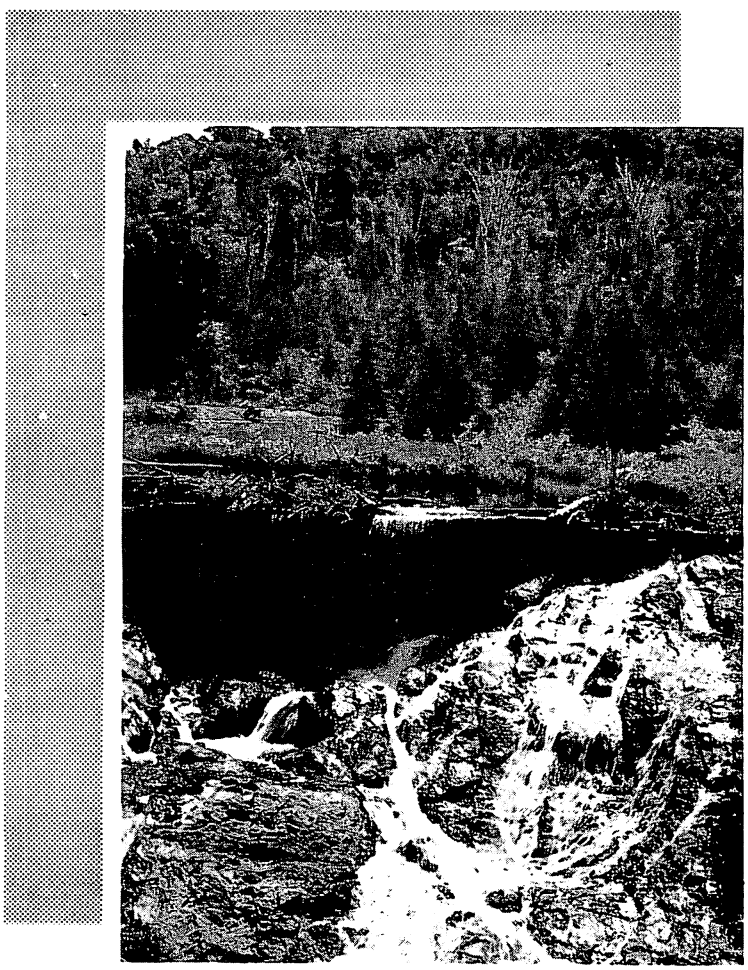
BEACON LIGHTS

SPECIAL ISSUE



OCTOBER/1994
Volume LIII
Number 10

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.
For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"
Mark 8:35-36.

Published monthly by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies

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Welcome

Welcome! A special welcome to you, friend. If you never have read the *BEACON LIGHTS* before, we as a magazine staff are happy you have picked it up and hope you enjoy it. We have encouraged our subscribers to give this issue to someone who currently does not subscribe. In turn we have made this issue full of topics that we thought would interest you, and we wrote about things that you may have questions about.

Believers are complete in Christ. Not by ourselves but by Christ do we stand. For those of you that do not know completeness in Christ we have tried to incorporate some articles in this issue. It is first hard for a person to say they are not complete. We all like to be self existing, not dependent on others. To say that you are dependent upon someone in today's world is considered wrong. Even children today are supposed to be independent and have their own rights. But the simple fact is we are dependent people. Everyone realizes that they sin and that they need forgiveness from their sins. But, pride can hinder acknowledgment of this fact. Examine your life. Put pride behind you and see if you are complete. Do you have forgiveness from your sins? Do you seek to flee sin? Do you have a personal relationship with Christ? Can you say, "Yes, I am a believer. I am complete in Christ?"

-Editor

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The Golden Ratio

by Tom Bergman

Do you have a second? Grab a tape measure. Measure the length of your leg (heel to hip joint) and the length of your lower leg (heel to kneecap). Divide the entire leg length by the lower leg length. It should come out to about 1.5 to 1.8.

[Heel to hip joint] ÷ [Heel to kneecap] ≈ 1.62.

Next, measure the length of your arm (fingertips to shoulder) and divide it by the length of your forearm (fingertips to elbow). The ratio is still about 1.62. Actually, the precise number is more like 1.618034 and it works for several body lengths. (Try chin to top of head ÷ chin to eyes.) This number is called the Golden Ratio and it occurs naturally in our bodies. In fact, it occurs in nature all the time. You see, nature is the work and creation of a marvelous God. The patterns we see daily are not accidents; they are planned by a wise and wonderful God—a God of order.

Wonderful patterns show up inside our bodies as well, with many applications in the field of medicine. In the late 1830s, a French doctor named Jean Poiseuille discovered that the naturally-occurring formula, $V = kr^4$, predicts how much the radius of a clogged vein or artery must be expanded to restore normal blood flow. Physicians now use this in angioplastic surgery (see figure 1). For instance, once the location and severity of blockage is revealed, a surgeon would inflate a balloon-tipped catheter to widen the radius of the artery 10% in order to restore 40% of the blood flow. Poiseuille was astonished to discover another unfailing accuracy in the network of veins and arteries. Each blood vessel is branched at *precisely the optimum angle* so that loss of energy (loss of

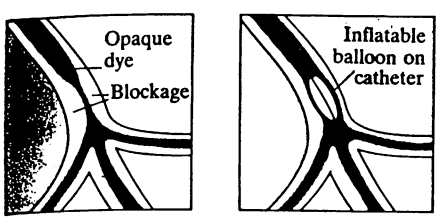


Figure 1

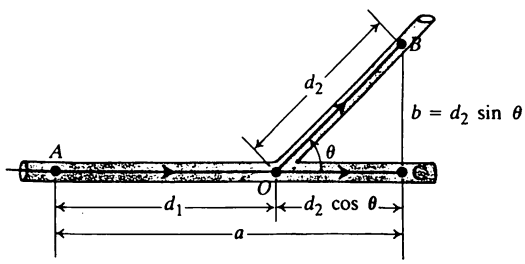


Figure 2

oxygen/physical exhaustion) due to friction is kept to a minimum (see figure 2). The human body could never function without this incredible precision. No breathing, no walking, no talking. Of course, this miracle does not just "happen." God *made* it so.

Mathematics is all about order. It is patterns all around us. Patterns, order, precision, beauty, and harmony. The Golden Ratio is a pure example of this. But there are so many other patterns buzzing around us, we could never take the time to notice them all. Look into weather and meteorology. In high and low tides, we see the beautiful harmony of the moon's movements. Waves, thunderstorms, humidity, and temperature are other functional patterns. Math and orderliness—in weather?!

Sure, it can be seen in more detail with Figure 3 below. That formula calculates the average temperature in Fairbanks, Alaska for **any** day of **any** year.

$$f(x) = 37 \sin\left[\frac{2\pi}{365}(x-101)\right] + 25$$

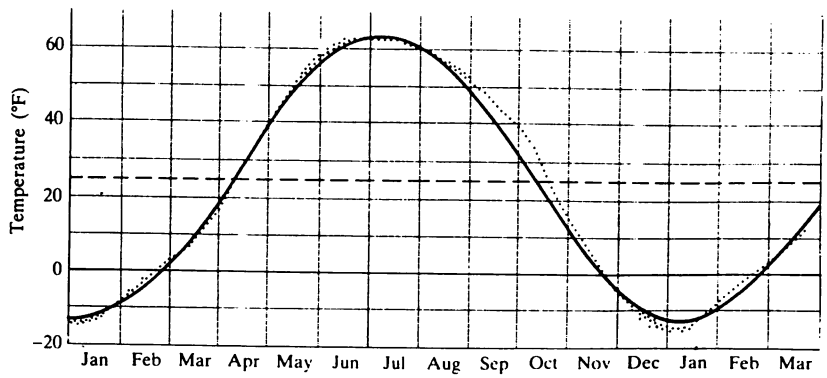
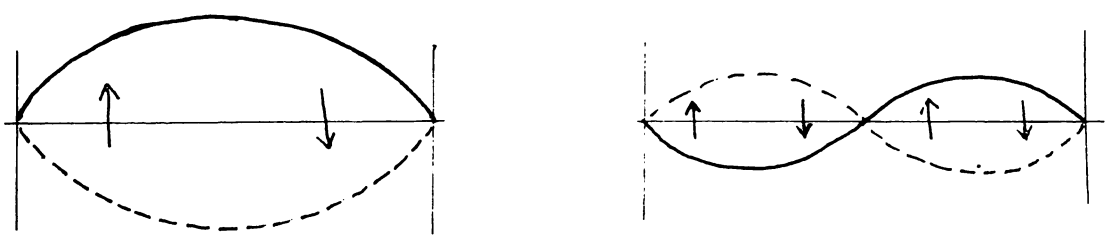


Figure 3

It is perfect... It is orderly... It is mathematics... It is God's creation.

