

Family Ties

Material for, about and concerning the church of Christ at Wasilla

Volume 1, Issue 2

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A Message from the Elders

We hope that you enjoy this edition of our "Family Ties" magazine. Our goal with this publication is that our family will be drawn closer together as we read the articles and enjoy the games. We hope that this encourages you to invite your family and friends to attend our services and we hope that your personal spiritual life is made stronger by this publication.

This edition will use Jude 1:3 as its theme. That verse states : "*Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.*" (ESV) Our articles will be written around either "Our Common Salvation" or "Contending for the Faith". Please share this with any one who you think may enjoy it .

ED MAXWELL
HANS NICHOLSON

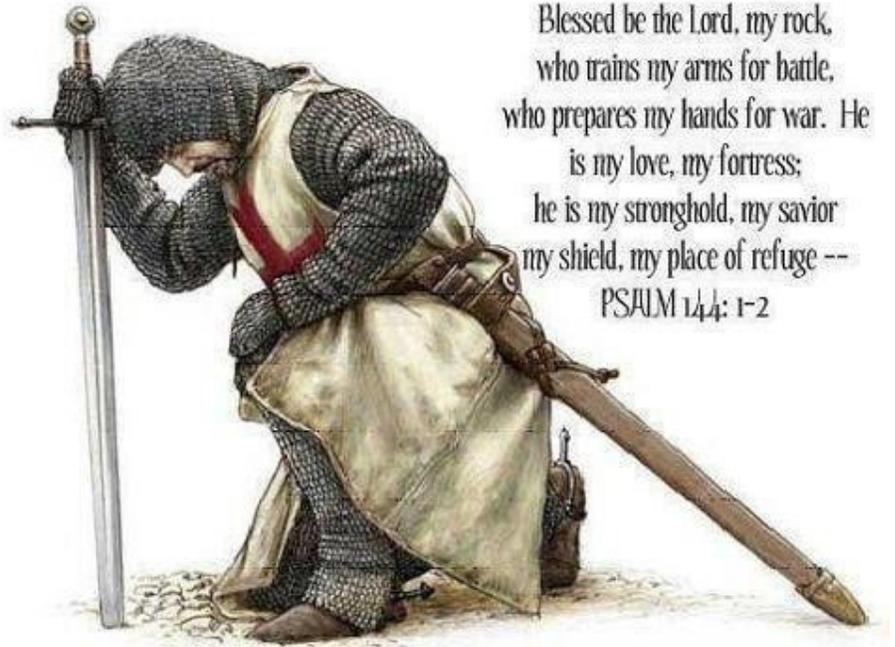


Why Pray?

Vines Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament words defines the word contend from Jude 3 as to defend as a combatant. Now with that in mind how many of us are willing to even make an decisive argument let alone engage in a combative discussion on the need for the blessing and the glory of prayer? Does it seem as a shock to us that the world continues to head in a downward nose dive or even more terrifying scripture reads:

Hebrews 10:26-31 "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

With thought of this scripture in mind we should all really, take time to pause and consider our hearts



Blessed be the Lord, my rock,
who trains my arms for battle,
who prepares my hands for war. He
is my love, my fortress;
he is my stronghold, my savior
my shield, my place of refuge --
PSALM 144: 1-2

and lifestyle choices. As Brother Bill mentioned in his sermon recently, "we are all followers of something," and with that fact we are all willing to defend or contend for something. We are so ready to contend against a business who chooses a controversial athlete as a spokesperson or a person in congress who tries to stall a court pick, yet say absolutely nothing when a family member or coworker says a crude thing about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Satan's plan is to make it appear as if God's word, grace, and answered prayers are not worth fighting for but we see where that has led us as a nation. Mentioning God is a public setting is considered taboo and praying in school is frowned upon and ridiculed. Philosopher Alexis

de Tocqueville said "Not until I went into the churches of **America** and heard her pulpits, aflame with righteousness, did I understand the secret of her genius and power. **America** is great because she is **good**, and if **America** ever **ceases to be good**, **America** will **cease** to be great." My friends it is from the power of God and those in the churches of Christ having the will to do as Peter boldly stated to the first century church that true change will take place.

1 Peter 3:15 "but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you"

This ready heart mind and soul gives us the ability to overcome

Why Pray? (Continued)

the devilish snares of Satan!

There is no other way but by the gospel and God's power to lead us to prayer, repentance and salvation! Prayer is not just a conversation with an imaginary friends as many atheist or agnostics would have us believe but it is a true glorious aroma to the Holy Father! For too long have we allowed the immoral and corrupt mind of man to dictate the course of our schools homes and society? Church family, this will continue until the day of judgment unless WE stand up and contend, defend, and combat for prayer. Not only in the our private lives but in public, schools, workplaces, and society. Until that point we will continue on as Paul writes to the Romans

Romans 1:22-23 "Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures."

We must be ready at every moment to stand up for God and push back the sinful nature of the world. This can be difficult, but is not hard when one considers the cost of what Christ gave up to redeem us! Prayer is not a text message or a snap chat conversation but a continuous attitude in which one does their very best to align there life with God's word! A.W. Tozer said Prayer will become effective when we stop using it as a substitute for obedience. Are you ready to Awake and recognize that we are in a spiritual battle daily against wickedness just as Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, and not until we take up the full armor of God will we be able to contend for anything! (Ephesians 6:10) Please under-



stand the severity and what is at stake for all who are unwilling to contend for the common faith, prayer, and salvation which God has so truly mercifully and compassionately gave to us ALL.

With Prayers and all Love, please look to God's holy word and always be ready to contend for God, and if you struggle with this please earnestly pray for courage to stand up for it, for the Lord can and will help you.

Joe Murdock

Pray WITHOUT CEASING

1 Thessalonians 5:16-22 (KJV)

¹⁶ Rejoice evermore. ¹⁷ Pray without ceasing. ¹⁸ In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

¹⁹ Quench not the Spirit. ²⁰ Despise not prophesyings. ²¹ Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. ²² Abstain from all appearance of evil

Evangelism

We humans have a tendency to value things based on our idea of worth. We look at houses and decide which are more valuable based on things like size, number of bedrooms, number of bathrooms and size of the garage. But this is not always the best way to place a valuation on a home. A home with five bedrooms, four and a half baths and a four car garage priced at under \$500,000.00 may seem like a great deal. But what if it were in a high crime area, or what if it were built in the 1950's and maintenance hadn't been completed on it in several years. The true value of this home may be considerably different then.

To really understand somethings value, we have to consider all aspects surrounding it. That is also what we have to do when considering the value of the human soul. Jesus told us this: "*For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole*

2 Timothy 4:17 (KJV)

Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?" Matthew 16:26 (ESV) Jesus viewed the soul of each and everyone of us as being more valuable than the wealth of the entire world. He also placed great value on the kingdom of God (the Church) in the parable of the hidden treasure recorded in Matthew 13:44-46. Unfortunately, we fail to value our souls and the church the way Jesus did. We place more value on recreation, or work than we do on either of these two things today. How can I say this with any

confidence? Because the things that we value most are those things that we invest our time and money into. And too often we are willing to invest more time and money into recreation or work than we are in evangelizing.

We place higher value on temporary things and allow those permanent things to waste away. Consider this when you next have a choice to make between helping spread the gospel or going camping.

Singing

In my last article about singing, we discussed how important it is to sing the correct tempo, sing loudly (especially the song leader), sing with passion and we went over some of the music terms. In this article, we'll go over more a few more musical terms and continue our theme of the newsletter: Faith.

We'll talk about some songs of Faith and how it can strengthen us spiritually when we sing them.

As we've previously stated, when we sing songs correctly, not only do we sound great as a congregation, it helps build our emotion and helps us get more out of our church

service. When you see something like this: < it's called a "crescendo". Depending on which direction it's facing, we either start very softly (pp) and gradually get louder (ff). If it's facing the opposite direction, we start > very loud then gradually get softer; "decrescendo". A great

Singing (Continued)

example of this, is "Master The Tempest Is Raging", song # 425.

Another symbol you'll see is a repeat sign. If you look in our song book, song #442, "My Faith Looks Up To Thee", you'll notice one of these. In this example, before we sing the last line, we sing the two lines first; thus, repeating. Sing one line, then go back and sing the other before the verse last line of the verse.

Let's talk about a couple songs of faith.

Hebrews 11:1 gives the definition of what Faith is: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." When we sing these songs, it helps

us get into a better frame of mind and helps us with our faith. As in "My Faith Looks Up to Thee", there's the earnest plea: "Now hear me while I pray, take all my guilt away". This is an honest, act of humility and casting our anxieties on him, 1Pet. 5:7.

