

Glorious Gospel Publication



Editor: Jack Davis
796 N. St Paul * Wichita, Kansas 67203
316-943-4190 or 942-5468
www.gloriousgospel.org
Email: ggospel5@juno.com

Published Monthly, No Subscription Price



Contents:

Vessels Unto Honor

Jack Davis 1

The Last Days

Anita Clark 5

Romans – Ch. 15:1-15

W. J. Franklin 9

A Good Report

Wendy Bratt 14

Moderation - Part 5

Doug Delhay 17

Trip to Israel - 2006

Bonnie Richards 21

From Our Mail Box

David & Jo Ann Cloud 25

VESSELS UNTO HONOR

God's great handiwork



II Tim. 2:19-21, "...the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a **vessel unto honour**, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

Let us be thankful for the privilege of bearing the name of Jesus. We may be separated unto His service by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, even the washing of water by the Word. That Word will separate us from contaminating, and corrupting influences to fit us to be profitable in His service.

FORMED FAILED AND FELL

That first creation failed and fell from it's first place of GOD GIVEN DOMINANCE. See Gen. 2 & 3. It is good for us to know of God's working from the beginning his Great plan that He will enjoy the results thereof for eternity. "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul." Gen. 2:7. It also seems that from the fall humanity was void of grasping things Spiritual. But God could foresee a holy new creation, in His beloved Son.

It is interesting to observe that much of His Spirit's work in us is symbolized by three types or figures, that of the water, oil, and wine.

THE POTTER'S HOUSE

In some sense our God has a great house of the whole universe, he owns it all. He has the capacity to inhabit the whole universe for the fulfillment of His wise purposes.

VALUED CONTAINERS

Jer. 18:1-9 - "The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them."

POTTER POWER

Rom. 9:20-23.

Consider and rejoice that God's great and glorious plan was not defeated by the fall of man. His plan to bring a new creation in Christ that would not fail. His purpose and ability to make His wheels to run true, are beyond question. He will bring forth that which pleases Him, as He does as He will with his own.

Unbelieving man may ask why hast thou made me thus out of this dust., that I must simply trust. We cannot see the end in exact detail unless we look at these things from God's view point. If we are only able to see the first creation as hand made, let us look beyond and see in a new creation, that which was blood-bought, and fire tested. Our potential in the old creation are "vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction." But, Praise God; through His grace, we may become "vessels of mercy prepared unto glory." God's input into us by our acceptance of faith determines how much we are being made vessels unto honor. As we yield to his work He prepares us for the fulfillment of his purposes.

VESSELS OF AN INDWELT TREASURE

To submit to the Christ-life treasure within us determines the measure of the excellency of his power that may be at work in us. Although our physical body is declining day by day, our inward life is being renewed day by day. And thus place is being made for the manifestation of the life of him that lives within us.

Acts 9:15 & 16

He shall suffer for my names sake, He shall bear my name. The apostle Paul was spoken of as a chosen vessel unto the Lord. What an honor to bear the name of Christ. God sets this privilege before us. Our Lord would have us desire, hunger and crave with all of our heart all that he can make of our life for His glory. Shall we not give Him a wholehearted Welcome?

by J. D.

ALL PRAISE TO HIM

**All praise to Him who built the hills;
All praise to Him the streams who fills;
All praise to Him who lights each star
That sparkles in the blue afar.**

**All praise to Him who makes the morn,
And bids it glow with beams new-born;
Who draws the shadows of the night,
Like curtains, o'er our wearied sight.**

**All praise to Him whose love hath given
In Christ His Son, the Life of heaven;
Who gives us for our darkness light,
And turns to day our deepest night.**

**All praise to Him in love who came,
To bear our woe, and sin, and shame;
Who lived to die, who died to rise,
The all-prevailing Sacrifice.**

—H. B.

THE LAST DAYS



Anita Clark

“Now the Spirit speaks expressly that in the later times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” I Timothy 4:1

“The Spirit speaks expressly.” Did the Holy Spirit speak to Paul’s heart or was this a message in tongues and interpretation. The word “expressly” means “distinctly” or “explicitly.”

The Holy Spirit does not mince word or beat around the bush. Paul wrote this about 2,000 years ago. People were eager for the truth. They were coming into the truth. There were not many churches, but one true church. Today it is confusing. There are so many different churches that people don’t know which is right or where to go. Praise God for those who love the Word and seek out where they can be fed!

