

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

July 2000

"Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Philemon 1:3) I pray that the Lord is richly blessing each one of you. The Lord has been working mightily recently. God's Word is spreading far and wide, and I am thrilled to behold it. The Arizona camp meeting was wonderful. Please read the report on page six. Next month we will again continue with our Questions and Answers section. You have been sending us some excellent questions. Thank you all for your participation. Please plan to attend the West Virginia camp meeting on August 8-12. You can read more about it on page eight. I pray this issue of *Present Truth* will be a real blessing to you. I am looking forward to seeing you at camp meeting.

OVERCOMING SIN

Sin is a problem that has plagued this world ever since Eve ate of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. The Bible is clear that *"the wages of sin is death."* (Romans 6:23) Jesus came into this world to save His people from the penalty of sin and its power. Of Jesus it was said, *"he shall save his people from their sins."* (Matthew 1:21) Notice the verse does not say, *"he shall save his people in their sins,"* but *"from their sins."* God is not only able to deliver us from the penalty of sin but He is also able to keep us from committing sin in the future. Jude wrote, *"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."* (Jude 1:24) God is able to keep us from falling into sin.

Some people claim that it is not possible for a Christian to stop sinning, but Jesus said, *"with God all things are possible."* (Matthew 19:26) He also said, *"all things are possible to him that believeth."* (Mark 9:23) And Paul said, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* (Philippians 4:13) This language is all inclusive. To make the claim that Christians cannot stop sinning is to say that Satan forces us to sin. Sin is a result of being tempted to do wrong. *"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."* (James 1:14, 15) To be tempted is not sin. It is only when we allow that temptation to take root that it becomes a sin.

Satan is able to tempt us to do wrong, but never, under any circumstance, is he able to force us to sin. It is only when we exercise our will and make the decision to yield to that temptation that we commit sin. God has informed us, through the apostle Paul, that He makes a way of escape out of every temptation. Paul wrote, *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."* (1 Corinthians 10:13) God has made a way of escape out of every temptation. That means that no matter how severe the temptation, no matter how likely a person is to yield to sin, there has never been, nor ever will be, a time when Satan forces an individual to sin.

Therefore it is altogether possible for God's people to stop sinning. In fact John wrote, *"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not."* (1 John 2:1)

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Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, “go, and sin no more.” (John 8:11) My friends, surely Jesus would not have instructed this lady not to sin anymore if it was impossible for her to do it. Certainly it could not have been done on her own, but with God’s help, “*all things are possible.*” Jesus said to a man whom He had healed, “Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” (John 5:14) God often asks us to do difficult things, but be assured He never asks us to do the impossible.

IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A THIEF TO QUIT STEALING?

If it were true that it is not possible for Christians to stop sinning, then we must say that it is not possible for the thief to give up stealing, or the drunkard to give up alcohol, or the murderer to give up murdering. Yet we have abundant examples of people who have done just that. How can we explain this if it is not possible for a Christian to stop sinning? Sin is, and always has been, a choice made of our own free will. And if it is an action of our own free will nobody can ever truthfully claim that it is not possible for a Christian to stop sinning.

Some people wish to do only the least amount necessary in order to accomplish a particular goal. Some wish to enter heaven by the skin of their teeth. Is this the attitude a Christian should have? Have you ever had a child, or known someone else, who is determined to do the least amount possible to get by? Suppose you have this type of person as an employee and you ask them to mop a very dirty floor. They take out the mop, dip it in water, wring it out, and quickly run it across the floor. If you know anything about mopping you know that this is a very poor way of doing the job. Yet they did do just enough to be able to tell you “I mopped the floor.” This is the type of attitude I think of when I hear a Christian say, “We can never stop sinning anyway, so we might as well not even try.” Is this the type of attitude a Christian should have? Should we want to just barely make it into heaven? I don’t know about you, but I want to make my Father in heaven as happy as I possibly can. I want to serve Him and please Him to the best of my ability.

Now that we know that sin is a real problem in our lives and that God has provided a way in which we can overcome sin, let us take a closer look at what the Bible says about this vital subject. Will anyone ever overcome sin?

