

The Berean Ecclesial News

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial welfare, with the object of providing Ecclesial news, exhortations, articles and information of fraternal interest to the Brotherhood. Upholding the Truth since 1923.

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God Willing, The Berean Ecclesial News will be published monthly as an avenue of providing information of Ecclesial interest to the Brotherhood. Ecclesial news and correspondence, Fraternal Gathering notices, special activities and upbuilding exhortations are encouraged. This is an effort to upbuild and prepare us in heart and mind for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

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Ecclesial News

AUSTIN, Texas -- Memorial Meeting 11:00am in home; Exposition of Daniel Class, Thursdays at 8 P.M.; Bro. Jim Phillips, 14723 Single Trace, Austin, TX. 78728; phone (512) 218-0920

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Loving Greetings to all in Christ.

We enjoyed the company of Bro. Fred Higham Jr., Bro. Antonio LaBarbera and daughter, Sunday School scholar Rachael on the Sunday before the Hye Gathering. We have enjoyed the company of Sis. Shiloh Brown on 3 different occasions for breaking of bread since we last sent news in. We have also enjoyed the company of Bro. Jerry and Sis. Kitty and Sis. Sarah Brown for Breaking of Bread. On February 17th we had Bro. Curtis and Sis. Cindy and children and Sis. Shiloh and Sis. Sarah Brown for breaking of bread, which was also a pleasure.

We are pleased to have **Bro. Mark Braune** as a member of our Ecclesia. He was baptised, on February 2nd at the Hye February Quarterly meeting at which time Bro. Lee Freeburg gave some encouraging words to us all.

Please note that we have moved to a new address. Our phone remains the same.

Love to all,
Bro. Jim Phillips

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERINGJune7, 8 & 9, 2002

Bro. Rusty Stephen, HC Box 16A, Lampasas, TX 76550, 512-556-6771

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING July 22 - 28, 2002

Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1 Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, 915-985-3868

BOSTON FRATERNAL GATHERING Oct 19 - 21, 2002

Bro. Jim Sommerville, 34 Birch Hill Rd., Northboro, MA 01532, 508-393-2874

Books For Kenya

There is an ongoing need for books, tapes and study material on the Truth for our Brethren and Sisters in the various Kenya Ecclesias. If you have books and material that you can send and would like to help in this effort, please contact Sis. Kaye Yuen for instructions on where to send to each ecclesia and she can let you know where the current need to send is and the best route to send them. She can be contacted at Syuen33550@aol.com or fax (604) 925-0649.

Prayer and Meditation: Remember Our Creator In Doing His Will

Dearly beloved brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus, The reading in I Corinthians 11 goes along with the day we meet to remember our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ until he again comes.

We gather together to gain strength and encouragement, but chiefly to remember our Lord and Savior Jesus, the Christ. Our sources of help are obtained in more than one way. We gain help from the exhortations each week, and by the opportunity to gather together with those of like precious faith. This isn't just one day we remember the Lord, there are six other days in the week. We cannot depend only on Sunday to keep us on the straight and narrow way that leads to life eternal. We must think about it in everything we do. Our main help comes from prayer and meditation on the Word of God. How often do we do this? How often do we contemplate on the things we read?

By prayer we are able to approach God to confess our sins. By remembering where we went wrong, we should be able to put away that which was wrong and not repeat it. We must give thanks in all things, for if we do not give thanks for those things given us, it is a sign we are not walking in the proper way. We receive nothing, except God giveth it, therefore, we must give thanks to Him.

We can let our desires be known and have full confidence we will gain them. We can pray for ourselves and for others, and we pray through our Mediator, Jesus Christ. We are told in I Tim. 2:5, *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"*

We read these things in the Scripture as we study. In meditation we have in mind the Word of the Truth, and those things written by the prophets of old flash through our minds. We then realize our hope as we bring to mind God's promises, and thoroughly believe that these promises will come to pass. Our great hope is to gain salvation.

We also obtain help in our hope by the companionship with the brethren and sisters. In these modern times we are able to communicate, via computer, very quickly and easily with one another. Another form for communication is telephone, for to speak with a brother or sister during the week reminds us of our position. We realize our hopes and desires are the same. We are able to travel great distances in a short time, and therefore we can communicate with another in a matter of hours. When we are out for a drive, we could stop by to visit one another. Being able to see one another gives one strength in the common hope, for when two or three are gathered together the discussion tends toward the spiritual. What better way of gaining comfort, strength, and knowledge?

We also gain help through the Daily Readings. It is most important to do them. Our searching the Holy Word of Truth gives us time to meditate upon them. We have the opportunity to store in our minds things we can relate to others. Thus we have the tools to present the Light of the Gospel to those in darkness. This, too, is very important. We can give the Word of Life to those in darkness: to those who do not study or do not know the importance of loving God.

How else can knowledge be gained if we do not study? Only once we gain knowledge can we then be teachers. There is a duty to help others, young ones, to understand and gain their own knowledge.

Through all these duties — prayer, meditation, reading and discussing the Word — we find the Promises contained within the pages of Scripture. The One Hope, the confident expectation these things will come to pass, is contained within the pages of the Bible. By the study of it, we see the true hope for salvation much differently than those hopes of the world.

The people of the world center their minds upon fleshly lusts, amusements, things from which we must keep ourselves far removed. Would Christ approve if he found us dancing, movie going, gambling, etc.? The age in which we live is immoral. Let us look at II Tim. chapter 3 from the first verse through verse 5 to see what is cautioned there. *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof from such turn away."* The words were written many years ago. Today we clearly see they have come true.

Other words from Paul, (Phil. 4:8) *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."* When we meditate, we can think on these things to help us, to guide ourselves in the right direction before our Heavenly Father.