One of the greatest signs of the end time and the soon coming of Christ is the radical departure from the faith. This unadulterated truth of the Gospel was revealed to the Apostles in the beginning of the Church Age, especially to the Apostle Paul. Many stood for this truth in the beginning. All the believers were “all with one accord in one place.” As time progressed Apostle Paul reported in his letters that different ones were going away from the revealed teaching given to him. All of Asia forsook Paul (II Tim. 1:15). The Galatians went away into the error of “works for salvation.” In I Timothy 1:19 he speaks of some having made “shipwreck of the faith” especially Hymenaeus and Alexander. Here in I Timothy 4:1 he

warns of more departure from the faith in the “latter times” of the Church Age.

The Church began well, but as time went by, great error crept into the church until the one body was divided into multiple bodies, all teaching their own doctrine. I have a chart of the denominations branching off from the one body, until it looks like a mass of tangled roots. In around 300A.D. the church, after much persecution, entered into league with the government of Rome. Constantine the emperor of Rome became “Christianized.” God only knows if he was a true believer. He made Christianity the state religion. History tells of all the horrible atrocities committed against anyone who did not go along with the one Church. Catholicism was born and many true believers were tortured and killed. This period of time was called the “Dark Ages.”

Finally, in the 1500’s Martin Luther and others began to get revelations, which brought about revival and separation from the “Mother Church.” This is history and most of us know this.

Error has grown and grown over the centuries. Praise God there has been revivals which caused some to get greater light. And now we are living in the last days of the Church Age.

The doctrines of the early church which were established, such as salvation by grace, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, the eminent coming of Christ, and many other truths were cast aside.

“Seducing spirits and doctrines of devils” are still being taught in this world today. It is a fact that error is propagated by the devil. Most false teaching promotes some man or woman instead of the Lord. Satan is the father of lies, and he deceives and deludes people with wrong teaching. This has increased

continually during this age and will finally end with Satan deceiving people into worshipping the AntiChrist. I John 4:6 says, "...he that knoweth God heareth us, but he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." There are many who will not follow the right spirit, and will not hear the truth.

I Timothy 6:3-5 tells us, "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, ...supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw thyself." This is a teaching that is strong in the religious world in these last days. Some teach that if you have faith, you name what you want and God will give it to you. If you have faith, you enter into divine health and if you are sick you claim it and you are healed immediately. This teaching is erroneous. It does not allow for God working in our lives through hard trials of want or pain. It cannot possibly be a universal doctrine because it would not work in Somalia or Nepal or some other country. Truthfully, it does not work here in the U.S. either. God allows many to suffer in order to work eternal values in the heart of the sufferer. What blessed work is lost if God is not allowed His intricate work in the believers lives.

II Corinthians 11:13 tells us that false apostles transform themselves into the apostles of Christ even as Satan himself transforms himself into as angel of light. That is why we have the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. When we are filled with the Spirit it makes it easier for us to discern the truth.

II Timothy 3:1 says, "This know also, that in the last days, perilous times shall come."

Verse 5, tells us that the people in these last days, are “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” This is definitely true of the so called church today. There is so much form and pomp in religion. The real working, life changing power of God is denied. There is a lack of power in their midst. Man is religious and formal, but is not Spiritual, anointed with the Holy Spirit. Early believers were not formal. No where in the Bible is it stated that we should follow forms in our worship. We inherited much of our patterns for church services from our forefathers. We as Bible believing persons must follow the direction of the Holy Spirit, as the Scripture says, “Do everything decently and in order” (I Cor. 14:40). This is not man’s order, but the Holy Spirit’s order. This is where men get into trouble, not letting the Holy Spirit lead, but promoting their own ideas, which are usually suggested by Satan. II Timothy 3:13 gives us the fact, “But evil seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” Error has grown into a full grown tree of evil. Many are walking in darkness and are being deceived. How we praise the Lord Jesus for the blessed truth! He said, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.” It certainly does. We are delivered from legalism and its bondage, we are delivered from religion and its formalism, we are set free into His love and grace. Can we say, “We are not ignorant of Satan’s devices.(II Cor. 2:11)? We will go on and run this race patiently, and say as Paul, “For I am now ready to be offered , and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith”(II Tim. 4:6,7).