The world of music reverberates with perfect harmony and patterns. The sounds of percussion, woodwind, brass, and string are measurable waves in the air traveling at 760 mph. When the strings on a violin oscillate (up and down), they become waves of the form $y = a \sin(kx) \cos(\omega t)$. It is formulas like this that are used to measure different tones and wavelengths. A wave in the first *harmonic* will produce one kind of tone, while one of the second harmonic gives another (see Figure 4). The combination of these frequencies produces musical harmony, hence the name. Anything in between sounds discordant—too sharp or too flat.



First harmonic

Second harmonic

Figure 4

Although it seems mind-boggling, remember this: music is one of the purest forms of math. The God who blessed us with music is a very great God, the Almighty God of heaven and earth! To put together the harmonic waves of the sweet violin like J. S. Bach did with his Brandenburg Suite results in an intense harmony of unmatched beauty and grace. Thanks be to God for the gift of music.

In global navigation, captains on the rolling lakes and seas rarely travel in straight lines: communication instruments are not meant to support this technique. Instead, they guide the big oceanliners in giant geometric curves called hyperbolae. This way, the ship can follow an accurate

path that is always a constant difference of distances from two radio communication points (see Figure 5). It is so simple and so perfect. Yet no one made this up. No one **could** possibly invent it, even out of sheer genius. Instead, it was discovered within our God's creation.

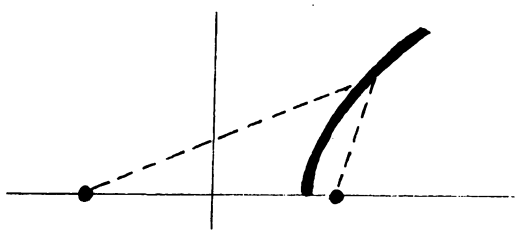


Figure 5

One could mention many other math applications that impress upon us the greatness of our Lord and Maker. These patterns extend into every realm of life. Even in architecture, for the dimensions of the Parthenon temple in Athens, the ancient Greeks used the Golden Ratio (ratio of width to height) because it was the most naturally pleasing to the eye. Appealing to the eye, this very same Golden Ratio can pop up in a flower garden. The number of sunflower seeds within the clockwise spiral (found in the brown center of the sunflower) divided by the number in the counterclockwise spiral is always going to be approximately... guess what!...1.618034. From human anatomy to architecture to flowers, the presence of God is known. The greatness of God is something to marvel at. This is my Lord, and my God!

God is a God of order. He is so orderly, He never changes. What makes the orderliness of the Golden Ratio so amazing is the fact that God in His infinite wisdom laid out these patterns for us, in His unchangeable glory, by His unchangeable Name. This same God, the only living God, the *Father of lights* (James 1:17) set the planets in motion for a perfect pattern in the heavens, a lovely harmony. Can you hear the beautiful sound? Maybe you will recognize it in the well-known hymn, "This is my Father's World."

"This is my Father's world,
And to my listening ears,
All nature sings and 'round me rings
The music of the spheres."

Although this editorial is not a lengthy mathematics text, it does introduce some complex designs within our world—the music of the spheres that sings God's praises. And while there may be no need to memorize the complexities involved in the calculations, the illustrations do have a purpose. More than a curiosity, this introduction is supposed to give you an idea for what the *Beacon Lights* is about. You see, There is something we wish to express about the God that we write about here at the *Beacon Lights*. He is great...He is all-powerful...He is the Lord of heaven and earth! His majesty is beyond human understanding, His glory unthinkable. So we write and publish articles of such a nature that they exalt the Lord—The Lord Who has performed such wonderful patterns and miracles in His orderly creation. We write and publish practical articles that help young people see and understand this God. We intend to help others live their lives *with this God always in mind.* The variety of articles and the monthly devotional are expressly for this purpose. Use them, and feel welcome! Feel free to send us a few of your thoughts. We would enjoy hearing from you and would like to welcome you personally. As a staff, we hope you enjoy reading this issue, the Lord willing. Thank you!

Thoughts on God's Sovereignty: Psalm 19

by Mike Feenstra

Article II of the Belgic Confession of Faith, a creed of many Reformed Churches, tells us that God is revealed unto us in two ways: by the creation and by the Word of God. These two means are important to us as Christians because they show us that since God is sovereign over all creation, we must obey Him in the way that He has commanded us in His word, namely the law of God. Psalm 19 speaks of these two subjects before it concludes with a prayer.

To understand what David is saying in this Psalm we must first look at what he teaches us about creation in the first six verses. He begins by telling us first that the creation was formed by God in such a way that its perfect order reveals to us that God is sovereign. This order can be seen in verse 2 where it states this about the heavens: "Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night sheweth knowledge." The "speech" and "knowledge" that David is talking about is the instruction that we receive just by viewing the constant perfect order of the world in the succession of days. What a wonder that the sun rises and sets every day at a precise time! This would be impossible if God was not behind it all!

We must also notice that although this instruction is described again as "speech" in verse 3, it is not verbal. This is an important distinction because the creation secondly reveals God to all nations, tongues, and tribes. The "speech" of God's creation should be understood by all men. The creation does not only reveal God to certain civilized nations, but it reveals God to all people that have lived on the earth since the beginning of time. Have you ever thought of this when you viewed the stars at night? Each one of the distant stars that you have seen has been rotating in such perfect order for thousands of years that we know exactly at what time a certain star will be at a certain point. Just think of an example from the past. The reliability of the stars is so great that travelers of old were even able to chart their courses by them! What a testimony to God's governing hand! How can anyone doubt that God has control of the universe! This is exactly why men who have not heard the Word of God can not excuse themselves from the judgement of God. (Romans 1:20.)

Thirdly, we must understand that God has made in the creation a "...tabernacle for the sun" (verse 4b). This shows to us that God has placed the sun for us as the most magnificent display of His almighty power. It is from the sun that the world derives all of its strength and life. Imagine what would happen if God would allow the sun to burn up entirely! Everything on the earth including man would die! Imagine if the sun would not come up at the exact time that it is supposed to! Then, all the earth would be hurled into panic and chaos. These thoughts should motivate us to trust and thank God not only for upholding and strengthening us, but also for governing His creation in perfect order.

Although we should thank God for His sovereignty in upholding us, we should also especially show our thanks to God for His sovereignty in appointing us to everlasting glory in His Son, Jesus Christ. Our thanks is given to God chiefly through prayer and also by living according to His law. This can be seen by looking at the Heidelberg Catechism, Questions and Answers 86 and 116.[1]

Psalm 19 also speaks of the law and of prayer in verses 7 through 14. It is interesting that David

speaks of the law after he speaks about the creation. He does this to instruct us about how God makes Himself known to us more fully, namely the Word of God as revealed to us in the law of God. It is well worth our time to consider what David has to say about the law of God.

First, we must note that the law of God, or the ten commandments, is the *complete* and *full* command of God about how we are to serve Him. This is brought out when the Psalmist describes the law as "perfect" in verse 7. This is the reason why we as Christians must follow *all* of the law of God, and this is the reason why we may not add to the law.

Secondly, we can see at the end of verse 7 that the law "...is sure, making wise the simple." In other words, the law is *true* and *clear*. The law is not some ambiguous moral code that man has dreamed up, but it is the work of God for Whom it is impossible to lie! (Hebrews 6:10). What a great comfort to Christians! The law is written in such perfect order by God, that no man has any excuse. This is a terrible thought for the ungodly, but for the Christian it is a glorious thought because the law states clearly how to serve God.

In the third place, the law "*endureth forever.*" It is "More to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold: Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb" (verse 10). The gold and the honey are mentioned here because they are prime examples of earthly things that give man delight, but this delight is only temporal, it passes away in a moment. This idea is brought out vividly in Isaiah 40:8 where we read: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever."

