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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  Jimmy Swaggart
EDITOR  Donnie Swaggart
GRAPHIC DESIGNER  Jason Mark
PRODUCTION  Shaun Murphy
ILLUSTRATION  Marshall Cancilla
PHOTOGRAPHY  Jason Mark, Jaime Tracy
ART DIRECTOR  Liz Smith

DECEMBER 2017 | Vol. 51 | No. 12

FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS, WISHING YOU A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

PHOTO BY JAIME TRACY

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The phrase, “In the beginning,” speaks of a time in eternity past when God began the creation of the heavens and the earth. Williams says, “Beginning is the subject of this book; it teaches that God is the beginner of the visible and invisible universe, as He is the beginner of salvation in the soul of the sinner.”

We aren’t told here when this beginning took place, only that it happened sometime in eternity past.

God has always existed, which means there never was a time when He didn’t exist. As such, and knowing that He is a creator, which is an essential part of His being (Jn. 5:17), we are made to wonder what existed before the heavens and the earth; however, any idea is speculation at best, and when it comes to God, it’s best not to speculate.
God

The theory of evolution puts forth all types of speculation as it regards the creation of man along with the heavens and the earth. However, irrespective of the proposals they make, they have absolutely no idea of the first cause. Every hypothesis they put forth is always based on existing materials of some kind; consequently, not having a proper foundation, their hypotheses are always wrong.

The phrase, “In the beginning God,” gives the first cause. That first cause is God.

God in the Hebrew is Elohim. Its root meaning is “strength and power.” Elohim is a uniplural noun, which shows the plurality of persons in the Godhead. Consequently, from the very beginning, we see the doctrine of three divine persons in the unity of the Godhead. There is one God but manifest in three persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

To help us understand the Trinity and creation a little better, perhaps the following may shed some light: God the Father is the divine owner; God the Son is the divine architect; and God the Holy Spirit is the divine builder. And yet, whatever is said of each member of the Trinity can be said of all the members.

Trinity

The word trinity is not found in the Bible. It was used, it is said, by Tertullian, in the last decade of the second century, but it did not really find a place formally in the theology of the church until the fourth century. It is, however, the distinctive and all-comprehensive doctrine of the Christian faith.

It makes three affirmations: That there is but one God; that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are each God; and that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are each a distinct person. In this form, it has become the faith of the church.

With the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Trinity comes much more into view.

For instance, when the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, He said that the Holy Spirit would come upon her. He then added that the power of the Most High would overshadow her and that the child born of her would be called “the Son of God” (Lk. 1:35). In this, we see the Trinity—the Father and the Spirit functioning in the incarnation of the Son.

At the baptism of Christ in the Jordan River, three persons of the Godhead can be distinguished there. The Son is the one being baptized; the Father is speaking from heaven in recognition of His Son; and the Spirit is descending as a dove upon Jesus (Jn. 1:32–33).

Trinitarian

The teaching of Jesus is Trinitarian throughout. He spoke of the Father who sent Him, of Himself as the one who reveals the Father, and the Spirit as the one by whom He and the Father work. In fact, the interrelations between Father, Son, and Spirit are emphasized throughout (Jn. 14:7, 9–10). He declared with emphasis: “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter (Advocate), that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth” (Jn. 14:16–26). There is thus a distinction and also an identity made between the persons of the Godhead.

The Father, who is God, sent the Son, and the Son, who is God, sent the Spirit, who is Himself God.

In the commission given by Christ before His ascension, instructing His disciples to go into the whole world with His message, He made specific reference to baptism as “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” It is significant that the name is one, but within the bounds of the one name, there are three distinct persons. In fact, the Trinity

THE PRICELESS CORNER

We have set aside this corner of The Evangelist to show God’s Plan of Salvation. If you are unsure where you will go when you die, please listen to what God has said in His Word.

FIRST: GOD LOVES YOU

“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” Jn. 3:16.

SECOND: MAN IS A SINNER, AND SIN HAS SEPARATED HIM FROM GOD

“For there is not a just man upon Earth, that doeth good and sinneth not” (Eccl. 7:20).

“For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

THIRD: JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY REMEDY FOR SIN

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God…” (1 Pet. 3:18).

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” Acts 4:12.

FOURTH: YOU MUST RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR PERSONAL LORD AND SAVIOUR

Jesus calls this experience the new birth. He told Nicodemus: “... Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:3).

We invite you now to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour. “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name” (Jn. 1:12).

WE BELIEVE:

- The Bible is the inspired and only infallible and authoritative written Word of God (Ps. 119; Mat. 4:4; Lk. 24:27).
- There is one God, eternally existent in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 5:7).
- In the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His Virgin Birth, in His Sinless Life, in His Miracles, in His Vicarious and atoning Death, in His Bodily Resurrection, in His ascension to the Right Hand of the Father, in His personal future return to this Earth in Power and Glory to rule a thousand years (Jn. 1:1-4; Eph. 2:13-18; Rev. Chpts. 19-20).
- In the Blessed Hope—the Rapture of the Church at Christ’s coming (I Thess. 4:13-18).
- The only means of being cleansed from sin is through Repentance and Faith in the Precious Blood of Christ (Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:8-9; 13-18).
- Regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for personal Salvation (Jn. 3:5-8; Titus 3:5).
- In the Sanctifying Power of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy life (Rom. 6:3-14; 8:1-2, 11).
- In the Resurrection of both the saved and the lost: the one to everlasting life and the other to everlasting damnation (Rev. 20:5-6, 11-15).

PRAY THIS PRAYER AND MEAN IT WITH ALL OF YOUR HEART:

“Dear Lord Jesus, I now realize that I am a sinner. I accept the fact that You died for me on the rugged Cross of Calvary. I now open my heart’s door and receive You as my Saviour and Lord of my life. Please take full control of me and help me to be the kind of Christian You want me to be. Amen.”

If you prayed this prayer in all sincerity, you are now a Child of God. So that we might rejoice with you, we invite you to fill out this coupon and mail it to Jimmy Swaggart Ministries, P.O. Box 26250, Baton Rouge, LA 70826-2550. In Canada, mail to Jimmy Swaggart Ministries of Canada, P.O. Box 1020, Niagara Falls, Ontario, L2E 6V9. We will send you a free copy of Jimmy Swaggart’s book What Must I Do To Be Saved? This book will help you grow in grace and knowledge.

DEAR JIMMY: TODAY I ACCEPTED JESUS AS MY LORD AND SAVIOUR.

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CITY ____________________________________________ STATE/PROV _ ZIP ______

DATE OF DECISION ________ AGE ______

Note: We will keep your name confidential and use it only to send you free materials concerning Christian living. Your information will not be sold, rented or traded.
as triunity could not be more clearly expressed (Mat. 28:19).

Early Christians knew themselves to be reconciled to God the Father, that the reconciliation was secured for them by the atoning work of the Son, and that it was mediated to them as an experience by the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Trinity was to them a fact before it became a doctrine.

**Creation**

The phrase, “Created the heaven and the earth,” proclaims such being done sometime in eternity past. Concerning verse 1 in Genesis, Matthew Henry said, “The first verse of the Bible gives a surer and better, a more satisfying and useful knowledge of the origin of the universe, than all the volumes of the philosophers.” He then went on to say, “The lively faith of humble Christians understands this matter better than the elevated fancy of the most learned.”

Creation, in its strict sense, carries the meaning of producing something out of nothing. Naturally, that is impossible as it regards man, but it is not impossible with God. Jesus said, “With God all things are possible” (Mat. 19:26). In fact, God spoke the creation into existence (Heb. 11:3), which we shall see in the following verses. Why is it so hard for man to believe that?

As stated, Moses did not bother to explain the fact that there is a God. The idea is that creation demands a creator. Common sense tells us that, but common sense seems to be in short supply.

**Without Form And Void**

“And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2).

God did not originally create the earth without form and void. It became that way after a cataclysmic happening. This cataclysmic happening was the revolt of Lucifer against God, which took place in the dateless past. As a result, darkness was upon the face of the deep.

The moving of the Holy Spirit upon the face of the waters—done in order to bring the earth back to a habitable state—was the beginning of life.

The phrase, “And the earth was without form, and void,” points to a stupendous convulsion that affected the earth after it was created by God.

“Without form, and void,” in the Hebrew is literally tohu and bohu, which signify “wasteness and emptiness.” God did not create the earth in this fashion. It became that way at a point in time. Many scholars believe that Lucifer ruled the earth after it was originally created, and did so in righteousness for an undetermined period of time. As well, during that time, he ruled it in righteousness and holiness under God. It also seems there was a race of created beings over whom he ruled. Whenever Lucifer led his rebellion against God, one-third of the angels, plus this race of beings, threw in their lot with him. Many think, and it is probably correct, that these particular beings, whatever they might have been, are the demon spirits that presently help Satan.

