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FREE

Give Yourself to God First (Jesus First, the Church Second)

By C.H. Spurgeon

If a man gives himself to the Church, he must not therefore suppose that he has given himself to God. To give himself to the people of God, before giving himself first to God will do the man no good. It will, indeed, do him a positive injury. The man who acts in this way is either self-deceived, or else a deceiver. He does wrong to God, to the Church, to himself and is thus a threefold offender! You have no right to either of the ordinances of God if you do not belong to Him. They are only for believers, and until you first give yourself to the Lord, you have no right to be reckoned among the people of God! If you come to the Lord's Table as an unbeliever, so far from getting any good there, you will eat and drink condemnation to yourself, for you cannot discern the Lord's body and, therefore, you cannot rightly use the bread and cup which are the emblems of



Photo Credit: NECB Staff

"And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!'" (Revelation 22:17)
His broken body and poured out blood. Dear Friend, keep that first thing first! First give yourself to the Lord and then give yourself to us by the will of God.
"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith" (2 Corinthians 13:5)
"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Does the Bible Allow for Woman Pastors and Deaconesses?

By James Moriello

"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27).

The application of our text is its significance for the local church. There is much confusion in the church today in this area. Although not essential to salvation, it does affect the growth of Christian men and women. The Word of God may offend you, but His Word is the truth, and we ignore it or explain it away at our own peril.
(Continued on Page 8)

The Narrowness of the Christian Life is no Joke

By Joe McKeever

Someone told a friend of mine, "You Baptists are so narrow. You think only Baptists are going to heaven." He replied, "I'm narrower than that. I don't even think some of them are going!" In truth, I know of no one who believes only their denomination is going to heaven. (We may be narrow, but we're not ridiculous.) How narrow are we? Narrow enough to quote the following Scriptures and then to announce that we believe them and are ordering our lives by them....

"Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be

saved" (Acts 4:12, KJV). There is only one name of salvation. Only one: Jesus.

"I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved: (John 10:9). There is only one door to salvation. Only one: Jesus.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me" (John 14:6). There is only one way to God. Only one: Jesus.

"No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son, and those to whom the Son wills to reveal Him" (Luke 10:22). There is one way to know God. Only one: Jesus.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14). There is one sin offering. Only one: Jesus.



Photo Credit: NECB Staff

"Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:14)

"So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many" (Hebrews 10:28). There is one sin offering. Only one: Jesus.

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:5). There is one go-between.

Only one: Jesus.

"No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man" (John 3:12). There is one authority on heaven. Only one: Jesus.
(Continued on Page 8)

Christian Living

By Scott Lancot

Living in the world today as a Bible believing Christian is certainly obtainable with Christ on your side. Our Helper, God the Holy Spirit dwells in His people (1 Corinthians 3:16). "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew

19:26). There are lines, and sometimes fine lines, in the sands of life. What to do? Seek wise counsel and pray. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). Look and see what the Bible has to say. Life is not easy or fair at times. One way to look at that is growth and character building.

Continued on Page 4

Children are Blessings

By Belinda Lancot

I was married at a young age and wanted to start a family right away. As time went on, I realized I was unable to conceive. I had faith in God but not enough. I was going to different doctors for fertility tests and taking my temperature everyday.

People even gave me baby clothes, knowing I wanted a baby. What I realized I needed to do was to put all of my faith in God and less faith in the doctors. Proverbs 3:5 (KJV) says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."

Continued on Page 4

Christian Book Review of: "Beyond the Silence",
By Tracie Peterson with Kimberley Woodhouse

Review Written
By Susan Moriello

I have read many books by Tracie, and they are all wonderful reading material. All of her books are Christian-based with many Bible verses included within her stories. This book I have just finished reading was most captivating. I couldn't put it down. I will give you a short synopsis of the story. It was set in 1891, and begins in Indianapolis, Indiana. Lillian Porter has answered an ad for a nanny position in Angels Camp, California, for a six year old boy who has not spoken since he saw his mother murdered. Against her grandfather's wishes, she takes the job, and leaves on the train to California. As she's leaving, her grandfather disowns her, and tells her never to come back or write.

Lillian arrives at Angels Camp and is met by some of the townspeople who maliciously gossip, telling her that her employer, Woodward Carlton, is the one who murdered his wife, and thus the plot unfolds.

Through many trials, Lillian and



Photo Credit: NECB Staff

"If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man" (James 3:2)

Woody keep the faith that the Lord will give them strength, hope, love, patience, forgiveness, and victory through all the adversities that befall them.

"Beyond the Silence" is a book worth reading, as most of us can relate to

some parts of their story. The characters in the book are truly unforgettable.

I hope you read this book, and if you do, please let me know your comments.

Until next time, all blessings to you! Happy reading! Keep praying!

How Do You
Want To Be
Called?

By Tanya Hay

Do you ever wonder how people think of you? Do you pay attention to how people address you? Are you called Mom, Dad, friend, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, Mr, Mrs, Miss, or just by your name? Think about this for a minute and decide, how do you want to be called? There are two very important people who call us opposite things in our lives. The devil knows who you are and he knows your name but he calls you by your sin. God knows your sin but always calls you by your name. I prefer being called by name. How about you?

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out" (John 10:1-3).

