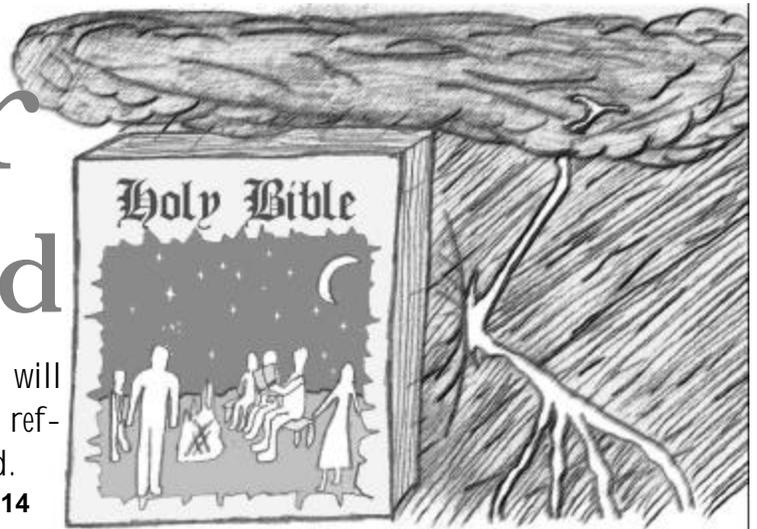


# Shelter in the Word

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty... You are my refuge and shield: I have put my hope in your Word.

—Psalm 91:1, 119:114



Vol. 1, No. 3

Helping you become self-sufficient in the Word—for a lasting relationship with the Almighty

July/August 1998

***WARNING!*** In case of RAPTURE  
this vehicle will be *unmanned!*

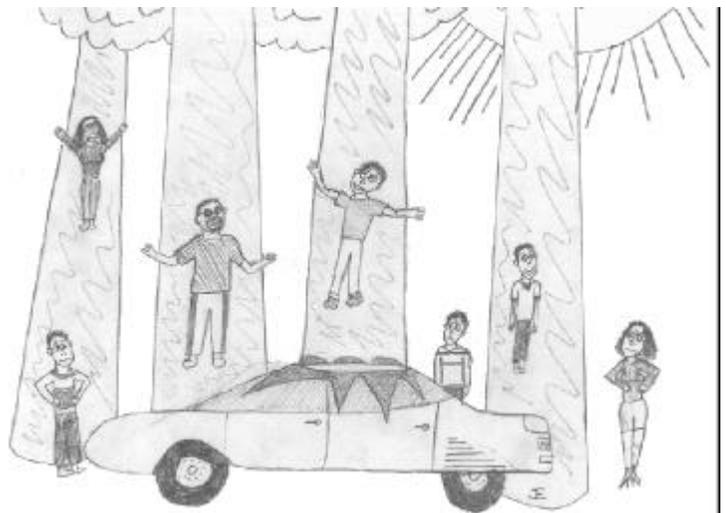
## *The Great Escape?*

by Pam Dewey

Have you seen bumper stickers like the one above? If you are not all that familiar with current religious ideas, you may not have had a clue what it was referring to. Perhaps you didn't even know that it is a "religious" bumper sticker! What is a "RAPTURE", and what would it have to do with the driver of a vehicle? And why would others need to be warned about it?

Although this is, indeed, a "religious" issue, you will search in vain for the word "rapture" in the King James Bible—or any other translation, as far as I have been able to determine. At the same time, the word itself isn't all that common in our society any more. You may have lived your whole life without saying or hearing the word "rapture". So we must first go to a dictionary to find out what the word means *in general*. Here is a summary of the definitions of "rapt" and "rapture" from *Webster's New World Dictionary* (1986):

**rapt:** from a Latin word meaning to "snatch or seize"; 1. [Now rare] carried away in body or spirit (to heaven, etc.) 2. Carried away with joy, love, etc. 3.



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Completely absorbed or engrossed (in meditation, study, etc.)

**rapture:** 1. The state of being carried away with joy, love, etc. 2. [Now rare] a carrying away or being carried away in body or spirit

Although not commonly used in conversation these days, many folks have likely heard at least once of someone described as being “enraptured” while listening to a powerful piece of music.

Actually, in recent years the related word “raptor” may have become more familiar to folks than the words rapt or rapture. The movie “Jurassic Park” popularized the word “raptor” to describe a kind of voracious dinosaur. Even more common is the use of the word to describe “birds of prey” like eagles, hawks and owls who “snatch up” their prey.

So what does all this “snatching” have to do with religion?

1Thes 4:13 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

15 According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be **caught up** together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.

When religious folks speak of the “rapture”, they are referring to this passage about some group of people who will be “caught up” at some time in the future.

Among groups who accept this passage as a “literal” prophecy, there is no disagreement that it **will** happen. The question is **when** it will happen. And about **that** question there are many disagreements among serious Bible students.

In this article I will clarify for *Shelter* readers some of the main “theories” about this event. The rapture is frequently mentioned in religious publications as well as on religious radio and television programs that focus on the topic of prophecy. Such discussions may be quite confusing to you as a reader or listener if you are unfamiliar with the terms that are part of the “vocabulary” of prophetic speculation.

## The Tribulation

The Rapture is one event that is significant in prophecy discussions. In most cases, it is discussed in relationship to another significant event prophesied to come upon the world—the *Tribulation*.

Matt 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by

*Shelter in the Word* is designed to help people become self-sufficient in their Bible study, so that they may be able to serve the Almighty Creator, and receive salvation through His Son. *Shelter* is not affiliated with any denomination, and teaches that eternal life is available to **individuals** who live by the Bible, regardless of their belonging to a church organization.

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Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

16 Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains:

17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

21 For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. (KJV)

The word “tribulation” in religious circles comes from this passage in the King James translation of the Bible. The NIV uses the word “distress” to translate the same Greek word, *thlipsis*, which comes from a root word implying “pressure.”

Matt 24:21 For then there will be **great distress**, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now-- and never to be equaled again. (NIV)

This time of “great distress” is referred to by modern prophecy writers and teachers as “The Tribulation”, or sometimes even “the Great Tribulation”. In its relationship to the event known as the Rapture, the issue is this: Will the Rapture occur *before*, *during*, or *after* The Tribulation?

### Pre-, Post- or Mid- ?

The first “theory” about the timing of the Rapture is that it will occur **before** The Tribulation. This is known as the *Pre-Tribulation Rapture* theory. In this scenario, Jesus returns “secretly” to “snatch away” all true Christians and take them to heaven to be with Him. Since this would happen instantly, they would be suddenly removed from whatever activity they were involved in. If they were driving a car, it would suddenly be “driverless”. This would also be true for airplane pilots, airtraffic controllers, surgeons in the middle of operations—can you **imagine** the chaos that would result! Thus the bumper sticker above.

Right after their disappearance, conditions in the world will deteriorate on every level, culminating

quickly in the Great Tribulation, which is expected by most to last for seven years. Humans left behind will suffer terribly through wars and natural disasters during this time. Thus the **purpose** of this action by Jesus is to rescue the people in His Church from having to endure the suffering that the rest of mankind must go through during this terrible time in history.

According to most of those who teach this *Pre-Tribulation Rapture* theory, there is **no** clear sign we can look to in order to determine when this event will happen. It might happen next year, ten years from now—or tonight. Most such teachers also believe that at the end of the terrible time of distress, Jesus will return to earth, stop the wars and natural disasters that have been raging, and will set up an earthly Kingdom. He will bring with Him those who were previously raptured, and they will reign with Him on the earth for 1,000 years. This period is called the *Millennium*, from the Latin word *mille* (meaning 1,000) and the suffix *-ennium* (referring to *years*).

The second Rapture theory speculates that the Rapture will occur half-way through the seven-year Tribulation. This is referred to as the *Mid-Tribulation Rapture* theory. Many of the elements of this theory are the same as the *Pre-Tribulation Rapture* theory. The primary difference is that those who teach this theory assume that Christians **will** suffer **some** of the trials of the Tribulation, but will be “snatched away” before the worst of it occurs. They also teach that, since there are definite prophesied events which trigger the Tribulation, the Rapture **cannot** take place until those events occur. Since those events have not yet transpired on the world scene, they do not believe that the Rapture can happen “tonight”. Only after certain clear events occur will they be anticipating their “removal” from the earth.

