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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 24 NUMBER 8



Allen Webster

Times change. Today's "new" is tomorrow's "old," this morning's "breakthrough" is this afternoon's "castaway," and this year's "popular" is lost in next year's "latest." Clearly, the "up-to-date" is soon "out-of-date."

Truth, however, doesn't change. It reads the same today as yesterday and as it will tomorrow. It was "once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3).

Some feel they have outgrown the ancient Gospel. Its absolute standard is, to them, obsolete. The concepts of sin and spiritual death are replaced by the exaltation of self and sensuality. The idea of self-denial now to gain heaven later is given a passing thought—and then passed on. Bible concepts—power in the blood, a virgin-born, sinless, sacrificial, miraculously resurrected Savior—are but myths of a bygone era.

Children of the post modern age have "grown up." They don't need the gospel anymore. Or do they? Has man outgrown the gospel?

NOT UNLESS HE HAS FOUND ANOTHER FOOD FOR THE SOUL

Vegetables and fruits have been on kitchen tables since Eve prepared meals in the Garden, but no one is calling them outdated. Noah must have grilled the first T-bone just after the Flood. Several thousand years have passed, but steakhouses still do pretty well.

What nourishes the spirit? The gospel fills those who "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matthew 5:6). Baby Christians first take "the pure milk of the word" (1 Peter 2:2) and then progress until they can eat solid food at God's table (Hebrews 5:12–14). No one has found a substitute for God's soul food.

NOT UNLESS HE HAS FOUND ANOTHER CURE FOR MAN'S MOST SERIOUS DISEASE

Medical treatments have been around at least since Moses, but nobody's in a hurry to close hospitals and pharmacies. A cure for sin (forgiveness) is still man's most ba-

sis spiritual need (Romans 3:23, 6:23). We all have ancient Israel's contagion: "From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment" (Isaiah 1:6). The only antidote for sin has "gospel" on the label (Romans 1:16).

Look around—if anything, sin has greater influence now than it did with ancient man. Violence, greed, lust, selfishness, drunkenness, and drugs are rampant. No society—yea, no individual—has mastered sin. Paul would say today what he said in circa AD 57: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Mankind has not conquered carnal desires. We are still prone to give in to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:15–17). We cannot overcome without the power of the written Word (Hebrews 4:12). Jesus used its power to

defeat Satan in the showdown in the desert (Matthew 4:1–11). Paul urged Timothy to make a good warfare by it (1 Timothy 1:18); and we can beat our adversary only with the same time-tested weapon (Ephesians 6:17).

Since the eternal God is the One who determines what sin is, sin does not change from culture to culture or with the passing winds of time. Men may change what they consider sin or what they call it (Isaiah 5:20), but that will not alter reality. Sin is still transgressing God's law (1 John 2:4), violating one's conscience (Romans 14:23), omitting a duty (James 4:17), and, in general, "all unrighteousness" (1 John 5:17). We've all done it; thus we all need the cure that only the gospel can give.

NOT UNLESS HE HAS UNEARTHED ANOTHER MAP TO HEAVEN

This world is not all there is. It is but the prelude to the main performance, the foreword to a great book, and the gestation period to endless life. Jesus used another figure: it is a short trip to an everlasting home. He plainly mapped out the road that leads to life (Matthew 7:14). He stated the conditions by which man can achieve salvation. He must believe in Christ (Mark 16:16), change his sinful life (repent, Luke 13:5), confess Christ's name (Romans 10:9–10) and be immersed for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:4).

Some have tried to invent their own ways to heaven, but their maps will only get a person lost. If we follow Faith Only Lane or Works Avenue, or Direct Spirit Leading Way, or the popular path, Once Saved Always Saved, we are traveling the various lanes of the in-

terstate Jesus called a broad "way that leads to destruction" (Matthew 7:13). Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life"—and His way is only found in His Book (John 14:6).

