

(Continued from the front page)

For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord" (Psalms 128:1-4).

"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (I Pet. 3:7). "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church..." (Eph. 5:23). "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph.5:25). "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church" (Eph. 5:28,29).

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Worship with the New Salem Church of Christ.

Sunday: 9 am, 10 am and 6 pm, Wednesday: 7 PM. Our meeting house is twenty miles south of Henderson, TX (FM 839 & FM 1662). Preacher: Glenn Melton. Brother Bo Linthicum teaches class on Wednesday Evenings.

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The Preacher's Attitude Toward His Wife

The gospel preacher has the right to have, or not have, a wife. Listen to Paul, "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, a well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas" (I Cor. 9:5)? Truly, he that "...findeth a wife findeth a good thing..." (Prov.18:22a), and should remember that "...a prudent wife is from the Lord" (Prov. 19:14b). He should want "...a virtuous woman,..." for "...her price is far above rubies" and he can "...trust in her..." He knows that "Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain..." therefore he wants "...a woman that feareth the Lord..." (Prov. 31:10, 11a, 30).

"Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love" (Prov. 5:15-19).

The preacher who so loves his wife will try to understand her, will be attentive to her needs and desires, and not so immerse himself in his work that he forgets her. She needs his presence and help in the home, especially when there are children.

When there is discord in the home the preacher should "Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman: That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words" (Prov. 7:4,5). For "...the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell" (Prov. 5:3-5). "...there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot and subtil of heart" (Prov. 7:10). "With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him" (Prov. 7:21). "Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chanbers of death" (Prov. 7::27). "So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent" (Prov. 6:29).

"Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways.

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Word Studies

Our English words "jubilee," "jubilation," and "jubilant" are used to describe occasions of great joy, but they are not derived from nor related to the word "joy" or its predecessors. These words came into our language ultimately from the Hebrew tongue, and they have purely biblical roots.

The Hebrew word "yobel" is rendered "trumpet" in Exodus 19:13, then in 20 references in Leviticus and Numbers, it is translated "jubilee." In Leviticus 25:9 the Lord instructed Moses to "cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound" on a certain day, signalling the commencement of a special year, a year of great joy, a year belonging to the Lord.

In the fiftieth year the Israelites were to "proclaim liberty throughout all the land" (Lev. 25:10), as those who had come to poverty and sold themselves into servitude would be freed (Lev. 25:39, 40, 54). Indeed, all Israel could feel a special sense of freedom and brotherhood in the year of Jubilee, for their God had released them from their forced servitude in the land of Egypt.

The Jubilee was a year of restoration, for in the fiftieth year real property outside of walled cities was to revert to its original owners. The conquered land of Canaan was parcelled out to the tribes and families of Israel, as recorded in Joshua 13 and 14. If an Israelite sold his property to someone outside the original family, he or his kinsmen had the right to redeem the land at any time they had ability to pay for it; but if it was never redeemed, it would nonetheless go back to the original possessor or to his heirs in the year of Jubilee. It was a time when things would be put back as they should be.

The Jubilee was a year of rest for the land and those who worked it. There was to be no sowing or reaping (Lev. 25:11, 12). Since the fiftieth year would always follow a sabbath year, this meant that one harvest must feed the people for three years. Thus, this year of great joy would be a time when the Hebrews' faith would be tested. Those who walked by faith in the God of Abraham would follow His explicit orders, carefully storing their forty-eighth-year harvest, then not planting again until seedtime in the fifty-first year. Those whose faith wavered would plant as usual and never reap the great spiritual benefits and the bountiful joy that the Lord intended for them through observance of the Jubilee.

Although Bible history shows that fleshly Israel was generally faithless, God was not thwarted in His purpose. Jesus Christ declared to the Jews in Galilee that he had come "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:16-21). He brought liberty to those in servitude to sin (Rom. 6:17, 18). He brought restoration and redemption from spiritual poverty (Acts 3:19-22). Those who put simple, obedient trust in Him as Lord and Savior will have the endless joy of fellowship with the God of Abraham into eternity. (John 8:24; Acts 16:30-33). Through Jesus Christ, God brought the joy of Jubilee to all nations!

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IS THE MAN IN THE WORLD AMENABLE TO THE LAW OF CHRIST?

In First Corinthians 5:9-13, Paul penned, "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world...I have written unto you not to keep company, if...a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat...do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." Paul distinguished between a fornicator "called a brother" and one that is "of this world." We know how the fornicator "within" became a fornicator: He violated the law of Christ in Matthew 19:9. But, how did the fornicator "without" become a fornicator? He also violated God's marriage law as stated in Matthew 19:9, "...Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery and whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Someone says, He is not amenable to that law!