THE SEAL OF GOD

The book of Revelation informs us of some of the events that will take place just prior to the second coming of Christ. John wrote, “*I saw four angels standing on the*

*four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed **an hundred and forty and four thousand** of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” (Revelation 7:1-4)*

Right before the second coming of Christ God will send an angel to seal the servants of God in their foreheads. Once this seal has been given nothing is able to harm those who have been sealed. John wrote, “*And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but **only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.**” (Revelation 9:3, 4)*

It is obvious that those people who receive the seal of God are alive during the last moments of this earth’s history when the mark of the beast has been instituted, for they are protected from the last plagues. There will be seven last plagues poured out on all those who receive the mark of the beast, but those who receive the seal of God will be protected. John wrote of the pouring out of the first plague, “*there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.*” (Revelation 16:2)

It is imperative therefore that we are among the group of people who receive the seal of God, and not among the group of people who receive the mark of the beast.

THE FATHER’S NAME IN THEIR FOREHEADS

Concerning those who receive the seal of God, John wrote, “*And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads.... And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.*” (Revelation 14:1, 5) The 144,000 who receive the seal of God are said to have the Father’s name written in their foreheads. They are also said to be without fault and without any guile, or deceit, in their mouths. Do you suppose they had a big tattoo of God’s name on their foreheads? I certainly doubt it. The verse says that the Father’s name is written *in* their foreheads, not *on* them. This seal is not given as a visible mark for men to behold, but as a sign to the angels that

they are not to be hurt by the seven last plagues. The word *name* in the Bible often has the meaning of a person's character. The name Jacob means supplanter, or deceiver. God changed Jacob's name from Jacob to Israel because his character had changed. Israel means "one who as a prince prevails with God" (*John Gill's Expositor* on Genesis 32:28)

For a person to have the Father's name in their forehead means to have the Father's character reproduced in their lives as Revelation 14:5 reveals. These people who receive the seal of God are said to be without fault and without any deceit in their mouth. The very same description is given of the remnant of God's people. Notice what Zephaniah wrote about them. "*The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.*" (Zephaniah 3:13) God's last-day people are often referred to as the remnant. John wrote, "*And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*" (Revelation 12:17) He also wrote, "*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*" (Revelation 14:12)

God's last-day people, known as the remnant, or the 144,000 (whether that is a literal number or symbolic, I cannot say), will keep the commandments of God and they will not do iniquity or sin. Certainly you can see that God will have no problem putting His seal of approval upon people like that.

This group of people will be prepared to meet their God. They will triumphantly proclaim, "*Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.*" (Isaiah 25:9) The proclamation in Revelation 22:11 will have already been given. "*He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*" (Revelation 22:11) Each person's case will have been settled at this point.

One group of people will have overcome sin. "*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.*" (Revelation 3:21) Another group of people will have chosen to cling to their sins, and they will be destroyed by the brightness of His coming. "*Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.*" (Isaiah 13:9) If you are still

sinning when the Lord returns, you will be destroyed. Do you remember what Jesus said when He spoke of His coming? He said, "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 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.*" (Matthew 7:21-23)

CHRIST COMES FOR A PURE CHURCH

As you can see, it is very clear that in the last days, when Christ comes for His people, He will be coming for those who have overcome sin; those who "keep the commandments of God." I want to be in that number, how about you? You *can* be one of them, brothers and sisters. The biggest obstacle that keeps people from overcoming sin is the idea that it is not required of them. My friends, this is a sad delusion. Jesus said, through the prophet John, "*Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*" (Revelation 22:14) Keeping God's commandments is not only possible, but necessary, to be part of God's remnant people who are prepared to meet Christ when He comes the second time.

With this brief presentation of the necessity of overcoming sin before the Lord returns, we can now enter into the study of *how* to overcome sin.

HOW CAN SIN BE OVERCOME?

Paul wrote, "*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*" (1 Corinthians 10:12, 13) God knows how much temptation we are able to bear, and promises that He will never allow us to be tempted above what we can bear. He will always make a way of escape. Shortly we will examine what that way of escape is that God has provided.

Can Satan force us to sin? No. Satan cannot force us to sin. We have to make the choice to yield ourselves to Satan before we sin. Rather than yielding to Satan we must learn to yield ourselves to God, and allow Him to give us the strength to overcome temptation.

