

BIBLE MONITOR

VOL. XCVII

DECEMBER, 2019

NO. 12

"For the faith once delivered unto the saints"

OUR MOTTO: Spiritual in life and Scriptural in practice.	OUR WATCHWORD: Go into all the world and preach the gospel.
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OUR AIM: Be it our aim to be more sanctified, more righteous,
more holy, and more perfect through faith and obedience.

HOW SWEETLY FLOWED THE GOSPEL SOUND

How sweetly flowed the gospel sound
From lips of gentleness and grace,
When list'ning thousands gathered round,
And joy and gladness filled the place!

Christ came from heav'n; of heav'n he spoke,
To heav'n he led his foll'wers' way;
Dark clouds of gloomy night he broke,
Unveiling an immortal day.

"Come, wand'rers, to my Father's home;
Come, all ye weary ones, and rest,"
Yes, sacred Teacher, we will come,
Obey thee, love thee, and be blest.

Decay, then, tenements of dust;
Pillars of earthly pride, decay;
A nobler mansion waits the just,
And Jesus has prepared the way.

— John Bowring

THE POTENTIAL OF CHRISTMAS

The power of Christmas is not in the gifts, celebrations, and sentiments that are associated with the season. The power of Christmas is centered in the person of Jesus Christ. His power is not evident in Bethlehem, but it is in His death and resurrection. Without this ending to His earthly sojourn, its beginning would only provide stories of miracles and teaching. He arrived with a mandate from His Father to seek and to save the lost. The first Christmas held the potential of fulfilling that goal.

Potential power is not on display. It is what is wished for, anticipated, or predicted. Jesus lying in the manger in Bethlehem would potentially be the Savior on Calvary and the Advocate in Heaven.

The babe of Bethlehem is worthy of remembrance. He is the Son of God, an equal part of the Trinity. While He appeared in human form and fashion, He remained God of very God. His birth had the potential of accomplishing His Father's goal.

God hoped that the appearance of His Son would induce those who saw and heard Him to amend their ways and seek a closer relationship with Him. Jesus came to those who were supposedly awaiting the Messiah, but they did not respond as expected. Despite their detailed show of religious faithfulness, they were not interested in hearing Him. They preferred to serve God in their chosen way, rather than change their ways to be right with God. They had the potential

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to be used by God, instead they missed their opportunity because they could not see beyond their closed minds.

That is what happens with many things and events that have a great potential. There is the possibility of being greatly used but when their plans do not align with God's, they are set aside. Equipment has the potential to make work easier, quicker or less tiring, but when it does not operate as expected it can become a nuisance rather than a blessing. Each person is born with the potential to serve God in some unique way. But too often that potential is ruined by disobedience, self-will or indifference. Many desire to celebrate Christmas without Good Friday. Without the suffering there is no resurrection.

Jesus was perfectly attuned to His Father's will. He left the glories of Heaven for the discomforts of this world. While here He blessed those He met, taught and healed. He gave good instruction, set good examples, and counseled acceptance of God's will. The leaders of the Jews especially had the potential to fulfill His counsel, but it ended up being fishermen and shepherds who followed Him. These common men became the

leaders of the greatest revolution ever accomplished in this world. Those who seemingly have the most potential often fail to fulfill that potential when they are entrapped by their human and social environments.

How can we fulfill the potential of Christmas? Christmas is an anticipated joyous holiday, but if we do not implement God's Christmas message we will miss out on the potential of that holiday. If we can maintain the vision of Who is the focus of Christmas, we can expand our potential service to Him and His Father. We can potentially fulfill in our lives the promises that Jesus brought to us. He fulfilled His potential when He willingly accepted what He must do, while in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was willing to drink the last bitter dregs of the cup of suffering set before Him.

Whatever popularity He garnered during His ministry was stripped away as the crowd cried out, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him". He bore the pains and discomforts of the crucifixion. Even worse He bore the sins of all who would ever live in this world. He was God and never had indulged in any sin, now He became totally sin, so terrible, that His Father averted

His gaze from Him. He suffered death and disgrace on the cross. After laying in borrowed tomb, came the glorious resurrection on the first day of the week. That was the fulfillment of the potential of Christmas.

Because of the potential of Christmas, we can fulfill our God-given potential through His shared Son. We can appropriate His fulfilled potential to become our fulfilled potential. As we celebrate

Christmas, we can appropriate the work He did on Calvary and in the garden tomb. Christmas points to our potential. Let us fulfill its promise to us.

What is the potential of Christmas for you? Some gifts, a celebration, good eats, good fellowship? Or does it become the potential of a life that is dedicated to God, Christ, and others?

M. C. Cook

WHAT IS THE STUPIDEST THING YOU HAVE EVER DONE?

John 18:37-38, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all."

Some people say Pontius Pilate was smart. Others say he was stupid. It is clear by reading John 18 that the Jews did not respect Pilate. We get the impression, though, that Pilate respected the Jews. We also would say that Pilate was reasonably intelligent. But there was one thing he did not do that lowers our opinion of him.

He asked Jesus, "What is truth?" but HE DID NOT WAIT FOR THE ANSWER. TRUTH

stood before him in the person of Christ. He had the wonderful opportunity not only to believe, but to see many others believe. He did not see God in the person of Christ.

Human nature has been amply shown all down through the scriptures: from Adam's fall to Peter denying Christ. While we live in the flesh, we will make mistakes, errors in judgment, and we may even do something stupid. God's word displays man's nature in order to reveal God's nature. Psalm 18 tells us that God's way is perfect. No dispute. No one can say that there is no God. In Genesis one it is written, "in the beginning GOD." If people deny

the scriptures, they deny GOD.

Think about it. What is the dumbest thing you have ever done? This thing which Pontius Pilate did probably cost him his soul. Hopefully this is not the case with any of you. When we think of all the times we said “no” to God, yet He did not give up on us. This is God’s GRACE, abounding toward us. Pilate was very close when he said, “I find in him no fault at all.” To be so close and yet so far away is a terrible thing. He was right, however. There was no fault in Jesus.

The stupidest thing this writer ever did was put off salvation so long. We were first introduced to the Lord at age four. There were times at age thirteen, sixteen, and later that we likewise ignored. At age nineteen, a couple of elderly

deacons came to my home and I experienced the Love of God in its completeness. We realized the effort it took for them to come and show their love, the love of Christ. We gladly came to Christ because we felt God’s Love through the love of others.

