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THE MAGNOLIA

Messenger

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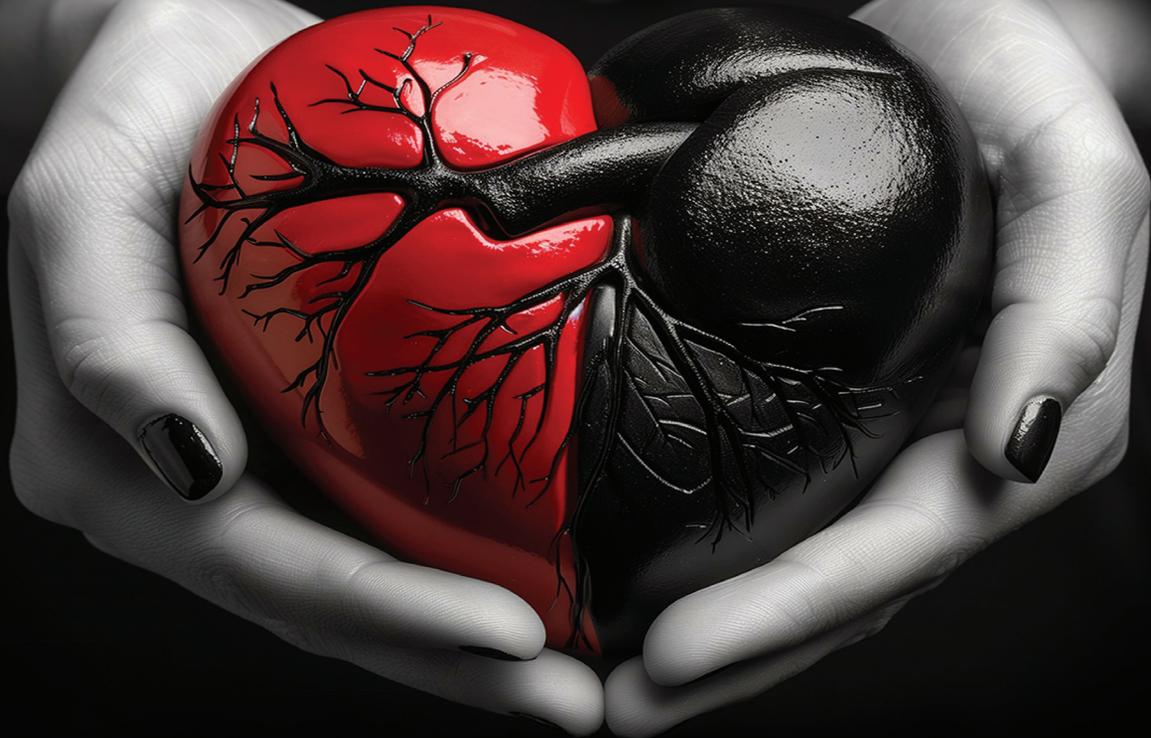
SATAN

AND THE

Battle for the Heart of Man

BETWEEN

Good & Evil

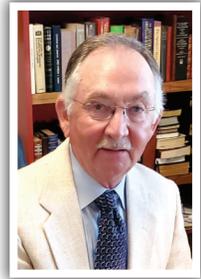


"Let us consider one another to provoke unto LOVE and GOOD works."

(Hebrews 10:24)

from Dennis

The Devil is real and living in our country, roaming about our cities, and even at work in our homes. Through the evil of world leaders, crime in our streets, and the internet streaming into our living rooms, the Devil and his demons are corrupting the world to which they have been condemned.



Having announced this battle of good and evil as the subject of this issue, I was a bit alarmed when articles were slow to come in. We preachers are not speaking and writing enough about our actual battle "against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).

I hope this issue of The Messenger will help you learn about how Satan tempts you. Special thanks to those who contributed to this issue and alerted us to the spiritual dangers we face as

Know the ADVERSARY

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your ADVERSARY the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." I Peter 5:8

- He is at war with the church of God Ephesians 6:12
- He tampers with the word of God Genesis 3:4
- He believes in the one God James 2:19
- He knows the scriptures of God Matthew 4:6
- He has been defeated by the Son of God Hebrews 2:14
- He has no defense for the armor of God Ephesians 6:10-17
- He can be resisted by the child of God James 4:7
- He has a home prepared by God Matthew 25:41

Christians. This roaring lion of evil deceived Eve in the Garden, tested the faith of Job, and tried to defeat Jesus in the wilderness.

In my *Heaven* book, I recount how Mel Gibson, director of "The Passion of Christ," was interviewed by Diane Sawyer when the film was released. This well-known journalist was dubious of anything about Christ, especially about Mel's depiction of Satan and demons in the movie. "What do these forces of evil want?" she asked sarcastically. A small smile crossed his face, then Mel looked at her sternly and replied, "Why Diane, they want you!"

They want you, too! Read on... **MM**



Church of Christ - Kosciusko, MS

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(Dennis Doughty, Editor)

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POLISHING THE PULPIT

BRANSON, MO
July 16-21, 2025

SEVIERVILLE, TN
August 15-21, 2025

THE FIRST LIE



by Dennis Doughty, editor

Joe Kenda is a retired police department detective from Colorado Springs, Colorado. Over his career, he investigated almost 400 homicides, solving eighty-three percent of those murders. The TV series, “The Homicide Hunter,” documented his career.

When Detective Kenda investigated and interviewed potential suspects, one key moment came when he caught one of them in what he called, “the first lie.” He knew then he had the killer, or someone deeply involved in the crime. He then focused on that individual to develop the evidence needed for an arrest. The guilty were, in fact, caught by their first lie.

Among the seven things that God hates is “a lying tongue” (Proverbs 6:17). For good reason. It is the instrument by which sin first entered the world. It was in the Garden of Eden that Satan enticed Eve to disobey God. Eve said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the tree, which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’ The serpent said to the woman, ‘You surely will not die!’” Ahh! The first lie.

You and I, and all mankind, have suffered significant loss, hurt, pain, and death because of that first lie. It was then, and is now, Satan’s great tool used to separate man from God. Jesus rebuked many of the Jews, saying, “You are of your father the devil,” explaining, “Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44).

A lie reveals one’s true character. It can become the foundation on which some build their lives. But their lies will eventually come back to destroy that foundation. A lie is told in darkness,

but like the sun, the light of truth will ultimately rise and convict them. “A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who tells lies will perish” (Proverbs 19:9).

The first lie in the New Testament church was told by Ananias and Sapphira, about their contribution to the disciples when they were asked, “Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?” Both were told, “You have not lied to men but to God.” Both were struck dead on the spot (Acts 5:1-10). The “father of lies” had again brought death.

We are urged to “Buy the truth and sell it not” (Proverbs 23:23). A lie is told to hide the truth. It is born of cowardice, fear, and pride. Lies are found in our homes, schools, politics, and, sadly, pulpits across the land. Satan smiles as men tickle the ears of others

(2 Timothy 4:3) to deceive and destroy!

How many souls will be lost because they “exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen” (Romans 1:25)?

We change our ways when we put off the old man of sin. That includes the practice of lying. “Do not lie,” Paul admonished, “since you have put aside the old self with its evil practices” (Colossians 3:9).

The “father of lies” is still in business today. Satan will lie to you for one reason: to destroy your soul. As those pearly gates are open and God’s people enter into their eternal rest, “everyone who loves and practices lying,” will be left outside with “the dogs and sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers” (Revelation 22:15). Some murderers were caught by Detective Kenda and their first lie. **MM**

Among the
seven things that
God hates is
“a lying tongue”

(Proverbs 6:17).

Q&A

HOLY BIBLE

*“What Does
the Bible Say?”*



Send your
Questions
to Dan Winkler
danddwinkler@gmail.com

I Made the Devil Do It

YOUR WONDERFUL QUESTION:

Brother Dan, what is the origin of Satan and why won't he leave me alone? I try so hard not to sin, but it seems like the harder I fight the stronger he gets. Is it me?

MY THOUGHTS:

I'm so grateful you want to fight the devil ... and win. Many don't even care. That's why Paul wrote about "evil men and impostors [who] grow worse and worse" (2 Timothy 3:13). So, I commend your desire to "fight the good fight of faith [and take] hold of eternal life" (1 Timothy 6:12).

In the wording of your questions, I actually see three questions to ponder. See if I'm right. I'll try to paraphrase each and do my best to provide an answer.

- **What is the origin of Satan?** — Paraphrased: Where did the Devil come from?
- **Why won't he leave me alone?** — Paraphrased: Why does the Devil have such an influence on my life?
- **Is it me?** — Paraphrased: Am I a bad person?

WHERE DID THE DEVIL COME FROM?

Your first question isn't all that easy to answer. What is the origin of Satan? There's not one Bible passage that speaks to the devil's beginnings. Yes, I know about Revelation 12:9 where God throws Satan down to the earth but, that context is highly symbolic and Satan in that verse is a cryptic reference to someone else. (For further study of these matters, please check out our work entitled, *The Church at Home with God, A Study of Revelation*, winklerpublications.com).

Some would suggest that God made Satan as Satan so he could tempt mankind and cull the disobedient from His fellowship. I have a hard time with that and here's why. God hates evil (Zechariah 8:17; cf. Proverbs 6:16-19) and the devil is evil (Matthew 13:19; Luke. 8:12). If God created Satan as Satan that means God created someone to hate. That whole notion runs contrary to God's loving nature (1 John 4:7). Still further, this theory would make God the author of temptation and the Bible teaches us just the opposite

(James 1:13).

Let me weave together several threads of thought and attempt to answer this question with a tapestry of truth.

Thread #1: God created angels (Psalms 148:1-2, 5).

Thread #2: God created angels higher than man [spirits without bodies] (Hebrews 1:7; 2:7, 9).

Thread #3: God requires more of angels since they're higher than man (Luke 12:48).

Thread #4: With more required of angels, they do not have the help of redemption (Hebrews 2:16).

Thread #5: God will not tolerate sin in Heaven (Revelation 21:27).

Thread #6: Some angels in Heaven sinned (2 Peter 2:4).

Thread #7: Angels who sinned were condemned without the help of redemption (Jude 6).

Thread #8: The devil sinned and was condemned because of his sin (1 Timothy 3:6; cf. 1 John 3:8).

Thread #9: The devil is leader of the other condemned angels, aka demons (Luke 11:15-18).

That said, it is my opinion that Satan was initially an angel but was condemned and cast out of Heaven because he sinned and could not be redeemed (Matthew 25:41). FYI: the sin of which Satan was guilty — apparently the first sin (dare we say the original sin) — was the sin of pride (1 Timothy. 3:6). Maybe that's why God hates pride so much (Proverbs 6:16-17; 8:3; cf. 16:18).

WHY DOES THE DEVIL HAVE SUCH AN INFLUENCE ON MY LIFE?

Your second question is easier, but you might not like the answer. Why won't [Satan] leave me alone? Not to be coy or cruel but, you're the reason why. And that's not unique to you. Satan is "the tempter" (1 Corinthians 7:5) but the way he tempts us makes us responsible for the influence he has in our lives. In short, when it comes to temptation and sin, you and I are our own best friend or our own worst enemy. James' Epistle of Common Sense tells us why. "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death'" (James 1:14-15).

Let's use five words to sum up the teaching of this meaningful passage.

First, there is the word **PERCEPTION**. The devil wants nothing more than for us to change the way we think about God. That's why he'd love for us to blame God for our temptations: Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God.'" Remember

the way he approached Eve: “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the Garden’” (Genesis 3:1)? He began by challenging the way she saw God.

This is also why he was so successful with some at Rome. “[A]lthough they knew God, they ... exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things” (Romans 1:21-23). They changed their concept of God and allowed for them to engage in lifestyles the Holy Spirit called dishonorable, contrary to nature, shameful, debased, unrighteous, and evil. (BTW, those lifestyles would be the lifestyles of today’s LGBTQ or the more comprehensive LGBTQIP2SAA communities.) Change your concept of God into what you want, and you are free in your mind to do what you want.

Second, there is the word **ATTENTION**. To tempt us, the devil must get our attention, and he does so by using our own personal desires. “[E]ach person is tempted ... by his own desire (epithumia > epi, “over” + thumos, “passion”).” He doesn’t tempt me with your passions. He doesn’t tempt you with my passions. The devil uses our individual passions against us.

As the “prince of demons” (Matthew 12:24-27), he dispatches demons — his “angels” (aggeloi, “messengers,” Matthew 25:41) — into the unseen realm of providence to craft situations that capture our attention with things that we want. Hence the warning of Paul: “[W]e do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). If we want to get the upper hand on Satan, we need to focus on our desires. That’s the source of our temptations. If our desires are right, there’s less of a chance that we will do what’s wrong. The devil and demons have less to use against us. If our desires are wrong ... I think you get the picture. Whose desires are we talking about? Our own. And who’s responsible for that with which Satan tempts us? We are.

Third, there is the word **SEDUCTION**. Once Satan gets our attention, temptation becomes a mind game. “[E]ach person is tempted ... lured and enticed.” With little effort, the desires we have can captivate our thoughts and seduce us away from God. That’s why we are told not to be “outwitted by Satan ... [or] ignorant of his designs (literally, “his thinking”)” (2 Corinthians 2:11). We must not continue to think on our desires and think the way the devil want us to think about them.

Note: If we haven’t already changed our perception of God to easily allow for temptation and sin, right here is where we become the most vulnerable. It is so easy to change what we think God is like or what we think God likes because we want to accommodate our wishes.

Fourth, there is the word **TRANSGRESSION**. If we allow our passions to consume our thoughts and allow those thoughts to seduce us from God, nothing stands in the way of our doing what we want. The result? Sin. “[D]esire when it has conceived gives birth to sin.” We have a personal desire, we give ourselves the liberty to think the way Satan wants us to think about that desire, we act in ways to satisfy that desire, and ... we sin.

Sin is violating God’s expressed will by: (a) doing what He tells us not to do or (b) not doing what He tells us to do (1 John 3:4;

5:17). So, if we blend together all that we are finding, this is what we learn. We do what God tells us not to do or refuse to do what God tells us to do because what we want has lured us away from God’s wants. Who did that? We did. Who made that decision? We did. Whose desires paved the way for that decision? Our desires. Who’s responsible? We are.

Fifth, there is the word **CONDEMNATION**. The “wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23) and that’s why “sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.” In the New Testament, the word death refers to one of three things.

