



Bible Believers' Bulletin

Vol. 45 No. 6

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17)

June 2021

The Great Encourager

By Brian Donovan

In the foreknowledge of God, the prophet Jeremiah was ordained before he was born (Jer. 1:5 **“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”**), and that foreknowledge did not make him a living soul in the womb, any more than you were saved before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9), nor did it force him to become a prophet.

The Bible student should take note that the foreknowledge of God never makes anything take place, since man has a free will and makes his own choices. The fact that the Lord knew what He was going to create in Jeremiah, did not force Jeremiah to do anything. The Lord “ordained” that Jeremiah was to be a prophet unto the nations, but that did not make it happen automatically, any more than Christians today, who are ordained unto good works (Eph. 2:10), necessarily perform them.

At one point, Jeremiah even decided he would never speak in the name of the Lord again (Jer. 20:9), but he recanted and chose to continue, with the word as a burning fire in his heart. Jeremiah was called without his approval or permission, as was Amos, who preferred gathering sycamore fruit (Amos 7:14), and Jonah, who ran as hard and fast as he could from it (Jonah 1:3), and Moses, who gave a number of excuses as to why he shouldn’t (Exod. 3:11, 3:13, 4:1, 4:10, 4:13), along with the countless others who have been called throughout the present church age.

Jeremiah had the unenviable calling of preaching a message of judgment on his rebellious people, and right from the start, he was warned by the Lord that he would be used to **“root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down”**, before he could ever be used to **“build and to plant”** (Jer. 1:10). In the meantime, all the others were preaching peace, though the Lord said, **“I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied”** (Jer. 23:21).

Jeremiah is often referred to as the **“weeping prophet”** due to the many tears that he wept before delivering

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How to Have a Successful Nervous Breakdown

By Dr. Peter S. Ruckman

“And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers” (1 Kings 19:1-4)

From 1 Kings 19, I have a unique lesson on how to have a successful nervous breakdown.

Elijah has just finished killing 400 prophets—cutting off their heads. Now he’s come back and laid down to try to get some rest, and a woman—a bad woman sends him a note, and he gets scared and runs. Well, obviously, his thinking equipment is not all there. How he could face 400 false prophets like that, then worry about a letter from a woman, I don’t know. It shows he was in pretty rough condition. That is how unreasonable our thinking is sometimes, and the greatest saints that ever lived had that problem.

Moses had that trouble. He said one time, **“Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin-; and if not, blot me,**

I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.” (Exod. 32:32) Jonah had that trouble. Jonah said, **“I do well to be angry, even unto death”** (Jon. 4:9). Both of those fellows wanted to die and get out of there. Elijah says, go on, take my life, I’m no better than my fathers. He’s under “tension”, or “stress”.

Paul had that trouble once in a while. One time he said, **“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain... having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better”** (Phil. 1:21, 23). But he said, **“Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.”** (Phil. 1:24).

There are some reasons why Elijah was subject to it. After what he had just been through, you can imagine he was shaken up. He was there feeling sorry for himself. In the condition he is in, he is miserable and irrational. There are some things about his condition that you ought to study if you are ever near a collapse.

First, he was oblivious to God’s blessing. He had forgotten the great victory he had already. He turned the whole nation back to God! He just let that slip his mind.

One lady, who was a professing Christian, wrote a suicide note about how she was going to kill herself. As she began to write out the things that were wrong, she remembered singing, “Count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.” So, she began to write down her blessings, and she never finished

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writing the suicide note. When she read the blessings, she said, "I've got so many of them, I just better stay where I am."

Some people just aren't appreciative and think up troubles. Do you know what Doctor Karl Menninger, the Dean of American Psychiatry, said? He said that if you think you are about to have a nervous breakdown, go across the track and find someone who has real trouble and minister to them.

Now back in those days, he said, "across the tracks", but that expression means nothing anymore. When I came up in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, every town had a railroad track coming through it. All the doctors and lawyers and rich folk lived one side of the track, and the poor lived on the other side. When we said "across the tracks", we meant "go over into the poor section."

He said to go over there and find somebody that has some real trouble, and then you'll feel better about the trouble you have.

Elijah also had an exaggerated sense of his own trouble. After all, what was it? Just a woman threatening to kill him—that's all. I mean, he had already killed 400 of her prophets!

Do you know what a preacher's mother said to him one time when he was getting ready to go into the ministry? He said, "Mama told me that next to old-fashioned salvation, a sense of humor is the most important thing to take through this life." You

say, "Why?". You won't take yourself so seriously.

I know a fellow who is 52 years old and has never walked—never picked up anything with his hands in his life. I've seen him twice. His mother stayed true to him and helped raise him. That fellow had no arms and no legs! Now you have trouble? He's saved—just as saved as you are. Don't you know he's been tempted many times to take his life?

I understand it perfectly. I'm no spring chicken—I know what's out there. I know about the graves and waiting for the doctor and waiting for the undertaker. I know about wondering who's going to pay for it. Then you can't meet the bills, and maybe you get sick yourself. The world is a veil of tears.

I'm one of the fellows who've been spoiled for years and years. But I know what's out in that world—I've been out there. I don't have to go out that door to see what's out there and what's coming. If the Lord doesn't come first, every one of you will wind up in a hospital bed or a coffin, or both. Amen?

We have a case here of a fellow who strangled on the umbilical cord when he was born. It stunted all his growth to an 18-week mentality. So that fellow, all the rest of his life, had a mentality of an 18-week-old, and his daddy took care of him. He changed his clothes, took him to the bathroom, and showed him how to eat. He had to have all his teeth pulled because he didn't know how to use

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them—eating like a baby.

When he was about 57 years old, his daddy was about 77 and worried day and night. They wanted to know what was wrong, and he said, "Well, I'm getting near death myself, and who is going to take care of my boy when I die?" Now that's trouble! Do you have that kind of a load on you?

I met a couple of German ladies one time up in Baltimore. They were both sick, and I paid them a visit while I had a meeting up there. The girl was being raised by her mother, but she was 52 years old by the time I met them. They lived in an apartment house where all the windows faced south, and they were on the north side. That mother had taken care of that girl her whole life until then. It was about the fourth story of a fifteen-story building, and there was no sunlight unless she took her daughter down in a wheelchair and walked her around. Then, while she was waiting on her daughter like that, she slipped and fell down the stairs. She then had to go a couple of months on crutches, taking care of the girl. That's trouble—real trouble.

Now, if you think you have troubles, I'll give you a case from Menninger's clinic. He was born in 1880 in South Dakota. When he was 11 days old, he fell from his cradle and broke his left arm. Four years later, he was riding a horse and fell off and broke the right arm. When he was 6, he was using a hatchet and cut his left foot to the bone. When he was 7, a bull gored him and nearly killed

him. It busted up one arm, four ribs, and the collar bone.

When he was about 15, he joined the circus. One of his tasks was to dive over three elephants into a net. He missed one time and missed the net and broke his left leg again. When he was 26, he was a brakeman on a freight train. While running on top of a moving train, he stepped on a rotten footboard and fell to the track. Thirty-seven cars passed over him and didn't hurt him until the caboose caught him and dragged him 3 miles. His left arm was cut off, nine toes were severed, and his skull was fractured.