Fourthly, the law of God *shows to us our sin and our inability by ourselves to follow the law.* This idea is brought out in verse 8 where we read that the law "enlightens the eyes," and in verse 11 where it states that we are "warned" by the law. Although we may think that we are good Christians, the law is always there pointing us to our sin. But, by God's grace through the working of the Holy Spirit we put away our sin, and seek to follow His commandments where there is great reward (verse 11). Note that this does not mean that our works merit salvation, for we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8,9).[2]

Although the law is written clearly for us to read, we still don't know all of our sin. David shows this by his confession in verse 12 through rhetorically asking if man can understand his own "errors." The answer is obviously no, because we read next that David asks God to "cleanse" him from "secret faults," or sins David does not know.

It is important to see that David is teaching us how to pray in verse 12 as well as verses 13 and 14. He does this by showing us the proper procedure for prayer. First, we must humble ourselves and confess our sins before God. Secondly, we must ask for forgiveness. Finally, we must ask Him to keep us away from temptation. We all ought to remember this when we pray to our God.

David continues his prayer in verse 13 by asking God to keep him away from presumptuous or willful sins. Then, in verse 14 we read, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." Is this also our prayer to God? Do we ask God to keep us away from godless rock music when we know that Ephesians 5:19 says that we should be "Speaking to [ourselves] in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in [our] heart to God?" Do we ask God to give us the strength to flee from the temptation to attend the movies where it is impossible to meditate on the things of God?

We as Christians must be fervent in prayer to God so that we may not fall into these sins. We must also be students of the Scriptures and the law so that we may be more able to see God's sovereignty in the creation around us. Then we must bring thanksgiving unto God Who created us and revealed Himself unto us in the creation and by His Word. To God be the glory, our Strength and our Redeemer!

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[1]The Heidelberg Catechism is also a creed of the Protestant Reformed Churches that is used to teach the Reformed faith. It is divided into Questions and Answers as opposed to Articles.

[2]For further study on this point I would like to suggest that you read a third creed of the Protestant Reformed Churches, The Canons of Dordrecht, especially the 3rd and 4th Head, Sec. A, Art. 5. Please note that the Canons are divided firstly by "Heads" or chapters, with the 3rd and 4th being combined. Each Head has two sections: the first telling the true doctrine and the second rejecting heretical teachings. Finally each section is divided by articles.

Mike Feenstra is a member of Southwest PRC. He recently graduated from Grand Valley State University and is working at Field's Fabrics. Mike is also a former member of the Young People's Federation Board.

The World: Presumed Godly?

by Brian Kuiper

"God Bless America"
"In God We Trust"
"Freedom of Religion"
"God Bless Our Troops"
"I swear to tell the truth...so help me God"

"State endorses assisted suicide"
"Yearly crime rate increases"
"State bans prayer in public schools"
"Divorce and broken families reach all time high"
"The President and first lady are implicated in a scandal"

The preceding statements are all sayings that have been seen or could be seen in the world of the 20th Century. They are all true of the United States of America. For the most part they are true of the whole world. However, these groups of statements stand in stark contrast to each other. Christians in the world today constantly have to choose between right and wrong. At the same time, we are instructed that we are to be separate from the world in which we live. Romans 12:1-2 says, "...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world..." How are Christians to live in the world today which is so deceptive? As I showed above, the world appears on the one hand to try to obey God's will, while on the other hand openly defying God. Is the world that we live in a Christian world, or does it just appear at times to be a Christian world? What are we to do? More importantly, if you are a Christian, how should you behave? If you haven't been converted by the grace of God, what must you do?

First of all, it is our Christian duty to pray for those who are in authority over us in the world. We often fail to do this because these officials seem to be anything but Christian. However, they do have a purpose.

Picture yourselves for a moment driving down a highway. This highway could be called "The Highway of Christians." There are many other people on the highway. Some people are using the exit ramps. These people appeared for a time to be travelling towards the same destination as the Christians. However, they didn't really belong on the highway and so after a time they exited. There are also many people that are using the entrance ramps. They are joining the Christians that are already on the highway. These people are new Christians who have been merged onto the highway through the work of the traffic controller. The travellers encounter very much road construction along the way. As far as the travellers are concerned, these construction workers shouldn't be on the highway. However, the traffic controller has placed these workers on the highway so that they can make the road ahead better for the travellers. These workers are merely serving a purpose in the scheme of things.

We must pray for those government officials who are corrupt and sinful. They are the construction workers that God has placed on our highway. Pray for presidents and state officers who make the laws that affect us. It is our duty to pray that God will cause them to fulfill His desires and will. We must not sit daily and condemn them for the evil that they are doing. God Himself said in Romans 13:1, "the powers that be are ordained of God." How then can we as Christians cut down those officials that God has ordained? Ask God to work in their hearts so that they will continue to allow Christians to worship. Be active in elections and politics. In fact, thank God for those whom He has appointed. They are serving His purpose.

Secondly, Christians must trust God at all times. Once again, God uses all things to serve His most glorious purpose. When this is hard for us to understand, we must have faith in God. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." All too often we call upon God only in times of need.

It is as if He is there only when we feel that we need Him and not at other times.

This is one of the problems that faces the world today. People think that it is convenient to use God only when they need Him. Therefore, we see in America huge masses of people who gather on national holidays and listen to singers asking God to "Bless America." That is why when America entered the Gulf War many people gathered together to pray that God would "Bless our troops." Yes, this is the same America that supports killing of unborn babies. This is the same America that forbids prayers in some schools, in fact, even punishes some who pray. However, when these people need God, they become instantly outwardly pious and sacrilegious.

We must avoid this attitude. Do not make God a plaything that we pick up and set down at our convenience. I once heard a minister say, "A hypocrite is a person who is not himself on Sunday." We must live *every* day as if it is the Sabbath and we are in God's presence. This is our duty. Show that you do love and trust God by living every day for Him.

The third and perhaps most important way that Christians are to live in this world is to be different. The life of the Christian is an active life. If we are true Christians, others will be able to see this by our walk and our talk. We must be active, living examples of the Christian's walk.

Question yourself at this point. Do you walk the walk of the true Christian? Could Satan visit the Lord today and discuss how exemplary your Christian walk is as he once talked about Job's? (Please read Job 2:1-6.) What can you do to better your walk? What can you do to prepare yourself for your walk in an increasingly evil world?

If you desire to know the Lord, seek out someone who will help you to understand the things of God's great Word, the Bible. In order truly to know the Lord, you must immerse yourself and your life in the study of the Bible. Church attendance will become a joy! The way of the "Christian Highway" is not an easy way. However, only by following the paths of the Lord can a person be admitted into the heavenly glory that awaits true Christians.

Prepare yourself by bettering your devotional life. Discuss things that pertain to religion with your friends, elders, and minister. Actively pursue the end to which the Lord has created us, His glory and eternal life. Live for Him!

One cannot immerse himself in the ungodly life of today's world and expect to shine like a light on the hill. Eventually the light will be dimmed and snuffed out by the swirling winds around caused by the ungodly. Separate yourselves from the tents of the ungodly so that they may see your devotion to your Father. Don't be fooled by the world and their attempts to appear godly. Above all, don't ever assume that the world is actually godly. Don't live for the world. For Whom should you live?

Live for Him!

Brian is a student at Grand Valley State University. He is studying to be a teacher.

NOTICE OF BIBLE STUDY AT DORDT:

A group of students dedicated to the historic Reformed faith meets together Monday evenings at 7:00 in the Dordt College library for a Bible study. The meetings are sponsored by the Protestant Reformed Churches in the area. The plans are to begin the study with the prophecy of Jonah. The study is in no way limited to Protestant Reformed students; those outside the PRC are most welcome. If you know students at Dordt who may be interested, please encourage them to attend. Questions may be directed to Rev. Russ Dykstra (712)726-3382.

Faith among Lions: Daniel and the Lion's Den

by Steve Bylsma

The story of Daniel and the lion's den is a story with which many of us are familiar. When Daniel was living under the rule of king Darius, the king established a decree saying that no one under his rule could pray to any god except the king. Anybody that disobeyed the decree was to be thrown into a den of lions. Daniel knew about this decree yet he continued to pray to God. Daniel was captured and thrown to the lions where he survived the night.

This story is one that yields a good example of the life of a Christian. Involved in this story are two main aspects of what should be an integral part of every Christian's life. These two aspects are 1) faith and trust in God, and 2) willingness to do whatever it takes to obey God, even if that means death.