Thinking on these things, the worldly things, we find that these pleasures are only temporary. What are shown in movies today are degrading. We must try to do what the instruction in II Cor. 7:1 gives us, *"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."*

We see in all worldly things – possessions, pleasure, and all that belong to the present evil world – are things that Brethren of Christ must keep themselves from. Not only so, but refrain from even the desire for them. We must not let any of these things become established in our lives. They can invade our lives so slowly, so easily. We see them (at first) as nothing, a small matter: but what we never seem to realize is once they are 'in' they begin to 'grow'. Being careless, they will wreck our faith. We should, at all times, keep our minds on those things God wants us to do. Remember our Creator in doing His will!

We have some words from I John that will help. (I John 2:15-17)

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

The Bible tells us the things that will help us to perfect holiness in the fear of God.

We see in all the worldly things and possessions, we see the things we do as only a small matter, forgetting that we should keep away from such. So, when we speak about things, let us cleanse ourselves; for, if we are careless we wreck our faith. Remember our Creator in doing His will!

James says, "...know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? **whosoever therefore** will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (4:4) *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. **Resist the devil**, and he will flee from you."* (James 4:7) The desires we must have are of God, and have companions of like-minded things. Psalm 16:11 gives us a wonderful picture of the promises awaiting: *"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."*

Let us remember God and the Lord Jesus everyday and walk the straight and narrow, that we may be pleasing in their sight. Remember we can, by reading, make ourselves strong in the Truth and we will gain the knowledge with which to help others on the road, and by this we can be useful. Let us never say (or think), "I am too busy for Scriptural meditation and study", for the day will come when we will be sorrowful that we did not put forth more of an effort.

Those of us who are parents have an 'extra' job to do. We must train our children in God's ways. Remember, children are good imitators, therefore it is up to us as parents to set forth good examples for them to follow. Show love to our children, in helping to solve their problems. We can thereby build sympathy and confidence, just as we have confidence in 90 our Heavenly Father. We must also correct our children, but with

firmness and fairness, as also our Heavenly Father does us. Proverbs 22:6, *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."*

We have the words of Christ, too. (Matt. 10:37) *"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."* So, then, if we train up a child in the proper way it is beneficial. We must help them. The first love of parent or child must be the love of God. We must also be gentle, meek, kind-hearted, compassionate, merciful, and forgiving.

We have been reading, the last few days, in I Corinthians. Paul's instructions are words to "reprove, to instruct, and to exhort" the people. He tells us to be followers of Christ, and to keep the ordinances as delivered. This we show each first day of the week by meeting to remember the Lord's sacrifice, to partake of his body and his blood: to partake of the emblems – the bread symbolizing his body, and the wine symbolizing his poured out blood.

We should let our light shine out before all men, showing love in all things. The Bible uses the word "charity", which means to have love. No matter how much good we do, or how much faith we have, or how much hope, the words to remember are "faith, hope, and charity". Love is the principle thing. It is above all others.

Christ died and rose from the dead, and did so for our sins, that we may have the opportunity for eternal life. He was buried and rose again the third day. He was seen of Peter and all the disciples – the resurrection is clearly recorded. Christ is the first-fruits and then they who are his at his coming.

We do not go to Christ (as is preached by the world's churches), but he is coming to us – "at his coming". And at his coming, there shall be changes in those who look for that coming. He will bring healing with him, and we shall be changed, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye", and shall be given immortality. Let us watch, therefore, that we may be found worthy.

Bro. William Stephen

1 Timothy 4

1 Timothy 3 gives us the ideals for our personal and ecclesial salvation and well being.

In this 4th chapter, we deal with the reality of the situation. Paul warns Timothy what was to follow. Paul knew that in man there was no good thing.

1. A seducing spirit is a deceitful or a wandering teacher. They are described in Jude the 11-13th verse. "Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

Or in another sense anyone or thing that leads us away from the truth. This may be contrasted to the scriptures that are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and for instruction in righteousness.

The doctrine of devils was the worship of the spirits of the good and great, by the Greeks. They were supposedly invisible beings who acted as a mediator or intercessor between man and the divines. This is where the saints of today's churches got their beginning. Plato describes these beings as an intermediate order between God and man."

This is Man's way, it is not God's way. God has given His son as the one through whom we can approach Him in prayer. Some say that the last part of this first verse should read "Doctrines taught by demons". This also fits, as those that were teaching these things were as David said in the Psalms "They that make them are like unto them," deluded.

2. Having their conscience seared with a hot iron. When something is seared it is basically branded or cauterized to become insensitive to pain or feeling. These people were willingly ignorant in the deluded state.

Today the word sear is used in cooking. We sear meat to keep the juices in. We seal it so that nothing can escape. Our conscience must maintain the sensitivity or responsibility to the demands that our life in the truth puts on us.

3. Forbidding to many: This was a command, not done by choice. In 1 Tim. 3 we read of the opposite of this. In order to handle the matters of God's house, we must first be able to handle the matters in our own houses. The marriage states the best place to learn. Caring for God's family is a learning process. As in any family things may not always be smooth. It is the love of the truth that brings us together. If that is not lost, we will be able to survive together and grow.

The next item mentioned is forbidding or commanding them to abstain from meats or solid food. Instead of receiving these things with 92 thanksgiving as God had intended they were rejecting them.

4. Paul states again in verse 4 that these things were to be received with thanksgiving and not to be refused. He adds one more important statement "For every creature of God is good, showing that the Mosaic Law was fulfilled, and there is no longer clean and unclean animals.

5. "For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer".

Before we eat we give thanks for our food. The food is sanctified or dedicated to the Lord and the strength we derive from it is dedicated to His honour and glory. Those who do not sanctify their food through prayer are not His servants and can only gain temporal strength from it.

6. "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained."

We, just as Timothy, Isaiah, Paul and others were to bring these things to remembrance, helping others focus on the blessings we have received and who they have come from. We have an obligation to do this. We have made a contract with God. In return for our obedience we will be granted eternal life. However we can never keep His commandments perfectly, we will fail every day. But God gives us another opportunity, time after time, through prayer. Eternal life is a blessing we can never earn, it is a gift.

