

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



# *The Word and Work*



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

MAY, 1998

## **Eight different ideas about DEATH (Seven are Not True)**

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**What about that Tunnel and the Being of Light?**

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**Farewell for a while, Brother Jack**

\* \* \*

**Good Dads and Moms make such a Difference**

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**The Jews through the Ages, and Now . . .  
and What do they Think about the Messiah?**

\* \* \*

**Support, and take Advantage of, Christian Camps**

## Woodland Bible Camp Must Install Septic System. Help Needed.

Woodland Bible Camp has been teaching about our Lord Jesus Christ, the Scriptures, and Christian living since 1964. In that time, over 20,000 campers have attended the camp's weeks or retreats. Six hundred and eight have received Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Last year over 500 campers attended and eight were baptized. As you can see from our past, a week at Woodland would help your youth grow in Christ.

At this time the camp is in need of your financial help. The Indiana State Department of Health has forced the camp to install a new septic system at the campgrounds. ISDH has approved plans for the new system. Although this new system is far more than what the camp needs, it is the smallest system ISDH would allow. The Camp's Board of Directors has accepted a bid from a local contractor to do all the necessary work. The bid is for \$19,204. According to ISDH, the work must begin by June 1, 1998.

The camp has always been in good financial standing and has worked hard at keeping camper fees low. Presently the camp's general fund has a financial balance of \$100. A good many individuals and churches, especially in the Linton area, have already donated over half to the funds needed for the septic system. We thank the Lord for those gifts. However, that still leaves a large balance of funds, approximately \$9,000.00, needed for the new system. As a last step, the Board of Directors is confident that we could attain a loan. However we are hoping to avoid getting into debt. If your church could help, please send your check to Eugene Pound, 110 "B" St. NE, Linton, IN 47441 and earmark it for "septic system". Make checks to Woodland Bible Camp.

--Mike Abbott, President

# THE WORD AND WORK

*"Declare the whole counsel of God"*

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

Dennis L. Allen, Missions

Jack Blaes, News

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## In This Issue

*Theme: Churches and Denominations, Preachers and Preaching*

Editorial -- Alex V. Wilson .....	130
What Happens at Death and Beyond -- Alex V. Wilson .....	132
Thought-Provokers about Death. ....	139
What About Life After Life? -- the Editor .....	141
A Prayer for Fathers .....	147
Mom Brings Out the Best in Us -- Joyce Broyles .....	148
Modern Israel at 50, Part 1 -- Alex Wilson .....	150
Messianic Trends in Israel -- Will Varner .....	153
Vocies from the Field .....	156
Farewell for a While, Brother Jack .....	157
News and Notes .....	158

**Theme:**

## **Staring Death in the Face**

This month our "What the Bible Teaches" series turns a corner. I'm not sure how many of you read these studies in doctrines. Many may feel, "Boring--I know all those things." And maybe you do. But review and re-study are important; at least Peter thought so (2 Pet. 1:12-15). If we master scripture's teachings we can explain them to other people too. Lots of folks are ignorant and/or confused on many of these matters. Share what you know. If they are interested in some specific topic, you could pass an article on to them for their enlightenment.

Our first sixteen articles were mainly about God (four in all), and salvation (six)--though we also covered the Bible, angels, occultism, sin, and the church (2). Now we begin the various aspects of future things or "the last things"--called eschatology. First we take up personal eschatology: what will happen in your future as an individual. That includes death, resurrection, and in between. But you may not die; Jesus may come first! So we will study His return and various related subjects. These are sometimes called general or universal eschatology, for they cover the future of world affairs, the church, the unconverted, and the universe. They include matters like the antichrist, the Day of the Lord, judgment --of the saved and of the lost, the millennium, hell and heaven. All these are important, so stay tuned. And of course weigh what is presented by the Word of God. We aim to promote Bible study, not replace it. You need not agree with the writer, of course. But we hope you have good reasons when you disagree.

But along with this month's main theme there is a second. Fifty years ago the modern state of Israel was established. This turns our minds to Scripture's teachings about the Jewish people and their past, present and future. So in this issue and some following ones, we will address those questions too.

### **Unbreakable Appointment?**

According to a legend, a wealthy merchant in Baghdad one day sent his servant to the market to buy provisions for the household. Very soon the servant returned and ran into the master's presence. He was pale-faced and trembling.

"What is wrong?" exclaimed the merchant.

"Master, I just now met Death in the market place, and when Death saw me he raised his arm to strike me. Master, I am afraid! I must escape. I pray, let me borrow your fastest horse so I may flee to Samarra."

The merchant, being kindhearted, consented, and the servant rode swiftly away toward the city of Samarra.

After his departure, the merchant himself went to the market. He too saw Death, and going boldly up to him said, "Why did you raise your hand to strike my servant a while ago?"

"Why," answered Death, "I meant him no harm. That was merely a gesture of surprise. I was surprised to see him here in Baghdad, for I have an appointment with him tonight in the city of Samarra."

\* \* \* \*

Yes. And even now, in an age of EMS, wonder drugs, ultra-sound and micro-surgery, we can only escape death for so long. A recent article in the newspaper recalled the flu epidemic of 1918. Half a million died in the U.S.--196,000 of them in a single month--and twenty million worldwide. But the swiftness of the plague was as amazing as its scope.

"Victims were struck down almost in midstride. Four women in a bridge group played cards together till 11 p.m. The next morning three of them were dead. One man got on a streetcar feeling well enough to go to work, rode six blocks and died."

And listen to this statement from the same source: "If a [virus] similar to the 1918 variant were to emerge today, some experts believe that even modern medicine would be helpless to prevent many related deaths." As I often say at funerals, "Life is short, Death is sure." But the rest of the poem is the most important. "Sin's a curse, Christ's the cure."

### Avoid Mediums like the Plague (Deut.18:9-12)

But death is not only beyond our control. It also ravages the hearts of those left behind, especially if they have no sure hope for the life to come. Thus many bereaved folks grasp at any wild claim they hear in their frenzy to know what lies beyond death and how they can penetrate its veil.

James Van Praagh, a medium and best-selling author on these matters, came to our area lately. His book, "Talking to Heaven," has sold like hotcakes: 600,000 hardback copies just between November

and mid-March! (I mention his name and its title not to recommend them but warn against them.) Hundreds of people, some from very distant places, came to hear him. They wanted assurance that their loved ones had survived and were happy. For some of them, the medium claimed he "connected" with their loved one--speaking to a husband named Mike and a teen-age daughter who had been killed. He told one man that his departed wife was "standing over here."

He teaches conventional spiritist beliefs, which contradict the Bible. God is in **everyone**, he says. There is life after death, but really there is no death. The spirit world to which all people go when they die has many levels in it--good, bad and in-between. Where you end up in that world depends on how you treat people before you die, the love you give out. Sure, he's not 100% wrong. There's enough truth there to make the falsehoods alluring. Most rat-poisons contain over 95% good stuff too; it's that little bit of deadly stuff that gets them.

And here's something sad. One person who heard Van Praagh speak said she was skeptical at first but convinced at the end. Being asked if she was sure he wasn't a sham, she replied, "I don't know, but his message affirms what I want to believe. And that's sometimes all that we need." Another James wrote something she needs to know. "Don't be deceived... Do not deceive yourselves" (James 1:16, 22). Both are horrid possibilities to the unwary.

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#### *What the Bible Teaches about...*

### **WHAT HAPPENS AT DEATH, AND BEYOND**

Alex V. Wilson

You have never thought seriously about Life unless you have thought seriously about Death and Eternity!

#### **Many Different Views Are Held:**

1. Some people believe in ANNIHILATION or EXTINCTION. This was a fairly common view in the days of Jesus and the beginning of the church. For example, a number of tombstones dating from that period have been found, bearing this inscription:

I was not. I became.

I am not. I care not.

But -- the person buried there had only guessed (and maybe hoped) that death would end it all. He hadn't proved it by experience! His belief may have been prompted by the desire that there be no after-life because if there was, he would be in trouble.