Words for the
Godly Woman
to Live By

From the Holy Scriptures

James 3:17: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."

James 3:8: "But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."

Ephesians 4:25: "Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,'

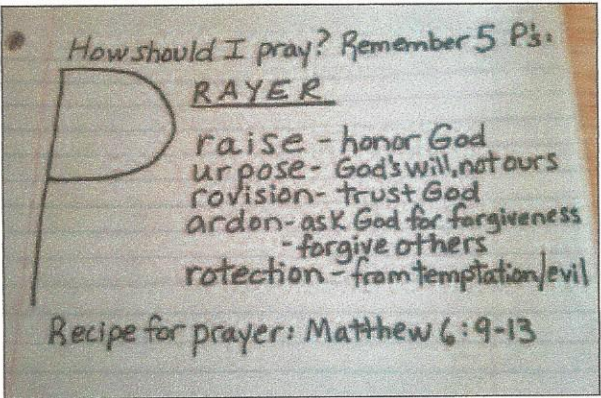
for we are members of one another."

Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

1 Peter 2:1: "Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,"

Colossians 3:12-13: "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do."

1 Thessalonians 5:17: "pray without ceasing,"



Credit: Alexandra Hay

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6)

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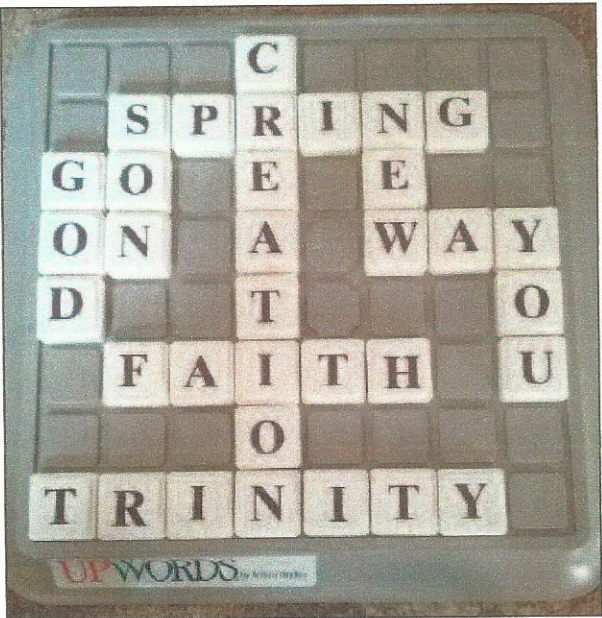


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Firm Foundation Christian Church meets at 84 Cumberland Street, Woonsocket, RI, on Sunday mornings at 10 am and Friday evenings at 7 pm. Our TV Bible Study airs in Northern Rhode Island on Tuesday and Saturday mornings at 10 am, on Cox channel 18 and Verizon channel 23. Our mission is the Great Commission, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ by any and all means possible. Please call us or email us with your comments or questions.



He Who Takes the Son Gets it All

Sermon Illustration as told
By Jim Landry

Many years ago, there was a very wealthy man who shared a passion for art collecting with his son. They had priceless works by Picasso and Van Gogh adorning the walls of their family estate. As winter approached, war engulfed the nation, and the young man left to serve his country.



After only a few short weeks, his father received a telegram. His son had died. Distraught and lonely, the old man faced the upcoming Christmas holidays with anguish and sadness. The joy of the season had vanished with

the death of his son. On Christmas morning, a knock on the door awakened the depressed old man. As he walked to the door, the masterpieces of art on the walls only reminded him that his son was not coming home. As he opened the door he was greeted by a soldier with a large package in his hands who said, "I was a friend of your son. I was the one he was rescuing when he died. May I come in for a few moments? I have something to show you." The soldier mentioned that he was an artist and then gave the old man the package. The paper gave way to reveal a portrait of the man's son. Though the world would never consider it the work of a genius, the painting featured the young man's face in striking detail. Overcome with emotion, the man hung the portrait over the fireplace, pushing aside millions of dollars' worth of art. His task completed, the old man sat in his chair and spent Christmas gazing at the gift he had been given. The

