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## Marriage and Happiness

By Harold Turner

Each year hundreds and thousands of young people enter the marriage union, and of these, statistics show that nearly one half will end in divorce. Too, among many of these that do not end in divorce, the relationship is little more than a battleground. Many have expressed the concept that marriage is a "tied-down relationship" where one's freedom is taken away. Others have expressed that if one wants to fight they should get married. Certainly these ideas about marriage indicate that something is missing in this relationship that is affecting a large percentage of our society. There are thousands of problems that affect the home life of our society, and, of which we may not have a ready answer to an easy solution, however, there are some things that can be offered to help each build toward a happier, more stable relationship.

Marriage was instituted and designed by our Creator, who said, "It is not good that the man should be alone." The woman was then made and presented to the man as a companion to share in his life, and to fulfill the needs which none other of the creation could fulfill. Therefore, marriage is an honorable relationship designed for the good of those who commit themselves one to the other in this relationship.

There are several things that each young person should know and consider about marriage before taking this serious step in life. The attitude that one has about marriage may well determine whether there will be happiness or unhappiness, love or bickering, honor or dishonor in the home. In the following part of this article I want to suggest several things that I feel young people should know and consider about marriage, which can help them build a happier relationship.

First, I believe that every person entering the marriage relationship should know that marriage is a life-time contract. Jesus showed that divorce was not in God's plan for the home. In Matt. 19:6, he said, "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." When asked about divorce, he said, "From the beginning it was not so, and I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and

whoso marieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." There cannot be the breaking up of a home apart from sin on the part of one or both. Realizing that marriage is for life should cause those entering this union to consider carefully the responsibilities involved, and to be aware that all problems must be worked out rather than ran from. Divorce is not the answer, it only creates a greater problem, and especially for the spiritual aspect of one's life.

Second, each person should consider the responsibility of the role they must fulfill to make the home what it should be. The husband is to be the head of the family (Eph. 5:23). He through love and honor is to provide for his family. He must provide for them financially, but there are other needs even greater than this. He is responsible to provide the spiritual leadership in the home, to provide the companionship for his wife, and to fulfill her needs as a woman. The wife is to love, honor, and submit herself to her husband, not because she is a slave, but to help him fulfill the role God has given him (See Eph. 5:22-33).

Third, it is important that those entering the marriage union discuss and consider whether or not they want children. Many homes are unhappy because one desperately wants children and the other does not. In God's plan, children were to bring happiness to the home. Notice Psalm 127:3-5, "Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them." This is a serious matter that can affect the home, and should certainly be discussed prior to the marriage.

Fourth, the matter that probably affects the happiness of more homes than any other one thing is the role of sex. The sexual needs are God given, and play an important part in the happiness of the home. God has said, "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence; and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not

## Will The End Be The End?

By Bill Flatt

The end of time will not be the end of it all. The end of it all will never come. Man's soul at death goes back to God who gave it, the graves of the dead will be opened and the dead shall be raised in the great resurrection morning. God, Christ, and the redeemed of all ages will rejoice together in Heaven throughout the endless ages of eternity, and the devil, his angels, and billions of people who have rejected God will be eternally separated from God and will suffer eternal punishment throughout all eternity from the presence of God and from the glory of his power.

### THE END WILL BE THE END

The end of time will be the end of the faithful Christian's trials. In this life even though God does bless those who put the Kingdom first, it still rains on the just and the unjust and many Christians have great trials and various tribulations. When I was a small boy one of our relatives and neighbors had cancer on his face and continued to live on and on in great pain and misery. It is a moment I keenly remember when my father told us that Uncle Leon asked him to take a brick and end his misery. Almost all of the skin of his lips was eaten away with this dreaded disease. Many other incidents could be mentioned. The great apostle John was on the Isle of Patmos, perhaps in a political concentration camp, for the word of the Lord and for his testimony. Hundreds of the early Christians died rather than to deny their Lord. It is conservatively estimated that six thousand early Christians were martyred between the time of Jesus and Constantine and his great Edict of Toleration. Brethren in hard places and places not so hard have this in common, they suffer the loss of loved ones and they have various illnesses and other tribulations themselves as they tabernacle here as a pilgrim in this body. But at the end of time these problems will cease to exist. The faithful Christian will be so much better off in Heaven than he has been on earth. In this context, we can understand why the early Christians so often said, "Our Lord come." Paul recognized that our light affliction is but for a moment and that it works for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory. Therefore we should not look at the things which are seen, but at

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## Marriage and Happiness (Cont.)

one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." (1 Cor. 7:3-5). When both are considerate of the needs of the other, it contributes to a greater degree of happiness in the home. When sex is used selfishly, or as a weapon to get other things in life, it is sinful and wrong, and in turn will destroy the happiness of the home.