- Physical death. When Adam and Eve sinned, they were expelled from Eden, isolated from the Tree of Life (Genesis 3:22-24), and “death came into the world” (Romans 5:12-14).
- Spiritual death. Physical death is a separation of the spirit from the body (James 2:26). That’s why it’s used to describe sin (Ephesians 2:1). Sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:1-2).
- Eternal death. Since death is a separation, Hell is described as “the second death” (Revelation 20:14; 21:8) because it’s a place “away from the presence of the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

In our current passage of interest, the latter two are meant. When we let personal desire overtake our thinking and dictate our actions, we violate God’s will and, if that sin goes unforgiven, it will keep us from going to Heaven (Matthew. 7:21; John. 5:28-29).

AM I A BAD PERSON?

The answer to your third question is “No” and “Yes.” I try so hard not to sin, but it seems like the harder I fight the stronger he gets. Is it me?

Are you a bad person because you have personal desires the devil can use to tempt you with wrongdoing? NO. Jesus was tempted (Hebrews 2:17-18) and that means Jesus had desires the devil tried to use against Him. But Jesus never gave into those desires. He never said “yes” to Himself and sinned (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 3:22). He wasn’t a bad person just because He was tempted.

Are you bad person because you said “yes” to yourself, satisfied you desires, and sinned in the process? YES. No need to sugar coat it. Sin is sin. It’s something God hates (Proverbs 8:13). It cost Jesus His life (1 Corinthians 15:3). It will cost you and me our eternity in Heaven (Romans 2:6-9). It’s a bad thing and we are bad people when we allow for it to be a part of our lives. BUT that’s why Jesus was sent into our world. He came as Immanuel, God with us (Matthew 1:23), He died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3), and He did that so we can be with God.

CONCLUSION

Years ago, the late comedian Flip Wilson tickled our funny bones with his mantra, “The Devil made me do it.”

Our study paints a different picture. We are tempted by the things we want. We sin because we say “Yes” to what we want. That means you and I are responsible for the sin in our lives. No one else. Not even the devil. He is the tempter (1 Corinthians 7:5). We might say, he’s the facilitator who providentially provides us with opportunities to sin. But he can only do what he does based on what we want and what our thinking allows him to do. That’s why we should resist him by saying “No” to ourselves. Otherwise, we will have to say, “I Made the Devil Do” what he did to my life. **MM**

FOUR TRUTHS ABOUT



by Gary C. Hampton
 Siwell Road church of Christ
 Jackson, Mississippi

Cartoons, comedians, and people on the street have many mistaken notions about Satan. They use him to cause us to laugh or relate things about him without really knowing anything of him.

What do we know about Satan?

● **FIRST**, he is not God. Nor is he equal to God. Job came to that realization by the end of his trials. He said, "I know that You can do everything and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You" (Job 42:2). Mary questioned how she could have a baby when she had not had relations with a man. Gabriel said, "With God, nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:36). We see that God has the ability to do anything He wishes to do what is consistent with His moral nature.

The devil, in stark contrast, can be restrained. The conversation between God and Satan shows it. God asked if Satan had considered Job. Satan responded, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" (Job 1:9-11). The LORD's answer demonstrates his ability to limit Satan's reach. "And the LORD said to Satan, 'Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person'" (Job 1:12). When Satan said Job would curse God if he could just physically hurt him, God again limited how far Satan could go. "And the LORD said to Satan, 'Behold, he is in your hand but spare his life'" (Job 2:6).



Gary Hampton

● **SECOND**, Satan was created, which I learned from Wayne Jackson's comments on Job. He noted that all things outside of the deity were created. Paul spoke of Jesus when he wrote, "He is

the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:15-17; Nehemiah 9:6).

Brother Jackson further noted that Satan was created during Creation week. Moses declared, "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day" (Exodus 20:11a). Satan was good when created, since Moses reported, "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day" (Genesis 1:31). James agrees. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17). John similarly writes, "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

● **THIRD**, Satan was the first sinner. John told his little children in the faith, "He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). "The devil has sinned (has been sinning, *ap' arches hamartanei*, present active indicative) from the beginning, i.e., from the first sin which resulted in his becoming the devil. Being the first sinner, the devil is the source of sin, the fountain from which it springs, the father of those who practice it" (Guy N. Woods, *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude*, 268-269).

John tells of an extensive discussion Jesus had with the Pharisees. They said God was their Father. Jesus told them that if that were true, they would love Him. The Lord then said, "Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it" (John 8:43-44). He was referring to the temptation of Eve, which was achieved largely because he said she would surely not die. That resulted in death coming upon all men (Romans 5:12).

We should beware of Satan because he makes sin look appealing.

● **FOURTH**, Satan fell because of pride, which led to rebellion. Peter begins a warning to false teachers with, “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to Hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for Judgment” (2 Peter 2:4). Jude presents a little more information about these rebellious angels. “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the Judgment of the Great Day” (Jude 6). These two combined show angels violated God’s law by leaving their offices or positions that God had assigned. They are being held in bondage until the Day of Judgment when they will be judged along with all evil men.

Paul says a man who would be a bishop should display certain characteristics. He should not be “a novice, lest being puffed up with pride, he falls into the same condemnation as the devil” (1 Timothy 3:6 NKJV). “This phrase seems to suggest an ancient incident in which, through pride, Satan fell into a state of rebellion and hence came under Heaven’s judgment” (Wayne Jackson, *Before I Die*, 94).

We should beware of Satan because he makes sin look appealing. Paul expressed concern regarding this very thing. “For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain” (1 Thessalonians 3:5). The word “tempted” describes an enticement to sin, like the hook hidden in appealing bait. He also wrote, “But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3). That is the approach he made to Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:4-6). He can do this by taking on the appearance of a messenger of light (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). This is to blind the minds of sinners, so the glory of Christ cannot shine in their lives (2 Corinthians 4:1-4).

It is best to get to know your enemy so that you will be prepared to defeat him. Stay alert. Satan is like a lion stalking his prey (1 Peter 5:8). Don’t be his next victim! **MM**

SOME WHO LEFT US IN 2024

Hugh Fulford
Gospel Preacher, retired

“Early each year for the last few years, I have endeavored to list various people (some well-known) who passed away in the previous year. I do not make a note of the date of their death, only of the fact that they passed away. This year’s list is not complete since, for the last three to four months of the year, I did not always record the names of those who died. For this I apologize. Those I did record, are as follows:”

Gospel Preachers:

Tom German

Jim Huffman (personal friend and active member of Nashville Road Church of Christ in Gallatin, TN)

Kenneth Grizzell

Bill Humble (also longtime Bible professor & administrator at Abilene Christian University)

Manlif Barnes

Kenny Barfield (longtime teacher & president of Mars Hill Bible School in Florence, AL)

John David Thomas (longtime teacher & administrator [Dean] of Freed-Hardeman University)

John H. Parker (a professor at both Freed-Hardeman & Lipscomb Universities)

Scott Farley

Ted Kell (also a former teacher at Sunset School of Preaching in Lubbock, TX)

Dennis Loyd (longtime teacher at Lipscomb University & former associate editor of the Gospel Advocate)

Perry C. Cotham (also a teacher at Lipscomb University; son of well-known preacher Perry B. Cotham)

Larry Whitehead (not a preacher per se, but a lover of and lecturer on the Restoration Movement [especially in Alabama]; editor of the Alabama Restoration Journal & a highly respected personal friend)

James Harris

Alvin Jennings (also author and former missionary to Canada)

Jerry Hogg (longtime missionary to South Africa)

Jim Waldron (longtime missionary to various Asian countries)

Gary Lutes (longtime missionary to Chile)

W. Terry Varner

Charles Kretzer (one of three preaching brothers in Florence, AL)

Bob Plunkett (one of two preaching brothers in Florence, AL)

Eulie R. Brannan (at age of 96, longtime teacher & administrator, including the presidency, at Faulkner University).

Charles R. Williams (longtime Gospel preacher in Gallatin, TN, & a highly respected personal friend)

Russel G. Bell

Relatives & Personal Friends:

Charles W. Mussleman, Jr. (my brother-in-law, married to my sister for over 65 years, and a friend since our high school days at Mars Hill Bible School)

Sherwin Clift (former golf coach and Sports Information Director at Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN; longtime member of the church; longtime respected friend)

Adrien Rivard, Jr. (boyhood friend and schoolmate in DeFuniak Springs, FL; highly regarded MD in Panama City, FL)

As we close, reflect on the following epitaph said to have been etched on an Indiana tombstone:

*"Pause, stranger, as you pass me by:
As you are now, so once was I.
As I am now, soon you will be.
So prepare for death and follow me!"*

An unknown passerby later added these words:

*"To follow you I'm not content,
Until I know which way you went."*

**Which reminds me of
I Corinthians 11:1.**

**Read it and reflect on the direction
of your life.**

**Hugh Fulford
January 21, 2025**

Happy New Day

RESOLUTIONS

by Frank Parker, Minister
Sebring, Florida

January 1 (Gregorian calendar) is not a new year for much of the world's population. Since various calendars are used by different nations/religions, the new year differs: Hebrew, Chinese, Muslim, Hindu. But it is a new day on any calendar. So, "Happy New Day"!

Perhaps the most common "New Year's resolution" is "I will lose weight." Closely connected to that is "exercise more." Yet, these are inner acts. Both are important for physical health, but let's direct our attention in another direction: spiritual health.

● **OVERWEIGHT:** "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is before us" (Hebrews 12:1). The great cloud of witnesses are those faithful listed in chapter 11. They were not overweight because their living, saving, obedient faith was their daily exercise!

● **WEIGHT GAINED:** "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life" (Galatians 6:7-8). Doubt and faithlessness grow when one rejects the evidence, as in Romans 1:18-26, and "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). The "pounds" are added when "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 14:1) and then live accordingly.

● **WEIGHT LOSS:** "But God be thanked that though you were slaves to sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18). This step does not happen until we see in a mirror the situation: "For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror, for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was" (James 1:23-24). James further explains, when we see the situation, we will become a "doer" of the Word. Examples of weight loss are the 3,000 on Pentecost (Acts 2:36-41) and those in Corinth (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

● **WEIGHT MAINTAINED:** "Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (1 Timothy 4:15-16). This is perhaps the hardest part of any diet--self-control and steadfastness! When the goal, benefits, and blessings are kept in sight, then weight management is kept in focus: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). Amen!

Happy new DAY! Time is non-renewable...use it wisely. **MM**

frankparker27@gmail.com

(As Frank mentions, there are many different "New Years." While in the South Pacific Island of Fiji during the Hindu New Year, Homes were decorated with lights and sweets were prepared as guests were invited into one's home.-dd)

Back to The Bible Campaign

A great campaign for Christ occurred on June 21-27, 2024 at the Blackwater-Macedonia church of Christ near Jasper, AL. They were assisted by campaigners from the Cox Blvd. congregation in Sheffield, AL, and other brethren from Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, and Texas. This was the 18th annual event which the Cox Blvd. church has conducted. The campaign itself was preceded by a workshop in which the Blackwater-Macedonia church was trained to knock doors and conduct Bible studies. A total of 46 Bible studies was set up, most of which were taught during the campaign with a few that were taught by the Blackwater brethren following the campaign.

The Blackwater congregation was not only prepared but was excited and eager to reach their community for Christ. Especially encouraging

was the participation of their young people who were "spark plugs" to everyone else. The support and encouragement of the Blackwater elders, preacher, and members made this an effective and productive campaign. To God be the glory as souls were added to His Kingdom.

If you would like to find out more about the workshops and the campaigns, you may contact the Cox Blvd. church of Christ, 303 Cox Blvd., Sheffield, AL 35660 (tel. 256-383-1618) and ask for Wade Hunt or Roger Johnson. Wade can also be contacted by email at whunt@coxblvd.org and Roger at rlj126@gmail.com. They will be glad to talk to you about how to train members of your congregation to lead others to Christ. One of the elders at the Cox Blvd. church, Russ Blackwell, will also be glad to talk with you and he can be contacted at jdrus@gmail.com. **MM**

The Preacher's Page

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THE BATTLE IS REAL FOR MINISTERS, TOO

Ministry Verse of the Quarter

We are not Alone

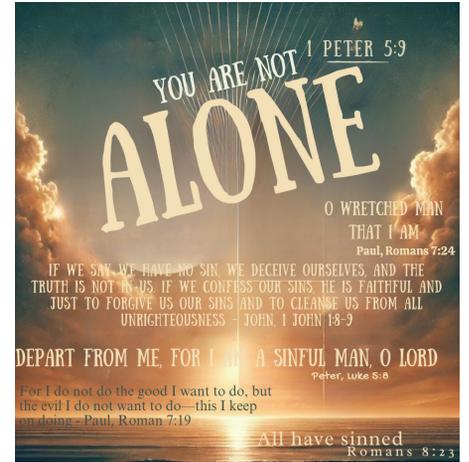


Our first preaching brothers who live in Asia during the first century, were under great persecution from the Roman Empire. They had seen loved ones, perhaps members of their own families as well as members of their church families die because of their faith.

No doubt, there were times they felt alone. We remember that on one occasion Paul said, "No man supported me" (2 Timothy 4:16). What these preachers needed, and what we often need when we feel alone is a word of comfort and assurance.

What they received then, and praise God, what has been passed down to us today, is a beautiful word of comfort from Jesus, delivered to them through His friend, Jesus. In Revelation 1:9 John writes, "I, John, your brother and fellow-partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus." John says I'm not just your brother but I am also your fellow partaker, in this tribulation.

He wanted them to know that they are not alone. Brothers, neither are we alone when we feel that we are going through unbearable tribulation, we are not alone. Not only do we have the promise that our Lord will never leave us, we can also have rest in our hearts knowing that we are surrounded by a great army of brothers and sisters who are fellow partakers. May God help us remember that we are never alone!



WHO PREACHERS CONFIDE IN



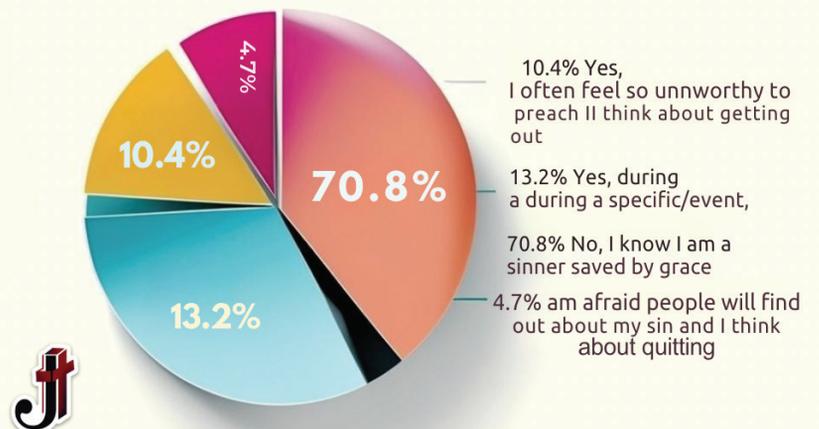
- The Divine Conspiracy by Dallas Willard
- The Good and Beautiful Life by James Bryan Smith
- Desiring the Kingdom by James K.A. Smith
- Every Man's Battle by Arturburn
- Rebuilding Your Broken World by McDonald
- Respectable Sins by Jerry Bridges
- Renovation of the Heart
- AND OTHERS

BOOKS that may bless your battle over sin...

