Did you know God saved us by His grace,
and it was not according to our works?
(See II Timothy 1:9; Romans 9:11-13; Ephesians 2:8-9)

Will You Please Help

There are many ways you can help spread the truth of salvation by Grace and the Sovereignty of God. First, we need more Scriptural articles every month. We need more ministers to write. If every minister would send a written message of some of the sermons God has given him to preach, it would be a blessing to thousands of God's dear children. Second, we need more personal testimonies about the ways God is blessing your life. Every reader, young and old, could tell about a special way God has protected, provided for, or guided your life. Will you please write today? Thirdly, we need more financial contributions if you are able to help in this way. Since we place numerous magazines in Nursing Homes, hospitals, doctor's offices, libraries, and businesses, it takes extra help financially from those who want to help share the truth with others. Fourth, we need more people to help distribute magazines in local communities. If you could place magazines in your community, there is a box on the back of each magazine to put the name and address of the local church, name and phone number of the pastor, and the times of worship services. In addition to the above, we need your prayers. Please pause right now, and ask God to help, guide, and bless this effort to share the truth with others. If we all work together, we can help many of God's children rejoice in His AMAZING GRACE!

The Lukewarm Church

by Elder Greg Phillips
Chattanooga, Tennessee

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:15-16).

Laodicea was great and wealthy center of industry, famous for the fine black wool of its sheep and for the eye salve that was manufactured there. In the year 60 AD, the city was almost entirely destroyed by an earthquake, but so wealthy were its citizens that they rejected the aid of Rome, and quickly rebuilt the city at their own expense.

Little is known of the early history of Christianity there. The church seems to have been, as their city, wealthy in material things, and apparently was self-satisfied. Christ's message to the church indicates that they had an entirely mistaken view of themselves. The church thought itself to be well off and needing nothing. Our Lord declared it to be in a desperately bad condition, "… wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17). The Laodicean church needed to see herself as Christ saw her. In like manner, every church and every individual believer today needs to see themselves through the all-seeing eyes of our Lord.

Many in our politically correct age would probably not condemn the spirit of Laodicea so strenuously as Christ did. The modernist would probably see the tendency of the Laodiceans towards compromise as toleration and moderation, which, in their view, would indicate sound practicality, and showed that the church of Laodicea was well balanced. He would regard it as happy, well ordered and fitting in with the community. He would see money-making and material wealth as proof of success.

To Christ, all those characteristics were indicative of coldness of spirit that was fatal to the Christian character, the spirit of self-sacrifice and zeal.

The Church of Laodicea was entirely self-satisfied. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17). It had never seen its real condition: wretched, and miserable, and poor and blind and naked.

The Laodicean Church is the only one which is absolutely and wholly condemned. In the estimation of Christ, this was the poorest of all the seven churches of Asia. In two churches there was good with no mentioned faults. In four, good and bad were mixed together. In the church at Laodicea there was bad with no good mentioned. Not even a faithful remnant was left. Even Sardis, the dead Church, kept itself pure and white. There is nothing good spoken of the church of Laodicea. Advice is given, but there is no evidence that it will be taken.

Where is Christ in relation to this church? "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). Christ was shut out of His Own church, knocking for admittance. Since the church thought herself to "…have need of nothing" (Revelation 3:17), she saw no reason to seek Christ.

There is a similar picture in the Song of Solomon. "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night" (Song of Solomon 5:2). Between sleeping and waking the bride has been so slow to open the door, that when at length she does so, the Bridegroom has withdrawn, and she has need to seek for and to follow Him.

At the voice of the Bridegroom, the bride answers, "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" (Song of Solomon 5:3). In Bible type the coat often represents righteousness. While believers have the imputed righteousness of Christ, they are also commanded to live in a righteous manner. Isaiah's call to the Jews is a call to live righteously: "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean" (Isaiah 52:1). To take off the coat is to sink in carnal ease and rest, and lay aside vigilance.

The feet are often typical of our walk, our manner of living. The bride had washed her own feet, and feared to defile them. She was at ease, free from trouble, affliction, and persecution, and unwilling to arise and go with her beloved. To do so might bring trials and sufferings.

This is exactly the state of the church at Laodicea, and, sadly, most of professing Christianity today. We are at peace with the world. Yes, we see some growing hostility from the world, and pay lip service to it, but no one seems to be terribly concerned. "I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?"

It would be foolish to seek persecution, and believers are certainly not to be controversial simply for the sake of controversy. The simple fact, however, is that the world hates Christ and will hate all that stand with Him. If we are not willing to stand with Him, regardless of the consequences, we are not worthy to be called by His name.

Christ said, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:16). Their condition nauseated the Lord. One writer has said, "If religion is worth anything, it is worth everything; an indifference here is inexcusable." This half-hearted condition drives the Lord away from His Church. He will not stay

either in the Church or the individual who loves him with half or less than half a love. We do not care to stay where we are not really welcome, and our Lord will not stay where His presence is no longer cherished.

One writer has said that the region around Laodicea abounded with springs of water. Some, he said, were cold and refreshing to the weary travelers who found them. There were also hot springs that would soothe and help heal weary and injured bodies. A lukewarm spring would have no benefit at all.

The only positive thing we find in Christ's message to the Laodiceans is that the church is not yet dead, even if in danger of dying. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19). The fact that Jesus is rebuking and chastening this church is evidence that He still loves her. The call to repentance is evidence that there is still space to repent (Revelation 2:21).

The living Saviour said, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). Though locked out of His Own church, He has not yet abandoned her. "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Psalm 86:15).

The longsuffering Lord is beautifully pictured in Song of Solomon 5:2, "... Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." The Bridegroom is pictured as having stood in the darkness so long that His hair is soaked with the dew. Even denied entry so long, He still calls to His beloved, "...Open to me."

Though longsuffering, Christ will not call always. "I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer" (Song of Solomon 5:6). The bride would eventually find the Bridegroom, but only after great difficulty. "The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me" (Song of Solomon 5:7).

To the church at Laodicea, however, there is evidence that when the Lord's longsuffering ended, there would be no hope of recovery. "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:16). The image here is quite strong, and shows the deep disgust Christ had at the indifference of the church at Laodicea. The picture seems to indicate that they would be utterly rejected and cast off as a church.

Jesus said, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:18-19). Again here is an assurance that his love is not yet withdrawn. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." There is still an opportunity to repent. They are called on to be zealous. "He that would be warm must keep near the fire." Drawing nearer to Christ and His cross will fan the embers into flame. The church is called on to repent. Repentance is not to be a one-time event, but a continual process. They are called upon to have all their need supplied by the Saviour, the Source of true wealth. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Revelation 3:18).

