

# Looking Back Summer 2019

Fall 2019



Grace Family Bible Church  
Duncansville, PA



A special thank you to  
to our friends at  
Grace Family Bible Church  
for their hard work  
in making & providing  
our VBS props.

Pastor Brent Biller



New Believers get Bibles

85  
+ 3  
88

85 Children + 3 Adults made  
decisions to trust Christ.

Installation Service



Friendship WI

You never know what  
you'll be asked to do upon  
arrival at the church.  
New Pastor Installation?

Visiting the Falls



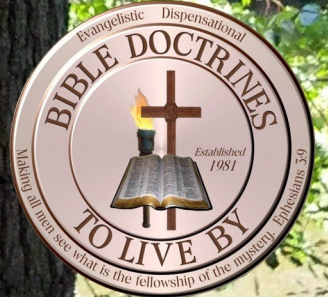
Sioux Falls, SD

Oxford Bible Church  
Oxford, WI



# TRUTH AFLAME

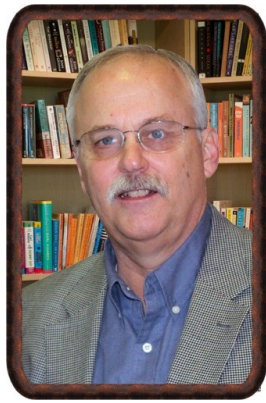
A ministry of Bible Doctrines To Live By, Inc.



To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery.  
Ephesians 3:9



# Welcome from the President



Summer is now past, but oh, what a summer of travel we had. We began our itinerant ministry in earnest in early May with a conference in South Dakota and then the end of May we were in New York. From there it was to Southwest Kentucky and the first of ten Vacation Bible Schools and a Bible Conference. We returned to Grand Rapids for the first week of September and then headed out once again for the Mid-Atlantic Grace Bible Conference held each year in Reading, PA. All-in-all, we logged close to 7,000 miles, saw a lot of beautiful country and met some wonderful saints. But the greatest part of all our time spent in travel were the 85 young people and three adults, who made decisions to trust the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Of course, many more beyond that heard the Gospel of the Grace of God in a one-on-one setting. (We never really know how many hear the Gospel and make that decision to place their faith and trust in Christ at some later time.) We praise the Lord for the opportunities that we are afforded each year to see the saving hand of the Lord at work. I dealt with a young boy on Monday night of VBS and he just wasn't really ready to make that decision. Tuesday evening, he arrived for VBS and couldn't wait to speak to "that man" about Jesus. It seems that he had thought all night about what I had shared with him and wanted to trust Jesus Christ as His Savior. Susan shared the Gospel with the larger group on Wednesday evening, and Thursday a young girl came and relayed how she had trusted Christ, when she got home Wednesday night. You never know what will happen when you faithfully share the

Gospel with an individual. Sometimes we get discouraged, because we don't see an instant response; but we must remind ourselves that all we are called upon to do is to share the Gospel. It is God Who does the saving.

We also want to thank a very generous donor for the supply of Bibles donated for the purpose of giving each young person, who made a decision for Christ, his own Bible. It's always a blessing to see the kids eyes light up, when they are handed a Bible of their very own.

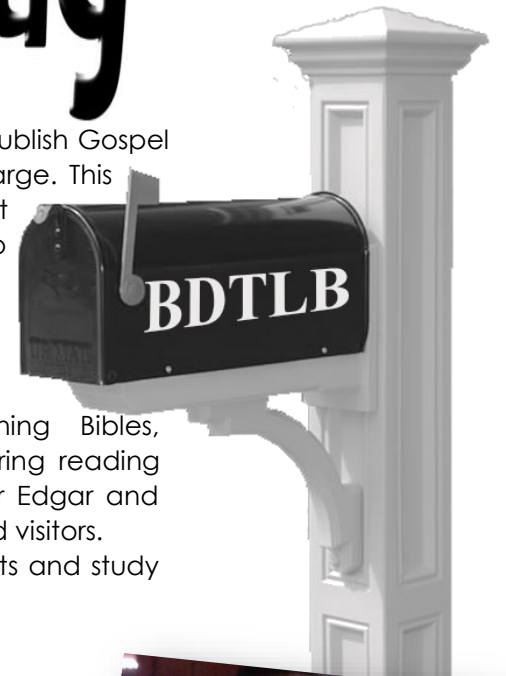
But now we switch our attention to the home office and the things happening here. We are living in exciting times and BDTLB is striving to keep up. In the very near future, we will be introducing yet another form of outreach that will not only provide a way for BDTLB to greatly expand our outreach, but, we pray, will be used by churches, as well, to saturate the globe with the Glorious Gospel of the Grace of God.

Our publishing ministry continues to add new Bible study materials in addition to the growing curriculum (see page 21) available for Sunday School, home school, and family devotions. Our newest title "Paul" (Part 1) is in its final proof-reading and will be available soon. Paul (Part 2) is also complete and is now being formatted and proofed. If you haven't checked out the large assortment of materials now available, call and order a catalog today.

Thank you for your prayers and faithful support throughout 2019. Without your faithful partnership, the ministry of BDTLB could not continue to reach lost souls for Jesus Christ.

# From the Mailbag

For several years BDTLB has partnered with Gary Miller and his ministry to publish Gospel booklets in many languages for distribution around the world free of charge. This ministry has also supplied Bibles to new believers who have come to Christ through our VBS / Bible Conference ministry. We thought you might like to see some of the letters we have received, as well as a picture.



Dear Brother Miller (BDTLB)  
 Pastor Edgar Villaflores received the Balikbayan boxes containing Bibles, commentaries, and booklets. Thank you so much for these God-honoring reading materials. In August 18, 2019, the anniversary of Body of Christ, brother Edgar and Domingo Acula brought copies of booklets and Bibles given to friends and visitors. On of the photos shows a box....with my wife standing by. These booklets and study materials will be given to three different study groups.  
 Grace Christian Church, Philippines



Solid Rock ministry from West Palm Beach ministering in Cuba. They give out Saved/English/Spanish booklets as can be seen in some of the photos. Cuban saints are trained and then go into the prisons with the booklets.



New believers in Ridgelely, WV., and Duncansville, PA., receive new Bibles following their decision to trust the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.



on the heels of the Rapture, "as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5:2). This chronology is important and is reemphasized in 1 Corinthians 15:23-24.

The Greek word from which "falling away" (2:3) is translated, is *APOSTASIA* and is preceded by the definite article *HA*; this, therefore, must be referring to a particular, definite, recognizable incident. The idea that this refers to some gross departure from spiritual truth simply does not fit. As bad as things are now or shall be in the future, it is not likely that things could become worse than they were in the "dark ages," so as to be identified as "the Apostacy."

