

Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Second Class Postage Paid at Mammoth Spring, Ark.

Volume 12

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554

AUGUST 1971

NUMBER 8

The Faith of Abraham

The Bible says Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. It is right for us to believe and be thankful that we have food, clothing and shelter, for all spiritual blessings are in Christ Jesus.

We first read about Abraham, son of Terah in the Book of Genesis where God told him to take his wife Sari and get out of that country to a land that God would show him.

Abraham took his wife and his dead brother's son, Lot, and went south into Canaan, and built an altar at Bethel.

Abraham was rich in cattle, silver, and gold, but a famine prevailed in the land, and he saw that they were going to be forced to go into Egypt. He told Sari to pretend to be his sister for she was fair to look upon and that he was afraid Pharaoh would want to take her to wife and would kill Abraham. The King took them and let them stay until God sent plagues on him that tormented him so much that he asked Abraham why he had told him that Sari was his sister and for them to go their way so he would not be tormented any longer. Abraham went back to Bethel where there was water and grass for the cattle but his herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen were not getting along. Abraham talked with Lot and told him that they must separate, that he would take valley, and Lot could take the hill country, or Lot could take the valley and Abraham would take the hill country. The Bible says Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, not long that the King made war on Sodom and Gomorrah, and Lot was captured along with a lot of other people, and were taken to Dan. Abraham took a company of his men and went to Dan, and waited until night and slaughtered the King, and as he was returning from the slaughter of the King he met Melchizedek, King of Salem, who give Abraham bread and wine and Abraham give Melchizedek a tenth of all. Sodom was a wicked city so much that God sent three young messengers to warn Lot that though the city was going to be destroyed they came by Abraham's tent. Abraham was in the door of the tent, near the Big Oak. Abraham invited the young men to stay for dinner and they agreed. Abraham told Sarah to prepare three corn cakes and cook them on the hearth. He also had one of his men to

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The Meanest Mother

I'm Glad She Was!

I had the meanest mother in the whole world. While other kids ate candy for breakfast, I had eggs or toast. When others had cokes and candy for lunch, I had to eat a sandwich. As you can guess, my supper was different from the other kids also. But at least I wasn't alone in my sufferings. My sister and two brothers had the same mean mother as I did.

My mother insisted upon knowing where we were at all times. You would think we were on a chain gang. She had to know who our friends were and what we were doing. She insisted if we said we'd be gone an hour or less — not one hour and one minute. I am nearly ashamed to admit it, but she actually struck us. Not once, but each time we had a mind of our own and did as we pleased. That poor belt was used more on our seats than it was to hold up Daddy's pants. Can you imagine someone actually hitting a child just because he disobeyed? Now you can begin to see how mean she really was.

We had to wear clean clothes and take a bath. The other kids always wore their clothes for days. We reached the height of insults because she made our clothes herself, just to save money. Why, oh why, did we have to have a mother who made us feel different from our friends?

The worst is yet to come. We had to be in bed by nine each night and up at eight the next morning. We couldn't sleep till noon like our friends. So while they slept, my mother actually had the nerve to break the child-labor law. She made us work. We had to wash dishes, make beds, learn to cook, and all sorts of cruel things. I believe she laid awake at night thinking up mean things to do to us.

She always insisted upon our telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, even if it killed us — and it nearly did.

By the time we were teenagers, she was much wiser, and our life became even more unbearable. None of this tooting the horn of a car for us to come running. She embarrassed us to no end by making our dates and friends come to the door to get us. If I spent the night with a girl friend, can you imagine, she checked on me to see if I were really there. I never had a chance to elope to Mexico. That is if I had a boyfriend to elope with. I

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Tell Me, Preacher

Question No. 1: Whose responsibility is it to counsel with a brother in Christ who quits coming to church or has irregular attendance?

Answer: Paul said, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." (Gal. 6:1). James said, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." (Jas. 5:19-20).

"Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand." (Eze. 3:20).

God, himself, taught us the principle a long time ago through Cain, that a man truly is his brother's keeper. (Gen. 4:9-15).

With the evidence presented by just three verses one would need help to misunderstand. Every Christian is responsible to and for his brother. Of course, if all admonition is refused, according to the principle laid down in Matt. 18:15-18 the matter should be called to the attention of others, then the church (ie. Elders and assembly.)

At this point what I am about to say may seem hard — it is not intended in harshness. In my opinion, the chronic absentee is the source of many of the church's problems thru their indifference, lack of love and the ignorance that naturally falls to those who habitually absent themselves from the worship and studies.

