



PEACE · ON · EARTH

The Apostolic Faith Report

December 1985

Vol. 32 No. 12

What About The Sheep?

Outside the little town of Bethlehem, shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks by night. Suddenly the glory of the Lord shone round about them and the angel of the Lord appeared. The angels trembled but were comforted by the words of the angel, "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a saviour which is Christ the Lord." The angel went on to say, "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger."

No wonder the shepherds left their flocks and went into town to see what had happened.

But what about their flocks? Who watched them?

These men were not irresponsible men who did not care about the duties they had as shepherds. God does not give special revelations to those that are haphazard in their service. The scripture makes that clear. To leave the flock unguarded would mean total loss; for sheep left to themselves would go in all directions and soon be lost. And yet as these men left their flocks, to see for themselves the Saviour of the World, they were taken care of that night. I am convinced that when they returned that all the sheep were accounted for, none had been stolen or lost and all were O.K.

Who did watch the sheep? Could it have been the same onethat closed the lions mouths as Daniel slept in the den with them? No doubt it was the same one that took off the wheels of Pharoahs chariots as the children of Israel fled on dry ground. Prison doors were opened for Peter and he was led to safety by the same one. Could it not be that while the shepherds bowed their knees and hearts in worship to the Christ child that an angel of the Lord encamped and cared for the sheep? Certainly no harm could come to them with God's angels watching. As we think of this we are made to realize that even in the day that we live in that if we will put Jesus first he will take care of anything that we committ unto his keeping. Our business may be many things but we know that God is able to keep all as we entrust them to his care. He will surely send the heavenly ambassadors to keep the "sheep."

The shepherds surely learned as the psalmist did, "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thine ways" and that "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear them and delivereth them."

Karen Oakes



Bylaws of the Apostolic Faith Bible College, Inc.

ARTICLE VII Doctrine

It is recognized that the true church of Jesus Christ consists of all believers in the saving grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who have accepted him as their personal Saviour. It is recognized and agreed that no organization or man has been granted authority by the Lord to exclude from or accept anyone into the Kingdom of Heaven, as this is done by Jesus Christ only. It is further recognized and agreed that we as Christians are to love all members of the Body of Christ (Christians), and this love and fellowship derives from the unity instilled by the Holy Spirit. Although differences in doctrinal beliefs and interpretations should not influence our love for one another, adherence to similar doctrinal beliefs and modes of worship have bonded together those of the Apostolic Faith Movement as founded by Charles F. Parham in the early 1900's. The scripture teaches us to adhere to the truth and proper doctrine. These common doctrinal beliefs are essentially as follows:

Triune God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Creation and Formation

Man is basically sinful and in need of Salvation

Salvation by Grace upon repentance toward God and acceptance of Jesus Christ as one's personal Saviour, which is the conception of Spiritual Life.

Sanctification of the Spirit, Soul and Body. A second definite work of Grace by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit; evidenced by speaking in other languages.

Water Baptism (of all believers) by immersion in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Washing of Feet.

Divine Healing through Jesus Christ for all believers.

Do not condone divorce and remarriage. Matthew 19:8-9

Destruction of the Wicked.

Conditional Immortality.

Rapture of the Man Child Class.

Return of Jesus Christ to earth again; bodily and visibly.

A Ministry supported by tithes and offerings.

These basic doctrines shall be adhered to in the teaching of the Apostolic Faith Bible College, which in addition to other doctrinal teachings approved by the Board from time to time if they are not inconsistent with the above listed basic doctrines.

AFBC NEWS

From the Superintendent

"These are exciting times to live in!" How many times have you heard those words? So many times we probably don't really think what we are really hearing. But really these are exciting days. With signs all around that point to the end times and the return of Jesus, what a privilege to live in this time. Please give a lot of thought to that opening line and I hope you come alive with that feeling.

God has been especially good to us. I want to praise Him and give Him all glory for being alive today. Some few weeks ago I experienced what no one desires to go through as the doctors gave me my report of severe heart problems. Praise the Lord for praying people! People who care and love! Many of you have prayed for me, called me and sent cards of get well and have a speedy recovery. Well, I am happy to report God is giving that to me. The doctors were able to clean the severally closed artery by a balloning procedure and I didn't have to go through open heart surgery, for that I thank the Lord. At this point everything looks to be successful and I am making a full and good recovery. I am on the job as before with no problems. Please continue to hold me up in your prayers and again I "thank you" for your love and concern.

The school is coming along fine and the recent choir trip was a great success. My special thanks to Bro. Ted Barker and Bro. Dennie Oakes who took my place on this trip and kept the gears rolling while I was in recovery. I really don't think I was missed at all. They did a great job. Sis. Janae Harris did a super job as always with the choir and many hearts have been touched. Several souls have been saved through this ministry.

We are in the closing days of our fall semester and it has been a spritual time for all of us. Thank you for your prayers and support. Needs have been met and God hasn't failed us and you haven't either. Thank you.

As we close the fall and prepare for the spring semester please continue to pray and send your faithful support. Please remember our faculty at this Christmas season. They have been faithful to do God's work.