To be nourished up in the words of faith is to be eating up God's words. We must not only have the milk, but we need the meat also, to have a well rounded knowledge of the truth. This must be desired with as much zest as our favorite desert. This zeal can be spread to others around us. It was Timothy's job to spread this zeal to others.

7. In verse 7 Paul is telling Timothy not to get bogged down with profane and old wives fables, but to get on with the work of the truth.

8. We are creatures of habit. Paul tells Timothy not to spend his energy on physical exercise which profiteth little, but to spend it on godliness which is profitable unto all things and has the promise of life, both now and in the future. We must set goals and use the future life as our incentive to keep our minds on godliness.

9. In verse 9 Paul tells Timothy that the way is not going to be easy. Timothy knew this, but these words are for us also. We must not be discouraged or surprised when the way becomes difficult. We can think of Paul being beaten, shipwrecked, and lost at sea. We must keep focused during these difficult times. Gatherings are an excellent way for us to keep focused. They are also profitable for the young, to get them in training for the work ahead. We must command and teach, command and teach.

Although Timothy was young he could still be an example. He had a great work to do. As younger brethren we may wonder what we can do. We are not to try and find new truths to exhort on, but to stick to

the foundations laid before us, by our elder brother Christ. WE are to be examples in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity. We are not to just read the word, but to live it. It must be our whole manner of life, we must treat our brethren with Agape love, unfeigned and undying, we must have faith or confidence that God will perform all that He has promised. Our lives must be pure, or clean from reproach in thought and motive.

We note in verse 13 that Paul tells Timothy he was to do these things "Till I come". He gives him ample instruction as to how it was to be done, "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." Timothy had all the necessary tools, he was to get to work with them.

14. It appears that Timothy was given a portion of the spirit power that was to be used to help get him started on the right track.

15. In verse 15 Paul exhorts Timothy to give this work his complete dedication, "give thyself wholly to them"

16. In verse 16 Timothy is told to take care for himself, that he didn't loose focus and lead the ecclesia down the wrong path. He needed the ecclesia as they needed him.

Paul's hope, Timothy's hope and our hope is summarized in 2 Tim 4:8

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Bro. Stephen Osborne

I Timothy 5

Chapter 5 deals with three main topics. The first section in verses 1 and 2 speak of the way each member of an ecclesia is to be treated. The second section, in verses 3 to 16, discusses what seems to be a problem with the ecclesia where Timothy is at; and this is the guidelines for which it is to be determined whether widows are to be financially aided by the ecclesial body or not. The last section of this chapter tells us a message which was given directly to the leaders of the ecclesia to help them in how they conduct the ecclesial affairs.

Members of the ecclesia Vs. 1-2

The ecclesia is a spiritual family that has bonds and ties which are tighter than any literal family. This spiritual family shares the united goal to direct their entire life in service to pleasing our Creator. In verse I, Paul is speaking of the older brethren in the ecclesia and instructs that they are to be given respect as a child gives their dad. Any concerns and questions are to be asked in a manner which allows the older brethren to not be 94 humiliated or put down. These older brethren are the ones who have

already put the effort in, in the past, to maintain and run the ecclesia, and they are to be treated accordingly.

He goes on to speak of other ecclesial members. The younger brethren are also members and deserve respect as any members do.

Likewise the women, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters. The entire family unit as a whole is represented here. The family unit can be a wonderful thing. The family unit has the bonds required to accomplish major tasks together as a team. So, to, the ecclesia should unite together to accomplish tasks together.

Widows vs. 3-16

The next section of this chapter devotes some thoughts to the role of widows and how they are to be treated. After reading verses 3 to 16 there seems to have been some confusion with how to treat widows in the ecclesia.

Typically the father of the house was the provider of the home, while the mother would be the caregiver. The women, typically, did not have external financial means of providing for the family. In the case of a widow, she would be poor and dependent on the giving of the community around her. She did not only have to raise and take care of the children at home, but also find means of making ends meet to provide the essentials of life.

The confusion comes in with the ecclesia's role to provide for the widows. "Who should the ecclesia collectively provide financial assistance to?" Of course, people were allowed to help and provide for these widows on their own, but the ecclesia was to analyze each widow's situation before committing that they will provide her with financial assistance.

Outside of the ecclesial setting, we have a literal family that depends on us. Verse 8 is a statement that demands balance in our lives. We are not to "give up" all of this life entirely. We do have responsibilities to fulfill. We are told that whoever does not provide for his own family or those who each is responsible for is worse than an infidel. Paul states here that whoever does this, in reality, does not actually follow the truth. We are told to take care of our own first and then attempt to assist others. So if we have widows to be responsible for then it is our initial duty to help out as much as possible and not leave the burden to the ecclesia.

So which widows should the ecclesia provide for?

Paul states a checklist of items the elders are to establish before providing assistance to the widow on behalf of the ecclesia.

Firstly, Paul stipulates that anyone that we can truly consider a widow and eligible for assistance would be a believer in God, continuing in supplications and prayers night and day. The contrast is presented that a widow is not one who should be "living in pleasure." "Living in 95

pleasure" specifically is directed towards pleasures of this life, pleasures of this mortal dying life, and does not refer to the pleasure one can find in the understanding and following of the truth which we are given in the bible. Again, we see the discrepancy of the need to understand that we can either please man (pleasures of self), or we can devote our time and energy to pleasing our Creator.

The true widow will follow our Creator and desire to please Him throughout her life. The God-fearing widow is a great example of someone with faith realizing that God will take care of those who trust in Him. This is an example for us all. Keep in mind that we are all dependent on God's mercy and grace and it is only through His will that he allows us to provide ourselves with the essentials of life and beyond. Remember that God allows this and that it is not directly through our own hands that we live from day to day, but only through the power provided to us by our Father.

So the first point a widow must show is that she has proved herself as a believer in God by faith and works.

Secondly, in verse 9, the widow was to be at least 60 years old and, thirdly, must have been faithful to her husband. Verse 9 has the statement "to be taken in the number." The Greek word *Katalego* is used in this phase, which means **catalogue, enrolled or listed**. Here we can see that the ecclesia will actually have a list of widows that will be granted special help from the ecclesia's funds.