One other thing that should be carefully considered before marriage is religion. Two people who have deep convictions in different beliefs are going to have problems affecting their happiness unless these differences can be dissolved. The family must pull together and work for the same cause to be happy.

The home can be happy when two people unite heart and soul together in this honorable relationship; when they are willing to face life's problems together; when they are unselfish and considerate of the needs of the other; and when they will pull together to build toward eternal life.

# Topical Bible Lessons

By Harold Turner

## INTRODUCTION:

1. 2 Timothy 2:15, To properly understand and apply God's word, we must do what?\_\_\_\_\_
2. Hebrews 8:6-13, Into how many covenants (testaments) is the Bible divided?\_\_\_\_\_
3. Hebrews 9:11-22, With what were these testaments dedicated?\_\_\_\_\_

## WHAT WAS THE FIRST COVENANT?

1. Hebrews 8:9, The first covenant was made when God led the people out of what land?\_\_\_\_\_

2. 1 Kings 8:9, 21, Upon what was this covenant written?\_\_\_\_\_

3. Exodus 34:27-28, What was written upon two tables of stone?\_\_\_\_\_

4. Deuteronomy 4:13, Of what did this covenant consist?\_\_\_\_\_

## WITH WHOM WAS THIS COVENANT MADE?

1. Deuteronomy 5:1-3, Did God make the first covenant with anyone other than the Israelites?\_\_\_\_\_

2. Exodus 34:27-35, Through whom did God give the first covenant?\_\_\_\_\_

3. John 1:17, Is the first covenant called "the law"?\_\_\_\_\_

4. Romans 2:14, Did the Gentile nations have the law?\_\_\_\_\_

5. Ephesians 2:11-12, Was the covenant, which was given to the Israelites, given to the Gentiles?\_\_\_\_\_

## WHY WAS THE FIRST COVENANT GIVEN?

1. Galatians 3:19, The law (first covenant) was added because of what?\_\_\_\_\_

2. Romans 3:20; 7:7, This covenant gave the people a knowledge of what?\_\_\_\_\_

3. Galatians 3:24-25, This covenant was a schoolmaster to bring the people unto what?\_\_\_\_\_

## HOW LONG WAS THE FIRST COVENANT TO LAST?

1. Galatians 3:19, The law (first covenant) was to last until what came?\_\_\_\_\_

2. Galatians 3:16, Who was "The seed"?\_\_\_\_\_

3. Galatians 3:24-25, Was the first covenant to remain in force after Christ came?\_\_\_\_\_

4. Romans 7:6-7, From what have those under Christ been delivered?\_\_\_\_\_

5. Matthew 5:17, What did Jesus come to do to the law and the prophets?\_\_\_\_\_

6. Matthew 5:18, Would any part of the law pass away before it was all fulfilled?\_\_\_\_\_

7. Romans 10:4, Of what is Christ the end?\_\_\_\_\_

8. Colossians 2:14, Where did the law end?\_\_\_\_\_

## WHY WAS THE FIRST COVENANT REPLACED?

1. Romans 5:12, What passed upon all men because of sin?\_\_\_\_\_

2. Galatians 3:21, Was there a law in the first covenant that could give back life?\_\_\_\_\_

3. Hebrews 10:1-4, Could the sacrifices offered under the first covenant take away sin?\_\_\_\_\_

4. Galatians 3:11, Could those under the first covenant be justified by the law?\_\_\_\_\_

## THE NEW COVENANT A PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY

1. 2 Timothy 3:14-17, Are the new testament scriptures sufficient both to save us and supply all of our spiritual guidance?\_\_\_\_\_

2. James 1:25, What promise is extended to those who look into the perfect law of liberty and continue therein?\_\_\_\_\_

3. Galatians 5:4, What is the result of going back to the old testament to justify religious practices today?\_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to have this lesson graded and returned to you, please send it along with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

"God promises a safe landing but not a calm passage."

"God gets His best soldiers out of the highlands of affliction."

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# MIRACLES TODAY?

By Roger E. Dickson

Do miracles occur today? Certainly, we must confess that that is a relevant question. It seems that every city has its "faith healer" claiming miracles of healing. And the number who have been deceived into believing their practices is not few by any means. Many have claimed to have been miraculously healed or have personally seen miracles performed.

It is this writer's contention that miracles, as defined in the Bible, do not occur today. This does not say that God does not work in a providential manner today. Providence, though, is not God working as he worked in miracles. God does providentially work today. He works behind the veil of natural law to accomplish his purposes. But God does not work through miracles today as he did in Bible times. This does not say that he cannot perform miracles today, but that he has chosen not to do so. With this in mind, let us study the reasons the Bible says miracles are not occurring today.

## NATURE OF MIRACLES AS PROOF

The very nature of true miracles is evidence that there are no such happening today.