*His love has no limit, his grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men;
For out of his infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth and giveth and giveth again.*

ROMANS

W. J. Franklin



Chapter 15:1-15

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves”—V. 1. The subjects of chapter fourteen are continued through 15:1-7. We are still considering the attitudes of weak and strong toward each other. The “Weak” are those who are still in bondage to legal observance of days and abstinence from meats. When Paul says, “We that are strong,” he means those who are free from every ceremony and every legal form of the law of Moses, and anything else that would bind us religiously. He means those who see that Christ is all in all.

“We ought to bear the infirmities of the weak” means to bear in a brotherly manner with their lack of knowledge and with their weak conscience. We can tolerate, sustain or bear with them. Their inability to see liberty in the Gospel is called their “Infirmities.” It means, doubt or scruples. In the small insignificant things as days, meats and appetite, we can make the small sacrifice of not pleasing ourselves.

“Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification”—V. 2. Note that we are not to become slaves to our neighbor, or just serve or please him, nor merely gratify him, but what we do is modified with, “For his good to edification.” We are to please him if we can build him up in Christ.

“For even Christ pleased not Himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me”—V. 3. I would rather translate the first part of this verse, “For also Christ pleased not Himself.” Christ never sought His own ease but was ever doing the will of another, even His Father. See Mark 10:45.

“The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me” refers, we believe, to the fact that all the sins of men, reproaches and all, fell on Christ in His redeeming death. All that man ever did against God fell upon Christ when He was nailed to the cross. Thus, Christ is an example that we should please our neighbor to his good for edification.

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope”—V. 4. From Paul’s words, we learn that all the Old Testament Scriptures minister patience and comfort to us. As we see how God’s patience was manifested to His own, and the comfort He gave His people in their trials, we find hope in believing that He will deal with us in the same way.

But note that there is in this text that which carries the thought of personal effort. The Scriptures are for our learning. This means personal application of ourselves in reading. There is no shortcut to the knowledge of God and of His Word.

“Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Jesus Christ”—V. 5. The three graces of the preceding verse are repeated and are said to belong to God. He is the “God of patience,” “The God of consolation” (Same word as comfort in the preceding verse) and the “God of hope,” V. 13. He is also the “God of peace”—V. 33. In 12:16 of this book, Paul expressed a similar thought to the one in the latter part of this verse. We are to be likeminded one to another as Christ is toward us. That is, according to Christ Jesus.

“That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”—V. 6. Despite the differences of race and religious backgrounds, even as they were likeminded one to another, so they are to be of one mind and one mouth to glorify God. Not with a contrary spirit, not with a bickering over meats and days, but in occupation with Christ and words that may glorify God.

RECEIVE THE BRETHREN AS CHRIST RECEIVED US

“Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God”—V. 7. This verse refers back to 14:1 where we are exhorted to receive one another. Christ received us without question and this to the glory of God. He received us cordially and affectionately, so let us do. So closes this interesting and profitable subject.

CHRIST’S MINISTRY TO THE CIRCUMCISION

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers”—V. 8. In the following verses, Paul contrasts his ministry with Christ’s ministry. Jesus preached to the Jews while Paul was sent by Him to preach to the nations. See V. 16. Jesus confined His ministry almost exclusively to the Jews, the Israelitish nation, to confirm God’s promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The “Trust of God” was contained in the promises. Christ fulfilled the promises and made them good.

MERCY TO THE GENTILES

“And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to Thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto Thy name”—V. 9. Even though Jesus was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, God’s salvation was also for the Gentiles. Paul quoted four texts from the things that had been written for our comfort and hope. The Jews could glorify God for His truth and promises; the Gentile for His mercy.

Paul’ first quotation is from David. See Psa. 18:49 where it is written that David and, no doubt, in the Spirit of

Christ, said he would give things among the Gentiles. The quotations are from the three great divisions of the Old Testament—the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms.

“And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people”—V. 10. See Deut. 32:43, where Moses exhorts the Gentiles to rejoice with His people. The people were the Israelitish saints. In the early church, there were many congregations made up of Jewish and Gentile Christians, rejoicing in Christ.

“And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud Him, all ye people”—V. 11. The writer of Psa. 117:1 told the nations to praise the Lord, and the people (Jews) to laud Him. In these texts, there is a union of worship among the people of such great distinctions in their race, backgrounds and religions, but they are now made one in Christ.

