

LOOKING TO GOD AS OUR ONLY SOURCE

by Danny Tunnell

“Consider it pure joy my brothers and sisters whenever you face trials of many kinds” (James 1:2, NIV). “Endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 2:3).

It’s important that we look to God as our source, not people. God can provide people to help us out, as channels through which His blessings flow, but they are not the source of those blessings. Our source is El Shaddai, the God who is more than enough (Genesis 35:1). He is the God who will never leave us or forsake us - our helper (Hebrews 13:5,6). The Lord is our strength (Habakkuk 3:19). “Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57). “Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ” (2 Corinthians 2:14). “We are more than conquerors through Him who loves us” (Romans 8:37). “I have strength for anything through Him who gives me power” (Philippians 4:13, Weymouth). “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” (Ephesians 6:10). It doesn’t say a thing about us being strong in ourselves.

We don’t want to take credit

ourselves or give credit to someone else for what God provides.

No person is our source. The government is not our source. Our spouse or family is not our source. Your job is not your source. Your business is not your source. The church a preacher serves is not his source.

I heard about a congregation that lost several of its top contributors. One member lamented, “We’ve lost our source of revenue for the church.” No! They never were the source. God is always the source (Deuteronomy 8:18).

Doctors, health care providers, and medicine can all be channels God uses, but God always remains the source of healing (Exodus 15:26; Psalm 103:3; Jeremiah 30:17). The picture and symbol for medical doctors today is the serpent on the pole. That image comes from Numbers 21:8,9 and John 3:14. It recognizes God as the healer and Jesus as the Great Physician.

We need to trust in the Lord with all our heart (Proverbs 3:5). Keep trusting in God through good times and bad times. Even if we don’t have a clue how to get out of a tough situation, we need to have faith in the God who

can get us out. “God will supply every need of yours according to the riches in glory of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 4:19). “In times of trouble, God is with us, and when we are knocked down, we get up again” (2 Corinthians 4:9, CEV).

Even in times of adversity, serve the Lord with gladness and come before His presence with singing (Psalm 100:2; Habakkuk 3:17-19). Sing praises to God, the fount (source) of every blessing. Robert Robinson wrote, “Come Thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing Thy grace. Streams of mercy never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.” He includes this line: “Here I raise my Ebenezer: Hither by Thy help I’ve come.” Samuel took a stone and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, “Until now the Lord has helped us” (1 Samuel 7:12).

That same help is for us today! As Bill Gaither wrote, “Every need He is supplying, plenteous grace He bestows. And every day my way gets brighter. The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows.”

— Miami, OK

TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?

By Cecil Burch

“From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life’” (John 6:66-68).

Some of the saddest times in the life of Christ were when His disciples, even after he had performed miracles and fed and taught them, rejected Him. Their excuses for not believing in Him were many. Before they walked away on this occasion, the complaint was made, “This is a hard saying, who can understand it?” (John 6:60).

Today, it is heart-breaking when we see those who, for whatever reason, leave the fellowship of the church and align themselves with unbelievers. They choose to follow their own opinions and feelings. Jesus

described a group of people who were very religious and very dedicated, but religiously wrong, by saying, “You make the commandments of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying, ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men’” (Matthew 15:6-9).

Jesus made it very clear that He comes even before family. He said, “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate (love less) his father and his mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26).

Some people who desire to be popular allow their lives to be controlled by the majority. Jesus said, “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is

the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

Every child of God should consider Peter’s wise response: “Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

— Amarillo, TX

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven, given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11). “When Christ who is our life appears, then you will also appear with Him in glory” (Colossians 3:4).

Old Paths

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“ask for the old paths” (Jer. 6:16)

JESUS OF NAZARETH

By Milton Smith

Many Christians are unaware of the fact that skeptics of the Bible have long asserted that the town of Nazareth never existed during the time when the New Testament claims Jesus spent his childhood there. Nazareth is not mentioned in the Old Testament, by the Apostle Paul, in the Jewish Talmud, nor by the first century Jewish historian, Josephus. Many critics have claimed that this absence of evidence points to the fact that Nazareth did not exist during the time of Christ.

Dr. James Strange of the University of South Florida (considered an expert in this area) describes Nazareth as being a very small, insignificant village that covered only about sixty acres. He estimates that its maximum first century population could not have exceeded more than about 500 people. He notes that when Jerusalem fell in 70 AD and priests were no longer needed in the temple because it had been destroyed, these priests were sent out to various other locations. Archaeologists have found a list in Aramaic describing the 24 courses of priests who relocated, and one of the priests was registered as having moved to Nazareth.