In His Service,
Supt. Jack Cornell

Boys Dorm Report

Greetings,

I speak for all the boys dorm that this semester has really been a blessing from God's throne. I believe each student here has a great testimony of how God's Word has changed their lives. And we thank you for making that possible through your burden, prayers and support. If we are faithful to do our part, God is faithful to the rest. Truly God has made us to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus and hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings. Each day that we awake and begin our schedule, we see God's anointing, blessings and provisions made available to us. It's something very special to see and experience. Remember each of the students and faculty in your prayers, because the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. I know that each of us here will feel that impact upon our college.

Sincerely,
Danny M. Robinson
Dean of Men

Choir Notes

The choir tour of fall, 1985, has passed leaving behind many memories. The true excitement and joy resulting from ministering for Christ is more than words can say. Although much physical and spiritual work is involved, anything done for the King in the proper attitude is not in vain. "Therefor, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Many people do work in the Lord's name, but not really working for the Lord. A sincere, consistent heart is what pleases God.

As the bus started to move Oct. 19 at approximately 7 a.m., many people were to experience the events of traveling untold miles and miles with other people, joined in close quarters. The essential point to remember is that these people are God's children. Flexability is constantly facing the choir. It means sacrifice and patience. The Christian life is also one of sacrifice and patience. God doesn't want part of a person. He desires the entire member. The entire purpose for the tour is presenting Christ and the Gospel wherever possible, yet sometimes, in the haste and enjoyment of things, Christ is forgotten. Christ is always present. People go away from God; led away by the deceitfulness of satan.

Just being associated with a church doesn't make one a Christian, and just attending Bible College doesn't make a person the flawless example of a Christian. What matters is an individual consecration to the Lord. No one can rely on another person's reputation. Christ as the solid foundation is security for a successful built life. Each person must consider his own soul. "How about your heart? Is it right with God? That's the thing that matters most of all." How simple and plain the message! Living as close as the choir does on the bus, many things are revealed about each person: habits, pressures, etc. Friendships can grow stronger as well as the unity of the entire choir. A choir is not to made of individuals; rather they are to ba a 'spiritual house' 'fitly joined together.' His people are to be separate from the way of the world. As ambassadors for Christ, each song that was sung had a message as Christ as the center and inspiration. So it must be with the Christian life. Christ must be 'the solid rock' to establish the right kind of life; one strong enough to stand in the 'winds of adversity' that are sweeping the world today. He will never fail us although His children may fail Him.

Each person that goes on tour is indeed privileged. Each church the choir sings at is not just "another church," and anyone having that attitude needs to do some soul-searching. I thank Christ for allowing the tour to continue for it is not done just for advertisement for the school, but the ultimate desire is to lead souls to the Kingdom.

I thank the Lord for giving Sister Janae to us. Her strength, talent, and patience are examples to everyone. Also the tour would not be possible without the spiritual and financial support of Christian believers outside the school; believers in doing what is possible for the spreading of the Gospel. God will richly bless His children for their sacrifices. "I Owe It All To Jesus."

Ron Noble

A.F. Report

Cults and False Prophets

Article II

by Yvonna Whiteley

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving head to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy." I Tim. 4:1,2

Current cult methods of attacking truth falls into two groups: (1) appeal to pride through rationalistic philosophy. (2) Demand a credulity akin to superstition but called faith.

Cults have a common denominator in that each one will deny the deity of Christ and the existence of the Trinity. Even those founded by a person coming out of a Pentecostal church as John R. Stevens from the Four Square Church founding the "Church of the Living Word" (sometimes called, "The Walk").

Active cults today are classed in four groups:

1. Pseudo-Christian cults: those that adhere to doctrines which are pointedly contradictory to orthodox Christianity and which yet claim the distinction of either tracing origin to orthodox sources or of being in essential harmony with those sources. Or stated another way it claims to be Christian but is NOT. Included are the cults which say they accept the Bible as authority yet have their own interpretive writings of the Bible which they will elevate above the Bible. They usually claim to have recovered long-lost truth never before known. We will give scriptures to counter this in latter articles.

2. Cults that are distinctly Eastern. This includes all of the Hindu-based groups as Buddhism, Transcendental Meditation, Hare Krishna, etc. Youth respond readily to these as they seek for self-meaning, truth, consciousness, and bliss. The Hindu scriptures, Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads are the basic teaching source. All Eastern cults hold to such fundamentals as monism, reincarnation, and an ultimate absorption into the "deity" that is in all and is all.

3. Christian-Hindu cults. These have interpreted the Bible according to Hindu teaching as Christian Scientists, Theosophy, Unity, etc.

4. Personality Cults. These gather around a single authoritative leader or founder. Such groups tend to be more ephemeral and will fade away upon the death of the leader unless an organizational structure was put into place and action. In this group we would list those like "The Way International", "The Church of the Living Word," Armstrong's "World-Wide Church of God", etc.

Christianity is the highest mountaintop...beyond which it is downhill no matter which way one goes. Beyond are the crags and crevices of heresy and the fever swamps of the cults where the serpents and the scorpions wait.

Beyond Christianity is death, hopelessness, darkness, and heresy. Our fastmoving, seeking atmosphere of present time is producing an explosion of the strangest religious concoctions ever known. Apostle Paul tells us to be sure we are IN THE FAITH (II Cor. 13:5) He also tells the church to beware of the attack of those within and without (Acts 20:28-31). We're to be faithful custodians and teachers of the eternal, absolute truth of God.