Some have claimed that demon spirits are fallen angels; however, angels have spirit-bodies, whereas demon spirits have no body whatsoever and, in fact, seek a body to inhabit, whether animal or human.

I think it should be obvious that whatever degree this revolution of Lucifer was, its destructive power was beyond comprehension.

**The Mystery Of God**

Knowing that God is omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing), and omnipresent (everywhere), and that Lucifer was and is a mere creature, we may wonder why the Lord has allowed the Evil One to continue this long. The Scripture refers to this as the “mystery of God” (Rev. 10:7). Why the Lord has allowed this, we are not told; however, we do know that God does all things well, and everything He does is done for a purpose and reason and is always the right thing to do.

Irrespective of what has happened in the past, and even how it has affected man, this one thing we do know: God has effected redemption for mankind through the giving of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by His death at the Cross, brought about four great judicial results.

They are:
- Calvary effected the acknowledgment in the person of Christ, the act of the due judgment that the sin-principle required. In other words, judgment was poured out on Christ instead of on mankind, at least for those who will believe (Jn. 3:16).
- Calvary made it possible for corrupt-ed self, of which Satan is the personal author and representative, to be placed in Christ. As someone has well said, Jesus died on the Cross in order to save man from self as well as from sin (Gal. 2:20–21).

“God has effected redemption for mankind through the giving of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by His death at the Cross, brought about four great judicial results.”

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- Calvary destroyed the organic connection that Satan had brought about between sin and death. While the wages of sin continue to be death, Calvary made it possible for that connection to be assuaged by the blood of Christ (I Jn. 1:7). In other words, spiritual death as a result of sin, of which all men are guilty, no longer claims its victims, at least as it regards those who have accepted Christ.
- Calvary made possible the adjudgment of all men to the Redeemer as His personal possession, that is, those who will believe (I Cor. 6:20).

That Which Jesus Did At The Cross

Thus, by this fourfold achievement that was carried out at Calvary, the judicial expression of Christ's work on the Cross extended to the deepest realities of the moral universe. In effect, it anticipated every essential moral issue that the soul would need to fear in view of its own misgivings concerning destiny.

The punishment difficulty with respect to past sin was potentially met. Satan, man's Archenemy, was potentially destroyed, the causation between sin and death was potentially broken, and the claim of Christ to the possession of all men was potentially set up.

Thus, in dealing with the ultimate spiritual realities of the universe, Christ's Cross was, in effect, the anticipation of the final judgment of all mankind.

In fact, the early triumphs of Christianity were won upon the basis of the conception of Christ's death, as such, a judicial transaction. Actually, this was the heart of Paul's message (Rom. 6:3–14; 8:1–11; I Cor. 1:17–18, 21, 23; 2:2, 5; Col. 2:10-15).

The mystery of God will be finished at the second coming when Satan will be locked away in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1–3).

However, the ground was laid for his total defeat by what Christ did at the Cross, without which, the Evil One would have triumphed.
Christ alone could take the book from the hand of God the Father because He alone was worthy, and He was worthy because of what He did at the Cross (Rev. 5:8–9).

Darkness

The phrase, “And darkness was upon the face of the deep,” represents the end result of satanic influence, which is the opposite of light. The light represents God.

There is what is referred to as the “gap theory,” which belongs between verse 1 and verse 2. As previously stated, this is the particular time that Lucifer rebelled against God. Actually, the word deep is from a root signifying “to disturb.”

The ruin pictured in this verse reveals the sinner prior to regeneration. The remainder of the chapter describes the renewing power of the Spirit of God introducing light, life, and beauty from out of this ruin. The created energy of the Holy Spirit operates presently in a similar manner in the ruined nature of man. Believers become new creations (II Cor. 5:17) and are created unto good works (Eph. 2:10).

It took the Cross to dispel this darkness because the darkness was more than mere surface. It went all the way to the disturbed deep. In other words, it was total darkness.

The Cross opened up the way to God and made it possible for light to once again shine, of which this verse is a type.
The Successful Home & Marriage Series
Family Worship

Presented by Frances Swaggart

Editor’s note: The following is a continuation of the “Successful Home & Marriage” series by Jimmy Swaggart.

Today, young minds are inundated and saturated with filth and profanity being spat out through TVs, computers, and smart phones. No wonder there is no social consciousness and no moral responsibility. The Word of God is what provides this element necessary for a stable society. Nothing else can supply it—schools don’t, colleges don’t, and televisions don’t. The Word of God is the only tool of moral consciousness and responsibility, and children are growing up without it. As a consequence, they are growing up filled with hate. They are growing up with no knowledge of right or wrong. They demonstrate no remorse over truly terrible crimes. So, what is the answer?

“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”
—Deuteronomy 6:6-9

The subject of family worship is of great importance. There are many reasons for family worship. There are as many reasons in the Word of God for the family worshipping in the home as there are for public services in a church building. The family is the more compact and permanent unit. It is more closely knit than any church congregation can ever be. This does not mean that we should not have public worship or church services. Most certainly we should.

It may be of interest to note that in early New Testament days the groups of people who met as a “church” held their meetings in homes. In I Corinthians 16:19, Paul wrote, “The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.” Again, we have reference to a church meeting in the house as Paul is writing in Colossians 4:15: “Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.”

So church services, as such, began in houses. But even beyond that, the home ought still to be a unit for regular worship. The family members worshipping together with a regular, set, dedicated time of worship will be much better church members and can better serve God. They will be more loyal to the activities of the kingdom of God than those who come from families neglecting home worship. Of course, worship at home does not replace church worship.

Home worship is more basic and serves as the foundation for all other activities. The home is the basic unit of society and as the home goes, so goes the church and the nation. It stands to reason, therefore, that family worship should serve as the foundation for every Christian home.

In Matthew 18:19, Jesus urged Christians to agree together in prayer. He said, “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.”

Who can agree so completely in prayer as husband and wife, those of one flesh?
“If children are to be taught the Word of God, how to pray, how to live holy lives, and how to put their trust in Christ, the Saviour—there certainly should be regular worship in the home.”

The next Scripture, Matthew 18:20, goes on to say, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." So families should not only involve themselves in church, but also in family worship. They ought to agree together in prayer about specific things and believe God is in their midst and answering prayers. The one who enjoys fellowship with the Lord in a small unit (like the family), will generally be regular in fellowship with the larger family of God in the church service.

**Responsibility**

Parents have a great responsibility regarding their children in all religious matters. Other persons and numerous outside factors affect children, but the primary influence should come from the parents. I see my little great-grandchildren as often as I can, but I can only teach them so much because I am around them for only a limited time. Their parents, though, are the ones who really set the example for them. While they are young and their minds are pliable, this is the compelling force in forming their character. While they can be molded, mothers and dads ought to take this golden opportunity by spending time molding their children's minds in the ways of God and His Word.

Fathers are commanded in Deuteronomy 6:7 to diligently teach their children the Word of God. Children are to be taught the fundamentals of faith while they are young. Then—once they are raised up in the faith—parents can claim the promise that they will not later depart from it.

The New Testament also commands fathers to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. If children are to be taught the Word of God, how to pray, how to live holy lives, and how to put their trust in Christ, the Saviour—there certainly should be regular worship in the home. This should include systematic Bible reading and prayer, exhortation, and even singing. There ought to be times when prayer requests are given the family unit prays about them. It is one of the most precious periods of family togetherness possible.

The home worship service should be a time under the supervision of the father and mother. When I was a boy growing up, we had family worship every night. I will never forget it. My mother and dad would read from the Word of God, or sometimes I’d read, and prayer requests would be given. It wasn’t a question of should we do it or not having time; we would get on our knees and pray. Whenever I was around the house, I was called in for family worship every night. It left an indelible mark of righteousness upon my heart and life.

In Old Testament days, when the population was much smaller than it is now, those of faith were commanded to train their children in their homes. That command still holds. Of course, there are churches all over the landscape now. They
Distractions

Many factors rob today’s family of the positive influences of past eras. Television (and today we could add all like devices) has intruded to the point where it has taken the place of parents. Everyone tends to go his or her own way. I still maintain, however, that whether the period is in the morning or at night, time should be allotted within the family for devotion and dedication. A few minutes of Bible reading and seeking of the Lord, as a family unit, can be the most valuable part of the day. The Word of God should be discussed until everyone is satisfied that they understand the passages read. This should be a blessed time. It will sometimes be solemn, sometimes happy and joyous. It should always be approached, however, with total consecration and dedication.

