

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

March 2009

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 1:7). I pray that the Lord is sustaining you through the unstable times that are upon us. Rejoice for any trials you are going through, for they are able to make you stronger, so you will be better prepared for what is coming upon this world. “Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets” (Luke 6:22, 23).

The camp meeting in Florida was wonderful! If you were not able to attend you missed a huge blessing and we hope you’ll plan on being there next year. Several people commented that it was the best camp meeting they had ever attended. The videos will be available soon. If you would like a copy please contact Eden House Publishing at (407) 291-9565.

What Happens After Death?

by Lynnford Beachy

Nearly everyone has asked this question, and how it is answered can have far-reaching implications. Some say death is a sleep, while others say it is the beginning of a new phase of life. Your answer to this question could determine whether you seek to converse with dead people. A venture that could cost you your eternal life, as it did for King Saul. We need to have a solid biblical answer to this question.

Any thorough study on death requires an examination of how the words *grave* and *hell* are used in the Bible.

The word *hell* is “derived from the Saxon *helan*, to cover; hence the covered or the invisible place” (*Revised Easton’s Bible Dictionary*). *Hell* means to cover, or hide.

In the King James Version of the Old Testament, originally written in Hebrew, there is only one word that was translated “hell.” This Hebrew word is שְׁאוֹל (*Sheol*), and is used a total of sixty-five times. *Sheol* is translated “hell” thirty-one times, “grave” thirty-one times, and “pit” three times.

The prevailing idea, at the time of the translation of the King James Version, about hell being a place where the wicked are being tormented right now, has influenced the translators’ interpretation of the Hebrew word *Sheol*. With the idea that hell is a place where the wicked are being tormented, the translators could not use the word *hell* to translate *Sheol* in every instance, for to do so would have put some of the most faithful servants of God in a place of torment.

For example, the first time the Hebrew word *Sheol* is used is in Genesis 37:35. “And all his [Jacob’s] sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be

comforted; and he said, *For I will go down into the grave [Sheol] unto my son* mourning. Thus his father wept for him” (Genesis 37:35). Jacob believed that his son Joseph had been killed by a wild beast and said that he would go down into *Sheol* unto his son. In this verse the translators used the word *grave* instead of *hell*. If they had used the word *hell*, it would have revealed that Jacob believed Joseph was in hell, and that he expected to go to hell when he died.

Another example of the translators using the word *grave* instead of *hell* is found in Job 14:13. “O that thou wouldst hide me in the **grave** [Sheol], that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me!” Job was experiencing much suffering, which finally caused him to ask God to let him go to *Sheol* where he knew he would have rest. “There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest” (Job 3:17).

If the translators had used the word *hell* in this case, the readers would soon learn that the *hell* of the Old Testament is not a place of torment, but a state of unconscious rest.

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Surely Job would not ask God to put him in a place where his suffering would be increased, and would last forever.

Another place where *Sheol* is defined for us is found in Ecclesiastes chapter 9. “For the living know that they shall die: but *the dead know not any thing*, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any things that is done under the sun.... Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; *for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave* [Sheol], *whither thou goest*” (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10).

This text sheds wonderful light on the Old Testament hell. We learn that there is no knowledge nor wisdom in hell, but those who are there “**know not any thing**.”

Sheol is the only hell of the Old Testament, it is the only hell that God’s people were told about for the first 4,000 years of history. *Sheol* is the only hell that the Jews were familiar with when Christ came. They understood that the wicked would be burned up in a lake of fire (Malachi 4:1), but this was not what they referred to as *Sheol*.

Hell in the New Testament

When we come to the New Testament, which was written in Greek, we find two Greek words that were translated “hell.” One of these Greek words is equivalent to the Old Testament *Sheol*. This is clear by the fact that Peter quoted in Acts 2:27 from a verse in the Old Testament.

“Because thou wilt not leave my soul in **hell** [Hades], neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Acts 2:27). Peter was quoting from Psalm 16:10. “For thou wilt not leave my soul in **hell** [Sheol]; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Psalm 16:10). When this Psalm was written in Greek, the writer used the Greek word $\alpha\delta\eta\varsigma$ (Hades) to translate the Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל (Sheol).

From this we can see that when Christ died, His soul went to the Old Testament hell. If the translators had given us the word *grave*, then it would have shown that the soul of Christ slept in the tomb with His body. But, this would not have harmonized with their belief that the soul cannot die. So in this case the translators felt it necessary to give us the word *hell*. The fact is that the hell of the Old Testament and the *Hades* hell of the New Testament mean “grave.”

Jesus said, “I am He that liveth, *and was dead*; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; *and have the keys of hell* [Hades] and of death” (Revelation 1:18). Because Christ was dead; because His soul went to *Sheol* (the grave, or hell), He has the keys of hell, He has the right to unlock the prison of the grave and let the captives free. “To open the blind eyes, *to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house*” (Isaiah 42:7).

Referring to the final judgement John wrote, “And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and **hell** [Hades] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and **hell** [Hades] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death” (Revelation 20:13, 14). Hell, or the grave, delivered up the dead that were in it. Hell was cast into the lake of fire. It is generally supposed that “the lake of fire” is hell, but here we see that hell was cast into the lake of fire to be destroyed.

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (1 Corinthians 15:26). “I will ransom them from the power of the **grave** [Sheol]; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O **grave** [Sheol], I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes” (Hosea 13:14). The Lord says that He will destroy death and hell in “the lake of fire,” which is called the “second death.”