“And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust”—V. 12. Isaiah is permitted to add his prophecy that one shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in whom they can trust, or according to the Greek, hope.

There is a millennial forecast in this verse, as Christ’s time to reign over the Gentiles has not come yet. But we do not have to await the blessings of a kingdom and a reigning Christ, but can enjoy the personal Christ now by faith.

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost”—V. 13. Paul, after showing forth the blessings of God to both Jew and Gentile, bursts forth into a precious prayer.

“The God of hope” refers back to the word translated “Trust” in the foregoing verse. Prior to the intervention of God, men were in a hopeless state, but now there is good and solid hope through believing the promises of God.

“Fill you with joy and peace.” We have abundant reason to rejoice. Before God saved us, we had no solid reason

for lasting joy. “Peace” is of inestimable value! That is, the peace of God. This speaks of rest in Christ, not simply the state of being at ease that Satan would lull us into.

Then, God’s promises are so great, that Paul desired us to have such a comprehension of them that we would “Abound in hope.” That is, be possessed of a full sufficiency of hope, to have hope in full quantity. And to be sustained in such hope must be the work of the Holy Spirit. Oh, believer, swing out into the place of a full, buoyant hope and sustaining joy in Christ! This is God’s desire and will for the Christian; not a gloomy, self-occupied, introspective view, not a dread and foreboding, but a sweet victorious faith and outlook.

“And I my self also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another”—V. 14. Paul had spoken freely and boldly, as well as plainly, to the church at Rome. But he knew that they were able to receive it. They were full of knowledge and goodness and could admonish one another. Still, they deeply needed what Paul could impart to them.

“Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God”—V. 15. Even though he wrote boldly and freely, he wrote graciously. God had given him the grace to fill the great office of apostleship to the Gentiles. He had the right and authority from God to teach the Gentiles wherever they were. This is the grace he referred to in this verse.

to be continued

*Since Christ is the Way, we ought to walk in Him;
Since Christ is the Truth, we ought to trust in Him;
Since Christ is the Life, we ought to live in Him.*

A GOOD REPORT

by Wendy Bratt

As a Jewish woman, the Old Testament holds a great deal of meaning to me. I lived with my grandmother, who was orthodox. I was raised to believe that Jesus may have been a very nice man, “thank you very much, but I cannot hear anymore of this.” I began to wonder what it was to love God. I had a love for him, but somehow felt unfulfilled, as if there were something missing in Judaism. I married a non-Jewish man and became active in a Baptist Church. If someone had asked me if I was a Christian Jew, I probably would have said yes.

One evening I was standing around a piano with some other people and singing songs about Jesus. I began thinking, if only his name were something besides Jesus. This really made me wonder just what I was. Was I Jewish or was I a Christian. I went to the library and checked out a very Jewish book named the “Pentateuch and the Haftarahs.” I had read the Bible quite a bit, and knew a lot about the Lord, but hadn’t actually met Him as yet. As I read the “Pentateuch and Haftarahs,” I began to realize that the 53rd chapter of Isaiah was missing. I began to wonder just what that chapter said. Why wasn’t it there? I was all alone in my bedroom when I began to read this, but was so aware of the presence of the Lord. It was as if He were looking over my shoulder and saying, “My Child, this is what I have waited for you to see.” Please read this chapter. It was at this time, that I asked Jesus to come into my life to be my Lord and my Savior.

After that, the Lord gave me scripture after scripture in the Old Testament showing me that He is exactly who He says He is. The Lord, the Son of the Living God. My Messiah.

The following are just a few more prophecies regarding the Messiah (Jeshua in Hebrew):

<u>Prophecy</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Fulfillment</u>
1. Born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matt. 1:18-25
2. Born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matt. 2:1-6
3. Date of birth	Daniel 9:24-25	See living Bible Our calendar
4. Healing wounds/ Sorrows & why he healed	Isaiah 53	The whole New Test.
5. Jerusalem entry	Zach. 9:9	Matt. 21:1-9
6. Betrayal	Psalm 41:9	Matt. 26:14-16 & 47-50
7. Death by crucifix	Psalm 22	This was not even thought of as a means of death for another 700 yrs.
8. Bones not to be broken	Ex. 12:46	None of Jesus bones were broken for the sacrifice
9. Sacrifice for sin	Isaiah 53	Jesus was the final sacrifice for our sins
10. Mourn the one	Zach 12:10	Jesus pierced side they have pierced
11. Jesus triumphant entry into Jerusalem	Zach. 9:9	Jesus lowly riding a donkey's colt
12. Raised from the dead	Psalm 16:10	Acts 2:22-32

David could not have been talking about himself. God used David many times to declare His word that was to come.