Daniel displays the first aspect admirably. When Daniel was thrown into the lion's den he believed that he would be safe from all harm. In the passage in Daniel 6 we do not read anything concerning Daniel's attitude until after he has spent the night with the lions. When morning arrives and the king calls to Daniel, Daniel answers by claiming that God sent an angel and shut the lions' mouths because he was innocent and had done no evil toward the king. Nowhere does Daniel say that he was unsure whether he would live or die. Daniel displays an attitude of faith and trust that his God would keep him from danger.

Daniel also displays the second aspect necessary in a Christian's life; that of absolute obedience to God. He does this by continuing to pray in spite of the king's decree. Daniel shows that prayer is so important to him by praying and henceforth risking capture and death. When captured, Daniel did not argue, beg, or complain. He calmly accepted his punishment. He was willing to die for his Lord.

As Christians we must strive to be more like Daniel when looking at these aspects of our lives. Daniel's example is one that we should follow. As Christians we must be zealous in our attempt to have faith as strong as Daniel's. Daniel also shows us where our priorities ought to be. God is first and we must obey God even if that means disobedience of man's laws and decrees, leading to punishment. As Christians the ultimate test of an individual's Christianity would be when confronted with death for his belief. We should pray that if confronted with such a test the Lord will make us as strong as Daniel and allow us to go forward with faith.

In this world we, as Christians, are confronted with an abundance of evil. There is such talk in the world about a person's heroes and role models. Most of the role models seem to come from sports and the entertainment industry. I think that we as Christians often overlook one important producer of role models. As Christians we need to use the Bible to determine our role models and Daniel is an excellent role model for all Christians. In the midst of an evil land, Daniel's faith and obedience toward God were strong. We should pray that our faith and obedience can become as strong as that of Daniel.

Steve Bylsma is a member of Faith PRC. He recently graduated from Calvin College.

Watching Daily At My Gates

by Paula Faber

Come with us each day as we have planned some special devotions for you! It is our prayer that you may better know God and His great work of salvation.

October 1 — **Read Genesis 1:1:** *"In the Beginning God created the heaven and the earth."*

God is the One, only supreme being. He is very great and mighty. We learn in Genesis 1 about His great power of creation. He made everything, the sky, sun, moon trees, birds, plants, flowers, and He also made man! Today as you go outside look around at this creation. It is a marvelous display of His power. Take time today to read Genesis chapter 1.

October 2 — **Read Genesis 2:1-2:** *"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the hosts of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made..."*

We believe in the power and might of our God in making all things, and we also believe in His might to do this in six days. This whole world with all its wonder and beauty was called into being by the Word of God in six days. In 144 hours, God's work of creating the "heavens and the earth and all the hosts of them" was finished. This is the truth that we must believe by faith. God does not lie. God's Word stands above the word of today's scientists! Read Genesis chapter 2 today.

October 3 — **Read Genesis 2:16-17:** *"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."*

God had clearly stated that there were trees in the garden of Eden of which Adam and Eve could eat, and there was a tree of which Adam and Eve were not to eat (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil). God had made those trees. His command to them was very clear. They were not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But, Adam and Eve chose to disobey and therefore they could no longer live in perfect fellowship with God. This disobedience caused separation from God. Instead of loving and serving their Creator, they disobeyed and showed hatred to Him. As you go about your work today obey God. Carefully seek to please Him by being obedient to Him. Take time today to read Genesis chapter 2 and 3.

October 4 — **Read Genesis 3:12-15:** *"And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."*

Adam and Eve took the fruit of the tree of which they were commanded not to eat. In the garden where Adam and Eve lived, there was a serpent. This serpent was Satan, a fallen angel of God. He had disobeyed God and was cast out of heaven. This serpent came and tempted Eve. The serpent changed the words of God, and he lied to Eve. He made this sin of disobedience look appealing. Eve then tempted Adam also to take of the forbidden fruit. Their fall for the lie plunges the whole human race (all their children) into sin and disobedience before God. When we are tempted to do the wrong, we must say "NO!"

October 5 — **Read Romans 3:10-12:** *"There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is note that seeketh after God."*

Because of Adam's fall into sin, man is no longer able to obey God. Adam was the father of all men, and because of his sin we are also guilty of this first sin. Man has become the servant of the devil. If man was left to himself he would most certainly perish in his sins. Man is full of corruption through and through. There is no good in him. He is not even able to say yes, I see my sins and now I choose to follow after God's ways. Man being full of sin cannot even desire to follow after God. Is this how you see yourself?

October 6

Read Genesis 3:15: *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."*

Adam and Eve found themselves separated from the one holy God. They had committed sin and were worthy of death. Throughout the Old Testament, New Testament, and yet today, men and women are found in this situation. We have sinned against God in countless different ways. We too are worthy of being cut off from fellowship with God. God does not leave us to ourselves but He said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed..." God would have two seeds come from Eve (the seed of the woman and the seed of the devil). Enmity is hatred, God would put a hatred between the children of the devil and the children of the woman. Whose friend are you?

October 7

Read Isaiah 9:6: *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The might God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."*

Yesterday we talked about how we are a sinful, fallen people. For these corrupt sinners has come a Saviour. He was spoken of by prophets hundreds of years before His coming. He came to this earth, to live and die for a people that were His. Who would this Saviour be? He is the Son of God. Yes, that same God Who is our maker humbled Himself and became the one on Whom all our sin would fall. He would suffer hell itself so that we would be found perfect in His eyes. Rejoice!! This Saviour has brought salvation!

October 8

Read Leviticus 22:20: *"Blind, or broken, or maimed...ye shall not offer these unto the Lord, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the Lord."*

All through the Old Testament the people of God, the seed of the woman, looked for the promised Saviour to come. God gave them a sign that would remind them of His coming, and a reminder of what His work would accomplish for them. Every time the Israelites, the nation of God, sinned, they had to kill a lamb. This lamb was to be spotless and without any blemish. That lamb was a picture of Jesus who would be born without sin. The people knew that their salvation was not going to come from any good that they might do, but rather salvation would come from one Who is spotless and perfect, that being Jesus Christ the Lord! Where are you looking for salvation? Are you looking to Jesus alone?

October 9

Read Matthew 1:18-25: *"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost."*

This chapter tells us of how this Saviour came to earth. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and would be born of the virgin Mary. Born of a virgin? Yes, He would plant that life in Mary and later be born of her. This birth of Jesus would free Him of sin. He would be a true man, but there would be no sin found in Him. This would make it possible for Him to take away the sins of others. Take time to read Romans 8 today.

October 10

Read Luke 4:29: *"And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill wheron their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong."*

Jesus, is the name of the Saviour. He lived for 33 years on this earth. All during those years He was hated and rejected of men. This is because fallen man does not love the right. So this perfect Jesus was hated not for wrong doing but for the loving, righteous acts He performed. You can not set your mind to loving this Jesus either. You have a totally corrupt nature which is unable to do any good. Loving God and serving Him is a good work which we can not perform apart from God's grace. Pray for God's grace to continue working in you, that you may love Him more.

October 11

Read John 6:37: *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."*

At the end of His 33 years He was crucified on a tree. His death was the fulfillment of His promise to bring salvation. He arose from the grave in which they had put Him, showing His complete power over death itself. He has given His chosen people this same victory over the final death, which is hell. Who are these that the Father has given? They are a people who are no different from the rest of the human race. They have not done anything in order to earn this salvation, nor have they lived a better life than others. But this choosing is totally a choice of God's. How wonderful to be a chosen one given Him of His Father!

October 12

Read Matthew 27:40: *"...If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross."*

After reading this chapter of Matthew, we have heard the many mocking words of the crowd. Now, as He hangs on the cross, they want Him to prove that He is the Son of God. Yet, for 33 years they had seen His miracles and wonders, but they would not believe. It was not the will of His Father that He come down from the cross. The will of the Father was that He suffer the agony of hell itself, to purchase salvation for the chosen elect of God. Imagine having the power to be able to come down from the cross, having power to slay all the wicked as they stood there mocking Him, yet to chose the way of suffering and humility so that our salvation would be made complete. Praise God today for fulfilling the work through His Son Jesus Christ!!

October 13

Read Matthew 27:66: *"So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch."*

Pilate calls his guards to set a watch over the grave of Jesus. He wants no one to steal the body of Jesus in the night, and then go out and say look, "the Lord is risen!" So such a watch was made. But, Jesus went through the tomb. He had received a spiritual body and did not need a man to roll the stone away for Him to rise. The disciples and friends come to the sepulchre to anoint His body but find that it is not there. He truly is risen. And just as His resurrection is sure, so we have the guarantee that we too will rise from the dead. This truth makes today full of hope and joy for we will not stay in the grave forever, but we shall rise even as He.

