

Expository Files



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Front Page

The Betrayer and the Betrayed
By Jon W. Quinn

Who Am I?

Here's a little quiz. Who is being described here?

1. I am the beloved son but I was betrayed.
2. My betrayer named in hint # 3 came up with the idea of receiving money to betray me.
3. The name of the betrayer who devised the plan to receive silver was, in Greek "Ioudan". This name is translated into the English names Jude, Judah and Judas in the New Testament. Same name, different people.
4. The man who devised this plan was one of the twelve.
5. Having been betrayed, I was taken away as a captive.
6. The betrayer felt deep remorse and regret for betraying me.

7. Neither the betrayer, nor any of the twelve for that matter, thought they would ever see me alive again.

8. I surprised them. I appeared and revealed myself to the twelve (actually, I met with only ten at first).

9. I explained to the twelve how that all these things had been done to fulfill God's plan and to save men.

There you have it. Can you think of someone that the above nine clues would describe accurately. I suppose most of you will say, "Yes, that's easy." But wait. I'll make it a little more difficult. I'll give an additional clue (usually, additional clues make it easier. But not this time. Sorry. That's just the way I am - J.Q.).

10. The betrayal price was in pieces of silver - 20 pieces of silver to be exact.

Now, "Who am I?" Think about it, then find the answer below. Also you will find the references listed.

Answer:

1. I am the beloved son but I was betrayed. (Genesis 37:3)

2. My betrayer named in hint # 3 came up with the idea of receiving money to betray me. (Genesis 37:26).

3. The name of the betrayer who devised the plan to receive silver was, in Greek "Ioudan". This name is translated into the English names Jude, Judah and Judas in the New Testament. Same name, different people. (Genesis 37:26-28).

4. This man who devised this plan was also one of the twelve. (Genesis 35:22-26).

5. Having been betrayed, I was taken away as a captive. (Genesis 37:28).

6. The betrayer felt deep remorse and regret for betraying me. (Genesis 41:21).

7. Neither the betrayer, nor any of the twelve for that matter, thought they would ever see me alive again. (Genesis 41:32).

8. I surprised them. I appeared and revealed myself to the twelve (actually, I met with only ten at first). (Genesis 42:24; 43:23).

9. I explained to the twelve how that all these things had been done to fulfill God's plan and to save men. (Genesis 45:7).

10. The betrayal price was in pieces of silver - 20 pieces of silver to be exact. (Genesis 37:28).

I am Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob and one of twelve sons.

Now, that little exercise was meant to demonstrate something more than just a coincidence. The New Testament speaks of shadows to be found in the Old Testament. In addition to prophecies about the Messiah and His kingdom, there were illustrations and figures to be found throughout. The sacrificial lamb. The scapegoat. The brass serpent raised up in the wilderness.

In fact, Stephen draws a parallel between Joseph and Jesus. He explains that those who rejected Jesus in his day were doing the same thing that their ancestors had done to the prophets. He uses the people's rebellion against Moses and one example, and also the treatment of Joseph by his brothers as another. (Acts 7:8-14). So, we are not surprised at the interesting and long shadow cast by Joseph that reminds us so much of Jesus. There are many nuggets like this in the Scriptures to be found.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1). I cannot imagine a sentence that has more meaning than this short, concise and simple statement with which the written revelation of God to man begins. We are so familiar with it that we that we may read it rather quickly without giving it the attention which it deserves.

Imagine for a moment that you had never seen nor heard of this verse until right now. The origin of the universe has puzzled you, and you had contemplated why you existed at all, and whether there was a reason you

were here. With this short statement begins a whole Book of answers, and certainly you would be eager to hear more. But notice what is already learned with the statement: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

A Definite Beginning

The universe did not just pop into existence from nothing by accident. Neither is it an eternal place. The science facts we know, and even most scientific theories about origins agree with what the Bible has said all along. There was a beginning.

One popular theory is that the universe began with a "big bang." The Bible says the universe began with God uttering the phrase, "Let there be..." God, the Father, spoke to God, the Son, and said, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the works of Thy hands." (Hebrews 11:10). Even today, He "upholds all things by the word of His power." (Hebrews 1:3).