A modern example of this belief was Bertrand Russell, famous philosopher and critic of Christianity earlier in this century. He wrote, "When I die I shall rot, & nothing of my ego will survive. I am not afraid."

Of course the Bible repeatedly contradicts this idea. Jesus' resurrection disproved it once and for all. In addition He said, "A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear [my] voice and come out--those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned" (Jn.5:28-29).

## **2. Some believe in the IMMORTALITY of the SOUL or SPIRIT or PERSONALITY ONLY --but NOT the BODY.**

Many ancient Greek philosophers taught this. The basis of the belief was their idea that all matter was evil. Only spirit was good. If that be true, then for the body to be resurrected would be bad. Man would still be imprisoned in his vile dwelling.

The Bible strongly disagrees. It teaches that God made our body as well as our spirit. His Son became flesh, with a genuine human body. After He died His body was raised from death, a glorified-but-material body. The Holy Spirit indwells our bodies. We can glorify God in our bodies. And we shall have real (though glorified) bodies for eternity, through resurrection (or transformation, if we are alive when Christ returns). These six points provide overwhelming evidence that God thinks He made no mistake when He created physical matter, including our bodies! (References: Gen. 2:7; Jn.1:14; Lk.24:37-39 & 1 Cor.15:12-20; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 Cor.15:42-44, 51-53 & Phil.3:20-21 & 1 Thes.4:16-17.)

## **3. Some who believe in the Immortality of the Spirit try to CONTACT THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD.**

They attend spiritist seances or even spiritualist "churches." Perhaps they feel terribly lonely in their bereavement, or seek assurance that death does not end all. Maybe they seek guidance from a departed parent or spouse in making a difficult decision. Some have merely wanted to learn the location of some important item! Others hope to discover information by which they can gain power over others, perhaps through blackmail.

Or nowadays they might be lured into meetings of New Age groups, who claim to contact spirits of the deceased through "channeling." Many are attracted to such groups through fascination with sensational experiences.

But God's Word declares all such practices totally out of bounds. And that's not only because many spiritist and New Age activities are mere tricks and fakery, but because some of them are not! True, much is counterfeit; but some is real and superhuman--energized by Satan. Many passages condemn such practices. Here are three of the plainest. "I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists...." (Lev.20:6; 19:31). The most complete list is found in Deut.18:9-13. There the Lord forbids all magic ("sorcery ...witchcraft...casts spells"), and fortunetelling ("divination...interprets omens"), and mediums, spiritists or anyone else "who consults the dead." He calls these activities "detestable" and ranks them with killing of children as sacrifices to the gods.

**4. Some believe in REINCARNATION.** The Eastern religions--Hinduism, Buddhism and others--all teach reincarnation. And several cults which have roots in Hinduism and have spread in the U.S., teach it also. Examples include Hare Krishna, and theosophy (which is the philosophy underlying the practice of yoga). Edgar Cayce, the "sleeping prophet" who died decades ago but whose writings are still popular, believed it. Transcendental Meditation for years claimed to be "a science, not a religion," but this claim has been disproved even in court. It too teaches reincarnation, though it may softpedal it in the beginning classes it offers to the public. And the New Age movement in its numerous forms is also shot through with this belief.

A usual foundation of reincarnation is the idea that forgiveness by God is impossible. You must reap what you sow, you must pay for your sins--and there is no escape from this rule of cause-and-effect, called "karma." The Theosophical Society teaches, "We believe neither in vicarious atonement [that is, that Jesus could be our substitute and bear the penalty for our sin] nor in the possibility of the remission of the smallest sin by any god." Since they disbelieve in redemption, then every person must pay in full for all his sins. And to do that requires many lifetimes! Here is their explanation:

Since the evil we do is usually not paid for in any one lifetime, it must be paid for in the next. If in one life you were bad, in the following life you might be born as a poor, sick person as your punishment. (In Hinduism you might even be born as an animal; but most of the cults do not teach that.) If you were good, then in the following life you'll be born as a healthy, rich person. Edgar Cayce wrote, "Since we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, we would be doomed if we had only one life for making ourselves acceptable to the Father." [Notice the legalism in that quote: we must earn God's favor by our goodness.] He even believed that when "Christ" (the spirit) became reincarnated in "Jesus" (the man), it was his 30th incarnation! But since Jesus reached perfection, no other incarnations were needed

afterwards. If Christ needed 30 incarnations to reach the goal, how many will you and I need?

The founder of TM, named Mahesh Maharishi Yogi, claimed that Jesus believed in reincarnation. After all, He taught, "You must be born again." Yes, but not again and again! Of course Jesus meant we must be "born from above" now, of water and the Spirit, not reincarnated in another lifetime as another person. Another passage used to support this idea is Matt.17:12, where Jesus said, "Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him...." The disciples understood that He referred to John the Baptizer. But does that mean that John was a reincarnation of Elijah? Not at all, for just a few moments before that, Elijah had appeared with Jesus and Moses on the mount of Transfiguration! The prophet had lived 800 years before Christ, but when he visited the Lord he was still Elijah, and Moses (who'd lived perhaps 1,400 years before) was still Moses. So much for being born again as somebody else.

Not only that, but other Scriptures contradict the whole idea. "It is appointed unto men once to die; and after that, the judgment" (Heb.9:27). One death, followed by judgment; not many deaths, followed each time by another life. Luke 16:19-31 shows that righteous Lazarus would not return to earth again, and the wicked rich man could not. And reincarnation's basis, the idea that we must earn salvation, is totally anti-Biblical.

**5. Some believe in SOUL-SLEEP between Death & the Resurrection.** That is, when you die you become unconscious, in fact nonexistent--but only temporarily. At resurrection time God will re-create you so your life can be judged. Then you will go to your eternal destiny.

The Jehovah's Witnesses and 7th-Day Adventists teach this, and Herbert W. Armstrong taught it while he lived (but the Worldwide Church of God, which he founded, has since his death changed from being a far-out cult to being Biblical in most of their beliefs--and all of the major ones!).

The Bible does describe the death of Christians as "falling asleep," but that does not prove soul-sleep as defined above. Scripture teaches, not that the soul sleeps but that the body looks asleep, and the deceased now "rests from his labors" (Rev.14:13). However, the soul or spirit is neither nonexistent nor unconscious. 2 Cor.5:6-9 says that to "be away from the body" means to be "at home with the Lord." Obviously this does not refer to our condition after we are raised from death, for then we shall not be away from the body. It can only refer to the period between death and resurrection. Note where we shall be at

that time. This agrees with Paul's words in Phil.1:23, "I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far."

**6. Some believe in THREE Possible Destinies after Death: Heaven, Hell or PURGATORY.** Roman Catholic doctrine says that only outstanding "saints" go directly to heaven when they die. Other Christians must go to purgatory to suffer for their sins in this life, and to be purified from their sinful hearts and made fit for heaven. An official R.C.C. book says,

[Church members] who have never done penance...have a heavy load of punishment to atone for....If this punishment is not atoned for on earth, then [God] demands that satisfaction be made after death...For "nothing unclean can enter into heaven" (Apoc.21:27)....Most men, at the time of their death, are not good enough for heaven and still not bad enough for eternal damnation....

[I added the emphasis.--AVW]

Not only must he pay for his sins but his soul must be cleansed after death by cleansing pains.

The length of time to be spent in purgatory is unknown by those here on earth. An elderly R.C. friend of mine still prays daily that his father, who died 40 years ago, will get out of purgatory--just in case he's still there. How very sad.

For the Bible never mentions purgatory even once! (How strange, if it is as common and important as the R.C.C. teaches.) Instead it mentions only 2 destinations, eternal punishment and eternal life (Mt.25:46). There is the narrow road leading to life and the broad road leading to destruction--and no detours! (Mt.7:13-14.)