Generic, or universal, language is used in the New Testament. There is "all nations" (Mt. 28:19), "all the world," and "every creature" (Mk. 16:15,16). We recognize the universal nature of these statements: they concern all men. The wording in Mt. 19:9 is similar: "whosoever." All men are amenable to the law of Christ on marriage and divorce.

In First Corinthians 6:9-11 Paul wrote, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind...shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Prior to being washed, sanctified, and justified, some of them were adulterers. How could they have been adulterers? **THEY WERE AMENABLE TO THE LAW OF CHRIST.**

Someone calls our attention to Romans 8:6,7 which says, "...the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God,..." The words "not subject to" mean "not obedient to;" they DO NOT mean NOT AMENABLE TO. The words "subject to" come from a military term (upotasso) referring to rank. Rank refers to amenability; subjection refers to obedience. One can be amenable to a law but not subject to it.

"...for where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15b). Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel (Eph. 2:12) cannot become adulterers if they are not amenable to the law of Christ. If they cannot become adulterers, they cannot become sinners. Then why would they need the gospel and the blood of Christ? If those in the world are not amenable to the law of Christ and thus not sinners, the worst thing that could happen is for someone to preach the gospel to them. But, all men are amenable to the law of Christ and guilty of sin (Rom. 3:22,23). Hence, all men need the gospel and the blood of Christ.

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Issues Among Brethren FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship in religion means different things to different people. Some think of it as a social gathering in the "fellowship hall." Others see it as including those in other churches, in spite of doctrinal differences. With many fellowship opens the door for them to participate with all other religious groups in religious activities of all kinds. From what has been said it is evident that fellowship is looked upon by large numbers to include anything and everything with anyone and everyone just as long as it is done in the name of religion! But, is this in harmony with the teaching of the Bible? Let's investigate, search the Scriptures for an answer.

A very clear and concise passage of scripture on the subject is found in 1 Jn.1:5-7, which reads, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Several significant statements are included in our passage. The first is, "God is light," Jesus, as God in the flesh, could declare, "I am the light of the world," Jn.8:12. Jesus also said, "He that doeth truth cometh to the light," Jn.3:21. To come to Jesus, Who is the light of the world, is to come to Him in obedience, as drawn by the power of the gospel, Jn.6:44-45; Rom.1:16-17.

Another pertinent point of our passage is, "If we walk in the light.....we have fellowship....." True religion, a complete, whole-hearted submission to the will of God is the only basis of fellowship both with God and with man. Those who refuse to believe, Heb.11:6; repent of sins, Acts 17:30; confess, Rom.10:9 and be baptized for remission of sins, Acts 2:38, can have no fellowship with those who do. Paul asked the question, "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" The obvious answer is, "NONE!"

Be mindful, too, that our passage insists that this fellowship is maintained only by those who continue to "walk in the light" - those who remain true to the doctrine of Christ, as revealed in the N.T., 2 Jn.1:9. Those who teach and practice those things not authorized by God (fellowship dinners in fellowship halls, salvation without obedience to the gospel, Christians in divergent denominations, etc.) are clearly warned, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth," 1 Jn.1:6. Honest hearts will heed the warning!

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First Principles

THE GOD WHO IS

The author of Hebrews, using Abel and Enoch as examples, reasoned that it is by faith that one pleases God. He then declared, "Without faith, it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently see Him" (Heb. 11:6). To please God one must believe, not that He "was", but that He "is". That's the present indicative of the verb "be", and it indicates a present and continuing reality. Note some of the attributes ascribed to Him which declare His "isness", if we may coin a word.

When Moses queried God as to how he could identify Him to the Israelites, God declared, "I AM WHO I AM"; tell them "I AM has sent me to you." (Ex. 3:14) One writer said of the phrase, it suggests "the idea of uninterrupted continuance and boundless duration." Another said that the idea is that of "real, perfect, unconditioned, independent existence." In the next verse, "LORD God" is equated with the "I AM"; and in Gen. 21:33, He who is the LORD is called "the Everlasting God."

In his final speech to the Israelites, Moses sought to comfort and assure them by declaring that "The eternal God is your refuge, And underneath are the everlasting arms..." (Duet. 33:27). In the New Testament, many hundreds of years later, Paul also called God "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God" (I Tim. 1:17). Joshua, having succeeded Moses as leader of Israel, reminds them that "the living God is among you" (Josh. 3:10); even as Paul referred to "the living God" Who is the creator (Acts 14:15), and a bit later declared Him to presently be "Lord of heaven and earth" (Acts 17:24), "the living and true God" (I Thes. 1:9).