The word translated "beginning" means "starting point." There was a time when nothing existed at all in the physical realm. That time will come again because all material things are temporary (Matthew 24:35; 25:46; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44,49; 2 Corinthians 4:18; 2 Peter 3:10-13).

Creator
(Genesis 1:1)
By Jon W. Quinn

A Supreme Being

The word translated "God" in this first verse of the Bible is the Hebrew word "elohim." The word signifies superiority and might. God is the "Almighty One." It was by His mouth that the whole realm of creation was awesomely and powerfully spoken into existence. Such a powerful event might well be referred to as a Big Bang except for the fact that a "bang" is an impersonal force without mind or purpose.

The Bible reveals that God is not only personal, but omnipotent, omniscient and eternal. He is without beginning or end, and thus refers to

Himself as "I Am." After God had spoken to Job from a whirlwind, and called to Job's attention His power, Job responded, "I know that Thou canst do all things, And that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted. 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know." (Job 42:2,3). Job was filled with awe, and someday every human heart will be filled with that same overwhelming sense of reverence.

Something From Nothing

The Hebrew word for "created" is a word used in the Bible exclusively for God. When the Bible talks of the "creations" of men, it uses a different word, and with good reason. This particular word used in the first verse of the Bible is never used of man because it describes something that is impossible for man to do. It means to bring into being or to make something from nothing. Men can rearrange matter to make new things, but he cannot make matter. "Thus says God the Lord, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk in it..." (Isaiah 42:5).

The Created Heavens

The word "heaven" is used in at least three different ways in the Scripture. Sometimes it refers to the spiritual realm. Other times it refers to the place where the stars are. Finally, it sometimes refers to the atmosphere of the earth. But here, the word is plural; "the heavens." When the Bible uses this term, it is referring to the universe. The Psalmist David said, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. (Psalm 19:1-3). As he pondered God's creation, he spoke of their silent witness as to the majesty of God.

He also considered that man might well be small and insignificant compared to the vastness of the universe, and yet God was mindful of man. What was it about man that God was interested in him? The answer to this question is one of the themes of the Bible. "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, The moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained;

What is man, that Thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man, that Thou dost care for him?" (Psalm 8:3,4).

The Created Earth

The earth of verse one of the Bible refers to this temporary, terrestrial dwelling place for mankind. It is to this planet that God sent His Son to walk its surface and to give His life for our sins. The Creator took upon Himself the form of one of His creatures. He did not cease to be God, but He also became man . "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him, and cried out, saying, 'This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ." (John 1:1-5; 14-17).

Our universe is resplendent with intricate design and wondrous beauty. It is not the product of chance, but of divine purpose.

The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it. (Psalm 24:1).

A Commentary on Galatians 6:1-10

(Galatians 6:1-10)

By Bob Buchanon

Galatians 6:10 is the culmination of a line of thought begun in chapter five: ***“For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another”*** (v. 13). Then in verse 16, he continues: ***“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.”*** The following verses draw a contrast between the flesh and the Spirit and their works and fruit. Then in verses 24 & 25, Paul warns: ***“Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.”***

But a question would naturally arise in the minds of the brethren, which Paul anticipates and answers in the first paragraph of chapter six. It might be worded something like this: "What about those Christians who are weak and give in to following the flesh? Should we turn away from them and reject them?" Let us look at Paul's answer. I am making a few comments in parentheses as we read these verses.

Verse 1 - "Brethren, even if a man (this is the Christian man) is caught in any trespass (he is overtaken in a fault, he is walking after the flesh, he needs to be restored), you who are spiritual (the obligation is not placed on the church--the case is not assumed to have progressed that far--but it is to those walking after the Spirit), restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted (to turn aside after the flesh)."

The apostle sets the stage in this first verse for the subject of burden bearing. Someone is overtaken or overcome in a fault or sin. The subject is not overcome with hunger or exposure to the weather, but rather to sin. This becomes even more obvious in the end of the verse when Paul warns the restorer to be careful for he might "also be tempted." The fault of the one needing restoration is the result of temptation, not physical needs.