Christian homes need this. The entire family should be involved. You will be surprised as you try to unfold the Scriptures to others, how much they will expand for you.

Memorize Scripture

We are exhorted in Deuteronomy 6 to keep God’s Word in our hearts and teach it to our children. Every individual in a family should memorize Scripture. Even a little

“A few minutes of Bible reading and seeking of the Lord, as a family unit, can be the most valuable part of the day.”

are plentiful in most areas and easy to get to. People should go to church.

Church going cannot, however, replace worship in the home. It is all too easy for parents to pass responsibility for instruction to pastors and Sunday school teachers. Even though pastors and Sunday school teachers may be committed servants of the Lord, this is not the right approach to the training up of children.

Certainly the pastor or teacher provides a framework of godly training and spiritual and scriptural instruction for the group as a whole. This does not, however, negate the responsibility of parents. Each parent should influence his child as no one else can. Leaving responsibility for teaching to the Sunday school teacher is completely wrong. Each child ought to learn Bible stories at his mother’s knee or from the parents together. Children should learn to worship God principally by the example of the parents. As the child is brought up in an atmosphere of prayer and obedience to God’s Word, it will influence and mold the child’s life long after he has gone out into the world.

As parents lead the family in worship, all children should participate. It shouldn’t matter if a son or daughter is grown. If they are home, either as a resident or a visitor, they should join in the joy and comfort of communal family worship. One of the secrets of successful family worship is to have a regular, set time. The length of time will, of course, vary, and it need not be overly long. Regularity is the important factor.
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The Church of Latter Day Saints, the largest branch of Mormonism, has 13 million members worldwide, but is Mormonism biblical? The Frances & Friends’ panel discuss the history and practices of Mormonism including Joseph Smith’s revelation, Moroni, and celestial marriage.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE MASONS (15-633)
Many believers think that the Masons are another branch of Christianity, but that is not true. Frances & Friends panel member Jim Nations reveals the roots, rituals, and symbolism of freemasonry and its deceptions related to the Word of God.

AN EXPOSE ON THE RELIGION OF ISLAM (15-622)

AN INTERVIEW WITH BRIGITTE GABRIEL (17-003)
Few people know more about the religion of Islam than Brigitte Gabriel. In this captivating two-hour interview, Brigitte shares her experiences and insights regarding the worldwide threat—possibly the most dangerous enemy that America has ever faced.
child is capable of memorizing simple verses. They can also be taught simple prayers. This will give them a good start.

When a child is allowed to say the blessing, no matter how elementary or clumsy, it is a treasure to the parents and grandparents, and a blessing for the child. I am sure it is also a dear thing to the Lord.

Teach Respect And Participation

Every child should learn to bow his head when others pray. Respect for the Word of God and all spiritual activity needs to be ingrained in children.

Children can play a significant role in the devotional time. I remember reading Scripture while still a young boy. My daddy would say, “Jimmy, it’s your turn now.” I would then pick out a passage from the Word of God, and I felt so uplifted by reading it. It was a great blessing. It left a lasting feeling of closeness to God and a sense that I can’t really begin to explain. We all participated, and I recall it all now with great warmth and fondness.

Not Too Fast

The family worship service should not be rushed through, nor allowed to degenerate into a “ritual.” Everyone should be truly involved and asked to contribute to the general spirit of the gathering. It will result in great blessing and spiritual growth.

Family worship is a beautiful way to teach children the Word of God. This should be a day-to-day part of family life with every member reading the passages they feel led to read, or sharing in some other way. If this could become a part of every family unit, then we could avert much of the juvenile delinquency and all of the other demonic influences affecting society today.

“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15).
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“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; You shall find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” —Luke 2:8-14

December 25

The Lord was not born on December 25. This date was chosen sometime before the fourth century. Therefore, as believers, we must understand that we really don’t know the exact date of Christ’s birth. Actually, we are celebrating His birth irrespective of the day on which He was born.

As well, Christian parents should never teach their children that Santa Claus is real. No child should be taught myths about some mystical gift giver. From the time he is able to understand, a child should be taught the true meaning of Christmas. It should center on the observance of the birth of Christ and what He did in delivering humanity at Calvary’s Cross and the resurrection.

Shepherds Abiding in the Field

Verse 8 begins: “And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.”

The area in question referred to the area around Bethlehem, where Jesus was born.

The phrase, “Shepherds abiding in the field,” pertained to the lowest caste in society at that time.

The phrase, “Keeping watch over their flock by night,” gives us the indication that December 25 was not the day on which Christ was born.

It was the custom to send flocks out after the Passover, which was in April, to stay until the first rain in October or November.
The Angel of the Lord

Verse 9 says, “And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.”

In the phrase, “And the glory of the Lord shone round about them,” this glory was the Shekinah, which was the visible token of the presence of God. It was the Shekinah glory of God that appeared to Moses in the bush that burned, then in the pillar of fire and cloud that guided the children of Israel during their journey through the wilderness, and then appeared in the tabernacle and the temple. It was the Shekinah glory of God that shone upon Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration when Christ rose from the dead.

Fear Not

The phrase, “And the angel said unto them, Fear not,” is especially endearing as most of the world lives in fear. There is fear of the future, fear in the present, fear about finances, and a multitude of other things, but here we are told to fear not.

The phrase, “For, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy,” proclaims that which salvation affords all who will accept Christ as Lord and Saviour. It is “joy unspeakable and full of glory” (I Pet. 1:8).

The phrase, “Which shall be to all people,” tells us that Christ would die for all of humanity; therefore, the gospel is not a western gospel or an eastern gospel but is one gospel for the whole of mankind.

Continued on page 18
This Day a Saviour Is Born

The phrase, “For unto you is born this day,” proclaims the incarnation—God manifest in the flesh.

The phrase, “A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord,” presents Christ as the “good tidings of great joy.”

A Multitude of the Heavenly Host Praising God

This phrase presents sinless angels first praising Him on His coming to earth. Therefore, if the heavenly host is continually praising the Lord, how much more should we, who were dead in sin and trespasses but are now washed, sanctified, and justified, praise the Lord.

Glory to God in the Highest

This statement tells us that all glory must go to God for sending His Son to die on Calvary’s Cross to atone for man’s sin. Once again this tells us that we are to be continually giving glory to God and praising Him for what He has done, for what He is doing, and for what He is going to do.

And on Earth Peace

At the time of the birth of Christ, the Roman Empire was at peace all over the world, but that peace ended not long after the crucifixion, and the world has been in conflict ever since. However, peace will once again be known around the world when the Prince of Peace is ruling from His eternal throne in Jerusalem during the kingdom age.

Good Will Toward Men

The Lord only desires good for humanity. His good will was His Son given for all men. George Williams, speaking of God’s good will, said: “God’s glory in creation was high; in revelation higher; but in redemption, highest. His power was seen in creation; His righteousness in law; but His highest attribute—His love—is seen in the atonement.”

We can have a merry Christmas as long as we understand how great our salvation is. 🎄

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- Blessed Assurance
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Evangelism should be at the heart of every single believer. Most people think that in order to evangelize, they must be a preacher of the gospel. However, that’s not necessarily correct.

It is true that God has called some to function in the office of evangelist, such as my grandfather and father, but that is not all that evangelism is relegated to. Every single believer should be an evangelist at heart. What this means is that we are to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to whomever is around. Think of it this way: You have received the greatest gift of all—salvation—and the way you accepted it was by simple faith in what Christ accomplished at Calvary’s Cross.

Once you have received the gift of salvation, wouldn’t you want others to experience what you have already experienced? Shouldn’t others have a chance to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ? It should not be left up to the pastor or evangelist only to reach those for Christ, but every single believer should proclaim what Jesus Christ has done for them. We are not to be silent in this endeavor, but should shout it from the rooftops that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world.

“Go”

I remember someone saying that the first two letters in the name of God spells “Go.” This commission given by Christ begins with “Go,” which means that every person who is saved has the obligation to tell others about Jesus Christ. Please notice that these words came from our Master, and these were His words to His disciples. This means that this is not a mere suggestion as some might think, but rather a command given from the highest order. This command was given that we might all be soul winners at heart, that we might tell others about what the Lord has done in our lives, and that we might have the heart of an evangelist. Every person on the planet has the right to hear the gospel. Every person who breathes has the right to hear about heaven and hell and what happens if they do not accept Christ as Saviour. Every person has the right to be given an opportunity to say “yes” to Jesus Christ. The question is, “What are you waiting for?”