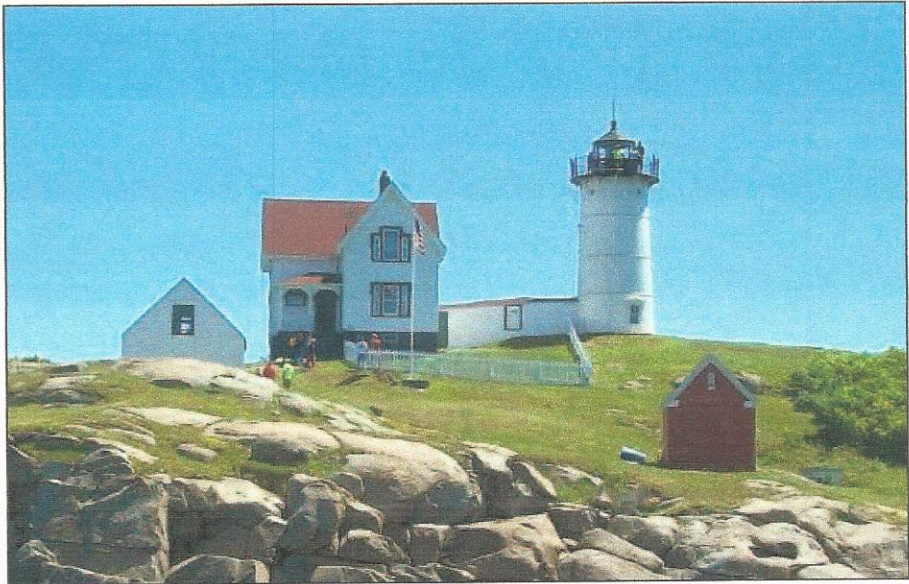


Photo Credit: NECB Staff

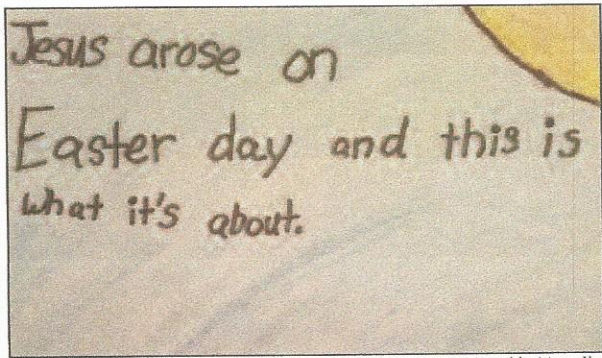
"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (Matthew 13:44)

painting of his son soon became his most prized possession, far eclipsing any interest in the pieces of art for which museums around the world clamored. The following spring, the old man died. The art world waited with anticipation for the upcoming auction. According to the will of the old man, all the art works would be auctioned on Christmas Day, the day he had received the greatest gift. The day soon arrived and art collectors from around the world gathered to bid on some of the world's most spectacular paintings. Dreams would be fulfilled that day. The auction began with a painting that was not on anyone's museum list. It was the painting of the man's son. The auctioneer asked for an opening bid, but the room was silent. "Who will open the bidding with \$100?" No one spoke. Finally someone said, "Who cares about that painting? It's just a picture of his son. Let's move on to the good stuff." The auctioneer responded, "No, we have to sell this one first. Now, who will take the son?" Finally, a neighbor of the old man offered \$10. "That's all I have. I knew the boy, so I'd like to have it." The auctioneer said, "Going once, going twice...gone." The gavel fell. Cheers filled the room and someone exclaimed, "Now we can bid on the real treasures!" The auctioneer looked at the room filled with people and announced that the auction was over. Everyone was stunned. Someone spoke up and said, "What do you mean, it's over? We didn't come here for a painting of someone's son. There are millions of dollars' worth of art here! What's going on?" The auctioneer replied, "It's very simple. According to the will of the Father, whoever takes the son...gets it all."

Bible Trivia on the Resurrection of Jesus

By NECB Staff

1. When did bodies of the saints come out of the grave in Jesus' day?
2. Who rolled back the stone from the door of the tomb?
3. What were the names of two of the women who were the first to come to the tomb on Easter morning?



Artwork by Arianna Hay

"He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:4)

ing?

4. What region are the women to tell the disciples that Jesus is going into?
5. What was the story agreed to between the chief priests and the guard to explain why the body of Jesus was no longer in the tomb?
6. What two things in Matthew's gospel are ways in which the disci-

ples should "make disciples of all the nations"?

7. Who was the first person the Resurrected Jesus appeared to?
8. What did the women bring with them to the tomb on Sunday morning?
9. How many angels stood by the empty tomb in shining garments?
10. What was the name of one of the two disciples that Jesus met on the road to Emmaus?
11. In what specific event was Jesus' identity made known to the disciples on Emmaus Road?
12. What fabric were the burial cloths of Jesus made of?
13. Who did Mary mistakenly identify Jesus as at the tomb?
14. Which disciple was missing the first time Jesus appeared to them in the house?
15. How many disciples were present when Jesus appeared to them while they were fishing?
16. When Jesus appeared to the disciples fishing, and they cast in their net, exactly how many fish did they

"He is not here; for He is risen, as He said" (Matthew 28:6)

catch?

17. How many days did Jesus walk the earth between His resurrection and ascension?
18. Which Psalm prophesied that Jesus would be risen bodily from the dead, and not bodily "see corruption"?
19. Which Person of the Godhead did the Resurrection prove Jesus to be?
20. How many brethren saw Jesus at once, as recorded in 1 Corinthians 15?

(Answers on page 5...no peeking!)

Ask the Pastor: Is the Crucifix Biblical?



By James Moriello

There is some debate within evangelical Protestant circles as to whether the crucifix is a valid Christian symbol. The crux of the argument is that since Jesus Christ is no longer on the cross and is risen from the dead, the empty cross is the 'more valid' representation of Christ's work. I reject that argument as spurious.

First of all, the symbol of the cross, whether or not Jesus is depicted on it, is a symbol of death. But for the Christian, it is a reminder of the work that Jesus Christ has finished (John 19:30) by offering up Himself as the propitiation for our sins (Romans 3:25).