At 45, he was riding in a passenger coach. He tripped in the aisle and broke vertebrae in his spine, giving him temporary paralysis. When he was 50, he got in an auto accident, went off a cliff 45 feet, and nearly drowned. He later tripped in the plumbing aisle and wrenched his spine, and sprained both ankles. When he was 60, he got Scarlet Fever, and he was six weeks in the hospital. During his convalescence, he got inflammatory rheumatism and didn't walk for 19 weeks. That's what you call real trouble!

He was in a tent in a national park vacationing and there was an explosion in the gas stove that enveloped him in flames. Only prompt attention by friends saved him from being burned to death. Do you know what he said when people asked him about these things? He said, "Well, you have to taste the bitter part of life to enjoy the sweet." This thought ought

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to be a rebuke to every Christian! That bird had trouble, brother!

I'll tell you something else about old Elijah; he questioned God's providence. God let things happen to him, and he got feeling sorry for himself. Here he was running from this mad woman, and he wished God would take him. He didn't think God did the right thing by not taking him. Elijah went up in a rapture in 2 Kings. He'd have missed that if God would have done what he wanted!

What God does one day may be the right thing according to you, and sometimes not. Sometimes the prayers get answered; sometimes they don't. I've had the door slammed right in my face. At least on three occasions, I thought it was the end right there, and it wasn't. You can question God's providence—the way He does things.

I know the verses—I know where they are. **“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us”** (Rom 8:37).

“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” (Rom. 8:28).

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Cor. 12:10).

I know where they are, but knowing where they are is not like going through them.

Back in the war, a seaman was on a ship in an armed convoy, and the Japanese were putting torpedoes on them. On the bow of that ship was a bunch of fellows, and they saw a torpedo coming at the ship. It was rough water, and as that torpedo came right up to the ship, the bow came out of the water about 6 feet. That torpedo went right under it and missed them. Some of those guys in the front of the ship were Christians. So, as they said, “Praise the Lord! Bless God! Glory to God!” it hit the ship next to them, and down it went. Now, that was great for Him to have mercy on that ship, but what happened to that second one? God provisionally takes care of some and drowns others.

Have you ever read in your Bible about how the Lord's **“mercy endureth forever”**? In Psalm 136, every other line is, **“his mercy endureth forever”**. You know it says He brought his children out of the land of Egypt, **“for his mercy endureth forever”** and got them across the Red Sea, **“for his mercy endureth forever”**.

Then it says he drowned Pharaoh and all his host, **“for his mercy endureth forever”**. And when they got into the promised land, He killed all those folks, **“for his mercy endureth forever”**. Well, for one guy it did, and for the other guy it didn't. Do you know why it was His mercy to kill Pharaoh? So that the Jews could get through. The one man's meat is another man's poison.

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He questioned God's providence. One thing that can mess people up, is where He gives one a blessing and not the other.

The classic joke about it is that a fellow went through an insane asylum one time. He heard a fellow moaning as he went by. The guy was saying, "Oh Lulu, oh Lulu, oh Lulu..." He went on down, and in the next cell, there was a guy saying the same thing. He said to the guard, "What is that anyway?" He said, "Well, that first fellow was married, and Lulu went off and left him. The second guy is the guy that married her!"

Now I'm not going to push you on these things and say you've done something wrong to get into the mess you're in. I'm not going to say that I fully understand how all things work together for good to them that love God. I can take a dozen people I know, and if I stayed up all night, I couldn't tell you what was working for their good—with them or anybody around them. I know what the Book says, and I believe the Book, but I know people have real problems.

Sometimes it's just you've lost a job, but sometimes it's sick children. Sometimes it's dead children. Sometimes they say, "it's cancer." Things like that happen. Bills and debts are things that get you down, and I know all of that. But when we reject that promise, we question God's providence.

I'll tell you another thing about Elijah. He wanted to be alone. Now it's alright to be alone. But you should

want to be alone to have communion with God—not to run from trouble.

Now that's one of my dangers. When I get feeling rotten and upset and sick, I don't want anyone around. That isn't too good. Elijah went out there alone and laid down under the Juniper tree. When he woke up, there was an angel there that had been watching over him. But he wanted to be alone. When people get like that, they want to be alone, and that's dangerous.

I think about a fellow who went to church over at Brent. He was in a wheelchair, and his wife left him—just an empty house, sitting in his wheelchair. So, I went over and talked to him for a while. I said, "You need to get out of here. Have you been out of the house since she left?" I think it had been four days. He said, "No." I said, "Well, get out, sit on the front porch, watch the cars—do something. You have some friends, go talk with them. Whine and complain to them and see if they'll share it with you. Don't just stay here alone—it's dangerous!"

So, I waited, and he didn't show up at church. He didn't phone anybody; he just stayed right in that house a few more days and then committed suicide. Now that's a bad thing wanting to be alone like that. Now when you get into a thing like that, you need somebody to talk with. If you don't talk about yourself, talk about something else. If you want to be alone, that's a bad thing.

Years ago, my buddy Glenn Schunk and I used to go to downtown Green-

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ville and do personal work. In those days, the stores would close by 5:00 or 6:00. By 8:00 or 10:00, there would just be a few people here and there. One night, when I met Schunk back at the car and started home, he said, "You know what happened to me just now?" I said "No," and he told me. He said he was going down one of the streets, and a fellow was standing there with his back toward him. He was looking in a store window, and there weren't any lights in the window.

Glenn came up behind him and tapped him on the back, and said, "Sir, would you take a tract?" He said this fellow turned around, and he had a knife in his hand. He had been trying to kill himself by cutting his wrists and didn't have enough guts to finish it. There was blood all over the place. He turned around and said, "Do you believe there is a God?" Glenn led him to Christ right there. This fellow was all by himself going through God knows what.

I remember one time I was out on the bridge trying to teach one of my young men how to cast a mullet net. He was a character! He was having trouble, and I tried to straighten him out. We were out there in the moonlight, waiting for something to come by. It was a beautiful night. He wasn't saying much of anything. I said, "Boy, it's a beautiful night, isn't it? Look at that up there at that moon!" He said, "Oh, small talk—it's just all small talk." I said, "Buddy, you may find one day that small talk is a good way to stay out of trouble." But he didn't take it.

Something else about Elijah—he became inactive for God. You get inactive, and soon things just rot away. Soon all you can think about is yourself.

Now Elijah became inactive for God—he didn't go fishing. If you're about at your wit's end, instead of just moping and feeling sorry for yourself, go back to fishing. See if you can get a soul saved.

J. Frank Norris said that's the only way you'll ever really get over it. He said to quit feeling sorry for yourself and get out and try to win a sinner for Christ. When you do, you'll find the light start turning on again. You'll be amazed how things begin to cheer up. Now I know that's true!

We have a joke down south about a fellow who did a little illegal fishing. He threw dynamite in the water to catch fish! The game warden couldn't get him for anything, so he went fishing with him to see what he was doing. The game warden was talking about fines and how many years he would get for this and that. They anchored out there, and that old fellow reached into his sack and pulled out a stick of dynamite, lit it, and gave it to the warden. He said, "OK, buddy, are you going to fish or just sit there talking?" Well, quit talking and fish!

Now let's talk about some practical things. Do you know what the angel told Elijah in the passage? He said, "Get a bite to eat and go back to sleep." That's some good advice—some "alternative medicine". Get a good hot meal, rest awhile, and go

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for a walk.

Stop everything that has a buzzer or beeper in it! Shut the phone off! Turn the TV and the radio off. There is nothing more crooked, aggravating, or unrealistic than a newscast! What you need is to get away and lie still.

