

**THIRSTY**

By Richard Dent

Jesus was almost dead. He had been crucified on that old cross for some period of time. His body was drained of fluids, thus he uttered the words, "I thirst" (John 19:28). He did not receive water but instead was given sour wine poured on a spongy-like substance.

Have you ever been really thirsty after doing some hard work in the yard or pasture on a hot, steamy day? Of course, the answer must surely be "yes." There's not much better drink to be had on a hot summer day than a cold glass of water. My yard man mows each week and I often tell him it will be a two or three glass day between rounds.

Jesus was traveling through Samaria and He came to a town called Sychar. He was tired from his journey so he sat down by a well known as Jacob's well (John 4:4-6). A woman from the city came to draw some water from the well and Jesus asked her for a

drink. The woman was shocked at Him speaking to her because normally Jews had nothing to do with Samaritans.

And then . . . and then . . . she is surprised even more when Jesus mentions "living water" (John 4:10). Jesus reminds the woman that water from Jacob's well is a temporary quenching of the thirst but the living water that He could give would spring up into everlasting life (vs. 13-14). Next, she asks Jesus to give her that water so that she would never thirst again or have to draw water from Jacob's well again (vs. 15). She gets much more than she had expected.

Remember that Jesus used this situation to get an audience from many people of Samaria. He reveals Himself as the true Messiah and the woman hurries back to her village and tells the people to come and see a man that knew "all things that I ever did" (John 4:25-26, 29-42). A whole lot of people must have received spiritual water

from the encounter of Jesus and the woman of Sychar. Jesus stayed there two days (vs. 43).

Spiritual water . . . now that is the drink that our souls dearly need. Revelation 22:17 states, "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."

If your soul is as thirsty as mine you will want to attend worship services on Sunday or any other time you might get an opportunity, such as gospel meetings, Bible school and Wednesday night services. Read the periodicals such as the "Old Paths" and "The Spiritual Sword" as well as others. Lap it up and your whole body (physical and spiritual) will be nourished by so doing.

Do not stay thirsty too long.

— Liberal, KS

**THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD**

by Danny Tunnell

Job said, "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12).

The Bible claims to be the revelation of God. All the writers claimed that God gave them their material (2 Timothy 3:16). 66 books, written over a period of 1600 years to more than thirty writers, but clearly the sixty-six books are actually one book. Two thousand times in the Old Testament alone the prophets claimed that they were quoting God such as, "The Lord said unto Noah," and "God spoke unto Israel." Isaiah and all the prophets hundreds of times said, "Hear the word of the Lord," "Thus says the Lord," "I heard the voice of the Lord saying," and "The word of the Lord came unto me saying."

Paul expressed thankfulness to God for those who received the word of God, "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which works effectively in you who believe" (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Thank God for His word.

The Bible should be the chief source of all preaching (2 Timothy 4:1,2). When Jesus was tempted by the enemy intensely for 40 days and 40

nights (Matthew 4:1-11), how did He overcome? He didn't answer Satan by saying, "Down at the synagogue this is what they preach." He didn't say, "Momma and them always thought . . ." No! On every point what did Jesus use to combat the lies, confusion, and deception of the devil? "It is written!"

Jesus constantly quoted from the Old Testament, and not once did He ever tell us to doubt it. He quoted from it authoritatively many times. Jesus, Himself, is the personification of God's word (John 1:1-3, 14).

You cannot separate God from His word. If you don't like the word, you don't like God. If you despise the word, or parts of the word, there are parts of God you despise. God has exalted His word in the highest possible place, even above His name (Psalm 138:2). If you love God, you love His word. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

When we honor the Bible we are honoring God. He said, "They that honor Me, I will honor" (1 Samuel 2:30). The word "honor" is the word for "heavy" or "weighty." It's the idea of important or significant; that which is treated as most important or revered;

as something very valuable. We are to treat God and His word as very valuable, with great respect, as the most important and significant thing that is. That respect has to come from the heart. It has to be genuine.

Throughout history there have been those who wanted to destroy the word of God. The Bible is an anvil that has worn out many hammers. The grass withers, the flower fades but the word of our God will stand forever (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:24,25). The word of God is living, alive, and inexhaustible (Hebrews 4:12). More copies of the Bible have been printed than any other book, over 6 billion. Compare that with 800 million copies of the Qur'an, or 200 million copies of the Book of Mormon. The Bible is in hundreds of languages, and as you are reading this, people are working around the clock to provide portions of the Bible for remote tribes, so they, too, can have God's word.

For the Bible to profit us today, we must believe it actually is God's word, and receive it with faith and trust (Hebrews 4:2).

— Miami, OK

**Old Paths**

Vol. 50, No. 2 February 2026

*"ask for the old paths" (Jer. 6:16)***THE STUDY HABITS OF  
N.B. HARDEMAN**

by Bobby Key

The late Ira North once told of a visit he made to the room of N.B. Hardeman. Brother Hardeman was in his prime as a teacher and evangelist. At the time of North's visit, he was engaged in one of his memorable Tabernacle Meetings in Nashville.