Whether or not Jesus is depicted on the cross (the crucifix) or not can be analogized to a coin. This analogy may be a bit imperfect, but can be clearly understood. On one side of the coin, we have Jesus on the cross, and on the other side of the coin we have the empty cross. One side reminds us of His sufferings endured to pay the penalty for our sins (death, Cf. Romans 6:23). The other side of the coin reminds us that Jesus could not be held by death on the cross, that He is risen! Both sides of the coin relate essential points of the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Since between His death and resurrection there must be a burial, this too is implied. So, the coin presents the gospel of Jesus Christ in its entirety.

Second, there is a strong tendency in Protestant circles to reject anything traditional or associated with Catholicism. This is often taken too far. Practices such as weekly observance of the Lord's Table, the sign of peace, Stations of the Cross, and yes, the crucifix as a symbol, are spiritually profitable, and we do well to observe them.

Third, some would argue that the crucifix has been used as an idolatrous symbol. Maybe so, by some, but so long as it is not used that way, it is nevertheless permissible. The use of symbols is not forbidden in Scripture, as long as the created things are not worshiped.

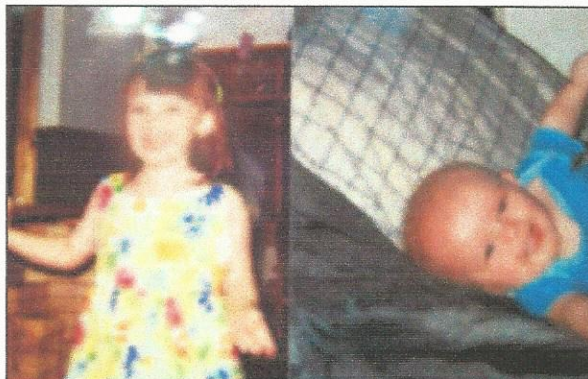
The conclusion is that if it is helpful to you spiritually, hang up your crucifix. Or if that troubles you, then hang up your empty cross. Or, do neither. But there is one thing you must not leave undone. Remember Jesus Christ the Savior daily in your heart.

Children are Blessings, Continued from Page One

"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward" (Psalm 127:3).

By Belinda Lancot

After two years of trying to conceive, and going back and forth to the fertility doctors two and three times a week, I totally put my trust in God and stopped all of my tests and taking my temperature everyday. I even threw all of the baby clothes away. Matthew 19:26 says, "With God all things are possible." After two years of trying it my way, I gave all that I had to God. My faith and trust in God became number one. What a miracle! The next month I was pregnant. What a blessing that was. Psalm 127:3 says, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward." I have learned in any situation to put all of my faith and trust in the Lord, and wait upon Him for an answer.



"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3, KJV)

Children truly are a blessing from the Lord. Today I have two grown up sons. Praise God! Always remember, no matter what trials you may be going through, trust in the Lord and not yourself or man. Proverbs 3:6 says, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Christian Living (Changed Lives Through God's Power), Continued from Page One

By Scott Lancot

The Bible is not a pick and choose book. The authors are human, but they were divinely inspired (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21). We might not understand everything in the Bible, but we must believe the words are from God, or we are calling Him a liar. The good news is that there are Bible believing churches with pastors, Bible studies, courses, etc... to help you learn the truth. The biggest obstacle in life is the person in the mirror. "I can do all things through

Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). God has the power to change lives. When the dust settles and the smoke clears, deep down, people want to be happy, joyous, and free. The only way I know how is to come to the cross, confessing and repenting, knowing that I am a sinner in need of a Savior. I must believe upon Jesus, and allow Him to be the Master of my life. One thing is certain: God knows our hearts (1 Samuel 16:7). Our works will convince people more than our words. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful

and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). As Christians, we should be growing more Christ-centered daily, and hating sin more. The journey we are on is done a day at a time. We are not promised tomorrow. "Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth" (Proverbs 27:1). "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified (2 Corinthians 13:5).

The Sun and the Son

By Tanya Hay

Taking a ride on an unusually warm day in March, my husband commented on how warm the sun felt. He said the warmth of the sun made him have "spring fever", a feeling of a new hope and renewal, a fresh start. The warmth and feeling of the upcoming Spring season made me think of the Son. When we believe in Him and put our trust in Him, He re-

news us, refreshes us and His love warms us just like the sun that He created. The "Son" and the "sun" both give us light and hope in this otherwise dark world. We have this confirmed when we read Genesis 1:1-5, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God

said, "'Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day." John 8:12 reads, "Then Jesus spoke to them again saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."



Photo Credit: NECB Staff

"I am the bread of life" (John 6:35)

Jesus Christ, The Bread of Life

By Brian Violette

John 6:35 - "And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.""

Jesus describes Himself as the bread of life. When we think of bread, we think of it as part of the basic food groups that help to sustain life. In biblical times, bread was the main part of any meal, just as it was in the Passover meal. So the question arises, when one comes to receive Jesus, "One would never hunger or thirst for what?" The answer is not a life full of sunshine and rainbows, or should I say, a problem free life. Jesus does not guarantee that (John 16:33). But He does guarantee to make one righteous with God the Father, which is something we all need in order to spend eternity in heaven.

We all have sinned against God, broken His holy law (the Ten Commandments), and because of that God will judge us ALL by His law in which we ALL are deservedly guilty before Him.

