

**SATAN'S HOUR**

By Milton Smith

After Satan had successfully tempted Eve to commit that infamous sin in the Garden of Eden, God proceeded to pronounce a curse upon Satan. God said in Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." Most biblical scholars agree that the metaphorical bruising of Jesus' heel represented a coming, temporary setback that would be inflicted upon Jesus by the prince of darkness, while the bruising of Satan's head by Jesus (the seed of Woman), represented utter and complete defeat of the wicked one. Jesus won an eternal victory over Satan by His resurrection from the dead, while Satan's only so-called "triumph" over Jesus was our Lord's temporary death upon the cross.

It seems accurate to say that this was Satan's hour.

Luke 22:53 tells us that when Jesus' enemies approached Him in the garden to arrest Him, He said to them, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." Satan is the prince of darkness. Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:12 that we do not struggle against flesh and blood, but against the "rulers of the darkness of this age," the "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Paul also tells us in Colossians 1:13 that God has delivered us from the "power of darkness" and has "conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love."

The suffering and death of Jesus would be the one, and the only, triumphant hour of this evil prince of darkness.

Jesus bore our sins when he died,

but he also bore our sins by His pain and suffering. He was bearing our sins when He was still alive on the cross, and He was bearing our sins when he was scourged and beaten. Isaiah 53:5 reads, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." It seems that even when Jesus was being spat upon, He was suffering for our sins. While His suffering for man's sins did not begin on the cross, it did end there.

Thus, it is accurate to say that Satan's hour was short-lived. Jesus now enjoys eternal triumph over the wicked one, and those who choose to obey and faithfully follow the Savior will forever be a part of our Lord's eternal victory!

— Tulsa, OK

**ETERNAL SECURITY AND JOHN 10:27-29**

By Mark Lindley

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (KJV)

This beautiful passage is an affirmation of the deity of Christ. Jesus states that He gives eternal life and that He is the Son of God. Of course, most of the Jews denied these facts about Jesus. (vv. 19-24.) It is unfortunate that such a powerful statement about Jesus' divine nature is often used as a "proof-text" for the "Once Saved Always Saved" doctrine.

Preachers who take the position that one can never fall from grace often stress that Jesus "gives eternal life." It is then asserted that if Jesus gives "eternal" life, then it can never be lost. What these preachers fail to mention is that Jesus also explained that eternal

life is "in the world to come." (Mark 10:30.) If eternal life is received in the "world to come," then the "sheep" must not possess its fullness now. There must be more to "eternal life" than what we have right now.

Further, preachers who teach that we can never fall from grace fail to preach that the "sheep" live "in hope of eternal life." (Titus 1:2.) But if we live in "hope" of it, then we do not currently possess eternal life in all its fullness.

In addition, preachers who teach that we can never fall from grace fail to stress that eternal life is a "promise." "And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life." (1 John 2:25.) But if we are waiting for the promise to be fulfilled, then we do not possess eternal life in the same way that eternal life will be enjoyed in heaven.

The truth is that Christians do have eternal life in the form of a promise,

a promise that God will keep. Eternal life is what we long for "in the world to come." This is our "hope."

But sheep can go astray (Luke 15:1-7); sheep can cease listening to the Shepherd (John 8:31.) No man can "pluck" the sheep out of the Lord's hand, but sheep have free will and can choose to leave the Lord. (Galatians 1:6.) This is why Christians are warned that children of God can fall from grace: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; you are fallen from grace." (Galatians 5:4.) If "sheep" (followers of Christ) can never fall from grace, then why did Paul warn that some had "fallen from grace?"

The good news is that Christians do not have to fall from grace. Rather, God's people can keep on listening to the voice of the Shepherd and reap eternal life in heaven. (Galatians 6:7,8.)

— Ripley, MS

**Old Paths**

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

**WHEN TO CONFESS**

By Danny Boggs

It's not easy to admit when we are wrong. But if we can get comfortable with confessing our sins to God, James 5:16 might still unnerve us: "Confess your sins to one another . . ." When should you confess your sins to other people?

If people know you have sinned against them, confessing your sin to them is the right thing to do. Jesus said so in Matthew 5:23-24. Here someone knows that you have done something sinful to him, and you know that he feels that way. What should you do? Admit that you have done it and seek forgiveness from him. God doesn't even want your worship until you try your best to work it out.

In Matthew 18:15-17 Jesus painted a scenario that begins with one person wronging another. Imagine yourself being the wrongdoer. If your brother tells you your fault, what should you do? Confess! If you won't do it, Jesus wants him to bring another person or two. What should you do? It shouldn't have gotten to that point. But if it does, confess! Never let yourself stay on the wrong end of this situation.