Gehenna fire

The other Greek word that was translated “hell” in the New Testament is $\gamma\epsilon\epsilon\nu\nu\alpha$ (Gehenna).

One commentator wrote, “Gehenna ‘should be carefully distinguished from Hades (Ἅιδης) which is never used for the place of punishment, but for the place of departed spirits, without reference to their moral condition’ (Vincent)” (Taken from *Robertson’s New Testament Word Pictures* on Matthew 5:22).

“The term ‘Gehenna’ arose from the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the Canaanites burned human sacrifices to Moloch. After the return of the Jews from the Captivity they made it a place of defilement, where the refuse of the city was thrown and burned. The name was applied to the place of future punishment by the Jews. The word is often used in the New Testament (Mt 23:33 5:29 10:28 18:9 Mr 9:43), and always denotes a place of future punishment” (*People’s New Testament Notes* on Matthew 5:22).

“The Jews so abhorred the place after these horrible sacrifices had been abolished by king Josiah, that they cast into it not only all manner of refuse, but even the dead bodies of animals and of unburied criminals who had been executed. And since fires were always needed to consume the dead bodies, that the air might not become tainted by the putrefaction, it came to pass that the place was called $\gamma\epsilon\epsilon\nu\nu\alpha \tau\omicron\upsilon \pi\upsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$ [Gehenna with the color of fire]” (*Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon*).

A fire was kept burning in the valley continually to destroy whatever was cast into it. If a body was thrown into the valley and did not reach the bottom, where the fire was continually burning, but instead was caught on the jagged rocks surrounding the valley, then the worms would devour the body.

“Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and *the worm shall eat them like wool*: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation” (Isaiah 51:7, 8). This is what the Bible refers to when it says “their worm dieth not.” Gehenna is the place that Christ used to describe the final destruction of the wicked in Mark 9:43, 44.

“And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into **hell** [Gehenna], into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:43, 44).

Gehenna, or “the valley of Hinnom” was used as a place where refuse and dead bodies were destroyed. When Jesus used the word “Gehenna” He meant destruction, as is clear in the following text: “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to **destroy** both soul and body in **hell** [Gehenna]” (Matthew 10:28).

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him *should not perish*, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Man does not have everlasting life without it being granted to him from God, and his eternal life depends upon eating of the tree of life.

After Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil “the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, *lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever*” (Genesis 3:22). If Adam had eaten of the tree of life, he would have lived forever in his sinful condition. God, not willing that this should happen, prevented him from eating of that tree.

Thanks be to God who has provided for us a way to eat of the tree of life so that we can live forever. Jesus said that if we believe in Him we “should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “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).

We must humble ourselves and repent; turn from our evil ways and live. “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezekiel 33:11).

The origin of man

Where did man come from? “*And 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” (Genesis 2:7). Man came from the dust of the ground.

What happens to us after we die? “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, *concerning them which are asleep*, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13). After we die, the Bible says that we are asleep.

Where do we sleep after we die? “And many of *them that sleep in the dust of the earth* shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2). “All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” (Ecclesiastes 3:20). “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, *till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*” (Genesis 3:19). When we die we turn into dust again, and sleep until the Lord awakens us.

When God formed man out of the dust of the earth, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. “All the while my breath is in me, and *the spirit of God is in my nostrils*” (Job 27:3). The breath of life is that spark of life that keeps a person alive. “If he [God] set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust” (Job 34:14, 15).

There is a spirit of man also, distinct from the spark of life from God that keeps him alive. When a man dies, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7). There will be a time when every man will live again, whether he is raised in the resurrection of the just, or of the unjust. His mind, which contains his life history, will be given to him again at his resurrection. He will come forth from the grave with the same character and manner of thinking that he had before death. During their sleep in the grave they were not alive anywhere. “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26).

“Who knoweth *the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward* to the earth?” (Ecclesiastes 3:21). The spirit of man goes upward to God who gave it. Whether the man was the vilest of criminals, or whether he was the most righteous saint, his spirit goes back to God who gave it. Man will live again, hence it is necessary for God to keep the record of what that man was like. A beast, on the other hand, will not live again, so his spirit goes down to the earth, never to be revived.

What is the soul of man?

“And 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*” (Genesis 2:7). The body (dust) plus the spirit (breath or mind) equals a living soul. When the spirit (breath or mind) returns to God, then the soul is no longer living. The Hebrew word for “soul” is נֶפֶשׁ (Nephesh), which means “living being” (Brown Driver and Briggs’s Hebrew Lexicon).

This is why God said that even animals are living souls. “And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, **wherein there is life** [Nephesh-literally; “in which is a living soul”], I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so” (Genesis 1:30).

The Hebrew word “Nephesh” can also mean “mind, or tablet” (*Strong’s Hebrew Dictionary*), in which is contained a record of every word, thought, and action of a person’s life; his very being or who he is. When a man dies there is still a record kept of him. While he is dead he is not a living being but a dead one.

Can a soul die or cease to exist?

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die....” (Ezekiel 18:20). This is not talking about the first death, from which all will return; but the second death, from which none shall return. “For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and *they shall be as though they had not been*” (Obadiah 1:16). After a man dies the first death the record of that individual will not be forgotten, but after the second death they will die and be destroyed completely, both body and soul.

“Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. *His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish*” (Psalm 146:3, 4). The spirit, or breath, of a man goes to God and he returns to the dust of the earth. What does the Bible tell us happens at this point? In that very day his thoughts perish; he can no longer think. He remains asleep in the dust, unconscious of anything, until the Lord raises him from the dead.

“But,” some may say, “don’t the righteous go straight to heaven when they die?” “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch *David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. ... For David is not ascended into the heavens*: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand” (Acts 2:29, 34). David will be in heaven, but he has not yet ascended to heaven. Peter’s argument was “We know that David is not in heaven, because his sepulchre is still with us.” Peter knew that David’s bones were still in the grave.

Christ is risen from the dead. Are His bones still in the tomb where He was buried? No! Anyone who still has bones on this earth could not possibly be in heaven. This is the argument that was made on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two. When Christ was raised from the dead, the Bible tells us, many were raised at that time. Are their bones still in the grave? Certainly not!

“And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared

unto many” (Matthew 27:52, 53). All those who are in heaven now do not have bones that remain on this earth.

“So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but *no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day*” (Deuteronomy 34:5, 6). Moses died, and was buried, but no man could find his sepulchre because the Lord raised him from the dead.

“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about *the body of Moses*, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 9). The fact that Moses was raised from the dead is evident by his appearing with Elijah at the mount of transfiguration. (Elijah was taken to heaven on a fiery chariot without seeing death—2 Kings 2:11). “And, behold, there talked with Him [Jesus] two men, which were Moses and Elias” (Luke 9:30).

David, who has not yet ascended to heaven, said, “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness” (Psalm 17:15). David will be satisfied when he awakes from death, not during the time that he is dead.

“Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead” (Isaiah 26:19). The first thing we notice about this verse is that the dead men shall, at some time in the future, live again. These people are not living now, but they shall live at some time in the future. Right now they are those who dwell in the dust. We have already seen that when we die we return to dust, there to remain in unconscious sleep until the Lord raises us from the dead.

Are the wicked in torment now?

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to *reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished*” (2 Peter 2:9). The unjust are being reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished. They are not being punished right now.

“That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath” (Job 21:30). The Lord is reserving the wicked for the day of destruction. They shall be brought forth, or raised from the dead, to the day of wrath.

When will the dead be raised from the grave? Paul exclaimed, “there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15). There will be two resurrections; one of the just, and one of the unjust.

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and *the dead in Christ shall rise first*” (1 Thessalonians 4:16). The resurrection of the just will take place first. It

will happen at the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the first resurrection.

“And they [the just] lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead [the unjust] lived not again until the thousand years were finished” (Revelation 20:4, 5). The first resurrection, which is the resurrection of the just, takes place at the return of Christ. The second resurrection, which is the resurrection of the unjust, takes place after the thousand years.

During the thousand years the righteous will live and reign with Christ in heaven while the earth is desolate with no inhabitants; for the wicked are dead upon the earth. “Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.... The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word” (Isaiah 24:1, 3).

Satan's lie

Satan has said from the very beginning, “Ye shall not surely die.” Satan taught that man could disobey God and still live forever without dying. This statement is in direct contradiction to the word of God who said, “thou shalt surely die.” God said that if man would disobey Him he would surely die.

Since that day Satan has continued to teach men that they will not surely die. According to Satan all men who have ever died are not really dead. Therefore, according to Satan, man can communicate with the dead. This cleverly opens the way for Satan himself, or one of his angels, to impersonate a deceased loved one. We see an example of this in the first book of Samuel. This is the only instance recorded in the Bible where someone supposedly communicated with the dead.

Saul's visit with the witch of Endor

“And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets” (1 Samuel 28:5, 6). Saul, the king of Israel, had walked contrary to the word of the Lord for so long that the Lord would not communicate with him by any means.

“Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee” (1 Samuel 28:7, 8).

Since the Lord would not communicate with Saul, he decided to use a forbidden means to try to communicate with a

deceased prophet named Samuel. God had strictly forbidden any such communication with familiar spirits. “A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them” (Leviticus 20:27).

“Then said the woman [unto Saul], Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel” (1 Samuel 28:11, 12). Samuel was a righteous prophet of God, yet Saul asked the witch of Endor to bring Samuel *up*. Many Christians suppose that when a righteous man dies he goes *up* to heaven immediately. If this were true, then Samuel would have to come *down* from heaven, rather than *up* from the earth. Was this really Samuel that appeared to the witch of Endor? What saith the Scriptures. As before noted, the dead “know not anything,” and are unconscious. Therefore, according to the Bible, there is no way that Samuel could have appeared, and spoken to Saul.

If Samuel was in heaven, as most preachers teach, then would God send him down to earth, in cooperation with a woman who was doing something that God condemned, to communicate with a man with whom God had stopped communicating? Samuel was asleep in the dust, not to regain consciousness until the Lord raised him from the dead. The spirit that was brought up with the likeness of Samuel was none other than Satan or one of his angels.

“So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; And enquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse” (1 Chronicles 10:13, 14).

Clearly you can see the danger of opening yourself up to communication with the deceased.

Satan can impersonate with unerring accuracy any person that he wishes. “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). If we are deceived into believing that the dead are not really dead, but alive somewhere, we are opening ourselves up to accept the teachings and doctrines of devils.