No! The departure here is **not** one from truth but rather a departure of the Body of Christ from earth "to meet the Lord in the air!" This is why the Apostle Paul says he is "thankful." Paul is excited and rejoicing that believers were, "from the beginning chosen," to be "delivered" from the dark and dreadful "Day of the Lord." This choosing occurred in the normal way that any believer is chosen, "through sanctification and belief of the truth" (vs.13).

These chosen ones represent the one and only obstacle to the manifestation of the "man of sin." Referring to believers, Paul reminds us, "you know what [Body of Christ] withholdeth that he [man of sin] might be revealed in his time" (vs. 6) and "only he [Body of Christ] who now restrains will do so until he be taken out of the way [delivered out of 'wrath'] (vs. 7) ... then shall that Wicked One be revealed" (vs.8). Just as surely as Lot had to be removed before the fire could fall on Sodom, so too, the Body of Christ must be removed from earth before the "wrath" of God falls!

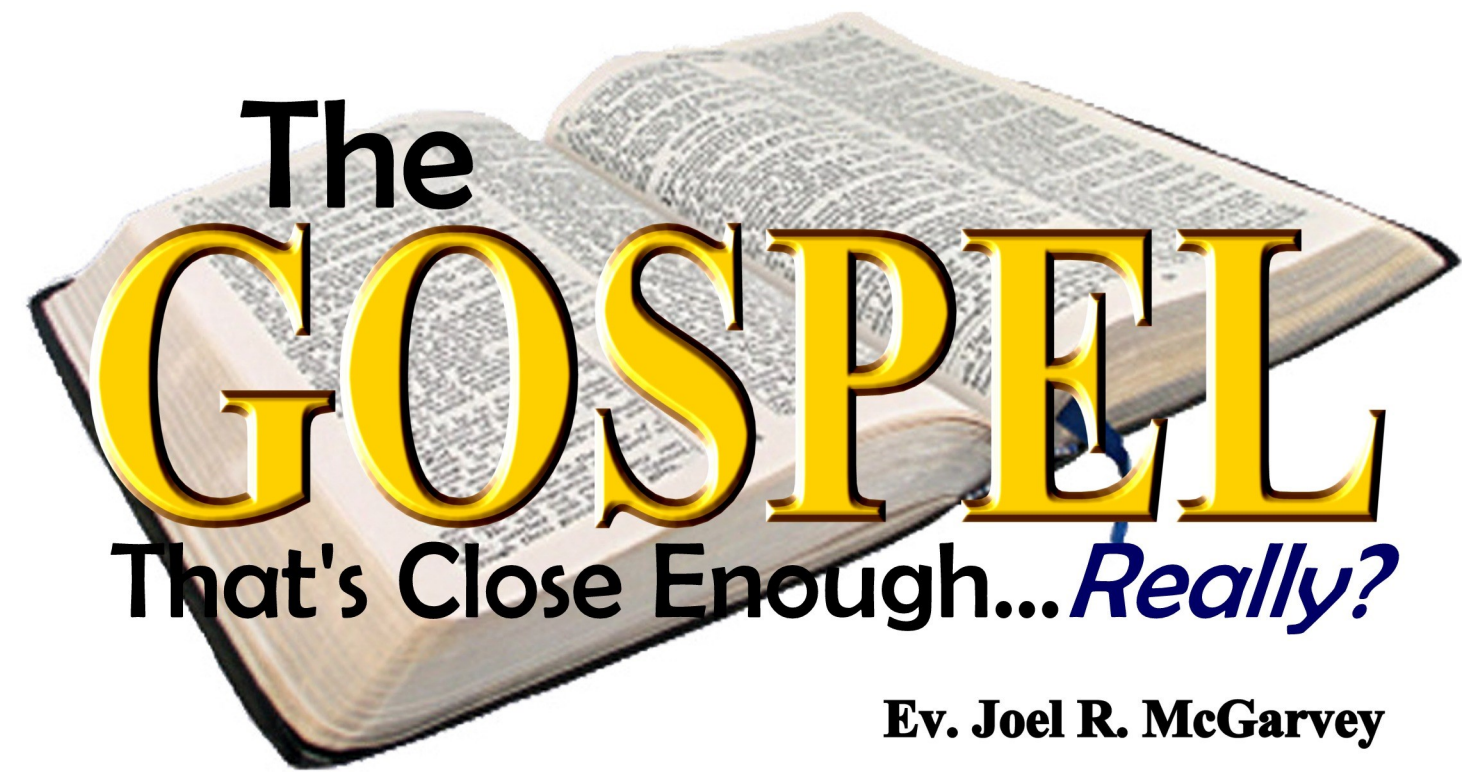
Furthermore, the chosen ones are "called by our gospel." This is not a generic gospel but, rather, by "our" gospel, a specific gospel which Paul owns-- the Gospel of the Grace of God -- the Gospel

of the Mystery! The purpose of this calling and deliverance is "to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ," (vs. 14), and "comfort" (vs. 17) — **not wrath** — **not the terrors** of the Day of the Lord!

**Why** is it hard for some to accept the uniqueness of God's Mystery program for the Body of Christ - a program that is distinctive in its calling, administration, deliverance, and destiny? **Why** must so many in Christendom labor to fit their prophetic thinking into God's prophetic design for Israel, a time uniquely fitted for Israel's discipline and ultimate salvation, the *Time of Jacob's Trouble*, the Seventieth Week of Daniel (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:24-27)? When believers fail to apprehend the truth of the Mystery, it places many precious truths for the Body of Christ in jeopardy, including the truth of the Rapture. **Note:** The reader may wish to investigate the Doctrine of the Mystery by requesting a free copy of my study, "Paul's Distinctive Revelation."

In verse 15, Paul tells us to "stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle." The preciousness of this wonderful truth is evident by Paul's assurance that it came to us because God "hath loved us" and given us reason for "everlasting consolation and good hope through grace" (vs. 16).

The exhortation to "comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:18; cf.5:11) and "comfort your hearts" (2 Thess. 2:17) would seem to be both a little late and inappropriate to give to someone after or during Daniel's Seventieth Week of Tribulation. Rather, **the thing that comforts believers' hearts now is the imminent, pre-tribulational return of Christ.** We eagerly await the return, rest and reward! This is our comfort! This is our incentive for godly living, and soul winning. Praise God, we are listening for the "shout" when we shall see the Lord Jesus and our loved ones who "sleep in Jesus"!



