

# PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path"  
Psalm 119:104*

April 30, 2017

## I Can Read... Can You?

by Frank Himmel

I can read in the Bible that the truth makes us free (John 8:32) whereas following error makes us lost (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). Can you read in the Bible that it does not matter what one believes as long as he is sincere?

I can read in the Bible that ignorance still leaves one excluded from the life of God (Ephesians 4:18) and in need of repentance (Acts 3:17-19). Can you read in the Bible that ignorance excuses?

I can read in the Bible that God's thoughts are not man's thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9), and that we cannot know God's thoughts unless he tells us (1 Corinthians 2:11-13). Can you read in the Bible that it is possible to "just know" what does or does not please God?

I can read in the Bible that Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6), to salvation (Acts 4:12). Can you read in the Bible that one religion is as good as another?

I can read in the Bible that people who wanted to know what to do to be saved were told to believe in Jesus (Acts 16:30-31), then repent and be baptized (Acts 2:36-38). Can you read in the Bible where anyone was ever told to say the sinner's prayer?

I can read in the Bible that division is condemned (Galatians 5:19-21), unity is exhorted (1 Corinthians 1:10), and oneness among believers was Jesus' prayer (John 17:20-21). Can you read in the Bible that God approves denominationalism?

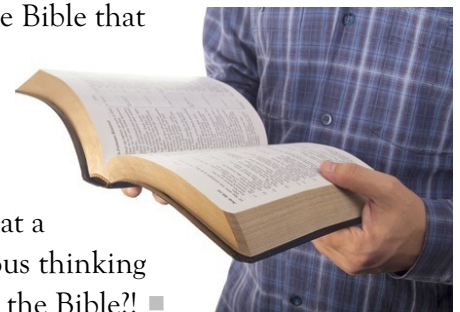
I can read in the Bible about elders or overseers in churches (Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 3:1-7), and also about deacons (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13). Can you read in the Bible about a pope, archbishops, metropolitans, cardinals, presidents, dioceses or districts?

I can read in the Bible about preachers or evangelists (2 Timothy 1:11; 4:5). Can you read in the Bible about administrative ministers, youth ministers, music ministers, recreation ministers, and the like?

I can read in the Bible that God condemns homosexuality, along with a host of other wrong conduct, in plain terms (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:9-11). Can you read in the Bible where God condones this kind of activity?

I can read in the Bible that Jesus gives salvation to those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9) and eternal destruction to those who do not (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Can you read in the Bible that the Lord is too merciful to condemn anyone?

Is it not obvious that a good deal of religious thinking did not come from the Bible?! ■



# Respecting God's Word

by Frank Himmel

After Nehemiah and his contemporaries finished rebuilding Jerusalem's walls, they held a great assembly in that city. They asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses. He did so and took his place at a podium made for the occasion. "Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up" (Nehemiah 8:5).

Luke 4 tells of Jesus visiting the synagogue at Nazareth. "...And as was His custom He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read" (v. 16). On this occasion He read a section from Isaiah, then "He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down..." (v. 20) and proceeded to teach. Notice that He taught sitting down but He read standing up.

The practice of standing to honor something or someone remains. We stand for the pledge of allegiance, the national anthem, the entrance of a judge into his courtroom, the entrance of a bride at her wedding, and so forth. Many churches have a designated Scripture reading in addition to what is read during the sermon. In a few places, all are asked to stand for that reading.

Obviously, respecting God's word goes way beyond standing when it is read; nevertheless, that is a timely reminder of the Bible's importance. Let's each ask ourselves, How much do I respect God's word? ■

# Poor in Spirit

by Frank Himmel



"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

According to Luke's account Jesus' saying was, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven" (6:20). Poverty itself can boast no inherent virtue; the spirit of an impoverished man, however, is essential to God's blessing.

The blessed spirit of the poor is one that humbly realizes its total dependence on God. It is opposite self-sufficiency. It has abandoned the notion that the world's goods or one's "success" brings satisfaction to life; it looks instead for spiritual solutions. It yearns for divine approval and welcomes divine assistance and direction.

To such belongs the kingdom of heaven. The word *kingdom* refers primarily to God's rule. God will not take a place of beneficial rule in our lives unless we want Him to. He said long ago, "I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit, in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isaiah 57:15). ■

## Service Leaders for the Week

|                     | Sunday Morning      | Sunday Evening      | Wednesday Evening |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| GREETER             | Greg Winget         | John Baucom         | Howard Moore      |
| SONG LEADER         | Gary Hagler         | Bruce Williams      | Bruce Hollander   |
| OPENING PRAYER      | David Gray          | Ron Cunningham      |                   |
| LORD'S SUPPER       |                     |                     |                   |
| BREAD               | Albert Lee Harrison | Albert Lee Harrison |                   |
| CUP                 | Kerry Gray          | Kerry Gray          |                   |
| CONTRIBUTION PRAYER | John Baucom         |                     |                   |
| SERMON/INVITATION   | Frank Himmel        | Frank Himmel        | Adam Gibson       |
| CLOSING PRAYER      | Chris Brooks        | Steven Turner       | Gary Hagler       |