Dealing with a Cultist

Usually the cult devotee will approach you. But regardless of where or when the contact comes...QUICKLY MOVE INTO COMMAND OF THE CONVERSATION. Steer the discussion; ask the questions; USE SCRIPTURE. A cult convert is drilled to use certain questions and answers so is unprepared to meet questions NOT covered in his outline and verses he has memorized. Answer a question with a question.

1. Don't argue. This may be difficult but strive to maintain at least an appearance of respect for his belief. He has a right

to them.

2. Don't ridicule the person. Remember the cultist is desperately sincere in his beliefs...having eternal significance to him. Show him love and understanding.

3. Don't denigrate the character of the cult's founder. This will only cause resentment and raise a barrier, closing the mind and ears of the cultist.

4. USE THE WORD OF GOD. It is "Quick and Powerful" (Heb. 4:12) Your use of God's word will be more effective than all other words in silencing and convincing the deceived one of the truth of the gospel.

5. Give your own testimony. This should give the impact of Christ on your life, or the life of a family member. "This is what He has done for me...and wants to do for you."

6. Exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. His name is above all others (Phil. 2:9-11) and was exalted by God (Matt. 3:17; 175).

7. Depend consciously upon the Holy Spirit. He will surely guide you and control you... giving words to be used. You might even have prayer with the cultist before beginning the conversation and ask that God will take control and reveal the truth to all involved.

8. Know what the cultist believes. With a basic knowledge of their key beliefs you can often disrupt or change the cultist prepared presentation and help you steer the conversation along positive, helpful lines...helping perhaps to enlighten the cultist to the truth.

Cult Deviations from Major Orthodox Doctrines

The end or aim of religion is salvation. Salvation, variously defined, usually includes deliverance from the griefs, pains, and sorrows common in this life, and entrance into an ideal state of conscious, happy, and eternal existence.

Faith is acclaimed by the cults as primary and essential for salvation. And Christian cults unite in preaching salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. BUT WAIT! A closer examination of the meaning of their faith reveals they offer salvation on the basis of faith PLUS continuing works. Also, their idea of salvation breaks down when you realize that their faith in Christ is connected with a denial of the deity of Christ.

Four doctrines from among these considered fundamental and mandatory in mainline Christians are falsely taught by most cults:

The doctrine of the Trinity

The deity of Jesus Christ

The personality of the Holy Spirit

The immortality of the soul

Doctrine of the Trinity

Trinity relates to three...in the Holy Trinity we have God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit...three persons, the same in substance, equal in power and glory...yet vehemently rejected by the cults as being heathenish and unscriptural. They consider it unreasonable or contrary to reason, and therefore totally unacceptable.

The Bible begins the Trinity concept in Genesis 1:1 using the plural noun ELOHIM (God).

Dr. Merrill F. Unger states that although the doctrine of the Trinity is implicit rather than explicit in the Old Testament, with the writings of the New Testament...the implication in the Old Testament becomes clear. Numbers 6:24-26; Isa. 6:3; 639-10 (the sanctity of the symbolical number three). The plural form of Elohim Gen. 1:26, 3:22, 11:7, Isa. 6:8.

The same worship is paid, the same works are ascribed to each of these three persons, and in such a way as to indicate that these three are united in the fullness of the one living God.

Deity of Jesus Christ

The full deity of the Son is contained within the doctrine of the Trinity. And all the pseudo-Christian cults categorically reject this truth. They teach against His oneness or equality with the Father God. Cults teach Christ as the first-born of God, the only direct creation of God; the one by whom all else

was created; uniquely born; sinless; a miracle workr; the only efficacious sacrifice—BUT NOT equal with God.

Equality with the Father and oneness with Him in all things was claimed by Christ himself. The gospel of John was written to prove that Jesus was the Son of God. (John 20:31). As such, He was coequal with the Father. The Jewish leaders of that day rightly understood His claim and determined to kill Him for that reason (John 5:17-18). John 5:19-32 is Christ's response. John's gospel concluded with the ultimate in worship as Thomas says: My Lord and My God. (John 20:28).

The importance of this doctrine cannot be overstated as the very doctrine of the atonement depends on this truth.

PHILIPPIANS 26. The word FÖRM in this verse was NOT refer to outward shape or appearance. It indicates that which is intrinsic and essential..."being in very nature God" or His state was divine" are other translations. Phillips translation "who had always been God by nature."

COLOSSIANS 1:15 and HEBREWS 1:3. Two Greek words are translated by the English IMAGE in these verses. Christ is declared to be "the image of the invisible God, "and "the exact representation of His nature." In Colossians 1:15 the word is eikon, referring to "moral likeness" or Christ's conformity to God in moral excellence or holiness. In Hebrews 1:3 the word is CHARAKTER and signifies the "exact impression of any person or thing, such as the imprint left by a metal stamp. Christ, it declares, is the precise facsimile of God in every aspect. (John 14:9).

Following is Dr. Metzger's precise and scholarly comment on Colossians 1:15 in reference to Christ being the first created being as cults say and therefore inferior to the Father:

The verb "to create" in reference to the relation of the Son of God to the Father appears neither here nor anywhere in the New Testament. Here Jesus is spoken of as "the first begotten of all creation" which is something quite different from saying that he was made or created. The adjective "first" in this verse refers both to rank as well as time.