The third alternative scenario for this event, the *Post-Tribulation Rapture* theory, speculates that the Rapture will not occur until the very **end** of the Tribulation period. It also thus suggests that, rather than coming to “take away” Christians from the earth to heaven, Jesus merely returns to the earth to “gather them up” on His way to the spot on the earth where He will establish His Kingdom. (This is thought by almost all Bible prophecy teachers to be in Jerusalem in what is now the nation of Israel.)

Those who accept the *Post-Tribulation Rapture* theory have a variety of explanations of what happens to Christians during the terrible time of the Tribulation. Some expect that they may be taken to a “Place of Safety” somewhere on the earth, hidden away where warring nations cannot get at them, and protected from



natural disasters such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. This may happen before the Tribulation, or at some point during that period.

Others feel that individuals may be miraculously protected wherever they live. There were ten plagues which were sent by God to punish Egypt at the time of the Exodus. (Ex 7-12) The Israelites lived immediately adjacent to the territory where they were occurring, yet suffered from none of the effects. The description of several of those plagues are similar to the predictions of the plagues foretold for the time of the Tribulation. Thus, some speculate, God can just as easily perform a similar miracle of protection wherever needed in the “End Time”.

Still others feel that individuals should do all they can to provide some sort of “place of safety **m-selves** in anticipation of the Tribulation. Some groups in America have already established such outposts—some of them armed fortresses, others merely hidden settlements far from populated areas.

## What Should You Do?

It is beyond the scope of this present *Shelter in the Word* article to carefully evaluate each of these theories. Each scenario is a belief sincerely held by dedicated Bible students. The arguments for and against each of these scenarios are quite involved. An in-depth look at the scriptures will be necessary to assist our readers in investigating this topic for themselves. This material will be considered in future *Shelter* articles. But we would offer two insights in conclusion:

1. God really **does** have a plan for when and how Jesus will return to earth as He promised. It is going to occur as planned **no matter** what we believe about it! The most important issue is—are **you** ready to meet Him whenever He comes? Is He your Lord and Savior?
2. The scriptures aren’t “crystal clear” regarding **any** of these theories. If they were, there wouldn’t be such disagreement among sincere Bible students about the details. If someone decides that the *Pre-Tribulation Rapture* theory **must** be true, they may be putting themselves in much spiritual jeopardy. If, at some time in the future, they find themselves right in the middle of a great time of distress, they may become despondent. They may conclude that either 1) they have been left behind when others were raptured or 2) God has let them down, misled them, even lied to them. For didn’t He promise them “The Great Escape” from suffering?

No. Fallible Bible teachers may have promised them such an escape. But God “only” promised them **eternal life—if** they trust Him!

Rather than insist that Jesus follow our timetable, it is far better to live our lives in such a way that we would not be ashamed if He would come unexpectedly tonight—but make plans to keep serving Him even if He does not come back for many years. 

## Use a “Star Chart” Lose a Billion!

The following is an excerpt of a United Press International article:

LOS ANGELES, July 24 (UPI) - Newly released court records reveal former Orange County Treasurer Robert Citron used a \$4.50 star chart to help manage the county's multibillion-dollar investment pool.

Citron was at the helm of the county's financial dealings when it went into Chapter 9 bankruptcy after its investment pool lost \$1.7 billion on exotic investments by Citron.

A recent report by a state legislative committee blamed Citron, lax oversight by other county officials and lapses by debarring agencies, securities firms and underwriters.

Citron resigned on Dec. 6, 1994, shortly before the investment pool collapsed. He pleaded guilty to six felony charges of misleading investors and misrepresenting financial data.

The county subsequently sued Merrill Lynch for more than \$2 billion for helping construct the investment strategy that led to the county's bankruptcy. A tentative settlement in that case would have Merrill Lynch pay \$420 million.

Court documents unveiled Thursday show that officials at Merrill Lynch knew Citron was using his astrology chart to help chart the future of Orange County investments.

It has long been known that Citron consulted with Anaheim psychics Jeannie Smith and Barbara Jean Conner during his tenure as county treasurer, but the documents just unveiled are the first with news that he had also used a star chart drawn by Marguerite Carter of Indianapolis.

**Shelter in the Word:** Robert Citron is certainly not the only one whose life has been ruined by consulting the stars, but his disaster may be one of the most expensive ever. Notice what the Bible says:

Deut 4:19 And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars—all the heavenly array—do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshiping things the LORD your God has apportioned to all the nations under heaven.

The Eternal made the sun, moon and stars for everyone. Two constellations, Orion and Pleiades are mentioned three times in Scripture (Job 9:9; 38:3; Amos 5:8). However, we are not to be afraid of what we see in the sky (Jer 10:2), nor are we to consult it for information (Jer 8:2). We should seek God (Isa 8:19). 

# The Myths of Health and Wealth

by Richard Weidenheft

I call it the “contract gospel”—the idea that your relationship with God is like a business deal: you accept Jesus as your Savior and agree to live by God’s laws; in return He promises to bless you with good health, success, and happiness.

When my wife was a teenager and had just learned about tithing, she decided to share her new-found conviction with her younger brothers. Eager to make it sound as attractive as possible, she asked them if they wanted to get in on a good business deal. When they responded positively, she explained that if they would give God one tenth of their income, He would bless them with much more. They were impressed with this opportunity and commenced to tithe.

My wife’s offer of a “business deal” is a good example of the contract gospel. She has long since learned that God doesn’t work that way, but, unfortunately, all too many Christians think that obedience should result in health and success—especially in rich, wealthy America. Too few stop to notice that the ungodly and irreligious among us are prospering too.

Certainly, whatever we have is a gift from God; but when we think that He is obligated to give blessings because of our obedience, we make a serious mistake and set ourselves up for disillusionment.

## Jesus’ Promises

Several statements by Jesus are often used to support the idea that success, health, and wealth are the results of following Him. For example, He said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10, KJV). When we read “abundantly”, we immediately think of the abundance we are familiar with—healthy bodies, full bank accounts, and comfortable homes. That understanding most certainly misses Jesus’ point.

Jesus also told his disciples, “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life” (Matt 19:29).

This passage is taken by many to mean that if Christians are truly faithful, they should be blessed with better homes, better jobs, and better financial positions than

whatever they gave up to become a Christian.

## New Testament Record

It is very instructive to note how these and other promises of Jesus were played out in the lives of the apostles. Peter, for example, was imprisoned on more than one occasion (Acts 4,5,12); James was beheaded (Acts 12:2); Paul suffered hunger, shipwreck, stoning, beating, near drowning, imprisonment, and finally martyrdom (2 Cor 11:23-27). What did these dedicated Christians get for following Jesus? Certainly not material abundance and success! Certainly not a hundred times as much property as they might have given up.

Perhaps the apostles were a special case; what about the other early believers?

Many of them were persecuted along with the apostles. Stephen was stoned to death (Acts 7). Saul, before his conversion, searched in synagogues and houses for Christians and threw them into prison (Acts 8:3; 9:2); many were driven from Jerusalem into the countryside of Judea and Samaria where they spread the Gospel (Acts 8:1-4). Usually, when we read about this scattering, we focus on the preaching of the Gospel; but consider that the believers were uprooted from their homes and loved ones, from their jobs and sources of income. Undoubtedly, they suffered terrible financial losses (Heb 10:34). Where was the abundant life they were promised? Where were all the homes and lands Jesus spoke about? Certainly not in the physical realm as they knew it.

Consider Priscilla and Aquilla, who were driven from Rome during the reign of Claudius. Consider the many Christians who were persecuted and martyred under Nero. Consider those in Jerusalem who, in response to Jesus’ warning, fled the city when they saw it surrounded by Roman armies in 69-70 A.D. Think of all they gave up in terms of security, property, possessions and jobs. Where was the abundant life?

The whole picture of the early New Testament church is one of a persecuted sect, which sacrificed a great deal to follow Jesus. They did it gladly because they were citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

## Physical Health

Obviously, good health is a won-



wonderful physical blessing; there are natural laws, which, when obeyed, tend to result in well being. Those of us who are blessed with the opportunity to eat nutritious food and to live a lifestyle conducive to good health would be fools not to do so. But being a Christian is no guarantee against sickness and infirmities.

Again, the New Testament record shows that early Christians suffered physical maladies. Paul had a “thorn in the flesh”, which is generally believed to be a physical problem, perhaps poor eyesight. In any event it was a weakness of which God said to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2Cor 12:7-10). Timothy suffered from stomach problems and frequent illnesses, for which Paul recommended he drink a little wine instead of water (1Tim 5:23). Trophimus, one of Paul’s helpers (“a faithful servant in the Lord” Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7), was left sick at Miletus (2 Tim 4:20). Epaphroditus, another of Paul’s helpers, was sick and almost died—“for the work of Christ” (Phl 2:25-30).