Romans 3:10-"There is none righteous, no, not one." But God loves us and has given us that necessary ingredient to sustain a spiritual life, an eternal life. That ingredient is the bread of righteousness, Jesus the Son of God.

John 3:16-"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Only through Jesus can one be made right with God.

2 Corinthians 5:21 - "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Jesus became our sin bearer, our substitute. He sacrificed His body on the cross for humanity. He shed His blood for sinners, so that our sins can be washed clean. So please receive Jesus into your heart. Don't wait another day. No one is guaranteed another day. Because of Jesus, you can be made right in God's eyes.

Matthew 5:6 - "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled."

The Way of Salvation has not Changed!

By C. H. Spurgeon

At this time, the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ is the same as it was in all ages. Jesus Christ still saves sinners from the guilt, the power, the punishment, and the defilement of sin. Still, "there is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Jesus Christ still makes all things new. He creates new hearts and right spirits in the sons of men and engraves His Law upon the tablets which once were stone, but which He has turned into flesh. There is no new salvation!

Some may talk as if there were, but there is not! Salvation means to you, today, just what it meant to Saul of Tarsus on the way to Damascus. If you think it has another meaning, you have missed it altogether!

Bible Trivia on the Resurrection of Jesus

Answers, From Page 3

1. "after His resurrection" (Matthew 27:53)
 2. "an angel of the Lord" (Matthew 28:2)
 3. "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary" (Matthew 28:1), "Salome" also (Mark 16:1)
 4. "Galilee" (Matthew 28:7; Mark 16:7)
 5. "His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept" (Matthew 28:13)
 6. "baptizing them" and "teaching them" (Matthew 28:19-20)
 7. "Mary Magdalene" (Mark 16:9)
 8. "spices" (Luke 24:1)
 9. "two men" (Luke 24:4; John 20:12)
 10. "Cleopas" (Luke 24:18)
 11. "the breaking of bread" (Luke 24:35)
 12. "linen cloths" (John 20:5-7)
 13. "the gardener" (John 20:15)
 14. "Thomas" (John 20:24)
 15. Seven (John 21:2)
 16. "one hundred and fifty-three" (John 21:11)
 17. "forty days" (Acts 1:3)
 18. Psalm 16 (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27)
 19. "the Son of God" (Romans 1:4)
 20. "over five hundred" (1 Corinthians 15:6)
- Scoring
18-20, Senior Bible Scholar
15-17, Junior Bible Scholar
12-14, True Bible Student
9-11, Reader of the Word
0-8, Time to get Deeper into the Good Book

Spurgeon on the Salvation of Children

By C.H. Spurgeon

Children need to learn the doctrine of the Cross that they may find immediate salvation. I thank God that in our Sunday school we believe in the salvation of children as children! How very many has it been my joy to see of boys and girls who have come forward to confess their faith in Christ! And I again wish to say that the best converts, the clearest converts, the most intelligent converts we have ever had have been the young ones! And, instead of there being any deficiency in their knowledge of the Word of God and the Doctrines of Grace, we have usually found them to have a very delightful acquaintance with the great cardinal Truths of Christ. Many of these dear children have been able to speak of the things of God with great pleasure of heart and force of understanding. Go on, dear teachers, and believe that God will save your children! Be not content to sow principles in their minds which may possibly develop in later years, but be working for immediate conversion! Expect fruit in your children while they are children! Pray for them that they may not run into the world and fall into the evils of outward sin, and then come back with broken bones to the Good Shepherd. But that they may, by God's rich Grace, be kept from the paths of the wicked one and grow up in the fold of Christ, first as lambs of His flock, and then as sheep of His hand.



Photo Credit: Tanya Hay

"I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6)

"But Noah Found Grace in the Eyes of the LORD", Exposition of the Text

By James Moriello

A companion paper to the sermon delivered April 29th, 2012 at: Firm Foundation Christian Church, Woonsocket, RI

"Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. And the LORD said 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.' There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came into the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.' But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (Genesis 6:1-8; NKJV).

The passage at hand is one of the most difficult and disputed passages of Scripture. Who are the "sons of God" who inter-

married with the "daughters of men"? I believe that the "sons of God" were fallen angels for four reasons:

1) Hebrew Expressions: The phrase "sons of God" is "bnei ha Elohim", which is a phrase that is used of angels elsewhere in the Bible (Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7). The word translated "giants" is "Nephilim", the literal meaning of which is 'fallen ones', so the English translation is misleading.

2) The reverse is not stated: We do not find 'sons of men marrying daughters of God' in the passage, as we would expect if the reference was to human relations.

3) Context: The great wickedness of those on earth in that day resulted in the swift judgment of the flood. Having heard the promise of the promised Seed which would destroy him, Satan had a view to corrupting the human race (Genesis 3:15). We find other examples in Scripture in

which Satan tried to do that; in the Book of Esther, for instance.

4) New Testament Witness: We find a reference in the New Testament linking the fallen angels confined to Tartarus (a compartment of hell) as a direct result of specific sin associated with the judgment of the flood. "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly" (2 Peter 2:4-5). Also see Jude 6.

The alternate view, popularized by Augustine although not held by the Hebrews, is that the "sons of God" were descendants of Seth, and the "daughters of men" were descendants of Cain. This is based primarily upon the New Testament text which says that angels do not marry.