Verse 10, the widow, fourthly, must be well reported of for good works. This includes the following acts: if she has raised children and taught them of the ways of God, if she has taken care of visitors, if she has washed the saint's feet (meaning showed hospitality). In that day people quite often traveled on foot for many miles. It was a custom of the time to wash and nurse the feet of a visitor. Their feet may be blistered, sore and dirty and probably constantly require this custom to maintain healthy feet. And also the widow was to have relieved the afflicted to be considered of good report.

Verse 11, directs our attention to a class of women labeled younger widows. Paul recommends against providing income to these widows. They must first prove themselves through service and work for the Lord. Paul states that they have begun to wax wanton against Christ. Possibly after having the close companionship of marriage cut off, a young widow may be tempted to fulfill her desires in an un-Christ-like manner. Here it states that they will marry. Since that there is nothing wrong with a widow marrying in the truth, then this must mean that they will be tempted to marry someone from the world and not of the understanding of Christ's 96 guidelines and lifestyle.

Again, this is a lesson to us. We are the engaged bride of Christ waiting for the marriage feast when he returns to earth to marry himself to his followers. We, too, must guard ourselves so that we do not desire to be with the world and fall into the thinking of pleasing self instead of pleasing God and our Bridegroom.

Verse 12, "Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith."

From the beginning of mankind, God has made his people a distinct and special people. Today it is still to be that way. We are not required to perform all the tasks required to meet Moses' law of the Old Testament, but we are to be a light shining in a dark place. We are to be the example to everyone around us.

These young widows had a tendency to stray from following Christ's guidelines by not whole-heartedly attempting to do his will. Remember that famous quote which states that we can not serve two masters: self or God, there is no in between.

Verse 13, Paul states that these young widows tended to develop bad habits that were detrimental to the ecclesia and the ecclesia's image. He says that they, "learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."

Idleness is a dangerous thing, not only for these widows, but also for everyone of us.

Eccl. 10:18, *"By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands and the house droppeth through"*

If we allow our natural minds to determine our actions, we are guaranteed that the diabolos will be trying to pull us to please ourselves. With idleness comes the aspect of conversation that is lacking. Idleness promotes gossip and backbiting and is spoken against here labeling "tattlers and busybodies" as products of the flesh.

Paul suggests that this type of lifestyle may be solved, or at least minimized, by having immediate responsibilities and goals necessary to maintain a family. In verse 14 he states that he wishes that women should get married young to prevent this desire from even having a chance at getting a grasp of their lifestyle. With responsibilities of raising a family, nurturing and teaching the children in the truth and providing for others should take ample time to prevent this evil from occurring.

Again, this is the lesson for the bride of Christ. If we do not set our goals at preparing to be Christ's sole mate, then we will be susceptible to being drawn away to desires of the flesh and the world.

Verse 16, is very similar to verse 8, which states that if anyone has the responsibility of a widow that it is up to them firstly to attempt to 97

provide for them. If it is too much to burden then the ecclesia may have to be called to help provide if the widow displays the appropriate characteristics and mannerisms.

Elders Vs. 17-25

The last section of this chapter is devoted around the elders of the ecclesia. It is worth noting here that these elders are the directors and leaders of the ecclesia and are not the older male elders spoken of in verse 1. These elders are the representatives of the ecclesia and have an extremely important duty to the ecclesia body. They are owed respect from the ecclesial body from their years of service to help spread God's word. (As Paul puts it in verse 17, be counted worthy of double honour.) This respect is required, but everyone must be careful not to set these people up as above others. These elders are people like everyone else in the ecclesia, and even though they have more years and experience in directing, they may make mistakes like anyone else who is mortal.

In verse 18, Paul quotes Deuteronomy, "*Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The Labourer is worth his reward.*" Here he is stating that the success and work of the elders is a great work to be a part of. This work spreads the gospel and keeps the truth. The elders and everyone involved should be very happy for any success they have in their work because we are told that this type of work will be rewarded for.

If there is any turbulence in the ecclesia, or any controversy, then it is probable that the elder will be involved in the middle of it. Also people could tend to be jealous of the elder's position and could lead the elder into many accusations. The elder is always under the eye of his followers, so here in verse 19, Paul is stating that one should not act rashly against any of the members of an ecclesia, but especially against any of the elders.

Verse 20, goes on to speak of correcting members who have acted or taught wrongly. That wrong believes or actions with an inappropriate attitude towards Christ should not go unpunished. We are to follow (at a minimum) the guidelines established in Matthew 18 and start by approaching the member directly, face-to-face. Once the steps of Matthew 18 have been walked through and no change occurs in the member's thoughts or attitude then the member must be made an example of for the rest of the ecclesia to understand the severity of the error and the unwillingness of the ecclesia to be associated with it. (I Timothy 1:13)

Those that are grossly misleading the followers into incorrect doctrine and teachings are to be dealt with quickly and appropriately. This is a severe evil work and must be stopped immediately to prevent harm and to set an example of the unacceptable nature of this action. *See I Titus 1:13.*

In verse 21, Paul tells Timothy and the elders with him that their 98 responsibility is a very important job. They are to act, lead and teach

in a fashion that will not show preference between members. This duty is tough and requires the word of God as a guide and an understanding of the spirit of Christ.

Verses 22-25, conclude the chapter by warning Timothy that elders should be selected very carefully. The role of eldership is not to be given to any fast talking gentlemen with an unknown background. To be an elder, one must prove themselves through years of dedicated service that they truly have Christ's principles in their heart and mind.

It is also important to not be linked or friends with inappropriate people. We have a responsibility to associate with those who walk in accordance with God's word. If we are friends and companions of those who sin and are viewed as ungodly, then we to may be a partaker of other men's sins. How can we be a shining light to the world if we are associated with what followers of God and even the worldly public views as evil and inappropriate behavior.