The Laodicean Church must recognize that it is blind, though not yet incurably blind. It is suffering from disease and needs medical treatment, but the physicians of the world can do nothing for it. It is the world that has brought on the blindness. Laodicea was famous for the production of a mineral powder which was made into a salve for the eyes and was used all over the civilized world. That salve would be useless for their kind of blindness. Only eyesalve of the Saviour could heal their blindness.

This church was rich in the material things of the world, though "... wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind," to the eyes of Him to Whom "... all things are naked and opened" (Hebrews 4:13).

The only true wealth is in "gold tried in the fire" provided by Christ, the rich spiritual blessings which Christ will give to those who look to him.

Laodicea's wools were famous and their garments were likely of the finest quality in man's estimation. Those garments, however, did not cover "the shame of thy nakedness." Christ offers infinitely better white raiment.

If the Laodiceans were in fact "… wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (v. 17), how could they buy? They could buy "…without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1) by simply opening the door to Christ and trading their own self-sufficiency for the All Sufficient Saviour. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:7-8). Everything, absolutely everything, that would separate us from a loving relationship with Christ must be sacrificed on the cross of self-denial.

We buy of Christ at the price of suffering persecution and afflictions for the sake of truth. We are called to faithfulness and steadfastness at all costs, even to martyrdom.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). Any man, any individual, who hears and opens will enjoy communion with the Saviour.

The conditions at Laodicea were the worst of the seven Churches, and yet perhaps the greatest of all the promises are made to them, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne…" (Revelation 3:21).

Christ, Who threatened to spue out of His mouth the lukewarm church, now offered a seat with Him on His throne to the over-comer. Richard C. Trench wrote, "…the highest place is within reach of the lowest; the faintest spark of grace may be fanned into the mightiest flame of divine love."

The image here is not that of sitting upon seats on the right hand or on the left of Christ's throne (Matthew 20:21), but of sharing that throne itself. As children of God, we are "…heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17). As over-comers, we experience the blessings of that relationship.

Grow in Knowledge

1. "Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his_____."

2. "The like figure whereunto even _____ doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

3. "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ that his _____ was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

4. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his _____ mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

5. "Being _____ that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead."

6. "That I may know Him, and the _____ of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death."

7. "And with _____ power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."

8. "For if we have been _____ together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."

9. "Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks _____ him, And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection."

10. "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were _____, yet shall he live."

SLOW DANCE

Anonymous

Have you ever watched kids
On a merry-go-round?
Or listened to the rain
Slapping on the ground?
Ever followed a
butterfly's erratic flight?
Or gazed at the sun into
the fading night?
You better slow down.
Don't dance so fast.
Time is short.
The music won't last.
Do you run through each day
On the fly?
When you ask How are you?
Do you hear the reply?

When the day is done
Do you lie in your bed
With the next hundred chores
Running through your head?
You'd better slow down
Don't dance so fast.
Time is short.
The music won't last.
Ever told your child,
We'll do it tomorrow?
And in your haste,
Not see his sorrow?
Ever lost touch,
Let a good friendship die
Cause you never had time
To call and say,'Hi'

You'd better slow down.
Don't dance so fast.
Time is short.
The music won't last...
When you run
so fast to get somewhere,
You miss half the fun
of getting there.
When you worry and hurry
through your day,
It is like an unopened
gift....Thrown away.
Life is not a race.
Do take it slower!
Hear the music
Before the song is over.

Do You Need Directions?

by Elder Jason S. Solomon
Cumming, Georgia

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

Lost

It is a familiar story. You are traveling down the road in unfamiliar territory. After several attempts, your wife finally convinces you to pull over at the next gas station to ask for directions. You continue driving and driving and driving, not knowing where you are going, but hoping to find some place to get directions. You are running late as it is, and it is getting dark. The farther you go without directions, the later and later you are going to be.

I think we all know that feeling. You thought you knew where you were going. You thought that it would be easier, and that there would be signs. Only when you have gotten off the highway, far away from anyone to ask, do you find that you need directions. While it is possible you could make your way back from where you came, you have no idea how to move effectively forward. You are essentially lost!

This feeling happens to most everyone. You do not have to be driving in the middle of nowhere to experience it. Why? Because we are lost in sin and doomed without God. Like the stubborn driver in the middle of no-where, we just keep going, believing we will figure it out on our own. We don't want any help, and we don't even believe we need any help. Only if we realize our mistakes (sins) do we admit that we need help. Some just give up, turn around and go back home abandoning the goal, but they miss out on the blessing.

The Situation

We need direction. No child ever learns to love without being shown love (1 John 4:19). It is simply not in us. So too, we must be enlightened by the Light of Christ to see the path of righteousness, and only God can show us the way. If we are to find direction and true enlightenment, it must come from God. *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures"* (James 1:17-18).

The lesson here is two-fold. For one, all men start out as sinners without God. Without God's saving, regenerative grace, we will continue going through life in sin without any hope. This situation is more like a man dead in the ditch as opposed to one who has merely lost his way. One is without hope while the hope of the other rests in Jesus. In order to understand Jesus, we first need to be spiritually alive. Just as God is the one who can give us mortal life, only He can give us a new heart and new eternal life. Only then can we receive direction. If you haven't noticed, dead men are not good listeners.

However, despite being made alive, God's children still stray into sin because we are changed spiritually and not yet physically. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:10). Therefore, the born-again, regenerated child of God, relates well to the lost driver. When we set out in life without properly seeking God's guidance, we end up directionless and adrift.

This is what happened to the prodigal son, but when he "came to himself" (as if he had been knocked out), he realized his great error and sin. Like all of God's children, he was once dead and lost, but when he returned to his father's house, he came humbly seeking refuge and forgiveness, knowing his lost condition. *"And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry"* (Luke 15:21-24).

The difference between the spiritually "dead" sinner and the spiritually "living" sinner lies in the way they are able to react to their sinfulness. The dead man in the ditch is simply dead. On the other hand, if God's children repent from sin and turn toward God, He will forgive and set them back on the right path of truth.

When you get lost, you look for either a map or someone to give you directions or both. It is such a relief to hear that you are not that far… just a few more turns… just a few more miles. Such is the relief of those words, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Ah, what sweet peace for the troubled mind of the child of God. Knowing that God requires and accepts our repentance because of the work of Jesus Christ is incredibly comforting. Jesus not only paid the ransom for the sin of the Church, He sits at the right hand of the Father as intercessor for the Church continually. This is the truth of the Gospel.

The Guide

As if it were not enough that God has all knowledge, all power, and sovereignty over all of creation, He descended to earth as a man, His Son,

to live, breathe, and face temptation as man. Not only did the Anointed One of God come in the form of a man to die in the place of God's children, He lived among us teaching and preaching, working miracles and forgiving sin. Hallelujah, what a Savior!