Most preachers plan their sermons in order to cover as much of the doctrine of the Bible as possible during his stay at a particular place. He tries not to be repetitious. Therefore those who fail to return for Sunday evening lessons are like people trying to piece together a jig-saw puzzle with pieces missing — Sunday evening pieces.

This part of the answer may seem irrelevant but it also ties in with the next question — and it's free!

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... is a monthly publication distributed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name, be SURE to include the Zip Code Number. It must be with each address according to the Postal regulations. This paper is supported by unsolicited contributions for which we are grateful. If you care to know of its financial status and expenses, that information will be furnished upon request.

EDITORS: Clovis Ragsdale
and James E. Henley.

The Faith of Abraham (Cont.)

butcher a calf. The young men ate bread, beef, butter and milk and had a nice visit.

Abraham and his wife were childless. God had promised Abraham that through him and his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed. So he had to have an heir before the nations could be blessed. Before the young messengers left one of them told Sarah that she would have a child. She thought she was past the age of childbearing and old, also, but the messenger said she would be the one.

In due time she had a son and they called his name Isaac. When Isaac was a certain age God tried the faith of Abraham by telling him to offer Isaac on the altar. If ever a man had reason to question what God told him to do it seems to me that would have been Abraham for God had told him that through him and his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed. But not so with Abraham. He arose very early in the morning, saddled his donkey, prepared the wood, took his knife with him. He, his son and two of his men started toward the place where the sacrifice was to be made. When they got in sight of the place, Abraham told the two men to wait while he and his son went and made the sacrifice and returned.

Abraham believed God would have him take his son's life and would raise him up again.

When they got to the place where the sacrifice was to be made Isaac ask his father where the sacrifice was. Abraham told him that God would furnish it. Abraham bound his son, raised the knife, but God said Abraham stay thy hand. He heard a noise behind him, looked, and saw a ram hung by the horns and used it for the sacrifice.

Amos M. McCord

1 John 3:9

By Glynn Purdy

"Whosoever is born of God doeth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in Him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God", King James Version.

"No one born of God commits sin; for God's nature abides in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God", Revised Standard Version. (Same as RSV below)

"No one who is born of God makes a practice of sinning, because the God-given life principle continues to live in him, and so he cannot practice sinning, because he is born of God", Williams Translation.

"The man who is really God's son does not practice sin, for God's nature is in him, for good, and such a heredity is incapable of sin", Philips Translation.

"A child of God does not commit sin, because the devine seed remains in him; He cannot be a sinner, because he is God's child", New English Bible

"No one born of God commits sin; for God's nature abides in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God" RSV.

"Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot, because he is begotten of God", Revised Version

"Whoever is a child of God does not continue to sin, because God is his father, he is not able to continue in sin", Good News Version, American Bible Society.

The confraternity Version (Roman Catholic) is the same as the King James Version so we will not give it here.

Many people misunderstand this verse of scripture, but we must realize that it may not conflict with other plain scriptures. Such as, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and His word is not in us", I John 1:8. 10. What then, does I John 3:9 teach?

The phrase "begotten of God" is more correct than "Born of God". We are really "begotten" of God, through His word and we are "born again" of water and the spirit, John 3:3-5 and I Cor. 4:15. So it is not the birth of God, but begotten of God!

The phrase "doeth no sin", is translated from "Hamartian Ou Poiei" and means that one does not continue to make a habit of sinning. You can understand that he is a "servant of righteousness" and must so live, Romans 6:16-18.

The phrase "and he cannot sin" is so translated from "Kai Ou Dunatai Hamartanein" and means that "he cannot continue to live a life of sin". This does not mean that it is "impossible", for one

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A System of Hirelings?

The Bible is indeed clear concerning the rights of those who preach the gospel to live of that gospel (I Cor. 9:14). Those who labor in the realm of spiritual matters are given the right to partake of the physical support (I Cor. 9:11). Those who plant and care for the vineyard are given the right to partake of that vineyard's fruit. We do not question this right. We defend this right. At present we live by it. But have we allowed the scripture, "The laborer is worthy of his hire" to cause us to turn the Lord's work into a system of "Hirelings."

Consider the average church. We hire our preaching done. We hire someone to direct singing and teach singing. We hire someone to see that our young people are entertained. We hire someone to plan and direct our personal work. We hire someone to plan and direct the educational program of the church. We hire someone to care for the building. We hire someone to clean and prepare the communion equipment. We hire someone to cut the grass and keep the lawn watered. In some places ladies may even be hired to care for the nursery during the gospel meetings. We are hiring so much done that nothing is left for the scarce volunteer to do for his Lord in the church. This hiring system contributes to the scarcity of volunteers workers in the church. It begets the hiring attitude in people. Volunteers to do menial tasks grow more scarce. People willing to be hired to fill a work grow more numerous.