One fellow from Texas had a chihuahua he called Chico. He said, "Chico is a brilliant dog. Actually, he is sensitive to all national and political problems!" I said, "How do you figure that?" He said, "He shakes all the time!"

Elijah gets up and walks for about 140 miles. Go for a walk. Not in the city—get out in the country. Just get out in the woods, walk around slowly. You'll be amazed. You'll get your hearing back—you'll get to hear real sounds. I mean, some of you haven't heard a bird in a week or a month, and you're not going to hear it in downtown traffic. Hear the woods calling you, leaves falling, and you can sometimes hear water bubbling. That's better than a tranquilizer!

If an archer doesn't loosen the bowstring, he can't tighten it when the time comes to shoot. With the old-fashioned bow, when you came back from combat or hunting, you'd always loosen the string. If you leave it on the bow, it stretches, and you lose the power you had. After you've been through some hard, trying problem in your life, take the time to rest—and I mean REST!

Now the next thing to notice about Elijah is what he *didn't* do. He didn't go to God for a revelation. He didn't

go to God to find out anything.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5)

When you have a problem come up, go to God. God may not answer everything the way you want it answered, but He'll do something with it. Some men get in bad trouble and never go to God to get any information. If I was in trouble, that's the first thing I would think of.

I believe the worst book I read in my life was by Martin Grey. Martin Grey was an unsaved Jew raised in Poland. Martin has a book called, *For Those I Loved*. He grew up in Poland and was a boy when the Nazis came in. He escaped half a dozen times from being taken off to the concentration camps where they had his mom, daddy, brother, and sister. A German soldier hit him in the face with the butt of his rifle and put out one of his eyes while he was trying to get some food when he was starving to death in the ghetto.

Finally, they got him into a concentration camp, and he had to pick up the bodies of his own dead people. He escaped tying himself under a scout car. He burned himself on the exhaust doing it, but he got out and escaped. He joined the Russian army and got in with the gorillas. They tried to kill him when they got to Germany. He left the Russians, got with the Americans, and came back to America.

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He got over to America and became a millionaire, then went to France. He married a movie star there. They had four beautiful children and bought a big chateau. Then one day, while he was away, a fire came through and burnt that thing to a cinder. When he came back, all he found was a car with his wife and kids' bodies in it. After that, he said he wanted to spend the rest of his life helping poor folks.

The word "God" or "prayer" doesn't occur one time in that book in 400 pages! Not one time did that fellow pray to God for anything or thank God for anything. And he died and went to Hell. Isn't that something?

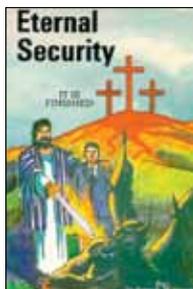
I have to ask God about everything I do. I wouldn't think of doing anything else. Some of these birds don't. All your big shots are like that. Like Elvis Presley, Ringo, Errol Flynn, Hank Williams, Marilyn Monroe, FDR, JFK, MLK, and Karl Marx. They all die miserable—without hope and without God. They don't ask God for anything.

Those people never found one verse in the Bible to answer any problem that ever came up. This Book has in it somewhere the answer for any problem any man ever had in any state, in any country, and under any condition. The idea that a man should put it aside and not look at it is ridiculous. It has outsold any other three books in the world! Don't you think you ought to look in it sometime—maybe try to find something?

Now, I know some of you have

some real heartache, trouble, and some hard things to face. I understand that, but nothing worth coming apart. You say, "I'm not happy." Why don't you ask God to show you the way to happiness? Bob Jones Sr. said that you will never find happiness by looking for it. You will stumble on it in the line of God's purpose for your life. That's so true.

I want you to do some praying. Ask God to show you something. Just knock on the door. Say, "Lord, I don't know what to do about this—I don't know how to handle it. Help me! Give me wisdom, or I can't take the load; it's getting heavy for me. It's going to crack me up. I don't want to crack up; I want to serve you. Help me!" Don't just go through trying to figure it out yourself.



This book covers those passages that deal with eternal security or, conversely, the teaching that a believer can lose his sal-

vation in this age.

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RK-2225

(Plus postage—see pg. 18)

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his message (Lam. 1:15-16, Jer. 9:1). Though he took no pleasure in it, he was obedient to his calling to preach **“thus saith the Lord”**, as should the Bible-believing preacher do today.

The fear of preaching ought to be a normal reaction for any saved sinner, considering his own ineptitude and especially the seriousness of the calling. But the Lord is faithful to help through those fears and weaknesses with the simple fact of His presence and strength for the fulfillment of it.

When Moses was called, his fears were met with, **“Certainly I will be with thee”** (Exo. 3:12). When Gideon reminded the Lord that he was poor and the least in his father's house, he was answered with, **“Surely I will be with thee”** (Judg. 6:16). When Jeremiah protested of his inability to speak, he was encouraged with, **“Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee”** (Jer.1:8). When Joshua trembled at the thought of his calling, he was pushed ahead with, **“Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee”** (Joshua 1:9). When the great apostle Paul felt some fears with all the opposition that took place at Corinth, the Lord spoke to him in a night vision saying, **“Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee...”** (Acts 18:9-10). If each of those great men needed to be comforted and encouraged in their fears, how much more is it needed today?

Not unlike Jeremiah's time, the God-called preacher in these last days must stand and preach a message of judgment against his own

country and be faithful to **“my words in thy mouth”** (Jer. 1:9). One thing we can depend on is that men never learn from history. Judah saw Israel go into Assyrian captivity (721 B.C.), and had at least one hundred years to repent before Nebuchadnezzar came into town in 606 B.C. England turned from the KJV (1881) and from Israel (1922). London is now 15% Muslim, with over 3 million of them across that country, giving the good old USA at least one hundred years to repent before the judgment and destruction hits.

And so today's preacher must stand alone and remember that there is a Saviour who will never leave him alone. We are to walk as sheep in the midst of wolves (Matt. 10:16), all the while making sure that we are to **“beware of men”** (verse 17), yet not afraid of them.

The Christians are likened to sheep (John 10:14), who follow the Good Shepherd, even while the **“hireling”** is on the way (verse 12). In this world, we will always have tribulation, **“but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world”** (John 16:33).

Once this virus is over, there will be another war, another disease, another famine, another economic crash, another earthquake, more riots in the streets, and more false prophets rising up to deceive many (Matt. 24:6-11). The Bible prophecy is coming to pass before our eyes as the antichrist gets ready to step in.

The Bible-believing Christian is not taken aback at the way things are going in his country, and he certainly could not believe we are going to

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save America. The Lord Jesus Christ warned His disciples of what is to come before He returns, and it is not revival, but **“wars and rumours of wars...and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places”** (Matt. 24:6-7), and those were only to be **“the beginning of sorrows”** (Matt. 24:8).

The spirit of our present Laodicean age is that we can have “every day a Friday”, and that “you can, you will”, and “it is your time”. It is no surprise to hear slop like that come from the T.V. charlatans, but what a shift in KJB-believing preachers to be serving up this same spirit. One of the main things that is wrong with this kind of political preaching is that Christians start thinking that the Lord has let them down by putting Biden (or Clinton or Obama) into office. They have swallowed the idea that it is the spiritual duty of the Christian to be a patriotic, right-wing American, and that preserving the wicked (but rich) American lifestyle is something that the Lord is interested in.

The Lord's accolades for those who lived and died in faith were that they **“...confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country”** (Heb. 11:13-16).