WHAT IS TEMPTATION?

Let's look at a plain Bible definition of temptation: "*Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his*

own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1:14, 15) To be tempted is to be drawn away of your own lust and enticed. Is it a sin to be tempted? No. It only becomes a sin when you allow lust to conceive in your mind.

For example, suppose a man is walking through the checkout line in a grocery store. Inevitably there are several magazines in the racks that have half naked women on the cover. The man glances around, and notices one of these magazines. There is something in him that is drawn to continue looking at this picture; however, he understands that it is wrong to continue looking at the picture, and immediately turns away. Realizing his own weakness, and the danger he is in, he calls upon the Lord to deliver him from this temptation. And immediately the Lord gives him the victory he so longs for, and draws his mind to focus on eternal things.

Was it a sin for the man to have glanced at the picture to begin with (in this case we will say he did it innocently), and had some longing to continue looking at it? No. He was tempted by being drawn to do that which was wrong to do, but this temptation was not a sin. It would have become a sin had he stared at the picture and allowed his mind to wonder on forbidden territory. This is "*when lust hath conceived, and it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*" (James 1:15)

HOW TEMPTATION WORKS

Understanding how temptation works is necessary for us to know how to overcome when we are tempted. There are three basic responses that the man in the previous example could have had.

1) He could have stared at the picture and allowed his mind to wander on forbidden territory. This would plainly be a sin. "But I—I say to you, that every one who is looking on a woman to desire her, did already commit adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:28 Young's Literal Translation) It is not the looking at a woman that is a sin, or even the drawing that a man has within him toward a woman that is a sin, but when a man looks upon a woman for the purpose of lusting after her, this is a sin.

2) He could have decided that it was wrong to continue looking at the picture and chosen to look away, trying to force himself to think about something else, thus striving in his own strength.

3) He could have recognized the sin in continuing to look at the picture, and immediately turned away. Realizing his own weakness, and the danger he is in, he could call upon the Lord to deliver him from this temptation.

Which of these responses would be the correct response? Obviously number 3. When we are being tempted we must call upon the Lord and He will be right there to give us the help we so desperately need. The main point of this study is to emphasize the importance of immediately calling upon the Lord for strength when we are being tempted.

CALL UPON THE LORD FOR HELP

When we are being tempted, we must call upon the Lord for deliverance, and He will come and help us. Jesus said, "*I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*" (John 14:18) Paul wrote, "*For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour* ["to run to the cry of those in danger, to help"—*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*] them that are tempted." (Hebrews 2:18) Jesus Himself has suffered being tempted, therefore He knows exactly how to help us when we are being tempted, and will come when we cry unto Him. For "*greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.*" (1 John 4:4)

We are continually assaulted with temptations, but praise God that we have a High Priest in heaven, interceding in our behalf, who knows what we are going through. "*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*" (Hebrews 4:15, 16) Christ was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin, therefore let us come boldly to the throne when we are being tempted, and He will quickly come to our aid.

God says to each of us now, "*Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*" (Psalm 50:15) "*He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.*" (Psalm 91:15) David wrote, "*Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD, held me up.*" (Psalm 94:17, 18) The Lord will help us when we are being tempted if we call upon Him, and do not rely on our own strength. How can we expect to be victorious if we do not call upon the Lord? We are powerless before Satan's attacks without God's help.

"*(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*" (2 Corinthians 10:4, 5) We do not fight against

Satan's temptations with swords and spears. These are useless in our battle with sin. Our weapons are mighty only through God. If we do not call upon Him when we are tempted, we will not overcome. It would be as pointless as facing an entire army alone, with a sword made of paper.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might [not the power of your own might]. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.” (Ephesians 6:10-14)

Notice the first piece of armour we are to put on, *“girt your loins about with truth.”* Does this mean we are to put a belt on that has truth written on it? No. We are to have our minds filled and surrounded with truth. Jesus said, *“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”* (John 17:17) Study the Word of God, so you know of a certainty the words of truth. *“Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?”* (Proverbs 22:20, 21) Another characteristic of God's last day people is that they speak the truth, and only the truth. For this to happen they must be very familiar with the truth.