Take a look at #400, "Living By Faith". This song describes a very strong, confident faith. "I care not today what the morrow may bring..." "Why should I then care though the tempest may blow, if Jesus walks close to my side". As we sing these songs together or in our alone time or family time, it helps build our faith, which in turn builds our love for the Lord, each other and our daily spiritual life.

We are stronger together. Our faith is stronger together.

How is your faith? How is your daily spiritual life? Do you sing during Worship or just follow along in the book? Just following along in the book isn't singing, as we have example to do in the Bible. Remember: we are all examples to each other, our children and the rest of the world. When we sing, we're "teaching one another in songs and hymns", Col. 3:16. Take a look at some songs about Faith in our books, read some passages about Faith and singing and you'll feel a renewed faith, especially when we're together with our like-minded, spiritual family.

-Eddie Maxwell

1. I care not to-day what the morrow may bring, If shad-ow or sun-shine or rain,
 2. Tho' tempests may blow and the storm-clouds a-rise, Obs-cur-ing the bright-ness of life,
 3. I know that He safe-ly will car-ry me thro', No mat-ter what e-vils be-tide;
 4. Our Lord will re-turn to this earth some sweet day, Our trou-bles will then all be o'er,

The Lord, I know, rul-eth o'er ev-er-y-thing, And all of my wor-ry is vain.
 I'm nev-er a-larmed at the o-ver-cast skies, The Mas-ter looks on at the strie.
 Why should I then care, tho' the tem-pest may blow, If Je-sus walks close to my side.
 The Mas-ter so gen-tly will lead us a-way, Be-yond that blest heav-en-ly shore.

Women to Women

The Bible and Female Leadership

by [Dave Miller, Ph.D](#)

Amid the polarization that plagues American civilization in general, and Christendom in particular, one chasm continues to widen between those who wish to conform to Bible protocol and those who wish to modernize, update, adjust, and adapt Scripture to secular society. The cry of those who are pressing the feminist agenda is that the church in the past has restricted women in roles of leadership and worship simply because of culture and flawed hermeneutical principles. They say we are the product of a male-dominated society and have consequently misconstrued the contextual meaning of the relevant biblical passages. As attitudes soften and biblical conviction weakens, Scripture is being reinterpreted to allow for expanded roles for women in worship. At least some of this propensity for compromise is due to the skeptic's insistence that God, the Bible, and Christians suffer from misogyny.

The central passage in the New Testament that indicates gender role in the home is Ephesians 5:22-33. The premier passage that treats gender roles in worship is 1 Timothy 2:8-15. Both passages indicate that men, i.e., adult males (andras), are to be holy, spiritual

leaders in the home and in worship, while women are admonished to be modest and unassuming, and to fulfill the critical responsibilities assigned to them by God. What conceivable reason would the inspired writer (Paul) have for placing any limitations on either men or women? Was his concern prompted by the culture of that day? Was Paul merely accommodating an unenlightened, hostile environment, or asserting his own chauvinistic tendencies? The Holy Spirit gave the reason for the limitations, and that reason transcends all culture and all locales. Paul stated that men are to be kind, loving, nurturing leaders, and women are to submit to that leadership in the home and the church, because Adam was created before Eve. Here is the heart and core of God's will concerning how men and women are to function and interrelate.

God's original design for the human race entailed the creation of the male first as an indication of the man's responsibility to be the spiritual leader of the home and the church. That is his functional purpose. Woman, on the other hand, was specifically designed and created for the purpose of being a subordinate (though not inferior) assistant. This feature of Creation explains why God gave spiritual teaching to Adam before Eve was created, implying that Adam

had the created responsibility to teach his wife (Genesis 2:15-17). It explains why the female is twice stated to have been created to be "an help meet for him," i.e., a helper suitable for the man (Genesis 2:18,20, emp. added). This explains why the Genesis text clearly indicates that in a unique sense, the woman was created for the man—not vice versa. It explains why God brought the woman "to the man" (Genesis 2:22)—not vice versa—again, as if she was made "for him." Adam confirmed this understanding by stating "the woman whom You gave to be with me" (Genesis 3:12, emp. added). It explains why Paul argued on the basis of this very distinction: "Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (1 Corinthians 11:9, emp. added). It further clarifies the implied authority of the man over the women in his act of naming the woman (Genesis 2:23; 3:20). The Jews understood this divinely designed order, evidenced by the practice of primogeniture ("firstborn" male). God's creation of the man first was specifically intended to communicate the authority/submission principle for ordering the human race (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:8). Indeed, the evolutionists, skeptics, atheists, feminists, and theological liberals who disdain this reality are faced with

Women to Women *(Continued)*

the stubborn reality that gender distinction is inherently built into the created order via a host of clear cut emotional, psychological, and physiological differences between men and women—from chromosomes, to life span and muscle strength (cf. Jacobsen, 2007). Paul pinpoints perhaps the most prominent and distinguishing feature: the ability of females to bear children (1 Timothy 2:15).

Bible teaching on difference in role in no way implies a difference in worth, value, or ability. Galatians 3:28 (“neither male nor female”), 1 Timothy 2:15 (“she shall be saved”), and 1 Peter 3:7 (“heirs together of the grace of life”) all show that males and females are **equals** as far as their person and salvation status is concerned. Women are often superior to men in talent, intellect, and ability. Women are not inferior to men anymore than Christ the Son is inferior to God the Father, citizens are inferior to the President, or students are inferior to teachers. The role of women in the home and in the church is not a matter of control, power, or oppression. It is a matter of submission on the part of **all** human beings to the will of God. It is a matter of willingness on the part of God’s creatures, male and female, to subordinate themselves to the divine arrangement regarding the sexes. The biblical

differentiation is purely a matter of function, assigned tasks, and sphere of responsibility. The tragic mistreatment of women through the centuries in countries and cultures around the world by men who have abused and misused their authority in no way discredits the biblical principle.

A massive restructuring of values and reorientation of moral and spiritual standards has been taking place in American culture for over 50 years now. The dismantling of scriptural gender differentiation is one facet of this multifaceted effacement and erosion of biblical values. Virtually every sphere of American culture has been impacted. To the extent that God’s will for the proper functioning of the human race deteriorates, to that extent we will [continue](#) to see the unraveling of America’s foundational values and increasing social

confusion and disorientation.

Many talented, godly women possess abilities and talents that would enable them to surpass many of the male worship leaders functioning in the church today. However, the Bible stands as an unalterable, eternal declaration of God’s will on the matter. By those words we will be judged (John 12:48). May all people bow humbly and submissively before the God of Heaven in conformity to His perfect will for people.

Reference

Jacobsen, Joyce (2007), *The Economics of Gender* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing), third edition.

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Philippians 4:3 (ESV)

Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Life Lessons

My life before I met Jesus was not ideal. I ran away from home several times and lived on the streets. I had a baby, but he was taken away by the state. I was molested and abused sexually, physically and mentally. Growing up for me was difficult and dangerous. I learned not to trust anyone but me.

Finally, my sister asked me if I still believed in God and Jesus. I said yes. She asked if I had been baptized and I said yes. She asked how I was baptized, and I reminded her that we were baptized as babies in the church (Catholic religion). She said that she learned that kind of baptism is not the one Jesus talks about. Babies don't know right from wrong, so how are you going to repent to be forgiven of your sins if you are not old enough to know what your doing is against God? Those who crucified Jesus, Acts 2:22-38 asked what they needed to do and they were told to

"I learned not to trust anyone but me...Here is how God has changed me."

repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins. They were not babies. How about the Ethiopian? Acts 8:26-39 shows us that not only was the Ethiopian a mature person, but he believed and knew that baptism was a necessary part of salvation for the way to heaven. He was immersed in the water, not sprinkled. And even though Jesus had no sin, He set the example of baptism in Mt 3:13-16. My friend and I (who after 4 years of friendship, I had fallen for) studied with some men from a local congregation of Christ's church (which is based on the church Jesus brought to all, the New Testament church) and Jesus reached my heart and I KNEW we must be baptized and get married to be right with God if we were to

keep our relationship going and then learn how to live as God wants us to live. We were baptized and married.

Here is how God has changed me. I speak and people listen, without foul language. I don't yell, get upset or browbeat someone because they disagree with me. I don't hear what I think they are saying, I listen with a clear mind and quietly ask questions to get a better understanding. I don't look at another and fantasize or flirt. White lies are no longer an okay thing. I don't get high or drunk. I don't tell dirty jokes or tease someone with a demeaning nickname. I take responsibility for my actions, not pointing fingers and blaming others. I no longer believe in superstitions because they are made up stories by those who do not know the truth. I have forgiven everyone that did any wrong to me. I care about all and pray for the homeless, widows, orphans, military, doctors, teachers, leaders, farmers, ranchers, those in dangerous places, travelers, persecuted, children, sick, dying, families, nations, law enforcement, firemen, endurance for all and the list goes on. Now I have peace in my heart and mind

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?