Brother North said his visit with Hardeman remained a cherished memory throughout his life. He found Hardeman studying his lesson for that night. He had been engaged in Bible study all afternoon. His well-worn Bible was open at his text for the evening lesson. He was exploring it thoroughly to the point of polish and strength and instructive excellence that all Hardeman's sermons achieved.

Probably no man of the twentieth century could surpass N.B. Hardeman as a Bible scholar. He knew the Bible practically verse by verse and could quote it instantly on any theme. He had repeatedly preached this evangelistic material. He knew it, so to speak, by heart.

Yet he was studying his lesson exactly as if it were entirely new to him, and his eager, listening audience knew he had prepared himself.

If N.B. Hardeman needed to study his Bible, how much more does each of us require regular Bible study?

A young preacher stated that he could learn more in two years than the old time preachers learned in fifty years because he had so many more books and aids to assist him. This young man was naive.

There is just no way to acquire Bible knowledge except by regular, diligent study. (1929-2018)

"But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching" (2 Timothy 3:14-4:2).

**HIS OWN PERSONAL  
POSSESSION**

By Milton Smith

In Acts 20:28, Paul told the elders of Ephesus, "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood." In this passage, Paul is affirming the fact that those who have undergone the new birth belong to Jesus Christ in a very special way. When Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world, He literally "purchased" the church with his blood. It thus became his own personal possession. This truth is even made clearer when we consider the fact that the church is described collectively in the New Testament as the spiritual body of Jesus. In a more personal way, Paul wrote that each individual Christian is "bought with a price" and that we should, therefore, "glorify God" by the manner in which we live (1 Corinthians 6:20). The phrase "purchased possession" is used in Ephesians 1:14 in reference to each and every child of God.

Jesus feels so close to those of His church that the Holy Spirit refers to individual members as being Jesus' brothers and sisters (Hebrews 2:11; Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 7:15). This is an obvious reference to our subsequent adoption into His spiritual body following the new birth (Romans 8:15). Nearly 2000 years ago - after offering a prayer for His chosen apostles - Jesus added these words, "I do not pray for these alone, but for those also who shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me" (John 17:20-21). While Jesus was on earth, He prayed for each and every soul who would make the personal choice to become a member of His family.

There exists no greater blessing than to belong to the family of God and have Jesus as our spiritual brother. In a special way, He is lovingly there for us when we go to the Father in prayer (Hebrews 4:15-16). Never forget that if you are a faithful child of God, Jesus views you as His personal possession. You belong to Him in a unique relationship that the world neither comprehends nor possesses. Because of this, He has a genuine concern for you on a daily basis. As a member of His fold, your loving Shepherd will never forsake you (John 10:27-28).

A simple word of advice: never allow the deceitfulness of this world rob you of these unparalleled blessings that reach from here to eternity!

— Tulsa, OK

**HOMESICK**

by Dalton Key

The question of death and its aftermath has puzzled the minds of the world's greatest thinkers throughout the ages, while the Bible has always contained everything we need to know on the subject.

James informs us that "the body without the spirit is dead" (James 2:26). Death may thus be defined as the condition resulting from the separation of body and spirit. At death, the body begins its process of returning to the elements of earth, in keeping with what God intended from the beginning. "Dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). The spirit, however, lives on. Unlike the body, which returns to the earth, the spirit returns to the spiritual realm, "to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

The body's life is measured by the inexorable passing of days, weeks, months and years. "The days of our years are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Psalm 90:10).

But what of the spirit? It can be neither measured nor circumscribed by time. Though life in the flesh is "cut off," we nonetheless "fly away." Albert Brumley hit the nail on the head and blessed us all in writing his much-loved song, "I'll Fly Away," the gist of which comes directly from the Psalmist's words.

Man's common attitude concerning death has, more often than not, been one of dread and fear. Louis XV, King of France, feared death so intensely that he decreed the word never to be spoken in his presence. Without God and the hope He offers, what is left but to view death with horror and trepidation?

Compare Louis XV's attitude toward death with that of the Apostle Paul, who wrote, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain . . . For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better: nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you" (Philippians 1:21, 23-24). Again he wrote, "So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well-pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:6-8).

Paul understood that this body was not designed for heaven, nor was the spirit designed, ultimately, for this world. As a trusting child of God, he envisioned death as a victorious homecoming, a time for receiving "the crown of righteousness" (2 Timothy 4:8). "Our citizenship," he wrote, "is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20).

The more love we have for this world, the more dread and fear we will have in leaving it. The more love we have for heaven, the more homesick for heaven we will be.

EDITORIAL . . .