We talked to some fellow preachers and asked them about books that have helped them in their own spiritual struggles. Each of these books are written by fallible men, there is only ONE BOOK that has all the answers. But these might enhance your own understanding of that ONE BOOK. The list follows, you can read their reviews of how this book blessed them at <https://www.thejenkinsinstitute.com/book-reviews-for-the-ministers-spiritual-life>.



'I have personally considered getting out of ministry because of personal struggles with sin'



Alexander Cruden and the Devil

by Dennis Doughty, editor

The very first book I bought as a teen interested in Bible study was *Cruden's Concordance*. I bought it for four dollars at Haslem's Book Store in St. Petersburg, Florida (the price is still in the book). Brother Haslem was a member of the church, and he recommended it to me as I visited his store. The old, tattered, torn hardback still sits on my shelf, and I use it occasionally.

Alexander Cruden (1701-1770) gave the world this invaluable Bible study tool in 1737. It has remained in print, in many languages, ever since.

After examining all the various texts, Alexander compiled a summary of what the scriptures conveyed to him about the Devil.

"By collecting the passages where Satan or the devil is mentioned, it may be observed that he fell from Heaven with all his company; that God cast him down from thence for the punishment of his pride; that, by his envy, and malice, sin, death, and all other evils came into the world; that, by the permission of God,



he exercises a sort of government in the world over his subordinates, over apostate angels like himself; that God makes use of him to prove good men, and chastise bad ones; that he is a lying spirit in the mouth of false prophets, seducers and heretics; that it is he, or some of his, that torment or possess men; that inspire them with evil designs, as he did David when he suggested to him to number his people; to Judas, to betray the Lord and Master; and to Ananias and Sapphira, to conceal the price of their field.

"That he roves full of rage like a roaring lion, to tempt, to betray, to destroy, and to involve us in guilt and wickedness; that his power and malice are restrained within certain limits and controlled by the will of God. In a word, that he is an enemy of God and man, and uses his utmost endeavors to rob God and his glory, and men of their souls."

While the best biblical minds of today might disagree with a point or two of Cruden's summary, I would say he was "spot on" about our adversary, "the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan" (Revelation 20:12.) **MM**

The
Wretched
Man's

Spiritual Battle

"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Romans 7:19)

"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death" (Romans 7:24)

The spiritual battle calls for ...

α CONTINUAL CLEANSING BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST (James 4:17; I John 1:7).

the BODY TO BE UNDER SUBJECTION (I Corinthians 9:27; Romans 12:1).

α HEART THAT DESIRES TO PLEASE GOD (Romans 8:6-10; Hebrews 11:6).

α LIFE OF MATURING (Hebrews 5:12-14; II Peter 1:3-10).

α DAILY PRACTICE OF THE WORD OF GOD (Romans 6:17,18; James 1:21-25).

"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice" Philippians 4:4

MM - MISSION REPORT

The Work in Romania

For the past thirty-one years, the Midway church in Jasper, Alabama, has overseen the work of Harvey and Pat Starling in Romania. Harvey is now 92 and struggles with health problems, however, he is still involved in the work. Ed Bull, an elder at Midway now takes the lead. Through this work, seven churches have been established in the southern districts of Arges, Valcea, and Dolj. The first church established was in Pitesti, Arges, Romania, and it is still a base for much of the effort.



Ed Bull

Although they are a poor people, the Romanian people are very literate. Coming out of communism in 1989, and holding the first free elections in 1990, they still struggled as a government into the current century. The state religion, government corruption, and lack of leadership ability have made evangelism difficult. But the fields are white, and many want to hear the Gospel.

In these seven churches, there are fifteen or so Romanian men who are able to preach the word. The churches continue in Bible classes, Ladies' classes (taught by Romanian women), deaf classes, youth events, benevolence, and many special events all led by Romanians. This year, there are 26 Americans scheduled for 30 trips to Romania. That seems like quite a few, but when you consider 22 million people in Romania who need to hear the true Gospel of Christ, the need is overwhelming. There are less than 1,000 New Testament Christians in the 15–17 churches that struggle to exist in Romania. Some are only one family.

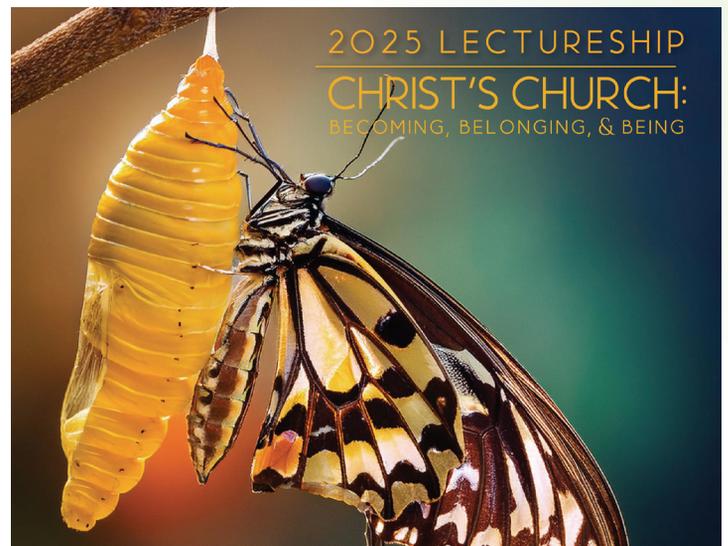
- **In February**, Jerry Holder and Mark Knowles, from Florida, will preach, teach, and work with translators.
- Also, in the middle of February, Marc Curfman, from Ohio, will teach, preach, and hold special classes. Marc is an anchor for the work and has been going 2–3 times each year for many years. He works with the men on leadership and how to prepare lessons.
- **In March**, Anne Newton and Cindy Rieck, from Texas, will hold special ladies' classes. They usually have 75–80 ladies attend.
- **In April**, two men from Midway, Randall Nunnally and Rick Tubbs will teach, preach, and do personal bible studies.
- **In May**, Ed Bull will follow with preaching, teaching, personal bible studies, and men's and youth classes.
- **June–July** is when 12–15 U.S. teachers will teach summer classes for children and adults. The daily attendance is normally 350–400.
- **The September** school is a college level course that is taught by Marc Curfman and Joel Inman (Arkansas). Intense studies are especially beneficial for those who preach, but there are also those who seek deeper studies into God' Word.
- **September–October**, Ed Bull and Rick Tubbs will return and preach and teach in all seven churches.
- **November** will possibly see Robbie Holt (Texas), and perhaps another man, teach and preach.
- **The December** food drive is the product of sacrifice by many in the U.S.



and the hard work of Romanian Christians purchasing and distributing food and supplies to over 200 poor and needy in Romania. Our hope is to again raise \$30,000 for this effort.

The work in Romania is a team effort. Many work in the U.S. to support the work so the churches can grow and teachers can be sent. Many others go to teach, evangelize, and encourage, while many others are concerned and pray often for this work. Several Romanians preach, teach, and are involved behind the scenes, helping in every way. The success of this work is based on unity of purpose and commitment to accomplishing the goals. **MM**

Ed Bull, Marc Curfman, Harvey & Pat Starling



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by *Dustin Abbott, Minister,
Lake Harbour Dr. church of Christ
Ridgeland, MS*

One of the most frightening depictions of the devil is found—not in Hollywood's latest horror flick—but on the pages of Scripture. Revelation 12:3-4 describes the devil as an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns.



Dustin Abbott

Yikes! What are we to make of such frightening imagery?

First, it is important to understand that this is imagery. The reader's objective, then, is to discern its underlying meaning. Is the devil extremely powerful and sinister? Absolutely. Is he literally a seven-headed dragon? I think not. Here are four truths about the devil we can discern from his description in Revelation 12.

1. The Devil is Powerful, but Not All-Powerful

The strength of the devil is heavily emphasized in this imagery. Ancient myths often use dragons to personify a powerful force of evil. One example is the birth of Leto's twin sons, Apollo and Artemis. This fictitious tale may be connected to the imagery in Revelation 12 due to Emperor Domitian's self-identification with Apollo. However, the depiction of the dragon in Revelation 12 goes far beyond ancient myths. Verse 4 states that his "tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky." It is hard to even imagine a dragon of this scale. Furthermore, the dragon has seven crowned heads and ten horns. In apoc-

alyptic literature, numbers carry symbolic significance. The number seven represents completion and fullness, indicating that Satan's power is fully on display. The ten horns echo the "fourth beast" in Daniel's vision (Daniel 7:7, 24), where the horns represent kingdoms. This suggests that Satan wields influence over earthly powers and rulers. The bottom line: the devil is an extremely powerful enemy with vast resources at his disposal.

Even so, the devil is not all-powerful. Revelation 12 repeatedly shows his defeats. He fails to devour the "male offspring" (v.5), he is cast out of heaven (v.8), and he is unable to destroy the woman (vv.12-16). These defeats demonstrate that, while the devil is formidable, he is no match for the all-powerful God and those who remain faithful to Him.

2. The Devil is Not Alone

Verse 9 suggests that the stars swept from the sky by the dragon's tail symbolize fallen angels. Jude 1:6 provides further insight, stating that these angels "did not keep their own position but abandoned their proper dwelling" and now await judgment. Paul also confirms these dark forces in Ephesians 6:12, reminding believers that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." These fallen angels serve as the devil's cohorts, working to deceive, tempt, and destroy.

As intimidating as the devil and his demons may seem, Jesus demonstrated His authority over them during His earthly ministry (Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39) and gave His disciples the power to do the same

(Luke 10:17-20). Most importantly, Colossians 2:15 declares that Jesus "disarmed the powers and authorities, making a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." The devil is not alone in his desire to thwart God's plan, but their combined efforts could not and will not prevail against God.

3. The Devil Has Been Defeated

Revelation 12 makes it clear that the devil is fighting a battle he has already lost.

Jesus declares in John 16:11 that "the prince of this world now stands condemned." There should be no confusion about Satan's destiny—his defeat is absolute, and he will face eternal punishment. Even demons are aware of their coming judgment (Matthew 8:29). The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus delivered a crushing blow to the devil, ensuring his ultimate downfall.

Amazingly, Revelation 12:10-11 includes Christians as ones who are victorious for having overcome the devil "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony." Paul echoes this victory in Romans 16:20: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." Through Christ's sacrifice, believers share in His triumph over evil.

4. The Devil Wants to Take You Down with Him

Once the dragon fails to devour the male child (Jesus), he turns his fury toward the woman—a symbol of God's people (Israel and the Church). Revelation 12:13-17 describes Satan's failed pursuit of the woman, leading to her escape into the wilderness. This imagery is reminiscent of Israel's own time in the wilderness during which God

"While the devil is formidable, he is no match for the all-powerful God and those who remain faithful to Him."

provided sustenance and protection (Exodus 16-17).

In a desperate attempt, the dragon spews forth water like a river to sweep the woman away. This imagery speaks to the devil's deception, false teachings, and all other attempts to destroy the church. Yet, just as God parted the Red Sea to deliver His people on dry ground (Exodus 14), He ensures the earth swallows the floodwaters. This calls to mind Jesus' parable of the wise builder who chose a solid foundation to build upon (Matthew 7:24-27). The church, then, survives the "rising streams" by remaining faithful to the Word of God.

The dragon's final recourse is against "the rest of her (the woman's) offspring"—those who "keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus" (v.17). Unfortunately this speaks to the ongoing persecution of Christians all the way to the present-day. Yet, Jesus reassures His followers: "In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). The devil will continue to campaign against the church, but Christ has already secured the victory for her.

Conclusion

While Revelation 12 presents a terrifying picture of the devil, it also reassures us of his certain destruction. It teaches us that though he is powerful, he is not all-powerful. Though he has allies, they are subject to Christ. Though he wages war, he has already lost. And though he would love nothing more than to take down God's people, victory belongs to Jesus and those who trust in Him. As we traverse a world which includes spiritual oppression from the enemy, let us stand firm, knowing that Christ has overcome and that, through Him, we also overcome. **MM**

With God, You Win!

by Bill Lambert, Professor of Bible (retired) Harding University

Often, we are fearful, discouraged, and overwhelmed. We are shocked by the devastation of hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods. Wars are raging between our international friends and enemies. We are at risk of a nuclear war. The cost of living has many struggling to provide their families food, clothing, shelter, and healthcare. Much of our culture has become irreverent, immoral, unjust, divisive, and resistant to God. No wonder many are fearful, discouraged, and even overwhelmed. But, God is greater than any problem we have! So, if we look through eyes of faith, we will see a bright future with Christ.

The Bible tells us of the victory of God over Satan and God's people over our struggles. John says, "Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for He who is in you is greater than he that is in the world"(1 John. 4:4). Our God is greater in power and might than the devil (1 Chronicles 29:12; Micah 3:8). He is able to do more than we could ask or imagine, and this power works in His people (Ephesians 1:20). So, He is bigger than any problem we will ever have!

The Old Testament tells us how God acted in response to the deeds and needs of Adam, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Daniel, David, Ruth, Esther, and many others. The Four Gospels are an account of the powerful triumphs of Jesus; He made the blind to see, healed lepers, made the lame walk, made the deaf hear, healed diseases, stilled storms, and fed five-thousand hungry people with a little boy's small bag lunch. He even defeated the devil in a personal moral battle in the desert (Matthew 4:1-11). These reports assure us that God will act to help us with both trouble and temptation.

When Jesus battled with Satan and his demons, who won? Jesus always won! But did Jesus really always win? With a testimony of lies, his enemies convicted Him of blasphemy. They cried, "Let him be crucified." They beat Him and spit upon Him. They wagged their heads in mockery as they saw Him nailed to the cross and die. This looks like defeat. But, He was not defeated!

Jesus won! His death was His victory—and our victory too!!! His death fulfilled His ultimate mission and made Him our "Savior." His death paid "the wage of sin" for people of faith (Isaiah 53:1-4; Romans 3:23-26). Also, by the cross, He tore down the wall of sin that separates us from God; He reconciled us unto God (Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18). Now God is with us to continually protect us, care for us, and provide for us (Ephesians 2:14-16; 1 John 1:6-10).

