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CANCER AND CHRIST

by B. J. Clarke

We frequently receive notice that one of our readers or the mate or family member of a reader has died of cancer. We dedicate this article to all of you who have suffered such losses. While we mourn for your loss and pray for your comfort, we rejoice that those in Christ are in glory, beyond cancer's reach. The prose article is by an unknown author. - Editor.

It is a six-letter word that begins with "C". It is one of the most terrifying words in the English language. Many lives have been shattered by this word. It has caused untold suffering, agony and pain. It is cancer. Who among us has not known of someone close to us who has sat in a doctor's office anxiously awaiting test results only to hear the doctor say, "I'm sorry, but you have cancer."? Then the battle begins. There are many anxious moments and sleepless nights. Rivers of tears. There are often radiation and chemotherapy treatments with all of the attendant side effects. The full head of hair begins to vanish. Facial hair is also soon gone. Sores develop. Itching aggravates the patient to virtually want to scream out. Nausea sets in. Pain shots are given. The medicine given in these shots sometimes causes hallucination and disorientation. There is often the emotional rollercoaster of thinking that the treatments are doing their intended work only to be crushed by the reappearance of the tumor. This back and forth type of scenario takes its mental toll on both patient and loved ones. The most devastating type of rollercoaster ride is for a patient to be given a clean bill of health and to feel good for a while only to be overtaken again by that six-letter word that begins with the letter "C"—Cancer. The treatments start again and life is turned upside down for both patient and family. Either the patient will get better after much suffering or the patient will die after much suffering. The suffering is a constant in the malignant cancer equation. The patient suffers and the loved ones do, too!

It is a six-letter word that begins with "C". It is the most comforting word in the English language. Many shattered lives have been mended back together by this word. Suffering, agony and pain are not great enough to overcome the one these six letters point to—Christ. Cancer is no match for Christ! Even if cancer physically destroys the body of a follower of Jesus, it cannot do anything to destroy the soul of that follower. Jesus said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul..." (Matt. 10:28). Though cancer was not under consideration in the context of the aforementioned passage, the principle certainly applies. Cancer cannot conquer our souls! Cancer can take our physical lives away but it cannot rob us of the eternal life which has been promised unto us (1 John 2:25). It is true that cancer can stop us from realizing earthly dreams, but it cannot stop us from realizing the dream of going to heaven to be with God. Cancer can put our bodies of clay into the tomb, but it cannot keep them there. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26). Because Christ conquered the tomb and rose from the dead to die no more, so shall we who are in him (1 Cor. 15; 1 Cor. 6:14; Rom. 6:9; Rev. 1:18; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). The moment cancer wins the physical battle the Christian wins the spiritual battle. Simply put, **CANCER DOESN'T WIN. THE CHRISTIAN DOES!** Those who have died of cancer who are in Christ shall never suffer again. No more chemo. No more pain shots. No more awful side effects. No more tears. Just the beauty and bliss of being with Christ forevermore. The battle is done and the victory is won.

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Southaven, MS 38671

*Cancer is so limited...
It cannot cripple love,
It cannot shatter hope,
It cannot corrode faith,
It cannot eat away peace,
It cannot destroy confidence,
It cannot kill friendship,
It cannot shut out memories,
It cannot silence courage,
It cannot invade the soul,
It cannot reduce eternal life,
It cannot quench the spirit,
It cannot lessen the power
of the resurrection.*

1 Corinthians 15:35-49

BLOOD ON EVERY PAGE

by Eddy Gilpin

Not too long after the first of this year, my wife and I suffered the same fate that happens to many drivers during their lives — an automobile accident. On a treacherous and rain-soaked mountain road in East Africa our Land-Cruiser overturned late one afternoon. Neither of us was seriously injured, although we did suffer a few lacerations. Having come to our senses, we checked the vehicle for damage. There, in the top of the overturned vehicle, lay my Bible. As is the case with most evangelists, I have a particular Bible that I use a little more and value a little higher than the others in my possession. This was that Bible that now lay exposed to the elements of that dreary day. Reaching in, I retrieved it, determined to salvage it if possible. Opening its dampened cover, I noticed that one of us had come in contact with it during the accident. There was blood on every page.

After the incident, I began to think of the implications of what I had seen. Truly, not just in my Bible, but in every Bible, "there is blood on every page."

(Continued on page 2)

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

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Ted J. Clarke EDITOR

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From its beginning words revealing the costs and consequences of sin in the transgression of Adam and Eve to its closing admonitions to devout disciples doomed to martyrs' deaths, there is blood on every page. From the covenant of promise made to Abraham and ratified by the offering of prescribed animals to the offering of the One Great Sacrifice which atoned for the sins of every accountable and obedient individual, there is blood on every page. From the crimson flow of innocent Abel to the ghastly departing scene of faithful Stephen, there is blood on every page. From its divine claims to Moses as the substance of physical life to its decree of salvation to every one of every race, there is blood on every page. From the quaking scenes of Sinai to the dismal scenes of Calvary, there is blood on every page.