October 14

Read Matthew 9:9-13: *"...for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."*

There is nothing for you to do in order to be the recipient of the salvation of God. Salvation is a gift of God. This gift is not attained because your life has been so clean and you have lived so justly in the world. Neither is this gift received because you decided to let Jesus into your heart. Rather, this gift is given to those whom the Father has given Him. Jesus came to save sinners, not good, righteous people. You must cling to the promises of His Word that your sins will be washed away in His blood on the cross, not through your goodness or your perfect living.

October 15

Read Ephesians 2:1-10: *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."*

If you know yourself as a sinner, and you know in your heart that there is only one possible way for salvation (through the blood and death of Jesus) you will certainly want to live the rest of your life to please that Saviour, to live for Him Who earned salvation for you. You will strive to flee from sin and seek to keep His commandments. Your motivation will not be to earn favor with God but because you are so very thankful for the life He has given you. How thankful are you?

October 16

Read Deuteronomy 10:12-13: *"And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?"*

You must know what is important in living a thankful life. Your life and mine, must be lived each day for the glory of God and not for our own glory and honor. We must read the Word of God and study it so that we may better know that great Saviour and from what great misery and sin He saved us. We will bow our heads in prayer and seek to fellowship with Him, pouring out our heart before Him. We will put away our own desires and seek only to please Him. Are you living a thankful life?

October 17

Read I John 1:1-5: *"God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."*

God is pure and holy. He shines in perfectness. He does all things right! He abides in fellowship with Himself: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He loves what is pure and what is done for His honour and glory. He hates all sin, darkness, and unrighteousness, because it is not of Him. It is contrary to His way. It is the opposite of purity. Sin lies. It deceives. Do you see the chasm between the Holy Perfect God and yourself?

October 18

Read I John 1:5-10: *"If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.."*

Our words and our actions must agree with one another. If we say we love God but walk with the wicked, then we are lying. That means, if we say God is the most important one in my life, but we spend no time reading His Word, or praying, we are deceiving ourselves. If our money is spent first for our own selfish desires and the leftovers are thrown in the collection plate, then we are deceiving ourselves. But, if you love the world then you will be walking and talking with them. You will find a type of enjoyment and happiness with them. If you love God then your words and actions will speak about that love you have for Him! What characterizes your life?

October 19

Read I John 1:5-10: *"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."*

Many people deceive themselves into thinking that they are basically good people. They think that they have very few sins and these sins are not very serious sins. They see the sins of others very well, much more clearly than their own sins. They are able to see what is wrong in the lives of others. They are blind to their own sin. They do not come to God for forgiveness, for they don't really know how they have offended Him. They become proud, thinking they are better than others. They stand proudly before God also. They wonder how He could condemn them for the few things they have done against Him. Pray that God will give you a humble heart before Him. Ask Him to show you your sin, and ask Him to make you truly sorry for it.

October 20

Read I John 2:1-6: *"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous..."*

You might say, "but what about me?" I sin. I do not keep the commandments of God perfectly. But, my inward heart desires to live according to all God's commands. I strive daily to set aside my way and concentrate to walk in His way, but sin is still present. Sin will always be found in my life, and in yours. Although I hate it and seek to be free from it, it will be present with me through my whole life. Remember He, Jesus Christ, is our righteousness. His blood covers all our sins and iniquities. He cleanseth us from sin so that God sees us as perfect in His sight.

October 21

Read I John 2:1-6: *"He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked."*

Jesus Christ walked in a perfect way His whole life. While He was on this earth He lived in perfect love with His neighbor. He lived humbly before God. There was no respecting of persons in His life. He denied Himself. O, to walk as He walked!!! This must be how we pattern our lives. As we read about His perfect holiness in every situation, we must follow and make His life our guide. Pray that you may be molded and fashioned more like Him. Ask Him to continue His fashioning process in you!

October 22

Read I John 3:1-16: *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God..."*

God's love is amazing! He not only sets His love upon us, but He also calls us to be His sons and daughters!! This is incomprehensible. You and I are sons and daughters of the King!! Do you see God's love in making sinners, who are prone to wander and who often wallow in darkness, His sons? With this glorious thought in your mind, seek to live in all purity and holiness before Him.

October 23

Read Matthew 24:7: *"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places."*

As you flip through the pages of the newspaper you undoubtedly see headings that catch your eye: earthquakes, famines, and war. God tells us these are signs that He is coming again very soon. Each time we hear the news of these things, our thoughts must be directed to the second coming of Christ. All through history the church has been waiting for Christ's coming. With each war, famine and earthquake we see our complete salvation coming closer. Are you looking for His coming?

October 24

Read Matthew 24:4-7: *"Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many."*

Antichrist, the deceiver, will come very soon to rule the world in which we live. He will be given much power. He will be able to do many unbelievable miracles, as making fire come down from heaven. He will be worshipped and followed by millions. His kingdom will be one of this earth. This man is not Christ! Christ's kingdom is not of this world. Although many shall be deceived and follow this man, God will give to His people a special measure of grace to stand alone and wait patiently for His return. Pray for wisdom for those last days.

October 25

Read Matthew 24:9-12: *"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake."*

The Christian at the time of Antichrist will be hated. It will be nearly impossible for us to live here any longer. The world will have no patience with us. They will not tolerate anyone who loves God. We must be prepared to die for our stand. We must remember that man can only harm the body but no one can take away the love that God put in us for Him. We must not worry about those days ahead, for God will give us the very words to speak. Are you ready to stand for the One you love?

October 26

Read I Thessalonians 4:16-17: *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."*

At the sound of the trumpet and the shout of the angels, the Lord Himself, will come on the clouds of heaven. He will descend from heaven, and He will gather to Himself all the elect believers. What a glorious day that will be. We will be forever safe in the arms of God. Do you long to live with Him there?

October 27

Read John 5:28-29: *"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."*

At the end of the world, when Christ comes again, He will take our bodies from their graves, and will give us spiritual bodies, bodies that are fit to live forevermore. This will be a glorious day, for when we hear His voice we will come forth from our graves and be changed. His chosen people will be raised to live in heaven with Christ, and those who are wicked will be raised to live in hell.

October 28

Read Matthew 25:41: *"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels..."*

The world has two different seeds, the seed of the woman and the seed of the devil. The seed of the devil are the wicked of the earth. They are those for whom Christ has not died. Although they may seem very prosperous in this life, and may have wealth untold, yet they will be cast into hell. God is just in casting them there because their works are evil. They have no salvation through Jesus. All their life they spend in hatred of Him, they do not acknowledge Him to be the Son of God. Spend your life serving the God of all life!

October 29

Read Revelation 9:2: *"And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit."*

Hell is a most horrible place. There is no fellowship with God. Hell is separation from the Blessed Saviour. Continually the wicked will be punished for their sins and disbelief. They will suffer forevermore in the fire of God's wrath, surely a hot and miserable state. Isolation from the God of life would most certainly be a sad way to spend eternity. O how we long to live with God in close fellowship.

October 30

Read John 14:2-3: *"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."*

In this passage the godly are told of the home God is preparing for us. The seed of the woman for whom He has purchased salvation are promised a home with Him in heaven. Right now He is preparing that place for us. He soon will come to take us each to that heavenly mansion. There we will abide forevermore in beautiful perfection with the Ever Blessed One.

October 31

Read Revelation 7:15-17: *"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."*

Is your life full of worry, trouble, or pain? In that new heaven and earth there will be no more tears, no more troubles or worries. Rather we will abide in perfection with God Who is holy. We will worship Him and give Him the true honour and glory that He deserves. Our spiritual thirst and hungering will at last be satisfied, for we shall be like Him, and sin and disobedience will be no more present. Do you long for that glorious day?

Walking with God— Personal Devotions

by Rev. Audred Spriensma

Do you want to walk with God? Is it possible? Enoch did but can I? Do I want to? Is it desirable? How does one walk with God? This article is written to young Christians who are called to be pilgrims and strangers in this world and wish to walk with God and enjoy Him as their Friend. We read in Micah 6:8,

> He hath shewed thee, O man what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

God, the Eternal, Magnificent One has descended in Christ Jesus to live, move, and suffer amongst us. By coming to walk with us, talk to us, to suffer in our place, Immanuel has delivered us from despair to love; from darkness to light; from death to life. He has shown Himself to be our God, our Saviour, our Father, and our Friend.