With this truth in mind, it is fascinating to read the Gospels, realizing that Jesus knew every thought, every word, and every deed of everyone He encountered. Hearing the whispers of the Pharisees and the scribes, He tolerated them. Knowing the doubts of the disciples and their human frailties, He taught them still. Knowing the moments leading up to His gruesome sacrificial death, He persisted to the end. If that is not worthy of attention and praise, then nothing is.

The beloved disciple, John, who gave us the Gospel bearing his name, introduces the person of Christ, saying, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth"* (John 1:1-4,14).

God's commands, His testimonies, His spoken will became flesh and dwelt among us. What do you think of that? God stepped down out of heaven onto the earth as Jesus Christ. Just thinking of it sends chills down my spine. We should be shaken to our core every time we think about Him, the Savior, the Son, the King.

So, when you pull over on the back road of life, lost and desperate, it is Jesus that gives you directions. It is Jesus that tells you where you went wrong. He takes out the map and shows you where you need to go from here.

The next time you pick up your Bible, just remember that Jesus listens. He knows where you are and where you need to be. Now listen to Him. He will show you where to put your feet, and shine a light upon the path ahead.

Answers to Grow In Knowledge

1. Resurrection - Acts 1:22
2. Baptism - I Peter 3:21
3. Soul - Acts 2:31
4. Abundant - I Peter 1:3
5. Grieved - Acts 4:2
6. Power - Philippians 3:10
7. Great - Acts 4:33
8. Planted - Romans 6:5
9. Encountered - Acts 17:18
10. Dead - John 11:25

The Bible

When I am tired,
the Bible is my bed,
Or in the dark,
the Bible is my light.
When I am hungry,
it is vital bread,
Or fearful, it is armor
for the fight.
When I am sick,
'tis healing medicine,
Or lonely, thronging
friends I find within.

If I would work,
the Bible is my tool,
Or play, it is a harp
of happy sound.
If I am ignorant,
it is my school,
If I am sinking,
it is solid ground.
If I am cold,
the Bible is my fire,
And wings, if boldly
I despire.

Should I be lost,
the Bible is my guide,
Or naked, it is raiment,
rich, and warm.
Am I imprisoned,
it is ranges wide,
Or tempest-tossed,
a shelter from the storm.
Would I adventure,
'tis a gallant sea,
Or would I rest,
it is a flowery lea.

Amos R. Wells

The Age of the Earth

by Elder Richard Williams
Zephyrhills, Florida

The genealogies of the Bible in the book of Genesis give us a record of the beginnings of man from Adam to Abraham. Furthermore, the historical events of Israel are summarized in scripture from Abraham to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylon captivity. The Scriptures, accepted history, and our current calendar brings us to the birth of Jesus (BC), the death of Jesus (AD), and to the current age of the Earth which is approximately 6013 years. Below are the scriptures, book, verse and event. As your read, remember that: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16 17).

Verse	**Event**	**Age**	
Gen 1:1-2:4a	Creation in six days	0 yrs	
5:3	Adam 130, Seth born	130 yrs	
5:6	Seth 105, Enos born	235 yrs	
5:9	Enos 90, Cainan born	325 yrs	
5:12	Cainan 70, Mahalaleel born	395 yrs	
5:15	Mahalaleel 65, Jared born	460 yrs	
5:18	Jared 162, Enoch born	622 yrs	
5:21	Enoch 65, Methuselah born	687 yrs	
5:25	Methuselah 187, Lamech born	874 yrs	
5:28	Lamech 182, Noah born	1056 yrs	
11:10	Noah 502, Shem born	1558 yrs	
7:6	Flood when Noah 600	1656 yrs	
11:10	Shem 100, Arphaxed born	1658 yrs	
11:12	Arphaxed 35, Salah born	1693 yrs	
11:14	Salah 30, Eber born	1723 yrs	
11:16	Eber 34, Peleg born	1757 yrs	
11:18	Peleg 30, Reu born	1787 yrs	
11:20	Reu 32, Serug born	1819 yrs	
11:22	Serug 30, Nahor born	1849 yrs	
11:24	Nahor 29, Terah born	1878 yrs	
11:32; 12:4	Terah 130, Abraham born	2008 yrs	
12:4	Abraham leaves Haran, 75	2083 yrs	
Gen 12:10	Israelites live in Egypt for		
Ex 12:40	430 years	2513 yrs	
Gal 3:17			
I Kl 6:1	Solomon builds the Temple		
	479 full years after the Exodus	2992 yrs	
I Kl 11:42	Solomon dies, the Kingdom is		
	divided, 37 years later	3029 yrs	
Eze 4:4-6	Ruled by kings, Jerusalem		
	Destroyed, 390 years later	3419 yrs	
	Jerusalem's Destruction 584 BC	4003 yrs	
	(accepted historical date)		
	Present date 2010	6013 yrs	**Total**

In the above record of history, the scriptures establish the age of the earth at just over six thousand years. By the authority of the word of God, we have the Biblical record of the age of the earth. So why do we hear so much about millions or billions of years? In most every type of media today, we hear of "millions" or "billions" of years. Even in children's cartoons, these false ideas are reflected. Millions of years are not taught in the Bible. Up until the late 1700's, the Genesis account was largely accepted as the truth of the origin of all creation. Where did the idea come from that the earth is billions of years old?

Things started to change about the time geologist Charles Lyell finished his work called "Principles of Geology" in 1833. His writings were an attempt to explain the former changes in the surface of the earth. The central theme of his work was that geological change came about as the steady accumulation of minute changes over enormously long spans of time. This theme became increasingly popular and is widely accepted by secular science today. Lyell's work denied catastrophic geological events. He denied the Biblical account of the Flood of Noah's day, which was a major catastrophic geological event. With the influence of Lyell, the science in today's schools and universities teaches that all creation can be explained by time, chance, and natural processes. This thinking excludes God from creation and denies that He is the creator. In fact, as far as secular science is concerned, God does not exist.

The apostle Peter spoke against this type of thinking.

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (II Peter 3:3-7).

Peter warns us of those that would not believe the word of God. He warned us of those that refute God's very existence. Peter tells us about scoffers motivated by their own lust and not by reverence of God or to the truth of His word. He calls them scoffers because they mock, deride, and scorn those that believe that God created all things in six days just over 6000 years ago, as the Bible teaches. The scoffers claim that Bible believers are ignorant. Paul says about this unrighteousness of men that, "they are without excuse." "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:" (Romans 1:20). David said, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 14:1). These scoffers (Peter says in verse 5) are willingly ignorant of the Flood with which God judged the world that then was, which perished. Praise God that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Scoffers set "nature and its so-called laws" above the God of nature and what He has revealed in creation. Their philosophy is that the earth remains the same with minute changes happening over long periods of time (millions of years). The evidence we see is that the world has changed, but the changes have taken place more quickly.