Does God want His people to be sick? Absolutely not! But neither does He promise to insulate us from sickness and suffering just because we believe in Him. Indeed, as God revealed to Paul, His “power is made perfect in weakness” (2Cor 12:9). Down through the centuries, dedicated Christians have been sick and suffered, and all have (or will) eventually die. Whatever the abundant life promised by Jesus is, perfect health in the flesh is not included. Indeed, there are many non-Christians who live longer, healthier, lives than many Christians.

Of course, the principles of good health, some of which are mentioned in the Bible, will benefit all who live by them. Much of the sickness and suffering in the world is because of broken physical laws of health. But Christians have no assurance that they won’t get sick.

## What About Prosperity?

If success in this world is a measure of God’s blessings as part of the New Covenant, then there are a lot more non-Christians enjoying it than Christians. For every Christian you can find who is really a great success financially, you can find nonbelievers who have more.

To be sure, there are numerous promises in the Old Testament that if Israel would obey Yahweh (the Eternal), He would prosper them in the land. For example, Deut. 28:1-2 promises all kinds of blessings for Israel—if they would obey. Before we appropriate those promises to individual Christians today, we should note that eternal life was not included! The Old Covenant was a temporal one, based on the promise of physical blessings for physical

obedience to Yahweh. The New Covenant, in stark contrast, is based on acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord—with much better promises.

This does not mean that all the laws of Yahweh given to Israel are of no consequence to us. Indeed, many of them incorporate natural and moral laws that, if obeyed, result in blessings. For example, an individual or a nation that lets its land rest periodically (as Israel was commanded to every seven years) will tend to reap a blessing. I say “tend” because there are many other factors. You may let your land rest periodically and build it up in many other ways, but that doesn’t isolate you from the harmful affects of polluted air and water, nor from insect plagues and blights brought on by the bad agricultural practices of your neighbors. Certainly, God can protect His people; and many Christians have testified to that effect; but many others have suffered drought, pestilence, hail, and storms, right along with unbelievers.

Individuals who live by the Ten Commandments save themselves great many curses that automatically fall on those who disobey. But, again, those who obey are not completely isolated from the consequences of the sins of others. Also, being “rich and increased with goods” is not a barometer of one’s spiritual condition. The brethren in Smyrna were poor, yet rich, while those in Laodicea were rich, yet poor (Rev 2:9; 3:17)

## The Wisdom of Proverbs

The book of Proverbs is full of wisdom on how to avoid many problems in life, how to get ahead financially and how to succeed in personal relationships. For example:

Prv 10:4 Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.

Prv 11:28 Whomever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.

Prov. 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

These and many other gems of wisdom are given as general principles, but they do not *always* work. There are diligent people who do not prosper financially; sometimes a soft answer does not turn away wrath; some lazy people do strike it rich. And some who trust in their riches ride high (in the physical realm) until the day they die.

Most of the time, of course, we will be blessed by living according to the wisdom of Proverbs; but if we do so only to get blessed, we may be headed for disap-

pointment. If we think that following these principles guarantees success in this light, we are in for a rude awakening. How many people have worked diligently only to see someone with connections get the promotion they had hoped for? The fact is that you can live by all the wisdom in the Bible and still suffer reverses because of other factors—such as the sins of wicked people around you. Christians should follow Biblical teachings because they love God, because they want to do what is right in His eyes, because they want to be good stewards of His earth, not because they seek pleasure and prosperity in this realm. Obeying just to obtain personal advantage is entirely selfish and contrary to God’s nature.

## The Negative Side

In contrast to Bible passages that are taken as promises of good things, there are many that forecast exactly the opposite—privation, trials, suffering, persecution, even martyrdom. Consider just a few:

Jesus said, “Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man” (Luke 6:22). “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother...a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household” (Matt. 10:34-35).

The apostle Paul took tribulation to be a normal part of a Christian’s life when he wrote “...[God] comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God” (2 Cor. 1:4).

Peter wrote, “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you” (1 Pet. 4:12). Earlier in the same letter he wrote, “in this you greatly rejoice, though not for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed” (1 Pet. 1:6-7).

These and many other passages show that Christians should not be surprised by all kinds of trials and sufferings. To be sure, they should not suffer because they are continuing in sin or because they reject the wisdom of God’s word. But they are going to suffer to some extent because of their past sins, because of the sins of others, because of time and chance, and because they live in a sin-filled, Satan-dominated world.

Of course, if Christians happen to live among the privileged few in the wealthy Western world, they may enjoy, (along with the ungodly around them), many physical blessings. However, these blessings are not guaranteed by a contract with God.

## Much Greater Promises

The promises of the New Covenant are much greater and better than the wealth and success and health that is possible in this world. They include peace that passes all understanding—peace that triumphs even in the face of trials and tribulations. They include the knowledge that God is on His throne and that all things work together for good. They include the forgiveness of sins, the fruits of the Holy Spirit—love, joy, peace, goodness, meekness, etc. They include the gift of eternal life.

Certainly, you have much to gain by living in accordance with God’s will and the wisdom of the Bible. You can save yourself a great deal of heartache and sorrow. But you have no absolute guarantee that you won’t suffer. Indeed, the difference between Christians and non-Christians is **not** that the former are insulated from pain and suffering—not at all. The difference is that Christians can suffer with **hope**, knowing that there is much more to life than the here and now.

Those who embrace the “contract gospel” or the “health and wealth gospel” are setting themselves up for giant spiritual disappointment. When tragedy strikes, they must either blame God for not living up to His end of the bargain, or blame themselves for some failure that negated God’s promises. Neither is valid, because there is no “physical health/wealth contract” made with individuals. Of course, when tragedy strikes, examining yourself is always a good thing and it does include considering your own failures. This is part of overcoming. Tragedy strikes sometimes, just so we learn how to deal with adversity.

Part of the problem with the “contract gospel” is in how we judge others who face tragedies. In the Old Testament much of the story of Job is about friends who judge him as a sinner, since in their minds, tragedy only happens to sinners. The Gospels contain several examples of men judging others for personal tragedies: the man born blind, the tower of Siloam falling, etc. The concept that “bad things” do not happen to believers is not part of the Gospel.

What do you get for embracing the Gospel? Not insulation from pain and suffering, but the **tools to grow** through suffering, to become more like Jesus Christ, our High Priest in heaven who also suffered. You get the kind of blessings that really count—in this life and for all eternity. 



# It's About Time

*Biblical Chronology Made Easy!*

## Times of Your Life

For every human, life is an unending series of events, and full of an unending parade of people. In order to make sense of our lives, we divide our memory of our past into a number of segments, each usually defined by the most memorable events. For a ten year old, this may mean categorizing his short life as periods before and after he started school, or further into periods before and after a significant family move to another city. A twenty-year-old may add those periods before and after she got her driver's license, before and after high school graduation, before and after a first real job. A forty-year-old will likely add such memorable events as a wedding, the birth of a first child, the purchase of a first home, or a significant career change. We also remember significant people in our lives in connection to these events: a high school buddy, a neighbor next to a specific home we lived in for a time, a boss from a certain job.

Without such segmenting of our lives, our memories would likely just blend everything together into one great blur of activities and faces! Most folks also use a similar method of remembering certain facts of history inside and outside their own lifetime. Even for just the limited amount of information in a high school American History book, it is nearly impossible to commit to memory **every** date mentioned. So we divide our knowledge of history into "eras". Most people likely don't remember the dates for every president, for instance. But most can remember the general time frame for Washington, Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, and Dwight Eisenhower. Since one of the most memorable dates in

American history is July 4, 1776—the signing of the Declaration of Independence—it is easy to connect Washington with that general time period. Lincoln is connected to the Civil War in the 1860's, Wilson to World War 1—about 1915—and Eisenhower was the first president most "Baby Boomers" remember, during the "Happy Days" of the 1950's.

When we think of other people and events in American History, we can "group" them before, after, or around those four men and their lifetimes. Ben Franklin: around the time of Washington. Teddy Roosevelt: before WWI. The Korean War: around Eisenhower's presidency.

But for some reason, when people start studying the Bible, and come upon numerous people and events, they seldom think to try to put all of these in a pattern. Characters and their adventures come and go—Noah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Paul—throughout the Old and New Testaments, and to the average church-goer, they really **are** just a blur of faces and events. It seems to many Bible students that there are just "too many" of them to be able to "memorize"... so they just leave their stories as isolated, unconnected events.

