

PathLights

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

January 22, 2017

"Blameless in His Time"

by Frank Himmel

Atheistic evolution depicts mankind as emerging from the lowliest of beginnings, slowly but steadily rising in stature, ability, intelligence, and interaction.

The Bible paints a much different picture. It says man had a glorious beginning – created by God in the divine image [Genesis 1:26-27] – followed by a rapid descent into sin and moral degradation. The second generation included a murderer, Cain (Genesis 4:8). And while Cain's family tree as outlined in Genesis 4 includes men who excelled in business, the arts, and technology, it also records that by the seventh generation, God's plan for the home was cast aside as Lamech married multiple women. That same Lamech boasted of killing a man for wounding him and a boy for striking him (v. 23).

Things were better on Seth's side of the family, but not for long. Sons of God chose wives on the basis of physical beauty instead of character. Self-will and violence took over. Genesis 6:5 offers this dreadful synopsis: "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only

evil continually." God was grieved in His heart. He was sorry that He had made man (v. 6).

On this bleak stage, one man stood out. "Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:9). Noah lived by faith (Hebrews 11:7). He listened to God's instructions, and "according to all that God had commanded him, so he did" (Genesis 6:22).

Noah illustrates a vital point: we can and must do God's will, regardless of how others around us live. The standards of our age that define acceptability in dress, speech, reactions, behavior, relationships, etc., do not govern us. God's will does.

Paul described the Ephesians as "dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world" (2:1-2). He challenged the Romans, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (12:2). Don't just pick up the world's trends and habits. Don't just assume that what you commonly see and hear is okay. Test everything in the light of God's word.

God saved Noah when his world was being judged.

Hebrews 11:7 says Noah condemned the world: good examples do that by way of contrast. Hopefully to some they will be saving lights instead. Be blameless in your time. ■



A Note about Complaining

by Frank Himmel

James 5:9 is a simple enough verse: “Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the judge is standing right at the door.” What is interesting is its setting.

The opening paragraph of James 5 is a condemnation of rich people who take advantage of the poor (vv. 1-6). The language suggests the rich in view were not Christians but the poor (at least some of them) were. James then turns to the oppressed poor and urges them to be patient, prop up their hearts, and wait for the Lord (vv. 7-8). Verses 10-11 continue that theme.

Our text occurs in the middle of this admonition to patience. It is well situated. Douglas Moo comments:

...Grumbling against others is surely one temptation that accompanies the pressure of difficult circumstances. How often do we find ourselves taking out the frustrations of a difficult day on our close friends and family members! Refraining from this kind of complaining and grumbling can be seen as one aspect of patience itself.

I've been guilty, how about you? James reminds us that the judge is standing at the door. What if he opens the door, walks in unexpectedly, and finds us fussing? ■

Hungry for Righteousness



by Frank Himmel

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6).

Righteousness, says Vine, is the character or quality of being right. First, it is one of God’s attributes (Psalm 11:7): He is always right. The word sometimes refers to God’s plan for making us right, the gospel (Romans 1:16-17). It is also used of right conduct, conduct which complies with God’s standard (Romans 6:19).

The blessed man longs for rightness. More than anything else, he wants to be right with God. That being the case, he would not dare argue with any of God’s conditions for salvation; instead he anxiously complies. And when it comes to his daily walk, he lets God’s word constantly light his path (Psalm 119:104). He is careful about each step, taking no chances. Why? Not because he is trying to earn God’s favor, but because he loves and respects the Lord so much that he does not want to displease Him in any way. Besides, he knows God’s way is always best.

“He who sows righteousness gets a true reward” (Proverbs 11:18b). ■

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Bruce Williams	John Baucom	Josh Baucom
SONG LEADER	Gary Hagler	Carlos Garcia	Albert Lee Harrison
OPENING PRAYER	Greg Winget	TBD	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	Albert Lee Harrison	Albert Lee Harrison	
CUP	Greg Winget	Greg Winget	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Jason Chandler		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	Brian Wilson
CLOSING PRAYER	John Baucom	TBD	Josh Baucom