised in the humble surroundings of a carpenter's home. Paul wrote, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). As He reached manhood and began His public ministry, He had no home in which to rest His weary body. How awful it must have been to possess less than birds and foxes (Luke 9:58), when once He had enjoyed better than the best of this world. It was only part of the sufferings of the Saviour.

There were also sufferings inflicted upon Him by others. Born of a virgin, living in a carpenter's home, He was misunderstood at the early age of twelve. It was evident that Mary and Joseph did not understand His behavior for they asked, "...Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?" (Luke 2:48). No doubt this very unusual child was subjected to mistreatment both by His

peers and by adults who failed to understand His real identity.

Perhaps this suffering seemed inconsequential when compared to the injustice which He endured as a man. The dark hours of persecution and crucifixion lay ahead of Him; jealousy and resentment filled the hearts of many who knew Him. Satan fanned the coals in men's hearts into flames against this just and righteous Son of God. The first biblical prophecy of Jesus revealed the work of Satan against Him. God said to Satan, "...And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). The seed of the woman referred to Jesus and the seed of the serpent had reference to Satan. Because of the work of Satan the hearts of many would turn against Jesus, even to the point of conspiring about His death (Mt. 26:3,4; Mk. 15:8,11; and Luke 23:2,5,10,23). From their cruel hearts the events of bodily suffering began to unfold.

Though innocent of the crimes of which He had been accused, He was beaten with a Roman scourge (Mt. 27:26). This scourge was usually constructed of three strands of leather attached to a wooden handle. The leather was often reinforced with bits of metal which would cut and tear the flesh. Thus was the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled. "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (Is. 50:6). He was delivered to a band of soldiers who stripped Him of His clothes (Mt. 27:27,28). How humiliating it would have been for any of us; how much more humiliating it was for the King of Kings! The soldiers evidently pulled out parts of His beard, and later they pressed in place a crown

of thorns (Mt. 27:29,31). Because we have small thorns and briars in our section of the country, it is extremely difficult for us to understand the pain caused by long, stiff, sharp, thorny bushes plaited into a crown and forced down on His head until the thorns ripped and punctured the flesh of our Saviour's face. To the painful crown of thorns they added mockery; and at last physical abuse by spitting on Him and beating His head with a stick. Oh! how He must have suffered, and yet it was not over. He was taken to Golgotha and was crucified by being nailed to a Roman cross (Mt. 27:31,35). It is impossible for us to imagine the pain of such an experience. Most of us could not push a sharp needle through our hand; the pain would be too severe. Yet our Lord's flesh was pierced by large Roman nails intended to inflict suffering on the worst of criminals. Both hands and feet were nailed to the cross, and Jesus was lifted up to die slowly and painfully. It is said that as the body slowly loses blood, it increases the work of the heart, which in turn is hindered because of pressure in the

chest cavity that is created by the position of the body on the cross. At last, regardless of pain, the person crucified must lift his suffering body, and this process goes on for what seems an eternity, until finally death is welcomed as a friend. Jesus suffered and then died in this horrible manner which was described so vividly in Ps., 22:13,18 and Isaiah 53:3,9.

As awful and indescribable as those sufferings were, they are not all that He endured. I am sure that it was difficult for Him to be sentenced for crimes which He did not commit, to suffer even though He was innocent, and to die such a horrible death; but I am equally convinced that His worst sufferings were those of the soul, not the body. Oh, what He must have suffered when **He became** sin for us! It is written of Him, "... Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24). He not only bore our sins; He became our sins! "For he hath made him to be sin, who knew no sin; that we might be

made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). At that moment when He became sin for us, His Father turned away and Jesus cried, "My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mt. 27:46). We can never know what sufferings the presence of sin brought to our Saviour. He had not sinned from all eternity. His righteous and holy being had never known the horrors of sin until that moment on the cross. It must have been worse for Him than all other sufferings combined, but He willingly endured it for us.

Though we are removed from those scenes of suffering by almost two thousand years, let us never forget them nor the Saviour who endured them. May we endure afflictions and count it a happy privilege to suffer for Him (Acts 5:41). My friends, most of us have endured little or no affliction in our pursuits of service; therefore, we should willingly withstand the inconveniences, the hardships, and even pain so that we may live a life that will glorify the Saviour who suffered so much for us.