But there are many factors in understanding what we read in the Bible that make little sense if we do not know when events happened in relation to other Bible events and circumstances. As mentioned in an earlier *Shelter in the Word* issue, it isn't so vital that we know "exact dates" of Bible events—in fact, Bible scholars are not sure of many such dates. But it **is** valuable for the serious Bible student to know the *relative* timing of events and people in the scriptures. Did Ezekiel live before or after Abraham? Did David live before or after the Exodus? If you do not know these simple relational facts, you may become easily bewildered by many things you read in the scriptures.

Starting with this issue of *Shelter in the Word* we will be suggesting a way to generally divide much of the history of the Bible up into simple segments around the lifetimes of five important Biblical figures: Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel and Jesus. Once you commit to memory the general time frame of the lives of each of these men, you can begin to view other time information you read in the Bible *in relation* to the lives of these men.

It is not necessary to find out or remember the "exact" birth date or death date of each of these men. In fact, that specific information for most of them is shrouded in the mists of ancient history. But it **is** possible to pinpoint a more **general** focal date in each of their lives that will be very helpful for our purposes.

For each of them lived along a timeline which can be conveniently divided up into five hundred year segments. We do not intend to suggest that the dates below are an exact mid-point in each of the men's lives. We merely suggest that by focusing on these dates that **did** occur in their lifetime, you can more easily memorize the sequence of events in the scripture.

Here are the general dates connected with these five:

- Abraham: 2000 B.C.
- Moses: 1500 B.C.
- David: 1000 B.C.
- Daniel: 500 B.C.
- Jesus: 1 A.D. \*

\*Note that in our common calendar system, there is **no** such year as "0" either B.C. or A.D. The year 1 B.C. is immediately followed by 1 A.D.

If you will make it a project to memorize **just** these five dates and the men connected with them, you will find that the effort was well worth it! Each person has a "memorization" technique that may work. We do not suggest there is any one best way to do the memorizing part. But here is one possible method: Rather than memorize the facts given here in "pairs"... that is, "Abraham + 2000" you may find it helpful to memorize the names as a unit first—"Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, Jesus".

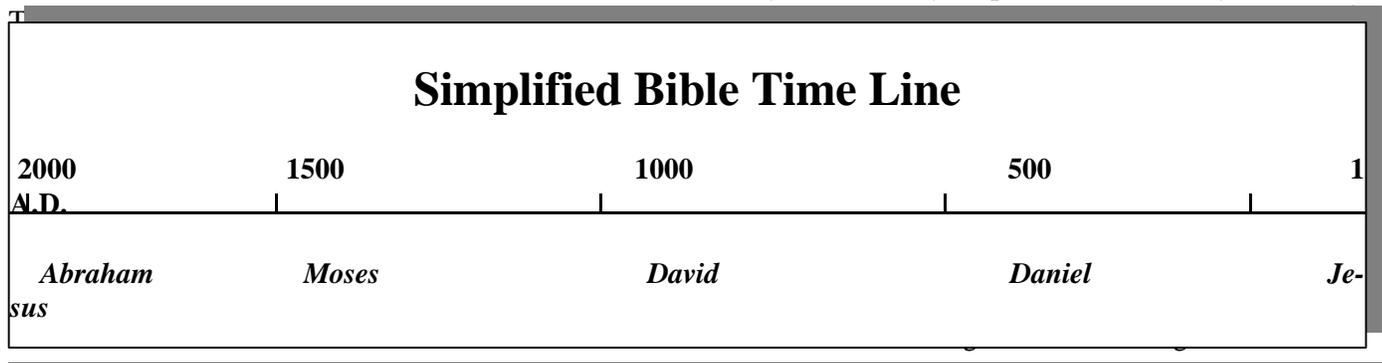
sounds like a little poem when stated out loud rhythmically! You can "divide" it up into two sections, perhaps... "Abraham, Moses... David, Daniel, Jesus."

Then clarify in your mind that the first date in the series is 2000, followed by intervals of 500 years. You can then write down the names in order in a column, just as given above, and "tack onto" them the appropriate dates.

As soon as you have these five names and their associated dates memorized, it is also very helpful to visually lay them out on a "time line" such as the one below. Then as you find other names, events and dates in the scriptures, you can place them on that line in their relative positions.

It may seem silly to actually make your own timeline on a piece of paper since you can just "look at" the one below. But it is a valid educational principle that the more "senses" you use when memorizing facts, the more solid your memory will be. By actually picking up a pen and paper and creating your own time line, you will impress upon your subconscious the facts you are writing down. And by writing down the list of the five names—perhaps several days in a row until you have them solidly in mind—you will reinforce your memory.

In our next issue of *Shelter in the Word* we will consider this simple timeline more carefully and explore ways to use it in your personal Bible Study.



## Hopes of the Heart

There is hope, if you don't fall away,  
 There is hope in each coming day;  
 Hope in the things of the heart,  
 Hope that will set you apart.

Hope in the work we must all get done,  
 In repenting, and overcoming, before He comes,  
 Receiving Him into our hearts,  
 This would be a very good start!

by Romelda Robillard, Forest Ranch, California.



# Natural Faith

Ramona M. Leiter  
**Biblical Principles Seen In  
God's Creation**



*“Consider the lilies of the field...”*



## What Time Is It?

The great drought of 1988! Remember it? I sure do. From April to August 1988, many of the nation's farmers were held captive by the terrible heat and shortage of rain. It was unlike anything my baby-boomer parents or I, at age seventeen, had ever experienced. Even my grandparents, who survived the Depression and the 1930's drought that devastated the Midwest, thought this was all a bit scary.

For me, it was more than just news reports. You didn't have to go any further than out our front door to see visible effects of the devastation. In my suburban neighborhood from one end of the block to the other, every lawn (even the meticulously manicured one across the street) showed various stages of yellowing. They all were dying out! Except ours. Somehow by the right timing or inspiration, my mom had happened to water our yard enough to keep it a lush, verdant green just in time before water rationing was declared. I'll never forget the almost eerie comparison of seeing our one lone bright green yard in a sea of straw.

Even more so, I remember the day that the rain came. I don't recall if it was predicted in the forecast. But that unmistakable smell of impending showers was in the air. The afternoon sky was darkening. An old

friend of mine and I decided to wait in anticipation on my front porch. I had my camera in hand to document the event. Then it happened. I captured on film the first electric sparkle of lightning as it struck the earth. And then drip, drop the rain began to fall. What a joyous time! While the next door lady ran inside for cover shielded by her mail, my friend and I began to dance as the rain fell all over us. We took turns posing for the camera with our prop umbrella that we never actually used.

The ground was grateful, the grass and the plants were grateful and we were too. Never did rain seem such a beautiful thing to me as then. It really impacted my young mind that because of the drought I had learned to never take rain for granted. So everything has its purpose.

Eccl 3:1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:

2 a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,

3 a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,

4 a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,

5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain,

6 a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away,

7 a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak,

8 a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

Later on that weekend the rain continued. It grew torrential at times. But for once I didn't mind the down-pour.

It was a time for rain.



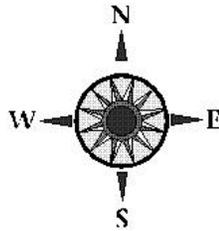
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## Practical Applications of the Golden Rule

1. If you open it, close it.
2. If you turn it on, turn it off.
3. If you unlock it, lock it.
4. If you move it, put it back.
5. If you use it, take care of it.
6. If you break it, repair it.

7. If you cannot repair it, find someone who can.
8. If you borrow it, return it.
9. If you make a mess, clean it up.
10. If it belongs to another, get permission to use it.
11. If you do not know how to use it, leave it alone.
12. If it does not concern you, do not mess with it.

# Navigating the Bible



## Bible Handbooks

Most new Bible Students can't afford to go out and buy a large collection of Bible reference works all at one time to help them in their studies. So it is helpful to know about some of the most basic, inexpensive such books.

In our last issue, we emphasized the importance of having a *Bible Concordance*. It is usually the first companion volume most students have to go along with their Bible. We recommended *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance with Greek and Hebrew Lexicons* as a good first choice.

The second most useful volume for many new students is a "Bible Handbook" of some sort. A variety of Bible reference books are available, so it may be bewildering to have to decide on which to purchase first. You may wish to go to a Bible bookstore and ask the salesperson to show you their collection.

### Halley's Bible Handbook

But if you'd like a simple suggestion to get started, we would recommend you purchase a *Halley's Bible Handbook* by Henry Halley, Zondervan Publishing. This simple volume has proven its worth to well over a million Bible students through many revisions—and in several languages—since it was first published in 1924.