TAKE YOUR CARES TO JESUS

**Take your cares to Jesus—
He is always there;
Do not be discouraged—
He always answers prayer.
Tell Him of your problems;
Do not worry or fret—
He is always faithful;
He will answer yet.**

**When troubles mount up
As high as the sky,
When things go wrong
And you wonder why—
God has the answer:
He's working for good.
It will turn out right
Like He said it would.**

**There is never a trial
Or ever a care
But He is with you
Your burden to bear.
The night may be dark
But wait for the day—
He's right beside you
All of the way.**

—Beula Clark

Moderation

Part 5

Doug Delhay

Philippians 4:5 - *Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.*

The statement that has guided us through this study (**The fact of Christ in us changes everything about us**) beckons us to the Apostle Paul's "classroom" that we would gain an accurate understanding of the truth that it contains. Though the **fact of Christ in us** contains every provision possible for us to be fully transformed by the renewing of our minds according to the purpose of God (Romans 12:2), we must also experience the truth it contains by directly applying it to our own lives and choices. Paul's "classroom" is a perfect blend of lecture and lab time that we might develop both knowledge and skill.

In the last segment, we concluded (with Paul) that there is but one overriding will of God toward the church in this dispensation, and that it has been revealed to the Apostle Paul and manifested in his life. There is a time for study and there is a time for the application of the studied topic, and this is a pointed purpose of Paul's calling. 1 Timothy 1:11-16 reads, *"According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ*

Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.” (Emphasis is the author’s)

The moderation of Paul’s life was to serve as an example to believers in his day and to every believer since that day for as long as there are those who will come to believe. The transforming effect that the presence of Christ in us is to have on our lives is to be all-consuming, even to the point where we agree that *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”* (Galatians 2:20). To understand this, Paul takes us through the transforming process he went through to arrive at this radical, unworldly view of the purpose of human existence.

In Philippians 3:1-3, Paul uses the topic of circumcision to launch us into the heavenly realm of the will of God in our lives. The literal, culturally motivated circumcision of the flesh is of absolutely no spiritual consequence, so that is not the topic. As we understand from Galatians 5:6 and 6:14-15, circumcision as an evidence of some spiritual standing with God is also devoid of merit. What is of utmost importance is that we are no longer born only of the flesh, but also of the Spirit. What is also of utmost importance is that we do not seek to labor in spiritual matters by the flesh, but by the Spirit. When it comes to the purpose of God in our lives, the flesh does not serve as an originating source for anything good or spiritual. The body is to be viewed as a temporal vessel that is there only to serve the eternal contents. The work that the

Lord is performing in our lives requires that we be in the flesh, but gains nothing from the capabilities of the flesh. Thus, the picture of circumcision; there is necessary flesh and unnecessary flesh. The unnecessary is to be removed and discarded, and that which remains is needful only for non-fleshly reasons while bearing the evidence of being altered for reasons having nothing to do with the flesh. Spiritual forces are intended to intrude into the realm of the flesh leaving the scars of a changed destiny.

Paul's word to the Philippians, "*For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*", declares that those who manifest the true meaning of circumcision are those who worship God by spiritual means, rejoicing only in the hope that is so graciously provided through the supply of the anointed Savior, and derive no positive persuasion, no peace or conciliatory overtones, no reinforcing evidence, or any kind of assurance whatsoever from the actions, manifestations, or feelings of their mortal body. True worship of God is a spiritual exercise employing spiritual means by a spiritual being. The words of Jesus to the Samaritan woman by the well still stand as pure and powerful testimony to the entire human race, "*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*" (John 4:24). And it is for these individuals that the Father seeks until this very day.

