

“MORE, MORE ABOUT JESUS”

by Danny Tunnell

E. E. Hewitt wrote, “More of His saving fullness see . . . more of His coming Prince of Peace.”

Jesus is everything the Bible says He is. Jesus was not just another man. He is God. And with God all things are possible (Luke 18:27).

No one has exhausted all the truth about Jesus in the Bible.

Jesus promises us His peace. “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (John 14:27). “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You” (Isaiah 26:3). “God’s peace, which goes beyond anything we can imagine, will guard your thoughts and emotions through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7, God’s Word).

The word “peace” in Hebrew is “shalom.” It means “to be whole, nothing missing and nothing broken; to have not only peace of mind but wholeness and soundness in every area of life - spiritual, relational, physical,

and prosperity.”

Salvation is promised through Jesus Christ (John 3:16,17; Acts 4:12). Salvation is an exceedingly great and precious promise (2 Peter 1:4).

The Greek word “soteria” for salvation implies deliverance, preservation, healing, health, and soundness. The Greek word “sozo” translates “saved,” and means “healed, made sound, made whole” (James 5:15).

With the eyes of faith Peter said of Jesus, “Whom having not seen, you love, in Whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable (inexpressible) and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8).

Thomas said, “Unless I see . . . I will not believe.” Jesus said the opposite, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:25,29).

According to Jesus, you don’t have to see something to believe it is true. In fact, that is the definition of faith (Hebrews 11:1).

Faith is expecting God to keep His promises (Ezekiel 12:25). To believe everything about Jesus takes faith. Faith is so rare that Jesus posed this poignant question: “When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8).

Jesus spoke of great faith, little faith, and no faith (Matthew 15:28; 8:26; Mark 4:40). Without faith it’s impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

How does faith come? “So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). The “word of God” actually is “rhema Christo;” “rhema” indicates the spoken word, and “Christo” or “Christ” means anointed. The Bible says, “faith comes by hearing the spoken, anointed word of God.”

As you learn more about Jesus, wouldn’t it be good to hear, “Your faith is showing remarkable growth and your love for others is increasing” (2 Thessalonians 1:3, God’s Word).

— Miami, OK

DID JESUS HAVE TO DIE?

By Mark Lindley

It is a fact of history that a man named Jesus died on a cross. This fact is supported by the New Testament and by the secular writings of early historians. No one can successfully deny that Jesus of Nazareth lived and that He died by crucifixion.

However, many who believe that Jesus died on the cross do not believe that Jesus was a divine being. Some affirm that it does not make sense that “the Son of God” would die on a cross. The reasoning is that if Jesus possessed divine power, then He could have saved Himself, and thus, according to some, He must not have been the “Son of God.” To them, it just does not make sense that a divine being would die in such a horrible manner.

But such reasoning is flawed and does not consider why it was necessary for Jesus to die for the sins of the world. Because all have sinned and come short of God’s glory, it was necessary

for a “sinless” person to redeem fallen man (Romans 6:23). Every person who has sinned needs a Savior; and he who needs a Savior cannot be one.

Does Jesus meet the qualification of “sinless?” Notice what the Scriptures teach: “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). “For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth” (1 Peter 2:21-22). Yes, Jesus, and He alone could qualify to be the Savior because only Jesus was without sin.

It is true that Jesus possessed supernatural power, and that He demonstrated such power by healing the sick, enabling the blind to see, calming storms, and by raising the

dead. Yet He freely chose to lay down His life for all. Jesus said, “Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man takes it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (John 10:17-18). The all-powerful Christ chose not to exercise His power to save His life.

It may never make sense to some that it was necessary for Jesus to die for us. Some did not understand in the first century: “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness” (1 Corinthians 1:23). Nevertheless, His death was absolutely necessary. Only by trusting and obeying Him can we be saved. Jesus is the way!

— Ripley, MS

Old Paths

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“ask for the old paths” (Jer. 6:16)

KINDNESS: TRY IT, YOU’LL LIKE IT!

By Joe Dale Wilson

Ephesians 4:32 begins with “and be kind to one another.” The inspired Paul added to that in 1 Corinthians 13:4, “love . . . is kind.” Paul listed “kindness” as one of the qualities a new Christian is to “put on.”