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WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Each month, there are hundreds of TRUMPET OF TRUTH magazines which go into foreign countries where the people are unable to contribute because of the poverty in those countries. Of course, in the United States, there are many elderly (including many in nursing homes) who also are on low fixed incomes and unable to send a contribution. From the founding of the magazine, it has been our policy to send the magazine wherever it is desired and requested, even if the individuals were unable to help financially. That has necessitated others to help take care of the expenses of spreading the truth and feeding God's dear children. We need YOUR financial support. Please send as much as you can so that we can meet our monthly expenses without putting too big a burden on anyone. Our current three month expenses exceeded our contributions by \$5,649.00. We need your personal help and support from Churches as soon as possible.

We look forward to hearing from you.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING SPREAD THE TRUTH!

Today Is My Gift!!

by Sis. Leslie Tucker Lanier
Waycross, Georgia

Lord, we started back several years ago. My first breath of life was a gift of You to me, and a gift to my wonderful parents and my toddler brother at Christmas time. That Christmas has been talked about in our homes throughout the years, right alongside the first Christmas story ever, Lord: The birth of your precious Son, my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. My childhood was not an easy one, Lord, but as I grew, I grew in Your name. I grew up with loving Christian parents who found it important to bring Your word to the dinner table (after hours), and who also cared enough to live Your word in our home, Lord. There were many times as a child, I laid in my bed crying out to You because of the faith and prosperity I could see in my parents.

You gave my brother to my parents first, Lord. He was a special gift with a birth defect, and he needed attention. He and I grew together in the same home with different, but similar stories. Our biggest connection throughout the years, Lord, was his baseball career. With my brother on the mound, and You right there with him, and me sitting in the stands cheering him on, I remember mainly the feeling of happiness every time You blessed him to strike someone out with his fast pitch, pick someone off of first, and throw in a few curveballs to throw a surprise! Billy, I will never forget how as your little sis, you could do anything to me you wanted, but if anyone else came close to me, you were my protector. I also will never forget when you were leaving elementary school and you felt it necessary, in the front yard at Grandmama's in Macon, to teach me how to put someone in a headlock, so I could protect myself.

As a child, You were always at our

home, Lord. We were poor at times, we had medical issues at times, but I saw the faith of my mother and my father, and I saw Your protective hedge over and over, Lord!

As a teenager, I moved out as soon as it was time for college in the Fall after my high school graduation. It was the night I moved away, Lord, that my mom and I discussed our "friendship" for the first time. Wow! Lord, to know what that means today, thank You! She was no longer just my mother. She was now also my friend for the rest of my life. Mama, I've always known that. You have been in my life, every step of the way. I don't know of many people who could say, "My mom moves in with us, when I'm down, and my family never goes lacking! She's the best mom in the world". I've always been "daddy's little girl", and my mom's good friend.

My first year of college, I moved in with relatives in a town nearby the college. They blessed me, took me in as their own, fed me, took me to church, helped when I needed it, and loved me unconditionally! Thank you, Aunt Grace and Uncle Jim – you will always have a special place in my heart for that one year – not to mention all the other memories we have!

My brother grew up and married Debra. Debra, Lord, is special, too, and I've watched them through the years. There is no doubt in my mind You put them together! Lord, they met in Your house!!! She will not let anyone stand in her way! She comes from a good, Christian Godly home: a preacher's daughter, the baby of five, and still thriving! Thank You, Lord, for her! Debra, I will never forget you calling me to meet me the first time, and how I've loved you ever since. You've been the blessed asset to my brother!

As a young teenager, my first boss

was blessed with the words I lived by for the next eight years! He warned me to never date anyone I wouldn't marry! Yes, I praise You, Lord, I lived by that! I went on many dates, continually searching for my mate. If I ever said the words to myself, "I could NEVER live the rest of my life with this person," I considered myself on my last date with him, and told him so. That sounds harsh, but what is dating anyway? If I had not leaned on You, Lord, for guidance in my life, I cannot imagine, would not want to imagine, where my life would be today! I thank You for the wake-up calls I got! I thank You for blessing me to see the end before things ever began! I praise You, Lord, for the wonderful best friend of a husband You blessed me with in Kelvin!