Paul continues on to state that not all good and evil works are presented into view at this time. That some sins will have to be dealt with at the judgement seat of Christ and others are opened to the ecclesia to deal with. Possibly some sins are exposed for the benefit of the entire ecclesia to see the problems and pain that it causes. Others are possibly best left for the judgement seat to be settled.

Summary

This chapter gives us much to think about. We must take the lessons Paul provides to Timothy and apply them to both our literal and physical family. We are together a strong family unit. If we can keep each of our individual goals united with our spiritual family members we can accomplish much.

Bro. David Humphreys

I Timothy 6

This 6th chapter of Timothy opens with a commentary to those who are under a yoke of bondage and to those who have authority over them in servitude. Those that were in bondage were not to suppose that a knowledge of the Truth, or that the privilege of being called out or chosen gave them any right to despise their heathen masters, or to disobey their lawful commands, or to expose their masters faults to others. They were to serve their master's to the best of their ability and to do all things unto the honor and glory of God. When we think about our own lives, how do we fare? When you think about going to work each day, what does your employer think of you? Are you the person who stands around the water cooler and wastes about 20 minutes a day? Are your skills not up to par?

Here, we have Paul exhorting Timothy to do what needs to be done to the best of his ability—to do unto God that He might be glorified and honored. It was written to those who were such as having the privilege of being a believing master, that they were not to hold respect and reverence to those, because they were equal in respect in the bonds of truth. Servants were to serve with double diligence and cheerfulness, because of their faith in Christ, because they were partakers in his salvation. In that situation what kind of a position would a slave be in, if he possessed a greater knowledge in the Truth than his master. How would we feel in that position? Or, if we were the master and teaching the Truth to our slaves, should you let them off from work to study? All things were to be done to the honor and glory of God. Paul is exhorting Timothy to work hard, to serve God, and to do the best that is possible in all things that God may be exalted.

We are taught in today's reading that we are not to consent to any words as wholesome except those words of the Lord Jesus Christ—those words that are written in the Bible, that are given to us from God. We have to give these words unfeigned consent. God never promised to bestow blessings on all His rational creatures, while they persist in willful disobedience. Pardon and acceptance are promised freely to all believers. But no man can be saved who does not obey the command of God—the commands to repent, to believe in Christ, to separate from sin and the world, and to chose self-denial and newness of life. In general, as our lecturing brother last night pointed out, men will hearken to those who speak of doctrines and promises and privileges, but when duties are mentioned, they will not listen. We do know that with total, unbridled, earnest service to the Lord comes the knowledge that we can be chosen for the final service which is to come.

Paul points out that our thoughts should be as Job's, after he lost everything anyone could imagine loosing. He lost his family, his possessions, and his health. If you think about that—one of your favorite things to do when you are ill is to be in your own home, in your own bed, with your own family. And he had none of that. Yet, he could still say, *"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked I shall return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."* The strength of character, the understanding of scripture that he had to have to make that statement is why he was quoted in this chapter. Because Job realized that all of that meant nothing to him. All things come from God.

Who among us can wisely seek the great and honorable things of this world? It's natural to desire them, to look for them. But wisdom says to be content with food and raiment, be not conformed to the world; pass this 100 time of sojourning in fear. In writing to the Philippians 4: 6-9, Paul

says, "*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*" That is where our hearts and our minds should be.

It is not evil, or bad, to be wealthy, but to seek that above all else—above our lives in service to God—is very unhealthy. Those who place their happiness in wealth are eager and determined in the pursuit of gain or goods do place themselves at much risk. What sins can a man be drawn into by the love of money! All sorts of wickedness in one way or another can grow from the love of money. If we look around, we cannot but perceive the many proofs of this, especially in this day of outward prosperity, great expenses, and multitudinous diversions. Contrary to popular belief, he who has the most toys does not win. He has his toys and satisfaction now. But we are told to flee—run away from—the things of temptation and unrighteousness. It ill becomes any man, but especially the elect of God, to set their hearts upon the things of this world. The community that we seek will be made up of those who are firmly seized by the things of God.

We have a habit and a desire to prove our worth to those around us, whether it's by financial gain—which is how many people in the world see things—or by scriptural knowledge—which is how some brethren judge our value in the Truth. We all would like to point out some new thing, to be able to say; "Look what I figured out! The pioneering brethren had this wrong. Or in the first century, look at what the apostles were trying to say, they meant this, or they meant that." But what can we accomplish with this outlook? In the last two verses of this epistle there is an appeal to Timothy to be careful of the things, which were creeping into the faith. Brother Thomas wrote about this in Eureka, saying, "But the Judaizers were not alone the perverters and vanquishers of the people. Another faction arose from among the Gentile element of the Star-Angels. This was composed of the 'wolves' first referred to in Paul's first letter to Timothy 6:20, where he says to him, 'O, Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane, vain babblings, and oppositions of *Gnosis*, or knowledge falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith.' These came to be called *Gnostics*, because of their professing what they called *Gnosis*, or knowledge, a false science, whose principles were subversive of the truth. The same thing is styled in our day 'theological science,' divinity," ethics," hermeneutics,' and so forth; terms invented to amaze the ignorant, and to impress them with 101

the necessity of schools and colleges for the indoctrination of pious youth in the mysteries they learnedly conceal. Now the principles of this ancient and modern *Gnosis* are subversive of the Truth; for 'some professing them,' says Paul, 'have erred concerning the faith.' He refers to them again in his second letter 2:16, saying, 'Shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their word will eat as a gangrene; of whom are Hymeneus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some.' "

We must keep our vigilance towards those things, which tend to creep in and subtly change the faith we hold so dear. Some appear as new ideas; a few come as old notions wrapped in new form or name. Brother Thomas points out in Elpis Israel, that one of the reasons that this is done is to deter men from crime and to move them to get religion. They build a kingdom filled with hideous devils and condemned people are sent down there. But we know that's not the aspect that God puts forth. This thing that they did – the Gentilizing of the Gospel—the changing of the hope into the way people want it to be—filled Paul with zeal and caused him to write many letters. He wrote to Timothy as we have read, and he tells them to guard against this—to shun them. Why are these details in our understanding of our doctrine so important? For make no mistake, no misunderstanding, Paul was entreating Timothy to hold fast the principles he had been given. And this doctrine is important, because the Truth is important—true doctrine in the Truth regarding spiritual things. True doctrine is the thing that sets us apart, that binds us together, that leads us in the way that we should walk to serve God. False doctrine is a fable; it's darkness; it's confusion; it's contrary to fact and reality. If our conceptions are wrong, our actions will be wrong. All of our actions are based upon our facts. God has revealed certain facts and outlined for us a certain course of action concerning these facts. This course is the course that leads to life. For we must lay up for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come that we may lay hold on eternal life.