1. Recognizable character of true miracles is proof. The miracles of the Bible could be clearly recognized as such. Peter healed a lame beggar and there was no question in the minds of the observers that he had been healed (Acts 3:4-14). None of the wonderful works of Jesus were performed without observers (Acts 26:26). And none denied his marvelous works. Faith healers today have observers, but these observers are different from those of the first century. None of those in the first century, even the unbelievers, ever denied the actual happening of a true miracle. They knew that a miracle had been performed. (Acts 4:14-16). How different is this picture from the situation today. The audiences of modern-day healers are always full of those who are not convinced by the flimsy evidence of supposed miracles performed by the faith healer. Those in the audience of Jesus never denied his works.

2. Presence of supernatural in true miracles as proof. The presence of the supernatural was clearly seen in the miracles of the Bible. Those who performed the miracles proclaimed the Word of God in an uncontradictory manner (Jer. 28:9, 15; Deut. 18:20; Gal. 1:6-9; Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3, 4), and the miracles confirmed their word. The presence of the supernatural was shown in Jesus and was recognized by those who observed his works (John 4:19, 39-42; Luke 7:11-17).

Obviously, the presence of the supernatural is not evident in the so-called miracles of modern-day faith healers. We must never confuse emotions and trickery for a miracle. A man may be convinced that he does not have a broken leg by the power of suggestion, but the first moment he tries to walk on it he will be convinced that he really does. The fake miracles of modern-day healers do not compare with the miracles of the Bible. They do not manifest the presence of the supernatural, but the presence of super-fake.

3. The miracles' relationship to natural laws as proof. Miracles in the Bible were recognized as not being in accordance with the ordinary occurrence of natural laws. Jesus calmed a storm at sea. (Matt. 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41.) He brought sight to known blind persons. (Mark 10:46-52.) He walked on water. (Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-31.) He changed water into wine. (John 2:1-11.) He multiplied loaves and fishes. (John 6:4-14.) Let those who claim to perform miracles today match the miracles of the Bible. Let them convince their audiences as thoroughly as those in the first century were convinced when they witnessed an actual miracle of God. (Matt. 21:18-20).

## CHARACTERISTICS AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF MIRACLES

The characteristics of the miracles of Jesus and how he performed them is evidence that modern-day healers do not perform such deeds.

Jesus healed what would be to modern-day healers the unhealable. (John 9; Luke 7:11, 12.) He healed completely and not partially as is so characteristic of the so-called healings of modern-day healers. (Matt. 15:29-31; Mark 7:31-37.) Jesus did not make a point of publicizing his healings as do modern-day healers. (Matt. 8:1-4; 9:27-31.) And Jesus never failed to heal anyone he intended to heal. Such is not the case with modern-day healers. Multitudes go from their meetings unhealed. Also, Jesus did not require faith of all those he healed (Luke 7:11, 12; John 5:2-13.) Many modern-day healers do require that their subjects have faith. If they do not have enough faith, they say they cannot be healed.

The miracles of the Bible were performed even before the eyes of unbelievers. (Acts 4:14-16; 26:26; 1 Kings 18:30-40; John 11:44-46.) None of these ever denied the occurrence of the miracles they witnessed. There are no denials of Jesus' miracles found in the gospel records. None of those who were cured ever said that they really had not been cured. Such is not the case after the

meetings of modern-day healings. (cf. John 9:20-25.) Many are on record stating that they were never really cured during a faith healing meeting even though they claimed to be at the time.

## NO MEANS TODAY OF RECEIVING POWER TO HEAL

The gift to heal people in a miraculous manner was one of the many miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Cor. 12. Miraculous gifts were received by the laying on of the apostles' hands. Notice the following: (1) The ability to perform miracles of healing in the first century was received through the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 8:18; 19:6, Rom. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:6; cf. 1 Cor. 9:1-2; 2 Cor. 12:12; Gal. 3:2-5; 4:6.) (2) But there are no apostles of Christ available today to lay hands on people. (3) Therefore, we must conclude that no one has the power to perform miracles of healing today, for none have received such a miraculous gift by the laying on of the apostles' hands. All the original apostles of Christ have died.

## PURPOSE OF MIRACLES HAS PASSED AWAY

The purpose for the open manifestation of miracles in the Bible was to confirm the Word of God. In the first century, the purpose of miracles was to prove that the message preached by Christ and the first Christians was sent from God. (Mark 16:17-20; Heb. 2:3, 4.) And the Word of God was firmly confirmed in the first century by the open manifestation of miracles. (Heb. 2:3, 4.) Many of the miracles that confirmed the Word were recorded to continually confirm the Word during all ages of history. (John 20:30-31; Mark 16:20.) We must conclude, therefore, that there is no need for an open manifestation of miracles today.

