

Expository Files

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13.10 October 2006

Front Page

Genesis Three: A Light in the Darkness

By Jon W. Quinn

There are several pivotal passages in the Scripture which record events that greatly altered the course of human history. One of these passages is found in Genesis chapter three. It is here that we find sin making its grand entrance into the world, and the beginning of the consequences that would follow. Things would never be the same.

In verses 1-7 we find the temptation and the fall. In verses 8-21 we discover that human suffering, guilt, hardship, pain, sorrow and death all entered the realm of human experience as a result of sin. Finally, in verses 22-24 we find the first human couple expelled from Eden and beginning a much less satisfying existence. Is there any light of hope?

The central theme of the rest of the Bible has to do with the development and implementation of God's plan to save from sin and restore fellowship between Himself and us. The ultimate goal of the plan is "eternal life" - a term the Bible uses to describe the unequalled glory of heaven.

In the middle of the darkness and gloom of Genesis chapter three - verse 15 to be exact - we have the first promise that a Savior is coming who will defeat the work of Satan. In the New Testament, we will find this promise is received by faith in Christ. But here the veil is lifted ever so slightly allowing a small light to shine through. It will grow brighter in the centuries to follow as the prophets expound upon the message of the

Messiah to come. And then - Jesus is born in fulfillment of the prophecies and the Provider of redemption and hope.

“For Those Who Honor Me, I Will Honor”

(1 Samuel 2:12-36)

By Jon W. Quinn

Eli was a priest and judge in Israel during the time of Samuel's birth. This means that he served toward the end of the period of the judges and before Israel had her first human king. He served in the tabernacle at Shiloh. The temple had not yet been built at Jerusalem.

The sons of Eli were corrupt and estranged from God. Eli spoke to his sons, and reprimanded them. However, they ignored their father and continued in their rebellion and Eli never took further steps to correct the situation. As a result, God was not pleased, either with the sons behavior nor with Eli's failure to adequately correct them. Though God had blessed Eli's house, He was going to withdraw His honor of them (1 Samuel 2:30).

Profane and Irreverent Sacrifice

The tabernacle of the Lord was in Shiloh. Eli and his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord there (1 Samuel 1:3,9). The Bible describes the corruption of Eli's sons to be so complete that “they did not know the Lord”. No doubt they knew His name, but did not know Him (1 Samuel. 2:12).

Eli's sons profaned the sacrifices. They would take meat of the sacrifices before offering them to God. If the worshipper objected, wanting to offer the sacrifice to God before the priest took his portion, it would be taken by force (1 Samuel 2:16). It was supposed to be sacrificed unto God first, then the priests received their portions. In this way, the priests Phinehas and Hophni despised the offering of the Lord (1 Samuel 2:17).

Today, all Christians are to be holy priests, offering spiritual sacrifices to the Lord (1 Peter. 2:5,9). Our sacrifices, too, must be acceptable to God (Romans 12:1,2). Conforming ourselves to the world's standards rather than according to God makes for an unacceptable sacrifice. We are irreverent priests as well when we give God only the leftovers of our lives.

Our priesthood is better than the one of the Old Law. First, because Jesus is our high priest today; a perfect High Priest unlike Eli and his sons (Hebrews 9:11-12; 7:23-25). Second, because we function as our own priesthood. No one can tamper with my sacrifice to the Lord... it is what I determine it to be. If God only gets the leftovers, then it is my fault, because I am my own priest making my own sacrifice.

Mild Reproof

The corruption of the sons of Eli grew worse and worse. Much like the modern day sex scandals among apostate clergy today, these religious leaders committed acts of fornication with the women who served at the tabernacle (1 Samuel 2:22). Some say that such behavior is one's own private business. Evidently the Lord feels otherwise.

Eli rebuked his sons. "Why do you do such things, the evil things that I hear from all these people? No, my sons; for the report is not good which I hear the LORD'S people circulating." (1 Sam 2:23-24). Their leadership did not place them above the Law. This was a sin against God as well as against the people (1 Samuel 2:25).