NOT UNLESS HE HAS FOUND ANOTHER WEAPON SATAN FEARS

The old lion isn't dead; he is still roaring and walking about "seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). The serpent is not hibernating; he still lurks to entice, entrap, and engulf the unsuspecting (Genesis 3:1–7; 2 Corinthians 11:3). Man is still in danger; therefore, he needs the one weapon that makes Satan cringe. Just as a lion does not fear a rock in the hand of a child, Satan does not fear man's strength in man's hand. However, he does fear God's power in man's hand ("it is written," Matthew 4:1–11; James 4:7).

NOT UNLESS HE CAN MAKE HIS LIFE MEANINGFUL WITHOUT IT

The Bible is able to make us complete (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Its message fills the void found in every heart. It has the power to convert (change) a person. The gospel has power to transfer us from the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Colossians 1:13). In every case of conversion in the New Testament (see Acts), someone preached the Word, which produced a change in the hearers.

An airplane stewardess came down the aisle asking what each passenger wanted to drink. Several in a row said, "Make mine a martini." Coming to the next seat, she noted a man with an open Bible. Somehow it seemed inappropriate to ask a Bible-reader if he desired a martini.

So she said, "Tomato juice, Sir?" He later observed, "What other book could I have been reading that would change a martini into tomato juice?"

Those who change the gospel put themselves under God's curse (Galatians 1:6–9) and will find that they will be judged by the gospel in its original form (Revelation 20:12). Those who choose to ignore it will find it was the one essential of their earthly pilgrimage (2 Thessalonians 1:8–9).

Let's not cast away the only Book God ever wrote!



What about "Death Bed" Salvation?

The emphasis of the Bible concerning salvation is always on "today."

Quoting Isaiah, Paul said, "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

When Jesus saw the interest of Zacchaeus, who had climbed a sycamore tree to see Him, He said, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house" (Luke 19:5). As Jesus forgave the sins of the thief on the cross, He said, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

It is never wise to put off responding to God's love. Some, however, seem to be waiting until they are near death to make things right with God.

The book of Acts lays out God's law of pardon for today. At Pentecost, Peter and the apostles made the first offer of pardon under the Christian Age. As the multitude understood they had crucified the Son of God, they realized they needed to respond to God's love.

"They were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2:37–38).

Other conversions in Acts follow this pattern. The Samaritans (Acts 8), the Ethiopian (Acts 8), Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9, 22), Lydia (Acts 16), the jailer (Acts 16), and the Corinthians (Acts 18) realized their need for conversion to Christ, and their faith moved them to repent

of sins, confess their faith, and be baptized. Not every conversion mentions each step, but every conversion account does mention baptism.

Does God change His law of pardon for the person on his death bed? There are no New Testament examples of such conversions, so there is no evidence to suggest that God has a different plan for those near death.

The thief on the cross is not an example for those living today because he lived under the Jewish law and was not subject to the new covenant of Christ (which came into effect after Jesus' death, Hebrews 9:15–17). He received the forgiveness of sin in the same way that others did during the public ministry of Christ—through the direct pardon of the Savior. He was not subject to the commands of Pentecost, because he lived before the establishment of the church on that day.

None of us is in the position of deciding the eternal fate of others. We are all in the hands of a just and loving God. By the gracious sacrifice of Christ, God set in motion the means of our salvation. It is up to us to respond to His love in obedience.

He has warned that the day is coming "when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:7–8).

Now is the time to obey Christ and live for him. As long as there is life, there is hope to obey God, but many who plan to repent on their death beds will never have the opportunity. —Bob Prichard



The Power of the Written Word

Some say that while Jesus Christ was upon earth there was power in what He had to say, but "all we have now is the written Word."

Does the mere fact that God's Word has been written rather than spoken reduce its force or influence?

Do we regard our oral words more sacred and binding than our written documents? Are our deeds, mortgages, government bonds, and securities rendered valueless because they have been written? Should we shut down the county court clerk's office and the recorder's office and do business by word of mouth? Of course not.