Bro. Beryl Snyder

As Ye See The Day Approaching

It is recorded in the Epistle of James Chapter 1 at verse 17: "*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.*" How wonderful and comforting this verse is, as are so many from Yahweh's Holy word of Truth - the Bible! We all at one time or another have received gifts from others that weren't perfect, good or useful. But *each* and *every* one given us of our heavenly Father is

truly excellent! He knows us through and through, even our thoughts, needs and desires before we ask! It is only in the last century that man has finally developed technologies that enable him to probe and to "see" into things. His best efforts to do so, however, run in a very limited capacity. Yahweh has *always* known all things, because He is all powerful and everywhere present by His Spirit. He is the Eternal First Cause! He not only created all things, but sustains all, as well. Psalm 139 helps us understand these marvelous truths. But, even though He knows what we will ask before we do, He takes pleasure in our asking. In our asking, we show our belief and faith in Him. this is just what he wants us to learn to do. For He has associated all blessedness, safety, and permanence in and from Himself. It is only fitting that He should. He is the source and giver of all things. He (through His only begotten son) has provided the only way of escape from otherwise certain unhappiness, sorrow and death. He is our loving heavenly Father who delights to give us those good and perfect gifts. He has prepared other things in futurity which have not even entered into the heart of man for those who truly have loved Him. Where we get into trouble so very often is when we want what is not good for us or might even cost us our salvation. Parents and grandparents see this in their offspring when they walk into harm's way and endanger themselves with the many hazards and perils extant.

The knowledge of the Truth as it is in Jesus is the most glorious and precious gift we could possibly receive. The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to all believing. (See Rom. 1:16) Think of just how wonderful this verse is! The power of or from God for salvation! "*But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*" (John 1:12-13) The gift of the Gospel is to those alone "*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*" (1 Pet 1:23) There are myriad multitudes who profess a belief of the Gospel who don't know it and believe things that were never promised by The Eternal. In fact, they worship another god (a triune god) and preach another Jesus (a previously existent one) than are revealed in the Scriptures! Jesus showed in Matt 13:10-16 that there were those unto whom it was not given to understand. "*And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is 103*

fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear."

These, therefore, who neither know nor believe the Father or the son have no power for salvation.

Continuing on in consideration of the wonderful gift bestowed upon us, John also tells us in I John 3:1-3: *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he [Christ] is pure."*

The scriptures teach the principle that: *"...unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required..."* (Luke 12:48) If we ask ourselves why this is, we have not far to look to find the answer. Yahweh has given so very much - His very best - His only begotten Son Jesus Christ. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16) How tragic it is that this one verse of scripture is so loved and is perhaps the most famous and yet, so terribly misunderstood and wrested by many hundreds of millions! *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* (Rom 5:8) He was (and is) truly Zadok - THE JUST ONE! He is the antitypical One Drawn Out (of waters/from among the people) = the Moses: the son called out of Egypt/darkness (Hosea 11:1; Mat. 2:15): the Prince with God or Prince of Power/E1 = Israel. Jesus is the antitypical Joseph - Increaser and preserver of life who was separate from his brethren. He is the prophet raised up from among his brethren like unto Moses. He is the antitype of Aaron (Enlightened) and Melchizedek (King of Righteousness).

Yahweh has offered us eternal life and inheritance in His kingdom to be established upon the earth! We will become kings and priests reigning with Christ over the nations during the thousand years! Just think of the honorable work of helping to establish that glorious new order upon earth! Think of spreading the truth throughout the earth, enlightening the 104 surviving population out among the nations! Think of the wonderful

work of the complete regathering and resettlement of the tribes of Israel! Think of that glorious throne established in righteousness and true justice. Think of the nations walking in the light of the Gospel and waiting for the Law of Christ to the ends of the earth! Think of every man having enough, sitting under his own vine and fig tree, none making them afraid! Violence and war will be known no more! Imagine knowing even as we are known! Imagine being able to stand and serve in the presence of the Lord of the whole earth! All of this is offered to us and will be ours if we are found faithful and if we have overcome. We must remember that Yahweh has offered us all eternity in perfect health for evermore and true holiness, righteousness, prosperity, real happiness and peace!

We can take comfort in the fact that these are not vain imaginings or fairy tales such as the people around us in the churches hold concerning heaven-going, etc.

The words of Paul come to mind found in Galatians: *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."* (Galatians 6:7-10)

It is written in Romans 11:29: *"...the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."* This verse has a *two edged* aspect to it. It is very comforting to know that God is not changeable. He keeps His covenants and promises. It is man who is so unfaithful and changeable. God is constant. He wants us to learn to keep our word, letting our yea be yea and our nay, nay. Do we remember Israel's answer to God when they came unto Mount Sinai? *"And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD."* (Exodus 19:8) Do we remember Lot's wife who looked back? Achan, Korah, Dathan, Abiram, Saul, Solomon, Ananias and Sapphira are a few of the individuals who failed under trial. Let us learn from these things we read in the Holy Scriptures and take warning. Let us be among the happy multitude who experience those good things prepared for the accepted at the judgment seat of Christ. We all see how quickly things can change in this fast paced world. The Sixth Vial pours on. We know Jesus will come as a thief to the unsuspecting world and to those of the household who are not watching. Let us awake and watch and fill our lamps with the precious oil of Yahweh's Holy Word.