Some people try to pantomime the Bible's requirements by coming in front of the whole church and admitting to an unspecified sin against an unnamed person instead of owning up to it personally with the one who was wronged. Still others will go to the other person and say something like, "If I have sinned . . . I am sorry." Neither measures up to the Biblical description of confession.

Even if your sin was not aimed at people, confessing to them can be the right thing to do. The wanderer in James 5:19-20 may be slighting God specifically and fellow Christians only collaterally. When concerned brethren help you come to your senses about your broken relationship with God, you'll realize how you broke it with your brethren, too. You'll want to confess your sin to them.

Should you ever confess your sins to people who don't know about them? If people are being hurt unawares or will eventually be hurt by what you have done, they need to hear it from you. We can put fellow Christians into more difficult situations by leaving them in the dark. What if someone who is not a Christian tells one of your fellow Christians about your sin before you do? You would want your brother or sister to be able to tell that person about your repentance and God's forgiveness.

One purpose of confession is to make sure that absolutely everyone who knows about the sin knows about the repentance. This can call for confession to the whole church. It helps with the harm done by your influence. It helps to keep other people from thinking, "Well, if she can get away with it, I can get away with it." Your sin was bad enough. If it becomes the springboard for someone else's sin, it's even worse. (Matthew 18:6.)

Some Christians try to manage their sin. It doesn't work. Repentance is the need, but it's hard. "Confess your sins to

**THE SPIRIT OF JESUS**

By Dalton Key

Have you ever wondered just why it is,  
That church members act as they do?  
Why otherwise, kindly benevolent souls,  
Will act as if meant for the zoo?

You've seen it, I'm sure - you've witnessed the shame,  
The stomping, the snorting, the brays,  
When Christians who usually act as they should,  
Discover they can't have their way.

And then in a way unbecoming their call,  
They'll fume and they'll fuss and they'll pout,  
'Til the whole church is injured and friendships are lost,  
And the good name they've worn is worn out.

Dogs can be kenneled; bears can be caged,  
And kept from attacking at will;  
But selfish church members, with unbridled tongues,  
Can hurt - even spiritually kill.

Mean-spirited words and vicious remarks,  
Can bring untold heartache to bear;  
Souls can be damaged or maimed - even lost,  
When ravaged by friends who should care.

The spirit of Jesus is just what we need  
When dealing with life's little hurts;  
With His mind as ours; His footsteps our own,  
Let's behave once again as His church!

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this:  
'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you bite  
and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by  
one another." (Galatians 5:15.)

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one another and pray for one another." Why? "That you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." (James 5:16.) Such confession gives a caring Christian the opportunity to help bear a burden. (Galatians 6:1-2.) By confessing specific sins to fellow Christians, you can strengthen your will to do right. The one who hears the confession might say, "I've been there. Here's something the Bible says that can help. Here's what I did about it. Let's tackle it together."

Confess your sins to the people they hurt and to the people who will be helped.

— Neosho, MO

**OUR KING**

By Bobby Key

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (1 Timothy 1:17.)

If Christ is not our king there can be no kingdom. As subjects of the king we must respect and obey Him. To the king belongs all authority in heaven and on earth. (Matthew 28:18.) At times it appears the citizens of the kingdom have deposed the king and taken matters into their own hands. When we refuse to allow Christ to be our king, every man does that which is right in his own eyes. (Judges 21:25.) In that instance, the kingdom no longer belongs to Christ; it belongs to the people.

The cardinal fault with modern religion is to call, “Lord, Lord,” and not do the things which the Lord says. (Luke 6:46.) The human mind, equipped by God, is capable of receiving and understanding orders from the king. Truth is objective and attainable.

Too many people assume their own way is as good as that of the Lord. Their faith rests upon assumptions. The human mind assumes baptism for remission of sins is not necessary; that the Lord’s Supper may be observed on any day of the week, or no day; that women may take the lead in worship; or that instrumental music in worship must please the king because, after all, it pleases us.

When our faith rests on assumptions, we no longer need a king. We become a law unto ourselves.

Men can do no better than to walk humbly with their God. To do this one must respect His authority and freely confess a willingness to change.

It is dangerous to set aside the law of the king. It is only by the king’s law that we can be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. (2 Timothy 3:17.) Everything must be done in the name of the Lord. (Colossians 3:17.) When something is done in the name of the Lord, it is done by the authority of the Lord. All authority belongs to the king. He has the authority to tell people what to do and how to do it.

Every person who has been born again is a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. As citizens it is our duty to show loyalty to the king.

— Deceased

EDITORIALLY SPEAKING . . .