Later in the Epistle to the Colossians 2:9, Paul declares, "It is obdily"....This means that everything without exception which goes to make up the godhead, or divine quality, dwells or resides in Jesus Christ bodily....that is....is invested with a body in Jesus Christ. Note, also, that Paul uses the present tense of the verb "dwells"...not has dwelt or will dwell...but that it "dwells" there.

Personality of the Holy Spirit

Many of those who reject the biblical concept of the Trinity reduce the Holy Spirit to an "influence" or power of God...NOT a person. In Genesis 1:2 the Holy Spirit is depicted as working with the Father and the Son in creation and the affairs of mankind. In the upper room Christ stated that He would ask the Father to send another Helper and that the Helper would be with them forever (John 14:16-17). You may study John chapters 14-16 for the whole context. In Acts the Spirit is seen founding the church, empowering the disciples, and leading in the expansion of the church unto the uttermost part of the world.

Titles of the Holy Spirit indicating His deity:

The Spirit of Knowledge

The Spirit of Truth

The Spirit of Holiness

The Spirit of God

The Spirit of Christ

The Spirit of the Lord

It might be asked how an "influence" or an "impersonal power can be grieved (Eph.4:30) or quenched (IThess. 5:19) or how can an attribute convive, guide, or speak (Acts 13:2)?

The Immortality of the Soul

The immortality of the human soul is generally denied by pseudo-Christian cults. They teach that at death man ceases to exist...period. Man does not have the inherent ability to live forever...Don't say that man has a soul...rather say man IS a soul. When he dies, the whole man dies...body and soul are one.

The Bible teaches that man has a spirit, soul, and body. I Thess. 5:23 asks that God sanctify you wholly...your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved...". And Matt. 10:28 tells us not to fear the man that can destroy only the body but to fear him that can destroy soul and body. So the breath of life which God breathed into man at his formation is our spirit....the personality of a person is his soul....and our flesh and bones, etc. constitute our body. There are many scriptures to confirm this. We teach at death that the spirit of man returns to the maker...the soul of man remains with the body in the grave until the resurrection at which time all 3 will be reunited to face the judgment.

I will list our teaching on conditional immortality as you will find contradictions in the Bible unless you understand this. The orthodox teaching is that all men have eternal life or eternal death. We teach that we have life and immortality through the new birth and only Christians will have eternal life as we receive life through Christ.

Life through Christ scriptures

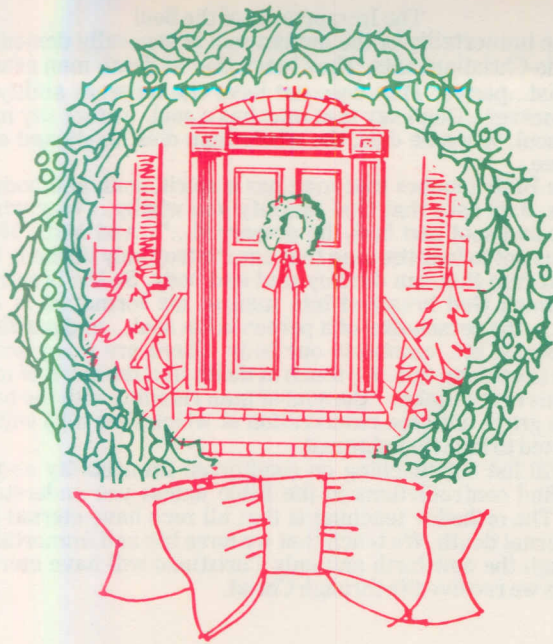
Luke 12:13-15	Life is not an earthly possession
John 14:19	Because I (Jesus) live ye shall live also
John 3:15	Believe and not perish but have eternal life
John 3:36	Believe and have life; Believe not and not see life
John 5:40	Jesus give life to those who come to him
John 14:6	Jesus the way, the truth and the LIFE
I John 5:12	He that hath the Son hath life
John 1:4	In Him was life
Rom. 6:23	The gift of God is eternal life
John 11:25	Jesus is the resurrection and the life
Rom. 8:2	Life in Christ makes free from Law of sin and death
Prov. 8:35	Whosoever findeth me (God) findeth life
Jer. 21:8	The way of life and the way of death
John 3:16	Whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

Conditional Immortality scriptures:

Rom 2:7	We seek for glory, honor, immortality
I Cor. 15:53,54	Immortality for the body
I Tim. 6:15,16	Christ only has immortality
II Tim 1:10	Christ brought immortality to light
II Cor. 5:4	Mortality to be swallowed up of life
Rom 6:12	Let not sin reign in your mortal body
II Cor. 4:11	Life of Christ manifested in mortal flesh

NOTICE!

Thirty cents a time is what the Post Office charges us whenever a copy of the Report is returned with a reader's new address. If you are moving, won't you tell us at once, allowing at least 4 weeks for the change? Send the mailing label from the back page so we will know your old address.



GALENA, KANSAS

Psalms 143: Hear my prayers, O Lord give ear to my supplications; In thy faithfulness answer me and in thy righteousness.