In the midst of all that negative news, we are reminded that our lives are in the hands of the great God and

Saviour Jesus Christ. This is the Lord God Almighty **“Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales”** (Isa. 40:12). This is the same Lord who dares the USA and all the nations to assemble and come out to battle against him (Joel 3:10-12), and the same powerful God who challenges anyone in heaven and earth to step up to His throne and take the Book out of His right hand and unseal it (Rev. 5:3).

And yet it is this very same powerful Lord God who puts our lives into his tender care, and watches over us so that we need not take any care over **“What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?”** (Matt. 6:31). This is the same Lord that tells us to be **“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you”** (1 Pet. 5:7).

This caring Saviour looks down at when you are bruised and says He will not break you, and when your light is nothing more than an ember about to go out, that He will not quench your hope (Matt. 12:20). The Lord likens our lives to the most frail, flimsy, and indefensible things (a reed, smoking flax, lilies of the field, sparrows, etc.), and then takes special care over our every need.

The illustration of our lives as a bruised reed shows just how weak and helpless human life really is. The reed cannot stand up to the slightest of breezes, but bends with every whisper. The reed produces no fruit,

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has no beautiful flowers, and is too frail to be used as building material. Shepherds would make temporary flimsy flutes to play some notes with, only to be thrown away and be trampled underfoot. Yet, the Lord uses the reed as a picture of His care and love for us.

The lilies of the field do not toil or spin, yet are arrayed with such beauty, just as you were fashioned in the womb and came forth through no work of your own, though **“fearfully and wonderfully made”** (Psa. 139:14). The lily has little strength and completely depends on the sun and rain for its survival, just **“as for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone”** (Psa. 103:15-16). The lily blooms, and regardless of how much care it is given, it dies quickly, just as man’s life is **“even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away”** (James 4:14).

There is no such thing as a man so low that the Lord cannot reach him, or a sinner so vile that the Lord cannot forgive him. It is Satan who is the constant discourager in an effort to **“steal, and to kill, and to destroy”** (John 10:10). If he cannot deceive you as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14), he will try to scare you as a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8). If he cannot get you to quit outright as Demas (2 Tim. 4:10), he’ll attempt to get you to compromise (Exod. 8:25). If he cannot get you to completely disobey (Num. 14:4), he’ll try to get you to put it off for a while (Haggai 1:2-5). The devil has certain devices that he uses to try to get the

Christian to quit, and Paul wrote that **“we are not ignorant of his devices”** (2 Cor. 2:11).

It is the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Great Encourager, with promise after promise that helps you to go on.

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

“...for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5).

“...Peace, be still...” (Mark 4:39).

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

“...If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink (John 7:37).

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37).

“...In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” (1 Thess. 4:17-18)

We have a Saviour who refuses to give up on us, and the child of God can find no one else like Him. He will love through the depression, the trial, the heartache, and even through the grave. He will never break a bruised reed or quench a smoking flax, but instead, will wrap His arms around

Continued on 13

The Great Encourager

Continued from 12
a bruised life and bind it up and will always be there when you feel like you cannot go on. Even as the smoking flax seems like it has no more light or heat left, the Lord Jesus will encourage and help lift you out of it.

I've seen the Lord save a murderer in prison who thought it impossible that he could ever be forgiven, much less find heaven as his home. A drug dealer once asked me after preaching a funeral if I really meant what I said about being forgiven and cleansed from all sin, and if that included him. We knelt together in the corner of the funeral home as he received the Lord Jesus Christ and found out firsthand that Jesus saves sinners—no matter how bruised.

The Great Encourager is the Lord

Jesus Christ. The KJV gives the truth about what the future holds for the believer. It does not sugar coat the Christian life as one of comfort and riches. Consider and pray over the following.

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12).

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18).

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you” (1 Pet. 4:12).

“But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither

Continued on 14

Bro. Donovan's Meeting Schedule

June 4-6

Northstar Baptist Church
2755 Phillips Field Rd.
Fairbanks, AK 99709
Pastor Paul Robinson
(907) 374-8775

June 18-20

Bible Believers Bapt. Church
596 SE Alexander St.
Hillsboro, OR 97123
Pastor John Robinson
(503) 706-7147

June 25-27

Bayview Baptist Church
1116 W. 7th St.
San Pedro, CA. 90731
Pastor Steve Andrus
(310) 548-7234

July 23-25

Faith Baptist Church
1302 Independence St.
Ft. Smith, AR 72901
Pastor Paul Sherrouse
479-650-4028

August 13-15

For His Glory Bible
Baptist Church
92 Butler Rd.
Union, ME 04862
Pastor Mike Kee
207-975-5571

September 10-12

Sunrise Baptist Church
2453 Hwy. 35W
Kalispell, MT 59901
Pastor David Haveman
(540) 216-1488

The Great Encourager

Continued from 13
be troubled” (1 Pet. 3:14).

For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing” (1 Pet. 3:17).

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine...” (2 Tim. 4:3).

“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim 2:3).

“...for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer” (2 Thess. 1:4-5).

“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Perse-

cuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;” (2 Cor. 4:8-9).

With all that, we also know how it all comes out in the end. As the Great Encourager prayed, **“ Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me...”** (John 17:24).

The Great Encourager inspired the apostle Paul to write, **“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us...For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”** (Rom 8:18, 2 Cor 4:17).

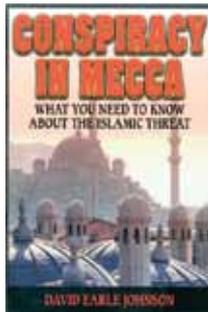


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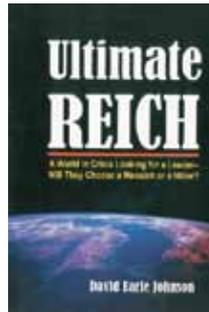


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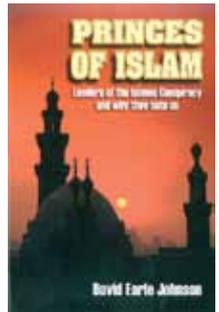