Kelvin and I met at church, Lord, in Your house, as friends. What a gift to my parents! My brother and I both met our spouses in church! There was nothing but friendship until Your timing came along for us and You said, "Now, this is the one!" You said to me, "He's special, I made him just for you, and I've helped his parents train him for you". I looked around where I'm sitting in a church founded by Kelvin's late relatives and also, yes, by my late relatives many, many years ago. Was that church found by You and the Lanier's and the McElveen's, so that one day Kelvin and I could meet and grow old together? Wow! Every day unfolds more of your plan, Lord. I never questioned You about Kelvin, Lord. I looked around again. Down the pew a little further are my McElveen grandparents, I look to my left up above where Kelvin's mom and dad and sister and her husband are worshipping You, Lord! His Ganny Lanier on the pew in front of them, with Uncle John B! Family! My family! His family! Your family! Thank

You, Lord, for the example his parents' marriage has been in my life. We were blessed in the late 90's to get married and both sets of our parents were still married! Yes, Lord, we took time to praise You! When You told me he was mine, I've known it ever since. Lord, several people asked if they could set us up, and I said, "No!" It wasn't because I didn't want that, but, Lord, that was something I knew was mine, and I knew that when Your timing was perfect, we'd be together for the rest of our lives. I knew I wanted to look back throughout the rest of my life and say, "God put us together without a doubt!" On our wedding day programs You blessed me to print, I placed the verse on there, Lord, most special to our hearts at the time, "Whatsoever God hath joined together, let not man put asunder". As I'm now looking forward to my 13th wedding anniversary next month, Lord, I ponder that same scripture! Did our marriage start out right? Absolutely! We were a trinity, Lord! You gave a few unexpected tests right off the bat, and 3 months in, I had no idea if I could make it through married life, Lord, something you gave me so precious as a gift! We were blessed month two with the news of a baby! We were surprised, anxious, and Lord, so excited! By the 4th month, we had lost our baby and we had lost the only grandfather I ever knew on the same day. The first of many close deaths to me! Kelvin and I forgot how to be married, Lord, we were just learning! We were blessed to pick up the pieces and move on with our lives with questions, of course, Lord. Was that the only time we'd ever have children? I have had female problems my entire life, Lord, knowing You were in control, but was this my only plan for children? Those of you who knew us then knew that babies were a part of our lives. Those of you who know us now KNOW that babies are a daily part of our lives. At this point in marriage, Lord, we had no idea how to go on without much hope in children one day. And, Lord, you brought us out of that! We were to-

gether before that happy as ever, and this was just the beginning of many tests in our lives together!

Soon, we found out we were going to be an aunt and uncle for the first time and a little twinge ached in my heart! It was soon, Lord! I had told You, please, Lord, let me go through another full pregnancy with someone else and I'll be ready to try again, Lord! It turned out Kelvin's sister was who God wanted me to experience this with. Kaitlin, the night before your birth, was one of the most amazing nights of my life! I knew you were coming, and God had me singing, "I Don't Know about Tomorrow"! I was so ready to be your aunt, but I was very scared all at the same time! I will never forget hearing you and your mom at your birth, and your first cry which accompanied a tear of my own! I will never forget your daddy walking you into the hallway to see the MANY friends and family who'd come to meet you! I will never forget holding you and giving you my first kiss on your forehead and for the newborn smell you gave to me! Thank You, Lord, for that minute!!!!

Two months later, the day after Christmas, I learned I was expecting another baby!!! I was working for GSU, and since I had the day off, I made an appointment and was confirmed the same day! Thank you, Lord, for that minute!!! I was scared, Lord, not because I didn't have faith in You, but I wanted things so much differently now for me and Kelvin. We were ready! This is a gift we prayed for! And a gift You did give us, Lord! In the meantime, You led Kelvin to join the Air Force, Lord! You needed us to grow and You needed to plant us somewhere that would allow us to grow like we'd never grown before. This also, allowed me to follow Your word, and stay at home and raise my babies. That hot, wet 31st day of August, Sis Elizabeth Anderson called me at 10:30 A.M. and said, "Now, Sis. Leslie, you said you were having this baby in August, and I called to check in, and you're at home!" I laughed and said, "Oh, my doctor's appointment is