The Savior understood that there is power in the written Word of God. It ought to be considered as having enough power and force for the accomplishment of that which God intended—the salvation of souls.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation."

ROMANS 1:16

God's Plan for Saving Man

Divine Love: John 3:16

God's Grace: Ephesians 2:8

Christ's Blood: Romans 5:9

Holy Spirit's Gospel: Romans 1:16

Sinner's Faith: Acts 16:31

Sinner's Repentance: Luke 13:3

Sinner's Confession: Romans 10:10

Sinner's Baptism: Acts 22:16

Christian's Love: Matthew 22:37

Christian's Work: James 2:24

Christian's Hope: Romans 8:24

Christian's Endurance: Revelation 2:10



Facts Every Person Needs to Know about Jesus

Some who consider themselves to be Christians are not really sure just what they believe about Jesus. To follow Jesus is a serious undertaking. To decide to be His disciple requires that one know about Him (John 6:44–45). Every person needs to know at least four things about Jesus.

Jesus made us—He is Creator. John wrote, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:1–3).

John 1:14 identifies “the Word” as Jesus, “the only begotten of the Father.” Colossians 1:16–17 declares that by Jesus all things were created, “and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.” No amount of evolutionary teaching can change the truth that God’s Son created all things.

Jesus died and rose again for us—He is Savior. Jesus did not come just to make the world a better place or simply raise the standard of mankind’s morals. He came to save people from sin and the horrible punishment of hell. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15). “The Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world” (1 John 4:14). Thanks be to God “that Christ died for our sins” (1 Corinthians 15:3), and “we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7). Just as Jesus predicted, after He was buried

“He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:4).

What does His resurrection have to do with us? He “was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification” (Romans 4:25). Jesus now sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven (Mark 16:19).

He has authority over us—He is King. Jesus has all authority. After the resurrection, Jesus told His apostles, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them . . . teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:18–20). He is the head of His church (Ephesians 1:22–23), so in all things the church is to be in subjection to Him (Ephesians 5:24). To put it another way, Jesus is King over His kingdom, which is simply another designation for His church (Colossians 1:13).

He will determine our destiny—He is Judge. Jesus said, “For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22). Paul added, “We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:10) because “He was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead” (Acts 10:42). What a thought: the One who created us, died for us, arose for us, and rules over us, will one day judge us!

A wise man wrote “in all your getting, get understanding” (Proverbs 4:7). We might add, “with all your understanding, understand Jesus.” —Roger D. Campbell

Woodrow Wilson’s Bible

The opinion of the Bible bred in me not only by the teaching of my home when I was a boy, but also by every turn and experience of my life, is that it is the supreme source of revelation, the revela-

tion of the meaning of life, the nature of God, and the spiritual nature and needs of man. It is the only guide of life which leads the spirit in the way of peace and salvation. —Woodrow Wilson

Making Sense of the Old Testament (Part 3 of 5)

The thrust of the Old Testament is to demonstrate the development of God’s plan of redemption.

To that end, Old Testament history selectively focuses on the Jewish people and their interactions with other nations.

The value of the Old Testament is seen in its prophetic preparation for the coming of Christ (Galatians 3:24), its timeless moral lessons (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11), and its cultivation of an awareness of the awful nature of sin (Romans 7:7, 13).

The Old Covenant, as a binding legal system, was restricted to the nation of Israel (Deuteronomy 5:1–5) and was abrogated with the death of Christ on the cross (Galatians 3:25; Ephesians 2:11–16; Colossians 2:14–17).

Poetical Books

There are five books in the poetry section of the Old Testament. By means of poetry, man exposes the depth of his emotions. These books reveal much about God and how intense human devotion for the Creator can become. The book of **Job**, largely poetical, has to do with a noble man of the Patriarchal Era who demonstrated that, in spite of the anguish of human suffering, the Lord is worthy of man’s devotion. **Psalms** is a collection of 150 songs (73 attributed to David) that emphasize great truths about Jehovah, His redemptive interest in humanity, and the authors’ relationships with the Lord.