Thinking about Pilate again we cannot afford to reject the truth as he did. We lost so many years because we were stubborn and wanted our own way. We must give up our personal desires and embrace Christ. We often want our own way. But Jesus said, “... nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done...” (Luke 22:42). We are human, and every bone in our body rebels against God’s will. But He is able, and He is persistent. The Holy Ghost will draw everyone that calls upon Him.

A limping beggar, clothed in rags
Disgraceful and forlorn;
In self a mass of hateful dregs,
In Satan’s image born.

To Jesus comes, with all his woes,
And loud for mercy cries
And mercy, like a river, flows
From Jesus’ heart and eyes.

He takes the rebel to his breast,
And with a touch divine.
Heals him of all his wretchedness,
And makes his face to shine.

Salvation unto God belongs!
Amen! We'll bless his name;
And when we have immortal tongues,
We'll still repeat the same.

— *William Gadsby*

Brother Lynn H. Miller
Mohler's Congregation

THE PLEASANT SIDE OF SUFFERING

There is a rumor going around, especially in some Christian circles, where, when you become a Christian everything is fine and no problems exist. We are all happy and positive and feeling great.

If only that were so. I would not object to it at all because I like feeling good.

Along with this attitude is the idea that if anything goes wrong God may be punishing me for something. If I stubbed my toe, God is punishing me about something.

I am not sure where this idea comes from, but it certainly does not come from the Bible. The Bible does not tell us that once we become a Christian all our problems are over and all we have to do is go skipping and dancing and singing into heaven.

I do not object to going to heaven, that is my plan. But along

the way I do not think there is going to be that much skipping and dancing and singing. What there will be along the way are trials, temptations and suffering. I hate to be negative, but truth is truth.

According to some today, Job could not have been a Christian. After all, his three friends told him it was all his fault and God was punishing him for something he was doing. We all know the rest of that story.

It was in Job's suffering that he really discovered the marvelous grace of God, which led him to testify, "Though He slay me, I will still trust Him."

There are two sources of problems in this life.

The first source, of course, is the problems and suffering we get from making wrong choices. Just because I am a Christian, does not mean that I cannot make a wrong choice. And out of that wrong

choice comes a consequence.

God allowed David to make a wrong choice with Bathsheba and David suffered a terrible consequence along with the nation of Israel.

Some people have the idea that everything we do is "God's will" for us. Just because God knows the end from the beginning, does not mean He has put us on a robot track, and we cannot do anything about it. Whatever we had been destined to do, that is our destiny.

One verse from the Bible says God is "not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9). Now if what these people are saying is true, then nobody will ever go to hell. God is not willing that any should perish, but God allows them the choice to go to heaven or hell. He never forces anyone either way.

My life is made up of choices and God will allow me to make choices, even though they are wrong choices. God has set before us His Word, the Holy Spirit illuminating that Word and guiding us and if we insist on going contrary, God will allow us.

Many of the problems I face in life are my own doing and not God's.

Then there are problems, difficulties, trials and tribulations

that come my way because I am a follower of Christ. I cannot expect the world to treat me any better than it treated Christ. If I am a follower of Christ, I will inherit the world's hatred of Christ. I will go through trials, tribulations and suffering.

Jesus, following His baptism was led of the Holy Spirit into the wilderness of temptation. Now if Jesus was going to be tempted so are we.

It is during suffering temptations that we learn several crucial things.

First, we learn how vulnerable we are in the world around us. No matter how strong we might be, we are limited at best and under the right circumstances will fall most tragically. I cannot stand on my own, at least, not for long.

Second, I learn the amazing grace of God. The harder I fall the more amazing His grace is to me. Amid all my rebellion, God's grace is sufficient. Amid suffering because of following him, God's grace is most amazing. And, most important, He never gives up on me.

Suffering can bring out some good traits. When I am going through a time of suffering, I begin to realize what is important in my life and what is not important. Too often, my focus is on things

that are really not important. As I go through a trial or suffering, I begin to realize that, then I have an opportunity to put away that, which is not important, and focus on the priorities that are important in my life.

During suffering, I learn how to pray. When nothing is going wrong, I fall into the rut of praying silly, meaningless prayers. But as I face my suffering, my prayer level begins to rise, and I begin to learn how to pray and how to trust God.

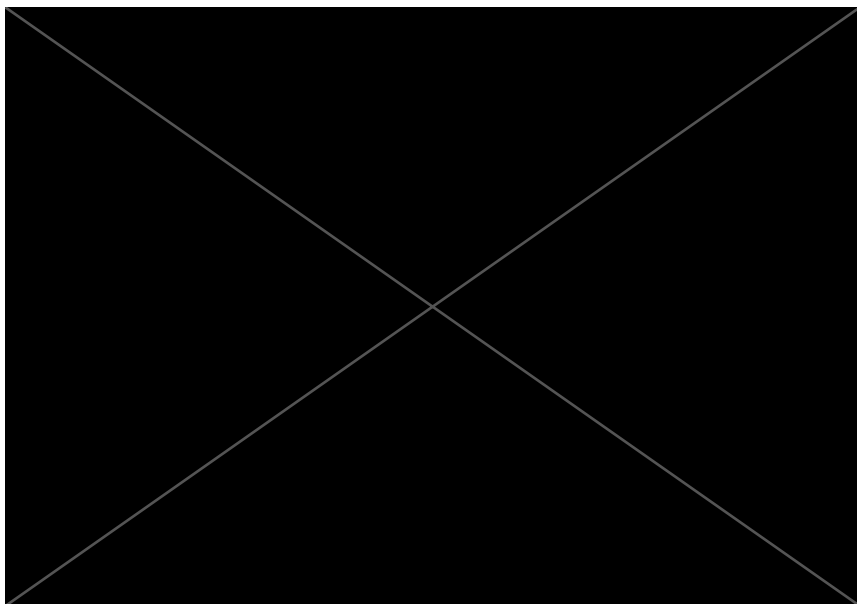
In the world of sports, no athlete ever achieved anything without due suffering. The harder they work and the more suffering