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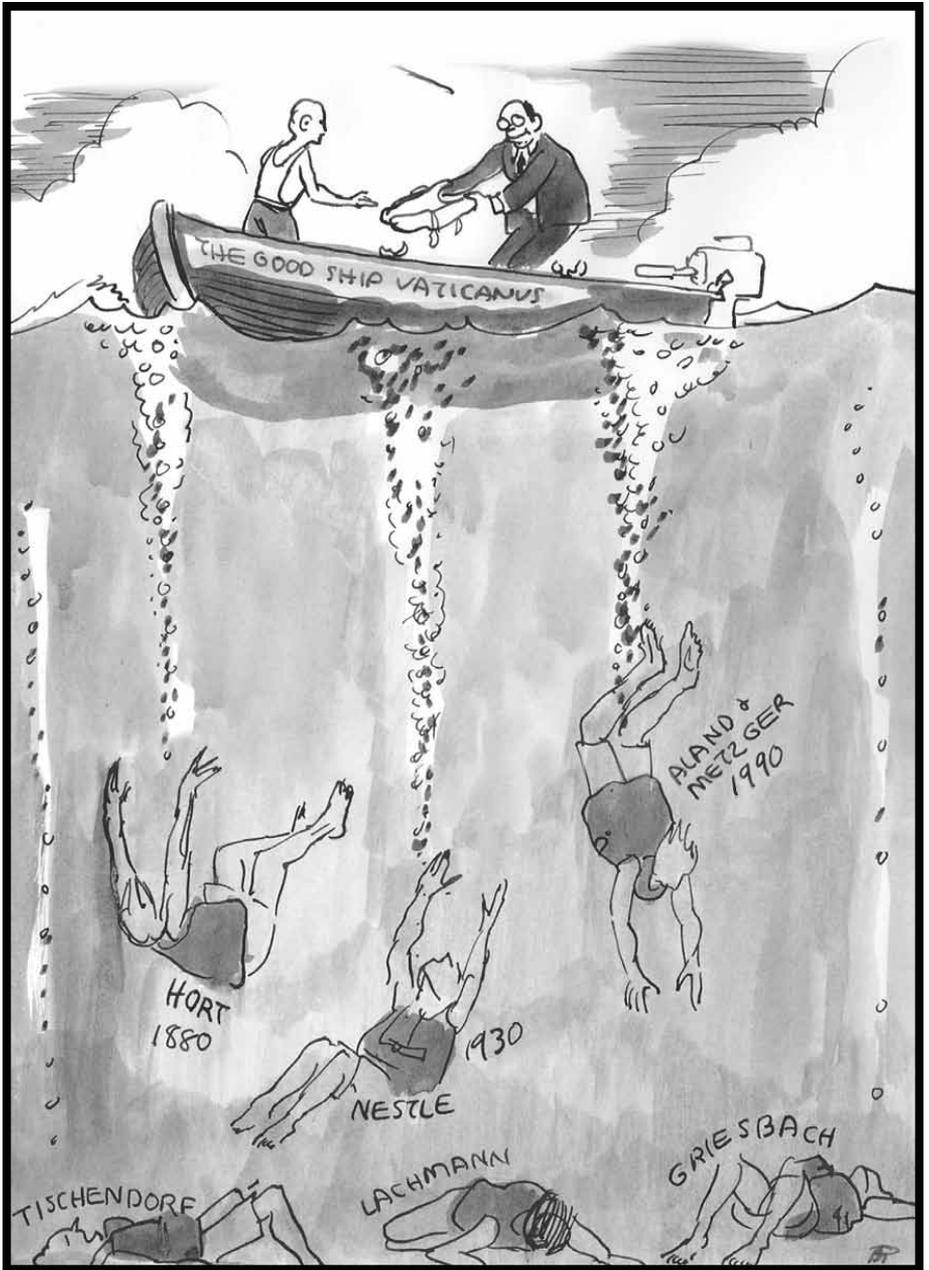


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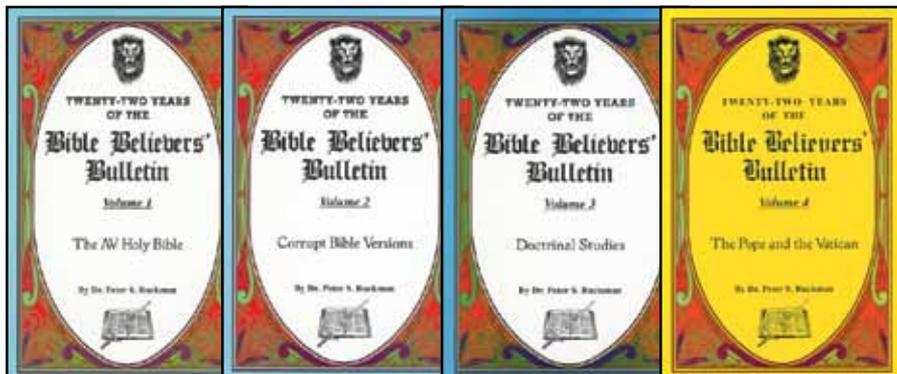
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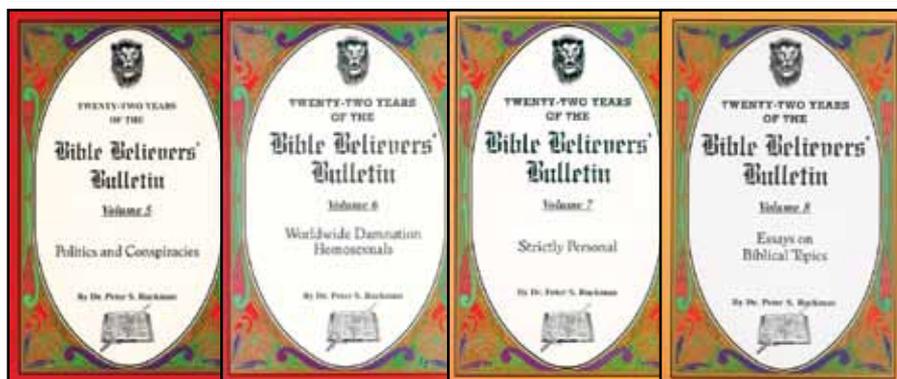
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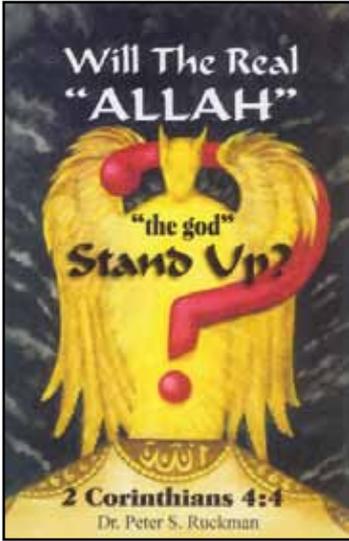
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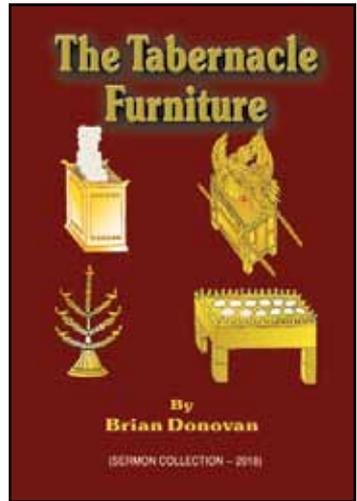
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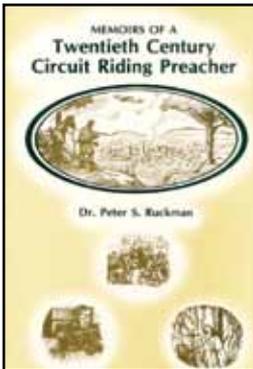
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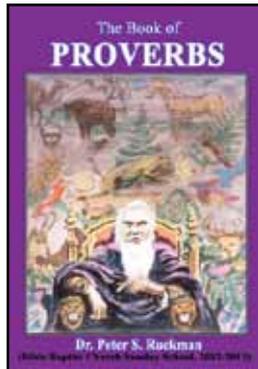
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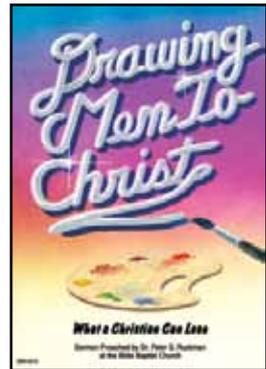
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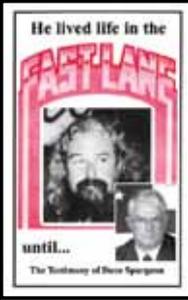
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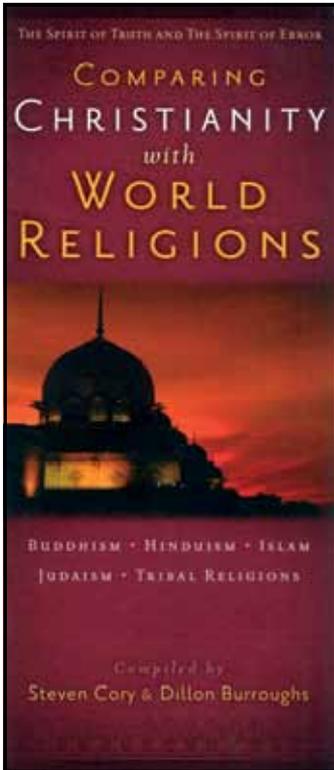
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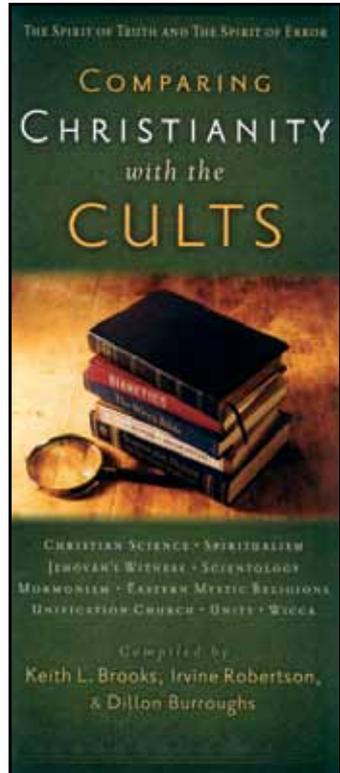