The problem with this interpretation is that Jesus is speaking of angels "in heaven" specifically, and not fallen angels (Matthew 22:30).

What follows is an explicit statement of the depravity of man, which is a characteristic of all men and women of all ages (Jeremiah 17:9). Then there is the divine response to the great depravity of that generation. I believe it best to take the statement regarding 120 years as the number of years before the judgment of the flood in keeping with the context, and not in relation to the human lifespan in general. God was not surprised by the circumstances of that day, but His divine patience and mercy are such that He always eagerly waits for one more sinner to come to Him (2 Peter 3:9). He is sorrowed and grieved whenever and wherever He is rejected, for He has our best interests at heart (Jeremiah 29:11-13).

(Continued on Page 7)

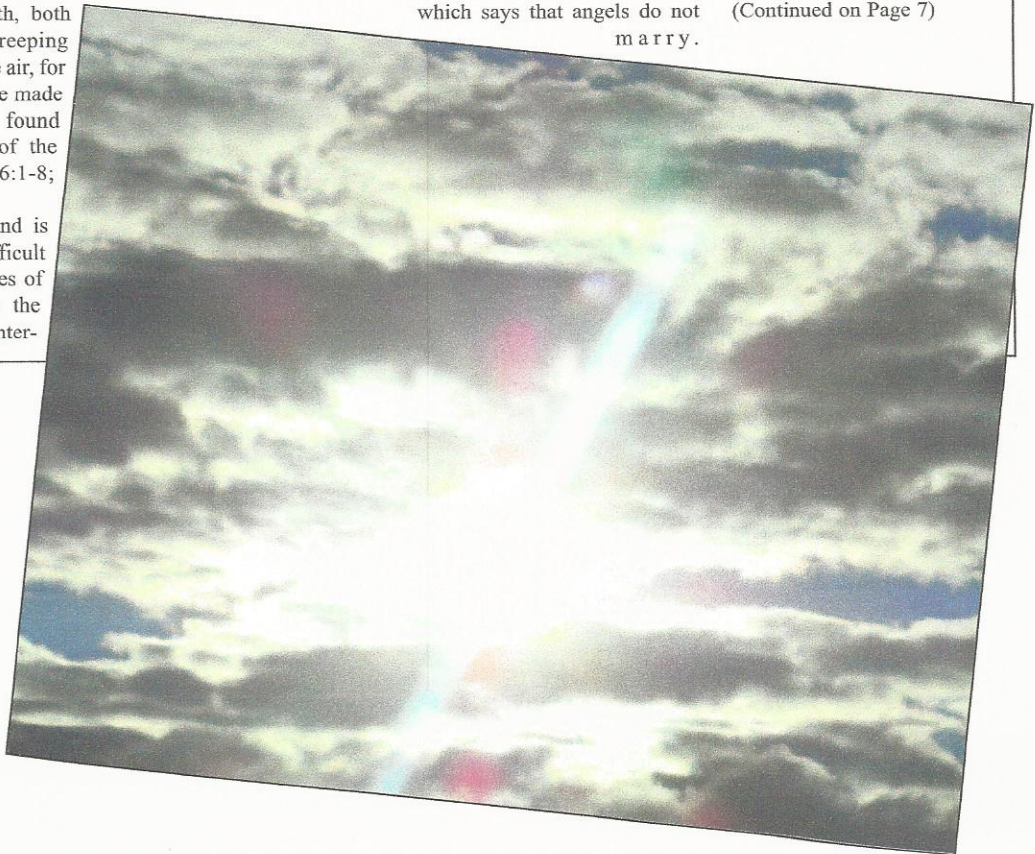


Photo Credit: Tanya Hay

"But Noah Found Grace in the Eyes of the LORD", Applications from the Text

By James Moriello, Continued from Page 6

A companion paper to the sermon delivered April 29th, 2012 at: Firm Foundation Christian Church, Woonsocket, RI

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (Genesis 6:8).

Divine grace is necessary for salvation. Righteous as Noah was, it was not upon the basis of his own righteousness that he was spared the judgment. Noah had to rely upon divine grace. He sought it, and he found it. Then, Noah experienced deliverance. What we have here in the Noahic account is a picture of temporal deliverance that illustrates spiritual truth. One sin is enough to disqualify the poor sinner from salvation by merit, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Yet, with regard to God's people, Scripture says that the Lord "has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities" (Psalm 103:10). "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)" (Ephesians 2:4-5).