Even as Paul serves fully as an example for believers, his life prior to conversion (as Saul) also embodies the acme of religious achievement by the flesh. If anyone through the efforts of the flesh could have attained effectual worship of God, Paul states that he could even more so. In Philippians 3:4-6, he lists his credentials, even as he professed before the Jews angered by his presence in the temple in Acts 22:1-5. He

proclaims in both texts that he had been nurtured “*according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God,*” accomplishing all that anyone could expect of a faithful Jewish man. And to what end did all of the zealous efforts of his religiously trained flesh bring him? He was brought into complete, absolute contrariness with the One whom he thought he could please. All of his attainments, studies, struggles, labors and intelligence were gathered in battle array against Jesus and the worshippers who were so beloved of the Father. He was blameless in the eyes of man (which is the very best that any religion can accomplish), but guilty in the eyes of God.

Paul’s righteousness according to the Jewish religion of his time heightens the symbolism and lessons of his conversion as recorded in Acts 9:1-19. What was esteemed of man was cast into the dust; what was enlightened was found to be blind; what was strong was made weak; what was of great value was found to be great spiritual poverty; knowledge became foolishness; all purpose came to a shameful end.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.” (Proverbs 9:10). To Ananias was given the task of informing Paul that he was indeed a chosen vessel unto God, however, this place was not based upon the accomplishments of his flesh (of which he had been so proud), but upon the grace and calling of God. The Lord had a purpose to fulfill in Paul’s earthly vessel, but the unnecessary flesh needed to be cut away. He was to be filled with the glorious treasure by which Christians from that point forward would be eternally refreshed, but the work and glory were to be entirely the Lord’s.

Saul was removed, Paul was born.

Trip to Israel – 2006

By Bonnie Richards

As we traveled toward Jerusalem from Beit-Shean, we were at one point 700+ft. below sea level and had a view of the Dead Sea. We are “going up” to Jerusalem, literally. Its elevation is 3500 ft. above sea level, on Mt. Moriah where the Temple stood.

All through this area we saw many sheep and goat flocks with their Bedouin shepherds. Roadside signs read “Camels beside road.” the Bedouin camps along the way appeared to have only tattered covering of protection. Their tent openings always faced Mecca and we could sometimes look into the tents. In many of them TV’s were on, generators in use. They appear to be underprivileged people, and receive money from the Israeli government as well as handouts from the US. In reality some of them drive very expensive cars, have cell phones and much wealth. It is their culture to live in this way as they have for centuries. A white flag above a tent means they have a marriageable daughter - inquire within.

Approaching Jerusalem the skyline showed three spires amid the city: one Jewish, one Muslim, and one Christian. At the “Jerusalem Promenade” the panoramic view was very impressive. It is no small city. “Zion” has been used through time to designate the sites within the old city of Jerusalem, built by King David. Now it is primarily referring to the ridge that overlooks the southwest corner of the Old City.

The Inbal Hotel at Jerusalem was our base for the next 5 days. It needs to be mentioned that the food which we were served was the most delicious imaginable. Many remarked about the vegetables and fruit being especially good (products of Israel). The meats were always “kosher” but we were served pork at no time. The very best meal of the week would be

served on Friday evenings with the Jews dining area away from the rest of the diners. The Shabbat, or Sabbath meant that the non-Jews could not use certain elevators in the Hotel because they were “clean” for the Jews use only and the occupants would not be defiled by being touched.

As we traveled the highways of Israel, we saw hundreds of groves of trees: Olive, bananas, dates, nuts, oranges, fig and others we could not identify. All appeared carefully tended and monitored. They now have many food exports.

The Garden of Gethsemane is just across the brook Kidron from the temple site. In distance from the gate of the temple mount it is less than 1/2 mile (or a Sabbath day’s journey). *John 8:1,2 “Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives, and early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down and taught them.”* Jesus often visited this Garden to pray. Prior to 1948 an Englishman, Charles Gordon, purchased the site from the Palestinians before the British occupation ended. Because of his foresight, we could visit the site without hindrance. Today the area is controlled by the “Palestinians,” so our buses could not park longer than to let us disembark. The streets outside the garden fence are unkept. I realized as a group of their high-school age young people passed us on the street, that none would make eye contact with the Americans. I felt that they were resentful that we were there.

Some of the trees of the garden were huge, one especially is believed may have been there at the time of Jesus. Many of our group dispersed in the Garden area to pray near the trees. I saw an unmarked open grave that had a view of human bones inside. It was fenced off, but no clue as to who may have been buried there or how long ago.