Verse 2 - "Bear one another's burdens (this sets forth the individual nature of the repairing that needs to be done), and thus fulfill the law of Christ (Christ is in the business of forgiving sins and reconciling men to God and to each other)."

The burden we are to help with is the "fault" of verse one. Because of the love we have one for another we should be concerned when a brother is overcome of temptation and sins. Providing a bag of rice or potatoes and a pound of bacon is not going to fulfill the law of Christ in this passage. The only thing that will do that is helping the man to overcome sin.

Verse 3 - "For if anyone thinks he is something (superior to his erring brother) when he is nothing (he also has sinned at times), he deceives himself."

The first word in verse three shows that the approach mentioned in that verse is the state of mind necessary on the part of the sincere individual who

seeks to bear a burden for the backsliding brother per the instructions in verses 1 and 2.

Verse 4 - "But let each one examine his own work (by God's standard instead of by a sinning brother), and then he will have reason (the right) for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in respect to (comparison to the error of) another."

Verse 5 - "For each one shall bear his own load (of God-given responsibility)."

Verse 6 - "And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches." This verse has been used out of its context to prove that we should support those who preach the gospel. While there are several passages in the New Testament that teach that a gospel preacher may be supported, this passage does not so teach. Look again at the context. Paul says when a man sins, help him. When he is restored, he may rejoice in himself. What then? Is he to give the preacher a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken? Is that what Paul is saying? To put such a meaning to the passage degrades the thought Paul has in mind. The thing under consideration is that of an erring brother being corrected by those who are not in error. The one who is taught should come to a point when he participates jointly with the one doing the teaching.

The person who is walking after the flesh and the one who is walking after the Spirit are no longer in step; they are going in different directions; their fellowship has been broken; and the one walking after the flesh is the one guilty of breaking that fellowship. He needs to heed the correction and instruction given him in order that he may return to the fellowship of good things from which he has parted. Hence, Paul admonishes the erring person, "And let the one who is taught the word (the one being corrected) share all good things with him who teaches." In other words, the erring brother is not only to listen, but he is also to do what he is instructed to do to correct the situation in order that fellowship may be restored.

It is true that the word "communicate" in this verse is sometimes used to refer to financial support (see Philippians 4:15). But that has to be determined from the context and not from the word itself. The word translated "communicate" here is also translated "fellowship" and "partaker."

Basically, we are told, it means to "share," but what is to be shared must always be determined from the context. It is not included in the word itself.

Verses 7-8 - "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh (by walking after the flesh) shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit (by walking after the Spirit) shall from the Spirit reap eternal life." These verses express the eternal truth taught in Genesis 1:12, that of reaping relative to the sowing. It expresses quite vividly our individual responsibilities in the realm of helping one another, as individuals. It is quite sad that some are trying to shift their personal burdens to institutions, but their real responsibilities stay with them. God is not mocked--they shall reap as they sow.

Verse 9 - "And let us not lose heart (growing weary or complaining because of prolonged effort) in doing good (it is easy to count them as weary burdens and shift them to others, to the church, or to an institution), for in due time we shall reap (based on our sowing) if we do not grow weary."

Verse 10 - "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

In this verse, Paul gives a general admonition concerning the matter to all Christians. The word translated "therefore" or "so then" connects this verse with what has been said before. In the Greek of this verse, the definite article comes before "good." Paul has in mind "the good" he has been discussing of correcting and instructing those in error, especially those of the "household of faith" that have been overtaken in walking after the flesh.

This verse does not have anything to do with helping those who are materially destitute or in need of financial benevolence. In fact, it has nothing to do with finances at all. It is the need of correcting those in error that is under consideration.