Peter speaks of the world that was then (time of the flood), and also the heavens and the earth which are now. He makes a difference of the "then" world and "now" world, because we live in a much different world today than God created in the beginning. We live in a world that shows the evidence of God's judgment for sin. Adam's sin was judged by God. Paul says "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" (Romans 5:12). There was no death until Adam sinned. The curse of Death passed on all living creatures. We even see corruption in the plants when God cursed the ground and said that it would bring forth thorns and thistles (Genesis 3:17-18).

God also judged the world by the Flood and, in doing so, changed the earth. The Flood was not just forty days and forty nights of rain. We are told in Genesis 7:11, "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were **all the fountains of the great deep broken up,** and the **windows of heaven were opened.**" "Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered" (Genesis 7:20). "And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days" (Genesis 7:24). "God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged." This word asswaged describes the receding of the water to expose the mountains and dry land. (Genesis 8:1). "And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen" (Genesis 8:3-5). "And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried" (Genesis 8: 13-14). Noah and his family were in the ark for over one year when God told them that they could depart out of the ark. There was much more than rain going on during the Flood of Noah's time. It was more

like earthquakes, tsunamis, and rapid drainage.

Read Psalm 104: 5-9. Here, the Bible further explains where all the water went. God explains that He made the mountains higher and valleys lower. After the flood, the mountains were higher and the oceans deeper. He also set the bound of the water so that they would never turn again to cover the earth. The flood also created billons of dead things buried in rock layers laid down by water all over the earth. The flood explains the fossils that are found buried in the earth. The Flood of Noah's time explains why we have places like the Grand Canyon.

Peter concludes in II Peter 3:7 by teaching us that the same power of God which created the world keeps it in being, and will keep it until the time appointed for His judgment by fire.

Modern science gives us a lot of great man-made things such as airplanes, cars, computers and more, but it fails in its attempt to answer how and when the earth was created. It mainly fails it excludes God from creation. Paul wrote, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:" (I Timothy 6:20). The philosophy of millions or billions of years is not science! It is just a false theory some men have. It is as Paul said, "science falsely so called." Some may say, "Does it really matter when or how the heavens and earth were created?" Well Jesus put it this way; "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John 3:12).

There is much evidence that Creation Science teaches that supports the young age of the earth. Hold to the truths of God's word. It is God "which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is" (Psalm 146:6).

* * * \

All the Way

by Elder Marty Smith
Roswell, Georgia

Ephesians 5:

[22] Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

[23] For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

[24] Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

[25] Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

[26] That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

[27] That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

[28] So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

If a man is attracted to a woman, and she to him, why not just have an affair? If length of time is the issue, why not just live together? Often, the question is put this way, "Can a license issued by a man-made government make a wrong relationship right? Consider how many official marriages end in bitter divorces with protracted legal battles. Isn't our love the main thing - that we are in a committed relationship? How will a piece of official paper make it more beautiful? Won't it actually diminish the beauty?"

These questions are often asked seriously, and if so, should be answered seriously. It is an age where same-sex "marriage" is seriously debated, and the North American Man Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) and Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender (GLBT) groups are viable organizations. In such times, calm, serious answers are needed – answers that communicate to the emotion and the reason, and that harmonize with the Bible.

Many years ago, Frank Sinatra recorded a song that became a hit, and started this way:

"When somebody loves you
It's no good unless he loves you - all the way
Happy to be near you
When you need someone to cheer you - all the way"

In fact, the expression "all the way" became a slang term synonymous with "having sexual intercourse". One problem is, however, that merely having sexual intercourse is not going "all the way". Living together for twenty years is not going "all the way". These relationships only risk some emotional pain, and perhaps disease, unwanted pregnancy, or a change of living quarters. Marriage risks all of that, and more. Marriage also risks loss of property, loss of custody, loss of time with children and grandchildren, loss of holidays together, and loss of things that are fairly difficult to even articulate. Marriage risks time spent in care for the sick or injured partner. Marriage not only risks saying good-bye in the funeral home, it plans to do it.

The Holy Spirit shines a clear light on the nature of a sexual relationship that pleases God. It involves large risk. A woman has to take a great chance to submit herself to a particular man that she takes as her husband. A man has to take a great chance to give himself to a particular woman that he takes as his wife.

But great achievements often involve risk. A farmer risks his labor to raise a crop. A fisherman risks his safety to bring in a catch. An entrepreneur risks his investment to build a business. Moses risked his life to stand before Pharaoh. David risked his life to challenge Goliath. Elijah risked his life to confront Ahab. Peter risked his life to defy the Sanhedrin. James lost his life preaching the gospel.

True love - love that goes "all the way," ought to risk great loss. It ought to risk hiring the lawyers and facing financial ruin. It ought to risk the days without being with beloved children. It ought to risk great emotional damage. If it's going all the way, it must be marriage.

Marriage between a man and a woman is the only two-person relationship that can last a lifetime and carry with it the possibility of new life.

Marriage risks great loss in hope of great blessing, and is both humbler and bolder than any other sexual connection. Part of what is wrong with an affair, or living together, is that it is timid, cowardly, and lacks daring. It may be well-intended at the start, but always leaves the exit door wide open, and actually prepares to be like a soldier who marches bravely to the battlefield but who later deserts and leaves his friends under fire. An unmarried sexual relationship is a watered-down, weak, pale facsimile of what real love ought to be.

One can certainly find scripture to show that marriage is what God commands for the man and woman who wish to become one flesh. Consider the Old Testament: "And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife" (Exodus 22:16). Consider the New Testament: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4).

One can find the best example of true love in God Himself. Before He came for His bride, he made a promise – even before the world began. He made a covenant. He then had his covenant, or Testament, written down officially, in the Bible. And then the bridegroom, Jesus Christ, came to the place where His bride dwelt, and He gave Himself for her. Jesus went all the way! So should we!

We Need Men Who Are Full!

by Elder Williams M. Mullis
Waycross, Georgia

When God told Noah to build the ark, God gave him a specific pattern, a blueprint, as to the dimensions, materials, and manner in which he was to build the ark. The Lord also told Noah who and what was to be able to go into the ark. When God told Moses to make the tabernacle, He told him to be sure that he made "all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Hebrews 8:5). The details of the dimensions, materials, and manner in which it was to be made was described by God in detail. He also told Moses who could enter the tabernacle, as well as what was required of a qualified individual before he could go into the tabernacle. God did no less when He established His Church.