And the idea of purgatory detracts from Christ's achievement at the cross. His death didn't accomplish very much if, after we are saved, we are still unfit for heaven. The quoted statement about not being good enough for heaven is an insult to God's gift to us of justification ("No condemnation," Rom.3:23-24; 5:1; 8:1). It also overlooks the fact that Christ's own righteousness is credited to those who trust in Him: With Paul, the believer may say, I am in Christ, "not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith" (Phil.3:9; see 2 Cor.5:21 also). Paul wrote that even the Corinthians, with all their short-comings, were "sanctified in Christ Jesus," for God had made Him their righteousness and holiness (1 Cor.1:2, 30). Thus, no need for purgatory.

Also, the underlined statement that most people are not bad enough for hell terribly underestimates the seriousness of sin. The God of the Bible is perfectly holy, and our transgressions deserve His righteous judgment.

## **7. Some believe in UNIVERSALISM: There is ONLY ONE Possible Eternal Destiny: ALL will go to Heaven at the end, if not right after Death.**

This is a popular position among "Liberal Christian" teachers. For example, theologian D.T. Niles wrote, "God loves us, Jesus died for us, our trespasses are not counted, when we die we shall go to Him who will be our judge. These statements are true of all men whether they know them or not, like them or not, accept them or not." And Bishop John Robinson of England believed, "Hell is an ultimate impossibility because already there is no one outside Christ."

Again, the president of a seminary in the Philippines said, "God's grace includes all men, though some don't know it. They are saved but unaware of it." A questioner in the audience asked, "What if a man says, 'God, I don't want You or Your heaven. I reject Your grace and salvation'?" The seminary leader replied, "That's the beautiful thing about God's grace. God rejects man's rejection of Him." So God will drag men into Heaven screaming and kicking if He has to, it seems.

But the Bible shows that God really respects the freedom of choice which he gave us. Jesus grieved over Jerusalem, "How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but You Were Not Willing" (Mt.23:37). And instead of only one final destiny Scripture regularly speaks of two. We already quoted Mt.7:13-14 & 25:46 in refuting view #6, but they apply here as well. Also Jn.3:16 (2 options: eternal life, or perish), plus Jn.3:36, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." Those are solemn words, spoken not by some vengeful deity but by the yearning, loving Son of God. They cannot be brushed aside.

## **8. Some believe in CONSCIOUS SURVIVAL of the SPIRIT AFTER DEATH, and a FUTURE RESURRECTION of the BODY, followed by TWO POSSIBLE ETERNAL DESTINIES, - either HEAVEN or HELL.**

The Bible teaching used above to refute the 7 wrong views, leads to the acceptance of this 8th one. Here are additional passages, not yet mentioned, which verify the conscious existence of our spirit between death and the resurrection. (This is our main point in this lesson. See #5 also.)

a. Luke 23:43, Jesus' good news to the dying thief. "Today you will be with me in paradise." (The meaning of paradise is explained in 2 Cor.12:2-3; the "3rd heaven" means the presence of God.)

b. Luke 23:46, Jesus' dying words on the cross. "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

- c. Matt. 27:50, Jesus' death described. He "gave up his spirit."
- d. Acts 7:59, Stephen's martyrdom: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."
- e. Heb.12:22,23, "...the spirits of righteous men made perfect."

### **Other passages of interest, for further study:**

1. Luke 16:19-31. V. 23 should not be, "In hell," as the NIV says, but "In Hades," as its foot-note says. Hades is like the jail or place of temporary confinement until a criminal's trial is held. This is where the spirits of the unconverted are at present. Then, if a criminal is convicted, he goes to prison. Hell will be the permanent prison of the damned after Judgment.

Before the death of Christ, the spirits of saved people also went to a compartment of hades. The Jews referred to this as "Abraham's side" or "Abraham's bosom" (he embraced them as they entered). In Jesus' story, Lazarus--like the OT righteous people--went there. But since Christ's death, the righteous dead go to paradise, as we saw above.

2. Rev.6:9-11. Here and in Rev.20:4 the dead are called "souls," rather than "spirits," as in most other passages. This is no problem; the two terms are often used interchangeably. (As in Job 7:11, Luke 1:46-7, etc.) Rev.6:9-11 shows them conscious and aware of conditions on earth, at least to some extent. I don't believe this proves they know everything taking place on earth. Probably the Lord shields them from knowing all the awful, evil things that occur--else how could they be happy even there with Him? Paul wrote that we "shall know fully" only "when perfection comes" (1 Cor.13:9-12), and that will happen only when Christ returns and our resurrection/glorification occurs.

### **The Good-News Conclusion:**

For disciples of Jesus, death takes our spirit to His presence in heaven, which is better by far than our present life. Yet God did not destine us to remain bodiless beings forever. So something much grander awaits us at Christ's return, whether we be dead or alive when that occurs.

We shall receive bodies described as imperishable, glorious, powerful, and spiritual--bodies like Christ's after He arose. (1 Cor.15:42-44; Phil.3:21.)

That will be glory indeed. "Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore...let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Cor.15:57-58).

## Thought-Provokers about D-E-A-T-H

"Die before you Die. Afterwards it is too late." --C. S. Lewis  
(perhaps quoting George MacDonald). Compare the words of Jesus.

\* \* \*

In a comic-strip, a nurse tells the doctor, "The hypochondriac is here to see you." Next we see the doctor asking the woman, "Why are you so concerned about your health?" Her reply: "Death runs in our family."--The Wizard of Id

\* \* \*

"When we die, and where we are buried, and what kind of a funeral we have, matters little. The great question to be asked is this, 'How shall we rise again?'" --J. C. Ryle

\* \* \*

Gen. William Nelson, a Union general in the Civil War, was consumed with the battles in Kentucky when a brawl ended up in his being shot, mortally, in the chest. He had faced many battles, but the fatal blow came while relaxing with his men. As such, he was caught fully unprepared. As men ran up the stairs to help him, the general had just one phrase, "Send for a clergyman; I wish to be baptized." Gary Thomas in Christianity Today. 10-3-94

\* \* \*

John Wesley was able to say of the thousands of believers under his leadership, "Our people die well."

In recent years a bishop of one denomination estimated that only about 10% of the members of his church body are prepared and spiritually ready to die when their time comes.

\* \* \*

"My wife once asked a young woman friend whether she had ever thought of death, and she replied, 'By the time I reach that age science will have done something about it!'" --C. S. Lewis

\* \* \*

One day a doctor called on a Christian woman in Brixton, England. He was deeply distressed, for his little son--an only child--had just died.

Gently the woman asked him, "Doctor, have you ever watched a shepherd and his sheep in the springtime? I have noticed that sometimes he will take a lamb from the flock, go through the hedge and put it in the next field. The mother will give a little bleat and be after it, followed by the rest of the flock.

"You know, doctor, the Good Shepherd sometimes does the same sort of thing. He cannot always get us older folk to follow Him, but He takes a little lamb and puts it happily in a better pasture, so that its parents get a longing to be with it. It does not always happen as quickly as among actual sheep, but the parents will find the Good Shepherd for themselves. . . for 'where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'"

That simple illustration meant so much to the doctor that soon he and his wife both became followers of their lamb, and of the Lamb who is also Shepherd. (A true story)

\* \* \*

"It is true that death takes us all. However, death is not the great leveler. It is the great divider. It separates those who have trusted Christ from those who have not. It makes permanent the loyalty we have pledged to God or the rebellion we have mounted against Him."

John Newport

\* \* \*

After several black children were killed by a bomb while attending Sunday school in Birmingham on Sept. 15, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. spoke these words at the funeral:

"I hope you can find some consolation from Christianity's affirmation that death is not the end. Death is not a period that ends the great sentence of life, but a comma that punctuates it to more lofty significance . . . Let this daring faith, this great invincible surmise, be your sustaining power during these trying days."

\* \* \*

"Let us live as people who are prepared to die, and die as people who are prepared to live." James S. Stewart

# What About Life After Life?

by the Editor

Is there *life after death*? And if so, will there be a *judgment* of our conduct and character in this life? Christians have always answered "Yes" to these questions, based on the Bible's clear teaching. To give one example among many: "God has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising Jesus from the dead" (Acts 17:81). But many people have denied these teachings, and strongly contradicted the whole idea of judgment and punishment.