Our Lord is still blessing our church families. We are happy to report that God blessed in a recent revival conducted by Brother Edwin Waterbury. Our families were drawn closer to the Lord. We also enjoyed all of the good help from the Bible College. We have enjoyed recent visitors. They were Brother and Sister Bill Cornell and daughter Ronda, Reverend and Mrs. E. K. Cornell, Bobbie and Barbara Bishop. It has also been so nice to have Corwin and Mary Weaver over each weekend from Mission, Kansas.

Please remember our shut-ins and sick for healing. May God's richest blessings rest upon you. We welcome all of our brothers and sisters to come by and worship with us at any time.

Howard Whitely - Pastor
May Rowland - Reporter

WEBB CITY, MISSOURI

As we look back over the past year it is with thankful hearts that we praise God. He has been so good to us. He has answered many prayers, met our needs and sent blessings untold. He truly deserves all praise, honor and glory.

December is a very busy time at our church. Brother Randy Dalton held a revival for us which started on Dec. 1. What a wonderful way to celebrate the Christmas season.

December 14 is the date set for our annual Christmas dinner and the Ladies group also planned their Christmas luncheon and Bible study for Dec. 10. On Sunday night before Christmas the Sunday School classes will present a program. The teen-age class will again be fixing a basket with food and gifts to be given to an area family in need.

As we look forward to the New Year we ask God to be with us in all that we do and help us to win souls for Him.

Our doors are always open to all of you to worship with us.
Otto Busch - Pastor

Union Chapel ANSERSON, MISSOURI

We are still enjoying the blessings of our revival here at the Chapel. It started on Oct. 27 and went through Nov. 3. And the Spirit of the Lord was there from the first service Brother M. D. Methvin, of Follett, Texas, was our evangelist and the Lord used him in a mighty way. On Monday evening two were saved and one received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Each night there were others that prayed for a closer walk with the Lord and received blessings. But Wednesday, Nov. 30, is the night I will always remember because it was that night that I received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. I wish there were words to tell how I really feel, how the love just seems to fill up your heart and run over into your soul and you wish you could give it to everyone. There are some thank you's I want to say. I want to thank the Lord for bringing Cecil and I together 9 years ago, if it were not for Cecil, I might never have heard of this teaching. I want to thank Cecil for his patience and understanding and for never pushing, but always praying. And for never getting tired of answering the foolish questions I asked. I know some of them sounded silly, but he never laughed. And I want to thank all the other people that were praying for me, and ask that they don't stop now, for this is just a new beginning for me. I want to be used by the Lord and I will need the prayers of His people. And I want to thank the Lord for His patience and understanding in my seeking and for His continual drawing me closer. Why the Lord has chosen me as one of His own I may never understand. But I know that I want to try and never make Him sorry that He did. I love Him with all my heart and to serve Him is my goal.

Remember us at Union Chapel in your prayers. Our prayer are with you.

In Gods Love,
A.W. Ferguson, pastor
Beth Williams, reporting

THE APOSTOLIC FAITH REPORT

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A Good Enough Gift

anybody either have a little donkey or know someone who would lend one for the parade?"

He looked around, waiting for someone to speak up. But everybody was silent. "I was afraid we couldn't get a donkey," the teacher said, smiling. "A pony would do just as well - maybe even better. Does anybody here have a pony?"

All the kids looked at each other, then shook their heads. Nobody had a pony either.

Finally the teacher said, "Let's all think hard, and if someone thinks of a little animal we could use, let me know." Then he started talking again about Jesus' birthday and gifts people can give to Him.

Joey forgot he wasn't one of the group. He had to know the answer to the question which kept hammering in his head. He raised his hand: "If a person doesn't have a good gift to give to Jesus, what can he do?"

The teacher didn't seem to think the question was strange. He said, "Any gift, if it is the best we have, is a good gift."

Joey thought about that. He didn't hear any more of the lesson. Perhaps he could give Epidemic - that was the best he had. So at the close of the class he said to the teacher, "Would it be OK if a goat walked in the parade with Joseph and Mary? I have a goat. He might do it - well, he would if someone walked with him and held his rope."

The teacher's face showed how much he liked Joey's suggestion. "I think a goat would be very OK," he said. "And just to make sure he won't be afraid, you can be Joseph and walk beside him."

Joey's real name was Joseph, but he couldn't pretend to be good like the Joseph in the Bible. He started to shake his head. Then he remembered that he wanted to give something to Jesus. Maybe walking in the parade and making Epidemic behave could be his birthday gift to Jesus.

So on the day of the parade, Joey and Epidemic walked nervously along the street, following the junior high department's float. There was straw on the float, and Epidemic kept trying to snatch bites.

There was a cross on the float too, and Joey couldn't help looking at it. He kept thinking of why Jesus was born so long ago. He remembered that He was born to die for all the sins of all the people in the world.

Joey thought about his own sins. Why, Jesus died on the cross for him too.

And then Joey knew he could give himself to Jesus! Bad as he was, he was the gift that Jesus really wanted. "I do give myself to You, Jesus," he whispered as he walked along between the rows of smiling people.

Then the people began to laugh, for Epidemic had managed to snatch a mouthful of hay. When Joey pulled his rope, Epidemic tried to bleat. Joey couldn't believe his ears. With his mouth full of hay, Epidemic sound almost like a donkey braying.