We are called to walk with Him. We are called to a life of faith, love, and obedience. We are called to walk with Him as His children, children of light, to walk antithetically as holy children in the midst of a sinful, evil world. We are called to walk on the high road of wholesome living, walking with God in humble joy, enjoying His friendship, care, guidance, and love.

We are pilgrims and wayfarers on the rugged road of a rocky, unregenerate world. And the only way to walk it with God is in an unshakable faith with God leading and encouraging us all the way.

The Word of God to us today is exactly the same as it was to young Joshua long ago:

> Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.
>
> This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy waay prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.
>
> Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Joshua 1:7-9).

God's Word must be a light upon our pilgrimage. God speaks to us telling us what He is like, what we are like, what we have been made in Christ Jesus, what our calling is, how to resist sin, how to behave as His children. He encourages us, reassures us, reprimands us, instructs us as His covenant friends. As we read in I Corinthians 2:9,10:

> ...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

So young people, diligently seek God and His counsel. For He promises to reward those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). Let your heavenly Father and Friend speak to you each day and surround you on every side with His presence, person, and power. God's speech will make you strong and courageous to walk as a godly young man or woman. "It is in Him that we move, and live, and have our being" (Acts 17:27,28).

God makes Himself known by speaking to us in a language we can understand. He communi-

cates His will and wishes to us. He reveals His character. He sheds light upon the path that we are to walk in life.

This is why the Scriptures are to be taken seriously. They must be studied, read, and reread. It takes time, a lot of time to be still, to listen, to hear, and to understand what He is saying. If we want to hear and understand God we must get alone in some quiet, private spot with His Word, away from noise and distractions. Before opening His Word, ask God to speak to you through it. Read slowly the passage before you. Concentrate carefully on what God is saying, and what that means for you personally. Perhaps in a private journal with the date write down clearly what the passage said and your reaction to it. During the day, recall and ponder what God has revealed to you. If there is opportunity, share this insight with another person or your family. This all takes time, precious time, but time well spent that we might know and walk with God.

As God speaks to you in His Word, you can speak to Him in prayer. Tell Him your fears, failures, and hurts. Thank Him for your new life, friends, parents, and everyday blessings. Ask Him to cause you to mature in your faith, love for Him, and you obedience. Beg Him for a keen appetite and hunger for His Word. Thank Him for helping you to recognize your enemies: Satan, the enticing world, and your old sinful nature. Plead with God to help you say NO to them. Thank God for forgiving you your short-comings and failures. Confess to Him your sins and ask Him to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Praise God for being near to His children always and implore Him to increase your oneness and communion with Him.

Walking with God means talking to Him, sharing with Him your inmost thoughts, and communing with Him personally, privately, and profoundly. Do not repeat thoughtlessly old phrases but open up, pour out your heart to God the Author and Finisher of your faith. Talking with God this way we walk with God in quiet strength and assurance, not easily turned aside, walking in faith and obedience. **WALKING WITH GOD: possible? yes! desirable? yes!**

Young person, do you want to walk humbly with your God? Do you see the need for personal devotions? Will you take the time and effort for them?

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Why Go to Church?

by Rodney Kleyn

It is the practice of Christians to go to church. But why? The answer to this lies in the very name Christian. What is a Christian? If you were to look in a dictionary the definition would be something like this: "a follower of Christ, pertaining to Christ," or something of that nature. Who then is Christ? Christ is the mediator or go between of God to man and of man to God.

Man needs a mediator. We all need a mediator. We are all sinners and that is why we need a mediator. God has sent His son, born of a virgin, born in our flesh, to mediate between Him and us. Without this mediator we could not pray and we could not worship. In fact, we would all be damned to hell. We would all deserve that as a result of our sin. But God has not determined that all should go to hell. God has created a heaven. God has determined that some, those He chooses, should come to heaven to dwell with Him there. We call these whom God has chosen the elect. The only possible way for Him to fulfill this was by the sending of His son into our human flesh, to die for the sins of the elect, and to purchase for them that place in heaven.

These people call themselves Christians. They do this because that is what they are. They are

followers of Christ. What is a follower? A follower is one who goes after the leader. He is one who pursues, imitates, obeys, and sets his leader as an object of his desire. This is how a Christian follows Christ. He desires to be like Christ, he imitates Christ in his Christian walk, and he is willing to obey Christ.

Christ is God's son. Christ walked a perfectly sinless life on earth. He worshipped God daily. If we read the Gospels we can see this. He went away early in the morning to worship God and to pray to Him (Mark 1:35). He sang praise to God (Matthew 26:30). He read the scriptures and preached from them in public meetings (Luke 4:16-44). We as followers of Christ must imitate Him and His worship of God. This is what we do in Church. We go to Church as followers of Christ, imitating Him in our praise of God.

Why did Christ worship God? Christ's whole life on earth was one of worship and service to God. Christ glorified God in everything He did, but especially in His death on the cross. In this death He overcame sin and the devil, and made the way open for us to communicate with and to come unto God. If our Saviour could give up His very life to glorify God's name and to fulfill His purpose, should not Christians also give of their time to worship God?

God is worthy of our praise. Romans 11:36, *"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever."* It is God that has created all things, so that without Him nothing would or could exist. This is evident from looking at the creation around us. Just look at the stars in the sky. There are galaxies upon galaxies of them beyond the reach of the strongest and largest telescope on earth. There seems to be no end to them. *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament* (or sky) *sheweth His handiwork"* (Psalm 19:1). This is all the work of God. But God does not only hold the heavens in His hand, He is also in complete control of everything here on earth. He knows every sparrow that drops from the sky, and every hair on our heads (Matthew 10:29-30). We then who are of more value than many sparrows are also in His care and control. If He daily upholds our lives, should we not worship and praise Him? Yes we should, and that is why He has also commanded it of us. Psalm 96:9, *"O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth."* He has said this because He is worthy of all praise (Psalm 95).

There is more, though, in our worship of God. Our ultimate incentive is the Glory of God, and our ultimate goal is heaven where we shall praise Him perfectly. However, there is only one way to attain to this goal, and that is through Christ. In calling on the name of God through Christ we are saved. Romans 10:13, *"For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."* Praise and worship are the expression of our desire to be saved and to be ever praising God in Heaven.

We then, who desire a place in heaven, must praise and worship God now. We do not know of the hour of our death, and we do not know the hour of Christ's return. What we do know, though, is that we all must die, and we all must meet our maker. II Corinthians 5:10, *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."* Amos 4:12, *"...and because I* (God) *will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God."* We must be ready for the judgment at all times, that means right now!

Christians then, as worshippers of God, gather together as a Church. Our worship in church benefits us as Christians. God blesses those who worship Him in His Church. Psalm 84:4, *"Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: They will be still praising thee."* We are blessed with the fellowship and communion of other believers. We are built up in our faith to God, and we are encouraged to go on in our fight against this world and its wickedness.

God blesses us in these ways primarily by the preaching of His Word, so it is important that we find a Church where the preaching is pure and soundly based on Scripture. It is our duty to do this. We then must confess our faith in that Church, and must carry that confession with us in whatever we do from day to day on this earth.

Let me conclude with one more text from the Bible. Hebrews 10:25, *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."* This text sums it up beautifully. We must gather together as a church, and we must do that in readiness for the day of judgment, whether that be at our death or at the second coming of Christ. *So, come, let us worship Him, for He is our God and we are His people.*

Rodney Kleyn is a member of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia, in Burnie, Tasmania. He is 21 years old and has worked for 5 years as a diesel mechanic. He is currently studying to get his year 12 certificate, after which he plans to study for the ministry of the Gospel.

Thomas Jefferson and the Man from Uz

by Tom Bergman

Philadelphia, 1776—While the mid-summer heat wave sizzled over the city, Thomas Jefferson sat at his wooden desk to write a statement for the colonies. At first, his part was prepared specifically for the men of Congress. But 40,000 people of Philadelphia soon heard the meaning of the Declaration of Independence. Up and down Vine St., excited colonists were touched by the words. The message spread like a brushfire in the New Market ward. From 7th St. to the docks on the Delaware River, the Declaration blazed through Philadelphia on July 4.

Like that summer day in Philly, the opening words are still celebrated nationwide. From the pretty lakes of Minnesota to the bayous of Louisiana, Americans hear the message. From the lofty Manhattan skyline to the sprawling heights of L.A., the Delcaration of Independence rings.