**Ev. Joel R. McGarvey**

**Jas. 4:17**

**"...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."**

**Rom. 14:23b**

In his work "**A Dispensational Theology**", Grace Bible College Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan Fourth printing 1986, page 269), Charles Baker summarizes sin as a "lack of conformity to the moral law of God, either in act, disposition, or state," "a transgression of, or want of conformity to the divine law," "as anything in the creature which does not express, or which is contrary to, the holy character of the Creator."

From this, it must be observed that sin is indeed an action, but not limited to an action. Sin is a thought or disposition of an individual, a state of being and the absence of righteousness. In describing natural man, the Apostle Paul calls him an "enemy" or at "enmity" against God (Rom. 5:10).

When speaking of the Gospel, we cannot diminish or eliminate the idea of sin and its consequences. "**For the wages of sin is death...**" (Rom. 6:23a). But, in discussing sin, we must understand its origins. In reality it is this very thing that the evolutionist and humanist

The title may seem strange to some and the answer obvious to others. But the truth is just the opposite. Far too often the Gospel is either stripped of the essentials, or coupled with human efforts, religious practices, sacraments and ceremonies. The answer to the question is the single most important answer anyone will ever be called upon to give and thus it is absolutely imperative that the true Gospel be made crystal clear.

I am dismayed at the responses I have received from individuals who should know the Gospel but have fallen prey to religious traditions and a post-modern form of "seeker-friendly" evangelicalism, that seeks to be pleasing to a broad base by surrendering terminology or teachings that may divide rather than unite. In this modern era the mention of sin is seen as offensive or arrogant. Since truth has become irrelevant and the absolute standard of the Word of God has been removed, it is seen as arrogance to call anything sin. But what is sin? The simple definition as presented in Scripture is;

**"All unrighteousness is sin..." 1 Jn. 5:17a**

**"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."**

attempts to destroy in its attack on Scripture.

In the beginning God created mankind in a state of innocence, free to love, live, serve, give glory to his Creator, and choose. He created from nothing a beautiful planet onto which He made man in His own image (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:21-22). God is a spirit, not possessing flesh and bones, so it is not accurate to suppose the image is a reference to one's outward appearance but, rather, it is a *spiritual* resemblance to rationality and morality. Only man was originally created in the image of God; all other creatures were said to be "after their kind". Only man has the capacity for eternal life, fellowship, self-consciousness, speech, worship and moral discernment. Into man God breathed the breath of life and man became a living soul; this, too separates man from all other creatures. Man was created a tri-partite being; body, soul and spirit, and it is through this unique creation that man was able to experience a unique relationship with his Creator. Later, we are told that Adam heard the LORD "...walking in the garden in the cool of the day..." (Gen. 3:8b) and hid from Him; the implication being that, at other times, he would have enjoyed a period of fellowship.

God would give to this man and woman one command, "...of every tree of the garden thou mayest eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16-17). One command, one rule, and it would not be too long, until Adam would rebel against God and make the willful decision to eat. In the very moment that Adam took that first bite, he died, no, not physically



although he doubtless began the process that culminates in a physical death), but rather *spiritually*. At that very moment, the Spirit of God departed from him and that special relationship he had enjoyed with his Creator was broken and lost. Although man physically and soulfully remained alive, **he died spiritually**. It was at this very moment that sin and death entered into the world. "**Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned**" (Romans 5:12). The sin of one man, Adam, would then be passed onto every succeeding generation. Look at the examples of his own sons. The first murder in history is recorded in Genesis 4, when Cain killed his brother Abel. Then the birth of Seth is recorded in Genesis 5, and we are given additional information related to this inherited sin nature. **And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth**" (Gen. 5:3). Note Seth bore the likeness, the image, of fallen Adam. He could not pass along a spiritual image, because he no longer had it; all he could pass down was a rebellious, fallen nature.

I realize that this is a very brief description of the creation and fall of mankind, but it is absolutely essential to the Gospel that one has an understanding of sin and its terrible consequences. I believe that I have written before concerning a church service I attended years ago. As the pastor was speaking, he mentioned the word sin and my ears perked up; finally, something of substance, I thought to myself. But that was not to be the case, as he went on to describe sin as "the **story** of a man, a woman, a snake, and an apple." That was the entire explanation of sin. There was no mention of its ramifications, its consequences, the cross, an agonizing death, burial or resurrection. He simply moved on. In a seeker-

## THE TIME OF THE RAPTURE

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

1 Thessalonians chapter 4 establishes the **fact** of the Rapture. Now, 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 documents the **when** of the Rapture. Pre-millenarians have often disagreed and debated the **when** of the Rapture. The three most common viewpoints that compete for attention are all tied to the Tribulation Period with either a "pre," "mid" or "post" chronology. It is my belief that the Christian community could have been spared this contention, if only all had come to understand clearly the implications of the Mystery, which God had provided for the "obedience of faith" (Rom. 16:25-26).

The "but", separating Chapter 4 from Chapter 5 sets up an important contrast between the "Day of Christ" and the "Day of the Lord", between "comfort" and "sudden destruction", between children of night and the "children of the day" - between mystery and "times and seasons"/prophecy - a contrast between what had been prophesied and what had not.

"But", Paul said, "of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you." "**Why?**" you may ask! Because the Old Testament Scriptures spoke often of the prophetic "times and seasons" of which the "Day of the Lord," with its "children of night" and sudden destruction, was a part! The Old Testament saints and these Thessalonian "brethren" had "perfect" knowledge of this since this was an oft-repeated subject of prophecy. Also, Paul had rehearsed these prophetic facts in time past with these saints (2 Thess. 2:5). This **was not** new information!

What they didn't know before, what had been a total mystery to them, was Paul's new revelation about a coming of Christ in the air! **This was new news!** An announcement of a resurrection, transformation, and translation of

both the dead and the living saints to meet Christ in the clouds and in the air! And thus, for the first time, they find out the **when** of the Rapture! An interesting observation here is that it is the Lord Jesus Himself Who activates the great work, which results in this snatching away of the Church, which is His Body (Eph. 1:22-23). Members, all of them, will be caught up to meet Him "in the clouds".

Paul, according to the revelation of the Mystery, further tells them that they were "*not appointed to wrath but to obtain salvation*" (1 Thess. 5:9; 1:10; Rom. 5:9)! This "wrath" of God is the chief characteristic that describes the whole of the Tribulation Period, not just a portion thereof (Rev. 6:16-17; 11:18; 14:19; 15:1,7; 16:1,19; 1 Thess. 1:9-10; Zeph. 1:15,18). The Body of Christ will not be touched by the storm-tossed seas of judgment any more than God's wrath affected those who were safe inside of Noah's Ark. Thank God! Give Him praise and glory!

It is worth pointing out that those to whom Paul is writing are already saved -- their souls are saved. Therefore, the "salvation" spoken of here must refer to a physical salvation or bodily deliverance (Phil. 1:19). Members of the Body of Christ will be physically/bodily delivered from the wrath of God before the Tribulation.