In recent years there has been renewed interest in these questions, due not to the teaching of religious leaders but to the research of medical doctors. Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, an authority on dying and how to care for the dying and the bereaved has written a great deal on these subjects. And Dr. Raymond Moody published an earthshaking book, *Life After Life*. This was popularized by *The Reader's Digest*. And a flood of articles has appeared in newspapers and magazines since then on what is called the near-death experience. They seem to have multiplied faster than a warren of rabbits.

Thirteen years ago, when I first wrote about this subject, professor of psychology Kenneth Ring estimated that "perhaps as many as eight million [Americans] have experienced this phenomenon . . . It cuts across race, gender, age, education, marital status, social class . . . Religious orientation does not make a difference in affecting either the likelihood or the depth of a near-death experience. An atheist is just as likely to have one as is a devoutly religious person." (*U.S. News & World Report* 6/11/84.) A year ago the same magazine said that maybe as many as fifteen million Americans "have had unusual experiences while straddling the line between life and death . . . A small percentage recall vivid images of an afterlife--including tunnels of light, peaceful meadows, and angelic figures clad in white" (3/31/97).

## A Typical Case

Here was a woman's testimony given on TV: "I had gallbladder surgery and after that I was not responding well . . . There had been terrific pain but it suddenly stopped. It was just wonderful. No pain. And I was not in the body. I could look back and see my body on the bed. Then I had what I call 'guides' with me--people, messengers, angels. And I'm coming out into a very, very bright light. There were people there. My mother and my grandparents met me. I met a Being of Light that I recognized as Jesus. And I'd always heard that on

judgment day you're going to be judged. But my whole life was flashed in front of me. What I had done, and guess what? He wasn't judging me. I was doing my own judgment on myself, whether I was happy or not.

"But oddly enough as we were going toward the city of light I was kept being told, You still have things to do, don't you want to go back? No, I didn't want to go back. But at the same time my daughter was calling and my husband was saying 'Don't go, we need you.' And I finally said I would. I immediately felt myself reentering through the top of my head, going in and the pain was terrific."

Hundreds have given similar testimonies--though details differ from case to case.

### Conclusion: Hell is Not so Bad!

The overall conclusion of Doctors Moody, Kubler-Ross, and others as popularized by *The Reader's Digest*, is this: Now we have very strong scientific evidence that there is life after death . . . but that there is No lasting punishment for sin or exclusion by God from joys of the after-life.

For example, Dr. Kubler-Ross said this: "The real hell comes when you are given a review of your own life--very much like watching it on television. You will see all the times that you should have acted one way and you acted another; all the times you brought pain to others you will regret. It is not God who will convince you of your wrongs, but yourself. And it is hell."

So, according to her, hell is only that review of the life you lived. Most of the people who claimed to have experienced such a review said it occurred very rapidly. Their whole life seemed to flash by almost instantaneously.

Because of these reports, many people have concluded that that is all that hell is. They feel great relief "Hooray, hell won't be bad at all! It will only last a short time, and then we will go on to enjoy the after-life for as long as it will last."

Dr. Moody writes, "Through all my research I have not heard a single reference to a heaven or a hell anything like the customary picture to which we are exposed in this society . . . In most cases, the reward-punishment model of the afterlife is abandoned, even by many who had been accustomed to thinking in these terms. They found, much to their amazement, that even when their most apparently awful and sinful deeds were made manifest before the being of light, the be-

ing responded not with anger or rage but rather only with understanding and even with humor."

## How Should Bible Believing Christians Respond To These Ideas?

First, realize that the researchers differ in their findings. For example, a doctor in Denver claims that of 2300 patients who came close to death, 1400 (60%) reported experiences somewhat similar to the ones we described earlier. On the other hand, a National Instructor of the American Heart Association, Dr. Maurice Rawlings, says that his research shows that only 20% of those brought back to life have any testimony to share concerning their experiences; the remaining 4 out of 5 remember nothing at all. So we should not put too much confidence yet in the research that has been done so far, even from a scientific viewpoint.

Second, some people feel that Doctors Moody and Kubler-Ross have been selective in reporting the cases they have learned about, i.e. it seems they have deliberately overlooked or refused to report some facts they learned. Joe Ludders of the Christian Medical Society sates, "There are a number of cases that we know of in the Christian Medical Society that are diametrically opposed to what Moody has reported. A number of our physicians report that when dying people have been resuscitated . . . (some) felt it was not a pleasant experience . . . (but rather) fear, anxiety and stress." See the book review following this article.

So we should realize that even scientists and doctors may allow prejudices to influence what they write. In the case of Dr. Kubler-Ross, she admits that she engages in spiritism. "In Sept. 1976 (she) came in contact with 'spirit guides' who 'now appear to her often and serve her as her personal guides.'" (Philip Swihart in *The Edge Of Death*, page 30). It is not surprising then to find that her writings agree with the doctrines of spiritualism. She also apparently believes in reincarnation.

Third, and most important: Our knowledge of life after death, of judgment, and of eternal destiny should be based on God's Word the Bible. The Lord God who reveals Himself in the Bible as our Creator and Judge, and who offers to be our Savior, has told us facts about what happens after death. We can have confidence in what HE reveals to us. And if scientific research or our own experiences seem to contradict the Bible, we should keep believing the Bible anyway. For God has given many evidences that it is His Word--through its fulfilled prophecies, its historical accuracy, its life-changing moral

power, and because of the testimony of Jesus who died, was buried, and then was raised to live forever.

We do not mean that Christians oppose scientific research such as is now being carried on. Such research may contribute to medical progress in some ways, revealing how to bring people back from the brink of death in some cases.

We DO mean that real Christians--i.e., genuine followers of Jesus--should base their beliefs on what God's Word the Bible says, rather than on the opinions of doctors or theories of scientists on these matters.

A number of people felt that hell was only the review of their life which they experienced, when they judged themselves--i.e., felt sorry --for the bad things they had done in this life. But that doesn't prove that Hell is really like that. One man felt that he had actually been in a terrifying hell of awful torment. But that by itself doesn't prove that Hell is really like that, either. Some seemed to experience no kind of judgment at all. But that doesn't prove that there will be no judgment. One psychiatrist had an experience which changed his former views on heaven and hell. "I saw no hell-fire . . . I know beyond a doubt that the Christ I saw will accept everyone, good or bad, even those who didn't believe in him." But his experience doesn't prove that his opinion is correct.

You see, these experiences and opinions contradict each other. They cannot all be correct. So if we base our beliefs on these experiences and opinions, we face a very big problem: How do we know who is right and who is wrong? Which opinions are correct and which are false?

But--In Dr. Moody's 2nd book he mentions a number of people who take a Biblical attitude in this matter. He says these people still believe that there will be a final judgment, though "they accept this on the basis of scriptural authority alone and did not derive it from anything they learned while in their state of near-death or apparent-'death'."

The Bible tells us what God wants us to know about resurrection, judgment, and heaven, and hell. We should base our beliefs on the Bible instead of human experiences and opinions. The Bible-believing Christian must not select which Bible-teachings He wants to believe and then reject whatever Bible-teaching he doesn't like. He must not decide to believe in heaven because he hopes that doctrine is true, but disbelieve in hell because he hopes that doctrine is not true. He does

not try to teach God what is true or false, but seeks to learn from God what is true--and then believe it, whether it appeals to him or not.

Notice this important point: The experiences recorded in these books "were experiences of DYING people, not DEAD people." (Ryrie) Now we admit that it's hard to define death precisely in medical terms, and doctors, lawyers and others disagree on exactly when death occurs. "Not all parts of the body die at the same instant, so while certain clinical signs may (be) absent, the body may not totally cease to function . . . But none of the cases involved returning from the grave" (Ryrie, *Kindred Spirit*).