> We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.

Until Jefferson, no one in Western history had formally called upon equal rights for all men. This was radical. In fact, Jefferson's ideas about man's "unalienable rights" made him a leader for human rights.

God's Ownership

Now, it's 1994. And what did Mr. Jefferson start? Americans talk a lot about human rights and civil rights. Minority rights and women's rights. Unborn rights and gay rights. All men are created equal with a right to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. Certain unalienable rights? Wow! We must be born with these rights. Ours to keep--they *belong* to us. *This* is the Declaration of a man who lived an ungodly life. The museum curators at Monticello, Virginia report that Jefferson believed in a "higher being," but felt little need for God or His Bible. In fact, Jefferson devised his own version by cutting out the portions of Scripture he did not like.

The true Holy Bible says that in body and soul, life and death, we are the Lord's (I Corinthians 6:19-20, Romans 14:7). The entire world belongs to the King of glory (Psalm 24). Everything is under God's ownership. Since the Lord is holy and sovereign, nothing really belongs to us. Our houses,
cars,
money,
clothes,
food,
jobs,
and all our liberties.

We are given these things to take care of. The Lord can give us gifts and take away those gifts. Nothing belongs to us because God owns and governs all things. *Our rights are not unalienable.* We would be selfish in claiming such rights. When God says "the world is mine" (Psalm 50:12), we have no room for selfishness. We do not even belong to ourselves.

Because God Owns Everything...

The Lord Almighty reigns. He can give; He can take away--whatever pleases Him for the good of His people. Because God owns everything, we do

not. Becuse God owns everything, we do not claim "unalienable rights." We are only taking care of this treasure while God chooses to let us have it. This is why we give unselfishly: in the collection plate to various causes, to friends, a cup of cold water every so often, cooking meals, providing shelter or the "shirt off your back." Do you want equal rights under God's ownership? Do you want equality?

> Your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want; that there may be equality. (II Corinthians 8:14)

That is true equality, for God owns everything. And since He does, a woman does not own her body. She does not have any right to make certain choices about it. This is why we do not support abortion. Considering an abortion is defiance of God's ownership even before it becomes a murder. Neither men nor women have the right to choose whatever they please to do with their bodies. I am *not* my own.

This is why we may not use drugs--because God owns everything. The pleasures of drugs are insanely selfish. It is not *my* body with a certificate of ownership. It is God's. The whole earth is God's (Psalm 24:1). This is why we care for His magnificent creation: the Great Lakes fresh water resources, the Siberian tiger, and the hardwood forests. Praise be to the Creator Who gave us the earth for a time *to use and care for wisely*. After all, when we slow down to consider our environment, and "the moon and the stars...What is man?" (Psalm 8:3-4). What is man? Only a creature--created by God, owned by God.

Becuse God owns everything, we do not claim "unalienable rights."

The Man from Uz

A long time ago, one of these creatures lived in the land of Uz. His name was Job. A very rich man, Job had access to much pasture and water. God had given Job many sheep grazing in the pasture, oxen for plowing, asses and camels. But then, the Lord allowed Satan to work a devilish plan in the land of Uz.

One day, Job was sitting down when a servant raced to the house with horrible news. The Sabean tribe had stolen all of Job's oxen and asses, killing the servants. A second servant dashed up to the house. Fire from heaven had come down and torched all the sheep. Meanwhile, the Chaldean people were rustling his camels and killing more servants. Then came the worst news of all. Job's children were all crushed when their house collapsed on them. What devastation! Satan even delighted in adding inflamed, open sores all over Job's skin.

While this was happening at dizzying speed, Job never said his rights were victimized. He did not call on the "rights" to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. The man from Uz had it rough, but he refused to curse God in selfishness. Instead, he said,

> The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord. (Job 1:21.)

The man of Uz recognized God's ownership. Thomas Jefferson did not. Job praised the name of the Lord. Jefferson did not. Thomas Jefferson Acknowledged that we are endowed by a Creator with our rights, but he failed to acknowledge that God can take these away and still be praised. Our freedoms are gifts, not unalienable rights.

The scary thing is, public schools today prefer Thomas Jefferson over Job. In fact, they will not allow Job in the door. Be aware of this. Be aware of what your liberty is: "Liberty is not the right to do as we please, but the opportunity to please to do what is right." Peter Marshall, the chaplain for the U.S. Senate stated this before the Senate in 1947. The opportunity to please to do what is right. *That* is our right!

It is a dangerous world. The rights movement is the work of the devil. He wants us to deny God's ownership and claim our own permanent rights.

May the Lord grant *you* the strength when you roll out of bed in the morning to confess, "The Lord gave..."

Tom Bergman is 22 years old and lives in Hudsonville, MI. He is a fifth-year senior studying to teach secondary mathematics. If possible, contact him by e-mail at TomBato@aol.com or bergman@beech.csis.gvsu.edu.

Where in the World is Love?

by John Huizenga

Love. Self-denying desire for another. Everyone wants to receive it, nobody wants to give it, and very few in the world seem to have it. Everywhere you look, you find people wanting to be wanted for who they are. Just when one thinks he has it, it vanishes. It seems bent upon leading man on a wild goose chase. It plays hide and seek. When found, it flees laughing, leaving man in despair. A human tragedy made into a comedy by the entertainment industry.

Is there really love in the world, or does man pursue a mocking phantom? If love is real, where can we find it? Some speak of a "Mother Nature" as if she is a force that cares tenderly for the human race. Some mother she is! What man builds, she tears down; when he clears a piece of ground, she fills it with weeds. Man is in constant battle with what he imagines to be a Mother Nature.

Perhaps we can find love in our leaders: men who devote their energy to bring harmony and unity within the nations. Do you feel loved by our president who wants health care for all in the nation? Does the army go out and fight because it loves you? Do the police protect because they love you? Do you find love here, real genuine love that satisfies your soul, that brings you peace, comfort, and happiness?

How about your friends? Do they love you? If you suddenly had nothing to offer them, would they still want you? Maybe you can be certain about the love of only one or two who are close to you. But even where love seems to be most true, how can you be certain that love would continue if you had absolutely nothing to offer? If you really think about it, it becomes evident how selfish we really are, how cold, mechanical, and business-like everything is. Most people try to ignore it and hope that apparent love is real love. But the fact remains, man is by nature selfish to the core and completely unable to love.

Yet there is love in the world. There is hope, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). God Who created all things, Who is perfectly happy without the world, out of His own sovereign good pleasure, draws his people to Himself to live with them forever in heavenly fellowship. His will is to save them from this world of tears and bring them to heaven. And His will is sovereign. His will without fail accomplishes His purpose exactly as He has determined in His perfect plan, His eternal council.

This perfect plan which is the only way to happiness and eternal life is found in the Word of God. We must live exactly as God wills us to live—in love, according to His Word—if we ever hope to live with God in heaven. And because we walk in sin, in our own way of selfishness, pride, and rebellion against God, God, in love sent His Son to take away the sin, and set His people in the way of righteousness.

"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." Do you believe? Rejoice and be glad. It is the wonder work of God's grace in your heart. You who were loveless, lifeless, spiritually dead, God has determined to love and bring to heaven.

And now, because God has taken you to be His, and you owe everything to Him, forsake your old nature, deny yourself and follow Christ. Only in Christ are you able to love as commanded in I Corinthians 13. Walking in your new nature in Christ will be a constant struggle as long as you live on this earth because our old nature still cleaves unto us. But you must pray for strength, live with other believers in the church, and listen to the Word of God as it is preached from faithful pulpits. In this way God will bring you to the glory which He has prepared for you.

John Huizenga is a second year seminary student. He is also a Beacon Lights *staff member.*

What Must You Do to Be Saved?

by Nathan Brummel

If you are not a confessing Christian and are wondering What you must do to be saved, the Apostle Paul provides you with the answer in the true story that is to follow.

Paul was traveling on a mission journey through what is now Greece. He came to the city of Phillipi which was then in the province of Thrace. The event that is important occurred after he was thrown into prison. But I am getting ahead of myself. When he came to town the first thing that he did of interest was that he on the Sabbath went to a river which was outside of Phillipi. At this place women would gather to pray. The historian who wrote the book of Acts does not report whom they gathered to pray to. It might be possible that these women were converts to Judaism.