The Apostle Paul picks up on this theme in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17, because the concern of the Thessalonians was for their welfare and future in view of the pending judgment. Some had even been "*shaken in mind*" and "*troubled*," mistakenly thinking that they had missed the Rapture (vs. 2)! The context here is entirely and unquestionably Daniel's Seventieth Week (Dan. 9:24-27). Paul reassures the saints that "Day of the Lord" ("Lord" not "Christ," \*see Greek text on 2:2) "*shall not come*" except "*first*" there must come "*a falling away*" (2:3). If this "*falling away*" is the unexpected and unannounced Rapture, it would explain how the "Day of the Lord," could follow immediately

*in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air,  
and so shall we ever be with the Lord.  
Wherefore comfort one another with  
these words."*

Several observations come to mind, at this point, which will help identify the blessedness and uniqueness of this event:

**(1).** That "...Jesus died and rose again" (Vs. 14) is the basis for the grace age believer's blessed hope ("hope"/ELPIS = confident assurance of future good / i.e., the rapture).

**(2).** The Apostle Paul's remark, "...by the word of the Lord" (vs. 15; cf. 1 Cor. 15:51), is of special interest since, Paul never received any of his apostleship, authority or apocalypse from Christ while He was on earth. Rather, any "word"/revelation that Paul received and passed on to us was from the living, resurrected, and glorified Lord Jesus Christ (Gal.1:11-20) --some 8 to 10 years after Pentecost! If this information about the Rapture was not unique, Paul could have cited some Old Testament Scriptures to make his point.

**(3).** The phrase "in Christ" (vs. 16), identifies the participants in the Rapture. There is only one place and event in the entire Bible that explains the mechanics of how the believer is placed into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13). It is that marvelous work of God the Holy Spirit Who, as the baptizer, places the believer into the receiving element, the Body of Christ. This baptism by (**not with**) God the Holy Spirit was **absolutely unheard of** in the pre-Pauline Epistles. Paul is drawing fresh waters from the pool of Mystery revelation. **Note:** It is true that the Old Testament Saints were in Christ, but only in the sense that they were in a saving relationship to Christ and citizens of His eternal kingdom, over which He will be King. But, Church Age Saints are in Christ in the sense that they are in His Body, over which He is the Head and, thusly, made citizens of heaven and saved for eternity (Phil. 3:20).

**(4).** The events described in verses 16 through 17 may accurately be likened to a long awaited, joyous, comforting, praise-filled reunion (cf. 1 Thess. 2:19), when the Body of Christ Church is gathered together to "meet the Lord in the air!" As Christ comes **for** the saints, the action moves from earth to Heaven! However, by way of contrast, Christ's return **with** the saints as referred to by the Old Testaments prophets shows the movement to be from Heaven to earth (Zech. 4:4-7; Jude 1: 14).

**(5).** The living and the dead saints are linked together in resurrection, transformation, and translation at Christ's coming. There is no equivalent for this teaching outside of the Pauline Mystery (verses 13-15; cf. 5:10; Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:51-53).

**(6).** The absence of specific signs, time qualifiers, or intervening events concerning this promised hope, distinguishes it from the pre-Pauline teachings concerning Christ's second coming (Lk. 21; Mt. 24). The exception to this might be Paul's warnings about the deteriorating spiritual condition of the Church as found in 1 Timothy 4:1-4 and 2 Timothy 3:1-7.

Our world is speeding out of control and towards judgment! The thinking man cannot watch TV, read the newspaper, or rub shoulders with the man on the street, and not wonder, "What's going to happen next?"

There was a time when preachers were ridiculed as "Doom's Day Preachers" for their warnings of impending judgment. Today, however, his voice is not heard alone. The air is charged with growing tension and anxiety. He is joined in concert with many educators, scientists, politicians, and military men, who believe that we are heading towards a suicidal world war. However, it is in this tense atmosphere that we are reminded of the reality of the "Blessed Hope" (1 Cor. 15:51-52). We cling to that hope and need not fear the future (2 Tim. 1:7-15).

friendly era, sin is too negative, too offensive. It's too arrogant to speak of certain actions as right and wrong, and certainly not as **sinful**.

Sin is a **fact** and contaminates every individual born into this world; "...for that **ALL have sinned.**" It is this very fact that Satan works to destroy. If he can eradicate the idea of sin, he can remove any concept of right or wrong associated with any consequences for sin, hence, no need of a Savior. Here's the real heart of the matter, when it comes to the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis. If the Satanic doctrines of evolution, in their varied forms, can successfully cause doubt, then the whole idea of a righteous, holy God and the fall of a created mankind is also removed and the whole purpose of Calvary is destroyed. But sin is a **fact**, the willful disobedience and subsequent fall of man is a **fact**; hence, man is tainted with sin and therefore unable within himself to bring about any cleansing from that sin. That leaves mankind with only one option, one solution, a Holy Righteous God Who would respond in love, mercy and grace. "**But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us**" (Rom. 5:8). "...**But according to His mercy He saved us...**" (Titus 3:5).

That brings us to our central point, **the Gospel**. With one's eternal destiny resting on one's belief, it is absolutely essential that the Gospel message presented indeed be "good news". Since the very beginning of time, man has attempted to address his sinful state with humanistic endeavors. Adam sewed fig leaves together to cover himself. Cain offered the fruit of his labor rather than the sacrifice God had requested. Religion in its simplest form is man attempting to placate a Holy God through his own human deeds. Yes, there are times in religion that man will concoct a mixture of truth and error, or Scripture and human effort. But the fact is, anything short of

God's way falls short of the true Gospel. "**For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect**" (1 Cor. 1:17). The Apostle addresses the relationship of water baptism to his mystery Gospel of Grace. In times past water baptism was a requirement of the Gospel. "**John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism for the remission of sins**" (Mk. 1:4). "**He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned**" (Mk. 16:16). Here belief and baptism are placed on equal ground together bringing about the remission of sin and salvation. Additionally, the twelve Apostles were sent out under a commission that included the ritual of baptism (Mt, 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-18). But then the Apostle Paul is separated out and sent with a new Gospel, a Gospel based upon one's belief, faith and trust alone. "**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast**" (Eph. 2:8,9). "**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost**" (Titus 3:5). All the human effort a person can muster will still result in coming up short and spending an eternity in the Lake of Fire.

