

## INFLUENCING FAMILY

by Joe Dale Wilson

I was visiting with a friend that lives near Georgetown, Texas and she told me her husband had been a non-Christian when they married. After twenty-five years of marriage he began to study and obeyed the gospel. They had dated for two years and that made it a full twenty-seven years that she had tried to get him to be interested in Christ but to no avail. After he became a Christian she asked him what it was that finally got him to be interested in Christianity. His answer was, "You are a smart woman and I've seen you travel to church three times a week since I've known you. I thought there's got to be something there if every time the church doors are open you are there and you are even taking our daughter, without me going with you." She told him that the most important thing in life for anyone to know is where they are going to spend eternity. She told me it made his death easier for her and her daughter knowing he loved the Lord and had dedicated his life to Jesus.

The fine Christian lady put in practice in her life what is taught in

1 Peter 3:1,2, "Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear." Her husband was attracted to Jesus by her manner of life. She put the Lord first in the priorities of her life! He gave her credit for his coming to Christ! She is blessed in this life and her works will follow her (Revelation 14:13).

She never missed church services for family. "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:37). She did not put activities, kid's activities, or school activities above serving Jesus! Jesus says in Matthew 6:33: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." Would she have won her husband to the Lord if she had stayed home from services on Sunday and Wednesday so she or her daughter

could rest? You know she would not have. People are disobeying Jesus in forsaking the assembly (Hebrews 10:25), plus they are not being a good example to others. A person can deceive themselves into thinking it is okay to not attend Bible Study or any other service as long as they take the Lord's Supper occasionally. I am sorry but that isn't taught in the Bible! We cannot love the Lord and do things our way! A Christian in Kansas was running his business on Sundays while Bible Study was going on and giving out tracts to customers and inviting them to services. A man said to him, "If church is so important to you, why aren't you there now?" He never missed Bible Study again. If a preacher had said that to him he would have become angry. But a non-Christian asked him to think about his example and he did.

Sister Jacobson had a tremendous impact for eternity upon her husband! What about us? How is our influence?  
— Vernon, TX

## SEED SOWN AND SOULS SAVED

By Dalton Key

The gospel of Christ, as the seed of the kingdom, wields tremendous power upon those honest and good hearts which receive it. This remarkably potent seed has power to convict, to convince and to convert. It has power to transform the vilest of sinners into saved and sanctified children of God. "The seed is the word of God . . . The sower sows the word" (Luke 8:11; Mark 4:14).

Paul felt the urgency of preaching the gospel, in sowing this seed, describing its message as the very "power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16).

Peter spoke of the gospel as the incorruptible seed by which God's children are begotten (1 Peter 1:22-25).

Centuries have passed and much in this world has changed since the time when Paul and Peter proclaimed the gospel's powerful message. Both men have long since left the scenes of

this life.

But the seed they sowed lives on. Wherever and whenever the gospel seed is planted in "honest and good hearts" (Luke 8:15), its life-giving effects are still realized. The same seed by which Christians were begotten in the first century is alive and active and able to do the same in the twenty-first century.

Not all hearts are honest; not all ground is good ground. But regardless the condition of the soil, the seed always retains its power!

Those who sow the kingdom's seed face times and circumstances, both "in season" and "out of season." There will be those times when many hearers simply "will not endure sound doctrine." (2 Timothy 4:2,3). But through it all, good times and bad, the word must be preached. The seed must be sown.

We may not always see the results

we would like to see. We may appear to be making no progress in extending the borders of the kingdom. But we should not, we must not, lose heart. We can't possibly know all the good that may come or all the fruit that may one day develop, through the years and across the globe, from the precious seed we sow today. Our business: sowing the seed; God's business: giving the increase. (1 Corinthians 3:6,7). And in the end, when all is said and done and the dust of history has settled, His word will not return void. (Isaiah 55:11).

Never forget: We may fail and men we admire may fall; times may change and the hearts of many hearers may become hardened. But the seed of God's gospel will live on. Ours is but to sow . . . and continue sowing the seed of the kingdom!

# Old Paths

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"ask for the old paths" (Jer. 6:16)

## THANK GOD FOR ALL HIS MANY BENEFITS

by Danny Tunnell

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases" (Psalm 103:2,3). God also redeems our lives from destruction, and renews our youth like the eagle's (Psalm 103:4,5).

The greatest benefit from God is eternal life. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). If I had only one benefit to choose from God, I would choose eternal salvation. But, praise the Lord, I don't have to choose only one! The psalmist, David, spoke of benefits (plural).

As a benefit, God has given us His marvelous creation to enjoy (Genesis 1). "The heavens declare (tell of) the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker" (Psalm 95:6).