ANALYZE YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE

Examine yourself to see if you are calling upon the Lord when you are tempted. When the Lord sees you call upon Him when you are being tempted, He sees that you do not want to yield to this sin, and He will honor your cry and give you the victory. If you do not call upon Him when you are being tempted, the Lord can see that you still have some desire to yield to that sin and He will not give you the victory.

We need to despise sin so much that we would be willing to die rather than sin. Jesus had this experience, and He was put to death. He would not yield in any point to the temptations of the Devil. Jesus *“loved righteousness, and hated iniquity.”* (Hebrews 1:9) We must have this same hatred for sin. Paul wrote, *“Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”* (Hebrews 12:4) But there will be a time when God's people will be required to

resist unto blood in striving against sin. *“For sin shall not have dominion over you.”* (Romans 6:14)

SIN IS A CHOICE

We are never forced to sin. Sin begins in our thoughts, therefore in our thoughts we must fight the battle immediately when temptation comes. We must choose to serve God with all our hearts. *“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”* (Joshua 24:15)

“See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; ... I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.” (Deuteronomy 30:15, 19) God gives us the choice of who we will serve, but He strongly encourages us to choose the good. God loves us so much that he wants each one of us to be saved. *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”* (2 Peter 3:9)

Paul gave us good counsel when he wrote, *“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”* (Romans 13:14) We are commanded not to make any provision for the flesh. Do not do anything that would make it easy to fall into sin. Never go out of the way to put yourself into a position that may cause you to fall into sin.

BURN BRIDGES BEHIND YOU

I heard of a man who used to be an alcoholic. He had given up drinking for quite some time and had discarded all of his bottles of alcohol—all except one. He would carry this bottle with him under the seat of his car. One of his friends stumbled across it while looking through his car one day. Shocked, his friend questioned him as to why he would have such a thing in his car. The man replied, *“I carry it around just in case I need it some time.”* This man had stopped drinking for quite some time, but was not sure he really wanted to give it up for good.

Are we like this man when it comes to sin in our lives? Are we making provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof?

I read of an army general who went out to fight a battle. Before he could face the enemy he had to march his army over a bridge spanning a deep chasm. After marching his army over the bridge, and going over himself, he

burned the bridge behind them, thus making any retreat impossible. This gave the army the increased desire to win the battle, for they had no way of escape. Thus the enemy was defeated.

Are we burning the bridges behind us in our lives? Or do we have some reserve about giving our lives to the Lord completely? God says, *“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”* (Jeremiah 29:13)

Paul wrote, *“If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God,*

they are the sons of God.” (Romans 8:13, 14) Every decision we make, for good or evil, we are either standing for God, or for the Devil. Let us follow after the Spirit that we may live. *“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”* (Galatians 5:16)

I pray that the Lord will guide you as you study and follow Him. Again I must emphasize the importance of calling upon the Lord when you are being tempted, and He will help you and deliver you out of your troubles—not sometimes, but every time. This is the way of escape God has provided out of every temptation. Praise Him for His goodness.

Arizona Camp Meeting Report

by Lynnford Beachy

The Arizona camp meeting in Wilhoit, Arizona was a wonderful experience for my wife and me. The theme of the camp meeting was “Walking in His Footsteps.” We were daily confronted with the urge to make further steps in our Christian experience. We enjoyed the challenge and appreciated the time we were able to spend with the Lord and His people. Every message was focused on practical issues in our lives. It was truly a blessing. I really appreciated the opportunity to meet new people with whom I had only corresponded in the past. For those of you who were not able to make it, or did not even attempt to come, I am truly sorry for the blessings you forfeited by your absence. I pray that you will be able to come to the next camp meeting in West Virginia. Until you have been to one of these camp meetings you have no idea of how uplifting they can be. The fellowship with like-minded brethren, with their gentle urging to continue on, is a real blessing. Solomon wrote, *“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their*

labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.” (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10) I pray that you will consider these verses as you are making plans, or neglecting to make plans, to attend the next camp meeting.