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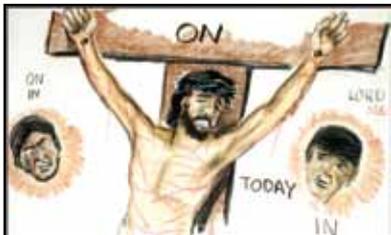
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THE THREE CROSSES



"And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left" (Luke 23:33).

The three crosses on Calvary's hill define every man or woman who has ever lived. There is no avoiding one's place among those three crosses by any means. Everyone will find himself on one of those three crosses.

his sins. This he does by faith, at the most inopportune time. Under seemingly impossible circumstances, he confesses Christ as a King with a kingdom, when Christ is dying as a criminal with NO kingdom (Luke 23:42). The penitent thief is saved by grace through faith in the finished atonement of Jesus Christ. He dies with sin IN him, but no sin ON him.

C. THE MIDDLE CROSS

The middle cross presents "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). There is sin ON Him but no sin IN Him (1 Pet. 2:24, 3:18). Christ's sinless life was the damnation of this world (John 15:22-25). By it, He ran Buddha, Mohammed, Mary, and the Popes off the track (Heb. 12:1-2). The condemnation of this world is that men will NOT receive a sinless man as their substitute (John 3:16-18). They will insist on "living it," "living a good life," or on "making the world a better place to live in." The middle cross cancels all of their ambitions and fondest dreams. It shows that only a sinless man can enter God's presence with favor. Without receiving that sinless Man (1 Tim. 2:5), the "doors to heaven" are shut. It reveals the depravity in the heart of

A. THE FIRST CROSS

Here is the unregenerate sinner. He is "dead in trespasses and sin" (Eph. 2:1). He dies IN his sins (John 8:24), with his sins ON him. This impenitent thief refuses the Sin-bearer (John 1:29) and trusts his own righteousness. He dies because "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). He lives and dies alone in the world without hope and without God (Eph. 2:12). He can profess ANYTHING: to be innocent, guilty, holy, defiled, sincere, wicked, hopeful, confident, unsure, doubtful, humble, or cocksure. It wouldn't affect his eternal destiny one way or another. He dies unforgiven, unredeemed, and unfit to enter the presence of an almighty, holy, sinless Creator.

B. THE THIRD CROSS

Here is the saved sinner. Regardless of his profession, religion, race, creed, sex, background, education, talent, intellect, money, or ethical standards, he dies forgiven, redeemed, and in fellowship with his Creator. He cannot kneel to pray, get baptized, join any church, take the sacraments, or "live it." He is dying condemned, under the wrath of human and divine justice, and he can do nothing but believe on the Saviour whom God sent to atone for

every religious "do-gooder" on this earth. Religious "do-gooders" trying to "help humanity out" (John 11:48) had Jesus Christ nailed to the cross. Everyone reading this print is on either the first cross or the third cross. The only "middle ground" is Jesus Christ Himself.

You can have your sins forgiven like the penitent thief. All you have to do is come to Jesus Christ in simple faith and sincerity, saying something like this:

"Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner, and unless you save me, I am lost forever. I come to you the best way I know how, believing you died for my sins and rose again to give me eternal life, and asking that you save me. I receive you as my Saviour and trust you to forgive and justify me, and present me without fault before God's throne in the day of Judgment."

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Why Be Intimidated?

By Robert Militello

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).

Here's this old Jew from Tarsus, once a terror to those who dared confess Christ, telling the saints in Rome that he would not be intimidated. Why are so many saints afraid to open their mouths for Jesus? The need for the saving power of Jesus Christ to be proclaimed everywhere in our nation has never been greater.

If it weren't for a Christian, brave enough to put aside his fear and tell me I was going to Hell without the new birth, I wouldn't be writing this article. That man was not intimidated by my scowling, Brooklyn face. He opened his mouth in a Brooklyn barbershop in late 1977 because the Holy Spirit in him overcame the fear of man. Jesus tells us not to be afraid because He has overcome the world. Fear muzzles the Christian; it paralyzes the tongue and makes us ashamed.

“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” (1 Pet. 4:14).

Here's the thing that brings happiness to a believer. First, a lost soul that gets saved, and next, ridicule and scorn for daring to open your mouth for your Savior. Many who are saved never enter into the abundant life the Holy Spirit offers them because they will not shake

off the fear of man.

“I am come that they might have life, and that THEY MIGHT HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY” (John 10:10).

Why live on the cheap while waiting to go to heaven? Your “Best Life Now” is not what Joel Osteen and Rick Warren and other megachurch preachers think it is. The last thing they are willing to do is risk offending people. To me, they are dogs that won't bark.

“His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter” (Isa. 56:10-11).

Was the prophet looking at TBN and Daystar and CBN back in 700 BC? It seems that way. If a preacher really believed you would burn in a literal, burning hell for rejecting the gospel, shouldn't he be barking aloud giving warning?

After attending many funerals before my salvation and after, I have come to a near blasphemous conclusion. In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus talks about a wide gate and a strait gate—one leading to Hell and one to eternal life. Few go through the strait gate while many enter the wide one. By observation, it seems Jesus may have gotten it wrong about those who die in America. Somehow, most souls leaving their bodies here take flight to glory. The thought of going to

Continued on 25

Why Be Intimidated?

Continued from 24

Hell is the most unpleasant notion to be thought about at a funeral. America, being the great place that it is, must surely make the majority of its people worthy candidates for New Jerusalem. One may arrive at this conclusion after attending service after service at numerous churches, both Protestant, Baptist, and Catholic, and never hearing much about Hell. Christians, for the most part, have become intimidated to a shameful degree, failing to bring up the subject, "Where do the dead go?". American pulpits are, in many cases, hideouts for spiritual cowards loving their own selves first.

"For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, BUT THEIR OWN BELLY; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:18).

