

GOD IS GOOD, AND HE DOES GOOD

by Danny Tunnell

In Acts 28:23, many came to where Paul was staying to hear him expound and testify “of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening.” It had to be some of the best teaching they had ever heard! And he taught over an extended period of time, from morning till evening. What was the result? Some believed the things which were spoken and some believed not. (Acts 28:24.)

Unfortunately, some have rejected the gospel entirely, while others have rejected parts of the gospel because they don’t agree with it, or it sounds too good to be true.

It is good news that Christ washed us from our sins in His own blood. (Revelation 1:5.) It is good news that we are made the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21.) It is good news that Jesus has prepared for us a home in heaven. (John 14:1-3.) “Blessed be the Lord, Who daily

loads us with benefits.” (Psalm 68:19.) “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases.” (Psalm 103:2,3.) It is good to recognize every good thing that is ours in Christ. (Philemon 6, McCord.)

Jesus is not only Savior, and Healer; He is also Deliverer. Today we talk about psychological problems. But many of those are actually spiritual problems. Jesus delivers us from anxiety. He said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow . . .” (Matthew 6:33,34.)

Another problem is loneliness. One of the most heartening things Jesus said to His disciples was: “Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world.” (Matthew 28:20.) We have a friend in Christ who sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18:24.)

The sense of futility is gone with our hope and faith in God, knowing

that “all things work together for good to those who love God.” (Romans 8:28.) In Christ, inner conflict is gone, such as what Paul experienced when he said, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of death?” (Romans 7:24.) Then he answered his own question: “I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord.” (Romans 7:25.)

The gospel (good news) truly is a panacea, a remedy for all the major difficulties of life. The believer stands in awe of God’s marvelous goodness and appreciates all He has done and is doing.

In the words of Stuart Hamblen, “It is no secret what God can do.” With God all things are possible. (Luke 1:37.) God is good, and He does good. (Psalm 119:68.)

— Miami, OK

BEWARE THE SCAMMERS!

By Richard Dent

Have you ever been tricked out of money that you would have liked to have used in a more beneficial way? People who do these things are crooks and are not ashamed to steal your material things. We know that in the Old Testament one of the ten commandments was “Thou shall not steal.” (Exodus 20:15.) In the New Testament, Paul told the Ephesian brethren, “Let him who stole steal no more.” (Ephesians 4:28.)

Money may not be the only thing that people are scammed out of. Consider the story of Jacob and Esau. Rebekah favored her son Jacob more than Esau. Rebekah told Jacob just what he needed to do to confuse his father, Isaac. Jacob dressed himself up and brought an offering of food to his father who was blind in his old age. Jacob pretended to be Esau and, what do we know . . . it worked. When the real Esau came to his father with an offering of food, sorrow befell them

both. In Genesis 25, we find that Jacob took advantage of his famished brother and got him to sell his birthright to him. Then in chapter 27 we find that Rebekah and Jacob scammed Esau and Isaac again by getting the blessing which should have gone to Esau, as the oldest brother. (Genesis 27:30-40.) Of course we know that things didn’t work out too well for Rebekah and Jacob as he had to flee from the anger of his brother, Esau. Remember that scammer is another word for trickster.

But who is the biggest scammer of all? Why I believe it just has to be old Satan himself. Yes, Satan does not just want your money . . . he wants your soul! Again Paul told the Ephesians, “Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” (Ephesians 6:11.) Paul also told the Corinthians that Satan could transform himself into an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:14.)

Don’t let Satan scam you out of your soul. “What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his own soul?” (Matthew 16:26.)

— Liberal, KS

“Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.” (1 Peter 5:8-10.)

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“ask for the old paths” (Jer. 6:16)

OUR LORD WAS TEMPTED

By Milton Smith

One of the most amazing incidents recorded in the Bible is the story of the temptation of the Son of God by the prince of “spiritual wickedness in the high places.” Each of the synoptic gospels record this incident. We must consider that what took place on this occasion was Satan engaging himself in an assault on the incarnate Son of God. Among the adversaries of Jesus, none could equal the power of Satan. If our Lord was able to triumph over the spiritual assaults of the prince of this world, he truly was the Son of God, the promised Messiah, and the Holy One who has the authority to rescue all sinners from the kingdom of darkness.