One of the "omni" terms which is frequently applied to God is "omnipresence", that is that He is everywhere and always present. The Psalmist wrote, "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell [sheol], behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me...." (Psa. 139:7-12). The very concept of "omnipresence" demands that one recognize that "God is."

The God who is has revealed Himself and His will to man. He "has spoken" (Heb. 1:1-2), and He calls upon His creation for response. He desires that we "might seek Him and find Him", He "commands all men everywhere to repent" in view of a coming judgment (Acts 17:27-31); and He desires the worship of His creatures (Jn. 4:23-24). Kind reader, do you believe that He is? Have you responded to Him in obedience?

In our next article, we shall consider "The God Who Is Rewards".

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Personal Work

Churches today are not growing as they did in the first century. In fact many are not growing at all, or very little. Some are even growing smaller (dying). Why is this happening? It certainly isn't because the gospel has lost its power (Rom. 1:16).

I believe it is a lack of conviction. If we had the conviction as they did in the first century, we would be busy doing personal evangelism. The fields truly "are white already to harvest" but the laborers are few.

Solomon said, "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise." (Prov. 11:30). If the one who wins souls is wise, what about the one who doesn't win souls? Is he not unwise? What about you my brother/sister, are you wise? Is the unwise person going to be saved? Is he doing the Lord's will? Remember Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Now, let me ask you again, are you doing the will of the Lord?

The apostle Paul said, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). If we understand the will of the Lord, then we know that he through Paul said, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). So, if you are faithful, you will be busy teaching others the soul saving gospel.

It was said of the apostles, ".....behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine" (Acts 5:28). Also, in Acts 17:6, ".....These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." Is this ever said of us today? It should be true in every city where there are Christians. Everyone in town should know that we are a Christian and that we are interested in teaching the gospel to others. But, we are so busy with the things of this world that we don't have or take the time to do the Lord's work. Brethren, we had better stop and take a look at our life and if changes need to be made, we better make them. We have no promise of tomorrow, so we had better be ready for the coming of the Lord every day. I believe if we look at our life and live each day as though it was the last day we will live, we would be busy doing the Lord's will.

Negativism, expressed in such language as, "We can't do it", or "It won't work", or "They will not listen," is responsible for killing initiative, enthusiasm and even churches.

We need to be positive, aggressive, optimistic and above all, converted members who are willing to go out and bring the lost to Christ. After all, we are soldiers in the Lord's army and we need to be involved in this spiritual war.

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Evidence

EVIDENCE OF GOD IN MAN AND ANIMAL

Animal rights activists knowing humans and animals differ set about to influence and organize people, not animals, against inhumane treatment of animals. During the Civil War abolitionists organized slaves, fellow human beings, and wrought havoc with the Confederacy. How successful the activists would be if they could organize insects! Let us leave fantasy land.

God spoke with Adam and set conditions concerning his residence in the garden. Adam was to care for the garden and was given every produce except for the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden. God provided Eve as one that was eminently suited to Adam's needs and for their mutual happiness. The above is found in Genesis 2:8-25.

Adam named the animals, not vice versa. No conditions are recorded for the animals of the garden. Adam followed his wife's example and sinned by acting contrary to acquired knowledge. Adam and Eve had no inborn traits of intelligent behavior. After they sinned Adam and Eve were instructed to clothe themselves properly. Independent will is seen in their own clothing design. Other consequences of their disobedience may be read in Genesis 3:et al. None of the instructions given to Adam were required of the animal kingdom.

Peter used the differences between human and animal life to emphasize self control which is a quality of human behavior. In 2 Peter 2 the apostle points out that humans choose to become beast-like. When they become self willed and no longer abide by God's will they behave as if they are incapable of learning — like the beasts. He goes on to recall the remarkable story of Balaam being instructed by a donkey (KJV, an ass) speaking to him, which he says is known to be dumb, that is unable to speak.

Animal behavior which seems intelligent, such as building nests, is called instinct. The NASB uses instinct in 2 Peter 2:12 and Jude 1:10 describing animals. In Romans 2:14 instinctively is improperly used suggesting that the Gentiles knew of God's ways without learning. This is inconsistent with the nature of man and beast and contrary to passages such as Romans 10:17 which teach that intelligent man must hear and heed God's word. Response by obeying what is heard and learned will assure one of salvation.

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