The Words Of The Apostle Paul

Listen to what Paul the apostle says, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they hear except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them who preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah said, Lord, who has believed our report? So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:13-17).
Paul is saying here that everyone has the right to hear the gospel preached unto them, even though much of the world lies in unbelief. Even so, we should not rest on our laurels and hope that someone else does this for us. We have what the lost need, and it very well could be up to us to see that person come into the family of God.

How many people will die today having never heard the gospel preached or proclaimed to them? How many will lose their souls to a Devil’s hell when someone they knew had an opportunity to reach out to them but never did? How many people will end up in hell when a family member or friend could have explained to them the way of salvation?

We should never wait for the Lord to send somebody to our family and friends when He has sent us! He has called every believer to do their part in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now, as I tell young people, it’s not up to us to make people accept what we have given them, but rather it is up to us to share it. The lost need to hear about Jesus Christ and His saving power. They need to hear about what is waiting for them should they reject God’s plan of redemption. They need to know what the end results will be should they accept God’s way, and that starts with you and me.

Cop-Outs

Sadly, when it comes to this all-important task of evangelism, or spreading the gospel, most Christians take the attitude of, “I don’t need to be concerned with this because God has already called people to reach the lost.” Even though this is a true statement, I look at this as a cop-out because it takes the responsibility off of us and puts it on somebody else. However, we all should take the responsibility to do what we can do to see as many people brought to Christ as humanly possible. For some of you, it wasn’t a preacher who brought you the message of Jesus Christ, but rather a family member or friend. For some, it was a neighbor who came to your door and offered you the plan of salvation. For others, it was a preacher, called of God to reach the lost for Christ. With that being the case, we should not pass the buck, so to speak, and leave the responsibility on the shoulders of our preachers, but we should have the fortitude to share with others what God has done for us.

Another cop-out that many believe is the idea that the pastor is supposed to bring the sinners into the church, but, in actuality, it’s not the pastor’s job to bring in the lost, but rather to disciple those who are there. Now, you must understand that there is a difference between a pastor and an evangelist. A pastor is to teach the body of Christ the right way to live for God, and to teach and explain the doctrines of the Bible, whereas the evangelist is to call sinners to Christ. Too many Christians who sit in pews across the country expect sinners to walk in the doors of their churches and come to Christ. Now, believe me, that can and does happen, but for the most part, it’s up to the laymen, the church members, to go out and bring them in. As a pastor myself, for that’s what God has called me to be, I need the help of the people to bring this gospel message to the surrounding communities simply because you can go places that I cannot go, you can reach people that I cannot reach, and you will go to places that I will never go.

As I was teaching on the subject of discipleship to our Crossfire youth, several of our young people went to a local coffee shop nearby to get some coffee. While there, they encountered a young man of their age, either studying or getting coffee, and approached him and began witnessing to him. They told him that they belonged to a dynamic youth group called Crossfire and that he was invited to join them for service. He accepted the invitation, came to Crossfire that night, got saved, and soon after, was filled with the Holy Spirit. He rarely misses a Crossfire service. This is what we should be doing every week. We have the command to go, and we should take this charge seriously and do as Christ commanded. We should all have the heart of an evangelist, and all do our part in reaching out to those around us for Christ. Never let a moment pass you by without sharing the love of Jesus with those around you.

“How many will lose their souls to a Devil’s hell when someone they knew had an opportunity to reach out to them but never did?”
If I Were
The Devil...

Legendary ABC radio commentator Paul Harvey broadcast this speech on April 3, 1965.

IF I WERE THE DEVIL .... I mean, if I were the Prince of Darkness, I would, of course, want to engulf the whole earth in darkness. I would have a third of its real estate and four-fifths of its population, but I would not be happy until I had seized the ripest apple on the tree, so I should set about, however necessary, to take over the United States. I would begin with a campaign of whispers. With the wisdom of a serpent, I would whisper to you as I whispered to Eve: “Do as you please. Do as you please.” To the young, I would whisper, “The Bible is a myth.” I would convince them that man created God instead of the other way around. I would confide that what is bad is good, and what is good is “square.” In the ears of the young marrieds, I would whisper that work is debasing, and that cocktail parties are good for you. I would caution them not to be extreme in religion, in patriotism, and in moral conduct. And, the old, I would teach to pray. I would teach them to say after me: “Our Father, which art in Washington ....”

If I were the Devil, I’d educate authors in how to make lurid literature exciting so that anything else would appear dull and uninteresting. I’d threaten TV with dirtier movies and vice versa. And then, if I were the Devil, I’d get organized. I’d infiltrate unions and urge more loafing and less work because idle hands usually work for me. I’d peddle narcotics to whom I could. I’d sell alcohol to ladies and gentlemen of distinction, and I’d tranquilize the rest with pills. If I were the Devil, I would encourage schools to refine young intellects but neglect to discipline emotions … Let those run wild. I would designate an atheist to front for me before the highest courts in the land, and I would get preachers to say “she’s right.” With flattery and promises of power, I could get the courts to rule what I construe as against God and in favor of pornography, and thus, I would evict God from the courthouse, and then from the school house, and then from the houses of Congress and then, in His own churches, I would substitute psychology for religion, and I would deify science because that way men would become smart enough to create super weapons but not wise enough to control them.

If I were Satan, I’d make the symbol of Easter an egg and the symbol of Christmas a bottle. If I were the Devil, I would take from those who have, and I would give to those who wanted until I had killed the incentive of the ambitious. And then, my police state would force everybody back to work. Then, I could separate families, putting children in uniform, women in coal mines, and objectors in slave camps. In other words, if I were Satan, I’d just keep on doing what he’s doing.

Paul Harvey, Good Day.
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- Whisper Jesus (Grace Larson)
- Hold To God's Unchanging Hand (Joseph Larson)
- Try Jesus (Joseph Larson, Grace Larson, Martha Borg)
- Jesus, Lord To Me (Grace Larson)
- It's Beginning To Rain (Joseph Larson)
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22-003

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- Amazing Grace
- Everybody Ought To Praise His Name
- I Believe When Jesus Died He Died For Me
- Somebody Touched Me
- Whisper Jesus
- I've Never Been This Homesick Before
- Bigger Than Any Mountain
- His Name Says It All

Take Me Through This Valley
- Take Me Through This Valley
- Lift Up Your Hands
- Too Much To Gain To Lose
- There Is A Balm In Gilead
- Alleluia To The Lamb
- All I Want To Be Is Like Jesus
- Only Jesus

22-66M

SonLife Radio Christmas
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- O Come All Ye Faithful (Lester Rector)
- O Little Town Of Bethlehem (Jimmy Swaggart)
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- Jesus What A Wonderful Child (Choir)
- Away In A Manger (B.J. Vavasseur)
- The Birthday Of A King (Lester Rector)
- Cherish That Name (Jimmy Swaggart)
- Go Tell It On The Mountain (FWC Worship Team)
- We Three Kings (Ted Garrett)
- O Holy Night (Robin Herd)
- We Shall Behold The King (B.J. Vavasseur)
- It Came Upon The Midnight Clear (Jimmy Swaggart)
- We Wish You A Merry Christmas (FWC Worship Team)

The First Noel
- A King Is Coming To Town (FWC Singers & Choir)
- Beautiful Star Of Bethlehem (Randy Knaps)
- God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen (Robin Herd)
- What Child Is This? (Ladies Ensemble)
- Down In Bethlehem (FWC Singers)
- I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day (Joseph Larson)
- That Little Baby (FWC Singers)
- I Call Him Lord (Martha Borg)
- O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Martha Borg, Grace Larson, Joseph Larson)
- The First Noel (Andrew Holley)

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SonLife Radio Christmas
- Joy To The World (FWC Worship Team)
- O Come All Ye Faithful (Lester Rector)
- O Little Town Of Bethlehem (Jimmy Swaggart)
- Silent Night (Robin Herd)
- Jesus What A Wonderful Child (Choir)
- Away In A Manger (B.J. Vavasseur)
- The Birthday Of A King (Lester Rector)
- Cherish That Name (Jimmy Swaggart)
- Go Tell It On The Mountain (FWC Worship Team)
- We Three Kings (Ted Garrett)
- O Holy Night (Robin Herd)
- We Shall Behold The King (B.J. Vavasseur)
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NOTE: To ensure delivery before Christmas, please place your order before:
USA-Regular Mail: Dec. 15; FedEx 2 Day/Priority Mail Express: Dec. 18; FedEx Overnight: Dec. 19
CANADA-Dec. 4