By Jesus "all things were created . . . and in Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16,17). It has been said, "Jesus is the glue of the galaxies." He holds everything together. Some have asked the question: "Is there life out there?" Oh, yes, there is life beyond our planet! Supernatural life!

There are more benefits from God than people sometimes realize. He saves eternally, He is Creator and Sustainer. He's all that and much more!

There is no need God cannot meet, no mountain He cannot move, no prayer He cannot answer, no sickness He cannot heal, no heart He cannot mend, and no door He cannot open.

God is so wonderful, and He is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). Jesus said, "The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37).

The seven blessings of God's covenant include: Presence, Provider, Peace, Victory, Shepherd, Righteousness, and Physician. Those benefits for us are reflected in seven of God's redemptive names. He is Jehovah-Shammah . . . the Lord is present . . . made nigh by the blood of Christ. He is Jehovah-Shalom . . . the Lord of peace (Isaiah 53:5). Jehovah-RA-AH . . . the Lord is my Shepherd . . . He gave His life for the sheep (John 10:11). Jehovah-Jireh . . . the Lord will provide (Philippians 4:19). Jehovah-NISSI . . . the Lord our banner or victor (Psalm 20:5; 1 Corinthians 15:57). Jehovah-TSIDKENU . . . the Lord our righteousness, our gift of righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30). Jehovah-Rapha . . . "the Lord who heals you," the Great Physician (Exodus 15:26; Luke 5:31).

Under each of these seven titles . . . He is "the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). "For I am the Lord, I change not" (Malachi 3:6).

Someone may say, "Yes, God was all those things back in Bible times, but not today!" Question: Who has the right to change the great "I AM" to the great "I Was?" Who has the right to change God's redemptive names? God has not stopped being Who He is. He is still all those things.

Lord, Help us to be cognizant of all Your many blessings that you lavishly bestow on us. Help us to be thankful. Surely, You send "showers of blessing" (Ezekiel 34:26). Amen.  
— Miami, OK

## God's Benefit Package

By Joe Slater

While salary is obviously important, job hunters know that benefits can be equally or more important. Health insurance, paid vacation, retirement, sick days, and other considerations may tip the scale as to whether one accepts an employer's offer.

Becoming a Christian isn't a perfect parallel to being employed, so don't make more of this illustration than you should. God doesn't "owe" us anything for working for Him! Nevertheless, by His grace He provides valuable benefits to His willing servants. That was true even under the Law of Moses. David exclaimed, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits" (Psalm 103:2). Psalm 116:12 rhetorically asks, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?"

Do we recognize and appreciate the benefits of being a Christian? Let's start with the most obvious one: forgiveness of sins. God washed us completely clean in the blood of the Lamb. Our debt is paid in full!

That naturally results in eternal life. We have a new life in Christ now, and we know that when our physical life ends, we will continue to live with the Lord. In the meanwhile, we enjoy the privilege of prayer.

Through our mediator, Jesus Christ, we can approach the Father's throne of grace boldly, knowing that He will hear and answer in whatever way is best according to His infinite wisdom and love. These benefits are but the beginning of a virtually endless list of advantages Christians have. And remember, we earned none of them. Our loving Father provides them by His grace. What other benefits can you list?

— Justin, TX

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

"His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:3,4).

## LOST BOOK FOUND

By Bobby Key

In the 18th year of Josiah's reign, when that good king of Judah was only 26 years old, he sent Shaphan the scribe to the temple of God in Jerusalem to arrange needed temple repairs with Hilkiah, the high priest.

Before Shaphan left, Hilkiah gave him a book he had found in some dark, seldom-used recess of the temple. It was the book of the law of God, long lost and forgotten by God's people. Shaphan immediately took it to Josiah.

Josiah discovered commands from God that were unknown, disregarded or forgotten. The young king called for repentance for the nation's rejection of God's divine pattern and urged the people to return to keeping God's law (2 Kings 22).

Perhaps we of more-modern times have a similar problem. We haven't lost the book, for the Bible is still intact and easily at our disposal; but God's word has been neglected, misused, misquoted and rejected by the masses. We must find the book of the law with all its purity - without addition or subtraction - and restore New Testament Christianity as it was given by Jesus Christ and his apostles.

Like Josiah, we have been given solemn warning about changing God's word. "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8, 9).

Our great need today is to go back to the original pattern and make sure the church of our day conforms to that pattern. We need more Josiahs who will rediscover the word of God in its purity and who will preach it and follow it. (1929-2018)

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16).

"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching" (2 Timothy 4:2).

EDITORIAL . . .

## A SHORTAGE OF HUMAN KINDNESS

by Dalton Key

"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

Common kindness seems to be in short supply these days, and like common sense, it is no longer all that common.

Let's be brutally honest: many of us are much more enthusiastic about receiving kindness than in extending it, especially toward those who disagree with us.