As the name implies, it is a compact book about the size of a very thick paperback novel (800+ pages), which usually comes in both hard and soft bindings at a modest price. It is what would be termed a "general" handbook of the Bible. It contains in **brief** form a wide variety of information about the Bible and its contents. Here is a sample overview of the type of material included:

1. Simplified chronology of world and Bible history
2. Maps of Bible lands

3. Archaeological discoveries relevant to the Bible
4. Brief overviews of every book in the Bible
5. Simple commentary on significant passages
6. Lists of such things as all the miracles of Jesus
7. Table of Biblical weights and measures
8. Simple history of "How We Got the Bible"
9. Brief overview of "Church history"

There is much more in this small handbook. As with any "reference" work outside the Bible, one cannot just assume that "every word" of this volume is perfect. Some is conjecture, some is Halley's own personal opinion on how to apply the Bible to life, some is his own personal opinion on the "meaning" of debatable passages. But if used wisely and with prayer that God will open your mind to discern clearly how to compare what you read to the Bible itself, *Halley's Bible Handbook* can be a valuable tool in your efforts to "Navigate

### Other Handbooks

In addition to "general" handbooks such as *Halley's*, there are a wide variety of more "specialized" handbooks to meet narrower needs. Depending on how in-depth you want to get in your Bible study, you may find one or more of the following types of handbooks interesting and helpful. All should be available through your local Bible bookstore for under \$15.

### Bible Atlases

Although *Halley's* and other general handbooks usually include a number of maps related to the Biblical narrative, the selection is quite limited, and covers mostly large general areas. There are specialized Bible map handbooks that pinpoint for you almost every major location referred to in any of the Bible stories.

One such book we can recommend is called simply *Bible Mapbook*, by Simon Jenkins, Lion Publishing. It is unique in that it has "3-D" renderings of the topography of many of the locations, and it uses "newspaper-style" graphics to clarify such things as troop movements, migrations and so on. Here is information from the bookjacket:

The Bible Mapbook charts the names, places, journeys and battles of the Bible, capturing the detail and significance of what took place. \* 3-D computer graphics put you right in the heart of the action, the

heat of the battle... \* Maps follow the same order of events as your Bible. \* One map per event makes it easy to follow the action. \* Concise notes give rapid access to essential information. \* Covers the whole sweep of Bible history.

## Bible Times Handbooks

One of the most difficult hurdles to get over in understanding clearly the message of the Bible is the fact that the events happened in a land so far away, and in a time and society so different from our own. Investigating the cultural, social and political customs of Bible times can help clarify many obscure or confusing passages in both Old and New Testaments.

One handbook that covers such material is *Today's Handbook of Bible Times and Customs* by William L. Coleman, Bethany House Publishers. Here is information from the bookjacket:

A brand-new look at life in Bible Times. Some topics covered: \* Home and Family \* Food and Drink \* Education and Literacy \* Medicine and Health \* Crime and Punishment \* Religion and Politics \* Slavery and Poverty \* Feasts and Festivals.

Published in 1985, this handbook is written in a contemporary style, with many photographs of archaeological finds, as well as modern scenes from the land of Israel, where some ancient customs haven't changed all that much, particularly in rural areas.

A recent revision of a much older book, written back in the late 1800's, is available which provides another perspective of the same topic. *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, was originally by James M. Freeman. The "Rewritten and Updated" version by Harold Chadwick, Bridge-Logos Publishers, retains the "feel" of the original, including the old-fashioned line-drawing illustrations from the original book. Freeman had included many descriptions of current customs in the land of Israel and nearby countries in his lifetime. Since "progress" caught up to such lands quite late, and since customs in that part of the world changed very slowly, many customs really did trace back to Bible times and gave an interesting glimpse into the past. In the hundred years since that time, many of these customs have died out. Thus, Chadwick determined to keep those old descriptions, while at the same time updating the language and adding results of recent archaeological and other studies.

Whereas *Today's Handbook of Bible Times and Customs* is arranged in chapters based on topical areas, the material in *The New Manners and Customs of the*

*Bible* starts in Genesis and addresses each custom or fact as it is encountered in reading through the Bible. Thus the first handbook is most helpful in getting a broad overview of a general topic area, and the second is most helpful in giving detailed descriptions of specific customs.

## Quick Reference Handbooks

A number of handbooks cover lists of items or people in specific topic areas—such as "all the women of the Bible" or "all the promises of the Bible". These are particularly helpful if you want to do an in-depth study of such a topic. They list each item, and then give details about it. But before you even narrow down an area of study, you might want to consider a broader overview of the possibilities for topic areas with a "general book of lists". One such book which you might find entertaining as well as helpful to your study is *The Complete Book of Bible Lists* by H.L. Wilmington, Tyndale House Publishers.

This "trivia-style" book offers more than 6,000 entries grouped in over 350 lists. Here is information from the book-jacket:

Among the many categories and more than 350 lists are:

Troublemakers: \* 34 Murderers \* 32 Plots \* 4 Traitors \* 13 Lies \* 38 Wicked Men \* 13 Excuses \* 16 Fools.

Everyday Life: \* 33 Banquets, Suppers and Feasts \* 26 Garments \* 42 Journeys \* 43 Occupations \* 17 Political and Religious Groups \* 8 Roads and Highways \* 22 Vessels, Pitchers and Water Pots.

And much, much more, including lists about angels, animals, curses, kisses, miracles, dreams and visions, kings and rulers, palaces, plagues, and polygamists.

You certainly **can** study your Bible with absolutely no outside reference books. The authors of the original manuscripts of the books of the Bible were inspired directly by God as they wrote. All of the information you need to have to establish a relationship with God and find what His will for your life is contained in the pages of the Bible.

Thus all other books must be viewed as secondary. However, depending on the wisdom and scholarship of each author, these supplementary books may have much of value to assist you in your studies.

—PSD

# Using the Mind Creatively

by Tommy Willis

Using the mind creatively can help us deal with many of the voids and needs we have in our lives.

Even some of those whose bodies are bound by physical ailments have found great freedom in using the mind sufficiently. A good example of this is the novelist Christy Brown. He was born with cerebral palsy, and couldn't walk or speak. All he could move was his left foot, while most of the time he just laid where they put him, unable to communicate. Through much effort he learned to move that left foot in such a way that he taught himself to type with his toe! Christy was to go on to become a famous novelist. He began to learn the lesson that many with a healthy body don't learn—the Joy of using the mind creatively and how fulfilling it is.

Christy wrote, “When I was writing, I wrote and wrote without pause, without consciousness of my surroundings, hour after hour. I felt a different person. I wasn't unhappy any more. I didn't feel frustrated or shut in anymore. I was free, I could think, I could live, I could create. I felt released, at peace, and if I couldn't know the joy of dancing, I could know the ecstasy of creating...”

Even with a body bound by cerebral palsy Christy learned to live a full life by learning how to climb the canyons of his mind finding ecstasy and joy, where before he was very unhappy because he couldn't get out and function like those he saw around him.

There are some important lessons here for us to learn. We as believers in Jesus Christ have something that goes beyond use of the natural mind. Through the Blood of Jesus Christ we have access to the mind of God. Heb 10:19 “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus...” Our ecstasy can reach beyond the natural mind, as we tap into the Mind that controls the universe!

Many have found that using the mind this way **fills the void of loneliness** also. Over the past few years, people have asked me if I'm lonely at times—because they see me spend so much time alone. They seemed surprised when I tell them that it's been years since I've had a lonely day. The best way I can describe it is God is guiding me through a learning process. I used to suffer with loneliness many years ago, and I feel if I ever stop learning that I would become lonely again. But the learning process I am in is so exciting that it deals with any loneliness that comes.

The nineteenth century author **Henry David Thoreau** knew that using the mind this way would keep the loneliness at bay. He wrote, “The farmer works

alone in the field all day, hoeing or chopping, and does not feel lonesome, because he is employed, but when he comes home at night he cannot sit down in a room alone, at the mercy of his thoughts, but must be where he can 'see the folks,' and he wonders how the student can sit alone in the house all night and most of the day without 'the blues.' But he does not realize that the student, though in the house, is still at work in his field, as the farmer is his...”