If a congregation (Church) follows the pattern given in the word of God, the Lord will dwell with them, manifest His presence, and "add to the Church daily such as should be saved." When a Church lives according to her own desires rather than following God's order and pattern, He warns the Church. Look at Revelation 2 and 3, as well as letters to the Churches (such as Corinth) to see some of the stern warnings God gives to Churches when they walk in their own way rather than following His way! Many local churches are dead today because God has removed His candlestick as a result of the people refusing to follow the instructions given in the word of God.

One of the many important governmental instructions God gives the Church is the choosing of men who are to take care of serving the tables of widows. By the way, there is no other Scriptural function of deacons than that one work of serving the tables of widows. They are NOT to be a board that rules over the Church or rules over the pastor! If Noah had not followed the pattern given to him in building the ark, the ark would have sunk. Churches that do not follow God's instructions, but come up with a "better way," will sink to the lowest form of religious institutions. "…it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (see Matthew 5:13). God says to the Church of Laodicea, "…I will spue thee out of my mouth" (see Revelation 3:16). It is His Church, not ours. We must follow His house rules, not make up our own, or alter His rules to adjust to our desires or the age in which we live! The qualifications for one to be baptized, or for Church membership, or for being set aside as a deacon, or for being ordained as an elder or bishop, have not changed since the Scriptures were given relative to those matters. It is to our own destruction if we fail to follow His word.

In Acts 6:1-4, we read, "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." One of the men chosen was a man named Stephen. The word of God tells us that Stephen was a man that was full! We need men who are full of the same things Stephen had in him. Looking at Acts 6 and 7, we see that Stephen was full of faith, full of the Holy Ghost, full of power, full of wisdom, full of light, full of the word of God, full of courage, full of love, and full of forgiveness! We need men who are full of the same qualities in the Church today.

FULL OF FAITH (Acts 6:5)

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Hebrews 11 tells us of men and women who were "full of faith" as they did what God told them to do. They pleased God when they walked by faith and lived by faith. He rewarded each of them for their faithful walk and obedience. When children of God are not strong in faith, He rebukes them as He did His disciples and says, "O ye of little faith" (Matthew 6:8; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8). There is a difference in having "little faith" and being "full of faith." Stephen was "full of faith!" It takes great faith to follow Jesus. The Church needs men, women, and children today who are "full of faith." If they are full of faith, they will also be full of good works. James 2:17-18 says, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." Looking at those in Hebrews 11 helps us to see that faith and works are inseparable. One of the great needs in the Church today is men who are full of faith!

FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST (Acts 6:5)

There is a difference in being "full of the Spirit," or full of the Holy Ghost, and being "born" of the Spirit, or "born" of the Holy Ghost. Children of God are only "born" of the Spirit once. Just as the natural birth takes place once in our lifetime, the spiritual birth takes place but once. When we were dead in trespasses and sins, God came to us, quickened us, made us alive spiritually, caused us to be "born" of the

Spirit or "born again" (see Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:1-8). AFTER we have been "born" of the Spirit, we are taught how to live and serve God. When we walk in obedience to His teachings and commandments, we then are "filled with the Spirit." The Scripture declares that God gives the Holy Ghost to them that obey Him (Acts 5:32). Faith is given to children of God when they are "born of the Spirit." As they walk by faith in humble obedience to His word and way, He then fills them with His Spirit. Though we are "born" of the Spirit once, we may be "filled" with the Spirit many times! The closer we walk with God, the more we will be "filled with the Holy Ghost!" Stephen was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 6:5). Paul asked the saints at Ephesus, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" (Acts 19:2). We need men like Stephen in the Church today: men full of the Holy Ghost!

FULL OF FAITH AND POWER (Acts 6:8)

In Acts 6:8, we find the word of God says that Stephen was full of faith and power! We have already looked briefly at being full of faith, but now the Scripture adds, "full of power!" I believe the word of God teaches that when we are full of the Holy Ghost, we are also full of power. Remember the words of Jesus in Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." We need to be full of power to be witnesses, power to stand boldly in the presence of strong opposition, power to speak the truth. When Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth, he said, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (I Corinthians 2:4-5). Where is the demonstration of the Spirit and of power in preaching today? Where is the Holy Ghost? Stephen preached with boldness in Acts 7 because he was full of power and of the Holy Ghost! We need men who are full of power in the Church today!

FULL OF WISDOM AND THE SPIRIT (Acts 6:10)

Oh how we all need wisdom! We need more wisdom. We need to be FULL of wisdom! "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (James 1:5-6). Look carefully at those two verses and I think you will see that we have to have faith before we can get wisdom! There is a major difference in worldly wisdom and wisdom from God. Please prayerfully study James 3:14-18 to see the difference. God's word says, "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom" (see Proverbs 28:28). Jesus teaches that it is those who hear His sayings and DO them that are wise (see Matthew 7:24-27). God tells us that obtaining wisdom is better than rubies, silver, or gold (see Proverbs 3:13-14; 8:11). Stephen was a man full of wisdom! Oh how we need men full of wisdom in the pulpit, as well as in the pew!

FULL OF LIGHT (Acts 6:15)

It is wonderful to see people so full of the Spirit of God that their faces glow with the light of God. God is light. Do you remember how the face of Moses shone when he came down from the mountain after being in God's manifest presence? Here we read of the council seeing Stephen's "face as it had been the face of an angel." Though Satan is sometimes transformed into an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:14) to deceive God's people, it is a great blessing to see those in the Church who are full of light! "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:" (Ephesians 5:8). When the Church is what she should be, and the people of God are letting their lights so shine before men as they should, then the Church is as a city set upon a hill whose light cannot be hid. If our focus is on God (our "eye" is single), our whole body shall be full of light! (See Matthew 6:22.) May God help us all to do what is necessary to be full of light, then our faces will glow as if it was the face of an angel!

FULL OF THE WORD OF GOD (Acts 7)

While studying Acts 6 and 7 in the past few days, I have questioned whether I could give as thoroughly accurate and detailed history of God's dealings with the children of Israel as Stephen did in Acts 7. He knew the Scriptures! He often quoted them! He was full of the word of God! Stephen knew God's dealings with His people in the Old Testament. I wonder if I could even give as detailed a description of The New Testament, or even the life of Jesus! I am not as full of the word of God as Stephen was. Being full of the Word of God gives us strength, encouragement, power, comfort, joy, and everything we need in this life. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Many of the Old Testament writers describe the importance of the word of God to them (especially David). They loved the word: it was precious to them; more important than gold, silver, rubies; even more important than necessary food! We need men in the pulpit, and people in the pews who are full of the word of God. We need people daily walking in such a way that they show they are full of the word of God. Our founding fathers in America were full of the word of God, and it showed in their writings, their walk, their words, and in their wisdom! God blesses His people in special ways when they are full of the word of God! FILL UP!