For Fast & Easy Ordering Call Toll Free: 1.800.288.8350 (US) | 1.866.269.0109 (CN) or Visit Our Website at www.jsm.org
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*24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK*

*PREACHING THE CROSS*

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*Spanish SAP*

*Closed captioning available for all programming.*

*E/I*

*Backstage (Repeat)*

*Crossfire Service (E/I) (Repeat)*

*Crossfire Service (E/I)*

*Family Worship Center Wednesday Night Service (Repeat)*

*The Message Of The Cross (Repeat)*

*Backstage (Repeat)*

*Crossfire Service (E/I) (Repeat)*

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*Family Worship Center Wednesday Night Service (Repeat)*

*The Message Of The Cross (Repeat)*

*Backstage (Repeat)*

*Crossfire Service (E/I) (Repeat)*

*Crossfire Service (E/I)*

*Family Worship Center Wednesday Night Service (Repeat)*

*The Message Of The Cross (Repeat)*

*Backstage (Repeat)*

*Crossfire Service (E/I) (Repeat)*

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*Family Worship Center Wednesday Night Service (Repeat)*

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*Crossfire Service (E/I)*

*Family Worship Center Wednesday Night Service (Repeat)*

*The Message Of The Cross (Repeat)*

*Backstage (Repeat)*

*Crossfire Service (E/I) (Repeat)*

*Crossfire Service (E/I)*
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<td>Manchester</td>
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<td>FLORIDA</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Spectrum .............. TBA</td>
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**DECEMBER 2017 THE EVANGELIST**

24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK

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*U.S. OVER-THE-AIR, DTV LISTINGS*

For those of you who are not familiar with digital television, these are free “old-fashioned TV channels” that are able to be picked up with a digital tuner and antenna. Most new televisions are equipped with built-in digital tuners or you can purchase a tuner from your local electronics store (Best Buy®, Radio Shack®, etc.). As well, you can purchase the proper antenna at your local electronics store. Many viewers under the broadcast signal of the television station can use a small, digital antenna inside the home. For those on the outer edge of the signal or to receive the best signal, an outdoor antenna may be required. Both indoor and outdoor antennas are available for less than $50!

INTERNATIONAL CABLE, SATELLITE AND FREE-TO-AIR (FTA) LISTINGS

ALL LISTINGS OPERATING 24/7

ASIA & INDIA

ABS 1 ........................sonlifetv.com for more info

AFRICA

Intelsat 20

Thaicom 5

Northern Africa

Hot Bird 6 ........................sonlifetv.com for more info

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

OPTUS D2 ........................sonlifetv.com for more info

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Until a channel comes to your area, enjoy your favorite radio and television programs by visiting www.sonlifetv.com. You can already view live services and prerecorded programming online!

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“My Chains Are Gone, I’ve Been Set FREE”

By Steven G. Roberts

If there is one thing that must be a constant in the life of a believer, it is to know the Cross of Christ and His Word. Many people know what the Bible says about salvation through faith in Jesus and what He did at the Cross of Calvary, but for many it ends there.

For my wife, Rebecca, and me, our problem was not a lack of love and zeal for the Lord, but a tremendous ignorance of the Bible, as is the case with many believers. This ignorance creates a spiritual atmosphere wherein anything can be taught and believed, and what the Bible calls “another Jesus” and “another gospel” can easily take the place of the real gospel. Christ and Him crucified—His death, burial and resurrection—is the real gospel, and it must be maintained as our object of faith. Our lives and ministries must be anchored there in the wonderful simplicity of His gospel.

Even though Rebecca and I were saved and loved the Lord, we had gotten way off track with another gospel, especially after our first encounter with the Prophetic Movement in 1991. This became our path of ministry, and it led us down a long road of false doctrine and mixture for nearly 20 years.

In 1999, Rebecca and I planted and began pastoring a church. By late 2000, we were hosting conferences and schools nearly every month. We were like a ministry machine that touched thousands of lives in many states with every source of ministry possible. We were hungry for revival and a move of the Holy Spirit, and we went down every road looking for it. We were involved in the apostolic/prophetic/signs and wonders/charismatic camps, along with every alleged move of God around the United States and Canada since 1994. I even held the title of “apostle” in the International Coalition of Apostles (now the NAR). We were involved in anything and everything looking for revival. But all of this led us to being very confused, and we saw little spiritual growth in the people. Our guest speakers and what they were teaching got more and more bizarre. As a result, we were ready to quit the ministry and begin a new life somewhere else; we were totally burnt out and didn’t know where to turn. But God had other plans.

We began to cry out to God for help, and He heard us. He drew us back to the foundation of our faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work on the Cross. One day, during our journey back into the truth, the Lord helped us find Frances & Friends on the SonLife Broadcasting Network. We started listening and studying along with her program and other SBN programs and the church services. Miraculously, the Lord delivered us from those false doctrines, and, in 2010, God began to do a major miracle in our lives and ministry.

We soon discovered that the people and speakers who used to come to all of
The meetings we had previously hosted didn’t want to come and hear the new message that we now preach. My wife and I are so glad and thankful to God for turning our ship, and our lives, around. We are thankful that He forgave us for following another Jesus and another gospel and that He brought us up and out of that muck and mire.

The Message of the Cross—the true gospel—means everything to us and to the many wonderful people in Gospel of Life Family Church. It was such a breath of fresh air. It truly was like being born again—again. We now have a wonderful Message of the Cross church where people are learning and growing in God. It truly is a miracle of God that He brought us out of the depths of false doctrine and mixture that we were involved in. Now, twice each year, we have gatherings with Family Worship Center associate pastors, with people coming in from other states to be involved.

Thank you for the Cross, Lord, and thank you for the price that You paid!

Pastors Steve and Rebecca Roberts pastor the Gospel of Life Family Church in Northfield, Minnesota.

“Coming down to JSBC has been a life-changing experience... At this college, you will learn and grow in the Lord as He helps you understand more about the Cross. It’s a wonderful experience and journey in the Lord.” — KOURTNEY, MISSOURI

Since 1984, JSBC has trained missionaries, evangelists, and pastors to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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JSBC PRECAMPMEETING SESSIONS
(Located in the FCA Auditorium)

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<td>1 PM - 2 PM</td>
<td>Dave Smith</td>
<td>9 AM - 10 AM</td>
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<td>Carl Brown</td>
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<td>6:30 PM - 7:30 PM</td>
<td>Mike Muzzeral</td>
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CAMPMEETING SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
(Located in Family Worship Center • Please Note the Changes to the Service Times)

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<td>Drury Inn and Suites</td>
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<td>Fairfield Inn by Marriott</td>
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<td>7959 Essen Park Ave.</td>
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Letters From Our Audience

Ministry Provides Opportunity for Salvation

Dear Evangelist: I wish to tell a brief true story about watching Jimmy Swaggart’s teaching in 1984. My father had his own apartment since I was 7 years old. In October 1984, when I was 17, I was visiting my father as I always did on most weekends in the evening. The TV was on, and I asked if I could search the channels, and my father said yes. I saw Jimmy Swaggart teaching, and I was happy, so I kept it on. I don’t remember which channel it was, but my father did not protest, and we watched it together, along with my boyfriend. My father had been an alcoholic for as long as I can remember. He used to take me in bars as a young child, from which my mother had to come rescue me numerous times. I know he loved me, and I do have many “great” memories with him in spite of his drinking. My father was also a very stubborn and proud man, and I only saw him cry once. So, after Jimmy Swaggart’s message and the invitation to accept Jesus, my father got on his knees and was crying heavily, and he accepted Jesus right there on his living room floor in front of me and my boyfriend! Praise God! (I accepted Jesus when I was 15, and my boyfriend did too). My mother always put on Jimmy Swaggart on TV as I was growing up. I am so thankful to God and to Jimmy Swaggart’s Spirit-filled messages! My father passed away that coming January. It was too late for him physically, because the damage of drinking for most of his life caught up with his body. I praise God that he accepted Jesus just in time! I know he is in heaven, and I will see him again. When I saw Jimmy Swaggart and his ministry along with his wife, Frances; and his son and grandson teaching, I was jumping for joy and praising God! Wow! Thank you all for being such a blessing in my life! Thank you, and God bless you all! Much love! —NEW YORK

Anointing Comes Like Waterfall

Dear Evangelist: I am sincerely short of words to describe or express the anointing flowing like a heavy waterfall or like an ocean to my soul as I receive the SonLife Broadcasting Network in songs, messages, A Study in the Word, and Fran-
ces & Friends. Thank you and the entire workforce for Christ. Daniel 12:3 is your portion in Jesus Christ’s holy name. Sir, we love you dearly. We salute every member of SonLife. God bless you in Jesus Christ’s holy name. —LOUISIANA