Benjamin Vela from Miami, Florida shared some powerful messages with us from the Word of God. His messages were focused on the eight laws of health, presented from a unique perspective—tying them in with our spiritual needs. I learned many new things from these meetings. Benjamin is a dynamic speaker who preaches with enthusiasm. He also has the talent of presenting the messages in a way that makes everyone know he has a genuine love for them.

Willis Smith from Cleveland, Ohio shared some very thought-provoking messages from the Word of God. I was challenged to examine my own life as the Bible standard was lifted up. Before each message Willis shared some excellent poems he had written that applied to the message he was going to share. Willis’ messages were filled with testimonies of everyday experiences where the Lord had worked in His life. I especially enjoyed the very appropriate message of “The Golden Rule,” which helped us to examine how we treat our fellow man. Jesus said, *“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”* (John 13:34) My friends, this is truly a high calling. Let us



Willis Smith telling it like it is



Group Picture

consider this in our daily lives and not love in word only, but manifest that love in our actions as well. Willis has a good way of making his messages very understandable and practical. This is very necessary in his work in prison ministry and with the down-and-out people on the streets in Cleveland, Ohio.

Malcolm McCrillis shared some very helpful insights into proper Christian music and, more specifically, proper music to be used in our churches. Malcolm has a deep appreciation for music and an ear to easily pick out the slightest variation from the correct notes in music—something I am very poor at doing. It is not difficult for each of us to quickly discern when the words of a song are not appropriate to fill the minds of Christians, but it is sometimes difficult for us to discern whether the way the musical instruments are used is pleasing to God. Malcolm shared some principles to help us recognize whether the music behind the lyrics is pleasing to God. If it makes you feel like dancing it is more than likely inappropriate to be played in our churches. On Sabbath Malcolm shared a timely message with us entitled, “If Not Now, When?” urging us to get ready to meet the Lord now rather than waiting until it is too late.



Malcolm and his wife Sandy

Richard Stratton shared some wonderful thoughts on faith. He also shared some encouraging thoughts on how we are fearfully and wonderfully made, reminding us to keep our body in good shape.

I spoke on the love of the Father in giving up His Son to die for us. I also shared a study on salvation, laying out some basic principles of salvation, as well as a study on the importance of having an assurance of your salvation. In addition, I shared a study on what the Bible says about how Christians should communicate with one another, especially on matters that would urge our brothers and sister to make forward steps in their Christian experience, and some studies on having a closer walk with the Lord and spending more time in fellowship with Him and His Son.



Cheryl Bonner singing

Each morning from 6:30-7:00 there was a time for personal testimonies. Benjamin Vela, Willis Smith, Malcolm McCrillis, Lonnie and Abigail Davis, Richard and Bonnie Stratton, Lynnford Beachy, Steve Sutton, and

Lea Hay each shared their testimony of how the Lord worked in their lives. It was a blessing to get to know the background of each of these people and behold the mighty works of God.

Of all the people who came to the camp meeting there was one individual who, by far, traveled the farthest to get there. A young lady by the name of Lea Hay took a plane from Australia just to come to camp meeting and meet some of the people in America. Praise the Lord for such dedication.

On the last day of the camp meeting a dear sister from Colorado entered into the watery grave of baptism. We praise the Lord for her commitment to serve Him. The camp meeting ended with testimonies from everyone who attended, sharing how the Lord had worked in their lives and how the camp meeting had blessed them.

I am certainly grateful to the Lord for allowing me to be able to fellowship with God’s people at the Arizona camp meeting. I wish to personally thank each of you who came to the camp meeting, for it would not have been the same without you.

After our camp meeting last September, in southern Illinois, I left proclaiming that it was the best camp meeting I had ever attended. (I have attended about fifteen since I became a Christian in 1991.) I can no longer say that the Illinois camp meeting was the best I have attended. Now the last Arizona camp meeting was the best one I have ever attended, primarily because of the deep experience I had with the Lord there and the wonderful fellowship. One thing different about this last Arizona camp meeting, from all the others I have attended, is that there was not even one Bible study focusing on the truth about God. This is good and bad. Good because it gave us more time to focus on other areas which we needed to learn about. Bad because there was nobody there who was not already familiar, and in agreement, with this message. Some people have accused us of harping on one issue all the time and becoming unbalanced. Anyone who attended the Arizona camp meeting would certainly know that we have a much wider perspective than that.