An added victory is that the story of Jesus does not end on the cross. Jesus arose! He lives even today to share His life with us. He offers us a "more abundant life" (John 10:10). Jesus lives in us (Galatians 2:20).

Victory requires faith in Christ. The Bible says, "For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4-5). The faithful, but only the faithful, will overcome. No, we don't have to be perfect to be blessed by God, but we must seek to know God's will and act in good faith (Romans 14:5, 23). God is on our side! God is here to help! He offers us a victorious life (John 10:10). When we leave this life behind, the best is yet to come. There will be no more pain, death, or crying; all that troubles us will have passed away (Revelation 21:1-4). Yes, with Christ, we win! **MM**



Bill Lambert



from a
Woman's
VIEWPOINT
"In Memory of Miss June"

STACKING ROCKS

by *Teresa Castleman, Editor*
Abundant Living Magazine

I'm not a terribly sentimental person. There aren't many collectibles at my house, and I don't hold onto many things. But I do collect rocks.

My husband is a gemologist, so when I say that "I collect rocks," you may think I'm referring to the shiny and expensive kind, but I'm not. Those are certainly lovely, but the rocks I collect are different. And heavier. And much, much less expensive!

I have three rocks in my collection. One is a piece of granite from the Canadian Shield, an area in Northern Ontario, Canada, and I picked it up on my parent's property. It's no diamond or sapphire, but it is a beautiful, gray granite with a pink quartz stripe running through it, and it reminds me of the first place I called "home." My second rock is ugly. It was dug from the bottom of Lake Murray in Lexington County, South Carolina. But it's in the shape of the state of South Carolina, and it reminds me of the nine years we spent there, nine years that I will treasure forever, so it is beautiful to me. Similarly, my third rock is not a looker,



Teresa Castleman

but I picked it up at Camp Wyldewood near Searcy, Arkansas, a place that has been home for most of my adult life.

My rocks have graced the front yard flower beds of all my houses, and my sweet husband has patiently loaded them in and out of several moving trucks. Among many reasons that I don't think we will move again any time soon is the fact that my husband doesn't want me to have a reason to get any more rocks!

These three rocks remind me of the places I have lived and represent so many amazing people and experiences. While a passerby wouldn't know anything about me just from seeing those rocks, if they happened to ask me about them, I'd have lots to say about the ways that God has blessed me in Ontario, South Carolina, and Arkansas. They are a small memorial to my life and a big reminder of God's blessings on me.

In Joshua 4, the Israelites were instructed to stack 12 rocks as a memorial to the way God displayed His power by parting the Jordan River. That act wasn't merely for sentiment or to decorate the riverbank: the stack of stones was to stand out and gather notice. God knew that future passersby would notice the stacks and wonder why they were there. The rocks would serve as a story-starter and give the Israelites an opening to retell

stories of Yahweh's mighty works.

My family leads a group of Harding students to Vancouver Island each summer to host a retreat for artists, in partnership with a church plant in Nanaimo, British Columbia. During this retreat, which is attended by local artists in all stages of faith, we create beautiful art and talk about the Creator in whose image we are created. Last summer, our art projects centered on the idea of stacked stones (the First Nations People in Canada call them "inukshuk" or "cairn") as memorials or monuments to mark events or places that are important. We carved and painted and sketched stacks of stones and shared about the times and places in our lives that we wanted to remember. It was moving to hear life stories from our participants and find points of connection from our own experiences. Regardless of where we were in our faith journey, we recognized times that need to be marked and remembered.

What are some stacks of stones in your life? What markers are there that might prompt someone to say, "Tell me about..."? Perhaps your rocks are scars, or maybe they are wrinkles. What in your life tells the story of God's mighty works, and how can you share those experiences with others? I invite you to stack stones, either literally or figuratively, as you consider the ways that God has moved in your life. Hopefully, passersby will notice, and you'll have the opportunity to answer the question, "What do these stones mean?" **MM**

<tcastleman@harding.edu>

(Teresa Castleman works in the Alumni and Parent Relations department at her alma mater, Harding University. She is the editor of Abundant Living Magazine and is also the director of Harding's outreach to retirement-aged Christians and leads alumni group tours. I appreciate her work as a fellow editor and this good article. -dd)



The Stiversville church of Christ Prepares Christmas Goodie Bags

Christmas Goodie Bags Filled with Treats for Our Shut-in Friends.

For many years this annual event has brightened the lives of the shut-ins who receive them and has been a joyful event for the members of the Stiversville church of Christ in Southern Middle Tennessee. As you can see, it's more than a candy cane for Christmas, but is a large assortment of nourishing goodies to be enjoyed during the Christmas season.

Although the Stiversville congregation is small, averaging an attendance of 25-30 on any given Lord's Day morning, the membership has a strong spiritual desire to love and serve those less fortunate. This love is further demonstrated by financially supporting fifteen mission works every month.

The yearly Christmas Goodie Bag project might be small in the eyes of some, but by the response of those who receive the bags and the joy of those who present them to the shut-ins, these blessings cannot be measured in dollars and cents.

One brother was heard to say, "We give our time and effort, but the Lord gets the honor and praise." Well said.

Larry Benderman and Barry Farris are the elders. Barry Farris is the minister and is now in his 35th year at Stiversville. **MM**



Former students-former teacher-former school. Keith Wilson, Ray Paseur, Tim West and Greg Ledbetter reunite at the old Magnolia Bible College site to reminisce.

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Is your city experiencing growth with new housing developments? The **New Subdivision Edition of House to House** is a great way to reach those new residents and introduce them to the church of Christ.

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JESUS

Is Our Example

by *Eddie Lewis, Minister*
Germantown church of Christ

“When trial or tragedy strikes, it is what we have been before that determines how we will react. When the storms of adversity beat on us, it will be the foundations of our life that will sustain and enable us to endure.” (Henry Gariepy, *Portraits of Perseverance*). What we are on the inside determines how we deal with trials.

Jesus is our example. He is in the wilderness about two miles west of Jericho and west of the Dead Sea, in the area called Mount Quarantania (Matthew 4:1-11). It is a desolate place; the sand is yellow; the limestone rock is blistered and crumbling; it is bare and jagged; and it glows and shimmers with heat like some vast furnace. Jesus has been there 40 days and nights, fasting and praying about the future. He is thinking about His ministry and the great work that lies ahead of Him. How can He accomplish His purposes?

The Tempter (Satan, the Devil) comes to tempt

Jesus. Satan is the ruler of the world (John 16:11). He is the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). He comes to Jesus as he would come to any of us. In His mind Satan plants these thoughts and draws these images:

First, he said to Jesus, “You are hungry—turn these rocks into bread and feed yourself.” It is a temptation

for Jesus to use His power for selfish purposes. But Jesus withstands the Tempter and quotes Deuteronomy 8:3, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but every word that proceeds from the mouth of the God.” Jesus realizes the only true way to real satisfaction is to learn complete dependence on God.

The Tempter attacks again. He takes Jesus to the pinnacle of the Temple. Most scholars feel this is the corner of the Porch of Solomon, which has a drop of almost 200 feet into the Kidron Valley. Satan tells Jesus, “If you are the Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, He will give His angels charge concerning You; and on their hands they will bear you up” (Psalm 91:11-12). Wouldn’t something like this attract the crowds to Jesus? Would some not feel that something like this would cause people to believe?

Jesus knew that such a sensational feat would not attract men of faith who would commit themselves to Him. It would not attract loyal followers who would sacrifice their lives for Him. So, Jesus again quotes Deuteronomy 6:16, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”

The Tempter comes to Jesus a third time. Jesus had come to save the world, so Satan takes Him to a high mountain where He can see all the kingdoms of the world. He tells Jesus, “All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me.”

The Father had already promised His Son all the nations as part of His church. What Satan is asking for is compromise. We need to arbitrate! Do not set your demands so high, wink at a little evil, and I will give you more people in your Kingdom.

It was the test of coming to terms with the world. Instead of presenting God’s will without compromise to the world, Satan asked Jesus to overlook a little evil. Jesus was sure you couldn’t defeat evil by compromising with it. Jesus said,



“Be gone, Satan.” Then He quoted Deuteronomy 6:13, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.”

Satan leaves Jesus for a little while. Satan tempts Him again when Peter attempts to get Jesus to change His intended course. Jesus calls Peter Satan (Matthew 16:23). Also, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Satan tries to get Jesus to change His mind, but Jesus withstands him (Luke 22:42f). Finally, the angels come to Jesus in the wilderness and minister to His needs.

What can we learn about trials in our lives from Jesus’ example? The following are two great lessons:

1. Trials are a test of our faith.

This is undoubtedly one of the hardest times in the life of Jesus. Trials always are. We must understand the word here translated “tempt” in the Greek is “*peirazein*.” It does not mean to entice a man to do wrong or seek to seduce him into sin. It means test. It is the same word used of God as He tests Abraham in Genesis 22:1. Of course, James tells us that God does not tempt anyone. Still, God will use Satan’s trials as a means to determine our loyalty to Him (James 1:13). What we call a temptation may not be presented to make us sin but rather enable us to conquer sin. What we call a temptation may not be presented to make us bad but rather enable us to be good. What we call a temptation may not be presented to make us weak but rather enable us to be stronger, finer, and purer as a result.

Pat Barnes tells the story of a flower lady he met one Sunday morning. She was sitting in her usual place, her clothing ragged and dirty. She had displayed some of her corsages and boutonnières on an outspread newspaper. She was smiling and happy. Her wrinkled old face was alive with some inner joy.

Pat said, “My, you look happy this morning!”

“Why not? Everything is good!” she said.

He couldn’t help but ask her, seeing her situation, “Don’t you have any troubles?”

“You can’t reach my age and not have troubles,” she said. “Only, it’s like Jesus

when He was crucified. That was the worst day for the whole world. When I have troubles, I remember that, but also what happened three days later—the Lord rose from the dead. So, I have learned to give God a chance when things go wrong. I’ve learned to wait three days knowing things somehow will work out.” Wait three days; give God a chance!

2. Trials follow great moments of spiritual importance.

All the Gospel writers make the point that this testing happened immediately after Jesus’ baptism. I believe this is a great truth to realize. After great moments of spiritual importance come great moments of reaction or trial. This is the greatest time of danger for the Christians.

Satan carefully, subtly, and skillfully chose to attack Jesus, but Jesus defeated him. We would do well to learn from Jesus and be on guard after our spiritual highs.

I have had times like that. Several have asked me, “How do you handle trials like that? You seem to have made it through O.K.” Yes, I have made it through the storms and have a greater trust and faith in God. But there were times of anger, over what I saw as unanswered prayers, and depression, as I asked the age-old question, “Why me Lord?”

Sometimes we suffer simply because we are human. Our bodies change and grow old. We are susceptible to the normal problems of life and disease. The same body that can bring us pleasure can bring us pain. That is part of life.

Sometimes we suffer because we are foolish in our actions or disobedient to the Lord.

Sometimes we suffer because someone else was foolish and we have to deal with the consequences of their actions. In God’s grace, He forgives us of our sins, but in God’s justice we must reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7).

Suffering is a tool used by God to

build character (Romans 5:1-5). God allows us to suffer so that we might grow in our spiritual life and cause us to trust Him more. Some might call it the discipline of God (Hebrews 12:3f).

Paul’s thorn in the flesh is a great example of how God allows suffering to mold us (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Paul had been taken up into “Paradise and heard inexpressible words” (12:4). This exciting spiritual experience could have led Paul to pride and all kinds of sins. So, God allowed Satan to give Paul a thorn in the flesh to buffet him (12:7).

The word “buffet” means “to beat, to strike with the fist.” The verb indicates that this pain was constant and recurring.

When you remember that Paul had letters to write, trips to make, churches to visit, dangers to face, this thorn was a serious hindrance. We understand why Paul prays three times for God to remove it.

God’s message to Paul and us is, “My grace is sufficient” (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). God is the provider for all our needs, when we need them. In His grace He gives us what we do not deserve. There is never a shortage of God’s grace. God permits us to be made weak so that we might receive His strength and grow strong.

Verse nine is the key verse, “My power is perfected in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). When Paul prayed about his thorn, God gave him the insight to see the thorn as a messenger of Satan. And the only way to deal with it was to accept it and let God help him reach his purpose for life.

The same is true for us. When we face a trial, we must pray and look to His Word for the message we need. We rely on His grace to help us endure the pain and know that only God can help us through to the end. We do not know the end, but whether we live or die, God is glorified because we trust Him and honor Him with our lives. We do not take pleasure in our trials, but we know in our weakness God’s power is alive. We can overcome and be spiritually strong because the power of God is in us. **MM**

“Paul’s thorn in the flesh is a great example of how God allows suffering to mold us.”

(2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

Sojourners

Traveling with a Purpose

by Dave Laton, Co-Director

Grocery store clerks, restaurant servers, and even church members often peer at the red-and-white nametags Sojourners wear and ask, “What group are you with?” The typical reply is, “We’re part of an RV ministry with the churches of Christ. We volunteer at church camps, Christian schools, children’s homes, and small congregations that need help with physical labor or evangelism efforts. We’re called Sojourners.”

The person asking will almost always respond, “God bless you for your work.”

And He has! Founded over 40 years ago, the ministry now includes over 400 active Sojourners and hundreds more inactive members.

What exactly is the Sojourner Mission?

The ministry began when Paul and Peggie Scott witnessed the struggles of a small congregation they worshiped with during Paul’s time in the Navy. They knew God had called them to help. After Paul’s retirement, the Scotts attended the Sunset School of Preaching to prepare for ministry, teamed up with another couple, and set out in their RVs to “travel with a purpose”—to strengthen the church, encourage, teach, edify, and evangelize. Soon, other couples joined their group and adopted the name “National Evangelism with Sojourners,” or NEWS.

The Burleson church of Christ elders in Burleson, Texas, oversee the mission. Six co-directors provide direct leadership in various ministry areas, including Sojourns, Public Relations, Camp Bee Facilities, Policies and Procedures, Office and Finance, and Workshops.

Active Sojourners range in age from mid-forties to over ninety. In the spirit of “Once a Sojourner, always a Sojourner,” those who are no longer able to travel and work transition their status from “active” to “inactive.”

What do Sojourners do?

The short answer is—almost anything. Each Sojourn is unique and coordinated to meet the entity’s requested needs. A small congregation may wish to host a Vacation Bible School. The team for that “Sojourn” can assist with decorating, teaching classes, and canvassing the community to promote the event. Church camps often need help preparing their campuses for summer sessions, which

can include everything from general cleanup to cabin repairs and painting. Christian schools and children’s homes are typically understaffed and, therefore, unable to handle extra duties—from something as simple as sorting donations to complex projects, such as building maintenance and repairs.