What has happened to the "willing" Christian? Where is that disappearing commodity, the Christian willing to give time and effort to repair the building, clean the building, mow the grass, teach classes, plan educational programs, do personal work, prepare the communion, etc., all for "free" (just to please the Lord and be a partaker of the divine nature in giving of himself in love?)

The Bible concept of "supporting" a preacher while he labored in the cause of Christ in preaching and teaching has degenerated into a system of "hiring and firing." This has created insecurity for preachers and havoc in the stability of the

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CONTRIBUTIONS:

Pilot Church of Christ	\$60.00
Wheeling Church of Christ	6.50
Payton Watkins	5.00
Viola Church of Christ	5.00
Velma Stethem	5.00
Ring Church of Christ	5.00
Agnos Church of Christ	5.00
Dollie Trammell	10.00
Sturkie Church of Christ	5.00
Elizabeth Church of Christ	5.00
Delhalf Church of Christ	5.00
Leonard Maynard	2.00

Socializers or Gospelizers

It goes without saying, and sometimes nothing is ever said—which is a good reason as to why it goes, that many brethren take for granted the “Faith once . . . for all delivered” and experience a “spiritual slump.” It is a serious matter to fall into this condition because one’s soul is lost for sure. Living in the Bible Belt as we do, we are not cognizant of the many manifold blessings that God can bestow upon us if we would but allow this bestowal. A great blessing from God comes to us as we give; but give what?

Denominational, pseudo-Christians have long been known to abound in giving worldly gifts. They are known to have the biggest dinners, the largest ingathering at a Sunday Morning breakfast, they can “throw” the finest party in town, they can decorate their Church buildings with elaborate—ornamental finery, they can give the nicest baby and wedding showers. Oh, there is no end to what magnificent socializers they are; but how about their teaching and preaching of the Gospel?

Are our denominational friends always excited about attending every Bible class and religious discussion? Are they interested in developing their spirituality more perfectly? Are they singing spiritual songs and praying spiritual prayers? Are they encouraging their preacher into greater spirituality? Do they make every opportunity they can, to tell someone about the precious Saviour who died for them. Do they learn more about this Saviour in Bible class and come to “know him” in a more intimate way? Do they spend vast sums of money, time, energy, and ingenuity in the instigation and propagation of the Gospel? Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). What more appreciable gift can be given than the gift of Christ and his way of salvation to a dying, lost man?

The Church of Christ stands distinct and peculiar to all denominationalism. The socializing of denominationalism should never be found in the Church of Christ to the extent that it undermines and takes precedence over the sweet song of Israel: “Jesus Loves Me This I Know.” Our purpose should never be one of emphasizing socializing to the de-emphasizing of the Gospel. The day that society takes over in the Lord’s Church will be a tragic one.

As Christians we must stand forthright with truth and clarity. As children of God, chosen and elect, we will direct all of our efforts toward one primary objective, i.e., the salvation of the souls of men. Those who find the time and energy to emphasize social offerings and fail to find the time and energy to emphasize Gospel offerings are in a sad state indeed.

ARE YOU A SOCIALIZER OR A GOSPELIZER?

—Mike Wilson

I Can Get It for You Wholesale

By Glynn Purdy

This is a time when everyone is spending more money than ever before and receiving less for each dollar. Yet each one is concerned with “saving” money and getting a “bargain”. Many business houses are telling us how we may save money by trading with them. The more you spend the more you “save”, so if one spends enough he may “save” himself rich! But the man who KNOWS, realizes that a bargain is when he buys something that is worth MORE to him than the money he had to pay for it!

So, under these conditions, we often hear of wholesale(?) prices. Many times we have a friend (?) who can help us save money, so he informs us that he can get it for us “wholesale”. This sounds so good and we need to stretch the money; so often we wind up with an inferior product and a padded price! But after all it was “wholesale” and we were so “lucky”!

Now this same principle is true in RELIGION! God has set a given price on man’s part for salvation, and he has only ONE list price, given in His word, the Bible. The “product” of salvation was “produced” by the blood of Christ, I Pet. 1:18-21. By the GRACE of God it is available to ALL men, Tit. 2:11-13. AT THE SAME PRICE TO ALL, OF COURSE, Acts 10:34-35.