Parents must discipline their children. Though Eli's sons were adults now, one wonders if he had always been so lax as they were growing up. Had he always given them repeated warnings when they were children without ever following through? The Lord expects better of parents than that (Deuteronomy 6:6,7; Ephesians 6:4).

And, on the matter of discipline, the Bible teaches the church should exercise discipline also (1 Corinthians 5:1,2;4-8) There are times when more than a mild reproof is required.

We are also reminded that teachers and preachers and elders have a very great responsibility to live righteously. Greater influence mean greater potential damage through failure. (Romans 2:22-24; cf. vs. 13; 2 Peter 2:2).

God's Response

A man of God came to Eli. Eli's father and his descendants were blessed and honored by God. But to adopt a phrase, "The buck stops here!" Eli was High Priest and he was responsible to see that things were being

done righteously. Had been lukewarm in his duties when dealing with his sons. There is also a suggestion in the text that though Eli complained to his sons about what they had been doing, that he, himself profited from their misdeeds; “Why do you kick at My sacrifice and at My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling, and honor your sons above Me, by making yourselves fat with the choicest of every offering of My people Israel?”

The Lord responded; "Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me; I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Samuel 2:30).

The consequence of their rebellion would be grave. Many of Eli's house would die young, before reaching old age (1 Samuel 2:31,32). The household would stagnate, not grow and prosper (1 Samuel 2:33). The instigators, Hophni and Phinehas would die on the same day (1 Samuel 2:34). Those who are left will beg for food in poverty, having been expelled from office and wishing that they could have again what they had despised and lost (1 Samuel 2:36).

But God will raise up out of the mess a righteous priest to serve. Samuel? Perhaps. Jesus? Maybe, if speaking of His spiritual priesthood. The time of God judgment on Eli's house was said to be near (1 Samuel 3:11-14). And it was; the deaths of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas are recorded (1 Samuel 4:10,11; 17,18).

There are so many other points that could be made. We as priests in the Lord's kingdom are blessed ((1 Samuel 2:36b; Luke 15:17; 1 Timothy 6:6). We, too, are expected to honor God (1 Timothy 6:11-16). We, too, must love our Lord more than earthly relatives (Luke 12:51-53). Those who mock the warnings of God and continue to be disobedient will be punished (Galatians 6:7,8).

We have received from the hand of the Father many blessings (Ephesians 1:7-8;11,12). These blessings are so great that even death loses its sting when these blessings are understood and received by faith. We must never lose sight of the fact that God had honored us so very richly. We should rise up each morning with deep appreciation of His kindness and never allow ourselves a day in which we forget, as did Eli's sons, who the Lord is and what He expects of us.

The Parable of Perseverance

Luke 18:1-8

By Ethan R. Longhenry

As Jesus taught His disciples and the multitudes, He constantly spoke to them in parables. Parables help to color and vitalize teachings and they represent a very effective teaching method.

Many times, however, people get bogged down in trying to pin down precisely what Jesus intends with a given parable. Luke many times helps his readers by indicating the purposes of Jesus' parables. This is certainly true of the parable of which we shall speak today, found in Luke 18:1-8:

And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying,

"There was in a city a judge, who feared not God, and regarded not man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came oft unto him, saying, 'Avenge me of mine adversary.' And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming.'"

And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. And shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night, and yet he is longsuffering over them? I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

We can know to whom Jesus directs this parable by looking back to Luke 17:22: He speaks to His disciples, and desires for them to learn that they should always pray and should not faint or to lose heart. The story presented is fairly easy to understand: a widow continually begged for justice from an unrighteous judge so that the judge, despite his unrighteousness, gave her justice, so that she would stop bugging him.

We should avoid any impulse to try to interpret the parable directly, lest we find ourselves in the situation of considering God as the unrighteous judge,

which is by no means the case (Acts 17:30-31)! While there are many parables where we can easily project the spiritual understanding directly on the literal understanding (say, the sower and the seed with the preacher and the Gospel, Matthew 13), this parable is not one of them. Instead, Jesus is presenting a story of an extreme to teach His disciples. As He himself indicates in verses 6 and 7: if such is the way with a judge who fears neither God nor man, how much greater do you think the judgment will be of the Son of God and the Son of Man?