Joey grinned. He and Epidemic really belonged.

by Jewell Ready
Reprinted from Sunday
School Counselor



What If There'd Never Been Christmas?

Barbara Waterbury

What if there'd never been Christmas?
What if there still was no Light,
And the world was still swallowed in darkness
Like it was on the first Christmas night?

Would there be hope for the hopeless,
and comfort for those in despair...
Would there be help for the needy,
Would there be love anywhere?

Would there be joy for the children
In a world full of hatred and sin
If Jesus had not come to redeem us
and give us HIS peace deep within?

What of the sick and the suffering,
And those who need help everywhere...
Where else would there be balm for healing
If the Great Physician did not care?

The good and the perfect gifts of life
Come down from the Father above;
There is no shadow of turning
Or variableness in His love!

So, in His tender loving care,
He saw mankind's sad plight
and sent His Son... His only Son...
to us on that first Christmas night!

Now there is hope for the hopeless,
And comfort for those in despair!
There is no circumstance so grave
But that His love can penetrate there!

Now there IS joy for the children...
There IS limitless healing balm,
There IS peace for those who accept Him;
In the midst of life's storms, there is calm.

And so thank God there WAS Christmas
On that first dark night long ago...
That same great Light STILL bids darkness flee,
And STILL sets our worlds aglow!

THEY MISSED CHRISTMAS

The world missed its first Christmas. Only a few—perhaps 12 or 15—knew it was Christmas. The rest slept through that marvelous event.

The scribes and Pharisees missed the coming of Jesus because they were not looking for Him—they did not feel the need of a Saviour. A mercenary spirit kept the innkeeper from recognizing his opportunity. Herod missed finding Christ because of insincerity.

On the other hand, Simeon and Anna found the Christchild because they were looking for Him. The shepherds found Him because of their humility; the Wise Men because they were willing to follow the star.

Perfect submission to God's will and purpose exposed Mary to the true meaning of this holy day, and Joseph found the situation "blessed" through divine revelation.

Will you see Christ this Christmas?

-Mel J. DeVries

"Merry Christmas!"

MERRY CHRISTMAS, PASTOR

If you think Christmas is a busy season for you—what about your pastor? He's not only supposed to attend everything the church sponsors, he's probably in charge of it! Decorated the church, buying Advent supplies, planning yet another set of Advent sermons, candlelighting ceremonies, children's programs, coordinating the music for services, the cookies being sent to shut-ins, caroling, Christmas Eve Services, entertaining... the list goes on... endlessly...

Show your appreciation for all their support to you during the year by supporting your pastor and family this Advent season.

1. Volunteer to organize whichever Christmas activity suits you; Christmas caroling, shut-in visitation, children's program, church decorating, etc.

2. Volunteer to address their Christmas cards. Pastors send hundreds. You'll save them precious hours for ministry.

3. Invite the pastor's family to dinner and spend a relaxing evening without even mentioning the church.

4. Invite them to your holiday celebrations (especially if they are far from their extended families.) But don't feel insulted if they're already booked.

5. Baby sit so the pastor and his wife can have an evening out to refresh themselves amidst the frenzy.

6. Offer a free housecleaning to the pastor's wife while she's busiest with entertaining. She'll never forget you!

7. Offer to bake, arrange, decorate, or store Christmas goodies the pastor's wife needs for entertaining.

8. Suggest he—they take a few days off immediately after Christmas Eve to go home if they're close enough. ("There's no place like home...")

9. Better yet, collect the money and fly them "home" for Christmas if the distance is great (and the church calendar allows). Pastors stay on the job all through the holidays—serving you. Give them a reward for a job well done.

10. Be creative in your gift giving. Anyone can buy a tie. Try giving a coupon a month for services you will render; typing the bulletin, a dinner out, a cake, housecleaning, baby-sitting.

Ask a family member what the pastor would really like but wouldn't buy for himself, or you can slip a check in his pocket or Christmas Card. However, you go about it, show him you love him and make all his hard work worthwhile.

-Kathy Bence



Reaping

"Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Gal. 6:7

The scripture says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I am so thankful and grateful to God because he forgives us of our sin and forgets also. God's mercy is so great. He gives us so many chances to serve Him, even at time when we, yes, we Christians do wrong. He is always there to pick us up and help us get back on the right track again. He is the most forgiving and the most loving of all. The scripture also says that when God forgives someone of their sins, they are removed as far as the east is from the west. God forgets the sins that we commit and have received forgiveness for, but do we?

Questions often go through my mind. If God has forgotten my sin, why can't I. If God has forgiven me, why can't I? Why are the sins that I have committed in my past always flashing themselves in my mind? Why, sometimes, do they seem as real to me now, as they seemed before I was forgiven? Why do I have such a hard time forgetting what I've done? Why does it seem that my wounds have left scars that will never disappear? I call it reaping.

David, the king, in days of old, was a godly man. He feared God and kept God's law. But David, too, was human. He sinned, what is considered by men, a terrible sin, that of committing adultery by taking another man's wife. Immediately, David was sorry and he repented and wept before God. He prayed "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin." I'm sure God heard David's prayer and forgave him immediately. But, it wasn't over. David went through great emotional pain when the infant child conceived in his sin died. What a tragic thing - for one's own son to die because of his sin. David had to reap what he sowed.