Life Lessons *(Continued)*

with godly love for all, yes even my enemies. I try to do what is best for others, even when they snap or stomp off because it is not what they "want". I have stayed married 30 years even through tough times. I have learned through reading the Bible that most of those tough times were because I was trying to control my husband or he was trying to control me instead of helping each other by setting good examples as a Christian, loving one another, sacrificing for each other the way God tells us. Now we work together as God tells us and we can get through anything peacefully, respecting each other and with an unselfish love bonding even closer. I have a life worth living, patience to endure, a loving family God gave me when I became His and a freedom from the chains that sin binds you with. God showed me I was worth something because His Son Jesus died for me, a sinner.

What a wonderful life it is knowing that I am saved and have a home in heaven where no pain, no worn out body or sins darkness and decay will be. The sun could explode today, but I know I will get to go to heaven.

Terry Campbell

(Editors Note: You can talk directly with Terry for more information about her early life and how it impacted her Christianity.)



We can't
change God,
but He can
change us!

Bible Study

Jude 1:3-4 (ESV)

"Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."

When Jude, probably a half brother to Jesus since he identifies himself as a brother of James, wrote this letter he wanted to write to them about our "common salvation" (Jude 3). His goal was to remind them about the salvation that they, and we, have in Jesus Christ. A salvation that transcends time, racial boundaries, nationalities, gender, age and anything that Satan might use to separate us.

This "common salvation" is a topic that we should rejoice in. It is also a topic that we should study. What does it mean that we have a "common salvation"? Our salvation, purchased for us by the blood of Jesus Christ, is no longer restricted to a national identity. It is available to both Jews and Gentiles. This was made clear when God sent Peter to teach the Centurion (Acts 10). It was affirmed by

the Apostles and Elders in Jerusalem when they sent a letter to the Gentile Christians concerning their relationship with the Mosaic law (Acts 15). We are fully Christian and not Jews or Gentiles. We are not required to follow the old law. Our men do not have to be circumcised and we are not required to obey the sacrificial and ceremonial laws that God had placed on Israel prior to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

So our salvation is truly a "common salvation". Paul made this clear when he wrote: *"Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming of Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise"* **Galatians 3:23-29 (ESV).**

Having a "common salvation" means that the saving grace of God is presented to all humanity through the blood of Jesus. You

and I are saved in the same way as the Apostle Paul was. The same way that Christians have been saved since Peter answered the question of the Jews when they cried out "...men and brethren, what shall we do?" on that Pentecost Day in 33 AD. Our salvation is NOT based on our nationality. It has nothing to do with our race. It is a "common salvation" available to all humanity by the grace of God and the sacrifice of Jesus as his blood flowed down from his body as he hung on the cross. It is, however depending on one thing. That is our willingness to obey God.

That is why Jude stated *"I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints."* Obedience is absolutely necessary to access our "common salvation". Without it, we cannot be saved. While Jesus paid all the debt that we owed because of sin, each of us have to take possession of that "common salvation" through obedience.

The Jews on Pentecost in Jerusalem had to obey. When they cried out "men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter didn't tell them that they all would be saved and to just go on living their lives. He didn't tell them to pray a sinners prayer. He told them to do two things. First was to repent, and the second was to be baptized.

Bible Study *(Continued)*

When Saul traveling on the road to Damascus to arrest Christians met Jesus, his life changed then and there. He would not be the same, and I would hope none of us would be either had we had that experience. But while Jesus could have forgiven him of his sins right then and there like He did for the thief on the cross, He told Saul to go into the city and he would be told what he had to do. Listen to him in his own words: *"As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.' Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.' And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus. "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, and standing by me said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.'*

And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. And he said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'" **Acts 22:6-16 (ESV)** Note that Saul asked the same question that the Jews asked to Peter, "What shall I do?"

Jesus could have told him to say a sinners prayer, in fact we see Saul spending the next three days fasting and praying, but He simply told him to go on into the city and he would be told what he had to do. When Ananias visited Saul, his instruction to him wasn't "Its ok, you are already saved." nor was it "Say a sinners prayer." Ananias told Saul the same thing that Peter told

the Jews at Pentecost. Ananias told Saul to "Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name."

When Jude wrote to the Christians then, and consequently to us today, to "contend for the faith" he wrote this because he knew that there would be those who would try to pervert the message. He continued in verse 4 to warn us about them. Listen: *"For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."* **Jude 1:4 (ESV)**

This began early as the Jews insisted that Christians had to be circumcised and follow the Mosaic law. It continued as the Roman church became preeminent and began to teach the Papal hierar-

Acts 17:10-12 (KJV)

¹⁰ And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither* went into the synagogue of the Jews. ¹¹ These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. ¹² Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few

Bible Study *(Continued)*

chy. It continued when John Calvin taught the five principles of Calvinism and it continues today as people continue to teach the sinners prayer and once saved always saved. So Jude's concern then is just as valid for us today. We want to talk and think about our "common salvation" but we also have to "contend for the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints."

To effectively "contend for the faith" we have to study. We can not do this without knowing the Gospel message, how Jesus was born of a virgin (and not of a young woman), how he spent three years teaching his disciples and others, how he was crucified, was buried and rose again on the third day. How he ascended into heaven and

that he will return again. But we also need to study to be able to counter false teaching today.

When someone teaches that once you are saved you are always saved can you ask them to read Hebrews 6:1-8 and explain how the doctrine of once saved always saved (OSAS) could be true? Can you take them to James 2 and ask them how their faith is demonstrated? Can you ask them to read Matthew 25:31-40 and explain how OSAS or the sinners prayer could possibly be true based on the teachings of Jesus in these verses?

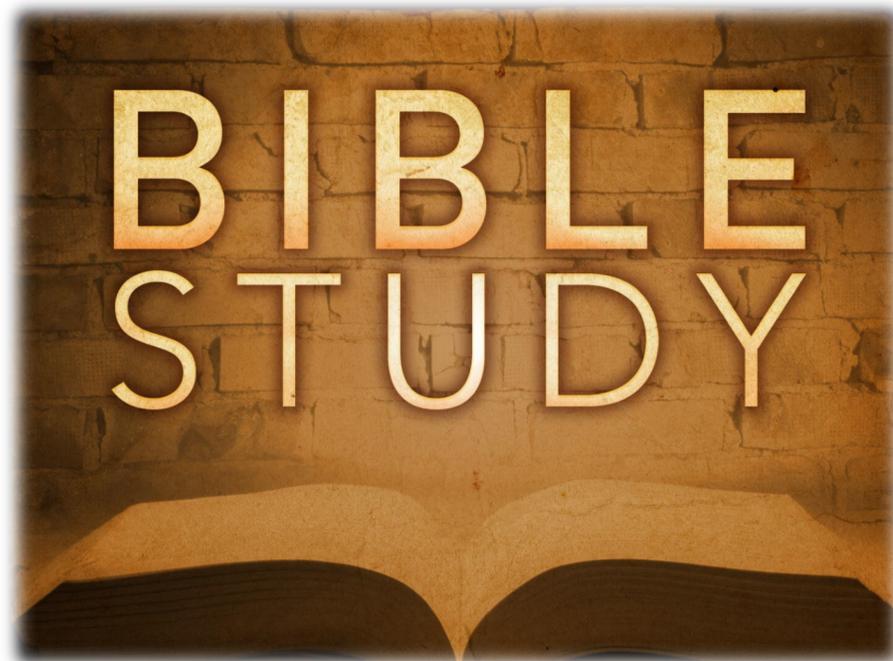
Can you "contend for the faith" when you meet and study with Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, or Muslims? Can you actively defend the deity of Jesus when they teach that he was a created being or a

prophet?

You can only successfully "contend for the faith" by active and consistent Bible study. And while our studies on Sundays and Wednesdays are extremely valuable they are not all the studying that a Christian should do. We should have the attitude that Luke ascribed to those in Berea. Those searched the scriptures daily to insure that Paul and Silas were teaching the truth. Daily, personal Bible study should be the hallmark of each and every one of us. It should not be what we do, but who we are. Bible study should be so much a part of our lives that all our friends and relatives know that we will be spending time studying.

Jude, in these two verses gave us some very valuable things to consider. We need to think about our "common salvation", but we also must be ready to "defend the faith". Can you do that? If not lets get serious about Bible study, both when the church comes together and when we are at home.