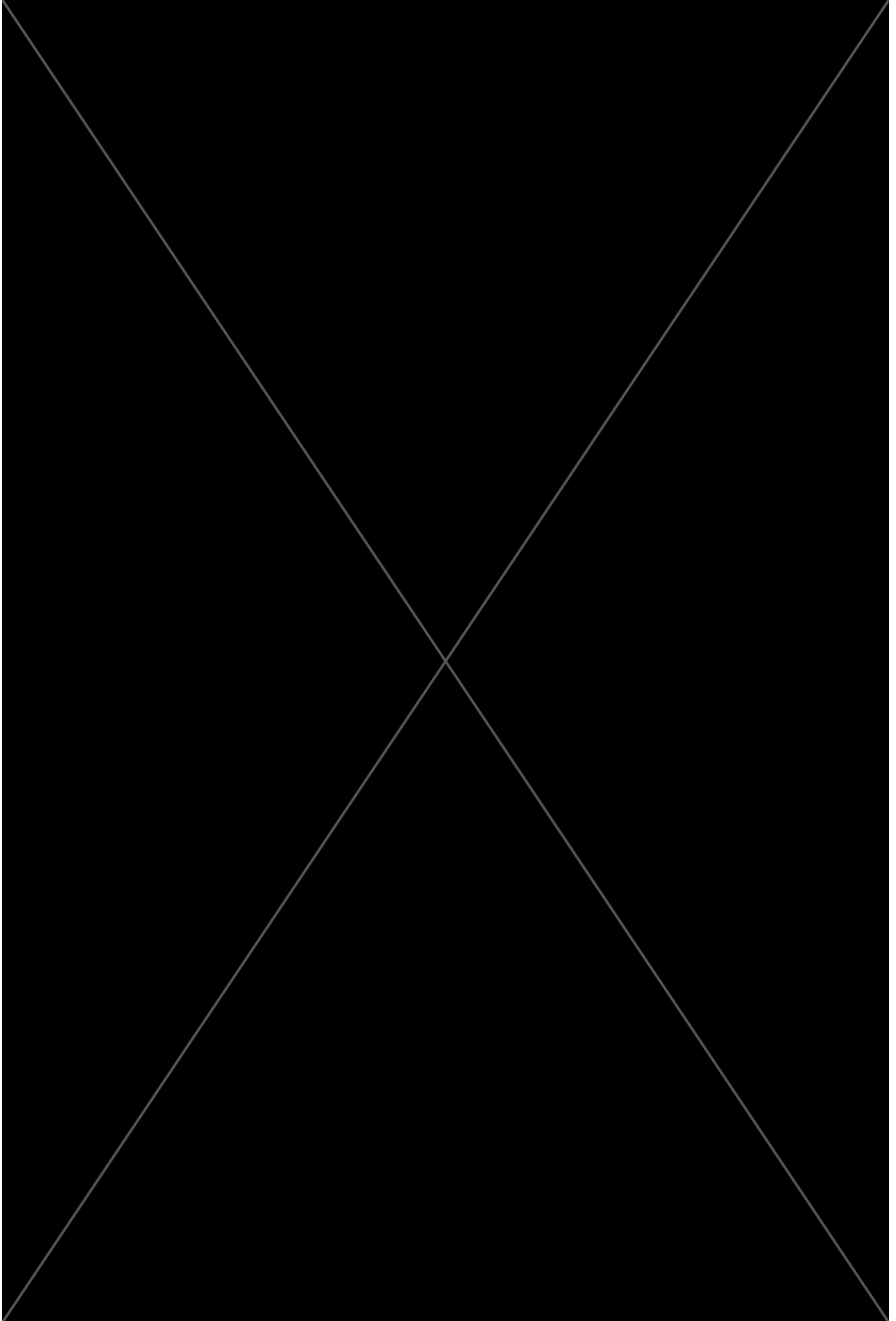
they endure the better they become as an athlete.

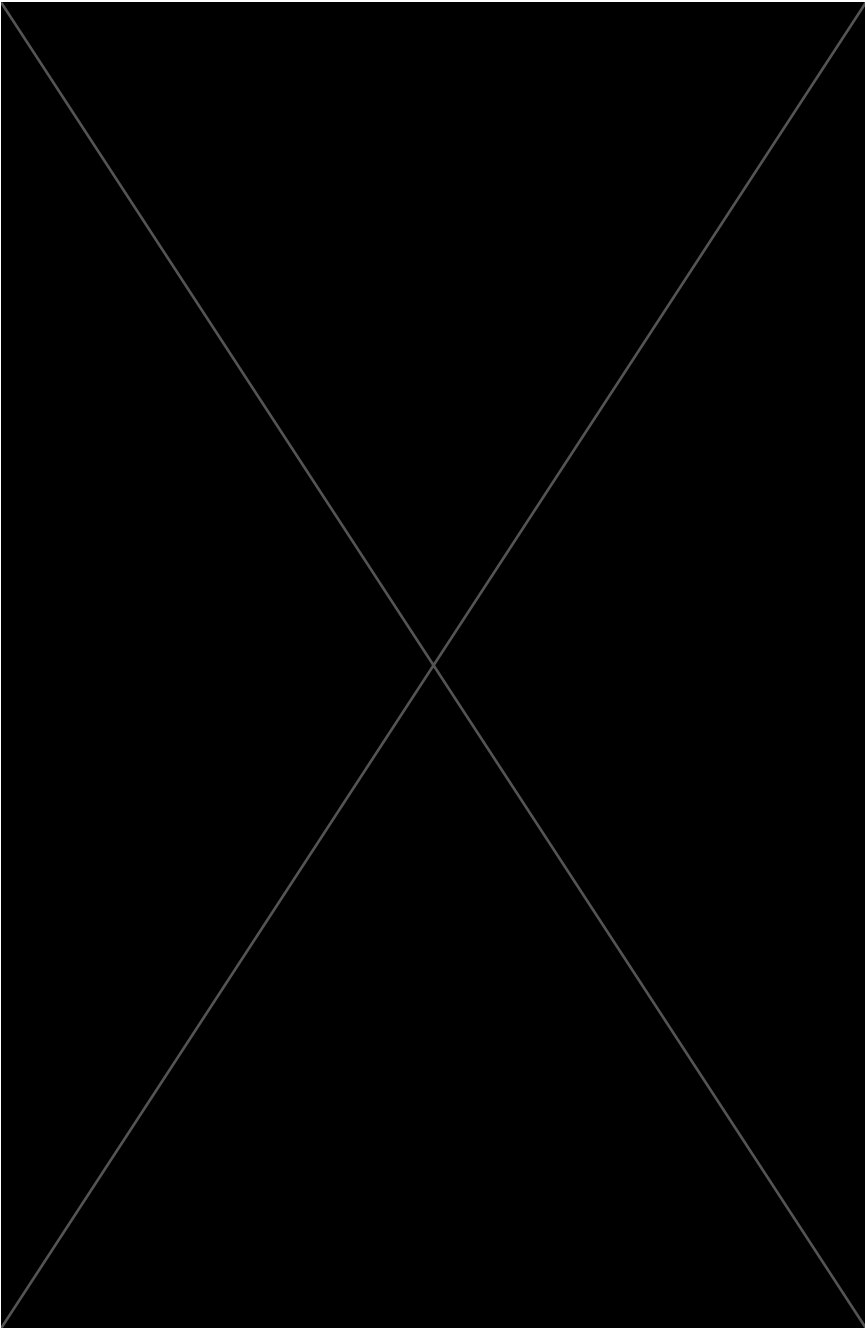
The more I suffer as a Christian the more I begin to develop and mature as a man of God. What our culture needs today are men and women of God able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