THOUGHTS GLEANED BY THE WAY

By a Wayfarer

"Ye ask, and received not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3).

The inspired words of James show that any petition for something that only fulfills a natural desire is asking amiss, and God will not answer such a prayer. If we pray according to divine principles, and in harmony with God's way, even though we may not receive what we want as we want it, we will always receive what we need and what God knows we should have.

* * * * *

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15).

When we preach the truth, teach it or speak it, it should be done with individual conviction; not a slavish compliance with accepted rules and customs laid down by others.

It should be based upon individual knowledge of the word committed to the mind and affections, not mere stereotyped words and phrases borrowed by others.

* * * * *

"Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

It has been said, and truly so, that "a half-truth is a whole lie." It has often been pointed out that the most disastrous lie ever told, the one told by the serpent in the Garden of Eden, was mixed with enough truth to make it all the more deceptive and misleading.

The wisdom of the world, including the many creeds of apostate Christendom, is accepted by millions because it contains enough that is true to make it appear plausible to the many.

The same principle holds true with those deluded souls who imagine that, because they hold SOME Bible truth, they need not concern themselves about seeking for all the truth.

And again the same principle is involved in the matter of scriptural fellowship. All who have any concern at all for sound fellowship would be appalled at the very thought of fellowshiping those who hold MUCH error, but many complacently fellowship SOME error.

* * * * *

"But he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall 106 come forth as gold" (Job 23:10).

The book of Job has been the subject of much controversy and many conflicting theories; one of the most common is that the book is nothing more than a legendary narrative of purely fictional characters.

That Job was an outstanding righteous man is also certain; for in Ezekiel 14:14, 20, Job is classed with Noah and Daniel as exceptionally righteous men.

In James 5:10-11, we not only have a verification of the book of Job, but one of the best explanations of and reasons for the things revealed therein:

"Take my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience . . . Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

The case of Job presents a problem, which the adversary did not understand, neither could Job or his friends find the full solution. God alone could give the answer, as the closing chapters demonstrate.

This is one of the great lessons found in the book of Job; that man can neither design nor work out his own righteousness; he must put on God's righteousness through specific divine directions.

If men could choose their own way of salvation, it would never involve chastisement and affliction, but the case of Job shows that in no other way can the impurities of human nature be purged out.

Job's friends held to the idea still common among professed Christians, that suffering and affliction comes because of transgression against God's law. They failed to recognize the principle laid down by the apostle Paul that –

"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

God's affliction of Job was not penal, but remedial and purifying. Though he was upright, faithful, and eschewed evil, he was in grave danger of becoming self-righteous, self-confident and lacking in humility.

Job finds the solution to all his problems when he is brought face to face with God, and he is revealed to himself as God sees him, and he could say

"Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6).

The affliction of Job was not only that he should *"come forth as gold,"* but a lesson to all God's children of subsequent generations that God cares not for the dross or the base metals or materials – He wants only the gold, and the gold is obtained only in the crucible of affliction. 107

Bro. Oscar Beauchamp - April, 1962

Many are the Afflictions of the Righteous

Psalms 34:19 says, "*Many are the afflictions of the righteous.*" When faced with some misfortune, when life seems almost too much to bear, we often ask, "Why me? What have I done to deserve this? Why must I have this trouble?" Perhaps we can find the answer in the Bible. Let us look in Ecclesiastes 1:13, where King Solomon says, "*And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.*" And in Eccl. 3:10, "*I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of man to be exercised in it.*"

Whatever our trouble may be - pain in our bodies, grief for our children, financial worries, a troubled spirit, or our own particular "thorn in the flesh"—it is given that we may be exercised by it. We know that exercise of the body will, in the beginning, make it sore. The first day of hauling hay or any unaccustomed work leaves the body weak and painful. But after many days of labor, of exercising the body, it becomes stronger and able to do more labor. And we are glad of its improved ability. Just as exercise makes the body strong, exercise by travail will make our faith strong. Trouble that is overcome will enable us to more easily overcome future trouble. It can help us to grow in grace, patience, and godliness.

Of course, we long to be free of trouble, to have our every desire granted, to be wise and happy. But, in the 2nd chapter of Ecclesiastes we read about a man who had all that he ever wanted—riches, honor, glory, power, land, wealth, houses, gardens, vineyards, orchards, servants, and everything else he desired. Was he happy? He said, *verse 11*, "*Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.*" All his success was vanity and vexation of spirit! We would probably think that vexation of spirit would be caused by disappointment, not by getting all your desires. And we would naturally think that the feeling of vanity would come from failure rather than success. But Solomon, who should know, tells us that even success is vanity and vexation of spirit

If prosperity is vanity and vexation of spirit, then what is tribulation? It is a trial of our faith. Let's read I Peter 1:6-7. "*Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*" These tribulations, which try our faith, as fire tries gold, will burn out the impurities in our faith and make it pure, strong, and precious, worthy to be used in our Father's work.

Our faith is tried by tribulations, and we should be glad that it is. *"Rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope."* (Romans 5:2-4)

Perhaps we think of tribulation as some dramatic persecution. We are not required to submit to anything as terrible as burning at the stake, or loss of property for our beliefs. Yet we may have to suffer unpopularity or ridicule for our faith. But this may be the harder trial to bear and still remain faithful to our beliefs. Little drops of water can wear away a rock in time. Without God's help, we could not bear all our troubles.

God sends trouble, not because He does not love us, but rather because He does care for us. God allows us to have trouble to exercise us and make us strong and to train, or chasten, us. *"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."* (Hebrews 12:6-8)

Paul tells the Thessalonians to rejoice in the tribulations which will make them worthy of the Kingdom. II Thessalonians 1:4-5 reads, *"So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer."* In Acts 14:22 we find that Paul and Barnabas went about *"confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."* We should be thankful to be counted worthy to suffer for the Kingdom's sake.