Bill Beebe



*So Great
a Salvation*

—1 PETER 1:1-12

Meet Our Family: The Betti Family

It is certainly an interesting time of reflection when being asked to share information about oneself and family. Where to begin? Debra and I just hit 30 years of marriage. Certainly that is a shocker for most seeing how most people think Deb and I are in our 30's. Or do we just think that...hmmm? We met in college at Alaska Pacific University. I was on scholarship playing basketball. Believe it or not APU had collegiate athletics for some years back in the late eighties. I was playing in Seattle and was offered a scholarship to come back to Alaska to finish up my last two years. That worked out well since my mom and dad were still living up here at the time and even better yet I would meet my future wife. Deb and her twin sister Darlene were attending the university at that time while there mom and dad were living in Barrow. Her dad was from Arkansas and mom from Point Hope. Talk about two worlds coming together. Deb and I would eventually meet on campus and the rest is history as the say.

Soon after we were married we had our first child Nicole and she has given us three beautiful granddaughters the last seven years. Tommy and Tony round out the rest of our children. After college I worked at Delta Airlines for some years as a load planner and then an

old college roommate introduced to me to his grandfather who worked at New York Life and so I switched careers and got all the proper licensing and education to begin a career in helping people in the financial services. After five years Allstate was looking for representatives to help them begin their new division in financial services and twenty years later I am still with them. Debra early on worked for her Native Corporation, ASRC, and for the mayor of the North Slope Borough as an administrative assistant. Later she would take off for thirteen years to raise Tony and recently went back to work part-time at Home-Depot where our oldest son Tommy works also.

Debra's dad who passed away many years ago was a preacher in the church of Christ. When Deb and I married I was not a Christian and would become one some 6-7 years after Debs dad's passing. The most remarkable thing, as I look back on it now, was after I was baptized Debs mom gave me boxes of my father-in-law's religious books and commentary's and hundreds of sermons. I really believe



that this played an important part in my desire to become a preacher and teacher of the gospel. Deb and I sure wish Don (Debs dad) could have seen the passing of the baton. I really feel blessed to have had things work out this way.

Deb and I enjoy traveling and with my job we have been fortunate to get to travel all over the world. We also enjoy the Alaska life of hunting and fishing and spending time with family especially those granddaughters and we also have lots of nieces and nephews. Deb has 5 siblings all in Alaska and I have two sisters in the lower 48.

Many people don't realize I play a little guitar and Deb and I are Star Trek and Star Wars nerds. And yes, we have been to a Star Trek convention. Live long and prosper!

Tom Betti

Meet Our Family: The Decker Family

Many of you know me name is Whitney Decker, but not many of you know how I became that name. I moved up from Melbourne, Florida where I was born and raised with the idea of getting some good job experience and then heading back down to the states to further my career. God had other plans, and now four and a half years later here I am, happily married with two beautiful boys.

I graduated with my bachelor's degree in Exercise Physiology from the University of South Florida in 2013 and moved to Alaska to work at the Alaska Heart and Vascular Institute as an Exercise Physiologist. At work I proctor stress tests on patient's that are suspected to have, or already have heart disease. This consists mainly of monitoring and interpreting the patient's ECG readings to make sure there are no signs of lack of blood flow in the heart muscle. I enjoy my job and am grateful to have it, but my heart is always with my family.



Logan and I met here at the church of Christ at Wasilla very soon after I moved up. Apparently, he had been waiting for my arrival for a long time before I even knew he existed, and I am so glad he did! With a little prodding from the Nicholson and Kelly families, Logan asked me on our first date to go hiking at Hatcher's Pass followed up by ice cream. It was such a fun date and to this day getting ice cream together is one of our special things. From there our relationship progressed and he proposed to me at the Sea Life Center on February 7th 2015, overlooking Resurrection Bay. We were mar-

ried on July 25th 2015 at a beachside wedding in Florida and shortly after had our first son James Reece Decker on May 25th 2016. David Ryder Decker quickly followed suit and was born on October 13th 2017.

Some things that you might not know about my family are that my dad is actually a very accomplished meteorologist down in Florida, where he specializes in forecasting

hurricanes. My parent's have been married for 34 years and I am so grateful for their godly example of what a marriage should be. Another thing that is that Logan is currently going to school part time for his degree in Occupational Health and Safety. So, with two people working full time jobs, one going to school part time and having two young sons, our lives are very hectic. However, it is more beautiful and blessed than I could have ever imagined and to that I give God all the credit!

We Are Family!

Meet Our Family: The Kelly Family

Phillip & Jennifer Kelly met at the Anchorage Church of Christ, and were married in the room they met, one year later. Phillip scored chance bonus points by taking Jennifer out for ice cream on their first date, not yet knowing it was her favorite thing ever. Phillip proposed, down on one knee, at Jennifer's home in front of her parents and son, Brandon. The couple will soon celebrate their 15th anniversary on March 23. Their family expanded over the years and is a happy one consisting of 6 children; Brandon, Donovan, Tysen, Mason, Justin and AdaLynn. As a family, they enjoy traveling, sports and outdoor activities such as snow machining, hunting, fishing, FROLFing and exploring. Brandon is a track athlete at UAA and the 4 younger boys play basketball for the local recreational teams. Phillip is about to celebrate his 17th year as a correctional officer for the State of Alaska. Starting his career in at the prison in Seward, he transferred to Anchorage Jail after their engagement, where he has since remained. Phillip and Jennifer also own and operate a hydroseeding business during the summer season. Jennifer attended the University of New Mexico, where she obtained a teaching degree. She then returned to Alaska and taught elementary school until the birth of Donovan, their second



son. Now, Jennifer is a stay at home mother, who in the past, has also operated a home sewing business and in home daycare. Phillips Parents are Charles and Nell Kelly. Charles served as elder at the Anchorage Church of Christ for many years until they moved home to retire in Alabama. Jennifer's parents, Hans & Danesa Nicholson, attend the Wasilla Church of Christ, where Hans currently serves as an elder. Hans is a commercial fisherman during the summers in Dillingham and employs Phillip & Jennifer's children, passing on the

A family's
Love[™]
 is forever

family trade as fisherman to a 5th generation. Jennifer and Phillip pray to be good role models and feel blessed to have their entire family part of God's church, and pray that their children grow up and continue to be active, fervent Christians.

The Moral Glory of Jesus

The Word of God presents a matchless portrait of the moral glory of Jesus. Such attests not only to the inspired nature of the Word, but it also attests to the high standard of personal maturation unto which we should strive in our daily Christian walk of life.

With respect to His humanity, Jesus committed no sin nor did he have sinful propensities. He was subject to Joseph and Mary during His youth and worshipped in the synagogue. His compassion is seen in that He wept over guilty Jerusalem and over Lazarus. He relied upon the Word of God in all respects. Jesus was perfect in every stage of development, in every relation of life and in all of His service.

With respect to His being a pattern for all men, Jesus was free from influences that typically affect men. He was not unduly influenced by the peculiarities of His race nor by the spirit of the age. Jesus was not unduly influenced by things local, things transient, things individualizing, things national or things sectarian. As one author stated, "*He rises above the parentage of the blood, the narrow horizon which bounded, as it seemed, His life; for He is the archetypal man in whose presence distinctions of race, intervals of ages, types of civilizations and degrees of mental culture are as nothing.*"

With respect to His unselfishness and dignity, Jesus did not gratify personal ambition but maintained devotion to His mission. He never drew unwarranted attention to self. Jesus illustrated a clear interest in others as He fed the multitudes.

Some things Jesus was never found to be doing. He never begged though having no obvious source of income. He never fled from His enemies in fear. He never became exasperated or excited by hostility directed toward Him. He was never cast down by rejection whereby He could not persevere in his mission.

With respect to His status as One who was superior to human judgment and human intercession, Jesus never needed to give nor did He ever give an apology for His action, for He was sinless. He made no excuses to others for what He did, even though they may have questioned the validity of His action. No excuse was necessary because He was sinless. He never was inclined to confess a mistake nor did He ever confess a mistake to His enemies. Such was not necessary because He was sinless. Notably, there is no record in the Bible that suggests that Jesus ever requested someone to pray for Him, a testimony to His relationship with the Father in Heaven.

With respect to His sinless character, the Bible pointedly affirms His perfection in this life (Hebrews 4:15). This perfection ran as a golden thread through the tapestry of His life, from His birth through His childhood, youth, manhood, private life, public life and even His death. The testimony of His enemies attests to the sinless perfection of Jesus. Judas acknowledged that he had betrayed innocent blood. The Pharisees, perhaps the strongest and more dedicated of His enemies, charged Jesus with disrespect to Caesar during His trial. The limits of the accusation, though false, illustrate their awareness of His perfection, though unacknowledged. The Bible records no error or sin committed by Jesus. He never confessed sin, requested pardon, implied personal guilt, displayed apprehension of a penal future, nor was His fellowship with God ever broken. Others were never able to convict Him of sin.