Commentary Powerful Resource

Dear Evangelist: Just a short note to say thank you. As part of my weekly schedule—beyond Sunday mornings, Sunday nights and Wednesday nights—I also teach a Bible study class on Tuesday mornings. I am currently teaching through the book of John. I am using the JSM commentary on John, and, I must say, it is incredible. Thank you for providing this powerful resource. My prayers are with your ministry, and I thank the Lord for you. —SOUTH CAROLINA

Viewer Finds Comfort and Salvation

Dear Evangelist: Many years ago, I first heard you singing on a cassette that was given to me. The year was in the 1970s, I think; I’m not sure anymore. But you, sir, have saved my soul from burning in hell. I now watch you on SBN, and, because of you, I was baptized and received the Holy Ghost. I watch you, Donnie, and Gabe. I love to hear the Word of God and how Jesus died for me. How I love to hear you sing and preach, and also Pastor Donnie and Pastor Gabe. It is hard for me to go to church because of my wheelchair (and Vietnam), but I listen to you and all the singers that you have. So refreshing to know that my Father in heaven still has control. In closing, I wish to say that I am praying for you and all of the church. May God continue blessing you and your ministry, in Jesus’ holy name. —LOUISIANA

Parched Soul Drenched in the Blessings of God

Dear Evangelist: Just letting you know that since I stumbled onto SBN in mid-August, your messages and teaching have been a great blessing. My soul and spirit have been filled and lifted after several years of drought. The first week that I listened, I literally soaked myself in the messages. My parched soul and spirit were drenched in the blessing of God. Praise God for calling your ministry into being. God bless you all as you continue to walk in obedience, faith and love. —AUSTRALIA

SBN Encourages New Viewer

Dear Evangelist: I had a tough summer after my father’s death in June, and, out of nowhere, I discovered SBN on my cable channels. Never noticed it before! Holy Spirit, Acts, man! At any rate, I am a Catholic, but find all of the Swaggart sermons—Jimmy’s, Donnie’s, and Gabrielle’s—inspiring and totally on the mark! Every day! Frances is cool, too, with Frances & Friends. Love it. Okay, see you all one of these days down in Baton Rouge! —NEW JERSEY

Prayer Request for Child with Absent Father

Dear Evangelist: I love you all and thank God for you all very much. I’m so thankful for Brother Swaggart, and I’m glad he said yes to Jesus when the Lord called him at 8 years of age. My prayer request is for my granddaughter, Sadie. Her dad is an alcoholic, and she prays for him at every meal and during the day. When he is on her mind, she wants to see him, but he won’t have anything to do with her. She has only seen him one time when she was 5 years old. Please pray for his deliverance from alcohol. When Sadie prays, she asks the Lord to save him because she doesn’t want her dad to go to hell. His family is well off and they think of God differently than we do. They believe if they put a check in the offering, they will be okay. Please pray for us. Thank you. —LOUISIANA

Media Church Members Thankful

Dear Evangelist: My husband and I watched after we came home from our own church services. We were so blessed by the moving of the Spirit of the Lord! It was so obvious to both of us that God was in control and Pastor Gabriel definitely followed the leadership of the Holy Spirit. We are so thankful to be part of the media church and know the Lord is in complete control. —W. VIRGINIA
In II Chronicles 20 Judah faced an impossible task of defending themselves against the enemy—Edom, Moab, and Mount Seir. There was no way physically they could defeat the enemy. So what did Jehoshaphat, the King of Judah, do? He called for a prayer meeting for all of Judah. “So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord” (verse 4). Jehoshaphat said to God, “For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You” (verse 12). What an awe-some sight that must have been to see the king and all of God’s people seeking God’s help. We need the same sense of urgency in prayer today for our families, churches, country and ourselves. We desperately need God’s help.

Right in the midst of the prayer meeting, the Spirit of God moved upon a man by the name of Jahazeil, and he prophesied, “Thus says the Lord to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s... You shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you.” (verses 15, 17). When God said, “You will not need to fight in battle,” He was meaning that they would not have to raise the sword and defeat the enemy in their own strength. They were to “go out against them” fighting the good fight of faith (I Tim. 6:12), knowing that the Lord was with them and that He would defeat the enemy.

The next day Jehoshaphat put the worshippers in front of the army as they went against the enemy. They sang loudly “Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever” (verse 21). As they worshipped God, believing that the battle was His, God began to fight for them. God confused the enemy, and they began to kill themselves. One by one, the enemy began to fall dead, and Judah never raised the sword. When they came to the hill that overlooked the valley, they stood absolutely amazed at what God had done. It took three days for Judah to take up all of the spoil from the enemy’s camp. Jehoshaphat called it the valley of Berachah (verse 26) which means the valley of “blessing.”

Believer, the enemies that we face within (the flesh) and without (the Devil, and the world) are too strong for us to fight in our own strength. It’s impossible for us to defeat them. We must have the same belief of Jehoshaphat when he said to God, “We are powerless...but our eyes are on You.” In ourselves we are weak, frail, and powerless against any enemy—small or big. Our eyes must be upon Jesus and His victory at the cross (Heb. 12:2). As Judah did, we must seek the help of God. With our faith in Christ’s victory at the Cross, we can go out against the enemy singing the praises of God. As we’re believing, praying, and praising, God will take care of our enemies both within and without. The battle has already been won because the battle is the Lord’s. We need to constantly remind ourselves that Jesus has won the victory over all of our enemies through His death at Calvary. Then we will see that the same valley meant for our defeat and destruction has become the valley of blessing! Believer, be encouraged today knowing that no matter the challenges you face, you don’t have to be afraid, because the battle is not yours, but God’s.
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Who Will Believe the REPORT of the Lord? Part I

The Call to Faith

The Christian is called to a life of faith. We are saved by faith, and then we enter into a life where faith in Christ and His finished work will supply us with everything we might ever need, both in this world and the ages to come.

The prophet Isaiah asked the question of all people everywhere when he said, "Who hath believed our report?" The author of Hebrews declared that "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11:6), and multiple writers proclaimed, "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38). So, in order for humanity to receive from God, God has required that we operate in faith, which is essential in almost every case before God extends His grace. As Ephesians 2:8 says, "For by grace are you saved through faith." Based on this truth, we learn that if we are to receive something from God, it will be due to faith, and our faith must be settled upon the proper object of God's choosing.

The Words Transgression and Iniquities

In Isaiah 53:5, two specific words used by the prophet are the terms transgressions and iniquities. A simple study of these words reveals very clearly that they refer to sin or acts of sin in the life of an individual. Therefore, it is safely concluded that the Cross paid the price for every active sin ever carried out by a member of the human race. Forgiveness of sins is the result of the Cross. We are taught in Paul's epistles that we overcome sin at this present time ("weight, and the sin that does so easily beset us" [Heb. 12:1]) by trusting exclusively in what Christ did for us at Calvary.

As we study these words, we come to clearly see not just the circumstances surrounding the Cross, but we also see revealed several key benefits that the world would reap as a result of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.

The Prophesied Picture of the Cross

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 houses the prophet Isaiah's fourth and final "servant song." The servant songs of Isaiah are prophetic in nature and describe the Messiah's work, life, and ministry some 700 years before it actually took place. Isaiah, Chapter 53, is a very clear picture of what Christ would accomplish for humanity when He would offer up His life as a sacrifice on Calvary.

In Isaiah 53:5, the prophet declared the words transgression and iniquities. A simple study of these words reveals very clearly that they refer to sin or acts of sin in the life of an individual. Therefore, it is safely concluded that the Cross paid the price for every active sin ever carried out by a member of the human race. Forgiveness of sins is the result of the Cross. We are taught in Paul's epistles that we overcome sin at this present time ("weight, and the sin that does so easily beset us" [Heb. 12:1]) by trusting exclusively in what Christ did for us at Calvary.

Progressive sanctification is an ongoing effort that will not be concluded until the rapture occurs. At that point in time, we will receive a glorified body, and just a little later, will experience an atmosphere that is totally devoid of the presence of sin forever. All of this was paid for at Calvary. Do you believe the report of the Lord?
"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with his stripes we are healed.” —Isaiah 53:1; 4-5

The Words Griefs and Sorrows

In Isaiah 53:4, a simple, or even an in-depth study, reveals that the word *griefs* is associated, not with sin, but with sickness. This word is used 24 times in the King James Version and is translated as sickness (12 times), disease (7 times), grief (4 times), and sick (1 time). It is never associated with sin. Strong’s dictionary defines this word as “malady, anxiety, or calamity.” Barne’s commentary states that this word does not refer to sins, but to sufferings. It is associated with the ideas of sickness, disease, anxiety, and affliction.