Youth hike

Again, I wish to urge you to attend the next camp meeting here in West Virginia. You have no idea of what blessings and advancements in your spiritual life you will forfeit if you do not attend. I will see you at camp meeting.



West Virginia Camp Meeting August 8-12



Smyrna Gospel Ministries wishes to invite all who are interested in preparing for the return of the Lord to attend camp meeting this August 8-12 at the Smyrna Chapel in West Virginia. We believe that this is going to be one of the best camp meetings the movement has ever had, so plan now to bring your Bibles and a cheerful heart!

We will be feasting upon God's Word, having special music, testimonies, and great fellowship. We are also planning to have communion during the camp meeting. David Clayton, Gary Richmond, Howard Williams, Ben Vela, Arthan Wright, Willis Smith, and Lynnford Beachy are some of the speakers currently scheduled.

The first meeting will be Tuesday evening, August 8. Each day will begin with an early morning devotional. Then there will be a morning meeting, a midmorning meeting, an afternoon meeting, and an evening meeting. Time will be provided in the afternoon for nature hikes and other activities.

This is a *camp* meeting. We do not have cabins or rooms available. However, plenty of camping space is available. Smyrna will have some tents and camping supplies for those who do not have and cannot afford to purchase them. The supply is limited so if you need to use a tent, camp stove, etc., please request early. Showers with hot and cold water will be available. Don't forget items such as tents, bedding, flashlights, food, toiletries, insect repellent, modest casual and Sabbath clothes.

While there is room for RV's, we do not have hook-ups. RV's will need to be self-contained. For those who wish, there are motels in the area. The nearest motels are: Pocahantas Motel, (304) 436-2250; Woody's Motel, (304) 732-6540; The Cow Shed, (304) 732-7000; Twin Falls State Park Resort, (304) 294-4000

All campers will need to be responsible for their own food. Meals will not be served. For those who use ice chests, we will attempt to make ice available. Some health food items will also be made available for purchase by Sister Gina Campbell who will be bringing some things from her health food store. You may call Gina ahead to let her know what you might need, at: (901) 845-5859.

Parents will need to be responsible for their children at *all* times.

For further information you may write to Smyrna Gospel Ministries, HC 64 Box 128B, Welch, WV 24801.

Our phone number is: (304) 732-9204. You may also contact us by e-mail at: info@smyrna.org.

Directions:

Traveling from the North, Northeast, or Northwest: From Beckley traveling I-77 south, take the third Beckley exit #42 (Sophia - Mabscott). Follow Sophia - Rt. 16 south branch of exit. After entering Rt. 16 south (four-lane undivided road) go 3.7 miles and turn right on Rt. 54. Go 13.6 miles to Maben. Turn right on Rt. 97 and go 12 miles to Pineville. Upon entering Pineville you will stop at a "T" in the road. You will have a Baptist Church on the right and a BP service station on the left. Turn left and go .35 miles. Stop at four-way stop. Turn left and go .8 miles. Turn right on Rt. 16 south. Go 6 miles. Watch for Smyrna sign on the left side of the road. Turn right at the sign and go 7/10 mile. (These values have been measured and are very accurate.)

Traveling from the South, Southeast, or Southwest: From Wytheville, VA traveling I-77 north exit #1 upon entering West Virginia. Immediately after exiting the East River Mountain Tunnel, which is the second tunnel you will go through. Follow Route 52 north to Welch (about 40 miles). At Welch, follow signs for Route 16 North. Once leaving town, you will travel about nine miles. Watch for the Smyrna sign on the right side of the road. Turn left at the sign and go 7/10 mile. (These mileages are approximates and not exact values.) *Beware traveling through the towns of Northfork, Keystone, and Kimball.* To those who live in this area, they are well-known speed-traps!