Christians can have confidence about what the Bible teaches about death and judgment and eternal destiny. For Jesus proved that He is stronger than death. He raised Lazarus from the dead after Lazarus had died and been buried; in fact, Lazarus had been dead for more than 3 days!

More than that, Jesus Himself conquered death. Lazarus and other who were raised by Jesus still had bodies like our own, and after some time they died again. But when Jesus arose, His body was transformed, glorious, immortal (un-die-able) body which would never die again. And when He returns to resurrect His followers, then He will--in the words of Paul "change our lowly body to be like this glorious body" (Phil.3:21).

So the really important question is this: What did Jesus Himself and His appointed apostles, teach about death, judgment, and eternal destiny? Let us see how Christ's teachings differ from several ideas which Doctors Moody and Kubler-Ross have popularized:

#### Their Views:

1. God will accept everyone, whether they trust in Jesus as Savior or not, whether they desire to do the will of God or not. No one will be rejected, no matter what they trust in or how they live.

2. God does not judge us and punish sin. The Being of Light responds to even "awful and sinful deeds" with "understanding and even with humor."

3. There is a judgment, but we only judge ourselves, and it happens very fast--as our life flashes before us and we experience regret for the bad acts we did. Then it's over, and we experience joy/beauty.

#### Jesus Said:

1. On Judgment-day He will tell some people, "Depart from me, you evil-doers." (Matt. 7:23)

2. "I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear him!" (Luke 12:5)

3. At judgment-day He will say to those who reject Him, "Depart from me . . . into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41)

So the attitude of the Being of Light repeatedly contradicts what Jesus taught. Whom shall we believe? Listen to Paul, in Gal. 1:8,

Even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed.

The Being of Light is teaching a false gospel--the idea that if you just try your best, be sincere and loving and seek knowledge, then God will accept you and you don't need to worry about anything.

The true gospel of John teaches us this: Don't depend on your own conduct or goodness or sincerity, for all have sinned and deserve judgment from the righteous Judge of the universe. But the Judge loves you and came to die and pay the penalty your sins deserve, so that he might forgive you and let you share in His joy and glory forever--IF you turn from your sinful self-centeredness and commit yourself to Him, Jesus Christ.

Last, if the Being of Light is not Jesus, then who is he? We would not be dogmatic in answering that question. But it is interesting that Paul says in 2 Cor. 11:14, "Even Satan disguises himself as an ANGEL OF LIGHT." Think about that!

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### More on "Life after Life:"

Dr. Maurice Rawlings, a Fellow of the American College of Cardiology, and a National Instructor for the American Heart Association, wrote a book entitled, *Beyond Death's Door*. In it he said,

"I had read other accounts of clinically dead patients who were resuscitated and spoke of the experience as pleasant. I felt I had to correct that impression.

"Through patients I have personally revived from the death experience, I have found that an immediate interview at the scene of the emergency reveals as many bad experiences as good ones." A book review in *The Prairie Overcomer* summarizes the material as follows:

1. Only 20% of those brought back to life have any testimony to share concerning "life after death."
2. Of these some are reluctant to divulge what they have seen and heard because it reflects negatively on them.
3. In the case of some, the "bad" experiences cannot be recalled even days afterward even though at the time of resuscitation they described the horrors they were facing.
4. Our belief in heaven and hell is based ultimately upon the testimony of Jesus Christ and the Bible.

## A PRAYER FOR FATHERS

Mender of toys, leader of boys,  
Changer of fuses, kisser of bruises,  
Bless him, dear Lord!

Mover of couches, soother of "ouchers,"  
Pounder of nails, teller of tales,  
Reward him, O Lord!

Hanger of screens, counselor of teens,  
Fixer of bikes, chastiser of tykes,  
Help him, O Lord!

Raker of leaves, cleaner of eaves,  
Dryer of tears, comforter of fears,  
Bless him, O Lord!

--Richard Heyer

Father's Day will have come and gone before the next issue of our bulletin. We would like to call special attention to them and their serious place of responsibility in this issue. We urge careful consideration of what is said.

Rob Grandi's newsletter reprinted an article by Chuck Colson. Note the following synopsis of it.

This is "the year of the father" and we are finally discovering the crucial role fathers play in social problems. Growing up without a father is now the single most reliable predictor of crime. High crime rates correlate less with race, poverty or bad neighborhoods than with children growing up fatherless. (May we add that almost as bad are fathers who do not give proper time to their children.)

The lesson is clear, Colson continues, to halt social decay we must address the decline of fatherhood. It is obvious government programs are not the answer to this dilemma. (Nor is the humanist philosophy permeating every facet of our society.)

Churches can help with social evils by creating a place of dignity and respect for men within the family. We can encourage men to be godly husbands and fathers.

For too long many men have dismissed religion as something for women and children. Churches need to present the tough masculine demand of the Christian faith. We must recapture the vision that being a real man means being a man of God.

The article quotes Leon Podles: "Scripture calls men to be warriors for the good; to protect their families and communities from the evils that threaten them. It's a battle men wage not by being belligerent, but by following the model of Jesus; being brave enough to suffer and sacrifice for the sake of others--beginning with one's wife and children."

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong. (1 Corinthians 16:13) Jonathan Edwards said: "Resolved: that all men should live for the glory of God. Resolved second: that whether others do or not, I will."

--from Gallatin Bulletin

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## MOM BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN US

Joyce Broyles

In America, the second Sunday in May is observed as an occasion for each person to remember his mother by some act of grateful affection. Phone lines and floral shops will be very busy that day.

Many famous quotations have been made about mothers. Perhaps the best known is attributed to Abraham Lincoln. He wrote, "All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."

Ralph Waldo Emerson echoed that when he said, "Men are what their mothers made them." Some mothers would be happy to take credit for what their children become, but others may be offended by them. When I was selfish, rude, and disobedient, Mother was disappointed, but unconditional love kept her working on me.

Victor Hugo wrote, "Mothers' arms are made of tenderness, and sweet sleep blesses the child who lies therein." Feelings of security and safety promote restful sleep. Unlike many children today, I always felt secure at home.

A good mother may try to be tender, yet firm, or give tough love, as Dr. Dobson called it. A Jewish proverb says that "God could not be everywhere, so He created mothers." As a child, I thought my mother's eyes were as all-seeing as God's. I could not hide much from her.

And Henry Ward Beecher wrote, "God pardons like a mother who kisses the offense into everlasting forgetfulness." My mother was like that. No matter how unlovable I was, she loved me, forgave me, and never brought up old sins to me. Mom did not keep count of my mistakes.

Mom's heart was my schoolroom, as she kept teaching basic morals for me to use later in making decisions. I realize now that it was not so she could be proud of me, but so that I could be proud of myself.

Of course, some do not go on so seriously. Groucho Marx once said, "My mother loved children. She would have given anything if I had been one." My mother enjoyed a good laugh, too.

Of all the rights of women, perhaps the greatest is the right to be a mother. Some of us became mothers by way of adoption. Others lay claim to students or nieces and nephews. Just giving birth does not make one a mother. Many childless women are mothers to fortunate children.

Finally, Theodore M. Hesburgh wrote a significant proverb which says, "The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother." My dad was a good example.

With flowers, candy, or other gifts, many honor their mothers on Mother's Day. Quite a few honor their parents throughout the year, but some of us cannot send material things any more. We are left with only memories. Raising my self-esteem, teaching me independence, and forgiving me with unconditional love are memories I cherish of my mother's personal expressions.

# **Modern Israel at 50, and the Jews through the Ages**

## **Part 1**

Alex V. Wilson

In the light of modern Israel's fiftieth birthday this May, let's consider the significance of this people, now and through the ages.

The agelong history of the Jews (not just present-day Israel) confronts us with incredible mysteries. Mark Twain was not a Bible-believing man, but mere undeniable facts led him to write the following in Harper's Magazine in 1899:

If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of stardust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly the Jew ought hardly to be heard of; but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk. His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine and [philosophy] are also way out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers....