Scripture tells us that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil for 40 days. (Luke 4:2.) This would be the ultimate assault on Christ by the wicked powers of darkness. This area the Bible identifies as the “wilderness,” was often called the “devastation.” It is a very frightening area east of Jerusalem that was entered by traveling down the back slopes of the plateau on which Jerusalem rose over the Dead Sea. It was an area consisting pretty much of nothing but rocks, jagged cliffs, and devastation. It was a most frightening trip. Jesus found Himself all alone in this dreaded wilderness when Satan came to Him. Here, in this intimidating wasteland, Jesus would be confronted by a subtle, crafty, and clever deceiver. Satan’s temptation would be masterfully designed to attack Jesus with the greatest amount of impact. Everything about this situation would be dangerous.

But Jesus overcame every obstacle and every temptation that this evil deceiver would throw at him. But what does this mean to us? Basically, three important facts: First, Jesus satisfied the Father’s demand for the perfect sacrifice by his victory over the tempter. Second, Jesus became the perfect mediator between God and man by being “tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15.) And third, in turning back Satan by quoting Scripture, Jesus was showing us how to overcome Satan’s temptations by using the Bible. Satan hates the word of God, and when we use it, he is more likely to flee from us and center his attacks on someone else. The temptation of Jesus was truly an amazing incident, and one that teaches the student of the Bible some magnificent lessons.

— Tulsa, OK

Love Rejoices In The Truth

By Joe Slater

Immediately after saying that love doesn’t rejoice in unrighteousness, Paul wrote that it does rejoice in the truth. (1 Corinthians 13:6.) This shouldn’t surprise us since our God is a “God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He.” (Deuteronomy 32:4.)

Paul himself exemplified the love that rejoices in the truth. Though under house arrest in Rome, he continued proclaiming the gospel even to his captors, and he knew other brethren were evangelizing also. Some had corrupt motives, but “whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.” (Philippians 1:18.) Christ’s gospel is truth, and Paul rejoiced in it being preached.

John the apostle also rejoiced in the truth. He told the “elect lady,” “I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father.” (2 John 4.) Along the same line he wrote to Gaius, “I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth.” (3 John 3-4.) Christian parents rejoice when children in their earthly families walk in the truth (i.e. obey the gospel and serve God faithfully). Let’s rejoice when others we’ve led to Christ are walking in the truth or, for that matter, any time we see anyone walking in the truth.

The ungodly “suppress the truth in unrighteousness.” (Romans 1:18.) That is, they hold it back, hindering it from advancing.

We must promote the truth vigorously and constantly, rejoicing in its progress.

— Justin, TX

“Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding.” (Proverbs 23:23.)

“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’” (John 8:31,32.)

GIVING OUR WHOLE HEART TO GOD

By Dalton Key

God seeks rule over more than just the body of man; He desires the heart as well.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1,2.) We offer to God our bodies as living sacrifices, conjoined with, or perhaps more accurately, resulting from the renewing of our minds.

This inward affection for God is referred to by Christ as "the first and greatest commandment." (Matthew 22:38.)

Heaven's message has always taken aim at the heart and soul of man. Peter's inspired message on Pentecost "cut to the heart" of those who heard it. (Acts 2:37.) The word of God, "sharper than any two-edged sword," pierces "even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12.) "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." (Psalm 19:7.)

Without a sincere change of heart, outward expressions of obedience are both hollow and impotent. We are "set free from sin" and become "servants of righteousness" only after obeying God's teaching "from the heart." (Romans 6:17,18.)

The new birth results in a new life, but the new birth concerns the spirit, the inner man. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John 3:6.) We "have purified our souls in obeying the truth." (1 Peter 1:22.)

Conversion, to be genuine, must include the whole man. While our behavior must manifest fruits of repentance, while we must live right and do right, we must first freely offer to the Lord our hearts and souls and minds. Jesus combined these kindred elements in teaching, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." (John 14:15.)

Ours is more than merely a regimented religion of doing; it is one of being and becoming. "These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone." (Matthew 23:23.)

The only way God has ever made a Christian? From the inside out.

EDITORIAL . . .