List of Titles of Studies used in *Present Truth*

The following is a complete list of titles of every study that has ever been printed in Present Truth. All of these back issues are available upon request. Please contact us if you would like to receive any of these.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Date</u>
• To Work With the Underground in America	Doug Goslin	January 1998
• The Love of God	Lynnford Beachy	February 1998
• The Divinity of the Son of God	Doug Goslin	March 1998
• The Righteousness of God.	E.J. Waggoner	April 1998
Religious Freedom	Thomas Jefferson	
• Righteousness by Faith.	Lynnford Beachy	May 1998
• The Law of God	Lynnford Beachy	June 1998
Is the Sabbath part of the New Covenant.	Gary Lewellen	
• What the Bible Says About Hell	Lynnford Beachy	July 1998
• The Reward of the Wicked	Lynnford Beachy	August 1998
• The Plan of Redemption	Lynnford Beachy	September 1998
Satan's Convention	Author Unknown	
• The Truth About God	Lynnford Beachy	October 1998
• The Word of God	Lynnford Beachy	November 1998
Don't Trust in a Guide	Lynnford Beachy	
• The Formulation of the "Trinity" Doctrine	Lynnford Beachy	December 1998
• The Importance of Knowing the Truth About God	Lynnford Beachy	January 1999
• The Holy Spirit.	Lynnford Beachy	February 1999
The Promised Comforter	Doug Goslin	
The Year 2000 - Y2K and You.	Allen Stump	
• Which Bible?	Lynnford Beachy	March 1999
• The Nature of the Judgment	Stephen N. Haskell	April 1999
The Ministry of the Angels.	Lynnford Beachy	
Gospel Order	Allen Stump	
Letters		
The Parable of the Candles	Author Unknown	
• Prophecy (Part 1) An Exposition of Daniel 2.	James White	May 1999
• Prophecy (Part 2) An Exposition of Daniel 7.	James White	June 1999
• Repentance	from "Steps to Christ"	July 1999
• A Time to Choose	David Clayton	August 1999
• The Love That Overcomes the Mark of the Beast	Colin A. Gyles	September 1999
Satan's Deadliest Lie	David Clayton	
Letters from our Readers		
Side by Side	Author Unknown	

the Bible came to an end at the cross. The letters this man sent me, which he had written to his parents and the Amish are very well written. If I can get the author's permission I will include some of these letters in our newsletter in the future. *Editor*

"Would you please remove my name from your mailing list. Thanks." *Florida*

"You call your news letter "Present Truth." Unless these days are not "latter days" your title is a big lie! The Bible clearly reveals what the latter days gospel is that will be preached to all the world. Your "gospel" that you continue to preach is not the true gospel that will be preached to all the world in the latter days. Your gospel is "Past Truth" that is no longer needed in these days! The gospel you preach is an invalid gospel. (Because of your gospel have many become righteous as Christ? Do many stand as tall as Christ?) How could you be preaching the true latter days gospel when you don't even know what it is?... I also challenge you to show me just two who have accepted the gospel you preach who are conformed to the image of the Messiah.

"If ever you decide to print the truth about the present gospel that needs to be preached before the "end" to all the world, would you send it to me? If all you have is your invalid gospel, forget about sending anything..."

"Don't forget that I would like to be directed to several Christians who are complete in all things. I want to meet some who no longer fight for a right to continue to be sinners." *Indiana*

"Greetings of love in Christ. A friend I learned to know recently shared with me your publication, *Present Truth*. I feel I have profited from this paper and wish to receive it here. My full address will be on the envelope and at the end of this letter.

"I am seeking fellowship and want to know of any like people in Tennessee, especially if they are close to my area. In your April issue you offered to try to help such as me to contact others who are like believers. I will appreciate this help.

"In your April article on the 'Details of Salvation,' you make what I feel is a wrong statement when you say, 'Christ died in our place.' That is an innocent mistake that many make, but I believe if you consider it carefully you will see that could not be true. Christ died for us, or as a ransom for our sins as well as for all men. Nobody else could do that, so his death was not in anybody else's place. Are you acquainted with the song, 'There was no other good enough, To pay the price of sin?' That is the thought I am trying to clarify. If any person would die for his sins, he would be eternally separated from God and heaven. Again, Jesus' death was not like that. Let me know if you feel I err on this thought, and thanks again for your help in the Scriptures. God bless you." *Tennessee*