With respect to the assemblage and correlation of His virtues, His will was balanced with His intellect. He served others when it was proper to do so. He exercised His ruling capacity when it was proper to do so. The justice and mercy of Jesus never clashed, nor did His love and truth or His holiness and pardon. His firmness never degenerated

The Moral Glory of Jesus *(Continued)*

into obstinacy, nor did His calmness ever degenerate into indifference. His gentleness never degenerated into weakness. The elevation of His person did not cause Him to be forgetful of others. He was silent at the right time and spoke when He should. He was the Victor in controversy and the Master of nature. He was and is the Lord of the unseen world. With respect to His power and knowledge, Jesus is both omnipotent and omniscient. His omnipotence is seen in His power over nature, evil spirits, disease and death. His omniscience is evident in His knowing the hearts of all men, His knowing the life of the people with whom he dealt, His knowledge of the world of evil spirits and His knowledge of God the Father.

Yes, the biblical portrait of Jesus is truly matchless and a wonderful guide for every child of God today. We cannot match His sinless character or fully duplicate the virtues mentioned above. Yet, we can and must look to Him as our Supreme example and renew our personal commitment to walk in His steps. This is our task. Anything less will degrade the Christ whom we serve and the One who gave His all for us. Our proper course is clear. May we have the Christian fortitude to follow it honorably and graciously.

📖 Ronald D. Reeves



Christianity Could Not Possibly Be True

What did atheistic author Mike Davis allege was the “smoking gun” that proved to him once and for all that “Christianity could not possibly be true”? What “sealed the issue” and led him to believe “Jesus was wrong...and no more deserving of our belief than any other guy”? When did the case against the Bible and Christianity become “closed”? In chapter one of his book, *The Atheist’s Introduction to the New Testament: How the Bible Undermines the Basic Teachings of Christianity*, Davis explained that Matthew 24:34 was the deciding factor.

In Matthew 24:34, Jesus stated: “Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.” According to Davis, since “Jesus tells his listeners that the judgment day will come before the generation he’s speaking to passes away,” and since that generation passed away 1,900 years ago, Jesus “could not have been divine” and the Bible is “untrustworthy” (2008, pp. 1-2). In actuality, what Davis confesses ultimately “proved” to him that the Bible and Jesus are unreliable is nothing more than a misinterpretation of Scripture. Jesus was **not** mistaken in His comments in Matthew 24:34—Jesus’ generation did not pass away prior to witnessing the things Jesus foretold in Matthew 24:4-34. But, Jesus did **not** foretell in those verses what Davis assumes He foretold. Davis and many others believe that, prior to verse 34, Jesus was describing events that would take place shortly before Judgment Day at the end of time. The fact of the matter is, however, Jesus was prophesying about the coming destruction upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and not the final Judgment.

When the disciples went to show Jesus the temple buildings (Matthew 24:1), Jesus said, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (24:2). Later, when Jesus was on the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked Him three questions, beginning with “when will these things be?” (24:3). In verses 4-34, Jesus revealed several signs that would indicate Rome’s destruction of Jerusalem, including the temple, was near. [NOTE: “The fall of the Hebrew system is set forth in the sort of apocalyptic nomenclature that is characteristic of Old Testament literature, e.g., when the prophets pictorially portray the overthrow of Jehovah’s enemies (cf. Isaiah 13:10-11; 34:2ff; Ezekiel 32:7-8)” (Jackson, n.d.); cf. Matthew 24:29-31; see Miller, 2003.] In verses 35-51 (and all of chapter 25), Jesus answered the disciples’ last two questions: “what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3). To summarize, in Matthew 24:4-34 Jesus foretold of the coming destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, while in 24:35-25:46 He commented on His future return and final Judgment of the world.

How sad it is that so many atheists and skeptics believe they have disproven the Bible and Christianity, when, in reality, they have simply twisted the biblical text to mean something God never intended (cf. 2 Peter 3:16). The fact that Mike Davis highlights Matthew 24:34 as the verse that once and for all proved to him the Bible is unreliable should tell us something about the extreme weakness of the skeptic’s case against Christianity.

By Eric Lyons, M.Min.

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“Radical” Distortion of the Scriptures

The *As Good As New* version of the Bible, translated by former Baptist minister John Henson, and subtitled “A Radical Retelling of the Scriptures,” was released in June 2004 by an English group of self-confessed radicals who call themselves “One.” *As Good As New* might have gone largely unnoticed by the religious [community](#), had England’s archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams (the leader of the Anglican church) not given the translation his enthusiastic stamp of approval (see “New Bible Translation...,” 2004). A press release from “Ekklesia,” a London-based theological think tank that supports the “One” translation, revealed the following:

The translation by John Henson from the organization “One” aims at a “new, fresh and adventurous” translation of the early Christian scriptures. It is designed both for mature Christians and for those who have limited experience of traditional Christianity or “may have found it a barrier to an appreciation of Jesus” (“The One Translation,” 2004).

However, it is apparent that Henson’s focus was not on giving his readers an accurate translation, but on making his radical readers feel comfortable, even if it compromises the real meaning of the Scriptures. One retailer wrote of *As Good As New*:

It also follows the cultural translation, where for instance “demon possession” becomes what it is as understood today, “mental illness.” It follows “contextual translation,” following the sense over longer sections. It is also “inclusive,” following the principles which Jesus adopted in relation to his culture. It is women, gay, and sinner friendly. Other radical departures reflect the need to demythologize in [order](#) to translate adequately into our own culture. For instance “Kingdom of God” thus becomes “God’s New World” (“A Radical and Readable...,” 2004).

The archbishop has praised Henson for replacing “the stale, the technical, the unconsciously exclusive words and policies” of the Bible, with modern phrasing (not to mention modern teachings, which differ from the plain teaching of the original Bible authors) [“New Bible Translation...,” 2004]. Few have a problem with those who merely want the Bible to be understandable (though it certainly is understandable in more traditional versions), but after considering the lengths to which Henson went to morph the Bible into something he considers “readable,” reasonable readers will reject it. Keep in mind that a “community” of random religionists, who happened to take [interest](#) in Henson’s translation process, provided contributions to this work. Apparently, the group of contributors in translation was not composed strictly of Greek or Hebrew scholars, but of “whoever” happened to contribute.

Henson and company have not given readers merely an English “translation” from the original Bible languages. (*As Good As New* is a translation only in the sense that “One” calls it a translation. Henson did not seem concerned about the actual original words themselves [see “The One Translation,” 2004], but only the “sense” of various collections of those words, so “paraphrase” would better describe what “One” has produced.) In short, Henson has attempted to **rewrite** the Bible.

For example, in an attempt to include only what “One” deems to be “the selection of books which were held in the highest esteem by the early Church in the first two centuries,” the book of Revelation has been excluded, and has been replaced by the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas (“A Radical and Readable...,” 2004). In their efforts to eliminate all “big words” from scripture, this vaguely defined group of translators has given modern nicknames to many of the Bible’s characters. For example, the apostle Peter is “Rocky,” Mary Magdalene is “Maggie,” John the Baptizer is

“Radical” Distortion of the Scriptures *(Continued)*

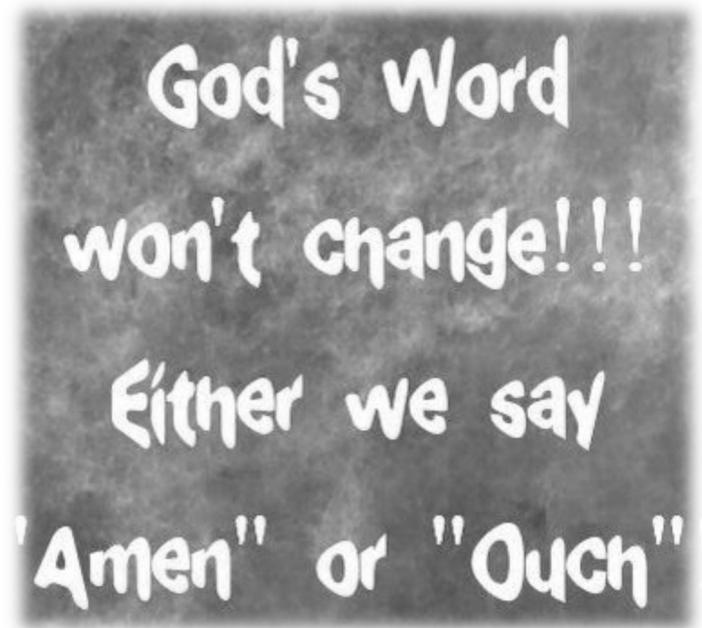
“John the Dipper,” Aaron’s name is shortened to “Ron,” and Nicodemus becomes, simply, “Nick.”