The Egyptian, the Babylonian and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away. The Greek and Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they were gone....The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was....All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?

The answer, of course, is in the Bible. Notice the following basic facts about Israel. (1) The Lord God freely chose and entered into covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He promised them a land. Also that their descendants would become a nation used by Him to bless all peoples on earth. (Gen. 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 17:1-8.) (2) He promised extraordinary blessings to them if they would trust Him enough to keep His commands. (Deut. 28:1-5, for just one example.)

But (3) He also warned that if they disobeyed and forsook Him they would undergo awful sufferings. (Deut. 28:15-19.) He got more specific. If you rebel against Me, He said, (a) I will "scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other" (Deut. 28:58,64). As we know, they did and He did. They defied Him throughout the centuries; He scattered them throughout the planet. Someone said, "They drink from every river in the world, from the Ganges to the Mississippi."

There's more. He warned them (b) they would be hated and persecuted beyond measure. "You will become a thing of horror and an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations where the Lord will drive you....Because you did not serve the Lord your God joyfully...in the time of prosperity, therefore in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and dire poverty, you will serve the enemies the Lord sends against you." "You will find no repose....The Lord will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. In the morning you will say, 'If only it were evening!' and in the evening, 'If only it were morning!'--because of the terror that will fill your hearts." (Deut. 28:37, 47-8, 65-7.)

Their history repeatedly illustrates the fulfillment of such passages. Think of Josephus' account of the ghastly siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. (foretold by Jesus forty years earlier). And the portrayal of anti-semitism during the Middle Ages in Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice. And in Russia the rabbi's prayer in Fiddler on the Roof: "God bless and keep the Czar...far away from us!" And the Holocaust. Anne Frank. Corrie Ten Boom's Hiding Place. And those few backward glances only scratch the surface of the misery upon misery and atrocity after atrocity during their history.

But the Lord also promised that despite all these calamities, (4)He would preserve them from being wiped out. They would never disappear as a people.

"Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only with justice." "This is what the Lord says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night...Only if these decrees vanish from my sight will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me." (Jer.30:11; 31:35-6.)

He has kept that promise too. Nearly a century ago Leo Tolstoy wrote,

"What is a Jew? This question is not at all so odd as it seems. [For] all the rulers and nations have together and separately abused and molested, oppressed and persecuted, trampled and butchered, burned and hanged [him], and, in spite of all this, [he] is yet alive....Such a nation cannot be destroyed."

If you studied world history you read about the Sumerians, who lived in Mesopotamia. Theirs was one of the earliest civilizations. They were the first people in history known to have used the wheel. They first divided hours into 60 minutes and minutes into 60 seconds,

and perhaps originated writing. But they have disappeared, while the Jews have survived.

Assyria once ruled all the Middle East. Their armies were the Nazis of ancient history, cruel torturers of those they conquered. But nowhere today is there any person who says, "I am an Assyrian." The people of that super-power disappeared, while the Jews are with us still.

The Hittites, with their capital in what is now southern Turkey, were powerful and widespread. They were outstanding horse-trainers, and developed the use of the war-chariot as a weapon. But they disappeared so completely that some 19th-century historians believed they never had existed. "True, the Bible mentions them 22 times, but that just proves how inaccurate it is. Maybe its writers simply invented these people, for there are no records of them anywhere except in the Old Testament!" But during this century archeologists have made more and more discoveries about the Hittites, once more proving the Bible right and its critics wrong. Gotcha! Yes, the Hittites vanished but the Jews remain.

We shall continue this study in the next month or two, D.V. But to review what we have seen so far: The Lord chose the Jews, to bless them and make them a blessing to all other nations too. He offered them great rewards if they would obey, and tragic judgments if they would disobey. Due to their repeated disobedience, He kept His warnings. They have been scattered worldwide, and hated more than any other people. But He kept His promises too. He protected and preserved them; they are still here.

What shall we say to these things? First, the Bible once more is shown to be true. Trust it. Second, God is active in history, overruling its affairs. He has never retired, but is alive and well. Despite sin and Satan, He is carrying out His plans in the world He made. Third, He judges sin. For our own sake as well as His and others', we should repent of running our own lives. Fourth, He is merciful and gracious. Despite their rebellions, He still pleads with them (and all people), "I have loved you with an everlasting love." "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people." (Jer.31:3; Rom.10:21.) How He yearns for the runaways to come home.

As Brother Boll once proclaimed in a sermon, "**Behold the Jew--and Believe: God's covenant is sure! Behold the Jew--and Tremble: God's judgment is sure! Behold the Jew--and Rejoice: God's promise is sure!**"

[To be continued]

# MESSIANIC TRENDS IN ISRAEL

Will Varner

In his essay, "The Messianic Idea in Israel," the renowned scholar, Gershom Scholem, contrasted the Jewish and Christian concepts of the Messianic redemption. While Christianity conceives of redemption as an event in the spiritual and unseen realm, reflected in the soul, Judaism has always maintained a concept of redemption as an event that takes place publicly, within the community. While this explanation neglects the future aspect of redemption in Christian thought (e.g., Rom. 8:18-25)), it does reflect the truth that in Judaism there can be no Messianic redemption without a radical change in social and religious conditions in the world.

Scholem further traces two trends in Jewish Messianic thinking about his new world that will come about through the eschatological redemption. Some rabbis stress the restorative factor: things will return to an ideal past condition. The Solomonic Kingdom most often is put forth as that ideal situation (consider 1Ki. 3-10). Other rabbis stress the utopian factor: a future state of things that has never existed. This view is most often associated with an apocalyptic emphasis that will involve a major defeat of Israel's enemies and the introduction of radically new outward conditions affecting mankind.

Whichever factor a Jewish person follows--the restorative or utopian--Orthodox Jews have affirmed with one voice that a human Messiah will be involved in this process in some way, either as a predecessor, initiator, or maintainer of the new world. Since the last major false Messiah, Shabbetai Zvi, wrought havoc in the 17th century, rabbis have been hesitant to focus too much attention on the identity of the Messiah. At times they have even discouraged speculation about His identity and the time and process of His coming. During the last ten years in Israel, however, there has been an increase in Messianic trends that cannot be ignored.

Before considering some of these trends, one further concept associated with Jewish thinking about the Messiah should be mentioned--that of hastening the coming of Messiah. According to this concept, Jews can take certain actions that will speed up the process of the Messiah's coming. Thus, the Messiah's arrival is being delayed by the poor behavior of Jewish people and can be brought about by their obedience to God and His Torah. The good deeds, or mitzvoth, most often mentioned are teshuvah (repentance); Shabbat (observing the Sabbath); Torah (the study of the Law); and tzedakah (charity) [Mashiach by Jacob Immanuel Schochmet, pp. 44-49].

An additional mitzvah has recently been added to the list of good deeds, which, if performed faithfully, will hasten the coming of Messiah: settling the land of Israel. The advent of modern Zionism, the founding of the State of Israel, and particularly the capture of biblical Samaria and Judea in 1967 all have contributed to a heightening of the Messianic consciousness among some groups in Israel. Who are these groups, and what do they believe?

For convenience' sake, these Messianic groups can be divided into those who believe that their actions are hastening the soon advent of the Messiah, and those who believe that the Messiah has already come.

Following Israel's amazing victory in the Six-Day War of June 1967, a group generally referred to as the Gush Emunin (bloc of the faithful) has made a concentrated effort to settle on what the world calls the "West Bank"--the areas of Judea and Samaria in biblical days. They believe they have a divine right to live in this land because of the clear promises to Abraham and the other patriarchs that it would belong to their descendants. More than 100,000 Jews, most religiously Orthodox, live in settlements and towns from Nablus (Shechem) to Hebron, sometimes provoking resentment from their Arab neighbors. Many of them fervently believe that what they are doing has Messianic ramifications--that the Messiah's coming will be hastened by their obedience.