Glen Campbell had a real catchy song several years ago that suggested, “try a little kindness, then you’ll overlook the blindness, of narrow-minded people on the narrow-minded streets.” Our world needs kindness. Kindness is the product of our love for others. Love and kindness make the world a better place to live. As Christians, we are in the world to change the world by our wholesome influence. We live with kindness radiating from our words and actions. We teach the gospel, which is God’s expression of His loving kindness to mankind.

Hatred walks our streets, is seen in e-mails and other sources of communications, bubbles out in our political arenas, and produces wars. Many follow a god of bitterness and vengeance. The world needs the loving kindness of God to be personified in Christians today.

In our day to day dealings we need kindness. People will do things that will disturb us. We can either jump on them with spurs on or reply with kindness. Which one will have the greater influence for Christ? We are here to win them to Christ, not to condemn them to the devil. Our words and actions must be seasoned with the wisdom of kindness.

Every day in the news we hear of people who are unkind to their fellow man. But every day there are those who go out of their way to show love and kindness to someone who is not in a position to help himself. Christians should be the ones who are more prone to be kind; and in my experience, they are!

If your life has not been marked by kindness, try it - you’ll like it!

— Vernon, TX

“Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.” (1 Peter 3:8,9.) “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:31,32.)

THE RAINBOW IS NO MYSTERY

By Milton Smith

The Bible tells us that after the flood, God gave the rainbow as a token of the covenant which He made with all living creatures that there never again would be a universal flood upon the earth (Genesis 9:12-17). The Bible also tells us that before the flood came, the earth was watered by a mist that went up from the earth (Genesis 2:6). Could it be that no rain fell from the sky before the flood? Many scientists believe that a “vapor canopy” surrounded the earth during its early history. Some have suggested that this canopy may have collapsed when the “windows of heaven were opened” to bring about the great flood (cf. Genesis 7:11). Under these conditions, many scientists concur that it is quite possible that no rainbow was seen on earth before the flood.

Before man discovered that the rainbow is caused by the refraction and reflection of the sun’s rays upon raindrops, many superstitions existed about this strange, multi-colored image in the sky (that could never be reached or touched). Most all of us remember the old legend about there being a “pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.” Many early cultures believed that the rainbow was a sort of omen that foreshadowed the coming of some future event. In ancient Scandinavian literature the rainbow was presented as a link between the “gods” and man. During medieval times there was a tradition that there would be no rainbow for forty years prior to the end of the world. Because of this belief, many medieval people had a false sense of security whenever they saw a rainbow in the sky, believing they were guaranteed the world would exist for at least another forty years!

The rainbow is no mystery. We know what causes it, and God set into motion the physical laws that bring about this beautiful phenomenon. It is simply a token and a sign that God has placed in the heavens. We also know that the appearance of the rainbow has absolutely nothing to do with predicting the final coming of Christ. The Lord can return at any time, and we are warned to be constantly ready and watching for this event (Matthew 24:42).

If people would take time to simply read what the Bible clearly teaches on matters such as this, silly theories and man-made superstitions would never be taught nor believed.

— Tulsa, OK

TOO EXPENSIVE!

By Dalton Key

Some battles are just not worth winning.

Take for example, King Pyrrhus, ruler of Epirus, who once defeated the Romans in the battle of Asculun. Though winning the battle, Pyrrhus lost nearly all of his soldiers in the process. Sometime later, upon being congratulated on the victory, he lamented, "Another such victory and I shall be ruined!"

Many centuries have come and gone since so many soldiers fell at Asculun, yet we still use the term "Pyrrhic victory" to describe a victory achieved at excessive cost; a battle really won by no one.

The man or woman lifting a fist toward heaven, boasting of independence from God and freedom to live unrestrained by His will may temporarily appear to win the battle. God does not rule by force or coercion. But the victory is hollow and short-lived at best, a true "Pyrrhic victory." This same rebel will one day stand before the Judge of all men to answer for deeds done in the body. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

In his Essay on Compensation, Emerson wrote, "Persons and events may stand for a time between you and justice, but it is only a postponement. You must at last pay your debt . . . you cannot do wrong without suffering wrong."

What a short-sighted victory, to waste a life and lose a soul in a foolish war waged against the God of heaven. Listen to the Lord: "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man, if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:25,26).