Some congregations request support for a Gospel meeting. Sojourners help canvass the area, spreading the word about it, setting up and conducting Bible studies, visiting members, and encouraging them in their faithfulness. Entities needing help can submit an online form at the mission’s website, www.sojourning.org

Debunking common myths about the Sojourner mission

Sojourners are full-time. Although many ministry members are full-timers, Sojourners must complete just one Sojourn per year to remain active.

Sojourners must be married couples. Although the Sojourner mission is composed primarily of married couples, many widows, widowers, and other singles are involved. Being married is not a requirement.

Sojourners must be retired. The truth is that many Sojourners are still employed. Some work from their rigs while on the road. Others have a full- or part-time job and use their time off to volunteer in the Sojourner ministry.

Sojourners must have special skills. The basic requirements to become a Sojourner are to be a faithful member of the church of Christ and own an RV. Regarding skills, many Sojourns need tasks anyone can do, such as cleaning, organizing, and painting. More specialized skills, such as plumbing and electrical work, can be learned. The mission organizes two workshops per year—one in Texas and another in Florida—and each workshop provides training classes from qualified instructors to teach Sojourners how to do many tasks. The workshops also include time for worship, fellowship, and service projects.

What’s the best part about working with the Sojourner mission?

All of it! From the camaraderie of working together, to the joy of serving entities that might otherwise be unable to complete needed projects, to traveling to sites one might otherwise never see to glorifying God through ministering to others—most Sojourners have stated this ministry is one of the most fulfilling aspects of their lives.

If you’re interested in applying to become a Sojourner, you, too, can soon travel with a purpose! The application process begins by completing the online application form available at Sojourner’s website: www.sojourning.org. **MM**

(Thanks to Dave for this good article and for the great work Sojourners do. -dd)--

In the **SPOTLIGHT**

The Church Secretary

They are the unsung heroes of many congregations and the administrative backbone of the church they serve. We are proud to put church secretaries “in the spotlight.”

I have served in congregations that had a secretary, and now, in my work as an editor, I have come to appreciate even more the tremendous value of the church secretary. If I need information, I do not contact the preacher but the church secretary.

These underappreciated and underpaid servants of the Lord’s House handle phone calls, emails, and social media, ensuring that information is disseminated accurately and promptly. They make coffee, file information, take notes in meetings, and answer questions that come to them almost daily. Their role in communication helps to keep the church community connected and informed.

In putting out the bulletin/newsletter each week they must get the order of services together, update the sick list, and ensure other important activities are included. Then they print the bulletin, fold it and have it ready come Sunday morning. Many secretaries use my “Inscriptions” articles in their bulletins each week, which is my small contribution to making their job a little easier.

To the elders, I would ask, “When was the last time you gave your secretary a raise?” I am almost sure they are deserving of one. Paul wrote of “our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea...she has been a helper of many, and of myself as well” (Romans 16:1). Sounds a lot like a church secretary. We are pleased to put these wonderful servants of the Lord’s church “In the spotlight.” -dd



Group Travel Opportunity for Christian Senior Adults September 5-12, 2025

Travel in comfort and safety with fellow Christians to the historic sites of Baltimore, Gettysburg, Hershey and Philadelphia, and enjoy the serenity of Amish Country in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, on this 7-day “Buggies and Battles Tour”. Highlights include:

- “Noah” at the Sight and Sound Theater and “The Amish Experience” in Lancaster, Penn.
- Guided Gettysburg Battlefield and Museum tour
- Chocolate-making class at the Hershey Chocolate Lab
- City tour of Philadelphia with local guide, including the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall
- Baltimore Harbor boat tour with stops at the Key Bridge collapse site and Fort McHenry

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*Based on double occupancy - single occupancy is available for additional fee

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The DRAGON



by Danny Dodd

Remember the old cartoons depicting Satan as a cute little red devil with small horns, a

tail, and a pitchfork? Typically, he went about doing a little harmless mischief with a sly grin, not meaning to do any significant harm. In fact, he was actually quite a lovable little imp. Yeah, well, don't believe that. Here is another description of him:

Then another sign appeared in Heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven

heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his head. His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth.

The apostle John captured this image of Satan in Revelation 12:3-4 as he wrote this letter to persecuted and suffering Christians in the latter part of the first century. It was an image intended not just to identify the enemy, but also to present him as the horrifically dangerous foe he is. A dragon is a beast of nightmares—ferocious, immense, aggressive, and intimidating, with

multiple weapons, all capable of mass destruction. The presentation of Satan this way was no accident. John wanted his readers to know—without filter—the evil and devastating

power they were up against.

But they already knew. They knew about the systemic oppression against them because of following Jesus. They knew about the deaths in the Roman Coliseum, about those of faith who disappeared, never to return, and about severe economic hardship because they would not bow down to Caesar. They lived it every day. In the Revelation, John provides them with another perspective of it—a broader context of

their struggle. It was a struggle in which Heaven was involved. God was engaged. He knew His people. He heard their pleas, and He was acting on their behalf. A spiritual war was unfolding. Those Christians were on the battlefield. Unfortunately, there were casualties. The dragon was attacking, but he would not have the final say. Ultimately, he will be defeated and thrown into the fiery abyss forever (Revelation 20:10).



This is the story of Revelation. Even amid their suffering, the promise of victory was real and reassuring. “To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God” (Revelation 2:7).

We are far removed from their context now. The Roman Empire is nothing but interesting archeology and history. God kept His promise. The church remains. But what of the dragon? What are our takeaways from that long-ago description?

First, it remains an ever real, accurate representation. Satan is as terrifying and menacing as any dragon. He is a constant threat to devour anyone in his path (see 1 Peter 5:8). Make no mistake, like a dragon, he is a predator. He is also powerful—illustrated by the “seven horns.” Like a dragon, his weapons have a far reach into all realms. Note John’s mention in the text of the abilities of his tail to demolish. It is

AGON

imagery to remind us of the lengths he will go to ensnare and destroy.

But it is not pure power alone that defines him. Secondly, like many mythological dragons, Satan is clever, which figuratively the “seven heads” demonstrate, representing complete earthly wisdom. He can transform himself into an “angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14) and appear to be anything but a dragon. He is a deceiver and liar as well (John 8:44). Part of the Revelation story about Satan was his ability to deceive the nations to follow and partner with him in his total oppression of Christians and the church.

The Roman Empire was his ally in this pursuit—another kind of beast, as John described them. They bowed to Satan’s authority (represented in the text by the “crowns” on his heads.) Working together, they were the “rulers,” “the authorities,” “the powers of this dark world,” and the “spiritual forces of evil,” of which Paul spoke in Ephesians 6:12. Those forces remain. Satan continues to deceive and partner with any willing ally in his never-ending pursuit of the Lamb and His followers. That is why in this Ephesian text, Paul challenges us to armor-up. The dragon is still on the loose.

And, so, our last takeaway. The way to bring down the dragon has not changed since the Revelation. It is not by brute force. We stand no chance if we try to take on the dragon using his tactics. While we do put on the armor of God, it is not to engage in a slash-and-burn campaign. Actually, it is just the opposite. The armor will indeed strengthen us, but just like the Revelation Christians, it will strengthen us to overcome the dragon “by the blood

of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony” (Revelation 12:11, just a few verses after the introduction of the dragon). There was no actionable way that those Christians could have even come close to countering the strength and fury of the dragon embodied by the Roman Empire. For them to have attempted to muster up weapons to literally engage in a battle with Roman soldiers would have been suicidal. Instead, they turned the other cheek; they loved their enemies; they prayed for those who despised them; they went the extra mile; and they remained faithful unto death (all following the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 5 & Revelation 2:10). This not only subverted the tactics of the dragon, but he also had no answer. He still doesn’t.

The dragon continues to rage, but do not be fooled. He can be defeated. In fact, he has already lost. Christ surrendering on the cross and bursting forth from the tomb three days later crushed him. Now, in his resentment, he is attempting to take down as many with him as he can. Please don’t give him a foothold (Ephesians 4:27-29)! Overcome that dragon just as those Revelation Christians did—by the blood of the resurrected Lamb and your faithful, unstoppable testimony that Jesus is Lord. **MM**

(Danny is a faithful preacher and long-time supporter and writer of this publication. We appreciate this good article. You can read more about Satan in his book, Revelation is Relevant, a survey of the book of Revelation available on Amazon. - dd)

THE EYC EXPERIENCE

by Matthew Irvin, Outreach Minister
Winona church of Christ
Winona, MS

I have been in full-time ministry for five years and have attended many youth conferences, but EYC stood out to me. Exposure Youth Camp (EYC), held in Huntsville, Alabama, is sponsored by brotherhood universities and individuals. It gathers over 3,000 youth and youth leaders from across the Southeast for a weekend of Gospel lessons, keynotes,



and much-needed youth group time.

This year’s EYC theme, “Reimagine Beauty,” focused on Jesus, salvation, and Heaven. Keynotes and classes explored Old Testa-

ment figures, singing, and a ladies’ class, offering youth solid Biblical teaching and impactful preaching.

EYC provides a unique chance for young people to connect with brotherhood universities through booths in the main lobby, promoting Christian education. It’s also a time for friends, often reunited from church camp, to exchange greetings and catch up briefly.

A highlight of EYC is the “Atrium Singing” in the hotel atrium, where voices unite in worship. I attended with a group from Ackerman and Winona churches of Christ, and the connected hotel and convention center made it convenient to stay together while enjoying classes, worship, and activities.

For those who have not attended EYC, I highly recommend it. Whether it’s a 4-hour, 6-hour, or even 10-hour drive, it’s well worth the trip to experience a weekend that can inspire, encourage, and deepen the faith of the young people in your congregation. **MM**

“If the Lord is with Us, ... why has all this Happened to Us?”

by C. Philip Slate
Memphis, Tennessee



Philip Slate

The year before my wife and I were sent to England to help plant a church in London, I preached at a small congregation in Nashville, TN. A single woman in that group had suffered many health problems. One day, she said to me, “Brother Philip, I don’t understand why I have had so many health issues while I know of a woman who has long been a Nashville prostitute, and she is now in the hospital for the first time in her life! I don’t understand. I have lived a virtuous life and tried to please God.”

Many Christians raise that question because they don’t understand. Doesn’t God promise to bless his people? Unbelievers present this as a challenge to our faith: “God can’t be both all good and all-powerful, given the evil and pain in the world. He is surely all good but unable to help the situation, or He is able to change things but not good enough to do so.” Don’t despair. Both biblical scholars and Christian philosophers have provided answers to that challenge. Here is a glimpse at biblical perspectives.

Gideon: One can gain some insight from the book of Judges, that bloody and unhappy book of the Old Testament. After Israel came to enjoy the long-awaited occupation of the land God promised to Abraham, one would think they would be loyal to God for that gift. They were not. There is a pattern in the book of Judges that appears seven times: Israel breaks the covenant, God disciplines them through existing nations, Israel eventually cries out for help, and God sends them deliverers, the judges. Gideon was one of those judges.

In the midst of being overrun (disciplined) by the Midianites, Gideon is down in a wine press, hiding from the oppressors as he beats out the grain. An angel of the Lord appears to tell him that the Lord plans to use him to deliver Israel. He said to Gideon, “The Lord is with us, O mighty man of valor” (Judges 6:12). It did not seem so to Gideon, who interrupted the angel and said, “If the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us” (v. 13)? The evidence he saw caused him to feel that the Lord had forsaken Israel.

Many people can identify with Gideon in the pit. “If God is good and blesses us, then why does He cause, or permit, these bad

things to happen to good people?” What are the biblical responses to this question? It is clear enough in Judges that God was providing discipline to His people in the hope that they would repent and keep the covenant. He empowered Gideon to lead Israel to victory (Judges 7).

Job: In his deep misery and pain, Job had three friends who were sure he was being punished for some secret sin and urged him to repent. Job denied secret sin and pointed out to his three friends that they could not explain why, at times, the wicked get along very well indeed, while the righteous have setbacks (see Job 21:7-34). Both eventually go to the grave (v. 26). It is a part of the world in which we live (Job 14:1). Job’s friends could see both scenarios as easily as he, so why focus on Job? The big purpose of God’s asking Job all those questions in chapters 38-39 was to let him know the Almighty knew what He was doing all along.

We are not informed whether God ever told Job why he, a righteous man, suffered as he did; but we know what was going on in the process because of chapter one. We may be assured that God knows what He is doing and that the suffering in our lives is not punishment for personal wrongdoing. Jesus made that clear (Luke 13:1-4; John. 9:1-3). We can suffer at the hands of evil people, and we can suffer for our own foolish manner of life. Why blame God? Yes, it seems necessary to conclude that God either causes or permits some setbacks as a discipline for those He loves (Hebrews 12:3-11). Many wonderful books and hymns have been written by people who had suffered or were in the midst of it.

The manner in which we respond to both adversity and blissfulness is a way of glorifying God. We need to behave in the spirit of Job, who said, “Though he slay me, I will hope in him” (Job 13:15), even though he wanted to know why it was happening. So do we, but, as we sing, “farther along, we’ll know all about it.” Meanwhile, live a life of trust. **MM**

Are you dressed for the Battle?

by Keith Wilson
Crystal Springs, church of Christ

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

The child of God is engaged in a war every day. The battles that are faced daily are spiritual in nature and are against the devil and his spiritual wickedness (Ephesians 6:12). Therefore, the apostle Paul encouraged the church at Ephesus, to be “strong in the Lord” (Ephesians 6:10) and to “put on the whole armour of God” (Ephesians 6:11KJV).. The whole armour would be needed to withstand the deceitfulness of our Adversary.

Paul, probably while under house arrest at Rome (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1), wrote this letter to the church at Ephesus. Could it be possible that Paul was looking at a Roman soldier in full armour the very day he wrote this text concerning our spiritual armour?

The pieces of the Christian’s spiritual armour, revealed at the close of the letter (6:14-17), are pieces the apostle Paul had already emphasized earlier in the letter.

● **BELT OF TRUTH:**

It was by “hearing the truth” that faith was produced in their hearts, resulting in them obeying the Gospel and obtaining the salvation of God (1:13).

Paul encouraged each Christian at Ephesus to “speak the truth in love” so spiritual growth in all things could be experienced (4:15).

● **BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS:**

God’s new man is created “in RIGHTEOUSNESS” (4:29) and the Spirit’s fruit consists of both RIGHTEOUSNESS and TRUTH (5:9).