Another famous author, **Eric Hoffer**, at the age of 72 had stopped writing, feeling his mind was played out and growing dull because of his age. But then he decided to try an experiment. He wrote, “...to see what would happen if I forced myself to write over a period of several months, to sluice my mind the way I sluiced dirt in my gold hunting days, using a diary as a sluice-box, to trap whatever flakes of insight that might turn up...” After six months he was happy to report that the experiment worked, his mind became more alert and sharp. **By writing something significant every day his mind had been revived!**

These are some good lessons for us. God set the mind up in such a way that we can continue to learn well into old age, And the “use it or lose it” principle applies here also. Thoreau wrote, “Be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought.” Thoreau understood how fulfilling a life could be lived by using his mind creatively, regardless of his economic situation. My own experience in life has taught me the same.

And the great difference we have as believers in Jesus Christ is access to the mind of God. The philosophers of the world only had the natural mind to work with. Therefore we can go beyond this natural dimension as we tap into the Mind that controls the universe. The wisdom of the universe is open to us.

If we seek God diligently, and allow Him to create the mind of Christ within us, this will be our point of true success. Nothing we can do will be using the mind more creatively than this.

Jesus said, “Labor not for the meat which perishes, but for the meat which endures unto everlasting life.” (John 6:27) As we allow God to create the mind of Christ within us, this will go into eternity. As the body is “put off”, the education will remain intact.

“The world and its desires pass away, but he who does the will of God lives forever” (1Jn 2:17). 



# A Closer Look

## Common Misconceptions About Bible Topics:

# Sin



*“Sinfully” Delicious?*

In a previous *Closer Look* article, we noted that much of what the average American believes about “religious” topics is **not** a result of personal study of the Bible, or even education from religious institutions. It is what might be termed “Popular Theology”. And it is a result of exposure to ideas in the public marketplace—from such sources as books, magazines, newspapers, movies, music, advertising and television shows.

In this issue we will take a closer look at the common conception in our society of “sin”. And in this topic also it is quite evident that many people have derived their concept of what is “sinful” from those popular sources. Folks who have never attended a church or opened a Bible in their life would almost all have *some* sort of definition in their mind for what “sin” is if you asked them to describe it. What might that definition include?

Have you seen the food ads for items such as high-calorie ice cream which proudly label the company’s products “sinfully delicious”? Is that a true use of the word “sin”? Can something truly be “sinful” *just because* it tastes extremely good? If so, this kind of logic might cause one to ask—Just how bad does it have to taste before it is the “opposite” of sinful—perhaps “holy”? And how could you go about marketing such tasteless or nasty-tasting food?

Have you seen movies or read about zealous religious individuals who will poke their head in the door of a bar or other establishment selling alcoholic beverages, toss in some religious “tracts”, and holler “Flee from the wrath to come, you **sinner**s”? Is it true that the very fact someone is in a building where alcohol is sold proves they are a

“sinner”?

It is a common conception among “non-religious” folks that overly “religious” folks label as a sin anything that is “fun” or “pleasurable”. And it might even seem that way if one were to investigate the “lists” compiled by some religious groups of activities that are considered unacceptable for members. Such lists often include some or all of the following: dancing, drinking alcohol, smoking, playing cards, going to movies, watching television, drinking “stimulant” beverages such as coffee or colas... and for women, wearing jewelry or a bathing suit—or perhaps even just wearing a blouse that exposes part of the upper arm or a skirt that exposes more than an inch or two of ankle!

It is also quite common for “religious” folks to use the term “sinner” to describe someone who indulges in any of the “forbidden activities” on their church’s list. But what does the Bible say about all of this? Is there just a certain segment of the population who are “sinners”?

1Jn 1:8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

This passage indicates that **everyone** has sinned! In fact, this is not just a “New Testament idea”. Solomon spoke a similar thought in Proverbs:

Prov 20:9 Who can say, “I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin”?

The answer is implied in the context: “No one.” But how can that be? Not everyone is a prostitute, or a murderer. Thus, we must ask, is there some “definition” of “sin” that is different from the popular conception?

1Jn 3:4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

Is this speaking of the “laws of the land” such as the traffic laws in America? This cannot be so, since such laws vary from country to country. In fact, if you were on a “desert island” where no country’s laws were applicable, you would not be breaking some sort of “man-made” law, even if you murdered someone else who landed there.

For the Biblical concept of “sin” to apply, we must look for a much higher, unchanging law. The Bible speaks of this as “God’s law.”

Ps 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD

are sure and altogether righteous.

10 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.

11 By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

12 Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

13 Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression.

The "Law of God" is a broad concept, and you will need to study your Bible to find out what precepts are covered by the concept. It includes, of course, the Ten Commandments which most folks are at least vaguely familiar with. But is that all?

Jms 4:17 Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

That surely broadens the definition of sin that most folks have, doesn't it!

You can understand a little more clearly what "sin" is all about by using a *Strong's Concordance* which includes dictionaries of the Greek and Hebrew languages from which the Bible is translated. (In the next issue of *Shelter*, we will cover in detail how you can look up such details yourself.)

According to *Strong's*, The Old Testament Hebrew word which is commonly translated "a sin" is *chattah*, from a root word which means "to miss" (as when one "misses a target").

Another common word in the Bible which is related to sin is "transgressions". The Hebrew word that is translated by that word is *pasha*: to "revolt"; break away from just authority.

The New Testament Greek word for "to sin" is *hamartano*, which also means to "miss the mark" (and so not share in the prize.)

The NT word for "transgress" is *parabaino*: "to go contrary to", that is, violate a command.

Understanding the concept of sin as "missing the mark" helps us comprehend how "not doing good" when we know we should is a "sin". There is a "mark" we are to be "aiming at":

Eph 4:13 ...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Our aim as a Christian is to eventually "be like Christ." Whenever we make choices that take us away from that aim, which cause us to "miss the mark", we are

sinning. That is quite a scary thought! Most folks who are honest with themselves will admit that they fall far short of "the mark" much of the time. How can we ever please God if we are constantly sinning?

1Jn 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

The **only** way that we imperfect humans can become like Jesus and become acceptable in God's sight is to confess our sins, and ask for the blood of Jesus to purify us. When we do that, we belong to Him, and He will set us free from the bondage we have been under to our sinful nature. Our sinful natures have produced very ugly fruit:

Gal 5:19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;

20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions

21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But if we confess our sins and accept the blood of Jesus, He will give us the Holy Spirit, which will yield totally different fruit:

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

And the fruit will continue after we are no longer in our human flesh:

Rom 6:22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

—PSD

# We Have Freedom of Choice Are We Choosing Sin?

by Norman Edwards



Most people who have read Ken Starr's report on Bill Clinton find Clinton's actions very disturbing. They are. Even more disturbing, however, are the polls and interviews of Americans who seem to say "leave the President's private life alone because he is doing a good

This article is **not** another retelling of the explicit details of this chapter in American history. It is an attempt to tie together important but little-noticed facts, and analyze them from the Bible. If one President fails in his job, the American people can elect another one. But if we as a people no longer understand or want the kind of person whom God expects as a leader, then we can expect to reap God's judgment along with our lying leaders.

## Bible Teaching on Appointing Leaders

When Ancient Israel was about to enter their land, the Eternal gave them instructions on how they were to pick leaders. From the beginning of Deuteronomy chapter 16, we can see that these instructions are to all adults. Everyone was to be involved in the choosing of leaders:

Deut 16:18 Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the LORD your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly.

19 Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.

20 Follow justice and justice alone, **so that you may live** and possess the land the LORD your God is giving you.

The President is the highest "official" in the land. He should meet these qualifications "so that you [that's us] may live". Neither these verses, nor the other verses on the subject, say a leader should be chosen for his good looks, popularity, or economic policy. When God was telling Samuel whom He wanted to be king, He

said: "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1Sam 16:7). A leader's attitude is very important to the Eternal—not just the job that he does on the outside.

Prov 17:7 Arrogant lips are unsuited to a fool—how much worse lying lips to a ruler!

It is bad enough that the President of a country is mixing sex with business. But it is worse that he can stare into a TV camera, knowing that most of the people who elected him are watching, and say things that are complete lies—simply to benefit himself.

## Was the President Lying to Cover a One-Time "Mistake"?

Some excuse the President's lying by saying that he was simply trying to protect the innocent from his one-time mistake. But we must realize that Monica Lewinsky is only the latest in a long chain of women who claimed to have had sex with Bill Clinton. Clinton, however, initially denied any type of sex with any of them, though he later changed his story with Lewinsky and Flowers. Since most sexual contact takes place in privacy between only two people, unbiased witnesses are often hard to find. It is often "his word against hers". (The lesson to be learned from this is: do not be alone in the company of someone of the opposite sex unless you completely trust them.)