We can see, therefore, why Jesus presents this parable to His disciples. The disciples can see the example of the widow, how through continual vigilance and perseverance in petition, one will be avenged. If they, therefore, remain constant in prayer, God will see that they receive justice.

We can also see, however, a lesson in this parable about perseverance in general. Despite facing great adversity, this widow never gave up. She kept trying. She kept bringing her petition forth, and finally, she was heard. As we look at our own lives, and how we strive to present the Gospel to our fellow man, can we sympathize with this widow? Many times we think that if we invite our neighbor or our co-worker once to assemble with us, and we get turned down, and we get discouraged and do not continue in trying. Nevertheless, many have found that by constantly trying, people may eventually listen. People have visited a congregation out of the blue because they realized that they needed God and they remembered receiving material from that congregation before. Many times it may take inviting someone 10, 20, maybe 50 or more times before they actually accept the invitation and come with you. If, however, you never ask more than twice, how will you reach such a one?

Perseverance is a very important trait of the Christian; consider again the widow. If she had not continually come to the judge, but only every so often whenever she got around to it, would the judge have found her presence so bothersome that he would give her justice? It is rather unlikely. Likewise, the Christian who only takes his commitment to God seriously occasionally will not be the light of the earth he is called to be (Matthew 5:13-16). The Christian must be constantly diligent, constantly persevering, if he will be found pleasing to God. Paul emphasizes this when he describes the need to take up the whole armor of God, twice establishing the need to stand firm in Ephesians 6:10-13:

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Wherefore take up the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.

When we do not persevere in the faith, we give Satan an opportunity to accuse us, and the people of the world have reason to revile us (1 Peter 5:8, 1 Peter 2:11-12). Wives, if your husbands are unfaithful to the Lord, if you do not persevere, you cannot present that example which can lead him back to the faith (1 Peter 3:1-5), and the same is true of those who are husbands with unfaithful wives. Parents, if you do not persevere in your faith, how can you raise your children according to the admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4)? Jesus considers those who do not persevere as salt that has lost its flavor, good only for being trampled upon by men (Matthew 5:13).

What of the question that Jesus asks in Luke 18:8? We have every confidence that Jesus will return, or so we say, but when He returns, will He find faith on the earth? Will He find people persevering despite trials and tribulations, persevering in promoting the Gospel to those with whom they come in contact, and steadfast in encouraging fellow saints in the faith? While it is not for us to know the precise time that the Lord will return, we can certainly ask this question of ourselves. If Jesus returns right now, will He find faith in us? Will we be as the widow, having continually with vigilance made every petition to God? Will we have taken strength in God and His might and have persevered in the face of temptation, and have done all we could to bring others to the faith? Or will we have lost heart and given up before we should have? Consider yourself today (2 Corinthians 13:5), and commit yourself to persevering before the Lord.

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*The Power of Language,
Rightly Applied*

1 Cor. 14

Warren E. Berkley

The power of any language is two-fold: (1) the ability of the speaker to learn it well enough to speak it effectively, and (2) the ability of the listener to learn it well enough to understand it. This applies to any language in whatever form: *spoken, musical, written or sign.*

In the very early years after Jesus' Resurrection (let's call it the apostolic era), there was a divine solution to the problem of language barriers. The Holy Spirit miraculously and directly endowed the apostles and certain Christians with the supernatural ability to speak in a language they had not learned. That means, bypassing the ordinary learning process, various ones were given the sudden ability to preach and teach in a foreign tongue. (For good definition of this, see Acts 2:1-11 and 1 Cor. 14).

One of the problems in the church at Corinth was the absence of a wise use of the gift of tongues. Some with this miraculous ability applied it without good purpose and order. Moving outside the original purposes (confirmation and edification), some used the gift in carnal, competitive ways.

Addressing this problem, Paul places great stress on Clarity of Communication.

⁶But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching? ⁷Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? ⁸For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? ⁹So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. ¹⁰There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance. ¹¹Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me. ¹²Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.