The price: ALL must “hear” the word of God, Rom. 10:17. This is to produce “faith” in the heart; without which one cannot please God, Heb. 11:6. Then ALL must “repent”, or PERISH, Luke 13:5; Acts 2:38, 17:30, 3:19. Then ALL must “confess Christ”, Matt. 10:32-33; with the “mouth”, Rom. 10:9-10. ALL must be “buried in baptism”, Rom 6:3-5; for “remission of Sins”, Acts 2:38; to “wash away sins”, I Pet. 3:21; to become “God’s child”, Gal. 3:26-27; to get “into Christ”, Rom. 6:3-4; where “all spiritual blessings” are, Eph. 1:3; where one becomes a “new creature”, 2 Cor. 5:17. Faith ALONE, will NOT save, James 2:24. In spite of this, some preacher will say, “I can get salvation for you wholesale”, meaning by faith ONLY!

Now God being NO respecter of persons, the same “price tag” is applied to EVERY one alike! The Bible teaches that baptism is a “burial”, but a preacher gives a “wholesale” price, SPRINKLING! The Bible says baptism is to save one from sins, a preacher puts a “wholesale” price on and promises salvation WITHOUT baptism. HE PUTS ON A SALE FOR GOD! The Bible teaches there is ONE body (the church, Col. 1:18), ONE faith, One baptism, man puts on a “Sale” of MANY churches, MANY faiths and MANY baptisms! God gives the church of his choice, the preacher offers “wholesale”, the “church of YOUR

choice”. Surely any HONEST person has read enough to understand this fraud in religion!

When God teaches man HOW to be saved, and then some preacher teaches him that he can get him saved some other way, then the preacher is giving him the word of an uninspired man and saying that this is better than the word of God. When we examine this in the Bible, this is what we find, “But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men”, Matt. 15:9. The “Gospel” is God’s power to save man, Rom. 1:16, and ALL of those who do NOT OBEY the Gospel of Christ, will be LOST, 2 Thess. 1:7-9. Surely then my friend, you do NOT desire to risk your soul in to the hands of a preacher, even though he is honest and sincere, who CLAIMS to be able to get you salvation, without you having to meet God’s price! Don’t you believe it, he cannot change God’s will! Better read the Bible and be willing to meet the price recorded there, for only then can you obtain salvation. ONLY THOSE WHO OBEY CHRIST WILL BE SAVED, NO ONE ELSE, REGARDLESS OF HOW MANY PREACHERS PROMISE TO “GET IT FOR YOU WHOLESALE”, Heb. 5:8-9. Is this not worth your most serious study? The soul you save, will be yours!

A System of Hirelings? (Cont.)

congregations. It has meant devastation to the brotherhood concept of the Lord’s people. Preachers and others “hired” by a particular congregation spend all effort directed at that particular congregation even to the extent of brotherhood rivalry. The “good of the church” is sacrificed for the “good of my congregation.” One congregation boasts of “its” preacher and program over another’s preacher and program.

Jesus taught that he was a shepherd because he loved the sheep. He warned us that the hireling would flee when the wolves came because he was just that, a hireling. Is it any wonder then with the system we have created that preacher, youth directors(?), educational directors(?), etc., (hired personnel) pack and move when difficulties arise? After all, another church has offered them a better “deal”. This is not to indict those well-intentioned and sacrificing preachers and workers who are forced to seek greener fields because the brethren in a given locality are too stingy to support him adequately as he gave himself wholly to the work of the Lord.

Brethren, let’s take another look at our “buying” our way. Let’s now allow the attitude of the world to take us in refusing to do anything without the dollar sign attached. Christian, volunteer to do the Lord’s work. Our labor is not in vain. The pay is tops and the retirement system is unmatched in any field of labor.

Dean Fugett

The Meanest Mother (Cont.)

forgot to mention, while my friends were dating at the mature age of 12 and 13, my old-fashioned mother refused to let me date until the age of 15 and 16. Fifteen, that is, if you dated only to go to a school function. And that was twice a year, maybe.

Through the years, things didn't improve a bit. We could not lie in bed "sick" like our friends did and miss school. If our friends had a toe ache, a hang nail or other serious ailment, they would stay home from school. Our marks in school had to be up to par. Our friends' report cards had beautiful colors on them, black for passing and red for failing. My mother, being different as she was, would settle for nothing less than the ugly black marks.

As the years rolled by, first one and then the other of us was put to shame. We graduated from high school. With our mother behind us taking to hitting, and demanding respect, none of us was allowed the pleasure of being a drop-out.