● **GOSPEL OF PEACE:**

The Gospel of peace is the power of God that unified both Jews and Gentiles in the same body (2:14-15,17; 4:3).

● **SHIELD OF FAITH:**

The Christian’s “personal faith” (2:8) in the “one faith” (4:5) is necessary to keep him “rooted and grounded” in love (3:19). This shield of faith will deflect and quench the fiery darts of the enemy (6:16).

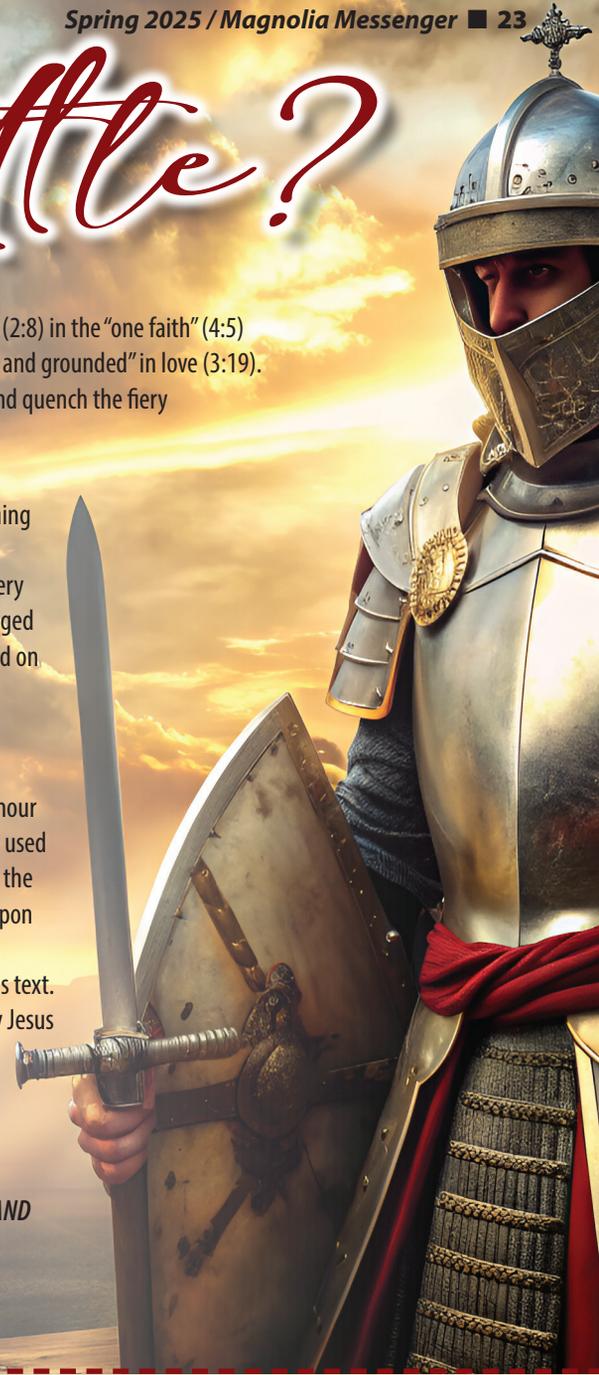
● **HELMET OF SALVATION:**

The good news (1:13) concerning receiving the unmerited gift of salvation from God (2:8) is the very reason why the Christian is engaged in a daily war. The devil is focused on the faithful child of God (1:1) becoming unfaithful.

● **SWORD OF THE SPIRIT:**

The one offensive piece of armour that is mentioned by Paul, to be used in these daily spiritual battles, is the powerful Word of God. This weapon is actually mentioned four times (truth, gospel, faith, word) in this text. This is the same weapon used by Jesus in His battles with Satan (Matthew 4:1-11). **MM**

*“Wherefore take unto you the **WHOLE** armour of God, that ye may be able to **WITHSTAND** in the evil day, and having done all, to **STAND**” (6:13KJV).*



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OUR COMMON Enemy



David Stewart
Minister, Perryville church of Christ
Morrilton, Arkansas

We are engaged in a spiritual battle every day of our lives. It is a battle that requires preparation, alertness, and engagement. The apostle Paul admonished Christians to “put on the whole armor of God” in order to “stand against the schemes of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11). He then explained, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). At the head of the forces of darkness is Satan, our common enemy. Several designations are given to this ringleader in Revelation 12, a chapter figuratively describing Satan’s warfare against Christ and His church. These names give us insight into the nature of our enemy. Let us briefly consider these designations from verse 9. (Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are taken from the ESV.)



David Stewart

● **The Great Dragon.** The Greek word translated “dragon” (*drakon*) is used in the Septuagint for the “sea monster” and “Leviathan” (see Job 7:12; Isaiah 27:1). In the New Testament, the word only appears in the latter half of Revelation. The evil one is first introduced in Revelation 12:3 as “a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.” The color red is often associated with bloodshed. The seven-headed dragon is found in earlier ancient Near Eastern art and literature. Here, the great red dragon is portrayed with a massive tail, capable of sweeping a third of the stars out of Heaven (Revelation 12:4). Despite having enormous strength and ferocity, the dragon failed to devour the male child (Christ). The raging spiritual battle involved the archangel Michael and his good angels fighting against the dragon and his evil angels. The latter side was defeated, being

thrown down to earth with authority and finality (Revelation 12:7-9). This is a foretaste of the devil’s ultimate defeat (Revelation 20:10). Nevertheless, the dragon still wages war against the saints today (Revelation 12:17).

The Ancient Serpent. This description points back to the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). The serpent, known for its cunning, was used as a vehicle for deceiving Eve (2 Corinthians 11:3). Perhaps Satan used the serpent like a ventriloquist’s dummy; he may have even possessed the creature. The serpent is known for its strange movements on its belly and its sudden poisonous bite (Genesis 3:14; 49:17; Numbers 21:6); and it stands under the curse of God (Genesis 3:15). Paul spoke of Satan being crushed under the feet of faithful Christians (Romans 16:20), just as the serpent’s head was to be bruised by Eve’s offspring (Genesis 3:15). In Revelation 12:13-15, the term “serpent” is used interchangeably with the word “dragon.”

● **The Devil.** The Greek word translated “devil” (*diabolos*) refers to an “accuser” or “slanderer.” In a few contexts, where the word relates to people, it is rendered as “slanderers” (see 1 Timothy 3:11; Titus 2:3). The devil slandered God before Eve, suggesting that He was withholding knowledge from the first couple in order to hold them back and that He did not have their best interests in mind (Genesis 3:4-5). The devil also slandered Job before the LORD, implying that this wealthy man only served God because He had put a hedge around him. The role of the devil is like that of a prosecuting attorney. The translators of the Greek Septuagint often used *diabolos* to render the Hebrew word Satan. While the precise meanings of these terms are not identical, they certainly overlap. *Diabolos* appears frequently in the New Testament for the devil, who tempts (Matthew 4:1), intimidates (Hebrews 2:14), oppresses (Acts 10:38), ensnares (1 Timothy 3:7), and binds (Luke 13:16). The devil has been sinning since the beginning (1 John 3:8). The eternal fire of Hell has been prepared for the devil and his wicked angels (Matthew 25:41).

Precious Memories



IN MEMORY OF

JUDY TAYS

Don Tays
Killen, AL

ELIZABETH REDMON

Robert & Denise Harris
(Baton Rouge, LA)
Mary Ann Weast
(Vicksburg, MS)

L.T. GURGANUS

Gary & Judy Wolfe
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(Orange TX)

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MACOMBER

KEITH & AMANDA

WILSON

Rita Smith
(Utica, MS)

RAY & SHIRLEY COLEMAN

& FAMILY

JOHN & SANDRA

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& FAMILY

Mary Coleman Freeman
(Senatobia, MS)

ROBERT RAWSON

Marty Christian
(Fulton, MS)

● **Satan.** The Greek word satanas is a transliteration of the Hebrew word satan, which refers to an “adversary” or “accuser.” Satan is the enemy of God and His people; the adversary incites the people of God to rebel against Him. This is clearly illustrated in the account of Job, whom Satan severely tempted to curse God (Job 1:11; 2:5, 9). Satan attacked Job’s wealth, his family, and his health. Nevertheless, Job—a blameless man—never cursed his God. Satan incited David to sin by taking a census of Israel (1 Chronicles 21:1); and in a vision, he stood beside the high priest Joshua to accuse him before the angel of the LORD (Zechariah 3:1). In Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-7, the Hebrew word hassatan appears with the article and functions as a title: “the Adversary” (NJPSV). In 1 Chronicles 21:1, satan appears without the article and apparently serves as a name: “Satan.” Regardless, the same character is referenced in both cases.

● **The Deceiver of the Whole World.** The Greek phrase translated “the deceiver” (*ho planon*) describes one who leads others astray (see 2 Corinthians 2:11; 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:14). Satan’s deception is alluded to later in the book of Revelation (Revelation 20:3, 8, 10). The deceiver is also called “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44). He lied to Eve: “But the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die’” (Genesis 3:4). He also lied to Jesus about the kingdoms of the world: “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me” (Matthew 4:9). The deceiver makes false promises that he cannot keep—and he would not keep if he could. The fact that he deceives “the whole world” indicates that no person is exempt from his devices.

There is a need for our vigilance and strong conviction based on the truth of God’s Word. The Scriptures repeatedly warn the people of God against being led astray (see Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 15:33; Galatians 6:7; James 1:16). Like one at a masquerade ball, Satan cleverly “disguises himself as an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). **MM**

(David preaches and operates Stewarts Publications. His wife works with Southern Christian Children’s Home in Arkansas. -dd)

Come Join Us!

GOSPEL MEETING

May 4-7 2025

Nile church of Christ • 4608 Attala Road 1106
Carthage, MS 39051

Speaker: Charles Warren

Sunday Bible Class: 9:30 am

Morning Worship: 10:30 am

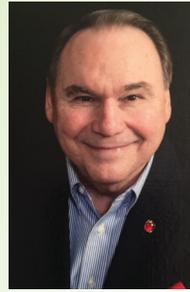
Evening Worship: 4:00 pm

Monday: 7:00 pm • Tuesday: 7:00 pm

Wednesday: 7:00 pm

There will be refreshments before and after the lessons for each day. Snacks, Drinks & Coffee

Visiting among Churches in north Mississippi



He is a graduate of MSOP and Bear Valley. We enjoyed meeting him and his wife, Bertha, and visiting with some of the brethren. They have five elders and around 179 in attendance. They are involved with several mission works. They have a good mix of ages. They are a very friendly congregation, and we enjoyed our visit. In Bible class they are using the Foundations Series from the Gospel Advocate.

November 17: Madolyn and I visited the Amory church of Christ. Jonathan Godsey is the new pulpit minister. He is a Harding graduate and is working on his master's degree from Heritage University. He and his family have been at Amory for two years, beautiful family. Bro. Philip Hathcock is now working



Jonathan Godsey and Philip Hathcock

part time, but very active in the congregation and area churches. The church has three elders and 170 in attendance. They have an active youth program and a good mix of ages. We enjoyed our visit. It was a pleasure to meet Jonathan and his family and get to see many old friends. In Bible class Philip lead the class in a study of the Foundations Series from the Gospel Advocate.

November 24 and again January 19: I was invited to preach for the Coffeeville church of Christ. The last time we visited Coffeeville was in July. They have no elders and around 40 in attendance. They have a preacher's home. Madolyn and I always enjoy visiting with the brethren there. We appreciate their love and support.

December 8: I was invited to preach for the Fords Well church of Christ near Water Valley, Mississippi. Nathan Swanson is the minister there. He was unable

By Eddie Lewis, Missionary to North Mississippi, 9423 Laurel Hill, Olive Branch, MS 38654. E-mail: lewis7946@gmail.com

November through January 2024

by Eddie Lewis

We appreciate so much the opportunity to inform you about our mission work among the churches in North Mississippi and the ministry at the Christian Student Center at Mississippi Delta Community College in Moorhead, Mississippi. We appreciate the Germantown church of Christ sponsoring us in our North Mississippi ministry. Several churches and individuals support the work at the CSC. This report covers ten Sundays during the months of November 2024 through January 2025. I preached two Sundays for the Coffeeville church of Christ and one Sunday for the Crockett church of Christ.

November 3 and January 12: Madolyn and I visited with the Crockett church of Christ to meet their new minister. Caleb Bennett and his family worked with the congregation from July to December. They have since moved to work with a congregation in the New Orleans area that can help them with their future plans. Caleb and Natasha are from



Natasha and Caleb Bennett

currently working on a degree from Amridge University. We were glad to meet them. The congregation is looking for a minister again. Last year I helped them by speaking once a month as they looked for a minister. Please be praying for them as they try to find someone that can help the church grow. It's a good congregation full of loving Christians. They have a preacher's home. We enjoyed our visit. It was great to see old friends while I served as a substitute preacher for them in the interim.

November 10: Madolyn and I visited with the East Main church of Christ in Tupelo, Mississippi. Barry Kennedy has been the minister there for six years.



Barry and Bertha Kennedy



Bill Kopf, Tom Osborn, Tommy Dickerson, Gene Spencer

South Africa. He is a graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching and is

to preach, and they called me to sub for him. I was happy to come. They only have around 8-10 people that attend and no elders. We enjoyed our visit.

December 15: Madolyn and I visited with the West Main church of Christ in Tupelo, Mississippi. Kerry Williams



Kerry and Lenora Williams

is the minister there. They have three elders and over 300 in attendance. They expressed their excitement about seeing their young couples class growing as they reach out to this age group. They have many activities for children and many service programs. The church ordered some of my books, "Finding the Heart of Christ." They plan to use it in their adult Bible classes. We took the opportunity to deliver the books and visit with some old friends. Kerry had a wonderful lesson on Christ being more important than anything in the universe.

December 22: Madolyn and I visited with the Como church of Christ. Taylor Francis is the minister there. He has worked with the congregation for ten years. They have three elders and around 50 in attendance. Taylor is working on his Doctor of Ministry degree from HST. Cindy, his wife, is a counselor for the counseling center at the Oxford church of Christ. We enjoyed



Cindy and Taylor Francis

visiting with them and the congregation. It's a very welcoming congregation.