at 1 P.M. And by the way, I've still got until midnight!" Little did she or I know at the minute, that later that night, at exactly midnight, God gave me my beautiful daughter!!! Things were perfect! She was healthy. She had traits of us both! All four grandparents and my grandmother had made the drive to hear her first cry, to meet her, and love her! Kelvin and I did grow, Lord! We grew!!! Wow! Kristina Logan, you were the most beautiful baby girl I've ever seen, and you've definitely been a blessing to our family since day one! God saved you to be our first born! I believed you jumped for joy in the womb and had the same experience John the Baptist did when you first knew your Lord. As a 2 year old, you taught me things I'd never heard from God's Holy Word! Wow! "Out of the mouths of babes", Literally, thank You, Lord! She was baptized at 6 years old, Lord, by the same preacher who baptized me as a child at 11!

Ten months later, I actually found out, Lord, that there was another baby on the way! Thank You, for that minute! You had just allowed the Air Force to send my husband away for a 6 month deployment to Kosovo during the conflict, and had also allowed him to come home to us in 32 short days, Lord!!! We weren't quite as scared this time, Lord, and Logan was a year above her age anyway. We would be okay! But the day I was to find out if we were having a boy or a girl, you placed a woman beside me, Lord, five months along, whose baby had died. I went in for my ultrasound, Lord, and she said, "We can't tell you". I didn't want to know with Logan, Lord, and I was extremely blessed by your choice! So, I turned and looked at the attendant that day, Lord, and said, "It's okay. My baby's alive!" The rest of the term was similar, Lord, and I knew it could happen to me again! 15 days before my due date in April, Lord, I knew the time was near. Kelvin and I had made many decisions along the way, and we knew you were in the midst! On the 13th morning of April in the new millennium of 2000,

Andrew Kelvin blessed our lives at 6:52 a.m. A perfectly healthy little boy!!! A son! God you completed our family. You gave us one of each! Thank You for that moment! I believe that since Drew entered our lives on a comical note, You blessed him with

an abundance of humor!!! A day has not gone by that we haven't laughed with our son! Drew, you were the most beautiful baby boy ever, and I will never forget our first touch. Again, Lord, You blessed all four grandparents and my grandmother to be there to witness

Drew's first cry, to meet him and love him. Drew was blessed to learn of You and love You at a very early age, Lord, and on Easter Sunday, 1 week before his 8th birthday, he too, was baptized.

To be continued next month...

Two Kinds of Tradition

by Elder W. R. Dale
(Deceased)

When an effort is being made to make an oral tradition equal to law or gospel, then it is, that someone is trying to put a new patch on an old garment. Since the two materials do not agree, the rend shall be made worse.

While Christ was on earth, the Jews had many traditions of the elders which they had tried to enforce as law, with the idea of improving the law, that God gave, and make the law more acceptable to them in their day. Christ openly condemned them for such for they had gone beyond the "thus saith the Lord."

Now for the traditions of men, let us read Colossians 2:8, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (verse 9)

Being spoiled by philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, has developed this world into a vulgar society, now facing judgement.

Now as we turn to gospel tradition, it is very obvious to me that the line between the traditions of men and the gospel tradition is the same line that divides Christian people from those who are not Christians; even among those who are in the same church membership; and also distinguishes between a true church, and the so-called churches of the world.

Gospel tradition is marked out thus, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle (the apostle's word or epistle)." (II Thessalonians 2:15).

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." (II Thessalonians 3:6).

The gospel tradition is very exacting, relative to our way of life, doctrine, discipline, and order; but deviates choose the broad way that leads to destruction. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Timothy 3:16-17).

According to the statement above, if a thing is right, the scriptures tell us so; therefore, why should we deviate? If we willfully deviate, then we shall surely take off after the traditions of men, of which there is no end.