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Many of you choose this time of year to help with the Old Path's ongoing expenses. Allow me to say in advance and most sincerely: thank you! Your support keeps this work alive.)

WARNING!

By Dalton Key

We live in a world obsessed with safety. Many of our products are required by law to clearly display warning labels, alerting us to dangers that might be related to the use or misuse of the items in question. Cigarette packages warn of cancer, heart disease, and death. Household cleaners, detergents, and pesticides warn consumers of their potential dangers. Even something as seemingly harmless as a stepladder is required to have stamped on it a warning about standing on the top rung or weighing it down with too heavy a load.

I wonder! What if God were in the business of posting warning labels? What might they say?

Imagine all paper currency with these words printed on both sides: "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." (1 Timothy 6:10.)

What if all malls and retail stores prominently displayed this disclaimer: "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." (Luke 12:15.)

Think of packages, pouches and plates of food, all with warnings reminding us, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4.)

Perhaps all running shoes, all exercise equipment, and all sports-related products would carry a label, warning, "Bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." (1 Timothy 4:8.)

It might be helpful if our TVs, our computers, and all of our electronic devices had the following warning permanently flashing in the lower, right-hand corner of the screen: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15.)

Surely all textbooks, self-help books, and tomes of knowledge would be improved with the addition of these important words of warning: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." (Proverbs 3:5,6.)

Paul's words seem especially relevant. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16,17.)

Yes, it might be both interesting and enlightening if God were to print His own labels of warning.

But then again, hasn't He already?



THE CHURCH AND SALVATION

By Bobby Key

People are often heard to say, "Now, the church doesn't save anyone." This statement is true. The church is made up of people, and people can not save us.

However, though the church does not save a person, one must be in the church to be saved!

It is Christ who saves, but He is the Savior of the body, which is the church. (Ephesians 5:23.) He purchased the church with His own blood. It is in Christ that we have "redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Ephesians 1:7.)

When one reads the second chapter of Acts, he reads about three thousand people who heard the gospel for the first time. They learned that Christ was the Son of God, and that God demanded of them repentance and baptism "for the remission of

sins." (Acts 2:38.) The text goes on to say, "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them." (vs. 41.) These same souls "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." (vs. 42.) The chapter ends with the words, "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." (vs. 47.)

Please notice that those who were being saved were added to the church. Surely this means one must be in the church to be saved.

Has Christ promised to save anyone outside His church? The answer is, "No." When we are saved we are added to His church. In fact, the very same things we do in order to be saved makes us a member of the church.

While it is true that the church

does not save, it is also true that the saved are in the church! Are you?

— Deceased

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church." (Ephesians 5:25-29.)

LOST OPPORTUNITIES

by Joe Dale Wilson

"Therefore, as we have an opportunity, let us do good to everyone, especially to those of the household of faith." (Galatians 6:10, McCord.)

The word opportunity in English means an open door!

The Greek word for opportunity is also used in verse nine and is translated, "in due season." What the word means is "the season of harvest." In verse nine he is telling us not to go give up or faint while it is harvest time. In verse ten he wants us to know that God has given us a season for doing good to others, especially our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Our Father has asked us to work good, kind, and benevolent deeds for others. Part of loving our neighbor as ourselves is shown in our care for others in their time of need (that is opportunity). At harvest time there is no time to waste because the opportunity will soon be gone. "A wise son gathers his crop at harvest time, but a disgraceful son sleeps during the harvest." (Proverbs 10:5.)

Jesus is a tremendous example. "He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." (Acts 10:38b.) Jesus also taught that opportunities will not always be ours to grasp: "I must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work." (John 9:4.)

Christianity is a working religion! It is strenuous labor that Christians do in the name of the Lord for His glory. "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." (Colossians 3:17.) It is therefore important to be remembered by Christians that they are working for the Lord! This gives the Lord's worker a reason for not becoming weary in well doing and seeing the urgency of the task of doing good deeds.

The opportunity could be brief. The window of teaching children can quickly close for parents. Can the opportunity to teach someone the gospel be lost by procrastination? Can

the season come to an end for helping someone in desperate need?

By waiting too long the harvest can be lost and the opportunity forever gone!

— Liberal, KS

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