The Lord's Conflict Resolution Plan

Matt. 18:15-17

Warren E. Berkley

From verse one in Matthew 18 Jesus deals with matters which are related: How we think of others, with self-exalting pride or humility (vss. 1-4); How we receive and treat “these little ones who believe in Me,” (vss. 5-6); the horror of any offenses, to self or others (vss. 7-9); and, the care of heaven toward both the saved and lost (vss. 10-14). There is really one underlying subject here: How we think of self is determinate in how we treat others!

One thing that is clear in the Lord’s teaching is the potential of conflict. He said, “For offenses must come...,” (v.7). It is expected, therefore, that the Lord address the matter we commonly call **Conflict Resolution**. Here is His word on that subject.

“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.”. (Matt. 18:15-17)

Let’s not overlook the purpose of this. Jesus did not give us these steps so that we can get rid of people who bother us, who sin against us or with whom we disagree! The purpose is *not to get rid of but to gain!* Therefore, if you run to this passage when you want to punish someone and get rid of them, your spirit is wrong and you will not likely use the procedure correctly. Jesus identifies the purpose at the end of verse 15, to gain your brother. That should be your hope. The elevation of self should be absent in this.

These steps find their practical use “if your brother sins against you.” While there may be situations of other kinds of conflict where the model of *private before public* can well be followed, this procedure was given to address one kind of conflict: “if your brother sins against you.” The teaching of Christ in Matt. 18:15-17 is not for every situation! It is for the situation specified: “if your brother sins against you.” There are other situations, to be dealt with according to other instructions (see Gal. 2:11-18; 1 Cor. 5; 1 Tim. 5:20). This is the situation of a private offense. Our reaction should be just as described by the Lord. To be hurt, then hold that hurt in your heart over several years is never recommended in the Scriptures! (See also Matt. 5:21-26; 38-48). To complain and gossip is not the right response. “If your

brother sins against you,” you are obligated by virtue of discipleship, to follow the Lord’s method of conflict resolution. Go to him.

Step #1 is to “go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.”

Necessarily implied in this is, the matter is private. You are taking a private matter up with the alleged offender *privately*. Based on this, at the first thought that I have been sinned against, I need to **GO**, not stay and sulk and *go and tell others*. The Lord said, “go and tell him his fault,” and do this privately at this point: “between you and him alone.” *Side Note:* I used to tell classes and audiences that this command of Christ was seldom obeyed. That was impulsive of me and extremely presumptuous. I have no way of knowing if people comply with this, because it is a private meeting! The only cases I would ever know about would be (a) those cases where I am asked to be a witness, or (b) those cases brought before the local church. Let’s assume then, faithful disciples – believing they have been sinned against – do what the Lord taught: “go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.” And let’s assume that sinful brethren are gained. When you do this, remember that all such efforts should be accompanied with the prayer that you will gain your brother. Also, bear in mind that this is about a “sin” and all charges of sin require evidence (1 Jno. 3:4).

The hope: “If he hears you, you have gained your brother.” If you approach the guilty party with right attitude and sufficient evidence, and this is combined with a receptive, humble spirit, “you have gained your brother.” In the case of sin proven, there would need to be repentance. (In some cases, since we are fallible, our perception of sin may not be reality. Once the misunderstanding is cleared, the matter is over.)

Step #2 is, “...if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that, ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established’.” In modern lingo, you “kick it up a notch” now. This doesn’t mean you get angrier, campaign or gossip! The “notch” is defined by the Lord: “take with you one or two more, that, ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established’.” These witnesses are not “on your side,” and their function is not to “gang up” against the offender! You are not getting your friends to help you fight a battle. You are asking fellow disciples to listen objectively to the matter. “Witnesses called in at this level should have impeccable integrity and be people whom the accused will recognize as fair and impartial,” (Ken Chumbley, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p.#329).

Step #3: “...if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church.” At this point the matter is, a guilty brother who will not repent. This is not about somebody you just don’t like, or somebody you see as a threat to your power in the local church. This is an offender whose sin has been established by evidence and whose guilt can be reported by more than one person. The one who first considered himself offended and who has visited with the offender twice – **that brother is to bring the matter before the church.** {This has to be the local church, since there would be no possible way to bring anything before the universal church.} The purpose is for all the brethren to admonish the guilty. Never loose sight of the purpose, to gain the brother.