God's grace preserves the saints. His grace is sufficient in quantity and quality to preserve as many as find it. To all those who seek the face of Christ Jesus, the promise goes forth: "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Corinthians 12:9). "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift" (Ephesians 4:7). God's grace is "exceedingly abundant" in measure indeed (1 Timothy 1:14)! The grace of the Lord is also efficient, or perfectly effective, in preserving His people. "And we know that all things work together for

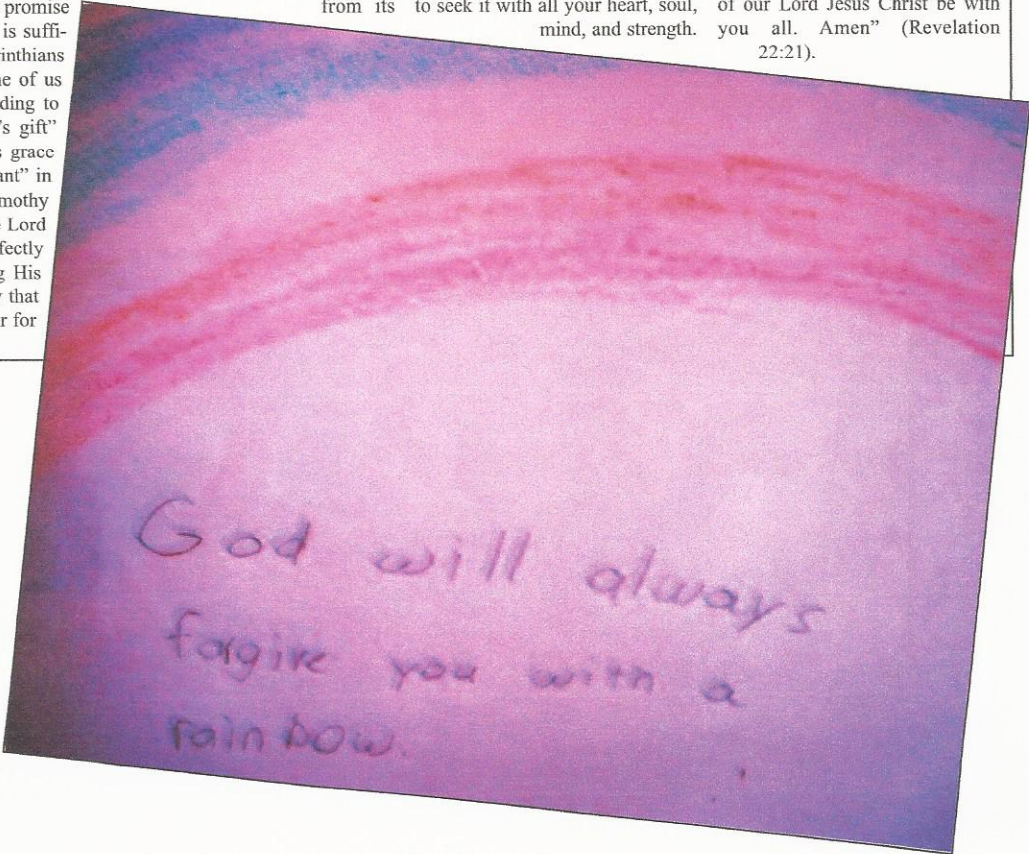
good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the Image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified" (Romans 8:28-30). Therefore, you can be "confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). God's work is perfectly effective precisely because it is His work, and not human work. If you are a Christian today, it is through His matchless power that you have received salvation, receive sanctification, and are guaranteed to receive glorification (Ephesians 2:8-10). Neither can you lose any of these things, for who is able to reverse what God Himself has done (John 10:28; Romans 8:31-39; Ephesians 1:13)? Praise the Lord in this, all His saints!

Let us return to our text in order that we might glean applications from its

context. Divine grace can be found even in the midst of judgment and chaos. Even when the world around us seems to be falling apart, an ark of safety can be found in Christ Jesus. Though the wickedness of men was exceedingly great in Noah's day, and judgment had been already decreed by Almighty God, grace was still available to be found, "that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory" (Romans 9:23). Eight vessels of mercy (Noah, his wife, their three sons with their wives) entered the ark, and eight departed from it over a year later (378 days). In this God was glorified greatly both in heaven and on earth! These are perilous times in which we live. The rampant sin and blatant disregard of the Creator invites His judgment! In His Providence, God allows sin to run its course in order to get the attention of men and women (as in the days of Noah; also His purpose in the judgments of the Book of Revelation). What is your response to this? There is "grace in the eyes of the LORD" for you, if you care to seek it with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Wisdom cries out in the streets! "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7). "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, these, O God, You will not despise" (Psalm 51:17). Friend, if these things describe your heart, the Good Lord will lavish grace upon you!

Have you been "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24)? Can you say with Noah that you too have "found grace in the eyes of the LORD?" If you have answered yes to these two questions, may your soul bless your God now and bless your God continually. If you honestly are not sure, know this: Today, God has grace available for the finding for you. If you will not seek His face today, you are not likely to do it tomorrow either. Hell is chock full of procrastinators, and its population is growing. Before you know it, the flood will come, and what then will your fate be? "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (Revelation 22:21).



Artwork By Arianna Hay

The Narrowness of the Christian Life is no Joke, Continued from Page 1

By Joe McKeever

There will come a day, we are told, when...

Every eye shall see Jesus.



Every knee shall bow before Him. And every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (See Philippians 2:10-11 and Romans 14:10-11.)

So, the problem is not with us, actually. The problem, if narrowness is indeed a problem, is with the Lord Jesus Himself. He said these things, and we're merely taking Him at face value and believing them and building our lives on them.

Truth tends to be narrow, we are told. In the medical field, the surgeon follows a narrow routine for all he/she does to save the life of the patient. In chemistry, formulae are exact and not given to the free expression of the whims of the chemist. In science, numbers are exact, even infinitesimal. Only in religion does it seem people want to throw out any regard for truth and let everyone design his own faith and believe any hodge-podge he pleases, and the rest of us have to honor it as "right for him, though not for me."