¹³Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. ¹⁴For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. ¹⁵What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. ¹⁶Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of

thanks, since he does not understand what you say? ¹⁷For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.

¹⁸I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; ¹⁹yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

²⁰Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature. 1 Cor. 14:6-20

According to one source (ethnologue.com), there are 6,809 distinct languages in the modern world. In apostolic times there were hundreds of languages (Paul says, “many kinds of languages”).

Even if someone learned how to speak every known language, in addressing an assembly to impart God’s Word to the audience, the speaker should use the language understood by the people present. Otherwise, there is no edifying outcome.

If we are talking about the miraculous gifts in the apostolic era and in the church at Corinth, **OR** the non-miraculous things we engage in when assembled, what Paul said should find good application. **Everything we do in the assembly should be presented so that people can understand.**

We should diligently seek clarity in every song, every prayer and every sermon, so that everybody in the audience can understand everything all the time!

Preachers and teachers need to get this. *Your purpose is to take people into the text of Scripture and challenge them to learn and apply it.* In order to do this, you must speak so as to be understood.

“Paul says that it is not the mere sound of speaking that is important, but whether the sounds can be understood by the hearers,” (p.#273, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, W. Harold Mare).

Peter’s Confession

Nathan Ward

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:15–16).

Context of the Confession

Before we look at the confession itself, let's take a minute to better understand the context that surrounds Peter's confession.

Prior to Peter's confession, the Pharisees had demanded a sign of Jesus, a demand that He found distressing—*He sighed deeply in his spirit* (Mark 8:12)—and refused. Instead, he retreats to a boat and travels to the other side of the lake (Mark 8:11–13). And it wasn't the first time that He had retreated from his enemies. What do you suppose the disciples were thinking at this point? *Surely, if He just showed them who He was, they'd have to believe! Or, if He won't show them, why doesn't He just wipe them all out? Why does he keep retreating?*

After the trip to the other side of the lake, Jesus warns the disciples of the leaven of the Pharisees (Matt 16:5–6). It seems as if they'd sailed in silence from one side of the lake to the other—a silence that must have been deafening. The Lord had retreated from the Pharisees and not uttered a word since, leaving the apostles to replay the scene over and over in their minds, trying to understand what their master was doing.

The silence is broken by this warning. Then, Jesus returns to silence, leaving the disciples to interpret the warning. Their interpretation, however, is superficial, self-absorbed, and far off the mark. They supposed that their forgetfulness—they'd failed to bring bread—was the cause of this warning (Matt 16:7). And so Jesus issues to them a stern rebuke for their lack of understanding. He says, essentially, *How is it that you don't get this?* (Matt 16:11), and alludes to the prophecy of Isaiah 6 (Mark 8:18), which He had already used as a rebuke of the Jewish leaders. You can hear the undertone in His words: *Do I need to apply these words to even you?*

Upon reaching the other side of the lake, Jesus heals a blind man. Then, He seeks to make sure that the blind man doesn't tell anyone about it (Mark 8:22–26). *Don't even go into the village*, Jesus says. And this wasn't the first time that Jesus had done this. Not long ago, he had done the same thing after healing a dumb man (Mark 7:35–36).

This is the context of Peter's confession: Jesus is trying to get people not to tell others about His miracles. He is refusing to offer signs to the religious leaders and instead retreating from them, crossing the lake to get away. He scathingly rebukes the disciples for their lack of understanding, applying to them the harsh prophecy of Isaiah. This is the context of Peter's confession: retreat, rebuke, and repression. If the disciples weren't frustrated and perplexed—perhaps even despondent—at this point, it may have been an additional miracle.

But it is at this very time—maybe one of the lowest valleys of faith the disciples ever entered—that Jesus looks at them and says: *Who do you say the Son of Man is?*

Peter's Confession

Peter's confession was obviously an incredible confession of faith, but aside from that, there are four things stand out to me about his confession that can help us better understand the confessions that we make.