“One” has subverted plain Bible texts in order to make the Gospel more politically correct. According to *London Times* religious correspondent Ruth Gledhill, “Instead of condemning fornicators, adulterers, and ‘abusers of themselves with mankind’ [as Paul did, through inspiration, when he wrote 1 Corinthians 6:9—CC], the new version of Paul’s first letter to Corinth has Paul advising Christians not to go without sex for too long, in case they get ‘frustrated’ ” (as quoted in “New Bible Translation...,” 2004). Instead of properly translating Paul’s command (recorded in 1 Corinthians 7:1-2) that, to avoid fornication, every man should have his own wife, and every woman should have her own husband, *As Good As New* has Paul writing: “My advice is for everyone to have a regular partner” (quoted in “New Bible Translation,” 2004).

The perversion does not stop there. “Heaven” becomes, in the new translation, “a world without time and space.” “Parables” are called “riddles.” In an effort to find favor with women, the contributors to *As Good As New* chose to render “Son of Man,” a title Jesus often called Himself, as “The Complete Person,” and “Father,” one of God’s scriptural titles, as “All Loving God.” Also in order to please women, Jesus is not called the “Son of God,” but rather “God’s Likeness.”

Such perversion is what one might expect from an organization that lists in its top five priorities, not to teach or defend the truth, but to “challenge oppression, injustice, exclusion and discrimination,” to “accept one another, valuing their diversity and experience” (“Who We Are,” 2003). Members of “One” commit themselves to accepting one another “in Christ,” to “support actively those doing Christ’s work **inside** or **outside** this institutional church,” and to combating “poverty, racism, and oppression through social and political action” (“Who We Are,” 2003, emp. added). One does not have to examine much of the “One’s” published material before he realizes that the primary purpose of the group is not to teach people how to be saved, but rather to push a leftist agenda down the throats of religious people. For “One,” a major step toward accomplishing that purpose would be widespread acceptance of *As Good As New*.

Accordingly, archbishop Williams hopes the new translation will spread “in epidemic profusion through religious and irreligious alike.” However, reasonable people will realize what *As Good As New* is: a twisted perversion of the Holy Scriptures. Henson, Williams, and the members of “One” and “Ekklesia” should fear for their souls, because they not only are teaching things that are contrary to plain Bible teaching (even though they do so by attempting to deceive people into thinking just the opposite), but also promoting exactly what the inspired apostle John forbade: “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him he plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the



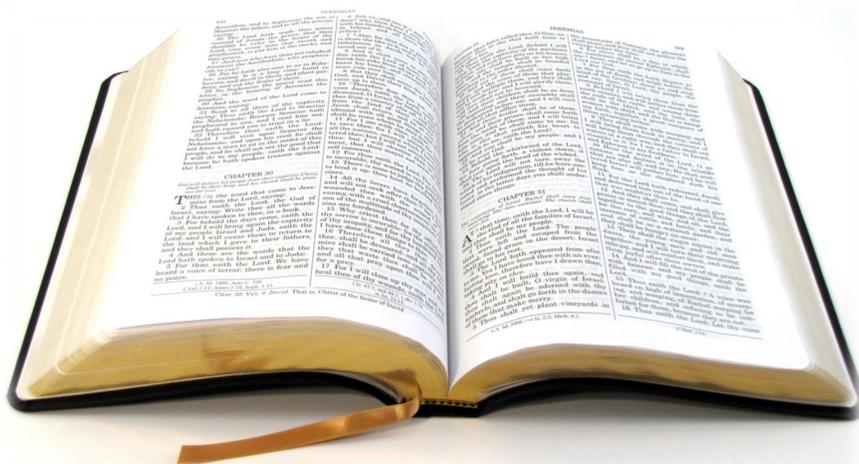
“Radical” Distortion of the Scriptures *(Continued)*

book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18-19).

The truth is that we can know, without a doubt, what books belong in the Bible (see A.P. Staff, 2003) and that the Bible is understandable. Because of the work of respected Greek and Hebrew scholars, we can understand, in English, just what God wants us to know. For example, the King James Version is on a 12th grade reading level, the New American Standard Bible is on a 10th or 11th grade level, and the New King James Version on an 8th or 9th grade level

(“English Bible Translation...,” 2004; “Reading Levels of Various...,” n.d.). Religious people do not need a dangerous distortion of the Bible in order to overcome a perceived problem in comprehending the Gospel. People have been reading, understanding, and obeying the Bible for almost 2,000 years, with no help from John Henson or his makeshift group of translators.

by Caleb Colley, Ph.D



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The Thief on the Cross (Luke 23:39-43)

Any discussion involving contending for the faith or evangelism will eventually turn to the question about the Thief on the Cross and the Caesarian Centurion. Our friends in the wider religious world like to point to both of these cases of salvation and something along the lines of "What about the thief on the cross? He wasn't baptized yet Jesus promised him that they would be together in paradise that day." And they make a similar argument concerning the centurion and his household. In this article I will concentrate on the thief and, hopefully, provide you with some points to consider about the thief and his salvation.

The first point to consider when confronted with this question is what we do not know for certain about this person. We do not know what he stole that qualified him for this type of execution. We do not know what nationality he was, although we can be reasonably certain that he was not a Roman citizen since there is almost no evidence of this execution being applied to a Roman. But most importantly we do not know if he was baptized or not. The Holy Spirit is completely silent about his background.

While we do not know if he was baptized or not, there are arguments that can be made that he was baptized. Consider these passages:

Mark 1:4-5 (KJV): *"John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins."*

Luke 3:7 (KJV): *"Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"*

Luke 3:21 (KJV): *"Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,"*

John 3:22-23 (KJV): *"After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized."*

John 4:1-3 (KJV): *"When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee."*

What we are told is that both John and Jesus were teaching and baptizing a lot of people. Mark says "...all the land of Judaea and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized..." (emp added). Here he clearly indicates that a large number were baptized. **ALL the land of Judaea and they of Jerusalem and were ALL baptized** (emp added). Then John states that the disciples of Jesus baptized more disciples than John did. **So these statements beg the question; how do you know that the thief wasn't baptized?** He could have been one of the multitude that were baptized by either John or Jesus.

The second point that must be considered is that the thief knew something about Jesus. While we don't know much about thief except that he was a thief and was being crucified for his crimes, he knew a great deal about Jesus. Listen to the thief himself: *"But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done noth-*

The Thief on the Cross *(Continued)*

ing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. " **Luke 23:40-42 (KJV)**

Luke records for us the statement of the thief "...but this man has done nothing amiss...". The thief knew enough about Jesus to be able to state with confidence that He was innocent of the charges being levied against Him. The thief also knew enough about Jesus to call him "Lord", and he knew enough about Him to know that Jesus had taught about His kingdom.



We are not told, nor will we know where and when the thief gained this knowledge about Jesus. However, there are only a few reasonable alternatives. The most likely among these is that he had heard Jesus teaching before being arrested. Another option is that the thief gained this knowledge during the execution process. This is, however, not very likely in my

opinion. Consider the process. No where in the scriptures are we told that Jesus and the two thieves were together prior to being placed on the crosses. In addition to this, considering human nature I am not convinced that the thief would have been able to assess the innocence of Jesus under these circumstances nor would he likely have been able to understand

enough about Jesus to call Him Lord or recognize that He is a King and that His Kingdom was about to be created.

These points makes it likely that the thief had either heard Jesus teaching directly or had heard his disciples teaching. Both of these makes it more likely that he was, indeed, baptized.

The third point that we must consider are the things that the thief WASN'T told to do. Jesus didn't tell the thief to believe in the gospel. The gospel is the good news about Jesus. That He was born of a virgin, that He lived and taught, was crucified, buried, and raised to life again on the third day then ascended into heave where He sits on God's right hand. The fact is at the time the thief and Jesus were talking on the crosses, the gospel had not been completed and it would have been impossible for the thief to believe it.

Next Jesus didn't tell the thief to repent of his sins. It was clear that the thief had committed sins that needed to be repented of. If not he wouldn't be on the cross beside Jesus. In addition, the thief himself stated that he had done things that caused him to deserve what was happening to him (Luke 23:41). And by inference we can understand that he needed to repent of those. But Jesus didn't mention repentance at all.

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 we are given a list of sins that will result in the person committing them to not be allowed entry into the kingdom of God. Thieves are included in this list. So why didn't Jesus tell the thief to repent first? Was it because He knew that the thief was in a situation where he couldn't commit sins any more? We don't know

The Thief on the Cross *(Continued)*

why Jesus didn't tell the thief to repent but He didn't.

The very same argument can be made about confession. When did the thief confess his belief that Jesus is the son of God? When did he confess his belief that Jesus died for his sins? In Matthew 10:32-33 Jesus stated; *'Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.'* By not confessing, the thief would have no mediator between God and himself. But Jesus still did not tell the thief to confess.