A number of similar religious groups have revived within the walls of the old city of Jerusalem's synagogues and yeshivas that were forcibly closed more than 50 years ago. They have reopened these institutions as close as possible to the Temple Mount, often amid a sea of Muslim neighbors. The Ateret Cohanim (crown of the priests) has established schools where young men from the ancient tribe of Levi (the tribe of Levites and priests) are studying the biblical and talmudic laws for Temple service. Just a few hundred yards away, the Temple Institute has prepared more than a hundred items to be used in a future revived Temple worship.

While some of these groups do not speculate on when Messiah will come, they believe that by taking these steps, they are hastening the coming of the Messiah.

A second Messianic trend in Israel today focuses on the firm belief that there is no further need to hasten the Messiah's coming, for He has already arrived. Much of this trend has centered on the beliefs of the Lubavitcher Hasidim, a sect of ultra-Orthodox Jews who have fervently followed the teachings of their rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson. Their beliefs and practices can best be understood by de-

scribing the evolution of sayings they have printed on signs. The first saying was, "We want Mashiach now." Worn as buttons, this was first seen in America and Israel about 15 years ago and continued to be used for more than a decade. The second saying, which began to appear on bright yellow signs in Israel around 1990, advised, "Prepare for the coming of Messiah." Soon it was rumored that the Lubavitcher-placed signs referred specifically to their rebbe, Schneerson. A house was even built for him in Habad village in Israel near Ben Gurion Airport (Habad is an acronym that serves as another name for the group).

Since Rebbe Schneerson never discouraged his disciples' attribution of him as the Messiah, the next sign that went up proclaimed, "Welcome King Messiah" and was accompanied by a photograph of Schneerson. A severe, debilitating stroke suffered by this Messiah in 1992 apparently did not discourage many of his disciples from their Messiah belief, because the last sign to appear, and one that can still be seen today, is a picture of Schneerson above the title, in Hebrew, "The Messiah." Even his death in 1994 did not assuage the fervency of some Lugavitzers, although it did create several alternative explanations of how his Messianic role is bing fulfilled.

As mentioned earlier, there are two examples of the Messianic trend that believe the Messiah has already come. The Lubavitcher Messiah is buried in Brooklyn--his house in Israel is empty.

But there is another group of Jews in Israel today who fervently believe that their Messiah has already come. This one also died, but, unlike Schneerson, He miraculously came back from the dead. A generation ago there was only a small handful of assemblies in Israel composed of Jewish believers in Yeshua Hamashiach. Today there are more than three dozen such assemblies. Some of them maintain a publishing house, a conference center, a radio broadcast, and even a theological journal. The Friends of Israel is thankful that one of these assemblies in Jerusalem is pastored by a graduate of its Institute of Biblical Studies.

Yes, there is an authentic Messianic movement in Israel today--one not based on land settlements or the false hopes of a dead Messianic pretender and his sincere but deluded followers. This is the Messianic movement centering on Yeshua ben Yosef, Jesus the Son of Joseph, who is also the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world. Human movements will rise and fall, leaving behind broken dreams and shattered illusions. The kingdom Jesus founded, however, is alive and well in Eretz Yisrael!

--Reprinted by permission from **Israel My Glory**, 10/95

# VOICES From The FIELDS

Robert & Joy Garrett  
April 1, 1997

P. O. Box 30, Ruwa, Zimbabwe

**Bancket-Raffingora.** Saturday Bible Studies. On each last Saturday of the month we are now having an all day series of Bible studies at Bancket. That is a little town about 1 hour's drive from Ruwa. Raffingora is about another 35 minutes further. The Raffingora people come to Bancket for this joint effort. Interest has been quite enthusiastic - they requested these studies. The church in Bancket began last year when Alouis Nyakudya moved to that area and began truck farming. There has been a church in Raffingora for many, many years.

**Glendale.** Yet another new congregation is being planted. The first of March we held the first Sunday morning worship service with a membership of two. Two men had been brought to the Lord by Bro. Chenche and baptized the previous week. We had been praying for some time about the situation in this little town of Glendale about 30 miles from Harare. Bro. Chenche, a student minister working with me, had begun doing some personal work there. On that first Sunday, although we had only two Glendale members, we had brought a number of saints from Harare to assist. We met on the open verandah of the community creche by permission of the local authority. Several visitors joined the service and Chenche is now holding studies with one of them. Several children came and joined the service and we had a short Sunday school with them and most of them have returned every Sunday. Last Sunday the Mvura family, longtime Christians, placed their membership there and will be a good help. Six more have come to the Lord since that first day and there are several prospects that Chenche is working with. I have gone with him on several personal-work visits. It is not easy to organize a church "from scratch", as it were, with completely new converts, especially when living so far away. However it will mean quite a bit of commuting for a while.

The main employer in Glendale is a cotton spinning mill which employs about 700 workers. All our male members work in the mill and are on different shifts and the shifts rotate so that they are sometimes working on Sunday morning and cannot attend service. That complicates matters when your congregation is so small. However, I believe that the Lord has been pushing us that direction and has opened the door to that area. Please be fervent in prayer for this new little congregation and the new converts and also pray for a good meeting place. We cannot continue forever on this open verandah.

**Epworth** - The walling contractor just this week finished erecting the concrete wall around the church site. He had been delayed by the heavy rains and shortage of materials. We must now erect two temporary wooden shacks to house a couple of families to live there to keep the property safe. Each shack will have two rooms. Each room is 8 feet six inches by 9 feet. The building plans for the church were approved this week and I have engaged a contractor to supply and erect a steel frame structure for the building. We will have to dig and pour the foundations and he will then erect his steel framework. We will lay the asbestos-cement roof sheeting and then, as funds permit, erect the brick walls. This system allows the congregation to meet and worship with a roof over their heads while funds are coming in to complete the brickwork, etc. You gracious supporters have contributed about enough to do this first stage.

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## **FAREWELL FOR A WHILE, BROTHER JACK**

There was only one Jack Blaes, and now he's gone to Heaven. Since our last issue Jack suffered a serious stroke. After some days the Lord called him to Glory on May 21.

Jack packed a lot of living into his 80 years. He grew up in Louisville's Portland area, and attended both Portland Church of Christ and Christian School. Despite the influences of men like brothers Boll, Chambers, and Neal, Jack did not receive Jesus as Lord and Savior till around grade 11. But when he did, he did! There were times when he would hitchhike for an unusual reason: in order to tell others about their need for Jesus. He'd hitch a ride out of town, telling the driver and whoever else was in the car about the Lord, and urging them to turn to Him. Then he'd get out and hitch a ride back to town--witnessing again.

Later Jack preached for a while in Covington, Ky. and St. Louis, Mo. and then for 27 years at the Antioch Church near Frankfort, Ky. During those years at Antioch he was a substitute teacher in public schools, and active in the Christian Business Men's Committee. He also helped Antioch Camp get started, had a radio program, and often was chairman of the American Cancer Society drive. He married Margaret Smith and they had three children. After she died, he later married Ann Bradley. Both his wives were wonderful encouragers and coworkers with him.

When they moved to Louisville, Jack began teaching at Portland Christian School. After resigning from the pulpit at Antioch, he be-

came an elder at the Highland Church. Deeply patriotic, he prayed and worked hard for better local and national government and for family values.

Jack was enthusiastic and humorous. At his 80th birthday party, someone recalled the time he swallowed an Alka-Seltzer whole, without dissolving it. Then he drank some water, resulting in an internal atom bomb! "Never ever try that!" Jack told us.

During his closing days of weakness and pain, a granddaughter asked, "Grampa, what's your favorite verse?" He replied, "Romans 8:28." Despite his suffering, he still believed it.

Various comments made about Jack include, "He's been a Christian every day." "He was a friend to everyone, including the neighborhood drunk and people even the dog didn't like." "He was a friend, advisor and example to his grandchildren." "He truly believed in a prayer-hearing God." "He served God with joy." "He was rich, not in what he got but in what he gave away." I'm thankful Jack was willing to serve as our "News & Notes" editor for the past several years. Pray for Ann and all the family, and the Highland Church. He will be deeply missed.