Moses, a devout and spiritual man, who was chosen to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt's bondage, wasn't perfect either. He disobeyed God when he smote the rock to get water instead of simply speaking to it, as God commanded. He was forgiven of this sin, but because of it, he wasn't allowed to enter the promised land. He reaped what he sowed.

Jonah, one of God's prophets, one of God's chosen spokesmen, disobeyed God by going to Tarshish instead of Ninevah. This familiar Bible story tells how the storm raged and the ship tossed to and fro, and everyone aboard was afraid. I'm satisfied that Jonah knew he was the cause, and he repented of his sin, but he still spent 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of a whale, and then was vomited up by the great fish. That would, no doubt, be a rather sickening experience. Jonah too had reaped what he sowed.

Not only did Bible people reap their deeds, but people today also reap what they have done. A man is an alcoholic. He beats his wife and children until they decide to leave. He comes to know Jesus Christ, and his life changes. He is no longer a drunk, but he may never get his family back. He reaps his sin for the rest of his life.

A teenage girl takes one too many chances with a guy. She get pregnant. She realizes her sin and repents. God forgives her completely, but she still has the baby. Chances are, her entire life she will be reminded of her sin every time she looks at her baby. She is scarred forever because of her past moral impurity. She reaps what she has sowed.

A junkie, strung out on drugs of all sorts decides that his life is not what he wants. He goes to a rehabilitation center and is broken from his habit. He asks Jesus into his life and

Jesus comes into his heart. But, sometimes the drugs still affect him now and then. The hallucinogenic drugs he used to take could still cause an occasional hallucination. He is reaping what he has sowed.

Parents wonder why their children are involved with, the wrong crowd, why they won't go to church, why they party, and conform to the world. Could it be that something in the parent's lives or something wrong done by them in the past is showing up in their children even though they may have repented long ago for it. It's possible. The old testament writer Jeremiah says, "The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Perhaps the children are reaping their father's sins.

When sin enters a life, that life is wide open to many things, whereas, if it had been covered by the blood of Jesus, there would have been no chance for these to enter. Even after the sin has been repented of, and forgiven, its results sometimes cannot be covered. The sin is remembered by the sinner himself, and often by friends, loved ones, and strangers. Often one's reputation has been shattered, his life wrecked. It takes many years to build it back up.

Past sin also gives Satan a place to work, a mode of temptation, although the temptation can be overcome.

Yes, God is kind, loving, and good. He is just, He is forgiving and he forgets also. But, people don't forget, and you will never forget. There is always the reaping, and that may be the worst part.

May I warn you, if there is sin in your life (whether you have never known Jesus, or if you have known him in the past and you have backslidden, or even if you are a Christian who has let some ungodly things slip in) don't let it go on any longer.

"Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

By Valerie Oakes
AFBC Student



FOUR ANGELS

By Dr. Arnold Olson

The story is told that when God was making the world, some angels stood around to watch Him. One of the angels said, "What are you doing?"

God said, "I am making world."

The first angel asked, "How are you making the world?"

The second angel questioned, "Why are you making the world?"

The third one asked, "When you have finished, may I have it?"

The fourth angel asked the question, "Is there anything I can do to help?"

The first angel represents the great scientific world. They are always trying to find out how God made this world. Billions of dollars are being spent today in trying to find out just how this world was put together.

The angel who asked, "Why are you making the world?" represents the philosopher. He does not look in the telescope or a microscope. He does not try to get out into a space, but rather locks himself up in a room and tries to figure out why God made this world.

The third angel represents the great mass of humanity today who says, "When it is finished today may I have it?" Everybody is out to get a little piece of this world for himself. That is the secularist view.

The fourth angel could easily be the Christian, whose one desire should be to be of service for Christ. "Is there anything I can do to help?"

If I Be Lifted Up

John 3:13-15

"(13) And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

(14) And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up;

(15) That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

John 12:28-32

"(28) Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven saying, I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it again.

(29) The people therefore, that stood by and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, an angel spoke to him.

(30) Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

(31) Now is the judgment of the world: Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

(32) And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

Numbers 21:4-9

"(4) And they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.

(5) And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

(6) And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

(7) Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee: pray unto the Lord; that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

(8) And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

(9) And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

The children of Israel were journeying from Egypt to the promised land. Continually they were upset. The journey was too hard. The food was not good. There was no water. They spoke against God. They spoke against Moses.

God always has a way to get people back into line. Israel had gotten out of line. Their complaints were not justified in the eyes of God.

You can find something wrong. I can find something wrong. Beloved, let us full examine the whole situation and especially our own self. You see the main trouble was with the individuals that made Israel. Most of the time the troublesome circumstances of our life are our fault and not God's. Very easily God allowed fiery serpents to invade their camp. They were deadly serpents. Many died. All of a sudden Israel found the solution. They had done wrong. They ask Moses to pray for them. "We have sinned. We have spoken against God. We have spoken against you."

It is amazing how quickly things can and will change when the proper solution is applied. The complaint turned to repentance. People begin to see themselves as God saw them. Immediately God gave Moses a solution. Build a fiery serpent and put it upon a pole. When anyone is bitten just look on the brazen serpent on the pole and you will live.