I don't have to agree with you. I don't have to approve of the things you do, the positions you hold, or the associations you choose to pursue. But I do have a divine obligation to be kind to you.

Where have we gotten the warped notion that difference in thought permits discourtesy in speech and conduct? Such thoughtless thinking was never learned from the Lord.

Christ was the walking demonstration of "truth in love." He never refused to speak with someone He disagreed with. He listened. He waited to hear the question before giving an answer. He never got into shouting matches with His enemies. He never started or spread ugly, unfounded rumors about others, even those who were actively working Him harm. He never attempted to silence His critics by means of mean-spirited barbs, baseless accusations, or snarky jabs of sarcasm.

We would all do well to follow the Master's example.

To be right, both morally and doctrinally, is imperative; to be right in our treatment of others is no less important.

Being long on scriptural argument provides no license for coming up short on scriptural attitude.

"Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. Therefore 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:17-21).

Let's all determine to be more like Christ, "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15), and less like the dog-eat-dog, anything-goes world working feverishly to shape us into its mold.

Let's be kind.

(MEN, our annual Old Paths Men's Retreat is coming up, September 12-14, and will be held again on the site of Flint Hills Christian Camp, just a few miles north of Sedan, Kansas. Our theme: The Substance of Things Hoped For (Selected Studies from Hebrews 11). Make plans now to be with us. For more information, write in care of this paper or call (620) 506-6155 or (918) 845-4886.)



## THE PASSION OF CHRIST

by Milton Smith

In Acts 1:1-3 we read the following inspired words of Luke: "The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen: to whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God" (ASV).

Note the statement, "after his passion." Luke describes Jesus' life in the flesh as his "passion." The Greek word here translated "passion" means simply "suffering." Many English translations use the word suffering in this passage. It is an amazing thought that Luke, by inspiration, describes the life of Jesus with this very suggestive word. As the great prophet Isaiah looked to the coming of the Messiah, he described him as being "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3).

An interesting incident is recorded in Luke chapter 24. On the very day of Jesus' resurrection, we read of two disciples walking to Emmaus. They were discussing the things that had taken place concerning Jesus (i.e. his arrest and crucifixion). At this moment, Jesus appeared to them. But their eyes were restrained so that they did not know him. As Jesus talked with these two disciples, he said to them, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" It is obvious that Christ's mission into this world to become mankind's Savior involved suffering.

No one knew more about the suffering of Jesus than the apostle Peter did. Having a very close and intimate relationship with our Lord, he was permitted to be an eyewitness to Jesus' earthly suffering. In Peter's first epistle, he emphasized this fact several times. He wrote that Christ "suffered for us . . ." (1 Peter 2:21), that Christ "suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust . . ." (1 Peter 3:18), and that Christ "suffered for us in the

flesh . . ." (1 Peter 4:1). In Acts chapter 17 we read of the apostle Paul arriving at Thessalonica. As his custom was, he went to the local synagogue where the Jews worshipped, and we are told that he, "reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead . . ." (Acts 17:3). Notice that he "had to suffer!"

All one has to do is read about the agony of our Lord in the Garden in the night of his arrest to realize how much Jesus was willing to endure for mankind. Sitting at the right hand of the Father is One who was willing to suffer greatly for us in order to become our sin offering. Jesus loves us so much and his earthly passion culminated with excruciating and agonizing death on the cross. Considering how much Jesus loves us, may we - as Paul advises all Christians to do - "rejoice in the Lord always" (Philippians 4:4). Truly, his love for you and me was, and continues to be, unmatched.

— Tulsa, OK

## WE CAN'T TAKE IT WITH US

By Jimmie Keas

I remember my mother's older brother, my Uncle Duard. He was a prospector in Utah, Arizona and New Mexico. I remember all he could talk about was the gold and uranium mines he had prospected and was mining. He lived to make the almighty dollar! An extremely good looking man, I remember a picture taken of him on his 50th birthday. In his hand was a silver dollar.

The time would come some twenty-one to twenty-two years later that I would preach his funeral. As I peered down into the casket I remembered that picture and looked closely; his hands were folded, empty! No silver dollar! But even if that silver dollar had been there, he still would not have taken it with him!

Well did the scripture say, "We brought nothing in this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." (1 Timothy 6:7.)

I also remember what Jesus said

in Luke 12:15: "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." Basically, Jesus was saying, "Life is not things." Jesus then told the parable of the rich man. (Luke 12:16-21.) The last question asked that rich man was, "This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?"

Don't be trapped in the tyranny of things.

Let us all be careful to not allow our possessions or even the desire for possessions to possess us!  
— Oklahoma City, OK

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart

will be also. . . No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. . . But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Matthew 6:19-21, 24, 33.)

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