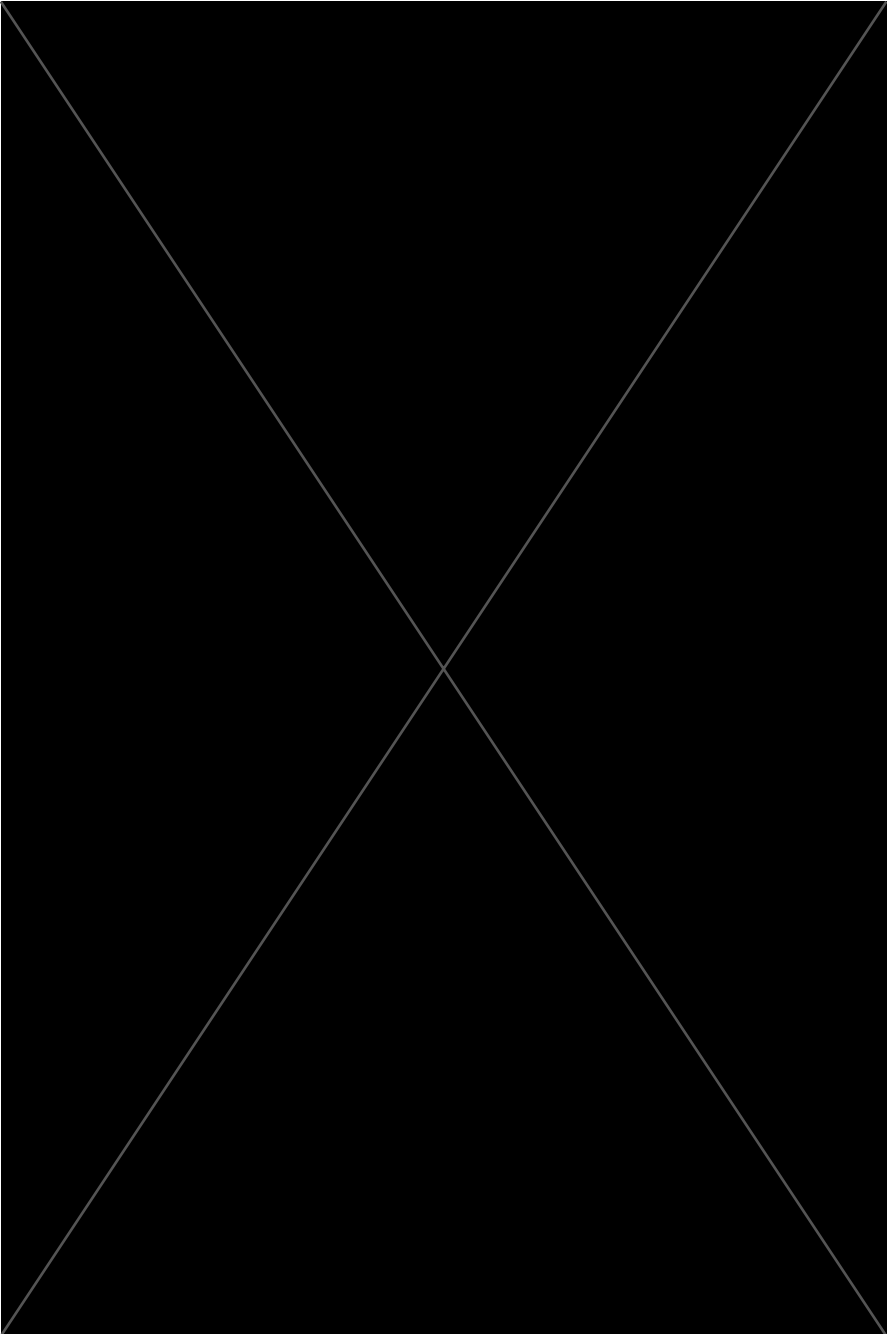
Nothing significant was ever accomplished without some level of suffering. And as I grow and develop in my Christianity, I get to levels where I can do what God wants me to do to His glory and honor.

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GIVING TO JESUS

Rudy Cover

Matt. 14:13-21, Mark 26:30-44, Luke 9:10-17, John 6:1-14

One time Jesus and His disciples went across the Sea of Galilee and a wonderful thing happened. Jesus had been so busy healing people and talking to them that He didn't have time to eat. Jesus and His disciples went by boat and when they came to land it was a desert place. The people saw them go and were determined to follow Jesus. I think most of them went by land across the north end of the Sea of Galilee. As they came to different villages and towns, others came along and soon there was a great multitude waiting to see Jesus.

The day was nearly gone, and the people had been so anxious to see Jesus that they had forgotten to bring anything along to eat. In all that crowd there was only one who had brought his lunch. He was a young boy who had five loaves of bread and two small fish. The loaves of bread they baked in that time were round and flat like a large cookie. The disciples asked Jesus to send the people away so that they could go into the towns around them to buy food to eat but Jesus

said, "Give them something to eat!" Andrew, one of the disciples said, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two small fishes but what are they among so many." There were five thousand men besides women and children. How, indeed, could that boy's lunch feed so many people? Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." And they sat down by hundreds and fifties.

I suppose the boy was glad to give Jesus his lunch. Maybe he thought that Jesus needed something to eat if anyone did. I think he was standing right beside Jesus. Jesus took the boy's lunch and gave thanks to His Heavenly Father for the food that had been so generously given Him.

The boy looked up to see Jesus eat and what do you think Jesus did? He was breaking the bread and giving it and the fish to His disciples. The disciples were carrying bread and fish to the people and then coming back for more. It was unbelievable! Jesus didn't run out of bread and fish. He just kept giving and there was always some left. The boy got some too because

the Bible says that they did all eat and were filled. Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." There weren't only five loaves and two fishes left but twelve basketsfull!

Where do you think Jesus got all that food? To feed so many people would have taken a big truck-load – maybe more. If Jesus could heal the sick and raise the dead, He could provide food for a million people if He wanted to.