## NEWS and NOTES

### In Need Of Continuing Prayers

Carl Kitzmiller remains in very serious condition. Paul Clark had his 2nd series of chemotherapy. Orell Overman had problems in both kidneys, but his condition turned out to be less serious than thought. 1/5 of one kidney was removed. Joe Overman had a heart attack. Irene Allen is recovering from shoulder surgery.

### Moving North

Randy Coulas will soon be moving north from Louisiana to

his home state of Indiana. He will start to minister with the Hamburg Church.

### Back to the U.S.

Paul & Virginia Kitzmiller have returned after their first stint in Russia teaching the Bible via teaching English. By April 26 they reached Johnson City, Tenn. to be with Paul's folks, and he gave a brief report during the morning service at the Locust St. church.

They plan to return to Russia and continue their teaching there

sometime in the fall. Stay tuned for more news.

### R. H. Boll's Influence Lives On

"The Kingdom of God," his book which has long been out of print, will be available soon. In Zimbabwe, Robert Garrett has reprinted it, along with "Lessons on Daniel" and "Revelation." In a few months we hope to have copies of Kingdom of God for sale at the Word and Work office. We already have Daniel and Revelation, @ \$8 plus postage (or get both of them for \$15, postage paid).

Churches of Christ historians have come to realize how important was "the premill movement" in the first half of the 1900s, & how sad was the split that took place over prophecy (& grace vs. legalism). In fact this summer at Pepperdine U. a conference will be held re: Boll. Several speakers will talk about various aspects of his life, ministries and teachings. Paul Clark has prepared a talk on Boll and education--his views and practices. Pray that Paul will be able to go & deliver the message. I will speak, D.V., on Boll as a writer & editor. The other speakers did not have the privilege of studying under him. --AVW

### Congratulations

...to Joe Stone, who ministers at the Waterford Church of Christ in Taylorsville, Ky. Joe has finished his studies at the Louisville Bible College, getting his Bachelor of Sacred Literature degree. Some of his earlier classes toward that degree were at our School of Biblical Studies.

### A Note from Bro. Hartle in So. Africa

Some weeks ago we got a note of greetings from Thomas Hartle. For many years he has evangelized and taught God's Word in So. Africa. His address is 11 Killarney Mansions, Gorge Road, Oranjezicht, 8001 Cape-town, R.S.A.

### We are Saddened to Learn

...that the Prairie Creek Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas, closed as of March 1, 1998. We don't know any other details except that the notice was sent us by Anna Kristen, 8534 Oak Haven, Dallas 75217. Dear Christian friends attended and served there in past years. May the Lord guide and encourage those who were there at the end.

Are we establishing any new congregations these days? Where are the evangelists, the church planters?

### It's a Jungle Out There; Let's Invade It with Good News

Here is some revealing news from a student newspaper at the U. of Louisville. There is now a Pagan Student Union on campus. "To many people, paganism means anti-religion. But, in fact, paganism is far from that misconception. The PSU welcomes pagans as well as wiccans, druids, shamen, Goddess-worshippers, aboriginal tribal practices and other beliefs as well....[We have a] spirituality that is in tune with the environment, as well as being feminist and modern while keep-

ing with the ancient tenents of paganism...."

Other excerpts: "Visits to 8 bars finds 1 which asks for identification; others serve 20-year-old freely." "Colleges often teach Beer 101. Student alcohol abuse is a major problem on college campuses nationwide....Some students drink to forget, others just enjoy." "In some ways, abortion is similar to Holocaust." But there was also an ad for the Jesus film, sponsored by 5 Christian organizations on campus. Pray for our fellow-disciples in such schools.

#### **Mackville Ky. Bulletin on Sonrise Day!**

We welcome you to the Mackville Church of Christ today. Things will be different this morning. We look forward to the special singing and the play presented by the young people of this church about the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thanks to the young folks and those who helped them prepare and present this play.

This past Wednesday Bro. Coultas took our food and money gifts to Maple Manor Christian Children's Home. There were 15 bags of all purpose flour, 14 boxes of black pepper, 12 jars of Miracle Whip, 8 envelopes with money in them, and 2 coin banks. He presented these items to Bro. Robert Istre, the administrator at the Children's home. They were very grateful; to this congregation for these gifts of love.

#### **Tell City, Ind.**

**Rejoice Last Sunday:** We had 117 at the Sonrise Service, and 102 for morning worship. Special Singing, one baptism, and two public responses for prayer, rounded out a Great Day!

#### **Harry Coultas To Louisiana**

Harry and Kate Coultas will move to Turkey Creek, La. by July 1. Harry will minister with the saints there. At present he is at Mackville, Ky. Glenn Baber retired as an elder and preacher after a number of years at Turkey Creek. His health has not been good. Harry will direct Junior Week again at Woodland Bible Camp before heading south.

#### **Wrong, Lost, Saved**

A skeptical man sat down to read the Bible one hour every evening. After a while he said to his wife, "If this book is right, we are **wrong**." A few evenings later he said, "If this book is right, we are **lost**." A few evenings later he said, "If this book is right, we may be **saved**." And they were.--Gallatin, TN Bulletin

#### **Jubilee will again be held in Nashville, TN**

Jeff Walling of Charlotte, NC will be the keynote speaker each evening. Other keynote speakers include Rick Atchley, Joe Beam, Gary Beauchamp, Mike Cope, Rubel Shelly and Nokomis Yelldell. To register, or for more information, call: (800) 382-5004.

# **Antioch Christian Camp**

Antioch Christian Camp is located on 36 acres of wooded land located near Frankfort, KY. The camp has accommodations for about sixty campers and staff.

The camp purpose is to provide an atmosphere where young people can grow in their Christian faith and have fun in the process. Each week of camp offers different ways of accomplishing these goals. Bible classes, recreation, challenging speakers, exciting videos, nature hikes and crafts are some of the ways camp deans will provoke spiritual growth in the campers.

**Junior Week** is a 6 day camp for ages 9-12. Crafts and activities will be the highlight of this camp. This week of camp will run from June 7-12th and costs \$50.

**Music Week** is an 8 day camp for ages 14 - college. This camp teaches music theory and sight reading. John Fulda is music director. Music Week will run from June 21 - 28 and costs \$55. Concert dates and locations will be announced.

**Teen Week** is a 7 day camp for ages 13 to 19. The highlights of this week of camp are nature walks, crafts, videos, lots of Bible study and singing. This week of camp will run from July 5 - 11 and costs \$50.

**Junior Music Week** is a 6 day camp for ages 9 - 13 and teaches beginning music theory and voice. The campers will be learning about music and the message of the songs they are listening to. A concert will be performed July 24th, at 7:00 p.m. at Antioch Church of Christ. This camp will run from July 19th - 24th and costs \$50.

**For More Information, contact:**

**Antioch Christian Camp  
355 Bark Branch Rd.  
Frankfort KY 40601  
(502) 223-7056**

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## **WOODLAND BIBLE CAMP 1998 SCHEDULE**

- June 14 - 20 ..... Junior Week #1  
H. Coulta - B. Smallwood
- June 21 - 27 ..... Intermediate Week #1  
R. Tribby - T. Rogers
- July 12 - 18 ..... Junior Week #2  
J. Carmichael - D. Johnson
- July 19 - 25 ..... Intermediate Week #2  
M. Abbott - D. Longest
- July 25 - Aug. 1 ..... Senior Week  
A. Borders - P. Denny
- Sept. 4 - 7 ..... Friends & Family Retreat  
Cameron & Sharon Cox
- Sept. 13 - 18 ..... Senior Citizen's Week  
Committee - R. Gill, Director
- Sept 25 - 27 ..... Senior Retreat  
N. Grimes

For More Information Contact:  
**WOODLAND BIBLE CAMP, INC**  
110 "B" Street N.E.  
Linton, IN 47441  
(812) 847-9248