**INJUSTICE, ANARCHY, AND THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST**

By Dalton Key

The following words seem especially fitting to our time and to the craziness lately gripping our country: “My favorite poet was Aeschylus. And he once wrote, ‘Even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart, until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God.’ What we need in the United States is not division; what we need in the United States is not hatred; what we need in the United States is not violence and lawlessness, but love, and wisdom, and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or whether they be black.”

A few years had passed since the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Just a few hours had passed since the assassination of Martin Luther King. The year, 1968. The quotation above is that of Senator Robert Kennedy as he spoke to soothe and salve a nation spinning out of control. His words speak for themselves and ring with a haunting relevance to our current state of affairs. They are refreshingly nonpolitical. And they brim with something sadly lacking in these more modern times - statesmanship.

Robert Kennedy would himself be assassinated just two months later.

Kennedy referenced the greek poet, Aeschylus, who had also once opined, “In war, the first casualty is truth.” We are, as a nation, as a people, presently at war with ourselves, and true to form, truth is nowhere to be found. We have killed it. We have buried the body. And we have left it to rot in an unmarked grave.

The time for bickering, finger-pointing, posturing and prevaricating has long-since past. What we need now - desperately - is what our country needed then, in the dark spring and summer of 1968 - “love, wisdom, and compassion toward one another.”

In other words, what we need - all of us - is a larger measure of the spirit and disposition of our Lord. “Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” (1 Corinthians 13: 4-7.) Those wearing Christ’s name must be willing to follow His example.

One truth is certain: the more Christ-likeness rules the land, the less injustice and anarchy will rule the day.

**HONESTY**

By Joe Slater

Truth can be uncomfortable! To avoid the distress, one of the first bad things we learned to do is lie. We soon discovered lying only makes matters worse, but still we do it. Will we ever learn?

Satan is “a liar and the father of it.” (John 8:44.) He deceived Eve in the Garden, and has been plying his devious trade ever since.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, “it is impossible for God to lie.” (Hebrews 6:18; also Titus 1:2.) It isn’t only that God won’t lie – He can’t! It is impossible. His nature (holiness, righteousness, justice, etc.) is such that lying isn’t even an option.

The first sin recorded in the early church was lying. Ananias and Sapphira lied about what they gave

to help the needy. Peter asked, “Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? . . . You have not lied to men, but to God.” (Acts 5:3-4.)

Fortunately for us, God no longer strikes people dead for lying as He did those two!

Paul exhorted the Colossians, “Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.” (3:9.) Just as you would remove filthy, smelly clothes, you must remove lying from your way of life.

You are a new person in Christ; don’t act like Satan!

This includes the “little white lies” that so many try to excuse. Scripture knows no such classification. It’s futile to minimize sin! Hear John’s words from Revelation 21:8 – “But the

cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” Not “some liars”; not “most liars”; not “big liars,” but all liars!

Truth can be uncomfortable; Hell is more so!

— Justin, TX

“Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another . . . Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” (Ephesians 4:25,29.)

**CASTLES BUILT UPON THE SAND**

By Danny Tunnell

Nations and individuals who leave God out may forfeit His divine benevolence, provision, and protection. “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14.) Jesus talked about a wise man who built his house upon a rock because he heard what Jesus said and did it. He also talked about a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. The wise man’s house stood in the midst of the storm. The foolish man, who built upon the sand, lost his dwelling. (Matthew 7:24-27.)

One of the greatest tragedies of our day is that the Bible is available to nearly everyone, but to millions it is a closed book. Many do not read it, while some read it and never apply its teachings to themselves.

The Bible is just as relevant today as it was in the first century, and it should be the authority that rules our conduct.

Think of the improvements that would come if everyone accepted the

moral principles laid down by the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach (disgrace) to any people.” (Proverbs 14:34.)

A return to the Bible would strengthen our home life. It would reverse terrifying crime statistics.

Think about what a return to the Bible would do for race relations, if everyone chose to love their neighbor.

William Wilberforce (1759-1833), a Bible believer, set about to abolish the slave trade in England. A few years later, another Bible believer, Abraham Lincoln, freed the slaves in the United States.

It may be hard for us to appreciate the magnitude of what President Lincoln accomplished. In 1863, when Lincoln freed the slaves, we had already had 244 years of legal slavery here. It was back in 1619 when the first nine African chattel slaves arrived on the shores of Jamestown.

Houses built upon the sand will not last. But the things of God, which are eternal, will last. Mosie Lister conveyed these thoughts so well in song. “Like a child by the seashore

building castles in the sand, foolish dreams I have dreamed day by day; Leaving God out completely, till the day my castle’s grand, fell apart in the tide and swept away . . . Wise the man who in God is anchored fast . . . In the Rock of Ages all my hopes are built today, and in the Rock they will never pass away.”

— Miami, OK

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