God used this simple solution to point to Jesus and today we

look back to the cross and remember what Jesus said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." What a beautiful picture of looking toward the cross. Today we remember this and look backward to the cross where Jesus died—the just for the unjust—God's only son for sinful man—the jewel of heaven for the wicked of earth and the only sacrifice that satisfies God.

Not only this beautiful picture, but as a God called minister of the Gospel in 1985 I am required to fulfill the words of Jesus, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." I am not here to laud individuals to the sky, I am not here to make you like me. I would appreciate your likes. I have a much deeper responsibility—I must lift up Jesus. I want you to see Jesus in me—whom to know aright is life eternal. I'm here in Christ's stead to tell you he willingly gave his life that you might live. He paid the debt you cannot pay. He and He alone can cure the bite of sin. His grace is sufficient to help you to be an overcomer over sin and all it's debt. Look to Jesus and live. Let Jesus solve the problems of life. We come not to the mount that cannot be touched. We come to Jesus the mediator between God and man. Let us seek him with all our heart. I give you a hope in Jesus for a hopeless world. I give you a living saviour for a dying world. I present Jesus the answer to life's problems.

Donald D. Dibbens



The Birth of Jesus

The decree of Caesar that all the citizens of the Roman Empire should be taxed sent every person to his own city. This taxing was really an enrollment or a registering of all the people, perhaps something on the order of a census. Joseph, the husband of Mary was of the lineage of David, and, as he was living in Nazareth of Galilee at that time, it became necessary for him to make the long journey southward to Judea and the city of Bethlehem. It was here in this vicinity that David, the son of Jesse, made his start in life and proved the faithfulness of God. And it was at this city that the prophet spoke when he prophesied that "out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

It is very inspiring to visualize the setting of this wonderful account of the birth of Jesus, and just what it meant to those people. Mary was great with child, and a long trip of that sort was a very trying ordeal for her. But the decree had to be kept regardless. "While they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered." It is not known just how long they were there in Bethlehem. But we do know that "there was no room for them in the inn." There was a purpose in this. It was the will of God that the baby Jesus should be identified in a special manner. Thus it was that He was born and Mary, His mother, "wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger." I am sure that it was not pleasant to the flesh for these dear ones, but consider the value of that holy Child that was born unto them!

To the shepherds in the nearby fields watching their flocks "by night" came the angel of the Lord with this wonderful message; "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Try to imagine the feelings and the emotion in these lowly men's hearts as they saw and heard all of this! Try to visualize in your mind the reality of the heavenly host praising God, and let what they said sink deep within your inmost being "Glory to God in the Highest."

THE SPIRIT OF ANTI-CHRIST

We believe that according to the following scriptures and what we see in the world today that the spirit of Anti-Christ is working in the world today as never before. When we see the spirit of anarchy that exists in the hearts of people and nations it makes us to consider some of the things that the Bible says about this.

I am especially impressed with the scripture in First John 4:1 through 6, V.1 Beloved, Believe not every spirit, But try the Spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. V.2 Hereby know Ye the Spirit of God: Every Spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. V.3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: And this is that spirit of Anti-Christ whereof Ye have heard that it should come. And even now already is it in the world. Please read verses 4-5 and 6 also.

1- John 2:18, Little Children, it is the last time: And as Ye have heard that Anti-Christ shall come, even now are there many Anti-Christ: whereby we know that it is the last time.

Spiritual darkness has caused the down fall of many, cults and religious teachings that have no Bible foundation teach anything for a following. All have an Anti-Christ spirit. Jesus said in His time. "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is yet day: the night commeth when no Man can work. St. John. 9 - V.4 if Jesus saw the need to work quickly in His day. How much more should we be able to see the need today: 2-Thess. 2-7 and 8. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: Only He. (speaking of the Spirit of God) who now letteth will let, until He be taken out of the way. V-8 And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming. Please read verses 9 through 12 also, 1- Tim. 4-V 1. Now the spirit speaketh expressively that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of Devils, 2- Thess. 2-11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: V.12, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Eph. 6-12, For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. We certainly need to put on the whole armour of God.

In The Masters Service
Rev. Ted Jackson



THE PRINCE OF PEACE

T-John 3:2. Nicodemus said unto him, Rabbi, we know that art a Teacher come from God.

H-Joel 3:16. The Lord will be the Hope of his People, and the strength of the children of Israel.

E-Isaiah 40:28. Hast thou not heard, that the Everlasting God fainteth not, neither is weary?

P-rev. 1:4,5. Grace be unto you, and peace from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth.

R-Isaiah 49:26. And all flesh shall know that I, the Lord, am thy Savior and thy Redeemer.

I-Col. 1:15,16. Who is the Image of the Invisible God, the first born of every creature.

N-Matt. 2:23. He shall be called a Nazarene.

C-I Pet. 2:6. Behold, I lay in Zion, a Chief Cornerstone, one, elect, precious.

E-Matt. 1:23. And they shall call his name Emmanuel.

O-John 3:16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

F-Prov. 18:24. There is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

P-Acts 3:22. A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren.

E-Isaiah 11:10. And in the day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an Ensign to the people.

A-Rev. 1:8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord.

C-Luke 2:11. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ, The Lord.

E-Heb. 1:3. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the Express Image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power.

-Isaiah 9:6. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

-Anna J. Kingery

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