I wish I could have talked to that boy who gave Jesus his

lunch. He gave Jesus all that he had and look what happened. What that boy gave Jesus was given back, besides helping many others. When we give to Jesus, He will always bless us. How can we give to Jesus? Jesus says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." We can give to Jesus by helping others.

Selected from the

March 15, 1980

issue of the Bible Monitor

CHRIST IS BORN

J. F. Marks

Again, we are approaching the time of the year when we celebrate the birth of Christ. He came and opened up a way for our redemption. His coming into a world drooped in darkness was prophesied long before it took place. He was called the light of the world, the Prince of peace. His offer of good tidings was peace on earth good will toward all men.

To celebrate His coming many usually go to much effort decorating and preparing for entertainments that include foolish things of this life. Some people go so far as to try to make

their children believe in a Santa Claus. About 25 years ago an aged elder spoke to a group of young people. At the start of his speech he asked the question, how many believe in Santa Claus. He smiled and told them the truth and explained many of the good thoughts about Christmas time.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. God is love. Christ has so great love for the human family that He was willing to leave the glory of

heaven and come down into this sinful world. Today we cannot be a Christian without love. Our desire should be for the salvation of souls. Professing Christian people that are engaged in teaching their children foolish things which go to the extent of untruth need to arise to their duty, as they attempt to observe this day.

It is necessary for us to think of Christ's coming and the life He lived. We need to follow the examples He set for us. Today His spirit is manifested in the world through Christians. How many are following His examples? Today we have many man-made theories that we do not need Christ's teachings to serve our God. By these ideas many are being deceived. Many are calling out, "Come accept the plan of salvation," who themselves refuse to accept the plain teachings of Christ.

The words of the apostle John, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God? because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not

that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God."

Christ's coming to the world has caused great excitement. Many people were wondering about this Child. The wisemen followed the new star. When they came to Him, they worshiped and gave gifts to Him. The king was much troubled, he feared the loss of his throne. His great effort to destroy Christ failed because of Joseph's being warned by God to flee to Egypt. Thus, man did not destroy God's plan of our salvation.

Today we hear that many Jews are still looking for the first coming of Christ, which happened nearly 2,000 years ago. Many people do not appreciate the value of the coming of Christ. As we look to the many individuals professing Christ in the world, we realize that to a large extent the plain commandments of His are ignored. Men, who are called to preach God's word, are neglecting their duty. Many are preaching only for their salary and the honor of men. Many are fearing and trying to please men in their sinful condition. They are failing to stand for that which is right and to throw out the gospel warning to those who are sinning against God.

Many are calling, come accept Christ, and yet fail to accept the whole plan of salvation themselves. Will they share in the glory of eternity who obey not God's will? Christ was falsely accused, today there are many false reports going out. What about those who profess to be Christians and yet practice many things that the Bible tells us should not be? How important is it that we be truthful, yes true in every respect. For all liars will have their part in the lake of fire.

Christ taught by example and precept, good will toward men. Today the world needs men who

will do their best to stand for what is right. And do we follow the great example of Christ our King? I believe it is well and necessary for us to look into our lives and see how we stand. Compared with Christ's teachings, do we stand for justice and judge only righteous judgment. The light of the world is Jesus. How many are shining for Jesus. In this age there appears to be great doubt. We need reality. Be grateful and rejoice for the Christ our Savior.

Selected from the
December 15, 1949
issue of the Bible Monitor

CHRIST, HIS BIRTH

Bertha Hicks

We are approaching another Christmas season. What does that mean to you? It means first, that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled at Christ's birth, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder." Isa. 9:6. We even go back to the book of Gen. 3:14-15 revealing this promise, "And the Lord said unto the serpent, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and

thou shalt bruise his heel."

Did you ever think, that there are perhaps many people in this old world who do not know that: 1. This babe was named before His birth. "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." Matt. 1:21. 2. The prophet prophesied that, "His name shall be called wonderful, counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting father, the prince of peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there

shall be no end." Isa. 9:6-7.

Then can you picture in your mind, a small inn? The throngs of people who had come from miles around to pay tribute to the Caesar's. The innkeeper who was trying so hard to supply accommodations to the demanding travelers, and the guests who were expecting the best service. I can imagine that he was a kind and a considerate man. That he probably was doing the best he could, else when Joseph and Mary came for lodging, he would have turned them aside.

How grateful and thankful Joseph and Mary likely were for the little shelter they did have. Would we have been thankful, or would we have grumbled and complained? This child Jesus, who only did good in His lifetime, who has helped so many did so much for them, was helped that night through Joseph and Mary, by a humble innkeeper who was kind and generous. We could add much more concerning Christ's birth and many more scriptures. But what is said of His childhood and early life is very little. "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him... and he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was

subject unto them." Luke 2:40-51.

Christ's early life is a pattern for all children and youth. It was marked by respect and love for His mother. He was obedient to His parents and kind to all. He hated sin and to every temptation turned a deaf ear. He sought to understand the reason of things and to increase in knowledge and wisdom. He was sympathetic and tender-hearted and ever ready to relieve the oppressed, the sorrowing, and the suffering. If we love Christ, we should love to talk of Him; our sweetest thoughts will be of Him; and by beholding Him, we shall be changed into the same image.

"A beautiful statue once stood in the market-place of an Italian city. It was the statue of a Greek slave girl. It represented the slave as tidy and well dressed. A ragged, uncombed little street girl, coming across the square in her play one day, stopped and gazed at it in admiration. She was captivated by it. She gazed long and lovingly. Moved by a sudden impulse, she went home washed her face and combed her hair. Another day she stopped again before the statue, admired and got a new idea. Next day her tattered clothes were washed and mended. Each time she looked at the statue she

found something in its beauties to admire and copy, until she was a transformed child. By beholding we become changed."

(Bible Readings)
Selected from the
December 15, 1959
issue of the Bible Monitor

UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN

Howard J. Surbey

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Isa. 9:6.

We are again approaching the time of the year, that most people recognize as the anniversary of the birthday of the Son of God. The miraculous fulfilment, by our Heavenly Father, of His plan of salvation for the sons and daughters of men. A child is born different than any other child was born, through the divine guidance of God in Heaven. Not just a child, but a Son is given for our every good.

For whose benefit was this Son given? Unto us, unto all who will believe in Him and accept Him. Isaiah had prophesied the coming of this Son, for us all, more than 700 years before it occurred. Divine power had revealed it unto man that long before and some men believed in its fulfilment that

many years before.