Dr. Strange adds that there have been archaeological digs that have uncovered first century tombs in the vicinity of Nazareth. These tombs would establish the very limits of this tiny village because by Jewish law, burials had to take place outside the town proper. Renowned archaeologist, Jack Finegan, has written, “From the tombs, it can be concluded that Nazareth was a mainly Jewish settlement in the Roman period.” Many respected archaeologists no longer doubt the first century existence of the village of Nazareth. Even the skeptical scholar, Ian Wilson, has written, “Such findings suggest that Nazareth may have existed in Jesus’ time, but there is no doubt that it must have been a very small and insignificant place.”

Students of the Bible will quickly recall that when Nathanael told Philip that he had found the Messiah and that he was none other than “Jesus of Nazareth,” Nathanael sarcastically replied, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:45,46). He was obviously referring to its small, insignificant size.

Archeology continues to confirm the reliability of the Bible - even when it must do so somewhat reluctantly.

— Tulsa, OK

JESUS WEPT

By Richard Dent

“Jesus wept” (John 11:35). What do we remember about this verse? Let’s see . . . oh yes, it is the shortest verse of the Bible. But why did Jesus cry? Let us explore this a bit further. Jesus loved people. He loved the poor, the sick, those afflicted by age, children, and even sinners (not the sin, but the persons). He performed miracle after miracle to prove his love for people. Jesus was even willing to go to the cross for us. But he especially loved a man named Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha (John 11:5).

He had spent some time in their home no doubt. Remember that He had no house of his own. He once said that foxes have holes and birds have nests but the son of man has not a place to lay his head (Matthew 8:20). Maybe He had been given some rest at Mary’s house.

Yes, Jesus loved that family.

We remember that Lazarus got sick and word was sent to Jesus about that sad fact. Jesus told his disciples that Lazarus was asleep (John 11:11) and that He needed to go to him to awaken him. His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well” (vs 12). Then Jesus told them that Lazarus was dead and that he was glad for their sakes. (vs. 14-15.) Why?? Because Jesus knew what He was going to do.

As they came closer to the home of Mary and Martha they saw many people trying to comfort them at the loss of Lazarus. Martha said, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died” (vs. 21). Just a little later, Mary came to Jesus and said the same thing (vs 32). Jesus was caught up in the emotional expression of pain and anguish on the faces of Mary and Martha and the people surrounding them. Scripture states that Jesus “groaned in the spirit and was troubled” (vs. 33).

We know how the story ends. Lazarus was brought forth from the burial tomb. He lived to laugh and love his friends again. That would include Jesus.

Does Jesus shed tears over you and me today? Perhaps, when He sees our weaknesses, knows our sins, or knows when we lose a loved one. Would Jesus shed tears for you or me? I remember the words of that old gospel hymn, “When the road is rough and the way is dim, Jesus knows, Jesus cares.” In my mind I can still imagine the tears Jesus shed over Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37-39).

Yes, John 11:35 is a special scripture that shows our Lord loves us, just like He loved Lazarus and his sisters. Let us remember that God so loved the world that He gave Jesus to be our Savior so that we might have eternal life (John 3:16).

— Liberal, KS

REJOICING REGARDLESS

By Dalton Key

The apostle Paul's life was anything but easy. Following his conversion to Christ, his life was littered with countless examples of opposition, affliction and painful persecution. He wrote the Corinthian brethren recounting several examples: ". . . in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in hunger and nakedness - besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11:23-28).

A lesser man might have complained of his fate and given up the fight. But Paul was made of sterner stuff. While imprisoned in Rome, his words to the Philippians ring forth with amazing faith and faith-based optimism. "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain . . . one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus . . . Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say rejoice!" (Philippians 1:21; 3:13,14; 4:4).

This powerful perspective runs counter to the message put forth by the conventional wisdom of our day. Paul's attitude appears unthinkably naive to the insulated intellectuals dominating our airwaves presently. Did Paul not realize - could he not own - his victimhood? Was he unaware of just how unjustly he was being treated? We can imagine today's talk show hosts sobbing over Paul's pitiable story while insisting he "open up" and "vent his rage."

No, Paul chose to rejoice regardless the difficulties he encountered along the way. As should we.

EDITORIAL . . .

PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE

by Dalton Key

Blessed are those Christians who have learned the value of patience and perseverance. Our true mettle is best seen, not by how fast we can sprint, but by how we hold up over the long run of life. Irregular, spasmodic bursts of frenzied activity may manifest energy and enthusiasm, but the enduring nature of steadfastness reveals the nobler attributes of wisdom and maturity.