### So what is the Gospel?

We've already addressed several issues but as we move into what the Gospel, let us quickly mention several things **it is not**. Salvation is not gained, received, or accepted by:

- Keeping the Law of Moses
- Doing your best
- Good works
- Praying a prayer
- Water Baptism
- Holy Communion
- Confirmation

Penance

Asking Jesus into your heart

Joining a church

Loving God

None of these things will save you for one second. There may be benefits in life to doing good deeds; in fact, the believer is called upon to do good works (Eph. 2:10). But those are good works growing **out of** one's salvation, **not leading into** salvation. Loving God may sound good, and 'may' be a good beginning, but nowhere does Scripture say one's salvation results from merely "loving God." But in truth all of these are human efforts and thus are human works, human deeds and again salvation is gained through belief, faith and trust alone.

So what is the Gospel?

**"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.**

**For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."**

1 Cor. 15:1-4

Here, my friends, is the Gospel in a nutshell as given to the Apostle Paul by divine revelation for this present age in which we live. What is it? It is simply placing one's belief in the finished work of Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection.

**"That we should be to praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. In Whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed**

**with that Holy Spirit of promise."**

Eph. 1:12-13

The Gospel involves a clear presentation of the work of Christ on the behalf of sinful man; His finished work, His death, burial and resurrection.

Oh, but doesn't the Bible say. **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..."** (Acts 16:31)? "All I have to do is believe on Jesus and I am saved," I've heard it said. But is that true? Is that all there is? How does that reconcile to James' words of caution? **"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble"** (Jas. 2:19). Yes, even the devil believes in God and in Jesus; is he saved? I think not.

Yes, the Apostle Paul, when asked by the Philippian jailer what he had to do to be saved, responded with a simple answer. Believe. But to stop there, thinking this is the Gospel falls short. First the paganistic society that was so prevalent would have demanded works on the part of the participant so the natural question is, "What do I have to do?" Paul's response immediately dispelled any notion of human effort when he said **"believe."** That would totally redirect the subject away from any human effort or deed. But does the phrase **"believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"** tell the whole story, or negate what else may have been said. Keep in mind, by this time, Paul had already preached his sermon in Antioch, where, for the first time, in a post-cross era, the cross of Christ is held forth as **"glad tidings"** (Acts 13:27-32). (Compare Acts 2:23, 36; 3:13-15). I have no doubt in my mind that one of the first elements of the Gospel of the Grace of God that Paul received was the truth at the very heart of the Grace Gospel, the finished work of Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection. This is perfectly

**Ev. S. Lee Homoki**

# Some Golden Daybreak

*It may be at morn, when the day is awaking,  
When sunlight thro' darkness and  
shadow is breaking,  
That Jesus will come in the fullness of glory,  
To receive from the world His own.*

*O Lord Jesus, how long, how long  
Ere we shout the glad song  
Christ returneth! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
Amen! Hallelujah! Amen!*

(E.L. Turner)

Looking at the texts that I reference for study will show that it is the bad news (2 Thessalonians 1:1-12) that moves the Apostle Paul to address the good news – *The Blessed Hope*. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:1-11; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12; 2:1-17)

The Rapture of the Church is called the *"the Blessed Hope!"* "Why?" you may ask. Because, in the words of the songwriter: *"One glimpse of His dear face, all sorrow will erase ... when we see Christ."* Furthermore, it is the believer's only hope of deliverance from the awful holocaust of man's destructive devises and the wrath of God that is coming upon this world! The time is coming when the whole world, especially the ancient land of Israel, will be caught in the grips of a life and death struggle with the Anti-christ. Our prospect of being delivered from this is the resurrection and Rapture. In view of the

pain, suffering, war and bloodshed that lie at our door, this is indeed a *"blessed hope"* (Tit. 2:13)!

## THE TRUTH OF THE RAPTURE

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

The revelation, reality, and rhapsody of this marvelous hope is found only in the doctrine of the Mystery! It is here that the Apostle Paul gives the world divine information of God's secret plan concerning the Church, which is the Body of Christ (Eph. 3:5-9; Col. 1:25-26; Rom. 16:25; 1 Tim. 1:16; 1 Cor. 9:17 with Gal. 3:23). One of the major features of the Mystery is the disclosure of a coming of Christ not mentioned before (1 Thess. 4:16-17)! A coming that is independent and separate from Christ's coming to rule as King of Kings on earth.

Beginning in verse 13, the student finds the Apostle Paul discussing the future of the believing dead. It is in this context that he delivers the good news of verses 16 through 18, that:

*"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we, who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them*

Himself the punishment that each of us deserves. Even though He knew there would be many who would continue to thumb their noses at Him, He demonstrated His love toward us. Even with those celebrating ungodliness, He still provided the way to eternal life through Jesus Christ.

God loves us because He has not left us in a state of hopelessness and helplessness. If He wouldn't have intervened, not one of us would make it to heaven on our own accord. The only solution was a perfect sacrifice. The Father declared His love by sending His Son to be that sacrifice. Another way of saying it is that God took upon flesh and went to the cross.

Please, know:

God did not prepare everlasting fire with you in mind. Matthew 24:41 says that the everlasting fire was "prepared for the devil and his angels."

He does not want that to be your destiny. 2 Peter 3:9 says God is "not willing that any should perish..."

God desires that everyone be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). The negative way to say it is that God doesn't want anyone to be condemned to hell. He has done everything that He can, while allowing free will, to keep you from that. All remaining for you to do is trust fully on the redemption offered through

Jesus Christ.

**Hell is not a threat. It is a warning.** The Bible gives us the reasons for unbelief - the cause of condemnation.

*"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."*

John 3:19-20.

*"Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."*

Romans 1:32.

It also tells us that all men know there is a heaven and a hell. You may have hardened your heart to it. You may have convinced yourself otherwise, but the truth remains. To answer the question: How could a loving God send people to hell? Because you have left a holy, righteous, just God no choice, when you reject His gift of love. Please, if you have not already done so, PLEASE, place your faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ to order to be assured that Heaven is your destination.

## Truth Aflame

summarized in Paul's closing words in his letter to the Romans. "Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my Gospel, **and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began**" (Rom. 16:25). As Paul responded to the jailer with the word "believe", isn't it important to ask, "**believe WHAT?**" Did the jailer (or does anyone) merely need to believe that Jesus was, that He was a good man, or even the **facts** about His life and work at Calvary? The word believe means far more than a mental point of agreement; it is a deep-seated, deeply-rooted conviction of a truth. Many people have a "**head**" knowledge, but that is the extent of their belief. They know all of the facts, they may even be able to quote of the verses, but that is not what counts. The story is told of the tightrope walker who pushed a wheelbarrow loaded with bricks back and forth across a ravine. He then asked the spectators who "believed" he could do it? They had all seen him do it, so they indicated that they "believed" (mental ascent). To that he responded, "If you believe, come and get into the wheelbarrow." That is true faith, belief and trust. Note too, the words quoted above from Paul's letter to the saints in Ephesus where he speaks of trust. The word trust is very similar to believe and it speaks of a confirmation, a confirmation of what? The passage clearly states it to be hearing "**...the word of truth....**" (see Rom. 10:17). That my dear friends that "**truth**" is **the Gospel**, the message of Christ's **death, burial, and resurrection**. Don't shortchange the Gospel. Without His death for sin (His shed blood), His burial (the putting away of sin), and His resurrection (showing His victory over death, which guarantees our resurrection [1 Cor. 15:12-23]), then our preaching is to no purpose; it is empty or vain. And as Paul

writes, "**And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are still in your sins**" (1 Cor. 15:17).