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, *giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils*” (1 Timothy 4:1). “For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Revelation 16:14). If we are going to stand the great trials that are soon to come upon the earth, we are required to search the Scriptures diligently to find truth from God Himself.

The thief on the cross

What about the thief on the cross? Didn't Jesus say that he would be with Him in paradise that same day? Let's look

at what Christ said to him. “And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me *when thou comest into thy kingdom*. And Jesus said unto him, *Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise*” (Luke 23:42, 43). The thief asked Jesus to remember him when He comes into His kingdom. “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, *who shall judge* the quick and the dead *at His appearing and His kingdom*” (2 Timothy 4:1).

The thief was asking the Lord to remember him when He judges the quick and the dead. Jesus replied, “Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). Notice where the translators chose to put the comma in the previous sentence. When this was written, originally in Greek, there was no use of punctuation. Read this verse again with the comma placed after the word “today.” “Verily I say unto thee today (at this moment), shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Jesus was saying, “This day I am telling you that you will [at some point in the future] be with me in paradise.”

It is also interesting to note that it would have been impossible for Christ to be saying that the thief would be with Christ in paradise on that very day, because Christ Himself was not in paradise that day. This fact is clearly brought out in John 20:17. The day that Christ was raised from the dead, Mary saw Him and was ready to fasten herself to him, thus restraining Him. Christ told her not to restrain Him because He had not yet ascended to His Father. He said to Mary, “Touch me not; for *I am not yet ascended* to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God” (John 20:17). Christ had not seen His Father face to face for over thirty years. He was eager to go and see Him. The fact that, on the third day, Christ had not yet ascended to His Father is clear evidence that He had not been to paradise on the day that He conversed with the thief on the cross. Instead, He was dead in the grave (hell), both soul and body.

The rich man and Lazarus

What about the parable of the rich man and Lazarus? Some doubt that this is really a parable. They argue that it is not a parable because it starts out in a narrative form. They say that because it starts out, “There was a certain rich man,...” Christ was talking about an actual incident that took place. But this is not the only parable that starts out in this manner. For example, the parable of the prodigal son, which starts out like this; “A certain man had two sons:...” Another example, “Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard,...” (Matthew 21:33).

“And with many such parables spake He the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. But *without a parable spake He not unto them*: and when they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples” (Mark 4:33, 34). It is

evident that Christ used a parable to illustrate almost everything He taught.

The prevailing idea in Christ’s time was that a rich man was surely blessed by God, and his riches were clear evidence that he was going to be in the kingdom of God. On the other hand, the Jews believed that if a man was poor he was cursed of God, and the fact that he was poor was evidence that he would not make it to the kingdom of God.

This false idea was what Christ was combating with His parable about the rich man and Lazarus. The fact that the Jews had this idea, and also the disciples of Christ had this idea, is brought out in these next verses. “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That *a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven*. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, *Who then can be saved?*” (Matthew 19:23-25).

The response of the disciples revealed that they believed that the rich men would certainly enter the kingdom. For, as they thought, if a rich man can hardly enter the kingdom, then we may as well not even try, because a rich man has a much better chance of making it than poor men like us. It was precisely to reveal the error of this idea that Christ told the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

There were many of the Jews in Christ’s time who fit the description of the rich man in this parable. Not only were many of them rich in earthly goods, but they had been given the oracles of God. It was their duty to impart the light that had been given them to others who were dying all around without hope of eternal life. Instead of looking upon the Gentiles with compassion, with a desire to share the wonderful riches that God had given them, they looked upon the Gentiles as one would look upon a poor man diseased with leprosy.

The rich man in this parable represented the Jewish nation. This is brought out by the repeated use of the term “*Father Abraham*.” “And he cried and said, Father Abraham,...” (Luke 16:24). At another time the Jews “answered him [Christ], *We be Abraham’s seed*, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?” (John 8:33).

When the poor diseased man (who represented the Gentiles) died, he is said to have been brought, by the angels, into Abraham’s bosom. “Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23). This represented a close relationship with Abraham. The Jews thought that since they were descendants of Abraham they would be heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

Christ revealed that a man, though he be of the lineage of Abraham, if he did not bear the character traits of Abraham, was not counted as heir according to the promise. “They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that

hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham” (John 8:39, 40).

Christ taught, through His parable, that the Gentile, though not of the lineage of Abraham yet having the character traits of Abraham, is considered Abraham’s seed (Galatians 3:29). The Jews so highly regarded their relation to Abraham that they set him up as God. When the rich man was in distress, he called to Abraham to have mercy on him. “And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me,...” (Luke 16:24). The Bible teaches, however, that there is salvation in none other but Christ. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead*” (Luke 16:27-31).

Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, had been raised from the dead to testify that Christ was the Messiah, yet the Jewish nation would not accept this. The rich man, along with his brethren, had every opportunity to know the truth and to be saved through the testimony of the sacred Scriptures. If they had rejected the Scriptures as the way of salvation, then they would not be persuaded even if one was raised from the dead.

I do not know anyone who would say that this parable describes, in every detail, the actual conditions after death. For one thing, the Bible never gives us any hint that Abraham is in heaven right now. Nowhere do the Scriptures teach that Abraham has already been raised from the dead, but rather is as David, whose sepulchre is with us to this day. “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, *and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.... For David is not ascended into the heavens*: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand” (Acts 2:29, 34).