December 29: Madolyn and I visited with the Nolen Hills church of Christ in Nolensville, Tennessee. The church has 3 ministers, four elders, around 300 in attendance, are new and a very active



Mark McInteer and Amos Jones

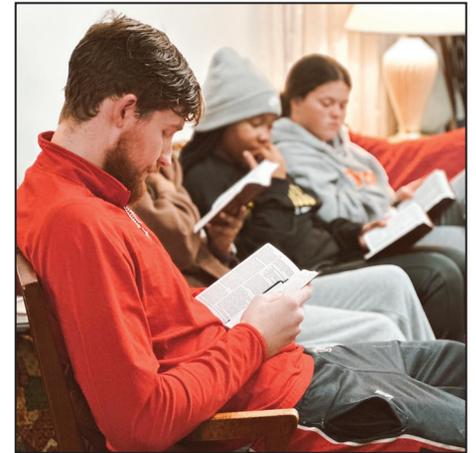
congregation in the Nashville area, and support several mission works. That Sunday, Mark McInteer was preaching. Mark is the CEO of 21st Century Christian Publishing. His theme was "Living a Life Acceptable to God." He talked about God's support in the storms of life and used several passages and songs to underline his theme. In Bible class, one of the elders, Amos Jones, lead the class in a discussion on evangelism. We went back Sunday night for a special singing and soup fellowship.

Update at the CSC: 34 students attended the last WNBS for November. Cory did a great job with his lesson on "The Art of Gratitude." He said that he and Mary Ashley feel blessed and grateful

to work with such a wonderful group of students and an amazing ministry to spread the marvelous light of Jesus Christ.

I received this report from Corey Ramsey about the Bible study Wednesday night January 15th at the CSC:

"Wednesday night at the Christian Student Center, I introduced this semester's theme: "the Fruit of the Spirit." We had 21 students in attendance. Galatians tells us about the fruits and explains the importance of reflecting Christ in our lives. We focused in on "joy" and how Christians can be joyful in all circumstances and hardships because of the hope in Jesus Christ. "Corey is now serving as an adjunct instructor for MDCC. He is teaching "Employment Readiness" on Monday/Wednesday. We are thankful that he has this opportunity. We pray it will open doors to the students." "A Messiah from a Small Town." **MM**



WNBS 2 student and bible

WHY DO GOOD PEOPLE SUFFER



Youth & Family

*by Greg Ledbetter, minister
North Brandon Church of Christ*

The question of why bad things happen to good people is one of life's most challenging mysteries. It strikes at the core of our understanding of God, justice, and the purpose of suffering. Job even struggled with this concept in Job 10:8-9, "Your hands fashioned and made me, and now you have destroyed me altogether. Remember that you have made me like clay; and will you return me to the dust?" From a biblical perspective, the answer lies in the reality of sin, the nature of God's control, and the hope of redemption.

The Bible explains that suffering entered the world through the sin of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3). God told them not to eat of the tree, and if they did, they should surely die. God had to do what He said He would do. He is a just God. So, when they disobeyed God, creation became corrupted, and pain, death, and brokenness became part of the human experience. This means suffering is not always a direct result of personal sin, but a consequence of living in a fallen world. Even the righteous are not exempt from hardship.

Jesus Himself reminded His followers, "In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

The story of Job provides a profound example of this truth. Job was described as "blameless and upright" (Job 1:1), yet he endured unimaginable suffering. He lost his wealth, health, and children—not because of his wrongdoing, but as part of a divine purpose he could not fully understand. Job wrestled with questions of justice and fairness, but he ultimately declared, "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). Job's story reveals that God's purposes are often beyond human comprehension. It also reminds us that faith does not require full understanding, but trust in God's wisdom and goodness.

The ultimate answer to the question of suffering is found in Jesus Christ. Jesus, the only truly sinless person, endured the most profound suffering imaginable—death on the cross. His suffering was not meaningless, but part of God's redemptive plan to save humanity. Isaiah 53:5 says, "He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed." Through His suffering, Jesus demonstrated God's deep love for humanity and His power to bring redemption out of pain.

Romans 8:28 assures believers that "in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him." While we may not always see or understand how God is working, we can trust that He uses suffering to refine our character, strengthen our faith, and draw us closer to Him. I believe with all my heart that suffering should remind us that this world is not our ultimate home. In Revelation 21:4, God promises that in Heaven, He will wipe away every tear, and there will be no more death, mourning, crying, or pain.

When bad things happen to good people, the Bible calls us to trust God's plan, even in the midst of confusion and pain. While we may not receive all the answers in this life, we can rest in the assurance of God's love, His purposes, and the eternal hope found in Christ. **MM**

The MAGNOLIA MESSENGERS / PREACHER SEARCH

■ MONTICELLO CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Monticello church of Christ in Monticello, AR, is seeking a full-time minister. We are a long established congregation here with four elders and nine deacons. Details of the position can be found on our website: <https://montcofc.org/about/news/2024/12/02/full-time-minister-search> Resumes and videos of preaching can be sent to monticellosearch@gmail.com

■ MUNFORD CHURCH OF CHRIST

We are looking for a well-grounded, full-time pulpit preacher. Ideal, but not necessary: middle aged married energetic man wanting to spread the gospel in a small growing town in west Tennessee. We have about 75 good active members with 2 elders and 3 deacons. Salary is open to experience. **Please send resume to Att. Elders, Munford Church of Christ, 435 S. Tipton Street, Munford, TN 38058, or e-mail to rahwoodshoe@gmail.com or call: Bob Holland 901-331-2**

■ NEW HOPE ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST

In Hendersonville, TN (suburb of Nashville), is in search of a full-time Minister. Our current minister will move to an associate's role. Our church size is approximately 60 to 75 members and an eldership is in place. Dedicated office hours are not required. This is a salaried position in mid \$50K range. Interested parties **contact Brian at carricobc@hotmail.com**

■ New life Behavioral instructional materials

"New Life Behavior" English Language curriculum is available to a congregation considering using this evangelistic material. NLB courses consist of 13 lessons and we have all 13 lessons. The lessons (approximately 144 letter-size pages in length). If interested in this free material, **contact the University Church of Christ in Montgomery, Alabama at 334-386-7320 and it will be shipped to you at no cost."**

■ CRYSTAL SPRINGS CHURCH OF CHRIST

Is seeking a minister for a congregation of about 45-55 regular members, meeting in the town of Crystal Springs, Mississippi. We are currently led by three elders along with four deacons. If you are interested in serving this community with us, please email your resume or other into to: mabridges1757@gmail.com or Call Mark Bridges at 601-941-3726 or John Mark Meadows at 601-260-5953.

■ CENTERVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

a small church in the middle of Alabama needs a working preacher to help grow a congregation now consisting of mostly of older Christians. **Please send a short resume to the church at 824 Montevallo Road, Centreville, AL. 35042.**

■ MIAMI FLORIDA CHURCH OF CHRIST

Looking for a preacher here in Miami, Florida, congregation of 30 to 45 members, suffering the passing of our own preacher recently. **Please feel free to contact Onofre Barrientos 305-951-8077.**

■ THE CALLAHAN CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Callahan, Florida, is seeking a full-time minister with a strong faith, who is doctrinally sound. Our congregation has approximately 55 members, led by a Christ-centered group of men. We wish to partner with an energetic servant of Christ in the work of the church. Our preference would be a married/family man but it is not required. Candidates with experience and advanced Theological/Biblical training will be preferred.

Primary duties will include preaching on Sunday mornings and Sunday nights, along with teaching adult bible classes on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. Other duties will include ministering to the sick and shut-in of the congregation, writing articles for the bulletin, preparing weekly bulletin as needed, and maintaining weekly office hours.

Please email an up-to-date resume along with a link to recent sermons and classes taught to preachersearch@callahanchurch.org

■ THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

In New Jersey is actively seeking a full-time minister. Approximately 125 diverse members led by elders and deacons. The primary responsibilities include preaching, teaching class, evangelizing in the community, and ministering to the family. The compensation includes housing. tcocpreachersearch@gmail.com.

■ COFFEEVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

A congregation of 45-50 members. Salary based on experience. House is provided.

John Allen 662-473-8702

Jim Peters 662-675-8623

■ THE CHRISTOPHER CHURCH OF CHRIST

Is seeking a minister for a congregation of about 33 members, located in southern Illinois. Salary is \$36,000 per year.

Please send resume to jurbanmail@gmail.com or call George Marshall at (618) 218-1401.

■ THE CLARKE COUNTY CHURCH OF CHRIST

is seeking a minister in Athens, located 70 miles from Atlanta. For more information, **visit clarkecountycoc.org.**

■ DEGAULLE DRIVE CHURCH OF CHRIST

4700 Degaulle Dr. Algiers, La. 70131. Looking for a sound, energetic, evangelistically-minded Gospel preacher. salary dependant upon experience. approx. 60 members. **Wesley Arabia 504-858-2881 aascreenglass@bellsouth.net**

■ THE EUPORA CHURCH OF CHRIST

Eupora, MS, is looking for a full-time preacher. We have approximately 42-51 that attend. We have a preacher's home. **huntpe@yahoo.com or text/call Paul Hunt 662-634-1651. However, I do prefer text messages.**

■ MERIDIAN CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Meridian church of Christ, located in Meridian, MS, is in search of a full-time minister.

E-mail Andy Duncan (Elder), hadunca62@gmail.com

Tom Fair(Elder), htfair1@gmail.com

■ CHURCH OF CHRIST McKEESPORT, PA

We are searching for a minister. One who is willing to work with a congregation of mostly older brothers and sisters in Christ. We have on average about 35 to 40 attendance Sunday morning, about 10 to 15 Sunday evening and Wednesday evening. We have a 4 bedroom house right at the building that we pay for the main utilities.

If interested contact Arnold Winter 412-225-5441

■ NURSES NEEDED MARCH 29-APRIL 5 GEN/GYN SURGICAL WEEK

Health Talents International is urgently seeking dedicated nurses to join us from March 29 to April 5, 2026, for a vital General and Gynecological surgical trip to Guatemala. This is an opportunity to make a profound impact on the lives of individuals and families, demonstrating the love and care that extends beyond physical healing. We invite you to participate in this transformative experience, working alongside a team committed to medical evangelism and collaborative service. **<susanmellor@healthtalents.org>**

■ HAPPY HAVEN CHILDREN'S HOME

has immediate openings for: HOUSE PARENTS (wife is the salaried employee, with housing, utilities, van, & other benefits provided; the husband is free to find employment or to preach locally).

Happy Haven exists to help young ladies in need of residential child care and is sponsored by churches of Christ & other interested individuals.

Please print off applications, fill out and return:

<http://www.happyhaven.org/documents/EmploymentApplication.pdf>

Office: 931-526-2052 Fax: 931-372-8837

happyhaven@frontiernet.net

Houston Bynum, Administrator.

■ WELSH CHURCH OF CHRIST

is seeking a full-time minister for a congregation of 15 plus members serving Welsh, La. .SWLA along I-10. We are a congregation of mostly older Christians, we are also sending out HTH - HTH, to 3 communities. We need someone faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ to help us evangelize these communities. **Please contact us and we can visit.**

Jerry @ 337.496.8992 e-mail gljackson@centurytel.Me,

Lewis @ 573.703.1243 e-mail lineberryc7@gmail.com , Orise

@ 337.458.2603

■ JOHNSON GROVE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Johnson Grove church of Christ in Bogue Chitto, Mississippi, is actively seeking to employ a full-time Associate/Youth minister but could be open to a bi-vocational person under the right circumstances. The primary focus will be ministering to our youth group of 20+ young people. **please email: Andrew Redd (Elder) aredd5268@gmail.com Douglas Kimble (Minister) dkpreach@bellsouth.net**

■ OXON HILL CHURCH OF CHRIST

is searching for a full-time minister. We have 50+ members. The position requires someone who is sound in biblical knowledge and has excellent communication and writing skills. **Contact: 1oxonhillcoc@gmail.com, or mail to Oxon Hill Church of Christ at 4201 Brinkley Road, Temple Hills, MD 20748.**

■ MEIGG STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST

a congregation of approximately 50 active members and located in Corinth, MS, is seeking a full-time minister to fill the position of current minister. **Submit resume and a video/ audio of a sermon to Meigg Street Church of Christ; P.O. Box 47, Corinth, MS 8834 by December 28, 2023. Paul Waddle: (662) 523-5708**

■ GEORGETOWN (SC) CHURCH OF CHRIST

seeking experienced minister. 100-member congregation with elders. Send resume with references, including training with recent video sermons, **by email or mail to Preacher Search Committee, Georgetown Church of Christ, P.O. Box 250, Georgetown, SC 29442 Email: GeorgetownCofCSearch@gmail.com**

■ ACADIANA CHURCH OF CHRIST

Looking for a part-time preacher in Lafayette, LA. We are a congregation of around 50 members. **If you are interested, contact us at office@acadiana.church.**

Roger G McCafferty Email: grmccaf@cox.net

■ MANKATO CHURCH OF CHRIST

is seeking mission-minded Christians in Minnesota. At this time, we are seeking part-time preachers, teachers, and general volunteers as we work to build a vocational ministry, starting with the focus in the city of Mankato, MN. **Mankato church of Christ <mankatochurchofchrist@gmail.com>**

■ ROCKY CREEK CHURCH OF CHRIST

Youth Minister Search. Contact: Rocky Creek Church of Christ in George County. **Stan James Email: Stanjames4him@gmail.com**

■ THE CORNERSTONE CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Baton Rouge, LA, is looking to grow its Youth Ministry. If you are humble, spiritual, and scriptural, we may be a good fit. **Please contact George Myer 225-229-5830**

■ DEFUNIAK SPRINGS COLLEGE AVE. CHURCH OF CHRIST

is looking for a replacement in the pulpit. **Contact: Mack Moore 850-892-5376 or email**

■ KINDER CHURCH OF CHRIST

We are looking for a sound, full-time preacher, married, energetic, willing to work with children of all ages, and be active in the community. We are a congregation of just under 40 members. We have 2 elders and 2 deacons. Kinder, Louisiana, 413 2 second Street. **Please email resume and references to Sbm eaves@yahoo.com or call Seth Eaves 337-302-4070**

The Digital Messenger



www.magnoliamessegermag.com

“ON THE ROAD AGAIN” with the Editor

Every year, one of three congregations hosts the Mississippi Delta Enrichment Series. This year, the Cleveland church of Christ in Cleveland, Mississippi, was the host congregation. I was privileged to speak at this event a few years ago, along with the great late Ken Joines. That was a wonderful day.

This year, brethren from thirteen neighboring congregations came to hear Aaron Gallagher. He is a regular speaker on the Gospel Broadcasting Network and gave an excellent defense of some of our fundamental beliefs.

I enjoyed meeting Charlie Garner, who attended the first Enrichment Series in the mid-1970s. Tim McCarter is the minister at Cleveland. His wife Debbie, along with all the ladies, provided us with an excellent lunch offering a wide selection of soup and chili. It was a good day!