We all suffer afflictions—some greater, some lesser—according to what we are able to bear. But God does not forsake us in our trouble. In Psalms 34:19 we find these words, *"Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."*

We place our faith in God and trust in His goodness and wisdom. We must say, as Paul said in II Corinthians 4, *"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed...For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."*

These troubles which will make us worthy of the Kingdom are never pleasant or easy. But we can always go to God for help. The 46th Psalm assures us of comfort and gives us the hope which makes it all worthwhile—

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof

There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

He maketh wars to cease from the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

Bro. Richard Wolfe

Inward Peace Through Outward Turmoil

The Truth can give peace, and in this peace it can preserve a man amid all the troubles and turmoil's of life. Not that he will never know trouble. A righteous man cannot be in this present evil world without knowing trouble: but there is a trouble that is OUTSIDE and a trouble that is INSIDE--as regards causes.

Christ's troubles were great, but they were all outside: inside, peace was his experience: "My peace" as he called it. So it will be with his brethren. They may know trouble among men, but in their own hearts towards God, peace reigns.

But even this peace is a thing of conditions; and it is the conditions we have to watch. When have we the greatest peace? Is it not when we see the most clearly and believe the most heartily the things declared to us by the Truth? It is the vivid sense of those "things" that imparts peace.

Bro. Robert Roberts

Moral Lapse: Introspection and Restoration

In Galatians 6:1, the Apostle Paul provides the believer with fundamental guidance for approaching brethren who have experienced a moral lapse. He declared: *"Brethren if a man be overtaken in a fault,*

ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted."

When dealing with a brother who has engaged in wrongful behavior, we should first bear in mind that we, too, have missed the mark. Often the only difference is that his sin is known publicly, while ours is not. There is no guess work to this. The Word of God informs us in clear terms that such is the case in 1 John 1:8.

Losing sight of our own position before the Deity can have dire consequences. It is during such a state wherein we forget our own failings, that we sometimes seek to correct an offending brother by placing a yoke upon his neck that we ourselves would neither be willing nor able to bear.

This form of hypocrisy is very difficult to detect in ourselves. Nevertheless, we must guard against it with the greatest of care, for it lies in wait for us at every turn of our walk. Moreover, this evil can be just as harmful to our eternal welfare, as the moral problem could be to the brother whom we are trying to "help."

Who among us, therefore, is spiritual enough to assist one who has been overtaken in a fault? The answer may be determined by how we propose to deal with the problem. Will it be according to the flesh, or the spirit? Here we must be both prayerful and introspective (Psalms 139:23-24; 2 Cor. 13:5).

In considering ourselves, we might ask the following questions: Will the approach to our brother be in the spirit of meekness? Specifically, what have we learned about our own moral failures. Have we examined these both thoroughly and honestly? Do we understand that all of us, though undeserving, have been the recipients of God's mercy and forgiveness? Will this realization result in both a humble and merciful attitude that can be readily perceived by our brother? Are we prepared to confess our faults to him (James 5:16)? Will we provide evenhanded assistance on his road to recovery?

With respect to the outcome, such a spirit in us could mean the difference between success or failure. There is nothing more tragic than one sinner thoughtlessly confronting another sinner over wrongful conduct. Caustic pronouncements about others are just as bad, perhaps worse, since we frequently get carried away with an audience desirous of ear-itching. Sadly, this type of behavior has been the case among us all too often. I've been guilty of it. All of us have.

Conversely, if our manner is consistent with the mind of the Spirit, then we will have faithfully discharged our responsibilities as Brethren and Sisters of Christ. Most importantly, in so doing, we will have the best opportunity to restore our brother to his essential place in the ecclesia. 111

Bro. Bob Widding

What Does That Mean?

"Saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." (Matthew 2:2)

Astrology is condemned in the Bible as a form of idolatry. Yet in the verse above, Christ's birth was announced by the appearance of a star. How can this be? First, we need to define the astrology that the Bible condemns. Astrology is a superstitious belief that the movement or the position of the planets and stars are forewarnings of the will of the gods, or forces of fate. Devotees of this idolatry believe that they may somehow cope with these forces by taking some sort of evasive or preventive action. Another form of the same superstition (which is so much in vogue today) is the study of horoscopes and signs of the zodiac. This form of astrology teaches that there is special potential in those born under a certain constellation. According to this superstition, forces of fate signify good or bad luck for activities that might be engaged in during a particular day or time period. As indicated in the Scriptures, all who carried on such practices in ancient Israel were subject to execution by stoning. (Deuteronomy 17:2-7)

In the case of the star of Christ, however, none of the above elements were involved. **First:** The wise men did not visit an infant in a manger, as depicted in so many Christmas pictures, but they visited a "young child" in a "house." *"And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him." (Matthew 2:11)* Herod had all the young boys, from two years old and under killed. This indicates that the wise men must have taken over one year in their travels to Bethlehem. **The star, then, was not a forewarning, but an announcement of an already accomplished fact!**

Second: No worship of false gods with determinant powers of fate was involved. The wise men simply received God's announcement through the star, requiring them to seek the newborn King.

Third: This was not a normal star. Much speculation and astronomical calculation has been devoted to the question of how such a bright and outstanding star could have been visible to the wise men. Some suggest that there was an unusual lining up of planets or stars so that their combined light produced a noteworthy brilliance. This does not fit the Bible's account. The star appeared in the east, which the wise men understood as an announcement of the birth of Christ. They traveled to Jerusalem, only to find out that they had entered the wrong city. They left Jerusalem with Herod's instruction to "search diligently for the child." *"When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."* (Matthew 2:9-10) It is not likely that any normal star would direct its glow so specifically over Bethlehem that the wise men could identify the place where the Christ was residing.

This was plainly a supernatural star sent by God for this special announcement. As for the aforementioned superstitions, The Bible condemns astrology and horoscopes - divination's: *"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."* (Rev 18:4)