If we really want to know what the Bible teaches on a particular subject, we must gather all the references that deal with that subject and weigh the evidence. “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (Isaiah 28:10). We must be as the noble Bereans, who “searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

Please take the time to examine all the scriptures that deal with this subject. Do not be misled to accept one section of Scripture that appears to support an idea which the rest of the Bible clearly disproves, without taking the time to weigh all the evidence. A judge can only make a just decision after examining all the evidence on both sides of the issue. Please do not settle this issue without hearing all the Scripture testimony concerning it. “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him” (Proverbs 18:13).

(This article is available as a small booklet. Please contact us if you would like to receive copies of this booklet. *Editor*)

The National Sunday Law (Part 5) by Alonzo T. Jones

(The following is a portion of an argument of Alonzo T. Jones before The United States Senate, December 13, 1888, opposing the Blair Bill promoting a Sunday law. *Editor*)

“In this way the church received help from the State for the furtherance of her ends.”

This statement is correct. Constantine did many things to favor the bishops. He gave them money and political preference. He made their decisions in disputed cases as final as the decision of Jesus Christ. But in nothing that he did for them did he give them power over those who did not belong to the church, to compel them to act as though they did, except in that one thing of the Sunday law. Their decisions, which he decreed to be final, were binding only on those who voluntarily chose that tribunal, and affected none others. Before this time, if any who had repaired to the tribunal of the bishops were dissatisfied with the decision, they could appeal to the civil magistrate. This edict cut off that source of appeal, yet affected none but those who voluntarily chose the arbitration of the bishops. But in the Sunday law, power was given to the church to compel those who did not belong to the church, and who were not subject to the

jurisdiction of the church, to obey the commands of the church. In the Sunday law there was given to the church control of the civil power, that by it she could compel those who did not belong to the church to act as if they did. The history of Constantine’s time may be searched through and through, and it will be found that in nothing did he give to the church any such power, except in this one thing — the Sunday law. Neander’s statement is literally correct, that it was “in this way the church received help from the State for the furtherance of her ends.”

The work, however, was not done yet. True, the bishops had secured the power of the State to take away from the people all excuse for not being religious; but from the beginning of the whole scheme, the people had no real wish to be religious. They had none of the spirit of devotion in their hearts; and although the State had forbidden them to work, and had shut the Sunday circuses and theaters, still the people would not be religious. The next step to be taken, therefore, in the logic of the situation, was to compel them; and the theocratical bishops were equal to the occasion. They were ready with a theory that exactly met the demands of the case; and the great Catholic Church Father and

Catholic saint, Augustine, was the father of this Catholic saintly theory. He wrote:

"It is indeed better that men should be brought to serve God by instruction than by fear of punishment, or by pain. But because the former means are better, the latter must not therefore be neglected.... Many must often be brought back to their Lord, like wicked servants, by the rod of temporal suffering, before they attain to the highest grade of religious development." — *Schaff's Church History*, vol. 2, sec. 27.

Of this theory Neander remarks:

"It was by Augustine, then, that a theory was proposed and founded, which... contained the germ of that whole system of spiritual despotism, of intolerance and persecution, which ended in the tribunals of the Inquisition." — *Church History*, p. 217.

The history of the Inquisition is only the history of the carrying out of this infamous theory of Augustine's. But this theory is only the logical sequence of the theory upon which the whole series of Sunday laws was founded. The church induced the State to compel all to be idle for their own good. Then it was found that they all were more inclined to wickedness. Then to save them from all going to the Devil, they tried to compel all to go to heaven. The work of the Inquisition was always for love of men's souls, and to save them from hell!

Allow me to summarize these statements from Neander: He says of the carrying into effect of the theocratical theory of those bishops, that they made themselves dependent upon Constantine by their disputes, and "by their determination to use the power of the State for the furtherance of their aims." Then he mentions the first and second Sunday laws of Constantine; the Sunday law of 386; the Carthage Convention, resolution, and petition of 401; and the law of 425 in response to this petition; and then, without a break, and with direct reference to these Sunday laws, he says: "In this way the church received help from the State for the furtherance of her ends." She started out with the determination to do it; she did it; and "in this way" she did it. And when she had secured the control of the power of the State, she used it for the furtherance of her own aims, and in her own despotic way, as announced in Augustine's Inquisitorial theory. The first step logically and inevitably led to the last; and the theocratical leaders in the movement had the cruel courage to follow the first step unto the last, as framed in the words of Augustine, and illustrated in the history of the Inquisition.

That is the system with which Sunday laws belong. That is the theory upon which they are based. They have no other foundation. Mr. Elliott, who has spoken here in behalf of this bill, knows that there is no law in the Bible for keeping the first day of the week. I could read a passage from his own book, "The Abiding Sabbath," page 184, in which he confesses "the complete silence of the New Testament, so far as any explicit command for the Sabbath, or definite rules for its observance, are concerned." And everybody knows that the Old Testament does not say anything about the observance of the first day of the week as Sabbath. Everybody likewise knows that the Old Testament does not say

anything about keeping the first day of the week as the day of the resurrection of the Saviour, or for any other reason. Dr. Johnson and others here this morning have said that the first day of the week was chosen because it was a memorial of the resurrection of the Saviour. It is the New Testament that tells about the resurrection of the Saviour. That is granted. Dr. Elliott confesses, and the American Tract Society publishes it, that there is "complete silence of the New Testament" in regard to it. Then what right have they to put it into law, and try to compel by civil law all people to keep as the Lord's day that for which there is no scriptural authority? Let me read another passage from another book, printed by the American Sunday-school Union. On page 186 of "The Lord's Day," written by Mr. A. E. Waffle, are these words:

"Up to the time of Christ's death, no change had been made in the day. The authority must be sought in the words or in the example of the inspired apostles."