Of the early Jerusalem church it was noted, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Some years later, Paul exhorted the Corinthian brethren, "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). And again, he encouraged the saints of Galatia, "Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9).

The Christian life is compared to a race to be run. "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). Our race is less sprint than marathon. A quick start is one thing, but what matters most is a strong, faith-filled finish. At the end of Paul's life he was able to say, "I have finished my course" (2 Timothy 4:7).

Jacob Riis once wrote, "When nothing seems to help, I go and look at the stone cutter hammering away at his rock perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack showing in it. Yet at the hundred and first blow it will split in two, and I know that it was not that blow that did it, but all that had gone before the final blow."

The Duke of Wellington looked back upon the battle of Waterloo and reflected, "The British soldiers at Waterloo were not any braver than Napoleon's soldiers, but they were braver five minutes longer."

As God's people we must never give up. We must continue living the Christian life, as best we can, with all that we have, for as long as health and life permit. The crown of life is not promised to the faint of heart but to those willing to remain faithful "unto death" (Revelation 2:10, KJV).

May we come to learn the preciousness of patience and perseverance!

(NOTE: Men, we hope to see many of you September 11-13 for our annual Old Paths Men's Retreat, held on the site of Flint Hills Christian Camp, just north of Sedan, Kansas. Our theme this year: "What A Sermon! (Studies in the Sermon on the Mount.)"



THE DEADLY PANDEMIC OF SIN

By Mark Lindley

(The following was written in the early days of the COVID pandemic. As of July 26, 2025, there have been over seven million confirmed deaths worldwide. Even with these larger numbers, Mark's point remains valid: the larger problem is - and always has been - sin. - DK)

The COVID-19 pandemic is a tragedy of epic proportions. At the time of this writing, the virus has claimed the lives of more than 23,000 in the United States and more than 118,000 worldwide. In this country, within the past few weeks, millions have become unemployed and a thriving economy has come to a sudden halt. People are panicking and uncertain what the future holds. Death, hospitalizations, sickness and unemployment have become a daily reality for Americans. When will this terrible nightmare end? Only God knows.

As devastating as the Coronavirus is, there is a spiritual "pandemic" that is far worse. The cause of this "pandemic" is sin. When the Pharisees

asked why Jesus ate with sinners, He responded: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go and learn what that means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:12-13). Jesus affirmed that those who are "sick" need a physician. The "sickness" of which Jesus spoke is sin.

Of course, sin is not a sickness that comes into our lives uninvited. Rather, we become sin-sick by exercising our free will. "Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4).

Since the fall in the Garden of Eden down to the present, countless masses have been destroyed through sin. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). There has been no tribe or nation that has escaped its deadly effects. Sin has shattered dreams, ruined lives, caused unspeakable pain and suffering, and ravaged the world more than all viruses of the world, combined.

If sin were the product of man's imagination, we might ignore any mention of it. But sin is real—just as real as any virus known to man. What viruses can do to the body, sin does to the soul. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Viruses may end lives; sin destroys souls.

The good news is that there is a cure! The cure for sin is the blood of Christ (Ephesians 1:7). One receives the cure by obedience to the gospel of Christ. "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). The remedy is available. Receive it today!

— Ripley, MS

What Christians Ask Others To Believe

by Joe Slater

We, as Christians, are under divine mandate to tell the Good News to the world. Have you ever considered just what it is that we're asking folks to believe?

First, we're asking them to believe in a Supreme Being we can't see, hear, touch, taste, or smell. We're asking them to believe that this God created from nothing everything that exists in the universe.

Then we're asking them to believe that God has revealed Himself to humankind, both in the written volume we call the Bible and ultimately in the person of Jesus Christ. We're asking them to believe that this Jesus was God in the flesh, that He lived an absolutely sinless life, that He bled and died on the cross of Calvary as the ultimate atonement offering for our sins, and that He came forth alive from the tomb on the third day.

We're asking them to believe that Jesus ascended back to Heaven where He reigns on the throne of David at the

right hand of the Father. We're asking them to believe that He will return to raise the dead and to judge the world.

Do we have the right to ask people to believe these things? Emphatically Yes! God has given us abundant evidence. Our faith is not "blind faith," but evidenced faith. The question is, "Are we, as Christians, informed and equipped to explain why people ought to believe things that seem at first glance to be not only unreasonable but outrageous?"

In other words, "Can we defend our faith?"

"But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).

— Springfield, IL

"Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to

present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:14,15).

"The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever" (Psalm 119:160).

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