Several years ago, a prominent religious denomination sought to expunge from its hymnal the word itself and every idea conveying the term "blood." Expel from inspiration's pages the thoughts of this life-giving and soul-saving substance, and expelled also are its life, gift, soul and salvation. There is blood on every page!

As the price of redemption for all ages of man's existence (Zech. 14:8), the atoning substance for the sins of the world (1 Jn. 1:7), the key that unlocked the door unto heaven (Heb. 10:19, 20) and the payment that purchased the church of our Lord (Acts 20:28), the blood is still on every page. Apart from its cleansing power and separated from its

life-giving flow, man stands beneath an insurmountable mountain of unpardonable wrong. Indelibly stamped and prominently displayed, there is blood on every page.

Chimala Mission & Hospital
P. O. Box 724
Mbeya, Tanzania
East Africa

"JUSTIFIED BY WORKS"

The Book of James: "Straw" or Law?
Part Two

by Ted J. Clarke

Review

Our previous article (June issue) proved that the book of James is not "straw" (meaning of little or no value or significance), as Martin Luther once said of it. Rather, James is a part of God's "perfect, royal law of liberty" (James 1:25; 2:8). James' claim that works have a role in our salvation and justification is simply a repetition of Christ's teaching (cf. Matthew 7:21; James 2:24). Peter and Paul likewise stressed the necessity of works in our salvation (Acts 2:36-40; Philippians 2:12). While the apostle Paul denied that we can be saved by works of merit (as if we could earn salvation), or by the law of Moses (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:28), he repeatedly says that we are saved only when we obey (cf. Romans 1:5; 6:17-18; 16:26).

Introduction

Because of his forceful and clearly stated section on being justified by works (James 2:14-26), James has been attacked and his teaching perverted in a multitude of ways. One of the frequent perversions of this section of Scripture is to say that he is speaking of what we do as children of God to witness to the world that we are believers. In other words, when the world sees our good works, our claim to be Christians is justified in their sight. Is this the proper view of what James is teaching? Is he writing of our being justified by the world, or by God? Let us investigate the Scriptures.

An Analysis of James 2:14-26

First, James is not primarily concerned with the way the world looks at us. It is clear that he connects the works of which he speaks with our **salvation**, which comes from God. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a

man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" (James 2:14) The American Standard Version, New American Standard Version and New International Version say, "can **that** faith save him?" or "can **such** faith save him?" In this verse James implies that saving faith must be a faith coupled with works. Otherwise, one is not saved/justified by God.

Second, it should be obvious to all that James is not familiar with the common religious teaching of the day that "we are saved by faith alone." Regarding such false teaching, James replies, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: **the devils also believe, and tremble**" (2:19). Even the devils (demons) have "faith alone." Would anyone say that they are saved by it? Such an idea is ridiculous on the surface of it and so is the teaching of present day denominationalism that we are saved by faith only. James 2:24 teaches, "...by works a man is justified, and **not by faith only.**"

Third, there is positive proof in the illustration of Abraham that James uses that he is not talking about the world justifying our claim to be Christians when they witness our good deeds. If you will read Genesis 22:1-19, you will note that when Abraham offered Isaac upon the altar **no one else was present to witness his actions!** Abraham and Isaac left the young men who accompanied them in 22:5 and returned to them in 22:19. **It was God who justified Abraham** in 22:12, saying, "now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me" (see also 22:15-18). James' conclusions from this event in the life of Abraham are: (1) God justified Abraham **when** he offered Isaac; (2) because his faith was coupled with his works, Abraham had "perfect faith," saving faith (2:14); (3) by this work, Abraham fulfilled an earlier Scripture which said he "believed God" (Genesis 15:6); (4) because of his faith/work God counted him as righteous; (5) it was through such trust and willing obedience that Abraham was called "the Friend of God"; and consequently, (6) one can "see then how that by works a man is justified (by God - TJC), and not by faith only" (James 2:24). Although it is important that we demonstrate our faith to the world by works which glorify God and serve our fellowman, **that is not the point which James seeks to**

make here! (cf. Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:11-12).

Works of Salvation

It is common to hear that the works mentioned by James have nothing to do with our initial salvation, that they are simply works done by Christians. We are told that we are saved initially in becoming Christians by grace alone, and that then there are some things we must do to live good moral lives, but our salvation does not depend on our doing them. James taught that **saving faith is working faith** (2:14-17). One speaker recently said, "...James was concerned in his epistle with the ethical demands of righteousness...and...stressed good works as an outgrowth of salvation." Let's see if he interpreted James correctly.