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh, will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life" (Galatians 6:7,8).

In the words of one anonymous sage, "You can't sow wild oats and then pray for a crop failure."

Friend, don't fight against heaven. Some victories are just too expensive!

EDITORIAL . . .

THE UPCOMING ELECTION

by Dalton Key

John Adams once observed, "No man who ever held the office of President would congratulate a friend on obtaining it." Andrew Jackson described the presidency as "dignified slavery," and Martin Van Buren referred to it as "toilsome and anxious probation."

Grover Cleveland ran against Benjamin Harrison in the presidential race of 1882. The entire affair was lackluster and stale; few people showed much interest, one way or the other. As one political pundit wryly commented, "Each side would have been glad to defeat the other if it could do so without electing its own candidate."

Zachary Taylor, widely known for his frugality, refused to pay the few cents postage due on the letter notifying him of his presidential nomination. Similarly, Calvin Coolidge was elected to our nation's highest office using the unusual slogan, "Use it up; wear it out; make it do; do without."

One wonders how well such a slogan would fare in today's culture of high living and easy credit.

Times change and so do Presidents, and we are just a few months shy of choosing, once again, who will lead our nation as President.

The church, "not of this world," backs no party, bolsters no political platform, and supports no candidate (John 18:36). However, as disciples of Christ and citizens of our democratic republic we are blessed with both opportunity and responsibility to apply biblical principles to our individual, political decisions.

The truth of Proverbs 14:34 still stands: "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Our nation, going forward, will become more godly or more profane; more just or more chaotic; more honest or more corrupt. The decisions we make and the direction we choose will forever determine our destiny as a people.

Though pilgrims here and citizens of heaven, we must do what we can, and vote as we are able, to draw this nation closer to righteousness. The timeless truths of the Bible should serve as both fuel and fodder to our choices. As lights for Christ shining in an ever-darkening, benighted world, we must do all we can to lead this ship of state back to the God of heaven.

Above all, may we remember, that after all the speech-making and vote-casting are behind us, regardless what outcome the election may bring, "there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God" (Romans 13:1).

**Best Friend Forever**

By Joe Slater

longer my friends. I regret that, but I realize I cannot change other people's thoughts and actions.

Christians have no trouble identifying their "best friend forever"! "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13). We know Jesus is the best friend we could possibly have, and He will never forsake us. Who else could ever qualify as our "best friend forever"?

A challenging question for me is, "Am I a friend to Jesus?" We sing, "I'll be a friend to Jesus" – but look at what the Lord Himself said: "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you" (John 15:14).

Having warm fuzzy feelings for Jesus is fine, but loving him and being His friend goes well beyond subjective criteria.

Who among us would claim to be the best friend Jesus has? But we can, indeed, be His friends forever.

Let's do that!

Justin, TX

"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15).

DOING OUR BEST TO LOVE

By Danny Boggs

Suppose you receive the sudden diagnosis of a fast-moving, unstoppable disease. Suppose a tornado rumbles through. Suppose an accident occurs. Or what if Jesus comes back today? Will you be ready?

You know you need to be right with God. Do you also realize that to be right with God, you have to do your best to be right with people?

Listen to John, the apostle of love. "Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in light, and in him there is not cause for stumbling" (1 John 2:9,10). Loving others keeps you basking in God's light. Antagonism toward another locks you in darkness.

When love is not your attitude toward another person, you're more like the first murderer, Cain, than you might think (1 John 3:11,12). "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:14,15).

Who has grabbed hold of eternal life? A Christian who keeps loving others. But a person of animosity is in the grip of death. He is a murderer. Impenitent murderers are headed nowhere but for the eternal lake of fire (Revelation 21:8).

Surely the Lord doesn't expect you to love someone who has hurt your feelings terribly, does He? What if the estranged person has done something even worse to you? "By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers" (1 John 3:16). Jesus didn't lay down His life for you because you had been so good to Him; it was the opposite.

"Beloved, let us love another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved

us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:7-11). What will it cost you to be reconciled to the person who has become your enemy? Nothing like the bloody price paid by God to reconcile you to Himself.

Can you go to heaven mad at someone? Why try to presume upon the grace of God? To be right with God, you must do all you can to be right with other people. Are you doing your best?

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