**OF HEARSES AND U-HAULS**

By Dalton Key

"Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:11-13). Paul's words sound quaint compared with our world's obsession with ready cash, easy credit, and out-of-control covetousness.

Confusing wants for needs, more and more of us race through life in a mad scramble to obtain more and more of less and less, never fully satisfied, never completely content. As Erich Fromm once observed, "Greed is a bottomless pit which exhausts the person in an endless effort to satisfy the need without ever reaching satisfaction."

Jesus warned, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Luke 12:15).

The inspired Apostle Paul taught, "Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:6-10).

Heaven's wisdom is speaking, but are we listening?

Life is simply too short, death and judgment are too certain, and eternity is too endless for us to give undue attention to money and the things money can buy, all of which are - at best - here today and gone tomorrow.

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15-17).

As the children of God, we are not of this world. Our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). The world may be living "under the sway of the wicked one," forever enamored by and obsessed with the material things of this world, but we are "of God" (1 John 5:19). Our treasures are in heaven (Matthew 6:19,20). Our minds are set "on things above, not on things of the earth" (Colossians 3:2). We do not "trust in uncertain riches" (1 Timothy 6:17).

And why are they uncertain? As one unknown sage put it, "You'll never see a hearse pulling a U-Haul."

**BRINGING IN THE SHEAVES**

by Joe Slater

My dad was probably one of the last farmers in Colorado to stop using a binder. "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, do without." Why buy a baler when you have a perfectly good binder? (Well, functional at least.) So I actually remember "bringing in the sheaves!" After binding, we leaned the sheaves upon each other to make shocks. Later we hauled them in to feed or to be thrashed.

We have long sung of bringing in the sheaves relative to a harvest of souls in God's kingdom. The song points out that if we are to bring in any sheaves, we must first sow the seed. Dad used the binder on cane, oats, and barley - but never without planting the seed first! Jesus said, "the seed is the Word of God" (Luke 8:11). The soil is the human heart, and the harvest (if any) depends on the soil's condition.

But there can be no harvest unless the seed is sown!

We sing of sowing in the morning, at noontide and evening and we should be sowing in all conditions (sunshine, shadows, clouds, cold breezes). Sowing can be long, hard work, but the end result - the harvest - is worth the effort. Ask any farmer if conditions are always ideal for planting. Neither is there always an ideal time for approaching someone with the gospel.

Not every seed a farmer plants will germinate and not every person with whom we share the gospel will become a Christian. But unless we spread God's Word far more than we are doing now, harvest will be mighty slim!

Will we come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves? There is no reason we can't. But the first order of business is

to plant the seed.

What do you say?

— Springfield, IL

"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:5-7).

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9).

"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest?' Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest" (John 4:35).

**SIN IS COMMITTED, NOT INHERITED**

By Mark Lindley

The old doctrine of Original Sin is still alive. Every now and then, one might hear a preacher state that we all have "Adam's nature," and that we are "born in sin." The doctrine is referred to as Original Sin or Total Hereditary Depravity. Many denominations of our day believe it.

The doctrine suggests that after Adam sinned in the Garden, he passed on his "sinful nature" to all people. Every baby is born "defiled in body and spirit," and is "totally depraved," not because the baby has sinned but because Adam sinned.

Some believe that Psalm 58 teaches this doctrine: "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent; they are like the deaf adder that stops her ear; Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Lord" (verses 3-6). Based on this passage some have said that "babies speak lies" because they have inherited "Adam's nature."

Let me assure you that babies are pure, innocent, and are not born in sin! Further, babies have never inherited a "sinful nature" from Adam! This is an ugly, false doctrine that should be opposed by all who respect God's Word.

Well, what about Psalm 58? I affirm that Psalm 58 does not teach Original Sin as seen by the following: (1) The passage is describing David's enemies, not innocent babies; (2) The passage says that the ones under consideration "go" astray, not that they "are born" astray; (3) Newborn babies cannot talk, much less "speak lies"; (4) The ones David describes have "teeth," but babies do not have teeth; (5) Neither Adam nor Adam's "nature" is mentioned in this passage; (6) This passage is an inspired exaggeration, designed to show the wickedness of David's enemies who were also God's enemies. Obviously, the language is not to be taken literally.

Babies do not "literally" go astray "as soon" as they are born; rather, wicked men make wicked choices early in life and go astray. That is all the text teaches. No passage teaches

that babies are born sinners!

Adam did not have a "sinful nature." God created him pure and sinless. But Adam chose sin. This is precisely how people become sinners today. We choose sin and therefore commit sin. "Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). Sin is committed, not inherited.

— Ripley, MS

**Old Paths**

830 W. Fargo Drive,  
Broken Arrow, OK. 74012

On a nonprofit basis.  
Published monthly and  
supported by Churches of Christ  
and individuals.

Dalton Key Editor  
"Subscription Free;  
Prayers Requested;  
Contributions Appreciated."