The second word that we’d like to look at is *sorrows*. Once again, this word is not associated with sin. In the King James Version, it is translated as *grief, pain, or sorrow*. It is defined as “anguish or affliction.” This seems to indicate an emphasis on the pains of the mind and in the heart. It describes the anguish brought to the inner being of man—the heart or the soul.

If we treat this knowledge honestly, then we must admit that the Cross dealt not only with sin but, also, with sickness. Just as the Cross paid for the defeat of sin, even so, the Cross paid for the defeat of sickness. So, similar to sin, we are to face the onslaught of sickness by believing in what Christ has done to free us from its effect.

These words also indicate a freedom from a broken heart. Therefore, we should understand that in the presence of sickness or a crushed spirit, we are to look to the Cross in faith to receive our freedom from either sickness or sorrow. There’s coming an hour when the believer will find himself in an atmosphere where all sickness and all sorrow will have been eliminated. We will find ourselves there because of what Jesus did for us at Calvary. So, we are to face sickness and sorrow by believing the report of the Lord—that He has already defeated these enemies at Calvary, and that our faith in his finished work will bring us the grace that we require to rise above this attack against our hearts or in our bodies.

Commentary on Isaiah 53:4 - Matthew 8:1-17

The best commentary in regard to Scripture is Scripture itself. In Matthew 8:17, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Matthew quotes Isaiah 53:4 and states, “Himself took our infirmities, and bear our sicknesses.” Take careful note that the word for *griefs* is *infirmities* and that the word for *sorrows* is translated as *sicknesses*.

As we study the context of Matthew 8:1-17, we find that the Lord Jesus healed a leper, a centurion’s servant, Peter’s mother-in-law, and the multitudes. The Holy Spirit indicated that these actions were a fit description of the meaning of Isaiah 53:4, verifying that this verse is about the healing of the body and soul.

Conclusion

Time and space do not allow me to complete this teaching in this issue of *The Evangelist*. Be sure to save this issue and next month, we will continue by encouraging every believer to actively pursue healing by faith through grace. Do you believe the report of the Lord?
The title of this article can be found in Romans, Chapter 11, verse 26. Christian scholars disagree on the meaning of the word Israel in this verse. Many believe that it refers here to ethnic Jews; however, there are still a number of scholars who believe that Israel refers to the church of Gentiles and Jews. In this verse we have a promise that there will be a future salvation for Israel, but to whom does the word Israel refer in this verse? Does it refer to a new Israel, representing the church of Gentiles and Jews, or does it refer to only ethnic Israel?

Does the land of Israel still belong to the Jews? How do we understand the differences between the Old and New Testaments with respect to Israel? These are theological questions. We must remember that theology is second order and follows behind exegetical and linguistic study.

In early Christian literature, the term Israel was often spiritualized and allegorized and generally was used to refer to Christians, whether Gentile or Jew. We see this in the writings of Irenaeus, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and Augustine, to name a few. In his work, Dialogue, while speaking to Trypho (AD 150), Justin Martyr ascribes Israel to include Gentiles and Jews wherein he used the expression, “The true spiritual Israel.” It is also important to recognize that the New Testament was completed at least 50 years before Justin Martyr’s Dialogue.

Did the early church fathers use Israel in the New Testament as a synonym for the Gentile and Jewish church instead of correctly following the literal use of the term Israel as did the New Testament writers?
JOHN ROSENSTERN

“...the waning hope for Israel’s conversion to embracing Christ as Messiah made it easier for the increasingly Gentile church to polemicize against Judaism and to embrace a replacement theology.”

Changing from Dispensationalism

The early church changed its views from the New Testament writers and began to allegorize the Word of God. In order to understand Israel’s intended place by God, we need to quickly look at some of the reasons for their erroneous theological misunderstanding and application to the word Israel in the New Testament. Why did the early church fathers so quickly abandon the biblical distinction between Israel and the church?

First was the developing antagonism between Judaism and early Christianity, as witnessed in the book of Acts and the Epistles. The early strife revealed in the apostolic period was provoked by the failure of Christians to support the Jewish revolt against the Roman authorities in AD 66-70. The Christians chose instead to flee Jerusalem for the safety of Pella, across the Jordan in Decapolis. The schism was again deepened by the Jewish proclamation at the Council of Jannia (AD 90) that all who departed from the traditional Jewish faith were cursed.

In terms of how they viewed Israel, the second factor influencing the thinking of the early Gentile church was the twofold destruction of Jerusalem. With the first destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and then the expulsion of Jews from Jerusalem as a result of the second Jewish revolt in A.D. 132-135, the early Christians began to see these defeats as evidence of not only God’s displeasure on Judaism but, also, God’s vindication of Christianity. The early Christians thus abandoned any hope for the restoration of the nation of Israel.

The third rationale was the refusal of Jews to accept Jesus Christ as Messiah. As time passed, the church began to realize that the Jewish establishment was not going to change its mind about Jesus Christ. Hence, early Christian leaders began to see Jews less as converts to the gospel and more as enemies of the gospel.

The fourth rationale involved the increasingly Gentile composition of the church. The church began to be dominated by Gentiles without Jewish roots. The hardening of the Jews’ hearts and the waning hope for Israel’s conversion to embracing Christ as Messiah made it easier for the increasingly Gentile church to polemicize against Judaism and to embrace a replacement theology.

The word Israel appears 73 times in the New Testament, with 12 of those times being in the book of Romans. In most of these instances, Israel undoubtedly refers to ethnic Israel. A clear example of this can be seen in Luke 4:25: “But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias.” There are other New Testament verses where the term Israel is used that may suggest a wider meaning. One of those verses is Romans 11:26. There is no sufficient evidence that Israel in this verse refers to Gentiles. Many have tried to say that “and so all Israel shall be saved” means that Israel refers to the church, and it is, therefore, a promise that God will save all Christians. The context in the preceding verse (verse 25) makes it clear to see that Paul is speaking of a hardening of Israel. Some translations say it is a partial-hardening (ESV) of Israel that shall occur until the times of the gentiles be fulfilled. The immediate context of these two verses (verses 25-26) is the theme of Israel’s ingrafting. The natural branches are going to be ingrafted back into their own olive tree.

All Israel

Paul is not saying here that every individual Jew will be saved. He is also not saying that they in any way have a separate salvation that holds them over until Jesus Christ returns. What he is saying is that the nation generally, as an ethnic identity, will find salvation in Jesus Christ. Jews who die without accepting Jesus Christ as Saviour die lost just like Gentiles. Likewise, Jews who accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour are saved just like Gentiles. There are several other verses in the New Testament where Israel is spiritualized. I will address these in future articles.
Who doesn’t know the Christmas story? I love Luke’s account of the birth of Christ, but there has always been something that troubled me, even since I was a child. “And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn” (Lk. 2:7). You want to yell out, “Don’t you understand who this baby is? Don’t you know why He has come to earth? How dare you say, ‘There’s no room’”!

The Lord Himself Will Give You A Sign

The birth of Christ was not done in secret. God had used His prophets to tell of His birth. “Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14). He used the minor prophet Micah to give more details: “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel” (Mic. 5:2).

The Religious Leaders Knew The Place

When the wise men came to Herod seeking to know where the new king was born, Herod “gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, (and) he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet” (Mat. 2:4-5). They did not need to research the information. They knew. They studied the prophecies regarding the Messiah. They knew the place, and most scholars feel that they would have known the time by using Daniel’s prophecies from Daniel 9:25.

They Should Have Made Room

The townspeople of Bethlehem should have known that their humble town was to be the birthplace of the Messiah. There should have been room. They should have made room for any expectant mother, but there was no room. Is it because they didn’t know? Is it because they had not been taught?

There’s Still No Room

There’s still no room for Jesus in most hearts. There’s room for everything under the sun, but no room for Jesus. Is it
because most churches fail to preach the gospel to the lost? Is it that a lot of pastors present another Jesus, another spirit, and another gospel (II Cor. 11:4)? Where is the good news?

Good Tidings

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Lk. 2:10-11). The good news of that day is the good news for all of mankind from that day until now and beyond. That Saviour was not just for Israel but is for all of mankind.

“There’s still no room for Jesus in most hearts. There’s room for everything under the sun, but no room for Jesus.”