It is lamentable that we should live so long a time in the world and do so little for God, and that we should live so short a time in the world and so much for Satan! D. L. Moody

*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. Ephesians 2:1-3

Bible Reading Calendar for July

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
1	Job 19,20	Acts 9:23-43
2	Job 21,22	Acts 10:1-23
3	Job 23,24,25	Acts 10:24-48
4	Job 26,27,28	Acts 11
5	Job 29,30	Acts 12
6	Job 31,32	Acts 13:1-23
7	Job 33,34	Acts 13:24-52
8	Job 35,36,37	Acts 14
9	Job 38,39	Acts 15:1-21
10	Job 40,41,42	Acts 15:22-41
11	Psalms 1,2,3	Acts 16:1-15
12	Psalms 4,5,6	Acts 16:16-40
13	Psalms 7,8,9	Acts 17:1-15
14	Psalms 10,11,12	Acts 17:16-34
15	Psalms 13-16	Acts 18

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
16	Psalms 17,18	Acts 19:1-20
17	Psalms 19,20,21	Acts 19:21-41
18	Psalms 22,23,24	Acts 20:1-16
19	Psalms 25,26,27	Acts 20:17-38
20	Psalms 28,29,30	Acts 21:1-14
21	Psalms 31,32,33	Acts 21:15-40
22	Psalms 34,35	Acts 22
23	Psalms 36,37	Acts 23:1-11
24	Psalms 38,39,40	Acts 23:12-35
25	Psalms 41,42,43	Acts 24
26	Psalms 44,45,46	Acts 25
27	Psalms 47,48,49	Acts 26
28	Psalms 50,51,52	Acts 27:1-25
29	Psalms 53,54,55	Acts 27:26-44
30	Psalms 56,57,58	Acts 28:1-15
31	Psalms 59,60,61	Acts 28:16-31