We might refer to other Godly men who believed, in this Son being born, both before and since Isaiah's time. I believe that more people believed in this child's birth, both before and after it took place, than in that of any other child that was ever born. As time goes on more and more people are believing in this Christ Child. Sorry to say not near all believe in Him that should, but there are still a few accepting Him as the Son of God.

May we individually gather some of the thoughts for us, in just this one verse of the great prophet Isaiah. Unto each one of us this Child is born, this Son of God is given for all who will accept. The child that the angels announced, the child that lowly shepherds could worship, the child that wise men traveled a great journey to see and worship.

A Son is given and "the government shall be upon His shoulder." Not just for a short

time, not just in one place in the earth but The Government, forever and ever. Some recognize Him in times past as having the true government, or rules and regulations for their lives. Some recognize His government now, and I believe that, as long as time continues, some will accept His government. Our important task is that we, individually, fully accept His government until God calls us from this life.

Is He actually our Counselor? Problems will come as long as our life lasts, and we must praise our Heavenly Father for a Counselor to take these problems to. He is a counselor that we can depend on for the proper solution because He is our God, our intercessor with the power of Heaven.

At heart man is a peace loving being. Man strives long and puts forth great effort in one way or another for peace. Sorry to say many times man does not know what peace really is, and usually man does not know how to obtain peace. Why? Because he depends on himself to understand

and obtain peace and does not refer it to the Prince of Peace. Do we have peace in our lives, our families, and in our associations with one another? I dare say, no, at least not always, for we have failed to depend wholly upon the directions of the Prince of Peace. Yes, even groups of apparently wise man and powerful nations fail to have peace because they refer to perhaps every other known source than the directions of the Prince of Peace.

May we yield our lives more fully to the directions of the Son of God as time goes on, and our opportunities continue. At this Christmas season may we observe this great event in ways similar to that of the Angels, the Shepherds, and the Wise Men. Our proper observance of this great anniversary will bring joy and peace in our hearts and may have much influence on the lives of some poor souls.

Selected from the
December 15, 1949
issue of the Bible Monitor

CHRISTMAS

B. E. Kesler

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I

bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord, and this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on the earth peace, good will toward men." (Lu. 2:10-14.)

This was the greatest, as well as the most epoch-making event in the world's history, and will remain so until the second coming of our Lord. The birth of the Son of God is fulfillment of prophecy will ever be, the one above all others, dividing line of history.

Practically all, national and world history, is either B. C. or A. D. in recognition of this event. It took place in Judea, as had been foretold by the prophets, and was in accord with God's great plan before the world began, and was therefore, one of the signal stations in God's manipulations of the affairs of this world, and his providence in directing them.

"I bring you good tidings of great joy", said the angel, showing the directing hand of a loving Father, who was thus dispatching good news to an expectant world, glad tidings to a sin-stricken world.

A Savior, a Redeemer is born. And this good news, these glad tidings, were to all people, to all races, to all nations of every age and of every clime; for "He is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." So that through this climax in the fulfillment of prophecy in carrying out God's great program of world relations, redemption from "original" sin was affected, and salvation offered to all mankind through Jesus the promised Messiah.

The mother of Jesus was a virgin, betrothed to Joseph, a village carpenter of the obscure town of Nazareth, out of which, "no good thing" could come, according to current conception. Yet no greater distinction could have been bestowed upon any city than to be selected as the birthplace of the Messiah.

The purity of Mary, her piety, her trustfulness, most eminently fitted her to become the mother of our Lord, and thus to be signally honored. Joseph and Mary were descendants of David, and of Abraham to whom it was said, "In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This blessing was bestowed in the birth of Jesus as had been

foretold by the prophets.

His birthplace, likewise, had been designated by the prophet Micah. (Micah 5:1.) This showing the hand of God in it all. For "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." And to doubt the history of the birth of Christ as given by the sacred writers, is to doubt the whole Book, and to deny the former is to deny the latter.

The Roman Emperor Augustus had ordered all his subjects to enroll for taxation. According to custom each Jew went to his ancestral home to register. Joseph being a descendant of David went to the city of David, Bethlehem, again fulfilling the prophecy of scripture.

And so it came to pass the while his parents were at Bethlehem, Jesus was born. The exact date of his birth is not known, but Christendom has agreed on December 25 as the most probable date in the year 4 B. C. The Bible accounts for the fact

and place of his birth, but not for the day and year, which are of little concern to us so long as the fact remains. Whether he was born on old or new Christmas, mid-winter or mid-summer matters little. The one great fact of his birth as king, Redeemer, Savior, is the thing that concerns us. For "there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." "Where is he that is born king?" inquired the wise men. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins," said the angel. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord", was the good tidings that greeted the ears of the Judean shepherds, on that first Christmas night. Such the glad tidings that came to us today. Such joy that fills our hearts this glad Christmas morning.

Selected from the
December 15, 1929
issue of the Bible Monitor

ROADS THAT LEAD TO BETHLEHEM

Paul R. Myers

We are nearing the date in which Christendom commemorates the birth date of our Lord. During this coming

Holiday Season, the mind and eyes of the believer will be turned toward Bethlehem, some will make the journey there bodily,

others in mind and Spirit only. From the far reaches of the globe, representing many creeds, there will be thousands go to Bethlehem by ship, plane, train, auto and afoot. Others will make the journey by way of imagination, meditations and sincere investigation into the sacred record concerning the birth of Christ.

I like to think of four roads that lead to Bethlehem that we all may travel, regardless of who we are or where we are. Two of these roads are on the other side of Bethlehem and lead up to it. Two are on this side of Bethlehem and take us back to the pivot point in sacred History.

The first is the road of Prophecy. Only a comparative few of the prophecies can be here referred to, Isaiah 7:14, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Micah 5:2 foretold of his birthplace, "But thou, Bethlehem, thou that be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth that is to be rule in Israel." That finger of prophecy points to the very village of the nativity.

Studying the scriptures, we find many, many more very interesting prophecies pointing to Christ's Birth and His mission here

on earth. He was to be cut off out of the land of the Living. He was despised and rejected of men. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was to be the fairest among ten thousand. He was to have no comeliness of beauty that we should desire Him. He was to be numbered with the transgressors. He was to be buried and raised again the third day.

Truly, the pen that traced the road of prophecy was a divine pen. The person that fulfilled the prophecies was a Divine person. Paul states concerning the Christ, in Col. 2:9, "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The Road of Prophecy leads the believer to Bethlehem. There one can see the fulness of prophecy wrapped in the babe, Christ Jesus.