First, Peter's confession was a confession made in **ignorance**—or, at least, in some ignorance. Immediately after making this confession, he falls flat on his faith (pun intended) by standing in the way of God's plan (Matt 16:21–23). Later, he will try to stop Jesus from washing his feet (John 13:5–10) and declare the faith to do something which he won't do (John 13:36–38). Finally, he shows his lack of understanding when, at Jesus' arrest, he pulls out his sword and take a hack at Malchus (John 18.10–11). It's quite clear that all of the facts weren't in—at least, not in Peter's mind—when he made this confession.

But though it was a confession made in ignorance, it was also a confession made in **understanding**, as is made clear by Jesus next words to him: *Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven* (Matt 16:17). This doesn't, however, necessarily mean miraculous insight. This was not the first time that Jesus had been confessed (cf. Matt. 14:32–33; John 1:47–49) and there is no mention of miraculous insight at any previous confession. It seems better to understand his meaning as it being revealed by God *through Jesus*: cultivated through the months and years of Jesus' instructions; declared by Jesus himself (cf. John 5:19–27); confirmed by the miracles done (cf. John 20:30–31) through the father (cf. Acts 2:22). Although it was a confession made in ignorance, it was also a confession

that was made in knowledge—a knowledge revealed by God through Jesus’ teaching and miracles.

Third, it was a confession made in **contradiction**. Anyone reading the gospel narratives will at once see that Peter’s confession stood in direct conflict with what others were saying. The religious leaders called Jesus demon-possessed and said that he was a Samaritan (John 8:48). Clearly, Peter’s confession stands in contrast with those labels. But Peter’s confession also stood in contrast with the more favorable epithets given (John the Baptist, Elijah or Jeremiah, one of the prophets; Matt 16:14). To call someone a prophet is one thing; to call him God’s Messiah and son is quite different.

Finally, it was a confession with **implications**. Those aren’t all clearly spelled out in this chapter, but they are clearly implied by the titles given: Christ (anointed one) and Son of God. If you acknowledge someone as your king (Christ), that means that you’re acknowledging yourself to be his subject, that you will follow his lead, offering him full loyalty and devotion. Could it mean any less, then, to acknowledge someone as God’s son? And this is precisely how we see the disciples living after the resurrection: full devotion to their king and God, regardless of what men say (*cf.* Acts 4:18–20).

So what, then, do we learn about our confessions from Peter’s confession? First, confession must be based in knowledge, but it doesn’t require full knowledge or direct revelation. Even without full insight, Peter fully confessed; there was no need to revise or amend the confession once he learned more. A confession that Jesus is the Christ is sufficient, even if it isn’t fully understood. Second, confession that Jesus is the Christ will be in direct conflict with what the world believes and teaches about Jesus—whether they deny him outright or seek to call him a “great teacher.” Third, confession implicitly requires submission to Jesus as king and God, a point that should tell us that confession is more than a one-time act, done in front of the church. Confession is daily spoken by one’s life and choices. Finally, from the context of the chapter, confession requires faith even in the valleys of the spiritual journey.

Faith Facts
Topical Study

By Jon W. Quinn

The Bible teaches the absolute necessity of faith. Jesus said, "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." (John 8:24). The Scriptures state, And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6).

Faith is not "blind". Biblical, saving faith is not a "blind leap." Let's consider some things about faith.

Faith Defined

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1). I do not know, but perhaps this is where someone got the idea about faith being blind. But "the conviction of things not seen" does not mean blind. If someone I trust makes a promise to me, say, that if I'll walk to the top of the next hill I'll be able to see the town toward which I am traveling, I will likely believe it and start walking. I will have assurance even though I have not seen it with my own eyes.

Faith is believing and acting upon God's promises concerning things we have not yet seen. It is not blind.

I believe in lots of things I have never seen. I believe in radio waves and magnetic fields and the other side of the moon. I have evaluated the evidence and heard the testimony of others and believe in these things. That's faith.

Faith is an Act of Mind

Many today think that faith is anti-intellectual. That there is reason on one side and faith on the other. This, too, is a very great misunderstanding of what faith really is. For true Biblical faith to exist at all, the mind must be involved.

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17). Faith entails the hearing and understanding of the message of Christ. Notice also what verse nine says about belief: that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised

Him from the dead, you will be saved; (Romans 10:9). What is this “heart” that we are to believe with?