I'll be 75 next month, and I see there is a bonus connected to my twilight years. I could care less and less about folks' reactions to the truth. I happily proclaim, **"Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house"** (Ezek. 3:8-9).

Ever think about the face the Lord will show you at His judgment seat? You're hoping for a happy face, no doubt, but unless you fear God more than man, don't expect one. How do I know this? Because unless you match the profile of the

soul spoken of in Isaiah 66:2, you may get a scowl and not a pleasant face at all.

"But TO THIS MAN WILL I LOOK, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

Facing a Jewish accountant who enlisted you into his Father's business may be very uncomfortable once the book is opened and your record of service is examined in a way you gave little thought to.

A young man out to serve the Lord needs to hear what Jeremiah heard. **"Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: BE NOT DISMAYED AT THEIR FACES, lest I confound thee before them"** (Jer. 1:17).

Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Old Testament prophets were dealing with a stiffnecked and stubborn people. Jews can be that way. I grew up in Brooklyn, and the evidence of this national characteristic of Jews was not hidden by a smiley face—this, I can assure you. Today, especially in America, the Holy Spirit is dealing with a comfort-oriented, Laodicean body of believers that prefers entertainment and smooth, conviction-free sermonettes and does not tremble at the word. If you haven't observed this, you are in some sort of spiritual coma. Get a lobotomy (look it up!).

"The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness" (Prov. 15:2).

Never has there been a time in
Continued on 26

Why Be Intimidated?

Continued from 25

American history when conversation has become so vain and so void of any real semblance of the fear of God. A device came into American living rooms in the early fifties, and a spigot was opened for images on a screen to promote almost everything that opposed the word of God. Worldliness spread like a plague across our nation. At the same time, the King James Bible was being replaced in the pew of many denominations. The power of God through His written word ebbed away, and many, even Christians, spoke as though God was on vacation. Remember the *Time* magazine cover that said, "Is God Dead?". Television, more than any other invention, helped multiple millions to love this world, and what a price will have to be paid for that.

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:16). So, the last day's church gets a blast from the Lord in Revelation 3:18 and is told to **"anoint thine eyes with eyesalve"**—the church went blind. Modern Bible versions will not restore sight.

Biblical scholarship (falsely so called) has intimidated pastors and Bible teachers who seemed to accommodate themselves to correcting the word of God rather than be corrected by it. The willingness to submit to the voice of scholars comes from a failure to study and diligently seek God's mind as instructed in 1 Thessalonians. **"Prove all things, hold fast that**

which is good." Either God left us His **"pure words"** (Psa. 12:6), or He didn't. What kind of wicked laziness causes a ministerial student or a pastor to believe that the Holy Spirit speaks out of both sides of His mouth through dozens of English translations? Is there one that is totally reliable or not? Scholarship is an intimidating weapon in the hands of the devil, and that's because men of God allow it to be so—shame!

Now the Apostle Paul was not one to be cowed by anyone in matters of faith and doctrine. He was familiar with how the prophets were to set the fear of God before their eyes no matter who was to be addressed. You trembled at God's word, or you trembled before men—it couldn't be both. Soon after my conversion, I was astounded to learn how Paul confronted Peter in Antioch and put the first pope in his place. Through four years of Jesuit school, this was never mentioned, and there's no guess as to why. Galatians 2 is a revelation into the boldness of Paul and his readiness to "take the bull by the horns" and run with it. Was he awed by those in authority?

"But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, IT MAKETH NO MATTER TO ME: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference addeth nothing to me" (Gal. 2:6).

The pillars of the early church, James, Cephas, and John, recognized where Paul's boldness was coming from and gave place. Instead of giving place to the power

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of the King James Bible, today's church "pillars" exalt the opinions of men, those of their own kind. Birds of a feather flock together. Galatians 2:11-14 destroys papal supremacy in so thorough a manner that no Catholic priest would teach it. Paul had no problem telling others to get in line. Talk about Chutzpah (Yiddish word for nerve or boldness). How's this? **"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ"** (1 Cor. 11:1). Catholics won't find Peter saying such a thing, but searching scripture is not a Catholic thing and will never be one for obvious reasons.

Church history in the Book of Acts begins with boldness. Peter goes right for the jugular vein labeling the Jews as murderers. **"And killed the Prince of Life"** (Acts 3:15). The Holy Spirit is the antidote to the fear of man, which is widespread among the saints. Put on Christ in the morning. Confess all known sin. Arm yourself with the sword of the Lord and open your mouth for Jesus. You will no doubt meet the enemy on the battlefield. He would love to silence and render powerless what is left of militant Christianity in these last days. Don't allow it!

Peter addresses the rulers and elders of Israel and lays upon them a guilt trip (Acts 4:8-12) which drives them into conference (verse 15). It is much better to be on offense than defense in spiritual battle. You learn this if you do personal work. Nevertheless, zeal without wisdom will result in being more defensive than offensive. Peter's sermon,

a bloody thrust to the heart of the religious, Jewish establishment, must have given great courage to the early church. Boldness can be contagious. Do you think a young man named Stephen got some of what Peter had? His boldness would go on to cost him his life. Watch out when you ask the Lord to loosen your tongue. When Peter and John were let go by the religious authorities, they went to a prayer meeting (Acts 4:23). They gave a report to the assembly, and here's their petition. **"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants, THAT WITH ALL BOLDNESS they may speak thy word"** (Acts 4:29). What good is a pastor today who is not regularly exhorting the sheep to be bold? There's no salt on their tables.

We know the infant church in Jerusalem came in for some heavy persecution. Jesus appeared to over five hundred before He left this earth. The saints that saw the Lord alive and may have witnessed the cloud taking him to heaven knew they hadn't believed in fables. They saw what we haven't seen, and this, no doubt, gave them a passion and boldness to speak the word, which is so lacking today in the body of Christ. What fervor must have been in the hearts of the saints back then. Nevertheless, sixty years or so later, there was a decline. Revelation 2:4 says the church at Ephesus had left its first love, although their works were commendable. There's a lot done by the churches today, while millions who profess Christ rarely

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move their mouths for Jesus.

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:22-23).

Money has poured in from God's people to build megachurches on select parcels of land with attractive landscaping, spacious parking lots and attractive signage. Countless millions are spent on audio and video equipment because new church buildings were constructed with special attention to acoustics. Slick publications are put out by these world-friendly churches, and money is spent on all kinds of promotions and special days. I wonder how much of the spending pie goes to foreign missions. Do these churches send out men to proclaim God's word in public places? What do you think?

Holy boldness would loosen tongues and cause amazing things to happen if the power of the Holy Spirit were prayed for earnestly. Stephen's boldness left an indelible impression on a Pharisee witnessing a man being stoned to death for charging the Jewish leadership with premeditated murder.

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed

before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers” (Acts 7:51-52).

How's that for a positive presentation of God's truth? Imagine being so enraged by what you just heard that you act like a beast and bite the speaker. That's what verse 54 says. Stephen's fire-breathing speech opened heaven for him. He saw Jesus, calling him the Son of man (Vs. 56), and the Jews knew what that meant. Why are religious “crazies” ready to shed blood to keep from hearing their beliefs exposed for the lies they are built upon? That wonderful, caring institution known as the Holy Roman Catholic Church did not hesitate to murder hundreds of thousands of “heretics” throughout much of Europe for refusing to adore the wafer. I'm still waiting for the History Channel, or perhaps PBS, to do a documentary on European history and Rome's crimes during the Dark Ages.