(I am not sure I understand the distinction made here between Christ dying for our sins and Christ dying in our place. A good point is brought out here regarding the penalty of sin. It is true that Christ was raised from the dead and it would seem that He did not really pay the penalty. The Bible says "That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead." (Acts 26:23) We know that others were raised from the dead before Christ, such as Moses, Lazarus, etc. The only way this verse could make sense is if Christ died the second death, which is the penalty of sin—see Revelation 20. Christ was the first and only One who was raised from the second death. So Christ definitely did pay the wages of sin. *Editor*)

"A very heartfelt and sincere thanks for your very generous gift of tracts to the Remnant Missionary Institute, Nigeria. The parcel arrived intact and we were able to distribute after going through each of the copies. I would like to assure you that the tracts will undoubtedly create awareness of the truth and will lead many to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus. Our people are of very good courage and have great faith in spite of the difficulties under which we operate. We can testify to the fact that it is during trial period that characters is developed.

"We in Remnant Ministry, are seeing prophecy being fulfilled before our eyes and we are confident the Lord will return soon. Please continue to keep us in your prayers.

"Enclosed is our quarterly publication maiden copy. Please inform us and advise us on future publications. We of course will love to be including current religious approaches in Nigeria and the world-over as we monitor situations in fulfillment of prophecies." *Nigeria*

"I have a few Unitarian friends that believe Father, Son and Holy Ghost are only one being. They believe that the Father is the mind; the Son, the body; and the Holy Ghost, the spirit. They say humans are made the same way, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; Mind, Body and Spirit. What would you say on this statement about humans?

"I had a wonderful Sabbath studying the May 2000 issue of *Present Truth*. What other publications do you have?..."

"I had another visit with my Unitarian friends and have more questions for you. Was Jesus part divine and part human? And did only his human part die? They say divinity can not die, therefore, only his human part died, and that was enough to save all the sinners.

"Please help me answer these questions from the Bible. At the same time they say God gave his life for us. But the Bible says: 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.'" *Tennessee*

(These are excellent questions. I will address some of these questions in next month's issue of *Present Truth*. *Editor*)

Present Truth

“Beloved of excellent service, with your due regards, and God’s love, we are more than grateful to inform you that your package sent to us has been received safely, date 1st April 2000, which contains tracts and one booklet. The entire congregation, students, Sunday school children, and staff both outside are appreciative of these tracts and send their millions of thanks to the entire brethren of Smyrna Gospel Ministries. We used the best stewardship in our distribution of these tracts to all congregations, outside souls, students, staff, newly converts 2 Timothy 2:15.

“It is always so exciting and spiritually uplifting when we distributed your materials, we rejoice when we see what God is doing in this area through your materials distributed. Many souls have been saved, many lives have been changed and many will come to know Jesus Christ to the glory of God, the Father. The total eternal impact of your labors there may never be completely understood in this life, we are thankful to God for you...

“We sincerely beg the entire members of Smyrna Gospel Ministries to kindly extend the hand of assistance once more with 100 Holy Bibles (KJV)... even old used ones, please send it to us. Two Bible colleges were demolished by Muslims. Their name and addresses are provided here and try to help them also with Bibles. They are Scripture

College of Nigeria, Rt 94 ESIO Street, Udung Uko Local Govt. Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, West Africa and New Lutheran Bible College, Eyotai Charity No 369, Oron, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, West Africa.

“Please if you cannot help us with all the Bibles, try to help us on whatsoever you have and send our address to other brethren to help us more Holy Bibles.” *Nigeria*

(If you would like to help out with this project, their address is Christ for the Lost Teaching Ministries, 6 Gospel Ave., Charity St., Eyotai, c/o Udung UKO PA ORON, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, West Africa. *Editor*)

“I am responding to your advertisement. Could you please send me a free booklet on last day events and Bible studies? Also could you please send me a pamphlet on What the Bible says about Hell and the Truth About God. I appreciate this very much.” *Ohio*

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Editor: Lynnford Beachy, HC 64 Box 128-B, Welch, WV 24801, phone: (304) 732-9204, e-mail: berean@present-truth.net.

Present Truth

HC 64 Box 128-B
Welch, West Virginia 24801
U.S.A.

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