When we hear conflicting testimony, we must examine which one plausibly agrees with the known facts, and what motivations each party might have for lying. If all of these affairs did take place, Clinton would have an obvious motive for covering them up—even if that meant lying. However, if they did not take place, then we must determine why all of these women decided to lie. Clinton has proven to be an unreliable witness in at

least two cases.

**Monica Lewinsky** initially claimed not to have had a relationship with Clinton. Later, she gave so much testimony to Ken Starr (which was well-confirmed by White House logs, letters, phone calls, gifts, and in one case, DNA testing) that the President cannot deny the overall substance of what she said. (Clinton disagrees with some points of how he touched her—claiming what he did does not fall under the applicable legal definition of sex.) Understanding why Lewinsky would be inventing “romantic details” at this point is hard to imagine. The provable details of Lewinsky’s story are damaging enough. Why should she risk a perjury conviction and the wrath of one of the most powerful people in the world to make things up and add to her story? They would make little difference in the money she would receive for a media offer at some time in the future. If she wants to make things up, she could make them up for the publisher or producer, and not risk any legal entanglements. *It seems that Lewinsky is more likely to be telling the truth than Clinton.*

**Gennifer Flowers** claimed a 12-year relationship with Clinton in 1992. Bill and Hillary appeared on TV where Clinton agreed that he had “caused pain in their marriage”, but he did not admit any sexual relationship. When Clinton denied everything, Flowers said that she wrote her book, *Passion and Betrayal*, because she feared for her life. (If the author of a book strangely dies, it is much more likely to be investigated than if a relatively unknown person dies.) She had some reason to fear—a neighbor of hers who made a video tape of Clinton and Flowers together was beaten nearly to death and his videotapes stolen. The crime was never solved. Flowers did make some tapes of phone conversations between herself and Clinton. She also claims to have aborted one of Clinton’s babies. Finally, in Clinton’s August 17, 1998 videotaped testimony, he admitted to having sex with Gennifer flowers on one occasion, but he still claims that her story of a 12-year affair was invented just for the book money. Flowers is reported to have made about half a million dollars from her book. While most of what is in the book was not witnessed by anyone (except, supposedly, Flowers and Clinton), now both sides agree that

they did have sex with each other.

The Drudge Report recently released a video tape made in the White House of an **unnamed young woman** who gently wiped Bill Clinton’s forehead with a towel after a morning jog, then disappeared with him into a dead-end hall, where he propped the door partly open in the exact manner described by Monica Lewinsky. No claims have been made, but the woman may be found and asked to testify.

**Paula Jones** has been involved in numerous legal maneuvers against Clinton since May 6, 1994, claiming that he attempted to coerce her into sexual acts with him. Jones turned down Clinton’s out-of-court offer of \$700,000 with no admission of wrongdoing—against the advice of her attorneys. If money were her motivation, she certainly made a big mistake. Nevertheless, it was the process of gathering information for her trial which eventually led to the disclosure of the Lewinsky story. *If Paula Jones were interested in money, she could have taken the \$700,000, written a book, and retired wealthy. If her goal is not money, then it must simply be to prove herself true and/or punish Clinton. Why would she want to do that, unless he did something to her?*

Former Miss Arkansas, and Former Miss America, **Elizabeth Ward Gracen** told her story of sex with Bill Clinton to the press on March 31, 1998. She claimed that she wanted to clear an acquaintance’s testimony in the Paula Jones case who claimed she was raped. Gracen had denied having sex with Clinton in the past, but now says that they both agreed to it. *Gracen cannot be considered too reliable because she changed her story. However, the least believable story is this: “Gracen never had sex with Clinton, but since there were rumors about it she issued a denial; Later she decided to tell a friend she was raped, then still later told the press it was consensual sex.” This sequence makes no sense. If Gracen were lying to make money or to hurt Clinton, she should have stuck with the rape story, it is far more damaging and more likely to sell books. It is more reasonable to believe she once tried to conceal the matter, an acquaintance exaggerated it, then she decided to tell the truth.*

**Kathleen Willey** claims that Clinton sexually touched her on November 29, 1993, without her permission. Willey stands to profit from her

book. One of her friends at first confirmed that she told her story shortly after the incident, but now denies it. *There are few provable facts in this alleged relationship, either one could easily be lying.*

It is a painful thing to be listing so much testimony and attempting to determine who is telling the truth. It would be so much better if we all told the truth. Men and women may be able to fool the investigators and courts of our day, but they will not fool the Eternal:

Prv 12:19 Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.

Prv 12:12 The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.

Prv 17:4 A wicked man listens to evil lips; a liar pays attention to a malicious tongue.

Prv 19:9 A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will perish.

## Should Only Those Without Sin Cast the First Stone?

When leaders brought a woman taken in adultery to Jesus, He did not condemn her, but said to the people: “If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her”, and to the woman: “Go now and leave your life of sin” (John 8:2-11). Is this what should be done with Bill Clinton? Should all courts and police departments everywhere simply tell all the accused to “stop sinning” and then let them go—realizing that all men have sin? That policy would probably give us more crime than we have now!

Eccl 8:11 When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong.

Jesus was not telling the leaders of His day to disobey the Old Testament Law. The leaders were trying to get Jesus to condemn the woman outside of the law. The law required that **both the man and the woman** be stoned for adultery and that two or three witnesses of the crime be first to throw the stones. This was to be done at the gate of the city (Deut 22:22-24; 17:6-7). None of those accusing the woman claimed to be witnesses of the sin, nor was there any explanation offered for why they were only bringing the woman and

not the man. The temple was not a place for this kind of trial or punishment and Jesus would not take part in this misuse of the law.

Today, the Old Testament laws are no longer our national laws and we should **not** stone people for adultery. However, the New Testament clearly states that adulterers will not inherit the Kingdom of God (1Cor 6:9-10).

But is it our job to judge Bill Clinton when he claims he is sorry for his sin and has repented? No, it is not our job to eternally judge him, but it is our job to determine if he is a fit leader for our country. Those who lead are simply held to a higher standard (Jms 3:1). While the following scripture was written for those who would serve in congregations, it seems equally applicable to those who represent us as public servants:

1Tim 3:8 Deacons [the Greek *diakonos* means “servants”], likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.

9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.

10 They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

Bill Clinton has been tested, and found wanting in many ways. Nevertheless, some will argue that since his wife, Hillary Clinton, forgives him, that we should forgive him also. But is she forgiving Bill, or just trying to keep **their** political career alive? Several different Clinton biographers have stated that the Clintons have largely a business relationship, not a marriage. This writer was amazed at the press reports that extended sympathy to Hillary each time a new story broke about Bill Clinton’s sexual misconduct. Hillary is a very intelligent lawyer and certainly aware of the many women who have claimed to have had sex with her husband. Does anyone believe that she has never done some investigating of her own?

Only a few hours after the latest “bombshell” was released, we could all see Hillary on TV—not trying to recover from the enormity of what her husband was accused of, but talking about the business of government, and supporting her husband. For a while, she even invented the story that these sex allegations were invented by right-wing conspirators, until it became

obvious that some were true (could there be a right-wing conspiracy to tell the truth?). Apparently, Hillary helped to cover up the Monica Lewinsky story. In an NBC interview on January 27, 1998, she claimed not to have knowingly met Monica. But Willie Blacklow, a former deputy assistant of public affairs at the Pentagon, recalled that she greeted her by name in the receiving line at a 1996 Christmas party.

Bill Clinton can be forgiven of his sin. But even if only the provable parts of Monica Lewinsky's story are correct, he is not the kind of man that should be President. The security logs show that he saw her often. The scientists agree that he stained her dress. They really gave each other gifts. Monica really remembered who was on the phone when she was in his room.

### **Isn't Clinton Doing a Good Job?**

This writer believes that Clinton's presidency can claim little credit for the now-vibrant American economy, but this article will avoid that issue, and assume for a moment that Clinton is "doing a good job". Should a leader who is "doing a good job" be allowed to continue in his post?

Ezk 18:24 But if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked man does, will he live? None of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness he is guilty of and because of the sins he has committed, he will die.

Even a man who does much good and knows the value of it, is still punished if he does evil. We must think of the message we will send to our country, especially our young people. Should all Americans in positions of trust be allowed to lie and cheat if they are "doing a good job"? Can bosses have an affair with their employees as long as they are "doing a good job"? Can students have affairs with teachers as long as they are "doing a good job"? What about doctors and patients, judges and defendants, or preachers and believers? Is it acceptable for them to have extramarital affairs and lie about them as long as they are "doing a good job"? If we accept this kind of sin everywhere in our country, we will indeed be in the sad state that the prophet Jeremiah described:

Jer 9:1 O that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, so that I might weep day and night for the slain of my poor people!