If this effort fails: “...let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.” Jesus uses a manner of expression here to indicate exclusion! The impenitent brother is “worthy” of this exclusion or discipline because of his choice to sin and remain recalcitrant. “...by his own choice he is now an outsider who is subject to disciplinary measures (1 Cor. 5:5,9, 2 Thess. 3:14-15),” (Ken Chumbley, p.#329).

Nothing in this procedure caters to the immature, vengeful purposes of man. The point is not to get rid of an irritant. **There is no space in this procedure to uphold your cause, elevate yourself, “show somebody,” or take over the church.** It is all about bringing a sinner to repentance. It is about our motive modeled after His motive. Look at the verse previous to our text: “Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish,” (Matt. 18:14).

"So Far as I Was Able"

1 Chronicles 29:1-21

Stuart Tullis

"So I have provided for the house of my God, so far as I was able, the gold for the things of gold, the silver for the things of silver, and the bronze for the things of bronze, the iron for the things of iron, and wood for the things of wood, besides great quantities of onyx and stones for setting, antimony, colored stones, all sorts of precious stones and marble."

(1 Chronicles 29:2)

As he came to the end of his reign over Israel, David made preparations for his son Solomon's reign of peace. David, the warrior king, had expanded the borders of the kingdom so his son could reign over a peaceful kingdom. Rather than build a kingdom, Solomon's purpose as king was intended to focus on construction of the temple of God, a project for which David had yearned. Though David was forbidden from building a house in which the ark of the covenant would rest, he spent years preparing, collecting, and providing for its construction. In the final chapter of First Chronicles, a testimony to David's preparation reveals to us several principles which we can apply as we offer to God gifts from our free will.

As the twenty-ninth chapter opens, David addresses the assembly of God's people, extolling the importance of the work before Solomon and all Israel in the building of the temple. Before asking the congregation to contribute to this noble effort, the aging king demonstrates his own commitment to this cause. From the treasury of Israel, "as far as he was able", David had provided for the house of God. Additionally, the righteous ruler had personally put his own wealth towards the construction of this glorious temple.

Answering the king's invitation to join with him in this work, the leaders among the people first contribute of their own free will. Heads of houses, tribes, and clans and commanders of the army of Israel all come together to graciously fund the house where God would one day place His name in Jerusalem. Then, following the example of their leaders, the people wholeheartedly unite to collect an astounding amount of riches.

"But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You." (1 Chronicles 29:14)

Impressed by the generosity of the congregation, David joyfully gives thanks to God, uttering a prayer which may challenge our thinking about our own giving. God is exalted as the owner of everything and origin of all. Riches, blessing, honor, and strength all come from Him and are due Him. In essence, the man with the heart of God relates that those who give to God are simply conduits of God's possessions, transferring them from one hand into the other. Humbled by the realization of his own position before the Sovereign, David gratefully thanks God for the opportunity he and Israel had been given and asks the Almighty to forever keep such motives and purpose

within the hearts of His people. Closing the prayer, the king commands the masses to praise Jehovah. And worship God they do -- offering from their joyful hearts even more in the form of sacrifices, libations, and burnt offerings.

Looking within this text regarding this period of preparation for the building of the temple, we can see several timeless principles which guided the giving of the Israelites and can guide our giving today as well...

First, giving which pleases God is both purposeful and intentional. The thoughtless tossing of a few coins or bills into a collection plate as it passes is unimaginable when considering the importance of serving God. David's example of giving was based on his devotion to the work which was to be done. The temple would honor God, and therefore David had intended to do all he could to provide for that purpose (29:2). Only after exhibiting such a prioritized practice before the people did David call upon the masses to match his devotion. Yet even in his charge to contribute to the construction of the temple, David did not call for cash, but appealed to the people to consecrate themselves to God (29:5). Similarly, excellent examples of purposeful giving in the New Testament Scriptures are the matchless Macedonians who were able to generously give because they had first given themselves to the Lord (2 Cor. 8:5). Before we consider how much we should give to God, we must consider if we've first given ourselves to God. Once we are God's possession, we should not give thoughtlessly or from our "leftovers", but our contribution must be considered and purposed in our hearts (2 Cor. 9:7).