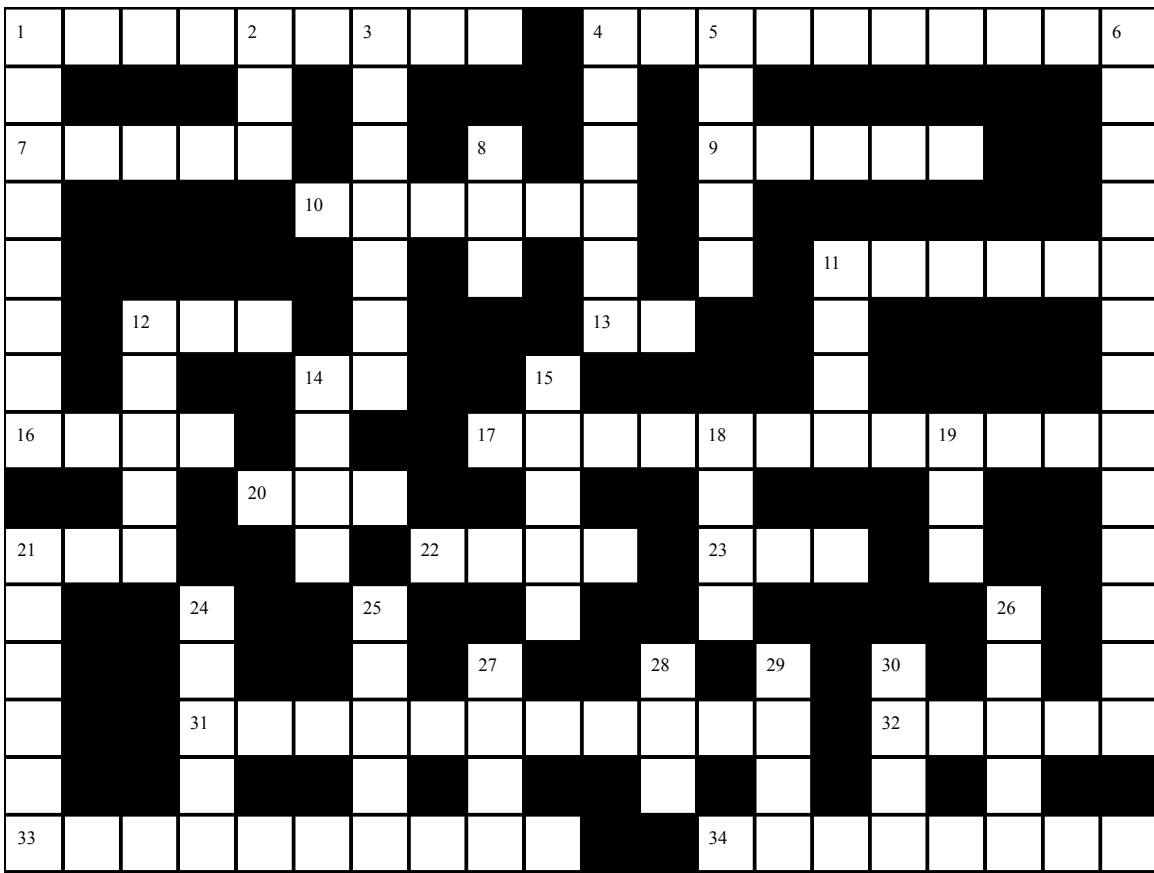
**ANSWERS TO
CROSSWORD
PUZZLE
JUNE 09**

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Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. "As it is written, there is none _____, no, not one." 4. "And he said unto me, my grace is _____ for thee 7. "...but to be spiritually minded is life and _____." 9. "It was said unto her, the _____ shall serve the younger." 10. "Professing themselves to be wise, they _____ fools," 11. "But the natural man receiveth not the _____ of the Spirit of God. For they are foolishness unto him: ..." 12. "For until law _____ was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law." 13. "But _____ are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." 14. "And not only so, but _____ glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;" 16. "And you hath he quickened who were _____ in trespasses and sins;" 17. "Moreover whom he did _____, them he also called:..." 20. "The lines _____ fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." 21. "_____ him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." 22. "For they that are after the flesh do _____ the things of the flesh " 23. "... Now if _____ man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." 31. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every _____ of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." 32. "_____ he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." 33. "Being justified freely by his grace through the _____ that is in Christ Jesus:" 34. "They are all gone out of the way, they are _____ become unprofitable;..."



DOWN

1. "The Lord _____ for this: it shall not be, saith the Lord." 2. "For _____ scripture saith, whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed." 3. "Moreover the law entered, that the _____ might abound " 4. "...for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt _____ die." 5. "So then they that are in the _____ cannot please God." 6. "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no _____." 8. "And God said, Let us make _____ in our image, after our likeness:..." 11. "...there is none _____ doeth good, no, not one." 12. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou _____ not eat of it:..." 14. "And we know that all things _____ together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." 15. "And the people murmured against Moses, saying, what shall we _____?" 18. "As it is written, Jacob have I loved but _____ have I hated." 19. "And when they came to Marah, they could _____ drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter " 21. "But after that faith is come, we are no _____ under a schoolmaster." 24. "I press toward the mark for the _____ of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." 25. "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it _____ depart from me." 26. "For to be carnally minded is _____;" 27. "Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter _____ you, and ye shall live." 28. "...But where sin abounded, grace _____ much more abound:" 29. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us _____ Christ, that we might be justified by faith." 30. "For whosoever shall call upon the _____ of the Lord shall be saved."

IS IT ALRIGHT TO PRAY FOR YOURSELF?

We know we are to pray for others:

Jesus often prayed for others- Luke 22:32; 23:34; John 14:16; 17:9
The word of God teaches us to pray for others, even our enemies-
Matthew 5:44; Luke 23:34; James 5:16;

We know we are to pray for ourselves and others:

Example prayer Jesus gave us in the sermon on the mount-
Matthew 6:9-13

BUT IS IT ALRIGHT TO SOMETIMES JUST PRAY FOR YOURSELF?

I think we all understand that if the primary focus of our prayers is “**FOR ME**,” then we know we are self-centered and selfish. We all need to examine our prayer life and our prayer time to see if we are too concerned about our own needs and problems, and are failing to fervently pray for others who really have far greater needs than we do ourselves! But there are times when we can pray just for ourselves, and it is alright with God. Look at some of the following examples where we read of individuals who concentrated their prayers at this particular time on their own needs, and it pleased God to grant their petitions for themselves.

Luke 18:13,14- “And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, **God be merciful to me a sinner**. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

Luke 23:42,43- “And he said unto Jesus, **Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom**. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

Matthew 14:30,31- “But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, **Lord, save me**. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”

***Consider some of the personal requests in prayer in the Psalms:

Psalm 17:8,9- “**Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings.**”

Psalm 25:4,5- “**Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me:** for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.”