As I close, let me briefly comment, (I know I'll catch some flack here). We cause a lot of confusion, when we use terminology or practices that simply are not Biblical. First, a person **IS NOT** saved because they pray the so-called "Sinner's Prayer." I can't tell you how many people have told me that they know they are saved because they prayed a prayer. A person is saved the very moment they **believed**, they **trusted**, they put their **faith** in the Gospel, the **Death, Burial, and Resurrection** of the Lord Jesus Christ on their behalf.

Second, a person isn't saved by "*asking Jesus into his heart.*" First that is totally void of a proper understanding of any Scripture. Unless the context demands otherwise, the heart, as presented in Scripture, is a reference to the very seat of thought and emotion. Strong's Concordance defines it as follows: *The heart was thought to be the seat of the inner self (composed of life, soul, mind, and spirit). Heart is similar in meaning to "soul," but often the "heart" has a focus on thinking and understanding. It is not the blood-pumping muscle. In the so-called Old Testament, it is often associated with the word bowels (Gen. 43:30; Isa. 63:15). One would not tell someone to ask Jesus into their bowels. Instead of asking Jesus into anything, why not simply tell an individual, young or old, to simply believe, trust, place their faith in the finished work of Christ on their behalf— His death, burial and resurrection?*

Friends, we have been charged to be His ambassadors of reconciliation, and, as such, we have been given the Word of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-20). With this in mind, let us not be drawn away from the true Gospel to another empty gospel, that is not a Gospel. The Gospel is plain enough, "simple" enough without removing portions to satisfy the whims of a lost world. "**Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord...**" (2 Tim. 1:8a).



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Pastor Matthew Ritchey

Part 8

Hell is an unpopular concept. Mention the word to a skeptic and he will automatically dismiss you as resorting to threats. Even some "Christian" leaders dismiss it as an allegory, while other religious leaders claim that love wins and everyone gets to go to Heaven eventually. The church and the world have sadly misrepresented hell. In some cases, it has become a fantasy cartoon with a red devil, horns, and a pitchfork. Yet, the Scriptures are clear in their teaching of hell.

*"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."*

Matthew 25:41

*"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."*

Romans 12:19

*"For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."*

Hebrews 10:30-31

*"Seeing it is a righteous thing with God*

*to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

2 Thessalonians 2:6-8

This is a side of God we don't like to talk about often. We want Him to be our buddy, our pal, our amigo. Don't get me wrong, Christians are in a position to address Him as "Abba, Father." It is a very real relationship that we can enjoy with Him. However, if God were standing in front of me today, I would not go up and slap him high-five. Reverence and respect have been lost in our culture toward teachers, parents, and others in authority. I find this lack of respect extends toward God as well. It is a fearful thing to be standing on the opposite side of God on reckoning day. Some Christians want to say the punishment of the unsaved is a temporary situation, but notice the word "everlasting" in Matthew 25:41. The Bible states the unsaved **will** spend eternity in everlasting punishment. This should be all we need to accept this truth, but the accusation actually asks: How could God do this and still be loving? So, let me remind you of a few things about God.

God who provided the solution to our problem. Titus 2:13-14 reads, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." We are made pure by the application of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

God has used all sorts of illustrations to try to explain this to people. The Bible speaks of removing the impurities in metal (e.g., Psalm 119:119; Proverbs 24:4; Isaiah 1:25). Why do this? Well, it makes it look nicer and it makes the instrument stronger. The Bible speaks of separating the wheat from the chaff (e.g., Psalm 35:5; Isaiah 5:24; Matthew 3:12). This analogy made more sense to me when I began growing chives, which is an herb that looks like grass, but tastes like garlic. When chives are cut, they have to be separated from the grass surrounding it.

If you want perfection, you can't have blemish and imperfections. We don't live in a perfect world. One day we will, when holiness is finally reinstated in the world.

#### 4. God is just

A retail store will not accept stealing. A school will not accept cheating. A book company will act against plagiarism. These immoral acts go against the very reason for the existence of these businesses or organizations. In the same way, our God can not accept ungodliness.

The word "just" is defined as "based on, or behaving according, to what is morally right and fair." God acts fairly to bring about morality. Immorality (the Biblical word is "ungodliness") needs to be judged. Human judges always have a possibility to err. But God is always fair and right in His judgments. There is no evidence that is withheld from Him; He sees all.

We cringe when hearing about God's judging people and sending them to hell, as we apply it to loved ones who have lived what we consider