Olive trees have always been a very important crop. Olives have many uses for the people. In many places archeologists have found ancient olive oil presses. Olives were and are a major staple for the people. The 1st press of the olives

was for the temple service anointing of priests; the 2nd for eating, the 3rd for soap, and the 4th for lighting homes.

The Mt. of Olives is heavily wooded, the place where tradition says Jesus ascended. *Acts 1:9,11* “***And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight.***” “***Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olives, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath Day’s journey.***” The importance of this place is shown in *Zech. 14:4* “***and His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.***”

As our bus drove along Kidron Valley, I viewed an area that appeared to be piles of stone. I learned that it is the oldest continuously used cemetery in the world, and is on both sides of the Kidron valley. It was the manner of burial to cover the grave with large stones. Contained here are Muslim, Christian and Jewish graves. New graves can be found near graves dug over 4,000 years ago. Being buried there assures them to be as close as possible to the Temple Mount on Judgment Day. *Verses 4,5* say “***Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.’ ‘Thus says the Lord God to these bones, ‘Behold I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life.’***” These words are both figurative and literal, speaking of the nation as well as the individuals.

At a site called “The Tomb of David” there is a room representative of the Upper Room of the Last Supper. That was the place where Jesus appeared to the disciples after his resurrection. It is not the actual location, but represents an upper room of Jesus’ time. When we arrived there, a group of Muslims were praying - and they stayed long. (They are now claiming this to be a “holy Muslim site” for some reason or

another. The real reason is to push out non-Muslims from being permitted here.) Our group began singing the hymn “Amazing Grace” after waiting for some time. This was not spontaneous, but on the itinerary to happen at this site. Some of the Muslims were angered and one of them stopped our guide and was talking to her about our “disrespect” for them, when a group of 20+ Israeli soldiers walked into the room with their rifles hanging on their shoulders. The tension evaporated! God arranged the timing perfectly as the soldiers were apparently not aware of the situation as far as we could tell.

From there we went to Golgotha where we clearly saw the formation of a skull in the rocks. The three crosses are usually portrayed at the top of the hill, but this is not the way in which a crucifixion would have been carried out. Rather, they occurred at the foot of the hill where passers by would have the greatest impact of the event.

At the traditional place, “the Garden Tomb,” where Nicodemus and Joseph buried Jesus, we could enter to see the interior. It was divided into three areas where over time many members of a family might be laid. It consisted of a small chamber that would accommodate 10+ people standing, a depression to contain the recently deceased body, and another area for the permanent placement of bones of members of the family who died. There was a huge 2 ton round rock that could be rolled in place before the opening of the tomb. It would take many strong men to move the stone - impossible for the women who came on that day after the Sabbath.

to be continued

*The Lord is risen, is risen! Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice!
From the tomb in which men laid Him the stone is rolled
away,
And lo! the Christ is here in our midst today.*

From Our Mail Box

David and Jo Ann Cloud

P O Box 181, Pharr, TX 78577-0181



Ps 84:11, “For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. An abundance of rain: with the blessing has come great inconveniences. Pola (living in Mexico) woke up to knee-high water in all her house. She lives alone, - nearly blind - was quite overwhelmed. The water overturned small tables and got in the drawers where sheets and other material were stored. The mattress is all wet and will need replacing, also the refrigerator. We brought her to our home, with most of the wet bed clothing etc., which the wife is washing and drying.

Several family members who would not speak to Sis Lupe, and wanted nothing to do with the “tortilla house” have attended one or more of the services. Our 34 nights of meetings advanced to 40. They were a real blessing: even with only a few outside speakers. We were constantly giving thanks for the 40 - 80 in attendance.

The stress test in late June prompted the cardiologist to ask for a test of the heart work and bypasses done in 98. The valve is working perfectly, He told Jo Ann that it looked like the bypasses were made a few days before. Now I have to learn to breathe properly and regain all my strength for working. He has enabled us to keep serving others in all the activities related to the “food pantry” and other “helping hand” areas.

Our prayer requests are “too numerous to mention,” but they are not beyond His desire, ability, authority or willingness. It is a thrill to see Scripture being fulfilled before our eyes. The end result will see our glorious Lord taking complete control over His own land and people: by fighting in defense of them.

In HIM abiding and confiding