And the same argument can be made for not being baptized because the thief wasn't in a situation where baptism was required. He was still under the old law which didn't require a person to be baptized.

So the logical end for this argument is that a person can be saved who doesn't hear the gospel, doesn't believe, doesn't repent and doesn't confess. Are we really sure that this is what this passage teaches?

How do we answer this in sight of the direct commands of Jesus in **Matthew 28:16-20 (KJV)** *"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."* and in **Mark 16:14-18 (KJV)** *"Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."* And in **Matthew 4:17 (ESV)** *"From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"*

The answer is easy, actually. Jesus hadn't died at time that he promised the thief that they would be together in his kingdom that day. Being still alive, the Old Testament was still in force. The new relationship between God and man wouldn't become effective until Pentecost when Peter would use the keys that Jesus gave him to open the doors of the kingdom to the Jews. About forty days after the conversation between Jesus and the thief. So the thief wasn't required to hear the gospel (it was still being written at this time), nor did he have to believe, repent, confess nor be baptized. Jesus had the power to forgive sins, He used it several times during his ministry (Matthew 9:2, Mark 2:5, Luke 7:48), and He used it here to promise the thief admittance into His kingdom.

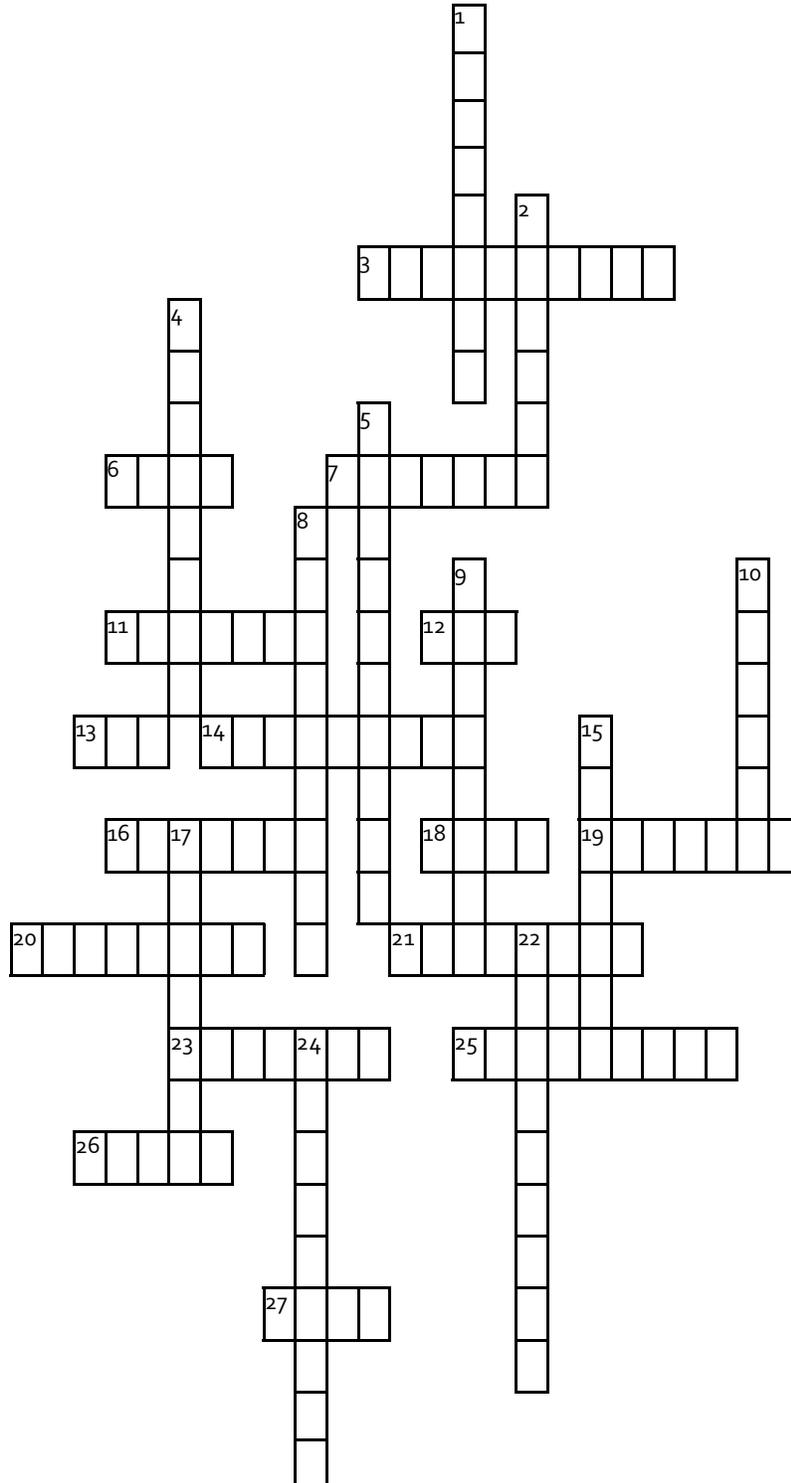
Bill Beebe

Connect the Dots!



God comes to Moses
at the burning bush

Contend for the Faith (Jude KJV)



Contend for the Faith (Jude KJV)

All clues are found in the book of Jude using a King James Version.

ACROSS

- 3 but left their own _____
- 6 without fruit, twice ____, plucked up by the roots
- 7 Now to him that is able to keep yu from _____
- 11 Jude, the _____ of Jesus Christ
- 12 For there are certain ____ crept in unawares
- 13 foaming out their __ shame
- 14 I will _____ put you in remembrance
- 16 Yed _____ the archangel
- 18 But these speak ____ of those things which they know not
- 19 durst not bring against him a _____ accusation
- 20 Even as Sodom and _____ and the cities about them
- 21 To execute _____ upon all
- 23 _____ men
- 25 that ye should _____ contend for the faith
- 26 These are ____ in your feasts of charity
- 27 And the angels which ____ not their first estate

DOWN

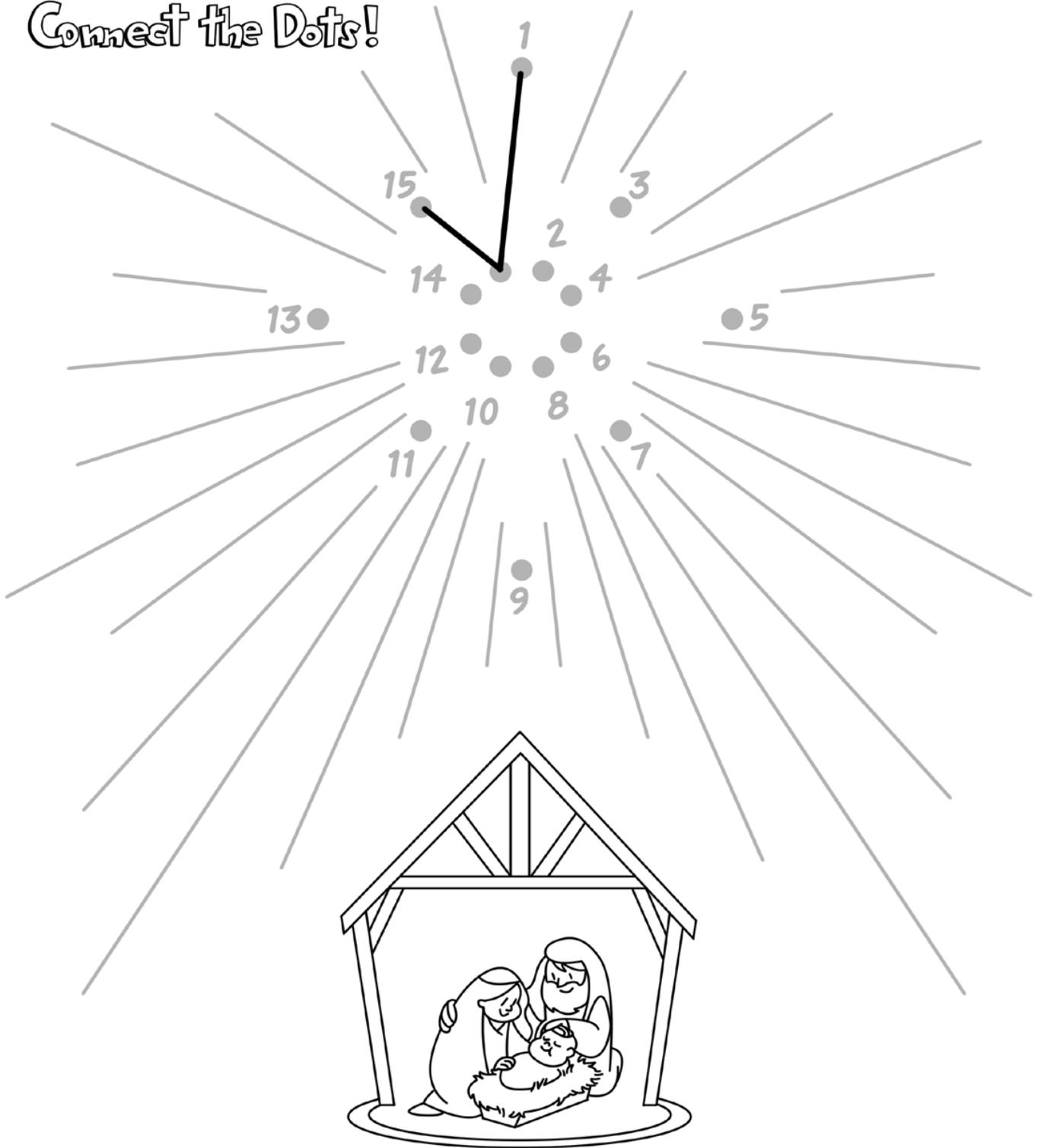
- 1 defile the flesh, dispise _____ and speak evil
- 2 _____ waves of the sea
- 4 Likewise also these filthy _____ defile the flesh
- 5 to them that are _____ by God the Father
- 8 but what they know _____
- 9 he hath _____ in everlasting fire
- 10 the _____ salvation
- 15 going after _____ flesh
- 17 in those things they _____ themselves
- 22 These are _____, complainers, walking after their own lusts
- 24 Beloved, when I gave all _____ to write unto you