Then on the very next page he says:

"So far as the record shows, they [the apostles] did not, however, give any explicit command enjoining the abandonment of the seventh-day Sabbath, and its observance on the first day of the week."

Dr. Schaff, in the *Schaff Herzog Cyclopaedia*, says:

"No regulations for its observance are laid down in the New Testament, nor, indeed, is its observance even enjoined." — Article Sunday.

If, then, they confess that Christ gave no law for its observance, why do they want to compel people to observe it? What right have they to compel anybody to observe it? I deny their right to compel me or anybody else to do what Christ never commanded any man to do.

Senator Blair: You admit there was a Sabbath before Christ came?

Mr. Jones: Certainly.

Senator Blair: And he said came not to destroy, but to fulfill?

Mr. Jones: Certainly.

Senator Blair: Is there anything in the New Testament which destroyed the Sabbath already existing?

Mr. Jones: No, sir.

Senator Blair: Then why does it not continue to exist?

Mr. Jones: It does exist, and we keep the commandment which provides for the Sabbath.

Senator Blair: Then you say there is a Sabbath recognized, and that is equivalent to its re-affirmation by Christ?

Mr. Jones: Certainly.

Senator Blair: I do not see from what you are stating, but that Christ recognized an existing law, and that it is continuing at the present time. You say that it is one day, and they say that it is another.

Mr. Jones: But they are after a law to enforce the observance of the first day of the week as the Lord's day, when they confess that the Lord never gave any command in regard to it. The commandment which God gave says that the "seventh day is the Sabbath."

Senator Blair: Is it still the Sabbath?

Mr. Jones: Certainly, and we keep it; but we deny the right of any civil government to compel any man either to keep it or not to keep it.

Senator Blair: The civil government of the Jews compelled its observance?

Mr. Jones: That was a theocracy.

Senator Blair: Does it follow that when the only form of government is a theocracy and that embraces all that appertains to government, another form of government which is not a theocracy necessarily, cannot embrace the same subject-matter as the theocracy? If the subject-matter of a theocratical, a monarchical, or a republican form of government is not the same, to control the establishment of good order in society, pray what is it? We say, and it is our form of government, that the people shall legislate, shall construe the law, and execute the law. Under the old theocratic form, God made the law, God construed it, and God executed it through his instrumentalities; but we do just the same thing by the will of the people, that under the theocratic form of government was done in the other way. Now if the Sabbath is necessarily for the general good of society, a republican form of government must make and enforce the observance of the Sabbath just as the theocracy did. You seem to be laboring, as it strikes me, under the impression that a civil government for the good of the people carried on by us under the republican form, cannot do anything that the theocratic form of government does when the theocratic is the only form. They necessarily cover the same subject-matter, — the control, the development, the good, and the health of society, it makes no difference which one it may be.

Mr. Jones — A theocratic government is a government of God.

Senator Blair: So are the powers that be ordained of God.

Mr. Jones: This Government is not a government of God.

Senator Blair: Do you not consider the Government of the United States as existing in accordance with the will of God?

Mr. Jones: Yes, but it is not a government of God. The government of God is a moral government. This is a civil government.

Senator Blair: A theocracy is a civil government, and governs in civil affairs, as well as in the region of spirituality and morality and religion.

Mr. Jones: Certainly, and God governs it, and nothing but a theocracy can enforce those things which pertain to man's relation to God under the first four commandments.

Senator Blair: But this proposed legislation is outside of the theocratic part of it.

Mr. Jones: Not at all; for it purposes by penalties to "promote" the religious observance of the Lord's day, while nothing but the government of God can do that. That is the point I am making here, that if you allow this legislation, you lead to the establishment of a new theocracy after the model of the papacy, and civil government has nothing to do with religious things. This bill is wholly religious; and if you begin this course of religious legislation, you will end only in a

theocracy, — a man-made theocracy, — and that will be the papacy repeated.

Senator Blair: We have had the Sunday laws in this country for three hundred years. They have constantly become more and more liberalized. Have you ever known an instance, though the sentiment in favor of the Sabbath seems to be growing constantly stronger, where any State in this Union undertook to enact a law that anybody should go to church, which is the danger you seem to apprehend?

Mr. Jones: Not yet. They are now after the first law. This will lead to that. The law of Constantine was enacted in 321, and it commanded at first only that towns-people and mechanics should do no work, that they might be religious. They did not ask for too much at first. As was said in a ministers' meeting in San Diego, Cal., about two months ago, "In this thing you must not ask for too much at first. Ask just what public sentiment will bear, and when you get that, ask for more." And as was said upon this bill by Dr. Crafts in this Capitol:

"We will take a quarter of a loaf, half a loaf, or a whole loaf. If the Government should do nothing more than forbid the opening of the post-offices at church hours, it would be a national tribute to the value of religion, and would lead to something more satisfactory."