Proverbs represents a collection of wise sayings (about 800 by Solomon). These sayings focus on the application of divine wisdom to life experiences in a world tarnished by sin. The **Book of Ecclesiastes**, most likely written by Solomon, argues that earthly goals (the accumulation of human wisdom, wealth, position, power, and accomplishment) lead only to frustrating dead ends. Real happiness is achieved in serving God. The **Song of Solomon** celebrates the joy of wedded love and illustrates the value of marriage in cementing male/female relationships. —adapted from Wayne Jackson

“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning.”

ROMANS 15:4



Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.



Bible Quiz

VOLUME 24:8

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark. We’ll grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark “Plan of Salvation” as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State: _____
Phone: _____

Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 24:6 Bible Curses: 1. “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them” (Galatians 3:10) 2. Gospel (Galatians 1:8) 3. Christ (Galatians 3:13) 4. Deaf (Leviticus 19:14) 5. Job’s (Job 2:9) 6. Malachi (Malachi 4:6) 7. James (James 3:10) 8. Paul (Acts 23:12) 9. Satan (Job 2:4–5) 10. Ecclesiastes (Ecclesiastes 10:20).

V. 24:7 Moses and Egypt: 1. They had become more and mightier than the Egyptians (Exodus 1:9–10) 2. 7 (Genesis 41:30) 3. Pharaoh’s daughter (Exodus 2:10) 4. He was beating a Hebrew brother (Exodus 2:11–12) 5. Midian (Exodus 2:15) 6. Zipporah (Exodus 2:21) 7. Draw not near; take his sandals off his feet (Exodus 3:5) 8. He was slow of speech and slow of tongue (Exodus 4:10) 9. Aaron (Exodus 4:14–16) 10. A serpent (Exodus 7:10) 11. Put lamb’s blood on the lintel and doorposts and stay inside (Exodus 12:22) 12. False (Exodus 8:22–23; 9:26; 10:23) 13. A pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21) 14. The Red Sea (Exodus 14:21–22, 29; 15:22) 15. Water became blood (Exodus 7:20) 16. Land of Rameses (Genesis 47:11) 17. Levi (Exodus 2:1–10) 18. Egypt (Hosea 7:16).

Starts with the Letter “Z”

Directions: Find answers in the following passages: Numbers 2:7; 27:1–11; Deuteronomy 2:20; Joshua 3:16; 2 Samuel 5:7; 8:15–17; 16:1; 1 Kings 17:9; 22:11; Ezra 3:8; 5:1; Esther 5:10–14; Matthew 4:21; Luke 1:13; 6:15; 19:2–4; John 2:17. Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. The tax collector who climbed a tree to see Jesus. _____ | 10. One of the twelve tribes of Israel. _____ |
| 2. The father of John the Baptizer. _____ | 11. The prophet in the days of Ezra who wrote a book of the Bible. _____ |
| 3. A priest in the time of David. _____ | 12. The false prophet who told Ahab, the King of Israel, to attack Syria. _____ |
| 4. The Ammonite name for giants Jews called Rephaim. _____ | 13. He had five daughters who asked to inherit his property. _____ |
| 5. The place where Elijah lodged with a widow. _____ | 14. The wife of Haman who suggested building gallows. _____ |
| 6. The place where Jordan rose up as “a heap.” _____ | 15. The primary builder of Israel’s second temple. _____ |
| 7. The disciples thought of this when Jesus cleansed the temple. _____ | 16. The city of David. _____ |
| 8. Simon the _____ was one of Jesus’ disciples. _____ | 17. The servant of Mephibosheth who helped David with provisions during Absalom’s revolt. _____ |
| 9. The father of James and John. _____ | |

—<http://www.religionresourcesonline.org>

Be Careful What You Say

One day a little girl watching her mother do the dishes noticed several strands of white hair on her mother’s brunette head. She asked, “Why are some of your hairs white, Mom?” She replied, “Well, every time you do something wrong and make me cry, one of my hairs turns white.” The little girl thought about this revelation for a while and then said, “Mama, how come all of Grandma’s hairs are white?”