The second road is the road of Types and Shadows. Many are quite outstanding in God's way of presenting things. In Genesis 49:10 He is the Shiloh (rest giver) who was to come from the tribe of Judah. In Matt. 11:28-30 Jesus announces himself as the giver of rest. In Exodus He is the Passover Lamb slain for our redemption, I Cor. 5:7. In Numbers He is the Brazen Serpent lifted up to heal the sting of sin, John 3:14-15.

In the tabernacle proper we see Him as the sacrificial Lamb dying for the guilty, John 1:29. The lover of regeneration who washes away our sins by His blood, Titus 3:5-7. The rent veil, as His broken Body, providing a new and living way into the sanctified life, Heb. 10:19-21. The shewbread typifying Him as the bread of life, John 6:34. The scapegoat who bore our sins away, Lev. 16:20-23 and Isaiah 53:4-5.

Our basis for belief that the types were symbols of Christ is founded upon the words of Christ, Himself. John 5:46, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me." I believe that these words of Jesus refer to types and shadows.

The third road is the road of History. This road points back to Bethlehem and the birth of Christ. The four Gospel writers each has a different approach to the same aspect of His biography.

Matthew was a Jew and tried very hard to convince the Jews by the prophecies that the Messiah was their king. He traced Christ's genealogy back to Abraham. The burden of Matthew's writing was largely centered on "THE Kingdom of God."

Mark writes the shortest history of Christ. He does not

mention the birth. He is more concerned with the miracles and deeds of Christ.

Luke, the physician, traces Christ's lineage all the way back to Adam. He emphasizes Jesus as the son of man and the Saviour of the world. He goes into much detail and can be considered a very good writer of history as pertained to Christ. John writes history, as concerning the pre-existence of Christ, and traces the genealogy of the Word as being in "the beginning," and being equal with God the Father. His effort is to prove that Jesus is the son of God and is a contender for the incarnation.

Besides sacred history, we have the works of Josephus, the Jewish historian, who was a contemporary of Christ. We need but to prayerfully and carefully study the New Testament to find a most beautiful and God inspired History, a road that will certainly, at this season of the year, take us back to Bethlehem.

The fourth road leading to Bethlehem is the Road of Personal experience. The best and greatest proof that Jesus came into the world is to know and feel that He came into your heart and my heart. To have His abiding presence within, is the purpose He has

knocked on our heart's door. Will we let Him in? In our personal experience, we know He was born in Bethlehem when we know He has been formed or born in our own heart. Gal. 4:19.

I feel that less and less we should be interested in what we are getting or giving for Christmas and more and more be concerned in the real meaning of the day, we commemorate as the Birth of Jesus. Only then will it bring

true joy and happiness into each of our hearts. May the same Presence who warmed the hearts of the Disciples, while traveling the Emmaus road, rekindle the flames of devotion in our spirits, as we traverse these pathways to Bethlehem during this Joyous Holiday Season.

Selected from the
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THE DIVINE PLAN OF SALVATION

Harold S. Martin

One of the most gripping verses in the entire Bible is the one which says, "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Matthew 18:11). Each person who has reached the age of accountability and has never surrendered his will to the will of Jesus Christ, is lost. And the word "lost" is a chilling word to anyone who has ever had the experience. Our emotions become stirred and whole communities become aroused, when a little child strays away from home, and wanders off into the woods, and gets lost. It is a terrifying experience, to be lost. Jesus, when speaking of those

who are lost, said, "It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

It is God's will that each human being should be saved – and the Good News announced in the Bible, is the fact that God has provided a way by which we can be saved. We want to look at the plan of salvation.

THE NEED FOR SALVATION

The very word "salvation" implies that men are lost and need to be rescued. According to the Bible, man comes into this world with an inborn nature to go astray. Everyone of us has practiced and done that which is sinful and

wrong. And these evil practices are more than mere outward acts. They are the outcropping of an evil nature within us. People don't **become** bad; they are **born** bad. The same urge to lie and cheat and steal and hate and think impure thoughts, lies deep-rooted within every human breast. One might be able through careful training to hide many of these evil tendencies outwardly, but underneath his neat clothing and behind his reputation as a good moral person, there is an inbred tendency to do wrong.

The Bible is honest with us; it tells us the truth about our condition. It is not merely our **outward** conduct that is wrong, but deep down within, **the heart** is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. The Bible says, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Genesis 8:21). David confesses, "Behold I was shaped in iniquity" (Psalm 51:5). You and I have inherited something that's at least 6,000 years old. We may have hailed from many differing backgrounds, but there is one thing we have in common – we are members of the human family, and as such our natures are tainted with sin. The Scriptures declare, "There is none that

understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good, no not one." Some have sinned more than average; some have sinned less than average; but everyone has sinned – and thus every one of us is guilty before God, and every one of us **needs** to be saved.

The Bible further declares that every act of sin is a transgression against the holiness of God, and that God's holiness demands a penalty for sin. If God would **let us get by** with sin, **and pass over** our transgressions, He would no longer be a just and holy God. God's righteousness demands that we be punished for our sins, and **the penalty for sin** is announced in these words: "The wages of sin is death." And death is not cessation of being, but a separation from the presence of God. This means that **unless something is done about sin**, there can be no hope of eternal life with God, because sin separates from God.

THE BASIS OF SALVATION

The glorious news of the Gospel is that **God has done something about sin**. John

3:16 explains it very simply: "For God so loved the world that he gave (He gave his only begotten Son), that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish (should not pay the wages of sin), but have everlasting life." The glad tidings that the Gospel of Jesus Christ sets forth, **is the fact that we sinners don't have to die, because Jesus Christ died for us.** John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The penalty for sin stood against us because we have sinned, but Jesus Christ came to take it away.

Everywhere in the Scriptures from beginning to end, salvation is always said to be based on the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mark 10:45 records the words of Jesus, "For the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to give his life a ransom (a payment) for many." Romans 5:10 says, "We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." The prophet Isaiah looked down through the centuries and declared of Jesus Christ, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Paul says of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:7), "In whom we

have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." The Scriptures teach very clearly **that the death of Jesus Christ has made satisfaction for sins**, and that in his death, the penalty for our sins has been completely paid. When Jesus suffered on the Cross, He was suffering as a **substitute** for you and for me. The Apostle Peter says of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:24), "Who bore our sins in his own body on the tree." Jesus was the just one, who suffered for us the unjust ones, that He might bring us to God. Christ died **for** us – that is He died in our place.