Into that kind of morass, the Lord Jesus comes saying things like: "Before Abraham was, I am." And, things like "I am the only one who has been to heaven, therefore I'm the only one who knows." And, "No one can introduce you to the Father except me." People react against that, today as they did when the words were first spoken. What we must not do is categorically reject Jesus's words simply because we find them objectionable. At the very least, the seeker should investigate Jesus to see whether His words and His claims could be the actual truth. And how to do that?

The starting place, as it always is with this sort of thing, is to consult the primary source. In this case, that would be the words of Jesus. And this would take us to the New Testament, beginning with the first page of Matthew's Gospel. One must be warned however. This word is alive. It claims that, actually, in Hebrews 4:12 and John 6:63. As C. S. Lewis once said, "A young man who wishes to remain a sound atheist cannot be too careful of his reading."

Joe McKeever is a New Orleans pastor. His writings can be seen at www.joemckeever.com.

Benediction: What Exactly is a Benediction?

By Jim Landry

A benediction is a short, concise statement given in the Bible in the form of a petition, an assurance, a promise or principle. It is a declaration of divine blessing. It voices images of protection, comfort, abundance, or some other word of assurance.

The word benediction means to say good, to voice good thoughts, to pronounce. What makes good thoughts good is that they are based on Truth, based on Principle, based on God.

The reading aloud of a benediction at the conclusion of a church service is joy expressed, and cherished, and shared with all in its hearing. It is a feast. It is the essence of genuine

heartfelt joy and commitment, seen in the exalted light of spiritual interpretation. It is positive; it is healing; it is eternal. It is part of "the morning meal" that blesses all.

Benediction: Ephesians 6:24: "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."

Does the Bible Allow for Woman Pastors and Deaconesses?



Photo Credit: NECB Staff

"And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man" (1 Timothy 2:12)

(Continued from Page 1)

The church should be a macrocosm of the family unit in which the husband is in the place of benevolent authority and the wife in the place of willing humble submission to that authority (Ephesians 5:22-33). A church that governs itself in a manner inconsistent with God's design of the family unit is prone to confusion and sets an example contrary to Scripture. After all, the church is the "household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). Elder is the first of two offices in the church (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). The title Elder is used interchangeably in the Bible with that of Overseer and Bishop. In today's culture, we use the title Pastor since, broadly speaking, this is the primary function of the New Testament Elder (Ephesians 4:11-12; Acts 20:28). The Scriptures clearly teach that the Pastor must be male (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6). In 1 Timothy 3:2, we are told that Pastors (remember, office is in view here) are to be (Greek) "mias gynaiikos andra", or one woman sort of men (Wuest). This does not require that they be married, but it does require that they be male, since the word andra is only used of the male gender. The Pastor also must be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2). Further, women are forbidden in Scripture from teaching mixed groups of men and women in a corporate worship setting. "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law

also says" (1 Corinthians 14:34-35). "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence" (1 Timothy 2:11-12). Any woman who does so is either ignorant of the Scripture on the subject or is exercising pride and presumption by opposing God's order. God will not call a woman into a particular ministry if to do so would contradict His own revealed will on the matter. What is interesting about this in light of our text is the divinely inspired reasoning: "For Adam was formed first, then Eve" (1 Timothy 2:13). The argument with regard to gender roles in the church is God's design in creation of male and female, and has nothing to do with cultural factors. Therefore, this doctrine is for all time, not just for the first century churches. A second office of Deacon is mentioned in Scripture, and again, the word used can only refer to males, so the women in this passage are determined to be the wives of deacons by the context (1 Timothy 3:8-12). Phoebe was a servant of the church (Romans 16:1), but did not hold an office. To claim that she did would mean that the Apostle Paul was contradicting himself in his letters!

Thus we conclude that although women can and should serve in the church, they are excluded from the offices of Pastor and Deacon, not by man, but by God's Word.

Leading Children to Christ

By Cheryl Correia

Whether or not you have children, know children, or teach Sunday school, leading children to Christ is of utmost importance. No one gets to heaven on their parents' faith. Romans 10:9 says "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Jesus spoke on all topics, especially the importance of children. He said in Matthew 19:14, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."



Here are 5 tips to lead children to Christ:

1. Keep the Gospel simple- Don't complicate the Gospel. Use simple language. Try using a children's Bible or interactive tools such as puppets or felt boards etc.
2. Personalize the Bible- Explain that the Bible contains the story of what Jesus did for YOU and ME.
3. Let them share- Encourage children to talk about where they are spiritually. Ask who they think Jesus is. Explain that He was both God and Man who saved us from our sins and humbled himself even to the point of dying on the cross for us.
4. Ask if they are ready to make a decision to give their life to Jesus. Pray with them and ask them if they would like to repeat after you. Make sure that they do the following:
 - Express belief in Jesus as God and his death on the cross for their sins
 - Want to change
 - Ask forgiveness for their sins
 - Thank God that they are now forgiven because of Jesus' death
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to teach them to obey God everyday
5. Encourage them- Show your excitement for their curiosity and especially a decision to accept Jesus as their Savior.