It is not mere emotion. It is not the physical muscle in the chest that pumps blood. It is not feeling. Rather, it is the center of man's intellect, emotion and will. A good synonym would be the word “mind.” This can be seen through what the Bible says we do with the “heart.”

Ways in Which the Human Heart Functions

The Bible says we do lots of things “with the heart” which, when taken together, show that the heart refers to the human mind. When we talk of a heart of faith we mean a mind of faith.

And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?" (Matthew 9:4). Right away, we begin to see that the heart includes more than feelings. Jesus said that we “think” in our hearts. He also discussed “understanding with their heart” (Matthew 13:15). Obviously, the intellect is integral to what the Bible refers to as the heart and the things we do with it.

But there is more. Human beings “reason” with the heart. But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, (Mark 2:6). So, when the bible talks about faith, or believing with the heart, it is not talking about something opposed to thinking or reasoning.

Consider other things the Bible says we do with the heart. We ponder with it (Luke 2:19) and conceive ideas in it (Acts 5:4). We can lust with it (Romans 1:24) or purpose/plan with it (2 Corinthians 9:7). When one obeys the gospel, he or she obeys “from the heart” (Romans 6:17)

So, given this information about the heart, it is no wonder that we have suggested that the word “heart” as used in God's word refers to the human mind and not mere emotion. In fact, “heart” and “mind” are sometimes used interchangeably in the Scripture. The Hebrew writer says, for example, "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM," (Hebrews 11:16)

Since Bible faith involves the heart, and since the heart involves intellect and reason, it is entirely wrong to think that faith and reason are in opposition. It just is not so. Faith is reasonable if it is what God intended. Christians ought to prepare themselves to make a reasonable defense of their faith. We are told, "...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, yet with gentleness and reverence;" (1 Peter 3:15). The word "defense" means a reasonable and logical explanation.

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. (Romans 12:1) Here, Paul describes the service we render unto our God by faith. He describes it as "spiritual" service. The word translated "spiritual" is the Greek word *logiken* and is the word from which we get our English word "logic".

Finding Faith

Earlier, we saw that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17). The Bible shows that God holds us responsible for attaining faith. Faith is a gift given by the Lord through His word, but we must choose to receive it. God does not make that decision for us, as Luther, Calvin and others have taught, and are still teaching. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life." (John 5:24).

It is up to us to hear and believe. God's instrument for producing faith is the word of the gospel. It is each individual who must choose whether to allow it into his or her heart, and each will be judged based on his or her decision.

Genuine faith in Jesus Christ is based on evidence. It is not vague or blind or irrational. It is nothing to be ashamed of and we do not have to "check our brains at the door." Without this faith, it is impossible to please God. Live by faith. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world.

Plan of Salvation

By Jon W. Quinn

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 13.10

“Quick To Hear”


Listening 101

Jas. 1:19

Warren E. Berkley

In High School and again in College, I was enrolled in Speech courses. Educational Curriculums are based on the assumption that speaking is a learned skill. I do not recall any courses entitled, “Listening 101.” Let listening is also a learned skill and clearly one half of the communication process. Here are a few simple observations we may overlook.

Don’t Interrupt the Speaker. If we do not allow the speaker to complete his thoughts, we miss the complete message. It is rude. Beyond that,



interruptions impede the communication process. Be patient. Simply wait until it is your turn to talk or respond (Prov. 15:2).

Listen to all the speaker says before forming your response. We may be tempted to listen a little, then pretend to continue listening – when we are really already beginning to form our response, defense or answer. We miss the last part of the message, out of our impulsive anxiety to frame our answer. In our haste to answer, we may miss something we need to hear (Prov. 25:12).

Stephen R. Covey describes something he calls “the fifth level, the highest form of listening – empathic listening.” It is “listening with intent to understand, to get inside the other person’s frame of reference, seeking to understand them emotionally as well as intellectually.”

Have you heard this? *God has given man one tongue but two ears that we may hear twice as much as we speak.*

Warren E. Berkley

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