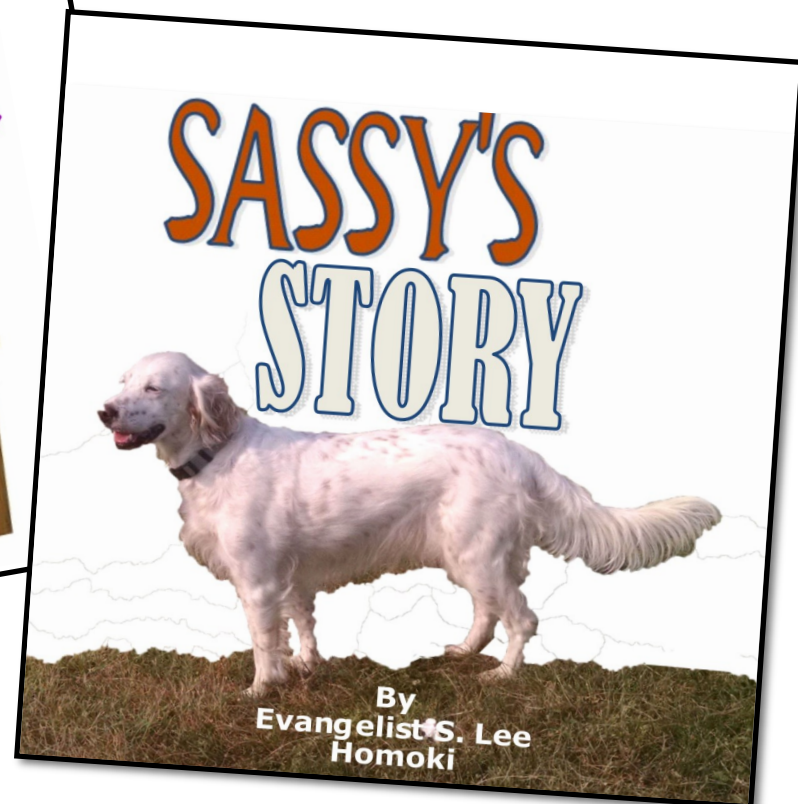
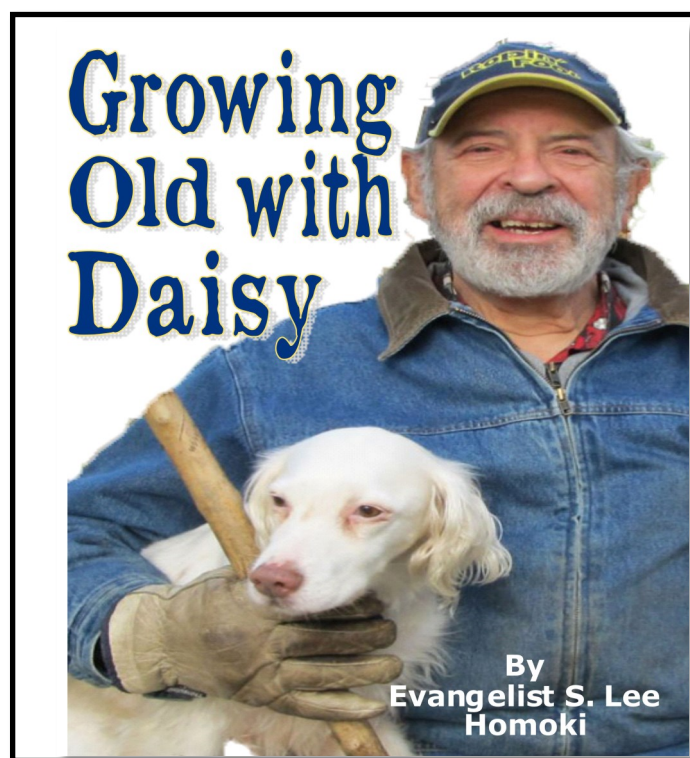
to be "good" lives, like our dear Aunt Theda. Aunt Theda never harmed a fly. She was so kind and baked delicious chocolate chip cookies. Do you mean God would send Aunt Theda to hell just because she didn't trust in Jesus Christ? The Bible presents Aunt Theda and the rest of us in a different light. Without Christ, we are dead sinners. No amount of chocolate chip cookies and sparing flies changes this fact. Only the shed blood of Jesus Christ can change a dead, unrighteous, impure sinner into an alive, righteous, pure saint. We have a low view of God, if we think we can attain to His holiness.

We also rebel against hell, because we conjure up pictures of people reforming and repenting if just given the chance. The people of Revelation knew the harm that was coming to them was from God. Listen to their response: "And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory...And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds" (Revelation 16:9,11). Their response was not, "God we are so sorry!" They responded, "God, I hate you even more for doing this to me." This saddens me a great deal, because, all of their lives, God had been patiently waiting for them to come to Him. It tells me that, even if God were to come down and beg on His hands and knees for the skeptic to accept Him, they wouldn't do it. They may even spit in His face, hit Him with a rod, whip Him, and nail Him to a cross.

Fine, but how does this make God loving? You want to know why God loves you. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Even though we were against Him and had nothing to offer Him, He still sent His Son Jesus Christ to take upon



Cowboy and Evangelist has written (so far) three tracts about his dogs Sassy and Daisy to help people know the Lord Jesus Christ. You can order some to share with your friends and family at Bible Doctrines to Live By.



**1). This world belongs to God.**

He created it. He can decide the rules. He created it to function in a way that is truly good. Humanity has perverted it into a way that rebels against His intentions.

Three of the passages above use the word "vengeance". This is not to be confused with revenge. Revenge is the action of inflicting hurt or harm on someone for an injury or wrong suffered at their hands. Vengeance is the punishment inflicted or retribution exacted for an injury or wrong. Revenge and vengeance (and avenge for that matter) are similar in definition and may look the same on the surface. However, while revenge is more spiteful, punitive, and injurious, vengeance points more to retribution for the sake of restoring justice. Revenge comes about because someone caused you personal harm and you want to get back at them. It mostly deals with your trying to vindicate yourself. Vengeance looks to make things right. God is not looking to hurt someone for harming Him (revenge); He desires to right what is wrong (vengeance).

In order to restore His creation back to righteousness and justice, God's vengeance goes out against all wickedness, which includes those that stand against Him. The world will never know peace until those at enmity with God are taken out of the way.

Everything the unsaved use for selfish, sinful means is an affront to the purpose of their Creator. If you rent a tool from Ace Hardware and you break it, there will be a consequence. If you lose the laptop provided to you through your school, there is a consequence for losing it. If you rent a hotel room and trash it, there will be consequences. None of these things belong to you. You are merely borrowing them. The owners have a right to have punishment in place. God has graciously given us all that we enjoy. We are expected to use them for His honor and glory. When it comes time for reckoning, God will inflict consequences on

those who rebelled against Him.

What makes the situation sadder is that God has provided a payment for you to be reconciled back to Him. When we choose to reject His offer of justification, we are denying the only chance we have of being saved from God's fair vengeance. If we choose to remain wrong, we will not survive the judgment of the One who is right.

**2. God is righteous.**

1 Corinthians 6:9 begins, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" This is the problem. God's kingdom is purely righteousness. You cannot have unrighteousness in a righteous kingdom.

Pretend you own a store. What kind of store would it be? Sports collectibles? Restaurant? Clothing? Supermarket? Gas Station? Pet shop? Whatever it is, I enter your store talking at the top of my voice, cursing, insulting other customers, racing a cart down the aisle. If you own a sports shop, I bounce a basketball against a wall. If you own a supermarket, I knock down displays. If you own a pet store, I punch a kitten in the face. You ask me to stop. If I respond by causing even more of a ruckus, what would be your next step? You would probably call the police to remove me from the store. I would never be welcomed into your store again.

Why would you kick me out? Don't I have a right to go where I want and do what I want to do? I wanted to bounce the basketball against the wall. Who are you to stop me? I don't like kittens. Why shouldn't I punch one in the face? You're not being very loving by kicking me out of your store!