First, we have repeatedly shown that James is concerned with **faith that saves** (2:14). Second, it was neither morality nor "ethical demands" that drove Abraham to offer Isaac on the altar. Rather, **it was obedience to a divine positive command of God** (Genesis 22:1-2). In Abraham's obedience to the command God reckoned (imputed) the act as righteousness to Abraham. God commanded, Abraham obeyed, and righteousness resulted. These principles remain as God's plan for saving man today (cf. 1 John 3:7). Third, was Rahab's good work an "outgrowth of (her) salvation"? No. Rather, it led to her justification/salvation. Rahab was not an Israelite. She was an alien sinner, a harlot from Jericho who had heard about God's power in delivering Israel from Egypt and their entry into Canaan (Joshua 2:1-24). Her faith led her to hide the spies and she accordingly saved her life and the lives of her family. As with Abraham, her work, coupled with her faith, was reckoned to her for righteousness and she was justified/saved (Joshua 6:22-25). Fourth, therefore, the principles which James teaches about man being justified by works (in faith) apply to one becoming a child of God, as well as maintaining that relationship. The illustrations of Rahab and Abraham demonstrate those points quite well.

Conclusion

What James teaches about faith and works is inseparably connected with salvation (2:14), justification (verses 21, 24-25) and righteousness (verse 23). Our obedience to God's commands are a

part of the salvation process **set forth by God**. The illustration of Rahab, who was not a child of God, shows that we must have a working faith to be accepted by God **initially**. This is confirmed by the apostle Peter in Acts 10:34-35. "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him **and worketh righteousness** is accepted with Him." In our Christian age this starts as we in faith repent of our sins, confess Christ as Lord and are buried with him in baptism (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:9-10; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-5). The illustration of Abraham shows that we must continue in obedient faith to work God's will in our lives if we hope to **maintain** our justification/salvation by God. This is the meaning of such passages as Matthew 7:21-27; Philippians 2:12.

Obviously, we could not be saved nor remain saved without the blood of Christ! It is God's gift to a mankind hopelessly lost without it (Romans 5:8-9). Still, access to that grace is by faith, a faith which works (Romans 5:1-2; Galatians 5:6). As Christians we continue to depend upon the blood of Christ to keep us cleansed from our sins (1 John 1:7-10). John also warns us that we do not know God nor love him if we do not keep His commands and His word and "walk, even as He (Jesus) walked" (1 John 2:1-6). The same epistle informs us, "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous" (3:7). God will not save us if we do not work His righteousness, which is the meaning of James 2:24. [to be continued next month - "Raw Law Versus Royal Law"]

THE INFLUENCE OF LUKE

by Joel Wheeler

There are many characters named in the book of Acts who did much for spreading the borders of the kingdom of God. Peter, James, John, Paul and Philip are a few of the outstanding men of the New Testament. Yet, there is one character who is not mentioned by name in the Book of Acts who contributed greatly to the work of the church. In fact, this individual is mentioned only three times in the New Testament, but without his contribution mankind would not have the inspired history of the church.

Who is this individual? It is Luke, of course. Luke was a traveling companion to the apostle Paul and aided him in spreading the gospel. Luke has been identified as the author of the third Gospel. There is no dispute, even among liberal scholars, that the same author penned the Gospel of Christ according to Luke and the Book of Acts. Many readers believe that Luke uses the most beautiful words of the Greek to describe the characters and events of the New Testament. In fact, Luke uses many medical terms which indicate his education. The apostle Paul refers to Luke as the "beloved physician" (Col. 4:14). Tradition says that Luke was a native of Antioch of Syria and attended the medical school there.

Paul said he had received thirty-nine stripes from the Jews five times, beaten with rods three times, stoned at Lystra, suffered shipwreck and went through many perils (II Cor. 11:23-26). There should be no doubt that Luke, "the beloved physician," attended to the wounds and afflictions of the apostle Paul. Luke's companionship to the apostle Paul proved perhaps to be very beneficial in these times of persecution. Paul wrote, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6:17). Literally, Paul bore the scars of affliction and persecution which he suffered for Christ.

Luke was also called a "fellowlabourer" with Demas (Philemon 24). But, we should note that Paul said "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world... only Luke is with me" (II Tim. 4:10, 11). For the pleasures of the world, Demas left Paul and Luke. The "beloved physician" remained a faithful fellow-

(Continued on page 4)

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(Continued from page 3)
labourer" in the gospel.

Although he is seldom named, Luke did much for the cause of Christ by preaching, teaching and recording the word of God. He should inspire us to be faithful in all that we do, without seeking self-glory and self-praise.

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.....●◀○○○▶●.....
Science cannot solve the ultimate mystery of nature. And that is because, in the last analysis, we ourselves are part of nature and therefore, part of the mystery that we are trying to solve.

Every vice is perverted virtue. Lust is perverted love. Lust is loved fastened on the forbidden object. Love fixed on the right object makes a man a saint. Love fixed on the wrong object makes a man a sinner.

Truth is tough. It will not break, like a bubble, at a touch; you may kick it about all day like a football, and it will be round and full at evening.

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THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

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