He Came Down So That We Can Go Up

The incarnate Son of God came down from heaven so that those who believe can one day go up to heaven. For that to happen, the debt of sin needed to be paid. The child born that day was the Lamb of God, who became the source of redemption for all who believe. “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (I Pet. 1:18-19). He is God’s eternal gift to mankind. Have you made room for Him? 🕊

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About 25 or 30 years ago, I was in a department store in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, looking at some clothes. I was shocked when a little boy, who was about 4 or 5 years old, walked up to me and said, “I hate you.”

About 35 or 40 years ago, when I was the associate pastor of the First Assembly of God church in Columbia, Missouri, one of my responsibilities was weekly ministering in the Boone County jail. I was allowed to sing a song, preach a sermon, distribute literature, and visit with the inmates in the cellblocks. I was shocked when one of the inmates told me through the bars, “You are the Devil.”

I did not know either of these people and, to my knowledge, had never met them before, and yet, there was an inherent hate and animosity toward me. The verses from Matthew give a description of what happens when a person hates someone. To hate means “to detest, despise, and abhor a person because of a real or imagined hurt or offense.” It includes holding a grudge, bitterness, and desiring revenge. The other person is called an enemy, which is “someone who is hostile, antagonistic, at war with, has enmity, and opposes the other person.” He curses, or desires harm, injury, evil, or misfortune to the person he hates. He also despitely uses or falsely accuses, insults, treats abusively, reviles, and threatens him. Finally, he persecutes or drives away by harassing, troubling, and mistreating. Hate is also murder (1 Jn. 3:15), which is “premeditated destruction of another physically (Ex. 20:13) or otherwise.” This could include socially or legally, and includes discrediting character and reputation.

However, instead of hating back and returning evil for evil (Rom. 12:17), reviling when reviled, or threatening with judgment when caused to suffer (1 Pet. 2:23), Jesus tells us to love our enemies (Mat. 5:44). This is a godly, supernatural love that man cannot produce, but it can only be produced in a Christian as a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22). It is giving and expecting nothing in return, regardless of the response. It does not depend on feelings, but is an unselfish, sacrificial giving of self (Jn. 15:13). It is not given only after conditions are met (Rom. 5:8), or in order to get something in return. It is a love that is more concerned about the benefit of the other person.

Specifically, Jesus tells believers three ways this love should be manifested by Christians to enemies:

- First, to bless means to ask God to bring them to where He can give them increase, prosperity, and fulfillment spiritually and materially.
- Secondly, it is doing them good by feeding them if they are hungry, giving them drink if they are thirsty, showing them the same mercy God has given, and overcoming evil with good (Rom. 12:20-21).
- Finally, praying that God would meet every need in their hearts, families, finances, health, and work.

These kinds of changes in reactions and attitudes can only come by allowing the Lord to heal the hurts, help to forgive, and change hearts from hate to love. This happened between the Jews and Gentiles. The Jews, in their self-righteous legalism, despised the Gentiles to the extent that they believed Gentiles were incapable of being right with God. However, because of their faith in who Christ is and what He did on the Cross, the separation between them was abolished. He made one new man from both of them by reconciling them to God into one body (Eph. 2:13-16). So, they received His love and were brought together in the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3) and the faith (Eph. 4:13). This was then, and still is now, the only answer to hate, racism, and prejudice.
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RADIO

We almost never say anything about radio, and that is an error that we must rectify. Quite a number of churches have been started as a result of the radio programming concerning the Message of the Cross. Consequently, radio is very important, even though it covers a tiny, tiny number of people compared to television. My reason for writing is this: It costs us an average of about $50,000 a month to take care of all the 74 stations. I can't remember when we've asked for any help for radio, and, therefore, we haven't received much help.

If SonLife Radio is a blessing to you—if you enjoy the preaching, the teaching, and especially the worship—then we need your prayerful and financial support to keep coming to you each and every day, 24 hours a day.

As you read these words and you are blessed by SonLife Radio, I ask you to whisper a little prayer to the Lord regarding what He would have you do to help financially. We need that help, and I know the Lord will bless you abundantly.

Let me hear from you, please!

Christmas

Christmas is going to be here any day now. Please allow me to encourage you to do the following: We believe that the things we are offering in this magazine (the Bibles, the music packages, the books, etc.) are some of the finest in the world today. In other words, any of these would make par excellent Christmas gifts. So, why not give something worthwhile for a change to your loved one or friend, whoever that might be? Of course, we're speaking of what is offered in this magazine or our catalog.

For instance, even though the following could be said about anything offered, I will specifically point out The Expositor's Study Bible. If you really want to give something to someone that is an absolutely excellent gift, try the Signature Edition. The cover is made of Cromwell premium genuine leather. It retails for $200 but is on sale for $125. As stated, this would make the greatest Christmas gift in the world, and I exaggerate not.

There is the Ladies’ Bible that would make the greatest gift for the lady in your life, whoever she might be. Irrespective, whatever it is you choose, whether it's Bibles, books, or music, it will be something worthwhile.

Speaking Of Bibles...

To date, we have given away 1.2 million copies of The Expositor's Study Bible to Third World pastors all over the world. I should say quickly, “Thanks for your help.”

In the coming Bible-thon, which will be January 2, I urge every one of you to give a Christmas gift to a Third World pastor somewhere in the world.

As I dictate these notes, we've just had one of these pastors from Nigeria in Africa visiting here at the ministry. He has been very instrumental in helping us distribute the Bibles in his country.

He tells of preachers who don't even have a Bible, and yet, they are trying to pastor churches.

He tells of Muslims who give their
“He tells of Muslims who give their hearts to the Lord but know absolutely nothing about the Lord because they don’t have a Bible, and they have no way to get one. We must get Bibles into the hands of these individuals.”

hearts to the Lord but know absolutely nothing about the Lord because they don’t have a Bible, and they have no way to get one. We must get Bibles into the hands of these individuals.

So, I’m asking each one of you who holds this magazine in your hands to give one or more of these Bibles to Third World pastors somewhere in the world. Some of you reading this could easily pay for 1,000 Bibles, others 500 Bibles, and others 100 Bibles, but others could only pay for two or three or even one Bible. I’m asking each and every one to do what you can do. To be frank, I don’t know of a missions work in the world today that can compare with this.

When you place The Expositor’s Study Bible in the hands of a Third World pastor, you are not only placing a Bible into their hands but, as well, a commentary, a Bible dictionary, etc. I don’t know of another Bible in the world that explains the Scriptures as The Expositor’s Study Bible does. So, I’m asking you, please, on January 2, which is the Bible-thon, do the very best that you can do. If it’s only one Bible that you can afford, please do it. How-ever, if you can afford to pay for 10, 20, 100, or even more, you can feel assured that if you do such, you will be making a difference. Really, there is nothing more important than that.

Much Of The World

The Message of the Cross is what I believe the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches. How I thrill at the emails and letters that we are receiving as it regards how lives are being changed as a result of this message.

The problem is sin, and the only solution for sin is the Cross of Christ—and I mean it’s the only solution.

That means that every single person in the world, and for all time, who has been delivered from a bondage of some nature, has been delivered because of what Jesus did at the Cross. That’s how important this message is.

Sometime back, Franklin Graham called me about this very thing. He said, and I paraphrase, “Brother Swaggart, you are the only one over television who is preaching the Cross.” Whether he’s correct or not, I don’t know, but I suspect he is right. I appreciated so very, very much his taking the time to call me and to tell me how much the Message of the Cross means to him, even as it has meant to untold numbers of others.

The message is not new, having first been given to the apostle Paul, and in a sense, was given to Adam and Eve.

The point I wish to make is that we couldn’t do this without you. So, if you have been blessed by SonLife Broadcasting, whether by radio or television, I’m asking you to give an offering to help us with the expenses. In other words, I’m asking for a Christmas gift for our Lord. Of course, the Lord needs nothing, but His work does. The gospel is free, but getting it to the people costs money. Let me ask you this: Have you given this year what you ought to have given? Only you can answer that, and if you haven’t, why not rectify the situation now? You can be certain of one thing, and that is that you know what we preach and teach. You don’t have to guess at it because it’s obvious and is just as near to you as the television set in your room. I need to hear from you, and I’m looking forward to hearing from you.

Incidentally, from the entirety of the staff of over 300 people at Jimmy Swaggart Ministries, we all want to say a wonderful Merry Christmas to you and a Happy New Year.

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This is the Chinese edition of The Expositor’s New Testament. As far as I know, we are the only ones who have delivered tens of thousands of Bibles into China (The Expositor’s New Testaments).

This Bible would make an excellent gift—especially for Christmas— for family and friends who speak Chinese, or as keepsake copies that serve as reminders to pray for China to open the door completely. (08-607)

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