The purpose for an open manifestation of miracles has been accomplished. The Word of God has been confirmed. Some miracles were recorded to confirm the Bible for all ages. Why would we need more miracles today to confirm the word of God when the Bible says that those miracles which are recorded are sufficient to produce faith and life? (John 20:30, 31.)

The revelation of the gospel was to be confirmed by an open manifestation of miracles in the first century. But when the revelation ceased (and it did, Jude 3; 2 Peter 1:3), there was no more need for the confirming miracles. We are receiving no more new revelations from God today. Therefore, we need no confirming miracles. The age of miracles has passed away.



# Life After Death

By Richard England

"The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28, 29). "Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51, 52).

That the Bible teaches there is life after death is obvious. The most candid reader will see this. The big question is: what will it be like? Some things about life after death we cannot know now. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). Our body will not be as it is here (1 Cor. 15:35-50). Even though we do not know all about the nature of the heavenly body that we shall inhabit, we are assured that it will be a glorious body.

The place of our dwelling after the resurrection is described as "A new heaven and a new earth" (2 Pet. 3:13). In what is probably highly symbolic language, nevertheless conveying the thought of transcendent beauty, John says that the gates are of pearl and the streets of pure gold (Rev. 21:18-21). Jesus said he would prepare a place for us in his Father's house (John 14:1-3). The grandeur of the world in which we now live is not to be compared with the magnificence of the world to come. Yet, what we see now is full of beauty. What wonders must await us in the eternal home for God's people.

Our hearts beat like drums as we all march toward the inevitable vastness of eternity which lies before us. For some, the departure from this life will be soon. It can't be very long for any of us. Those who have failed to submit to the authority of Jesus Christ and obey his commands will be raised to everlasting punishment. If one refuses to bow to Christ and confess him now, he will certainly bow to him then and admit, to his own destruction, that Jesus is over all. "For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Rom. 14:11).

Are you ready for the last trump to sound and all of us be called before the Creator of all things? If you have heard the saving gospel of Jesus Christ and believed him to be the Son of God, why not repent of sin and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of

## Will The End Be The End? (Cont.)

the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal: but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Cor. 4:17, 18.)

The end of time will be the end of the unfaithful church-member's opportunities for pardon. In this life, he has an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, but at the judgment day it will be too late for him to seek and to find forgiveness and fellowship with his God.

The end of time will be the end of the alien sinner's rebellion. He may have turned down many invitations in his life, he may have continuously rebelled against God's purposes for him, but he will finally give in at the judgment day and will bow down before the throne of God and before the Lamb. Paul mentions this idea in Phil. 2:9-11, where he says: "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." So the words in the Bible which encourage men that now is the day of salvation should not be thought of as empty words. Jesus is standing at the door of our hearts now; we should open up our lives and let him be our master and savior.

### AND THE END WILL BE THE BEGINNING

The end of time will be the beginning of heaven for the saved. Actually the judgment day represents a promotion to the called out of God. They will hear Jesus say, "Thou has been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of the Lord." Then they will go away to be forever with the Lord in eternal life. What a high and holy and exalted objective for the greatest of men and women! To live and to have eternal security and complete happiness with God forever.

The end of time will be the beginning of hell for the lost. Before you laugh at this, are you willing to take a stand that this is not taught in the Bible? Are you willing to say that Jesus did not indicate that this is true? Do you believe in Jesus? Do you believe in the Bible? If there is no hell, what does this verse mean? "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast forth into outer darkness: there shall be

weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 9:12.) If there is no hell, what does this verse mean? "And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matt. 10:28.) Now is the time, oh then be wise. Now is the day of salvation; at the judgment day, the door will be shut, fellowship with God for the lost will not be available.

Since our life is a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away, and since we know that the end of time will come, we need to establish fellowship with God for this relationship can be established and exist throughout the endless ages of eternity. This means security and this means happiness. We were made for this purpose. When we ignore the needs of our soul, we are not happy for we are ignoring basic needs which were placed in us by our God. So if you are in union with Christ, treasure this relationship and cultivate it as you would a tender plant. If you are not in fellowship with God, surely you are not happy to let this condition continue. You want more security than this. Wonderful fellowship with Christ is experienced in the body of Christ, and the apostle Paul tells us how that we come into this fellowship in 1 Cor. 12:13 when he writes: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jew or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." We need something that we can take beyond the grave, for this world is not going to stand forever, it has been stored up for fire. God does wish that none should perish, but, still he promises to send the Lord as a thief in the night, and he promises that the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Peter wrote of these things in Second Peter in the third chapter. Since these things are so, what manner of people ought we to be? The end of time will not be the end of all things.

sins (See Acts 2:38). With this action you become a member of the church of Christ. Being a member of his body, you will want to do his bidding, looking forward to his second coming and the life after death which he provides his faithful disciples.

*Richard England*