Another principle of giving found within this account is that gifts to God are to be consecrated, set apart for God and His purposes. Not only were the people consecrated (29:5), but the collection was to be put into a treasury to be used only for the construction of the temple (29:8). Even today, the Lord's people contribute to a common collection which is to be used only for those purposes which God has ordained (1 Cor. 16:1-3). Care for destitute saints (1 Cor. 16:1), and other works of benevolence, evangelism, worship and edification of the saints -- those works with which God has charged the church -- are the only appropriate uses for these consecrated funds (1 Cor. 9:14; 1 Tim. 5:9-10, 17; Heb. 10:24-25). Certainly we would not misappropriate monies from this treasury by using them for more common means which merely suit our own tastes and interests in the worldly arenas of entertainment, recreation, or secular education.

A third principle which defines the giving which glorifies God is that each one's gift is of his own volition. From David to the leaders to the common man, each individual chose to give towards the Lord's house on his own. The text stresses the willingness of the people to contribute to this noble purpose (29:6, 9). No less does God expect, nor will He accept, from those who would serve Him today (2 Cor. 9:7). Our gifts must come from our wholehearted, joyful devotion to our Heavenly Father. Just as the Israelites rejoiced in their contribution and subsequent overflow of offerings (29:9, 20-21), we should count it a privilege to take from His one hand and give it into the other (29:16). What a joy it is to be counted as worthy stewards of the Creator (29:14)!

Finally, within this passage -- and throughout the Scriptures -- it is evident that God is glorified in generosity of giving (29:14, 16). How we view God will be evident in many aspects of our lives, not the least of which is our giving. Do we believe that He provides for us? Then our giving will not be lessened because of anxieties over our needs (2 Cor. 9:8-9). Do we consider Him as our highest priority (Matt. 6:33)? Then our giving will reflect it.

This final chapter in the Chronicles' account of David's reign should inspire us to emulate the heart of this humble servant of God in our giving so that each of us may also say that we have given "so far as I was able".

A Christian's Carol
Special Topic
By Jon W. Quinn

It has been called "The Greatest Story Ever Told." It most certainly is that. The message of human redemption. In it we see love and hate; tragedy and victory. We see God, at tremendous cost to Himself, reach down His hand to save those lost in sin, blind, wretched, lame and dying. "Father, forgive them, they do not know what they do." cried out the Son of God as He paid the cost of human redemption.

Our Creator loves us very much. What a gift! What wonderful mercy!
What a bright hope we have in Jesus, our friend!

So, why are so many of us spiritual Scrooges?

Bah! Humbug!

"But Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and besides, I will not let Israel go.'" (Exodus 5:2). There is not much respect in these words, nor in the actions of the man who said them. The pride that shows itself in this refusal of God's commandment is still alive and well in today's world. The Lord invites the sinner to "come" so that we may be saved from eternal darkness, and often man replies, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?"

The reasons for this ungracious attitude are several. Sometimes, it is because man without God thinks he or she does not need God at all. Sometimes material wealth helps paint the illusion that we are self sufficient. Sometimes we just do not want to yield to another even if it be God Himself. So, many will look at what Jesus has done on the cross, and quickly turn away saying "Who needs You?" All the while, the bitter consequences of living in a fallen world are so evident all around us. Many have become spiritual Ebenezer Scrooges. God offers grace and eternal life, and the response: "Bah, humbug!"

It's too bad folks do not have the benefit of the three ghostly visits that Scrooge received in the story "The Christmas Carol"

Ghost of Lifetime Past

We look back on our lives and there is one common ingredient to them all. "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23). Everyone of us were created upright, innocent and pure. "Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices." (Ecclesiastes 7:29). Whether we talk of the individual or the world, it all began well, and became otherwise by our own doing.