FULL OF COURAGE (Acts 7:51-53)

Much like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Stephen was bold while speaking to those who seemingly had the power to take his life. No fear of

men! He did not beat around the bush. He did not let them wonder if he was talking about someone else. He was blunt and to the point. There are too many times today that people are just as ungodly and stiff-necked as those to whom Stephen was speaking, but preachers will not boldly proclaim the truth and cause God's people to know their transgressions (Isaiah 58:1). Old Testament men of God, New Testament men of God, and true men of God today are full of courage. They follow and preach the word of God without trying to keep people happy. If people of God are offended by the word of God, the people need to repent. If people are walking contrary to God's word, but do not know it because preachers have failed to confront them clearly with their sins, the people will perish, and the blood of those people will be on those who were afraid to speak the truth to them! One of the first lessons Jesus taught His Apostles was, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). Jesus and His faithful servants fear God, not men. They are full of courage and boldness!

FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST EVEN WHEN BEING PERSECUTED (Acts 7:55)

It is one thing to be full of the Holy Ghost when there is no persecution, but quite a bit more difficult when being slaughtered! "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Peter 2:19-23). Can you think of anyone who was more like Jesus than Stephen while being persecuted? What a man of God!!! Being full of the Holy Ghost, he "looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55-56). He saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God! When he told what he saw, it made the people even madder, and they stoned him (see verses 56-59)!

FULL OF CONFIDENCE IN GOD (Acts 7:59)

Nearing death, having completed his work, Stephen said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." How wonderful to have no fear of death: to know your spirit is about to be in the presence of God! To be able to actually be dying and say as Paul wrote, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:55-57). Faith and confidence no matter what is happening is an evidence one is full of confidence in God. To be able to say as Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him" (Job 13:15). And Job later showed his confidence in God again when he said, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:25-27). I think when the people of God have been full of faith, full of the Holy Ghost, full of power, full of wisdom, full of light, full of the word of God, and full of courage while they have been daily serving the Lord, when the day of death comes, they will be full of confidence in God, and have great peace in saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

FULL OF LOVE (Acts 7:60)

Of all the commandments Jesus ever gave, to me the most difficult to keep is "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). Sometimes, I have trouble even loving my neighbor as myself, and loving my wife as Christ loves the Church! But to love my enemies is extremely difficult! I know Jesus did it while hanging on the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). But for a mortal man to fulfill Matthew 5:44 is very rare. But it is possible with God's help! Stephen did it! He actually loved his enemies and prayed for them!!! One will have to be completely FULL of love to do that. When we are born of the Spirit, God gives us the ability to love. As we grow spiritually, that love will grow! If we keep growing, one day we can be so full of love that we too can even pray for our enemies, even if they are putting us to death!

FULL OF FORGIVENESS (7:60)

Sometimes it is easier to forgive than at other times. It is in those difficult times that we especially need to remember how much God has forgiven and IS forgiving us. "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32). No one has done as much against us as we have against God. Jesus taught us in the example prayer that we should pray, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors (Matthew 6:12). It is only concerning forgiveness that Jesus returns to the prayer and stresses its importance. Immediately after the prayer, He said: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15). THAT should motivate us to forgive anyone of anything. If we want God to forgive us, we must forgive others! Continuing in fellowship with others depends

on us forgiving each other. Family fellowship and Church fellowship cannot be maintained unless we are willing to forgive and forget! There is no other way to forgive. If we say we will forgive but we will not forget it, we are not really forgiving. Like Stephen, we all need to pray for God to help us to be full of forgiveness.

I have been amazed once again at the depth of the word of God. Though I have been reading and studying the word of God for about 50 years, I see new things all the time. This lesson on how full Stephen was is one of the new things our Heavenly Father has shown me this week, and it made me love Stephen more than ever, and motivates me to be FULL (and not just have a little) of all the wonderful attributes found in these two chapters.

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VAIN

(useless, empty, foolish; of no value)

It is disheartening to work hard and later find that all your work was in vain. It sometimes happens to me when trying to plant a garden, do some task around the house, or sometimes even laboring with people.

When the Apostle Paul labored with people, he would often write them back later and encourage them to be fruitful and serve the Lord faithfully, lest all the work he had done with them be in vain (useless or of no value)!

1. "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Galatians 4:11).

2. "And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain" (Galatians 2:2).

3. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain" (Philippians 2:14-16).

It is amazing that we can do something that would make all the work we have done be in vain. I have been guilty of planting something, then put so much fertilizer on it that I burned it up. All my labor was in vain. The word of God teaches us that there are some things we can do that will make all our religion be in vain. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (James 1:26). Can you imagine doing so much religious activity, so much work to serve the Lord, and then burn it all up with foul language? God says failing to bridle our tongue makes our religion vain (useless, of no value). "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting…. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood" (Isaiah 1:13, 15). Though the children of Israel were engaged in much religious activity, God said it was all in vain. He was so displeased with them that He would not even hear their prayers!

The Apostle Paul said to the saints at Galatia, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" (II Corinthians 6:1). He also declared that by the grace of God he had served the Lord, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (I Cor. 15:10). When we fail to stand up for what is right, fail to use our time wisely, fail to use our money in the right way, fail to work with people as we should, fail to go to God's house as we should, or fail to study His word, then we have received the grace of God in vain! God has given us many talents, but if we do not use them in service to Him, the gifts are in vain. God will not deal lightly with us when He bestows His blessings in our lives and we fail to use them. Concerning the one-talent servant who had received his talent in vain, God said, "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30).

Running after happiness by pursuing temporal, material goals and things, is all vanity. Study the book of Ecclesiastes to see that the wise man Solomon declared that no matter what we achieve materially, it is all vanity without feeling the presence and blessings of the Lord! (The word vanity is used over 30 times in the book of Ecclesiastes!)

One of the most beautiful truths in the Bible is the resurrection of Jesus Christ! If Jesus is not risen from the grave, then all our religion, all our preaching, everything we do is in vain! We need to rejoice in His resurrection every day, "keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain" (I Cor. 15:2). "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (I Cor. 15:14). But now is Christ risen from the dead! PRAISE GOD! "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58).

Did you know God chose you before the foundation of the world?