THE APPROPRIATION OF SALVATION

The death of Jesus Christ is sufficient to save every human being. The Bible says He has become a propitiation (one who turns away wrath) for the sins of the whole world, but salvation will only become effective to those who accept Him and believe on Him. The sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary is absolutely worthless and meaningless for those who reject Him. **There must be a response on the part of each individual.**

The question was asked

by the Philippian jailor. He said to Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The word "believe" involves the thought of trusting and accepting and receiving (see John 1:12). Real saving belief is not only a knowledge of certain facts about Jesus, but it is believing those facts so sincerely that I am ready to act on them. More than two decades ago I learned to know the girl who was later to become my wife. I began to build a long series of beliefs about her. I believed she was a good sincere Christian girl. I believed her tastes and mine were closely related. I believed she would make a good wife. But simply believing that long creed about her, made no difference whatsoever in our personal relationship – until that never to be forgotten day when we stood by each other's side, and I said as we exchanged our marriage vows, "I take you to be my wife." That one definite act established a life-transforming relationship. **I acted** on my beliefs, and from that time on, she took my name and she became my wife. And just so you may believe a great many things about Jesus Christ,

but until you say, "Lord Jesus, I take you to be my Saviour," your life will not be changed and you will not be saved. There is something for you to do.

When Peter preached the Gospel on the Day of Pentecost, many believed and the Word he had preached, and they cried out, "What must we do?" What is the response required on our part? And Peter answered (Acts 2:38), "Repent and be baptized every one of you." Jesus says that entrance into the kingdom is only for those who "repent and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). Paul says, "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). Repentance involves the **intellect**. There must be a knowledge of sin. We must acknowledge that we have transgressed the law of God. Repentance also involves the **emotions**. There must be genuine grief and hatred and sorrow for sin. Repentance also involves the **will**. There must be a determination to forsake sin and to turn from it. And if the sinner has wronged another person in the past, he will attempt to make restitution for the wrong. After Zaccheus (the man of small stature) met with Jesus, he repented, and said, "Behold

Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." He simply meant that from that very moment, he was going to try and make right the ugly sins he had committed as a crooked tax collector. God demands a complete repentance.

The way of salvation is clear. The plan is very simple: **All have sinned**, and therefore every one of us stands condemned before God, and every one of us needs salvation. **Jesus Christ has died**, and His death was solely for the purpose of paying the penalty that stood against us. **A response is required** on our part. Each individual is expected to exercise faith in Jesus Christ

as the Sin bearer, to turn from his life of sin, and to receive water baptism. If you have ignored Jesus, why not forsake the broad road that leads to destruction and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? He will forgive every sin. He will make you right with God. He will stifle selfishness and other unholy sins in your life. He will make you a new creature, with new desires and new ambitions. "Through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

Note: Additional copies of this tract sent free on request. Ask for our sample packet of Bible Helps.

Bible Helps
P.O. Box 391
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THE VOICE OF JESUS' BLOOD

John Newton

When the wounded spirit hears
The voice of Jesus' blood,
How the message stops the tears
Which else in vain had flowed:
Pardon, grace and peace proclaimed,
And the sinner called a child;
Then the stubborn heart is tamed,
Renewed and reconciled.

Oh! 'twas grace indeed, to spare
And save a wretch like me!
Men and angels could not bear
What I have offered thee;
Were Thy bolts at their command,
Hell, ere now had been my place;
Thou alone couldst silent stand,
And wait to show Thy grace.

If in one created mind
 The tenderness and love
 Of thy saints on earth were joined
 With all the saints above;
 Still that love were weak and poor
 If compared, my Lord, with thine;
 For too scanty to endure
 A heart so vile as mine.

Wondrous mercy I have found,
 But, ah! How faint my praise!
 Must I be a cumber-ground,
 Unfruitful all my days?

Do I in Thy garden grow,
 Yet produce Thee only leaves!
 Lord, forbid it should be so;
 The thought my spirit grieves.

Heavy charges Satan brings
 To fill me with distress;
 Let me hide beneath thy wings,
 And plead thy righteousness;
 Lord, to Thee for help I call,
 'Tis Thy promise bids me come;
 Tell him Thou has paid for all,
 And that shall strike him dumb.

Selected by Brother Lynn H. Miller

NEWS ITEMS

MINISTERIAL LIST CHANGE

Please add to the Ministerial List the following Brethren: Devin Sweitzer (M) (Quinter), 2260 County Road 74, Quinter, Kansas 67752, 785-299-0663; Brad Wertz (M) (Quinter), 2420 Castle Rock Road, Quinter, Kansas 67752, 785-673-3242.

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NOTICE

The Editor seeks the help of each Presiding Elder, or his designate, to provide him with information concerning the officials and scheduled events of their respective congregations. This material will appear in the February 2020 issue as a source of information for the Brotherhood. Contact the Editor: by mail at 1138 E 12th Street, Beaumont, CA 92223; by phone at 951-845-6231; by text at 951-206-9180, or by email at miltoncook1943@gmail.com.

Thank you,
 Brother Milton Cook.

THANK YOU

The Editor and his companion thank each one for your part in sustaining the work of the Bible Monitor during this past year. We are thankful for the faithful efforts of those who have authored articles, sent in news items, collected subscriptions, and those who have subscribed. We appreciate the encouragement given and especially the prayers offered on our behalf.

We would extend our heart-felt words of Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to each one.

Brother Milton & Sister Marilyn Cook

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR JANUARY 2020**January 5 – A Voice Crying in the Wilderness – Luke 3:1-20**

1. In what frame of reference does Luke begin to inform us about John the Baptist?

2. In what frame of reference does John explain his calling and ministry?

3. Is repentance an attitude of the heart or a change in behavior?

January 12 – Jesus' Lineage and Satan's Temptations – Luke 3:21-4:13

1. How many reasons can you think of for Luke to connect the lineage of Jesus with His baptism?

2. What kind of Messiah would Jesus have become with each temptation?

3. How does Jesus' rejection of each temptation clarify and shape the nature of His Messiahship?

January 19 – Jesus begins His Ministry – Luke 4:14-37

1. What stands out in Isaiah's prophecy that sounds like "good news" (the gospel) to you?

2. On what basis can Jesus say that this scripture is fulfilled?

3. What was most offensive about the examples from Scripture Jesus references to the people of Nazareth that results in their attempt to kill him?

January 26 – Jesus Calls His First Disciples – Luke 4:38-5:16

1. How did Jesus end up at Simon's house?

2. How did Jesus end up in Simon's boat?

3. How did Simon end up becoming Jesus' disciple?

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