Jude 1:1-3 (KJV)

All four letter words and at least one three letter word from this passage are in the puzzle.

Y K Y X Q F V V H T L J E S U S T P X F K G I Q
 F L N C N O K G P C M R Y W B R V N Z K D R C D
 W M N I G H U K H R L P L S T X X M A R N M I U
 B L K O O Q S R J E E N T V D E I L P I T L U M
 M L O V E T I A T J E S S M Q F H U O O L G W W
 S P J A M S A H I T L R E D E Y A C J I B J L S
 E X I O T G P V I N H S N R G B Z T G X H Q M V
 M C D N S W X R L R T W R O V C S E H O U Q S G
 A B S C F N W R C A V S A Y T E N R G E C M R X
 J W U E D Q T I D K S T E S I C D F Z I R T T G
 V L H L C R T N G N W L H A E E A T I G E N S F
 N Z M I A M C C A B E G E A E I X L M W J W J C
 P E S J C S M O W V A T Y Y T W S S J D U G A V
 K V U K H H M M T U R C N H T H Q Z E I S L K H
 X D Z D C R V M Z H R E P O O X M L I I L X G D
 E W P I O U Y O M E E R S U C Y I B L E V A N E
 D H Z Z B G C N M F H M L A S V M Z D O V E M I
 D L L U F D E E N M M D T Z E P R D E E H Q R F
 G E U W Y G F H E X U L G R P E R T R W V R U I
 W V V H C X E F I O E I E E H D I R J B D F N T
 O D U O R C Q S T P J D A T X O E C A E P I U C
 H Y Z C L V Z N Y M O A O X X N S Z P X F J U N
 N C C M L E U G H G Z R T R O H X E U N N U G A
 A W F O E D B W C I B C N T E N V L D L S E E S

Connect the Dots!



This burned over the sky
above where Jesus was born

Jude 4-5 (KJV)

(Most four letter and larger words in these verses can be found)

N S Q Z U V N Z O E R O F E B E F O T H O U G H
 O O J P D I I L G D E S T R O Y E D J E S U S V
 I O R B E V I I V I B Z V D E V E I L E B U G Z
 T Y Z D V I Y U N G O D L Y V L X A B L C U G J
 A F F E A R X C C R I R N V L K X Y W U Q U O T
 N X X E S I Z G H T T O Y E H S T T T I N Q D R
 M E Y A O U N H V R H X A I M E K W F A L Z P E
 E K L S T P O E L A I E G Y P T H V W U N L B M
 D O A Z G U X S D A S S U D F T T A T T U O L E
 N S S Y R R T G T P R S T R W V R A F P M W Z M
 O E C J B W B M L T Y F X N I E F H K O E C X B
 C F I A X C R X H U P D Z J S T K L N N H R N R
 H A V N S H N G F R J V X E E P X L K M T Q C A
 X T I I X W N W V N M I Z R S Q Y Z P S W K R N
 I H O A G M O S V I D B W X X N P Q Z M W P A C
 X E U T R N M E F N L A J J B J S T D O V D R E
 S R S R C U Q E M G R M X I Q I G A F U P O D M
 J E N E T O N H A D H A V I N G N H P W O R L O
 V F E C F L N N L H J L Y T X K P T T A O Z M D
 L O S M O J Z X V O P H U S C E L G S L K J F P
 X R S M E Y B I H U T V F O O N G N I Y N E D D
 R E J Z W C G B N Y Y T J P Y C N W N X Y V N A
 H U R H A A P D O T D M L J F A C W E R E A N U
 N J O K C V R P W O O E A G R A C E G I L T I T

Jude (KJV)

(Answers can be found in the book of Jude using a King James Version.)

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Jude was a brother of _____ | A. shame |
| 2. Jude wanted mercy peace and love to be _____. | B. remember |
| 3. Certain men crept in unaware who were _____ to this condemnation | C. love |
| 4. Jude gave diligence to write concerning our _____. | D. charity |
| 5. Jude found it was necessary to write and exhort them to? | E. stars |
| 6. Which cities are used for examples? | F. execute |
| 7. What did the angels not keep? | G. common salvation |
| 8. Who are reserved in everlasting chains? | H. brute beasts |
| 9. Who speaks evil of dignities? | I. Sodom and Gomorrah |
| 10. Who is Michael | J. fear |
| 11. Who argued with Michael over the body of Moses | K. wise |
| 12. The Lord _____ thee | L. Filthy dreamers |
| 13. These are spots on your feasts of _____ | M. Angels |
| 14. They feed themselves without _____ | N. James |
| 15. but what they know naturally, as _____ | O. seventh |
| 16. _____ waves of the sea | P. falling |
| 17. foaming out their own _____ | Q. An Archangel |
| 18. wandering _____ | R. Raging |
| 19. trees whose _____ withereth | S. ordained |
| 20. And Enoch also, the _____ from Adam | T. fruit |
| 21. To _____ judgment upon all | U. First estate |
| 22. But, beloved, _____ ye the words which were spoken | V. rebuke |
| 23. Keep yourselves in the _____ of God | W. multiplied |
| 24. Now unto him that is able to keep you from _____ | X. the devil |
| 25. To the only _____ God our Savior | Y. contend for the faith |

Church of Christ AT WASILLA

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We hope you have enjoyed this edition of the "Family Ties" magazine. It has been designed to encourage us to get to know one another better, to study the bible, and to help each other grow. If there is something that you think should be added or deleted, let us know. It will be a while before we settle on a final design, so look for changes in future editions. Tell us what you enjoyed and what you didn't like so much so we can improve future editions.

THANKS FOR READING

Family News

Things are happening at the church of Christ at Wasilla!

New Sister! Joanne Kameroff was baptized Thursday November 1, 2018. Welcome her to the family!

New Brother! Daniel Schramm was baptized Thursday November 15, 2018. Welcome him to the family!

Ben and Carla were able to get moved up and in place at their new home in Willow. They are getting settled in to both their new physical home and their new church home.

Paul and Alice Stone have moved out to the valley. Being here will allow both of them to become more active in our congregation. We look forward to great things working with them.

Brandi Dearing is changing her work schedule. We hope to see their entire family more often at

our services.

Daniel and Emery Schramm and their family have decided to work with us. It is great to have them.

Joshua Morris and his family have also began to worship with us. It is very good to have all 12 of them attend services and worship our God with us.

Raymond and Lois Whittaker have began to worship with us as well. It is good to have them.

Ed and Phyllis were outside for a month visiting family and friends. It is good to have them safely back with us now.

Steve and Abbey also traveled outside and returned safely back to us. It is great to see them back with us.

Bill and Tom attended a state wide preachers meeting hosted by the Valley church of Christ here in Wasilla. It was a very good meeting and we were able to meet old friends and make new ones.

We have two families that are expecting new arrivals soon. Jennifer Morigeau and Beverly Murdock will bring new

life to our family in a few months!!

Our Outreach 2018 program has been successful. We visited about 380 homes and talked to many people directly, inviting them to visit us in one of our services. We had at least four young people assist with our door knocking efforts. Tony Betti, Weston Gillespie, Bella Gillespie and Alice Nordstrom all worked hard on this effort. Thank them and encourage them and