Cleveland is a major city in the Mississippi Delta. It is home to Delta State University and the new Mississippi Grammy Museum.
-dd



Charlie Garner and Myself



Aaron Gallagher with Tim McCarter

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by Dennis Doughty “INSCRIPTIONS”

A Witty Quote

The British churchman, Thomas Fuller (1608-1661), was a scholar and prolific author. He was recognized for his witty quotes, one of which is literally engraved in stone, that reads,

**“ALL THINGS BEFORE THEY
WERE EASY WERE DIFFICULT.”**

Life always starts out difficult. Before walking was easy, it was difficult. Learning to ride a bike was difficult before it was easy. The first college term paper, the first day on the job, the first at-bat, the first day at boot camp; everything that scared us, stressed us, and challenged us became easier as we gained skill, knowledge, and experience.

Overcoming certain temptations is difficult at first, but as our faith in Christ grows stronger, we are more easily able to “resist the devil” and see him flee from us (James 4:7). Men, leading that first public prayer, or ladies teaching that first bible class, it was always difficult before it became easy. But never let us fear to do what we think is difficult. “For God gave us not a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7). Day-to-day life is difficult. A growing faith in God makes every day easier.

“It’s All Gone”

The fires in Los Angeles County are challenging to comprehend. Those who lost everything in the wind-whipped flames gazed in shock upon the ashes of their once beautiful homes. When asked, many could only reply, “It’s all gone.” Jesus can empathize, for he had no home either. “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head” (Matthew 8:20). After the fires, many were left with only the clothes on their backs. So too, Jesus possessed only the robe and tunic he was wearing when crucified. The soldiers cast lots to see who would get them (John 19:23-24).

The Californians lamented all the personal possessions they lost in the fires. Jesus taught that all we possess would eventually be lost to “moth, rust,” or “thieves.” Rather, “store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19-20). May all who have suffered this tragic event look to Jesus and be drawn closer to Him. We do not serve a Savior “who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). **MM**

“If you would like to receive Dennis’ weekly “Inscriptions,” column drop him a note at dennis1848@bellsouth.net.

These Sent In Answers to QB, Last Issue

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Mark Hayden | 68. Dee Kepler | 130. Nancy Akers | 197. Belinda Escoubas | 259. Michael Harvill |
| 2. John Brooks | 69. Sharon Huckaba | 131. Lucilla Lee | 198. Donna Steverson | 260. Seth Burnett |
| 3. Kristy Pipes | 70. Danny & Glenda
Wooldridge | 132. Bobbie Loggins | 199. Mary Lois Moore | 261. Aaron Williams |
| 4. Don Tays | 71. Evelyn Rushing | 133. Pat Shadle | 200. Carolyne Miller | 262. Levi Burnett |
| 5. Sue Fisher | 72. Jossiephene Spain | 134. Bobbie Clayborn | 201. Admiral & Ruth
Tidwell | 263. Makiyah Burnett |
| 6. Glenda Wilson | 73. Claranett Hathorn | 135. Mable Hodges | 202. Sherian Martin | 264. Jada Burnett |
| 7. Jim & Judy Hill | 74. Barbara Shanklin | 136. Randy Sartin | 203. George Lowrey | 265. Ryleigh Holliday |
| 8. Vera Spencer | 75. Gloria Wilborn | 137. Scotty Balentine | 204. Mary Mann | 266. Johnny Miller |
| 9. Ann Cockroft | 76. Vera Winfrey | 138. Carolyn Harvill | 205. Michael Hobson | 267. Michele Graves |
| 10. Rita Smith | 77. Vickie Comer | 139. Beulah Rupert | 206. Brenda Hobson | 268. Sue Mason |
| 11. Herschel Ford | 78. Barbara Rushing | 140. Ken Harris | 207. Mary Adams | 269. Annie Mae Pipkin |
| 12. Rosie Mae Felton | 79. Doyce Britt | 141. Ella McElroy | 208. Wanda Cochran | 270. Veartis Reed |
| 13. Charlene Jent | 80. Wanda Orman | 142. Jenny Chance | 209. Perkins Cochran | 271. Nellie Lester |
| 14. Linda Keirn | 81. Hilda Laster | 143. Jennifer Seal | 210. Ruby Nell
Parham | 272. Jane Barnett |
| 15. William Pyron | 82. Mary King | 144. Eva Almon | 211. Bonnie Holcomb | 273. Sheila Williams |
| 16. Sandra Watts | 83. Claudia Pullman | 145. Ellie Tackett | 212. Brenda Collums | 274. Linda Swan |
| 17. Lee Ehret | 84. Frederick Alan
Jones | 146. Mary Belle
Tackett | 213. Sarah Hill | 275. Mattie Ownes |
| 18. Maggie Edmonds | 85. Peggy Crouch | 147. Glenda Kees | 214. Patsy Moore | 276. Stehanie Slaydon |
| 19. Rachel Dover | 86. Beverly Miles | 148. Nancy Floyd | 215. Scott Floyd | 277. Dorothy Franks |
| 20. Claude Edwards | 87. Tommy Simpson | 149. Bertha King | 216. Peggy Jackson | 278. Earl Franks |
| 21. Mark Hayden | 88. Faye Stanford | 150. Roger King | 217. Stacey Mac
Hawkins | 279. Wes & Rhoda
Jeans |
| 22. Michele Graves | 89. Linda Cook | 151. Artis Hinton | 218. Melinda Ann
Hawkins | 280. Mike & Bobbie
Goodknight |
| 23. Fannie & Douglas
Johnson | 90. Yogie Spears | 152. Carolyn Jackson | 219. Gregory Mac
Hawkins | 281. Johnnie Franks |
| 24. Tishia Williams | 91. Peggy Wroten | 153. James Thornton | 220. Patricia Glover | 282. Alice Humphries |
| 25. Mary Ellen Patrick | 92. Johnnie Jumper | 154. Imogene Grayson | 221. Brenda Miles | 283. David Nalley |
| 26. Pam Bates | 93. Dorothy Brunson | 155. Christine Holliday | 222. Patricia Dukes | 284. Kevin Meredith |
| 27. Suzette Endris | 94. Sherron Dixon | 156. Julius Lee Wales | 223. Carolyn Ware | 285. Shirley Bostick |
| 28. Lisa McIntyre | 95. Earl & Judy
Von Dollen | 157. Patrilla Maddox | 224. Lincoln Hyatt | 286. LaShanda
Stringfield |
| 29. Kimberley
Easterling | 96. Channing
Ashbaugh | 158. Sherry Townsend | 225. Camille McCarver | 287. Alice Simmons |
| 30. Faye Stamps | 97. Betty Standard | 159. Kelly Key | 226. Cameron
McCarver | 288. Carla McKinney |
| 31. Garry Gooch | 98. Jeremiah & Shelia
Woodard | 160. Amy Hutson | 227. King McCarver | 289. Sarah Greene |
| 32. Laura Brannon | 99. Jeremiah
Woodard, Jr. | 161. Roscoe Slate | 228. Paul & Elsie
Bryson | 290. Mary Jo Barr |
| 33. Joyce King | 100. Ma'Nia & Bralan
Womack | 162. Sonya Tucker | 229. Damen Cochran | 291. Latisha Watson |
| 34. Sarah Dantzler | 101. Benris & Nicole
Womack | 163. Marie Lively | 230. Roxann Stewart | 292. Blaise Fernandez |
| 35. Sharon Dantzler | 102. Barbara Baker | 164. Sue Calloway | 231. Earlean Williams | 293. MacArthur
Mullins |
| 36. Mack Moore | 103. Madonna Cook | 165. Mary Lewis | 232. Glenda Jefcoat | 294. Anita Butler |
| 37. Joyce Hildenbrandt | 104. Dorothy Banks | 166. Carolyn Garrett | 233. Connie Vaughan | 295. Pam Cooper |
| 38. Becky Holley | 105. Evelyn Pritchard | 167. Carrie McGrone | 234. Mary Grigsby | 296. Rosie Lee Odoms |
| 39. Gayle Carlock | 106. Greg Ward | 168. Glen Skelton | 235. Brenda Redd | 297. Sandy Dean |
| 40. Lilli Davis | 107. LaCoyia Mitchell | 169. Rickey Tinsley | 236. Doris Darnell | 298. Frances Ketchum |
| 41. Phila Groce | 108. Chery Boudreaux | 170. Josephine Carter | 237. Greta Hare | 299. Linda Crochet |
| 42. Ann Hulsey | 109. Tom Ferguson | 171. Roy Gambrell | 238. Kittie Edwards | 300. Eldon Crochet |
| 43. Florine Riley | 110. William Free | 172. James Burden | 239. Don Lee | 301. Ann Cumberland |
| 44. Billy Willingham | 111. Steve Nelson | 173. Robert Burton | 240. Nan Conley | 302. Shirlene Wroten |
| 45. Ed Yancey | 112. Cathie Stephens | 174. Evelyn Netteville | 241. Rhea Forum | 303. Scott McKinney |
| 46. Pauline Jones | 113. John Brooks | 175. Betty Skinner | 242. Don & Madolyn
Ward | 304. Lola Tittle |
| 47. Mary Williams | 114. Gail Saxton | 176. Margaret Watson | 243. Judy
Vanlandingham | 305. Arvel Miles |
| 48. Glenda Alexander | 115. Gavin Dellinger | 177. Ruby Cameron | 244. Linda Ford | 306. Betty Miles |
| 49. Ted Teague | 116. Phyllis Spiers | 178. Vickie Hunter | 245. Rhenda Miltner | 307. Jimmy Dillinger |
| 50. Martha Freeman | 117. Steve Moore | 179. Katie Burns | 246. Terry Miltner | 308. LaRane Dillinger |
| 51. Kenny Schroeder | 118. Jean Lewis | 180. Emile & Peggy
Rollins | 247. Lillie Williams | 309. Charles
Rutherford |
| 52. Judith Carol Willis | 119. Trina Maddox | 181. Michael
Brotherton | 248. Averi McKinney | 310. Linda Matheny |
| 53. Stan
Neuenschwander | 120. Kathy Perry | 182. Jerry Fleming | 249. Carson Chandler | 311. Sid & Jean
Clemmer |
| 54. Claude Faught | 121. Exie Motes | 183. Ann Kimble | 250. Jon McKinney | |
| 55. Rick Bishop | 122. Margaret Teague | 184. Wm. & Atlean
Snow | 251. Carson Alexander | |
| 56. Dorothy Booker | 123. Jason, Maverick
& Shane French | 185. Carolyn Perry | 252. Brandi McKinney | |
| 57. Shelvie McGuire | 124. Barbara Skrobak | 186. Betty Bryant | 253. Ainsely McKinney | |
| 58. Sandy Rushing | 125. Bill Moore | 187. Joyce Yarbrough | 254. Elijah Tucker | |
| 59. Charlane Stanfield | 126. Joyce Reich Gray | 188. Betty VanBuren | 255. Jane Kuykendall | |
| 60. Ora Gladney | 127. Billye Wiygul | 189. Bernita Booker | 256. Missy Ivey | |
| 61. Paul Pounds | 128. Avie Clemons | 190. Jim Vermillion | 257. Barbara Cavalier | |
| 62. Tom McLemore | 129. Betty Bowdle | 191. Eddie Vermillion | 258. Rosa Sanders | |
| 63. Sylvester
& Linda Burton | | 192. Cheri Moore | | |
| 64. Rose Ard-Wess | | 193. Wilda Pounds | | |
| 65. Dennis McNairy, Sr. | | 194. Donny McKay | | |
| 66. Kimmola McNairy | | 195. Henry Norris | | |
| 67. Arthur Burnett | | 196. Steven Tutor | | |



**BIBLE
WINNER**

Stan
Neuenschwander

Pike Road, AL

312. Lessie Tanson
313. Peggy Vinson
314. Carla Schaadt
315. Nadine Patton
316. Doris Flecther
317. Joyce Stanberry
318. Charlotte
Vandiver
319. Nell Lawson
320. Jessie Allen
321. Clara Allen
322. Charlotte Ritter
323. Jerry Redd
324. Mary Turner
325. Clyde Bradford, Jr
326. Joyce Dunn
327. Luccile Clark
328. Bobby Marques
329. Will Reid
330. Jackie Drew
Hodges
331. Izabella Sistrunk
332. Brinley Moseley
333. Laken Gazaway
334. Millie Moseley
335. Bronlynn Nygard
336. Ember Nygard
337. Silas Nygard
338. Barry Cole
339. Melissa Tarver
340. Bonnie Dixon
341. Ida Tuggle Walls
342. Patricia Semon
343. Riyland McMillion
344. Ashley McMillion
345. Abrion Abrams
346. Rosie Taylor
347. Arielle Brown
348. Jean Cearley
349. Evelyn McArthur
350. Ruby King

**THE
MAGNOLIA MESSENGER
ADDRESSES**

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS:

Send info to:

glendafranks@yahoo.com

South Huntington Street
Church of Christ
P. O. Box 1578
Kosciusko, Mississippi 39090

Question Box - March 2025

Names and Descriptions of Satan (NKJV):

1. Genesis 3:4: Then the _____ said to the woman, "You will not surely die."
2. Matthew 4:1-3: "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the _____ . . .
Now when the _____ came to Him
3. Matthew 12:24: ". . . This fellow does not cast out demons except by _____, the
_____ of the demons."
4. Matthew 13:19: . . . then the _____ comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart.
5. Matthew 16:23: . . . Peter, 'Get behind Me, _____!
6. John 8:44: . . . your father the _____, . . . He was a _____ from the beginning. . . for he is a
_____ and the _____ of it (lies).
7. John 14:30: . . . for the _____ of this world is coming,
8. 2 Corinthians 4:4: . . . the _____ of this age
9. 2 Corinthians 6:15: Christ with _____
10. Ephesians 2:2: . . . according to the _____ of the
_____ of the air, the _____ who now works in the sons of disobedience,"
11. 1 Peter 5:8: . . . your _____ the devil walks about like A _____,
seeking whom he may devour.
12. Revelation 9:11: . . . had as king over them the _____ of the bottomless pit, whose name
in Hebrew is _____, but in Greek, he has the name _____.
13. Revelation 12:10: . . . have come, for the _____ of our brethren,

Please Send Your Answers To Us

(Print your name... Please. Thank you!)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

NOTICE: Each person who sends in answers will be recognized in the next issue of the "MM" (see page 31). ALSO, by random drawing, the name of ONE student will be selected to receive a beautiful New Study Bible.



"The Question Box"

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