God rules in righteousness. In contrast, the current world is influenced by Satan (Ephesians 2:2). We exist in a state of unrighteousness and rebellion (Ephesians 2:3). Those remaining in rebellion to God's ways are always going to make excuses about God's actions (e.g., He's unloving, He's not good). But, wait a minute, it is

His creation! He owns it! He will do the right thing! It goes beyond His acting righteous; He desires that righteousness be the rule of the day. Can you imagine it? A world where no wrong exists?

We have destroyed God's ways of peace and unity. Unrighteousness must be removed for righteousness to remain. You cannot have right in the presence of wrong; the two cannot coexist. Thankfully, not only is God righteous, but He is gracious. While 1 Corinthians 6:9 tells of the problem, verse 14 of the same book and chapter tells us the solution. It says, "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power." This refers to those who trusted in the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ (see verse 11). Believers will one day be part of God's Kingdom – the Body of Christ makes us the Heaven division.

Let's revisit your store. Someone has paid to take care of all the damages that occurred during my visit. I can come back, if I acknowledge the payment had been made. You get my phone number and call my cell to present this offer. I yell, "No!" and hang up the phone. My choice. You did everything you could to provide a way for me to get back into the store. I refused the offer. You were right to kick me out of the store. You were gracious to provide a way back.

Pay attention to how 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 describes those who will be sent to Hell:

*"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."*

The unbelievers rejected the love of the truth (i.e., God in His grace provides salvation

through faith alone in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ), which would save them. They refused the truth and chose unrighteousness. The fault does not lie with God. The fault resides with those who deny His offer of escape from hell through faith in Jesus Christ.

3. *God is holy. He is pure.*

It is not a pleasant moment when you reach into a bag of potatoes and you pull your hand out covered in foul-smelling mush. Grimacing, you probably start pulling out potatoes to make sure other potatoes have not started to rot. It is true that one bad apple, or in this case, potatoes, has the potential to spoil the whole bunch (due to the ethylene, science lovers). While that one rotten potato remained in that bag, the bag was impure. It needed to be removed to spare the other potatoes.

Why am I talking about potatoes? To help explain why a holy, pure God cannot stand for any impurity. One stain taints perfection. Titus 1:15-16 states, "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." I have a white shirt that was clean until I got a mustard stain on it. From that day on, that shirt had an impurity on it. If people noticed the mustard stain on my shirt, I did not respond by saying, "Yes, but this spot over here is pure." The one stain ruined the entire shirt. One impurity made it impure. Titus speaks of impurity as something that grows like the rot that will spread through a bag of potatoes. The impure will affect the pure.

A holy, pure God cannot –not simply will not, but cannot – stand for anything impure. One impurity that made its way into His kingdom would taint the whole thing. Once again, it is

Nevertheless, our senior years have been filled with precious memories, and we are hoping they will never end! Yet, sure enough, that very day has come! After our morning walk and one final trip around the yard, sniffing the bushes, Daisy died one morning! She was 19 years old. In the following days, I looked in vain for a way to eliminate my sense of loss, emptiness and painful feelings.

I had my son Steve bury her in the back yard so that I could keep the memory of her close to me, hoping that the emptiness and pain will fade into thankfulness for the precious gift that God gave me for the years of companionship with **Daisy Mae Starr!**

As I think on Daisy's life, I can't help remembering that each of our lives will end one day. It is so important that we ready to go to Heaven.



**GOD'S WORD SAYS:** *Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."*

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

When I was a boy of 15, I heard the gospel by which I was saved. Because "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:1-4), **My hope of resurrection and Heaven rests on this truth.**

I remember my Dad, shortly after he became a Christian, praying at the dinner table: "Lord, I pray that I have not led my children too far out into the world that I can't bring them to Christ." (He would pray so long that the potatoes would get cold!) He would get me into the car and on the way to church (I was a captive audience), he would ask me, "Lee, are you saved?" I could never run away from that haunting question! **YES,** I have put my trust in the Gospel! I thank God that He made provision for me to enjoy the hope of resurrection and the fellowship of Christ by putting my faith in His Word!

There is no disappointment in Jesus! My prayer is that any boy or girl or animal lover who hears or reads of my love Daisy has trusted in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ to save them. Then, you can grow old knowing you

home... **and all that night, TOO!** I could not help but feel pain for her. She was afraid and was missing her mother and six other brothers and sisters. Everything was so strange and new! Nothing would satisfy her until later in the evening when she crawled into bed and cuddled up beside us. Little did I realize that she would capture my heart so completely!

I was amazed at Daisy's manners, instincts and playfulness; for some reason, she found my cap, gloves or undershorts to be an attraction and, at the first opportunity, she would eagerly try to steal them and run away with them! Throughout her long life (17 years), this game of "Keep-away" remained her favorite enjoyment! She had no interest in playing "Fetch" with a ball like most dogs; rather, she preferred that I chase her around the yard hollering, "I'm going to get you!" She would only let me get so close ... and the chase would be on again! She loved to play! You could almost see the smile on her face! Eventually, I gave her the nickname of "Skippy."



**GOD'S WORD SAYS:** "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6

Daisy was born with natural, inbred, highly developed, hunting instincts. I did not teach her to hunt; however, I did **train her to obey!** (The same instructions are good to apply to the child or the puppy. The Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.") When Daisy was a little pup, before she even knew what a game bird was, she would find one in the brush (ground cover) and she would go on point, alerting me of the whereabouts of the bird. In time, I learned to trust her instincts. If she said there was a bird hiding in the cover - without fail, **it was there!**

I always felt wanted and knew of her love for me when I would see her wagging her tail and see her "happy dance" when I would get home! She made me feel very special! In addition, when I would lay down for a short afternoon nap, Daisy would insist on making herself comfortable by lying between my legs. Moreover, every night, she would wait at my feet for her favorite treat - **a chocolate, ice cream fudge bar!**

Daisy and I have grown old together. In dog years, I think, we are about the same age. Like her, I do not hear or see as good as when in my youth. Also, we both have found it difficult and painful to move about quickly.



# TRUTH for Youth

Volume 3. Number 3.



**GOD'S WORD SAYS:** "[Trust] in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy." 1 Timothy 6:17



## Growing Old with Daisy

By Cowboy Lee Homoki

Her name is **Daisy Mae Starr.** What a face! What a picture of grace and beauty! What a sweetheart little dog! She ought to be in the movies! Truthfully, she captured my heart the moment that I laid eyes on her.

My best friend and bird-hunting partner, Bill McCreary, who raises and trains English Setter dogs, presented her to me, as a gift, when she was an adorable white puppy, 12 weeks old! Since then, I have told many that Daisy was a gift from God, too, because the enjoyment of my life would have been significantly diminished without her.

Daisy is a registered **English Setter Bird Dog.** For her first ride home, I put Daisy on my wife Darlene's lap, where the puppy whined and cried all the way