Don't you think the boldness of Stephen, and the way he went to his death, might have given this Saul a little heartburn? Some memories have a bite to them, and they travel with us through life, appearing on a screen in our mind affecting our behavior for good or for bad. Who knows you and I better than the Lord? Going through life pretending He's not there is a delusion of convenience that ends with a nightmare. Sinners without Jesus go to Hell, and Christians are obligated to tell the truth and nothing but the truth—Amen?

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Paul asked prayer for boldness, and many saints have personalities not amenable to bluntness. You may be shy and retiring, and the flesh will always resist the Spirit. Nevertheless, we have someone living within our bodies. He is quite capable of being assertive. He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. I believe that our God is always ready to speak through us in

season and out. If the Lord further delays His coming, my tongue will fail along with the rest of my body. I'm not thrilled about that because I've always enjoyed talking to folks. There aren't many New Yorkers, especially Jews, who are at a loss for words—believe it!

It is interesting to note that Christianity spread rapidly throughout the Roman world. This

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THE CREED OF THE ALEXANDRIAN CULT

1. There is **no final authority** but God.
2. Since God is a Spirit, there is **no final authority** that can be seen, heard, read, felt, or handled.
3. Since all books are material, there is **no book on this earth that is the final and absolute authority** on what is right and what is wrong, what constitutes truth and what constitutes error.
4. There **WAS** a series of writings one time which, **IF** they had all been put into a **BOOK** as soon as they were written the first time, **WOULD HAVE** constituted an infallible and final authority by which to judge truth and error.
5. However, this series of writings was lost, and the God who inspired them was **unable to preserve their content** through Bible-believing Christians at Antioch (Syria), where the first Bible teachers were (Acts 13:1), and where the first missionary trip originated (Acts 13:1-52), and where the word "*Christian*" originated (Acts 11:26).
6. So God chose to **ALMOST** preserve them through Gnostics and philosophers from Alexandria, Egypt, even though God called His Son **OUT** of Egypt (Matthew 2), Jacob **OUT** of Egypt (Genesis 49), Israel **OUT** of Egypt (Exodus 15), and Joseph's bones **OUT** of Egypt (Exodus 13).
7. So there are two streams of Bibles. The most accurate—though, of course, there is **no final, absolute authority** for determining truth and error; it is a matter of "preference"—are the Egyptian translations from Alexandria, Egypt, which are "almost the originals," although not quite.
8. The most **inaccurate translations** were those that brought about the German Reformation (Luther, Zwingli, Boehler, Zinzendorf, Spener, et al.) and the worldwide missionary movement of the English-speaking people: the Bible that Sunday, Torrey, Moody, Finney, Spurgeon, Whitefield, Wesley, and Chapman used.
9. But we can "tolerate" these if those who believe in them will "tolerate" US. After all, since there is **NO ABSOLUTE AND FINAL AUTHORITY** that anyone can read, teach, preach, or handle, the whole thing is a matter of "PREFERENCE." You may prefer what you prefer, and we will prefer what we prefer. Let us live in peace, and if we cannot agree on anything or everything, let us all agree on one thing: **THERE IS NO FINAL, ABSOLUTE, WRITTEN AUTHORITY OF GOD ANYWHERE ON THIS EARTH.**

This is the Creed of the Alexandrian Cult.

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alarmed the authorities, who held a belief in many gods, and that the emperor himself was a god of sorts. How was it that so many were reached with the gospel in the first century alone? The answer is obvious. Christians were passionate in their desire to witness to their faith in spite of great danger.

If a belief is worth dying for, those who oppose the faith take extreme measures to stamp it out. Believers throughout the empire were watched, and thus had to meet in secret. Even Roman citizenship was no real protection if your activity as a Christian got you noticed. Paul's Roman citizenship was good for an appeal to Caesar, but it did not save his life. Right now, it is still uneventful to be a Christian in the United States. Will that be the case a few years from now? Don't call Trump. He left Washington.

Rome, at first, thought it was expedient to burn Christians or set them in arenas to provide public entertainment. One certain proof of the depravity of man's heart shows itself clearly when throngs of "respectful" folk still fill the arenas to see fellow human beings torn apart by lions and wild beasts. How many sweet saints were to die violently to satisfy the bloodlust of those who feared this new religion? God only knows, but certainly, there were those spectators who could not fathom how someone would go singing to a pile of wood, there to be burned alive.

What did these "misfits" know that would make them face death so unafraid? The blood of these

martyrs became the means by which more and more hearts opened to the gospel. Rome, at times, suspended persecution for a while and then started it up again. All the emperors ran scared until Constantine made Christianity the religion of the empire. Pagan temples reopened as churches, and the Roman Holy Catholic Church set out to teach its brand of Christianity. Soon, those who practiced their faith according to the scriptures had to go underground again. Rome always hated the word of God.

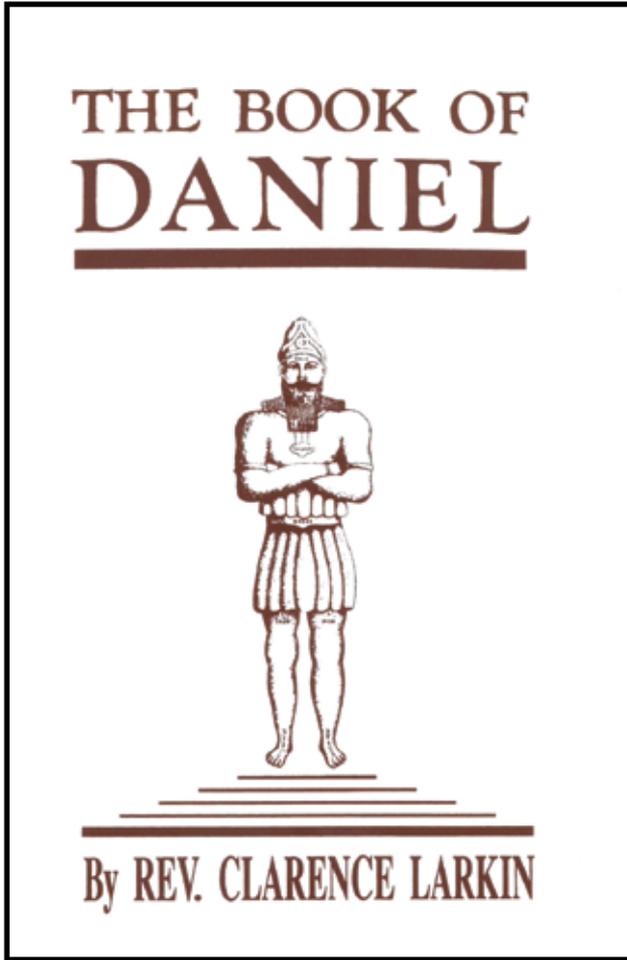
We, thank God, do not have to go underground with our faith. I've gone to public street corners since 1979. It is there you get an idea of just how unappealing God's word is to the parade of passing souls. Christians need to see how their Lord's words are ridiculed and His witnesses held in contempt. Would sympathy be given today to those Christians who fear ridicule by those who died violently because God's word was worth it?

Are you saved? Are you not exceedingly happy that your soul has a place in glory and you cannot go to Hell? We have something worth talking about.

"Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy" (Psa. 107:2).

"My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long" (Psa. 71:24).

"Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I WILL DECLARE WHAT HE HATH DONE FOR MY SOUL" (Psa. 66:16).



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