Thoughts on Discipline

The child who says, “I will not” to his parents shows disrespect, dishonor, and discourtesy. This child also rebels against the Heavenly Father who commands obedience to parents (Luke 2:51; Colossians 3:20). Parents must teach respect for authority while children are young. If they do not, society may teach it later, but often in a more severe way. A prominent officer said, “Crime prevention should begin in the high chair” (cf. Proverbs 3:12, 23).

At the same time, discipline should not be administered in anger or revenge (Ephesians 6:4). Harsh or unfair punishment is not intelligent (it produces resentment) nor is it Christian (it does not imitate our Father) (Hebrews 12:6–10; 1 Peter 1:16).

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

The Same Seed, the Same Plant

The seed is the Word of God (Luke 8:11). It makes no difference how long that seed has been stored. Even if it was preserved from a crop a thousand years ago, wherever and whenever it is finally planted, regardless of who sows it, it will produce nothing but the original fruit. God made it a law of nature that the earth would bring forth “the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind” (Genesis 1:11). This principle is also true in the spiritual realm. If there had not been a church of God upon the earth following the New Testament order for the last nineteen hundred years, but God’s Word had survived, when people read, understood, and obeyed it, it would make of them exactly what it made on that memorable Pentecost. It would replicate the original—the same church as in the beginning. This is what the church of Christ seeks to do in every generation.

“Thus says the Lord: ‘Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls.’”

JEREMIAH 6:16



What is the CHURCH?

- A practice field for patience and compassion.
- A fellowship against loneliness.
- A resting place.
- A garden where God comes looking for us.
- A bathing for washing guilt away.
- A reflecting pool.
- An internship for minister-members.
- A kneeling bench.
- A rescue mission where God finds us.
- A laboratory of life.
- A school instructing those who would fear God.
- A hospital for healing souls.
- A cafeteria where God feeds us.
- A classroom of truth.
- A track for walkers in the Way of Christ.
- A hospitable door.
- A herald of Good News—joyful, hopeful, helpful words.

“The kingdom of heaven is like . . .”

MATTHEW 22:2

Why Go to Church?

Is it a waste of time? A churchgoer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. “I’ve gone for thirty years now,” he wrote, “and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me, I can’t remember a single one of them. So, I think I’m wasting my time and preachers are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all.” This started a weeklong controversy in the column. It went on until someone wrote this clincher: “I’ve been married for thirty years now. In that time my wife has cooked 32,000 meals. But for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of them. But I know this: They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not cooked these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today.”

“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

ACTS 20:32



Recommended Resource



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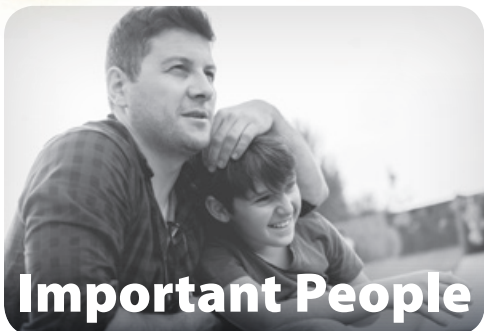
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VOLUME 24:8



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Important People

Take this quiz:

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman Trophy winners.
3. Name the last five Miss Americas.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last half-dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress.
6. Name the last decade's World Series winners.

How did you do? Remember these are not second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Few remember yesterday's headliners.
Here's another quiz:

1. List three teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name five friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name two people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of ten people who have made you feel appreciated and special.
5. Think of ten people with whom you enjoy spending time.
6. Name a half-dozen heroes whose stories have inspired you.

Easier? Those who make a difference in our lives are not those with the most credentials, money, or awards. They are the ones who care the most.

"When he saw him, he had compassion."

LUKE 10:33



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