Sin brings death! It brings physical death, spiritual death, and eternal death. Each of us have been sharers in this death by our own sin (Romans 6:23; see also Genesis 2:16,17; 3:4;15;19; 5:4,5; James 1:15).

When it comes to our lives, what began with so much potential for good instead brought forth death. The innocence; the trust; the confidence and security; the joy and happiness of purity are so distant to us, almost

forgotten. Sadly, like Paul, we try to remember those days before sin was awakened in our lives (Romans 7:9-11). Those days are gone. If we could possibly begin on a road that would lead back to purity and life instead of sin and death, would we not want to take it?

Ghost of Lifetime Present

We are only promised the present. The past is gone and we cannot go back and change it. Tomorrow may or may not come (James 4:13,14).

There is a parable of a rich fool that many of us are all too much alike. He built his life on temporal things and was completely unprepared for eternity when the end of his life came. "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' (Luke 12:20). His lands had been very productive, but not his spirit. He thought he could live "by bread alone." He had run out of days.

Running out of days is not so bad if one is prepared. What can I do in the present to be prepared?

I can be rich toward God. I can do that today. I do not have to waste the present. Jesus explained, concerning the rich man, "So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:21). I can live my life for God, seeking to do His will and worshipping Him in spirit and in truth. I can be "rich toward God."

I can teach and show others the way. Even if I have a tomorrow, my friend may not. I can be unselfish with my time and accurate in the Christ-like example I show. I can love my neighbor as myself. These are the greatest two commandments: "Jesus answered, 'The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these.'" (Mark 12:29-31).

I can do this with my present. But will I?

Ghost of Lifetime Future

"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? " (Mark 8:36-37). For what are you willing to trade away your soul? What can Satan offer you to cause you to sacrifice eternity? Many are willing to settle for far too little! The fact is, he cannot make it worth your while. Can Satan convince you to be ashamed of living for Christ? "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38).

On the final day that marks the end of time, the end of the present system, and the beginning of eternity, we will find ourselves standing before God in judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10). Our "ghost of lifetime future" shows us two visions what might possibly be.

1) Condemnation. "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews 10:31). Judgment will be eternal. It is described as a lake of fire (Revelation 20:15). It is as lost as anyone can ever be. But the "ghost of lifetime future" shows us another possibility:

2) Eternal life. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love." (1 John 4:18; see also Revelation 21:4). This is the future God wants for us, and offers us through faith in His Son.

As Tiny Tim put it: "May God bless us everyone."

Plan of Salvation

The Plan of Salvation

By Jon W. Quinn

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#### *Plan #1*

Announced by the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to new believers in Christ who asked what they must do:

"Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (ACTS 2:38)

## *Plan #2*

On the back page of a tract, sinners were urged to pray this prayer to be saved. This prayer is not found in the Bible; nor were alien sinners commanded to pray for their forgiveness.

### **The Sinner's Prayer:**

"O' Lord, I accept that I am a sinner and that Jesus died for my sins. I now accept Him into my heart as Lord and Savior asking for your mercy and forgiveness in His name. Amen."

The editors of Expository Files are happy with plan #1 and thankful to the God of all grace for it. We cannot recommend Plan #2 at all, but will change our minds when this prayer can be shown to us in the Bible.

Final Page

### ***Guest Editorial*** ***Herb Berkley***

Each day of our lives we are set against a backdrop of worldly matters that we must attend to. We work, some have children, some have house-work, some have grocery shopping, and other essential daily activities that are routine. These routine activities are essential in fulfilling our responsibilities as humans to our selves and our families. I look at each day as another day on a journey towards greatness in Christ. It is yet another day that God has given us to fulfill our worldly obligations, but most importantly it is another day that God has given us to fulfill our spiritual obligations. Each day's journey is filled with temptations, and filled with moments where we can decide to pray to God for strength in keeping our path straight and narrow. In Acts 6:4 it says, "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." This scripture indicates an importance to continually pray and to be given to that cause. In your daily journey through life you should consider that prayer is a very important part of serving God. You have a relationship with God through Christ for a reason!!