At the river sat a notable woman. From the fact that her whole household was later baptized it can be assumed that she was apparently a rather wealthy woman who possessed slaves. The lady's name was Lydia and she was a seller of purple. As soon as Paul began his open air preaching Lydia became very interested. She had two important virtues which are noted. First, when she heard the words of Paul her heart was opened by the Lord and she "attended" to the words of Paul. Secondly, after she had been baptized along with her entire household she showed her love for the gospel by inviting Paul and his companions into her house.

In the following days a certain young lady made herself very annoying to Paul. This lady followed him around and would yell out things like "These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." And she just did not quit. For we read that she did this "many days."

This lady was in fact correct. She was speaking the truth. For a very great phenomenon had just occurred. Paul had come to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in Phillipi. This town that was filled with pagans who worshipped various Greek and Roman deities now had in its midst an unknown man who was claiming that there was this Jesus of Nazareth who had suffered and rose again from the dead!

Although this lady was correct in the message that she screamed around town, as she annoyed Paul, there was a terrible problem with her. The reason that she was doing this was because she was possessed of a "spirit of divination." In plain words this meant that she was possessed by a demon who could speak messages about the future. This poor girl was not a free woman. Luke, who wrote the book of Acts, writes that she had masters who made money by her soothsaying. She was a slave—something that us twentieth-century Americans cannot properly relate to. We no longer have this devilish practice in our midst. But in this lady's time many people owned others and their will was absolute over the slaves. They could misuse them in any way they pleased—without fear of the law. Happily by now the spirit of Christianity and the gospel has triumphed in such a way that slavery is dead in Christian nations.

Paul became grieved by both the way that this lady was acting and probably by the fact that she was bound by Satan in this way. So at one point when she was being particularly annoying he said to the spirit that was in her, "I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out or her." And so this young lady, whose life was of course ruined as far as an average young lady's life should

go, was given back a sane mind and the possibilities of a normal life.

But were her masters happy? No. We do not know exactly how many masters she had, but apparently there were more than one. And they were not happy that this young girl was restored to normality. Rather, they were angry that they could not make money by her soothsaying anymore. The bottom line was that they were interested in money, and they had just lost a decent business venture.

The masters must have been forceful men because they immediately and violently caught Paul and his companion, Silas, and brought them to the city magistrates. They claimed that Paul was teaching customs that no good Roman citizen could possibly accept and they got the crowd roused up and angry. The magistrates rent their clothes (Oh they were so upset) and commanded that Paul and Silas be beaten with many stripes, which after having been done, they threw them in prison.

To make a long story short, while Paul and Silas were in prison, it being the middle of the night, they began singing psalms of praise to God. God Who greatly blesses those who trust in Him suddenly caused a miraculous earthquake to occur that not only opened the doors of the prison, but also loosed the stocks that the jailor had put on Paul and Silas.

The jailor was rudely awakened by the earthquake. Through his sleepy eyes he saw that the doors of the prison were wide open. He thought for sure that the prisoners had escaped. This terrified him, for he knew that in Roman prisons that if prisoners escaped, the jailor who allowed them to escape was put to death. So he was going to commit suicide with his hefty sword.

But Paul saw him attempting to take his life and cried out, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here." The jailor got a light and went into the jail where he saw Paul and Silas. He fell down on the ground before them. Still terrified, he cried out to the two prisoners "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

I am not sure exactly what he meant by this Could it be that he thought that he would be put to death, if he did not suddenly secure the prison? By "saved" he could have meant—saved from death either by suicide or the Roman magistrates. On the other hand, it might have been the case that he had heard what Paul had preached in the city, either because he had heard Paul in person or from reports of first hand listeners. And then when he saw the miracle of the earthquake he knew instinctively that this was done to free Paul and Silas (after all, this was a time of great superstition). If this is the case, then by his statement "what must I do to be saved?" he meant "what must I do to be saved from my sins and be forgiven by the God Whom Paul preaches?"

But no matter what the jailor meant, the latter question is what Paul answers. Paul says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." The jailor took the men to his house where their bloody backs were washed off and taken care of (for the stripes that were given in those days tore the flesh of the back). The jailor had Paul and Silas tell his whole family Who this Lord Jesus Christ was, Whom it was necessary to believe in, according to Paul. The whole story of Jesus of Nazareth was related to them including His life on earth, the great miracles done by Him, His sufferings, and then His most triumphant resurrection. And the whole family was baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit because they believed in Jesus Christ.

the only way that (our) relationship with God can be restored is if (our) sins are done away with.

And here is the answer to the question that we have been investigating. The answer to the question "What must you do to be saved?" is "You must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." Believing in the Lord Jesus involves believing that He is the promised Messiah Who was promised thousands of years before His birth, Who would come and save God's people. He would come and speak the very words of the Father (the Triune God) to humans, and He would suffer for the sins of God's people so that His justice would be satisfied. For humans are responsible for the great sins that they commit against God, and the only way that their relationship with God can be restored is if their sins are done away with. And this is what the Lord Jesus did. When He suffered on the cross on the hill of Golgotha He took upon Himself the sins of the world, and suffered at the hand of God so that all those who believe on Him might be restored into a loving relationship with God.

Therefore, believe in the Lord Jesus and in the words that He speaks. If you hear His words and keep His commandments then you will be saved.

Nathan is a first year seminary student. He recently graduated with a masters degree in philosophy.

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

. . . LET IT SHINE!

by Connie Meyer

True History?

Eerie sounds surrounded Dirk and Deanne as they walked through a dimly lit passageway. Slowly their eyes became accustomed to the darkness, and they could begin to see the strange plants and rocks along their path. They were inside an exhibit about the history of fossils at their local museum, and they were finding this display very interesting.

As they reached the center of the exhibit, they heard a recording of a low voice coming from a nearby speaker, and it began to say, "It was millions of years ago when the earth...?

"Wow, millions of years," repeated Dirk.

Suddenly another low voice broke into the darkness, but this one was from Dirk and Deanne's father, who was walking right behind them.

"Millions of year?" he said. "That's not true you know."

Dirk and Deanne remembered hearing something about this all before, but they were still surprised to hear their father contradict the museum!

"Do you remember hearing about the flood in the Bible?" he asked.

Dirk and Deanne nodded. They knew very well the story of Noah, the ark, and the flood.

"Well," their father continued, "whoever put this exhibit together either doesn't know about it, or doesn't believe it. That flood was a judgement against the wicked, and it changed the whole earth. Scientists today want to explain those changes with millions of years, they don't want to be reminded of God's judgement."

Dirk and Deanne were thoughtful as they continued to look at this prehistoric scene. It looked so real, yet was only made out of plaster and paint.

Then when they returned home, their father read to them from II Peter 3:3-7:

> Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers...saying, Where is the promise of His coming? ...all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.
>
> For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the work of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:
>
> Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:
>
> But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men.

Find all the words of II Peter 3:6 in the puzzle:

E	W	O	G	D	L	R	O	W	G
H	Y	T	N	A	S	W	V	H	D
T	C	B	I	L	T	H	E	N	O
I	O	V	E	I	B	E	R	L	W
W	A	S	B	R	O	S	F	I	S
I	P	W	K	I	E	P	L	J	F
R	O	A	S	Y	V	H	O	R	T
M	W	T	U	N	B	A	W	A	H
H	P	E	R	I	S	H	E	D	A
U	S	R	O	V	L	N	D	H	T

Remember the __ __ O O __ !

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FAREWELL

Alas, like a tasty apple pie, all good things must come to an end. The staff of the *BEACON LIGHTS* hopes that you have enjoyed this edition of our magazine. We have prepared it especially for you. The purpose was twofold. First, it was to encourage outreach and evangelism on the part of regular subscribers. If you are not a regular subscriber, but hold this copy in you hand, that first objective was accomplished. But, also we wanted to expose you, the reader, to another Reformed magazine. It seems that the literature of the day becomes less and less tasty to the truly religious reader. So, we hope that this will whet your appetite and excite you too to pass this magazine on to a friend.

If you have any questions regarding this magazine or any material in it, these questions can be addressed to the editorial office or to the *BEACON LIGHTS* post office box. Both of these addresses appear in the inside front cover. We eagerly look forward to responses and questions.

The *BEACON LIGHTS* is a publication of the Protestant Reformed Churches. If you wish to visit any of the churches in this denomination, a directory follows this article. We would enjoy seeing you as visitors if God directs your paths in this way. Thank you and Bon Appetite! To God be all the Glory!

Protestant Reformed Churches in America

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