Then in telling what would be more satisfactory, he said:

"The law allows the local postmaster, if he chooses (and some of them do choose), to open the mails at the very hour of church, and so make the post-office the competitor of the churches."

At another point in the same speech, Mr. Crafts referred to the proposed law as one for "protecting the church services from post-office competition." And in explaining how this could be done, he said:

"A law forbidding the opening between ten and twelve, would accomplish this, and would be better than nothing; but we want more."

And:

"A law forbidding any handling of Sunday mail at such hours as would interfere with church attendance on the part of the employees, would be better than nothing; but we want more than this."

He continues:

"Local option in deciding whether a local post-office shall be opened at all on Sunday, we should welcome as better than nothing;... but we desire more than this."

How much more? Still he continues:

"A law forbidding all carrier delivery of mail on Sunday, would be better than nothing; but we want more than that."

And when will they ever get enough? It is precisely as it was when the Emperor Constantine forbade the judges, towns-people, and mechanics to work on Sunday. That was an imperial tribute to the "value of religion," and led to "something more satisfactory" — to the church managers.

To be Continued...

(This article was taken from pages 71-80 of the book entitled, *The National Sunday Law*, by Alonzo T. Jones. Some editing was done for this publication.)

Editor)

The Gospel in Creation (Part 2)

by Ellet J. Waggoner

The First Day - Creation and Redemption

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). In this brief sentence we have the whole of the truth of the gospel summed up. He who reads aright may derive a world of comfort from it.

In the first place, let us consider who it was that created the heaven and the earth. “God created.” But Christ is God, the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of His person. (See Hebrews 1:3.) He Himself said, “I and My Father are one” (John 10:30). He it was who, representing the Father, created the heaven and the earth. **[Editor’s Note:** Christ is Creator in cooperation with His Father. God, the Father, “created all things by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:1, 2).] “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:1-3). And again we read of Christ, that “by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:16, 17).

The Father Himself addresses the Son as God and as Creator. The first chapter of Hebrews says that God has not at any time said to any of the angels, “Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten thee.” “But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom.” And He has also said to the Son, “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thine hands” (Hebrews 1:5, 8, 10). So we are well assured that when we read in the first chapter of Genesis, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” it refers to God in Christ.

Creative power is the distinguishing mark of divinity. The Spirit of the Lord, through the prophet Jeremiah, described the vanity of idols, and then continues, “But the Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting King: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by His power. He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion” (Jeremiah 10:10-12). The earth was made by His power, and established by His wisdom. But Christ is “the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” So here again we find Christ

inseparably connected with creation as the Creator. Only as we acknowledge and worship Christ as the Creator do we acknowledge His divinity.

Christ is Redeemer by virtue of His power as Creator. We read that “we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins,” because that “by Him were all things created” (Colossians 1:14, 16). If He were not Creator, He could not be Redeemer. This means simply that redemptive power and creative power are the same. To redeem is to create. This is shown in the statement of the apostle that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation; which statement is immediately followed by another to the effect that the power of God is seen by means of the things that have been made. (Romans 1:16-20). When we consider the works of creation and the power manifested in them, we are contemplating the power of redemption.

There has been a great deal of idle speculation as to which is the greater, redemption or creation. Many have thought that redemption is a greater work than creation. Such speculation is idle, because only infinite power could perform either work, and infinite power cannot be measured by human minds. But while we cannot measure the power, we can easily settle the question of which is the greater, because the Scriptures give us the information. Neither is greater than the other, for both are the same. Redemption is creation. Redemption is the same power that was put forth in the beginning to create the world and all that is in it, now put forth to save men and the earth from the curse of sin.

The Scriptures are very clear on this point. The psalmist prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10). The apostle says, that “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17), or a new creation. And again we read, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Compared with God, man is “less than nothing, and vanity.” Isaiah 40:17. In him “dwelleth no good thing” (Romans 7:18). Now the same power that in the beginning made the earth from nothing, takes man, if he is willing, and makes of him that which is “to the praise of the glory of His grace” (Ephesians 1:6).

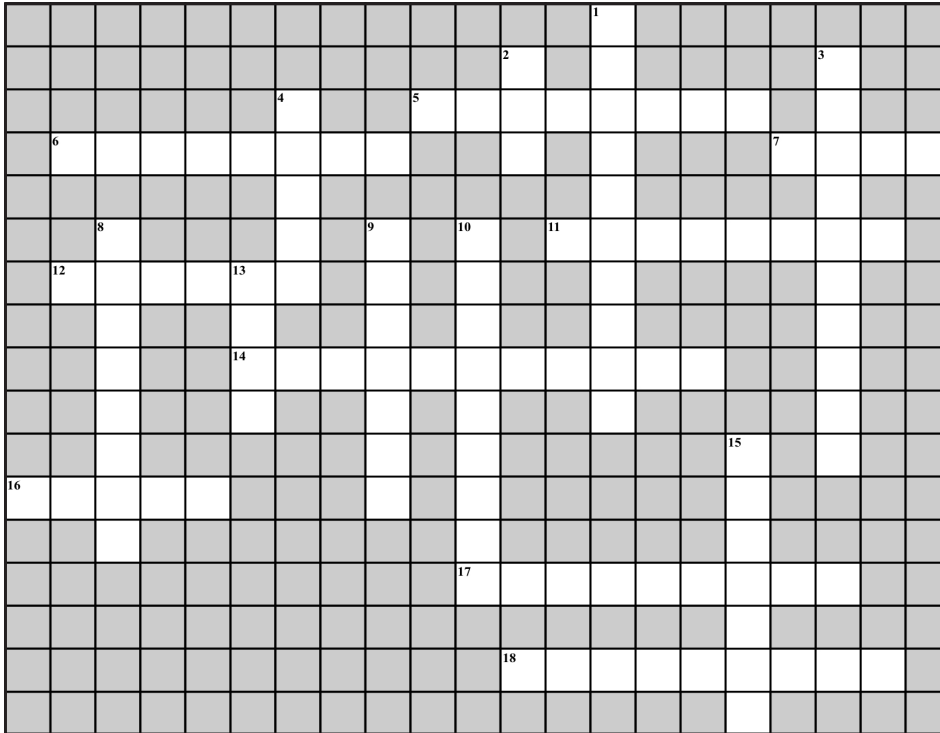
To be Continued...