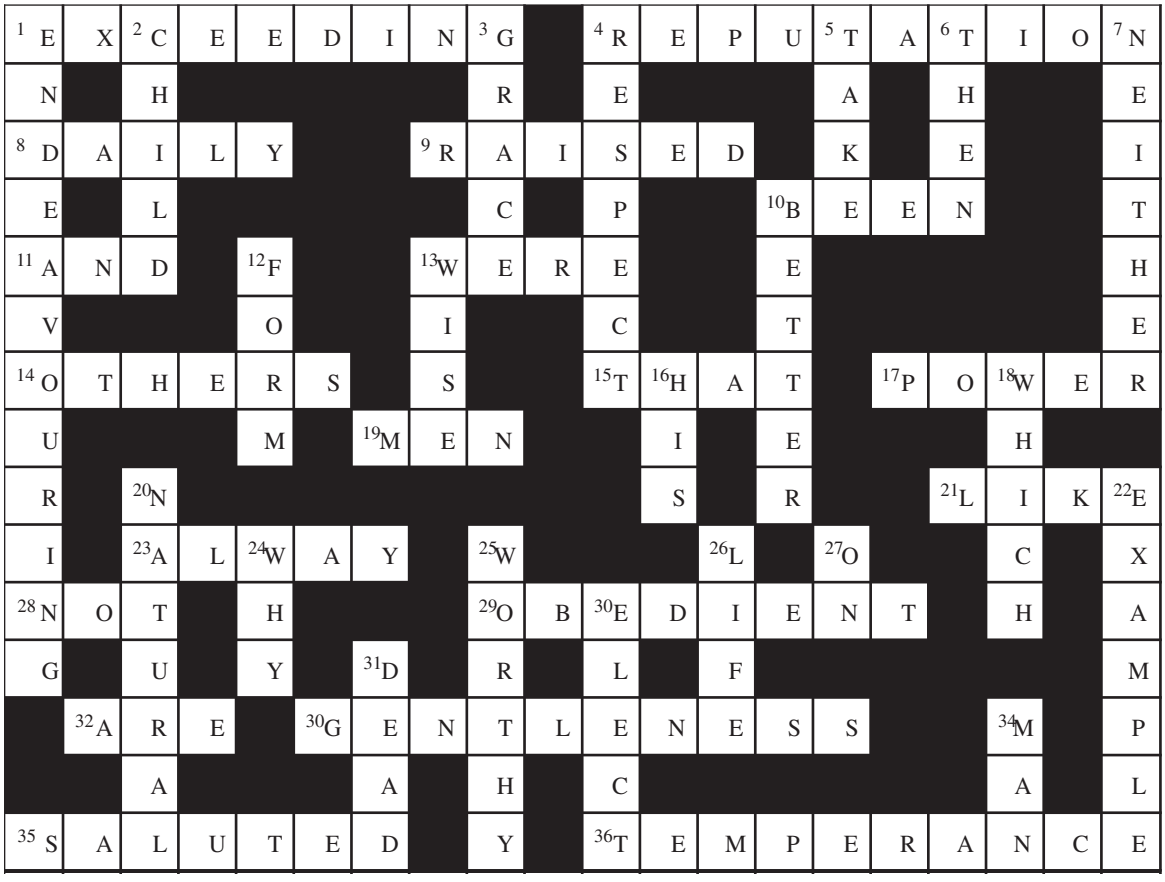
(See Ephesians 1:3-6)

Bible Reading Calendar for June

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
1	II Chr. 1,2,3	John 12:1-9
2	II Chr. 4,5,6	John 12:20-50
3	II Chr. 7,8,9	John 13:1-17
4	II Chr. 10,11,12	John 13:18-38
5	II Chr. 13-16	John 14
6	II Chr. 17,18,19	John 15
7	II Chr. 20,21,22	John 16:1-15
8	II Chr. 23,24,25	John 16:16-33
9	II Chr. 26,27,28	John 17
10	II Chr. 29,30,31	John 18:1-23
11	II Chr. 32,33	John 18:24-40
12	II Chr. 34,35,36	John 19:1-22
13	Ezra 1,2	John 19:23-42
14	Ezra 3,4,5	John 20
15	Ezra 6,7,8	John 21

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
16	Ezra 9,10	Acts 1
17	Neh. 1,2,3	Acts 2:1-13
18	Neh. 4,5,6	Acts 2:14-47
19	Neh. 7,8	Acts 3
20	Neh. 9,10,11	Acts 4:1-22
21	Neh. 12,13	Acts 4:23-37
22	Esther 1,2,3	Acts 5:1-16
23	Esther 4,5,6	Acts 5:17-42
24	Esther 7-10	Acts 6
25	Job 1,2,3	Acts 7:1-19
26	Job 4,5,6	John 7:20-43
27	Job 7,8,9	Acts 7:44-60
28	Job 10,11,12	Acts :1-25
29	Job 13,14,15	Acts 8:26-40
30	Job 16,17,18	Acts 9:1-22

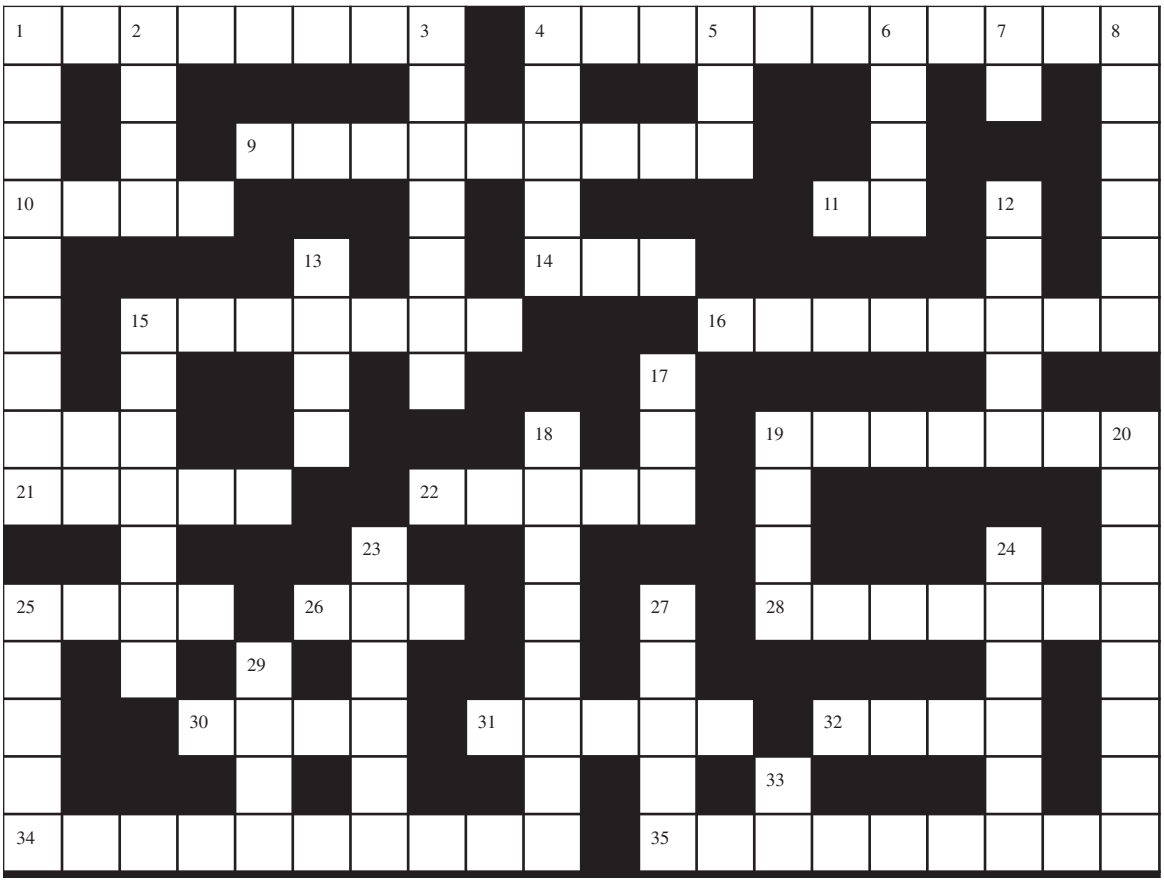
ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE MAY 2010



Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy _____: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;” 4 “Pride goeth before _____, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” 9. “Submit yourselves to every ____ of man for the Lord’s sake.” 10. “And she shall bring forth a son, and ____ shalt call his name Jesus....” 11. “The wicked shall ____ turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” 14. “The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of ____ heart to all generations.” 15. “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a _____ and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;” 16. “Having predestinated us unto the _____ of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,” 19. “And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the _____ of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above;” 21. “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in.” 22. “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the _____, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:” 25. “...but the gift of God is eternal ____ through Jesus Christ our Lord.” 26. “But the natural ____ receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God “ 28. “And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to ____ of the Lord.” 30. “Forasmuch as ye know that ye _____ not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;” 31. “For God so _____ the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” 32. “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of world, but was manifest in these _____ times for you,” 34. “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in _____ and sins;” 35. “Jesus Christ the same _____, and to day, and for ever.”



DOWN

1. “And the _____ said, this is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.” 2. “And he said _____ them, when ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” 3. “_____ by the Blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” 4 “For the wages of sin is _____; .” 5 “The Lord will destroy _____ house of the proud” 6. “And the Lord said unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall _____ to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live” 7 “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is ___ you,...” 8 “Blessed is the ____ whose God is the Lord;...” 12. “For ye are bought with a ____:...”13 “That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but ____ eternal life.” 15. “..therefore _____ God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” 17 “Honour thy father ___ mother; which is the first commandment with promise;” 18 “But with the ____ blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 19. “But now being made ____ from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” 20. “Behold therefore the goodness and ____ of God...” 23. “For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the ____ over the sea.” 24. “And as Moses ____ up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” 25. “I am not worthy of the ____ of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant;...” 27. “And the Lord sent ____ serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.” 29. “If ye love me, ____ my commandments.” 33. “...For unto whomsoever much ____ given, of him shall be much required:...”

Chasten While There is Hope!

by Bro. Brooks Strickland
Statesboro, Georgia
(21 year old college student)

"Chasten thy son while there is still hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Proverbs 19.18).

I have recently seen on the news that a school in Texas brought back paddling at the request of the parents. It was reported that the mere proposal decreased behavior problems in the school! Meanwhile, Congress is making proposals to ban not only paddling but also every disciplinary measure in public schools. If we are a Christian nation founded on Biblical principles, and the Bible tells us to chasten thy son while there is still hope, why is our Congress preparing to do the exact opposite?

We have just seen that the very mention of paddling made children behave in the classroom in a way that was productive and respectful to the teacher. This goes to show us, as the Bible has already declared, that discipline is not only effective but also necessary. Nowhere is it more necessary than in schools. The Bible says, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Proverbs 22:15). Schools are full of children. In order to instruct our children in the knowledge and wisdom needed to live a healthy life, they need discipline to help them grow out of foolishness.

The way the Bible words this verse, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying," sounds to me like it is referencing our early stages of life, "while there is still hope." It seems to say chasten thy son while he is young. Also, it helps me to believe that foolishness is not only something that we have early in life, but, if not dealt with, if not driven out by chastening, can carry over with us into later life.

I am reminded of a slogan that many sports programs made: "Pain is weakness leaving the body". Foolishness is a weakness. If we wish to mature and become stronger, we must get rid of foolishness. Not just discipline, but more specifically, spanking is that pain that rids us of that weakness called foolishness. We are aware of this when the second part says, "Spare not for his crying". We know that this is a sign of a child getting stronger. As we all know, school is no place for foolishness, but a place for instruction and growth that is meant to shape a child into an adult as they learn about the world around them. And, as any schoolteacher would know, instruction and growth could not take place without the teaching of character and valuable principles to go along with it. We could see where at this young stage of life, when we must learn so many things that help us build our foundation as a person, foolishness can be very counterproductive, and result in a major struggle within a child.

If you think spanking is harsh, what is the harsh result of leaving it up to a child to struggle to learn maturity on his own when foolishness is BOUND in his heart? Spankings are quick, simple, effective, and give a child the victory over foolishness! We are not being leaders or role models when we do not take it upon ourselves to help children in making the right decision between behaving and not behaving. Mature adults who have wisdom will do what is necessary to provide a successful learning environment. One of the major problems in public education today is the lack of discipline, which has resulted in schools full of foolish children. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Why are the prisons overflowing today? Because we have a generation which was basically raised without discipline, therefore foolishness has overtaken their lives.

You help a child in his growth tremendously when you help him put away the simpler things so he can take on the more complex things. Our government and educational systems are making a huge mistake by taking discipline out of schools. It is a move that has resulted in major counter-production in the lives of children. Discipline is needed at a time when children are developing into stronger individuals. This can only mean trouble for the future of America as the younger generation has to one day take on the real world and its problems. If the American government passes anything that bans corporal punishment in public education by making it illegal, stripping the ability of a teacher to create an environment in which she can teach, then it is not only one more burden that we will have put on our youngest and most impressionable generation, but also one more burden we have placed on the future of America.

Taking a stand is not ever easy, but is always right.
Especially difficult are the times when you must stand up to someone who has been and should still be standing with you. Shelton Smith