2 O that I had in the desert a traveler's lodging place, that I might leave my people and go away from them! For they are all adulterers, a band of traitors.

3 They bend their tongues like bows; they have grown strong in the land for falsehood, and not for truth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know me, says the LORD.

4 Beware of your neighbors, and put no trust in any of your kin; for all your kin are supplanters, and every neighbor goes around like a slanderer.

5 They all deceive their neighbors, and no one speaks the truth; they have taught their tongues to speak lies; they commit iniquity and are too weary to repent.

6 Oppression upon oppression, deceit upon deceit! They refuse to know me, says the LORD.

7 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: I will now refine and test them, for what else can I do with my sinful people?

8 Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaks deceit through the mouth. They all speak friendly words to their neighbors, but inwardly are planning to lay an ambush.

9 Shall I not punish them for these things? says the LORD; and shall I not bring retribution on a nation such as this? (NRSV).

### **Has Clinton Committed Perjury?**

Perjury is lying under oath in a court of law. Lawyers, politicians, and commentators are divided on whether or not Bill Clinton has done it—some say, ; some say, "No". Clinton says, "No". Clinton bases his defense on very narrow definitions of words. In his video-taped deposition, he argues about the definitions of "relationship", "sexual relations", "sex with me" vs. "sex with her", and even the meaning of "is". He claims that his statements of not having sexual relations with Lewinsky are technically correct. We will

spare the sordid details of why. But if the courts and congress agree that Clinton did not commit perjury, then our nation is indeed in grave danger. If the president can do even a fraction of the things that are in the Ken Starr report, but stand up in court and say "I have never had sexual relations with that woman", then our President is not really under any obligation **to communicate the truth about anything to us.**

Clinton must know that when he made his original statements, most people would understand that he really **did not have any** sort of intimate contact with Lewinsky. In his earlier depositions, the questioners were not very detailed and Clinton's word-games seemed to work for him. In his latest deposition, the questions were **very detailed and specific** and Clinton seemed to be angry about that. At one point he said, "Mr. Wisenberg, I'm not going to answer your trick questions." Did it ever occur to him that Wisenberg was tired of getting "trick answers"?

Let us consider this issue on a personal level. Should our teenagers follow the example of the president? Should they do all of the things that the President did, then get out their dictionary and tell Mom and Dad that they "are not having sexual relations"? Furthermore, what has become of our legal system in general? Do we want a system where people do what is obviously wrong, but call white "black" and black "white" and get away with it because they are "legally correct"? Do we want other governing people and agencies making deliberately confusing statements?

Isa 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

People might think that these detailed legal word-games are a new thing that our modern sophisticated leaders have developed. However, they existed among corrupt leaders at the time of Christ. Notice the extent to which Christ goes to refute their legal double-talk:

Matt 23:16 Woe to you, blind guides! You say, "If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath."

17 You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred?

18 You also say, "If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath."

19 You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred?

20 Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it.

21 And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it.

22 And he who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it.

23 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices-- mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law-- justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

24 You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

25 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

27 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean.

28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

## Do We Want Clinton To Continue to Lead Our Nation?

Americans deserve a president who is fully attentive to his duties as head of state while he is at work. They do not need a president who is always thinking about possible sexual gratification from those who come in and out of his office. Also, relationships such as that between Clinton and Lewinsky represent a great **security risk.** What would happen if foreign spies had

made friends with Lewinsky instead of Linda Tripp? Would they have been able to extort national security secrets from him or her? Could they have broken into Monica's apartment and inserted spying equipment into some of her gifts or clothes bound for the White House? Many of the official channels of protection are bypassed in these affairs. Hillary always has Secret Service agents with her who would protect her possessions and check her purchases for tampering—Monica does not. If Clinton does not want **anyone** to know about his affairs with women, he is not likely to follow the normal security procedures.

Is Bill Clinton really trying to stop his adultery and “tricky talk” to the country? Notice this statement from his deposition: “You know, I believed then, I believe now that Monica Lewinsky could have sworn out an honest affidavit, that under reasonable circumstances and without the benefit of what Linda Tripp did to her [taping her conversations], would have given her a chance not to be a witness in this case.” In other words, Clinton is saying that if Tripp had not made her tapes, Lewinsky probably would not have had to testify and he would not have been caught. Most parents quickly learn the difference between a child who is genuinely sorry for what he did, and one who is simply sorry that he “got caught”. Do Americans need more lies and deception? The Bible warns us of the attitude of those who lie:

Proverbs 26:28 A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.

Could Bill Clinton be lying about things more important than his sex practices? There is a growing body of evidence that he is. We cannot begin to cover all of it in this article, but we can provide a few resources to those who are interested. One is the book, *The Secret Life of Bill Clinton: The Unreported Stories* by Amrose Evans-Pritchard, Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc. It contains numerous interviews about the Oklahoma City Bombing, Vince Foster's death, the Whitewater scandal, the Parks murder, and the Arkansas drug operations.

For those with internet access, there are a number of sites that give information about 70-plus people who were once close associates of Bill Clinton but died either by suicide or murder. If you read these lists, please ask yourself, “How many of my close friends have died by suicide or murder”?

<http://www.accessone.com/~rivero/politics/bodies.html>  
<http://www.kendra.com/family/body.htm>  
<http://www.marsweb.com/~watcher/klinton.html>  
<http://etherzone.com/body.html>  
<http://www.globaldialog.com/~larryt/bodcount.htm>  
<http://tscnet.com/pages/badcrcc/entertain/clinton/index.htm>

Is it possible that a human being could be so evil? The Bible says, “yes”:

Isaiah 32:7 The scoundrel's methods are wicked, he makes up evil schemes to destroy the poor with lies, even when the plea of the needy is just.

Jeremiah 23:14 And among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen something horrible: They commit adultery and live a lie. They strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from his wickedness. They are all like Sodom to me; the people of Jerusalem are like Gomorrah."

## Writer's Opinion: What Is Likely To Happen to Clinton?

While I believe that the Starr Report provides ample evidence that Bill Clinton is unfit for public office, and that it probably contains enough evidence to legally impeach Clinton, I am not convinced that there is a 2/3 majority in the Senate willing to impeach him. Furthermore, there is some chance Starr's evidence may not be used for some legal reason, such as Starr not being authorized to investigate Lewinsky.

While Starr is painted as a bitter rival of Clinton by most of the media, he was actually appointed by the Clinton administration. Furthermore, he did very little to uncover new evidence or solve existing problems with evidence in the Vince Foster murder/suicide case, the Whitewater case, and other cases he was supposed to investigate.

I cannot prove it, but it is possible that the pages of Lewinsky details are just a calculated distraction away from very serious problems in the cases mentioned above. It will take months to gather evidence and present claims and counter claims. If Clinton survives an impeachment vote, it is unlikely that congress will want to start new impeachment proceedings on other charges.

In this human existence, we may never be able to figure out exactly what Bill Clinton has and has not

done. We probably cannot personally affect the outcome of his resignation decision or an impeachment decision. However, we can individually avoid committing sins like his, and we can let others know that we are against such behavior in our leadership at all levels. We can prefer truth and righteousness over political expediency. If people are slow to demand that Clinton leave office because they, too, have sinned, the solution is for everyone to repent and change, not to hide our leader's and everyone else's sins. Also, we can read the Eternal's warning about corrupt nations, His promise to judge all people justly, and to replace the False leadership with the just leadership of Jesus the Christ.

Isa 59:1 See, the LORD's hand is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.

2 Rather, your iniquities have been barriers between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue mutters wickedness.

4 No one brings suit justly, no one goes to law honestly; they rely on empty pleas, they speak lies, conceiving mischief and begetting iniquity (Isa 59:1-4).

12 For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities:

13 rebellion and treachery against the LORD, turning our backs on our God, fomenting oppression and revolt, uttering lies our hearts have conceived

14 So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter.

15 Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey. **The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice.**

16 He saw that there was no one, **he was appalled that there was no one to intervene**; so his own arm worked salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him.

Luke 12:2 For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known.

3 Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the rooftops.

4 And I say to you, My friends, do

### Be Thankful for the Best Things

The best things are nearest:  
Breath in your nostrils,  
Light in your eyes,  
Flowers at your feet,  
Duties at your hand,  
The path of God just before you.  
—Robert Louis Stevenson

not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!

6 Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God.

7 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Rev 11:15 The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever! (NKJV) 