(This article was taken from pages 13-17 of the book entitled, *The Gospel in Creation*, by Ellet J. Waggoner. *Editor*)

Something for the Young at Heart

This month we are beginning a series of crossword Bible studies based on a Bible Lesson written by Lynnford Beachy, entitled, "God's Love on Trial," based on the book by the same title. In order to maintain the flow of the study, this crossword puzzle is not split into Across and Down sections—Across or Down is indicated at the end of each line.

The Love of God (Lesson 5)



Answers will be printed on the last page of next month's issue

Note: Not only must we know the identity of God (as explained in the last study) in order to worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24), but we must also know His character of love.

- Who is the source of love? 1 John 4:7—**2 Down**
- Everyone who loves ____ God. 1 John 4:7—**9 Down**
- He that does not love ____ God. 1 John 4:8 (2 words)—**3 Down**
- God ____ His love toward us by sending His Son into the world. 1 John 4:9—**1 Down**

Note: Love is demonstrated by giving. It is often assumed that the opposite of love is hate, but in reality the opposite of love is selfishness. Selfishness is a lack of love. There is no such thing as darkness, it is only an absence of light. Love is selflessness, the willingness to give everything for the benefit of others.

- God loves us so much that He gave His only ____ Son to die for us. John 3:16—**11 Across**

Note: When Jesus said God "so loved the world" He was saying, "This is how much God loves you, He loves you so much that He did something for you. He demonstrated His love for you by giving up His most precious possession, His only begotten Son."

- God told Abraham, "take now thy son... whom thou ____." Genesis 22:2—**12 Across**
- God knew Abraham loved and feared Him because he had ____ his son from God. Genesis 22:12 (2 words)—**14 Across**

Note: If Abraham would have been asked to give away everything he possessed, he would have done it gladly rather than to give up his son.

- A rich man was asked to demonstrate his love for God by giving everything to the _____. Matthew 19:21—**7 Across**

Note: Love is measured by the value of that which a person is willing to give up.

- God ____ His own Son. Romans 8:32 (2 words)—**17 Across**
- This proved that God is willing to give up _____. Romans 8:32 (2 words)—**10 Down**

Note: If God had loved the world so much that He gave a goat, you and I would seriously question God's love for us, because a goat would be an almost meaningless gift for God to give up, since it is something He created. If God had loved the world so much that He gave a human, what would we think then? Well, that is a little better than a goat, but it is still a small gift, because humans were also created. What if God had loved the world so much that He gave an angel? That is a better gift than a human, but it still falls far short of demonstrating how much God loves us. We could still think that God is holding something back. You see, our understanding of God's love depends upon the value of the gift He gave up for us. The more valuable the gift He gave, the more we can see His love for us. God gave His only begotten Son for us. There are others whom He calls sons, but He only has one begotten Son.

- Christ came to redeem us so that we might receive the ____ of sons. Galatians 4:5—**6 Across**
- Angels of God met together with God, and were called ____ of God. Job 1:6—**13 Down**

Note: We can be "sons of God" by adoption (Romans 8:14, 15), angels are "sons of God" by creation (Job 1:6; 2:1), but Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. What sets Jesus Christ apart from everyone else in the universe, and by which we know God's love for us, is the fact that He was begotten. This puts Him in the closest possible relationship with God.

When God gave up His only begotten Son it proved that He is willing to give up every possession, suffer any amount of pain, and endure any hardship in order to save those whom He

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loves. This is what Paul meant when he said, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32)

God truly loves us, yet this love can only be comprehended by understanding that God gave His only begotten Son.

➤ To overcome the world we must believe that Jesus is the _____. 1 John 5:5 (3 words)—**8 Down**

Note: Believing that Jesus is the begotten Son of God enables us to overcome the world by elevating our perception of God's love and enabling us to love Him with all our hearts in return. Love produces love.

➤ We love God because He _____ loved us. 1 John 4:19—**4 Down**

➤ As we behold God's glory we are _____. 2 Corinthians 3:18—**15 Down**

➤ Moses asked God to show him His _____. Exodus 33:18—**16 Across**

➤ To do this, God made all His _____ pass before Moses. Exodus 33:19—**5 Across**

➤ We see the light of the _____ of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6—**18 Across**

Note: The face of Jesus Christ is used to refer to the life, words, and actions of our Lord Jesus Christ. 

Answers to Last Month's Crossword Puzzle

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