My mother was a complete failure as a mother. Out of four children, a couple of us attained some higher education, none of us has ever been arrested, divorced or beaten his mate. Each of my brothers served his time in service of this country. And whom do we have to blame for the terrible way we turned out? You are right, our mean mother. Look at all the things we missed. We never got to march in protest parades, nor take part in a riot, or burn draft cards and a million other things that our friends did. She forced us to grow up into God-fearing educated adults.

Using this as a background, I am trying to raise my three children. I stand a little taller, and I am filled with pride when my children call me mean. Because, you see, I thank God that He gave me the meanest mother in all the world.

—Copied
Author Unknown

I John 3:9 (Cont.)

who is God's child, to commit a single sin, but it does mean that if he is God's child that he can no longer live in sin and continue to be the child of God! We often say to our children, "You cannot do that". We do not mean that it is impossible for them to do that, but rather, that this would not be in the keeping of the good character of our child for them to engage in such. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God", Rom. 3:23. Yes, you can sin, it is possible, but you cannot continue to live in sin and continue to be acceptable to God. You cannot live in sin and die in the Lord!

Sad News

Matt. 19:22 — "But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful."

A rich young ruler came to Jesus asking what he could do to inherit eternal life. Jesus's answer and lesson perplexed his disciples. They saw this young man had done so many good things, had given so much, had kept commandments, and yet he lacked. He went away sorrowful because he could not trust 'everything' to Jesus. How like us today. God does not want some of our money. He does not want a part of us. He wants us. Jesus loved that young man. He wanted him to follow. The cost was too great for the young man. The apostles questioned: "Who then can be saved?" Jesus replied: "With men this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible." (Read Matt. 19:22-30; Luke 18:18-30)

No man can earn salvation. It is God's gift to those who trust Him to direct their lives. The rewards are great. "... And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

"Many of his disciples when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it? ... From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." (John 6:60, 66.)

It is no new thing for disciples to turn their backs on Jesus. With Him, it is all or nothing. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and man." (Matt. 6:24). Jesus taught us to COUNT THE COST. "... So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsake not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:25-33).

God is no respecter of persons. Whosoever will to the Lord may come. Each must come unreservedly, willing to DO THE FATHER'S WILL, and not our own. (Mt. 7:21). Jesus came not to do His will, but the will of the Father that sent Him. For this very reason, we are called. Christ suffered for us, "leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." (I Pet. 2:21). Each one who would be His, must give up trusting in their own goodness, vices, riches, or pleasures, and place self in obedience to Him who knows the way to lead us. (John 14:6; Jer. 10:23). The choice is yours. No one can force this decision. God does not force. He shows and tells us the rewards for those who choose His way. He warns of the destruction to those who reject Him.

Tell Me Preacher (Cont.)

Question No. 2: Is it more important to be present on Sunday morning to partake of the Lord's supper then it is to be present on Sunday evening or Wednesday evening?

Answer: Allow me to begin to answer this with a question. If Christ was planning to be present Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening, which of these services would you choose to miss? It is rather superfluous to ask isn't it. We wouldn't miss at all. Missing any of the worship services simply shows a lack of love for God and indifference toward his work, unless that absence is due to some providential hindrance. I can conceive of no Christian ever entertaining the thought of absenting himself from any opportunity to worship with the saints in the presence of God. Such attitude is indicative only of a spiritual dwarf.

In the early church the saints usually only met once on the first day of the week but that meeting was usually all day. (Can't you hear the brethren of today moan?) The convenience of two meetings each Lord's day, though, was only provided with the hope that Christians would avail themselves of both opportunities and for those who were ill or providentially hindered from the morning service to have the opportunity to remember the Lord's death. But many of us who have failed to complete throw off the materialistic thinking of the world have thought that the hours from 10-12 were the only part of Sunday that belongs to the Lord. Remember it is the Lord's DAY. To only worship and spend the rest of the day in pleasure is only fallacious reasoning and indicative of a lack of knowledge.

It is more important to be present every service than any other time of the week. Where did the idea come from of arbitrarily choosing the more important worship services on Sunday?

Study the following verses then act as conscience and conviction dictate. (Heb. 10:24-31; Jas. 4:17; Matt. 18:20; Jno. 14:15; Matt. 6:33; Acts 2:42-47; I Cor. 15:58; Titus 3:8.)

I hope these are answers approved by God and beneficial to each for a greater spiritual awakening and service.

DF

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