

Expository Files



Jon W. Quinn, Warren E. Berkley - Editors

June, 2006

God Shed His Grace on Thee

By Jon W. Quinn

Our nation celebrates its independence next month on July 4th. You probably were aware of that. A well know songs proclaims, "America! America! God shed His grace on thee." It is true that the blessings of God are worth singing about.

But why is our nation turning from the principle upon which it was founded and grew strong? God invites, "Remember this, and be assured; recall it to your mind, you transgressors. Remember the former things long past, for I am God." (Isa. 46:9,10).

A story is told of a man from our country who was traveling in South America. He was asked to explain why there was so much prosperity in North America and so much poverty in South America. He answered, "Perhaps it is because the Spanish conquistadors came looking for gold while the pilgrims came looking for God." So why are we abandoning what has always been the true source of our national strength? Dwight Eisenhower said, "The spirit of a man is more important that mere physical strength, and the spiritual fiber of a nation than its wealth." The Bible says, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people (Prov. 14:34). Our coins say, "In God we trust." Our pledge says, "One nation, under God." Our Declaration of Independence speaks of "A firm reliance on the protection of divine providence." Are these sayings true anymore? Thomas Jefferson once said, "God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed the conviction that these liberties are a gift of God? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever."

The Lord challenged the nation of Judah to “remember this, and be assured; recall it to your mind... remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other.” (Isa. 46:9,10). Judah had become as a nation what our nation is becoming. Lawless, immoral, unprincipled, greedy and dishonest. God invited Judah to remember how He had carried them and delivered them. He reminded them of how once they had been blessed and protected, but now they had turned away from their Protector. They had forgotten their roots and the true source of what had once been their national strength.

Woodrow Wilson said, “A nation that does not remember what it was yesterday does not know what it is today nor what it is trying to do. We are trying to do a futile thing if we do not know where we came from or what we have been about.” I am absolutely confident that God has blessed our nation in the past because of the righteous goals of our forefathers. Not that they were perfect - they were not - but they built a nation founded on Biblical principles. Many leaders today are attacking those same principles. Are we sowing the wind to one day reap a whirlwind? (Hosea 8:7).

Doing Right, But Not With a Whole Heart
(2 Chronicles 25:2)
By Jon W. Quinn

Amaziah was king of Judah, and was said to have done "what was right in the sight of the Lord..." But, unfortunately, that is not all that was said about him. There was a problem worth mentioning because it is a very common problem today as it was then. "And he did right in the sight of the Lord, yet not with a whole heart." (2 Chronicles 25:2). Other translations have not with a "loyal heart" or "perfect heart" or "blameless heart" or "wholeheartedly". (The word "whole" here translates the Hebrew word shalem which means finished, complete, whole.

We must not settle for Amaziah's attitude toward God! Many think it is enough. It is not. In contrast to Amaziah, who had less than a wholehearted commitment to God's will, we can consider such ones as Joshua and Caleb. "None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they did not follow Me fully, except Caleb the son of

Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have followed the LORD fully.” (Numbers 32:11,12). See the contrast? Amaziah followed the Lord, but not with a whole heart, but Joshua and Caleb followed the Lord fully.

Jesus said those who were pure in heart are blessed because they will see God. This is a part of what it means to be "pure in heart" (Mt. 5:8): to be single-minded in our devotion to God and in our determination to do His will, to "love one thing." When we purify our hearts we put God and His will first like Joshua and Caleb. “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (James 4:8).

King Saul's Mistake

The Amalekites were an evil and corrupt society living in the Land of Canaan. They posed all kinds of threats to Israel; moral, spiritual and physical. God ordained that the nation be destroyed, and appointed King Saul to do the job. When God instructed Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites, Saul chose to do most of what he was commanded. But Saul set aside a very small part of God's commandment. Later, he would explain he did so only with the best and noblest of intentions. He suggested that his way would actually be an improvement over what God had commanded.

I would hope all can see that is wrong headed thinking.

Saul spared the king and some of the sheep. To do this thing was just a small matter in Saul's eyes, but it was evil rebellion and pride in God's eyes. People often look at “minor” disobedience differently than God does. We assume that thinking "it is no big deal" will mean that God will think that as well. Saul seemed surprised at God's anger. We note this so that one day we will not also face God's anger with surprise because we, too, looked at a commandment or two of His as "no big deal". Instead of developing “reasonable” explanations as to why our way is best, it is better to simply obey the Lord. (See Saul's reasoning in 1 Samuel 15:7-9,13-23).

Becoming Guilty of All

“For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT

ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law." (James 2:10,11).

We need to be clear on what this passage teaches, and what it does not teach. The passage does not teach that no matter how devoted one is to the Lord - no matter how diligently one strives to obey the Lord - one inadvertent transgression makes one as unrighteous in God's eyes as the worst sinner. (i.e. That if you get angry and say something you should not have said, then God will consider you an adulterer, liar, murderer, thief as well).

A clear distinction is made in the New Testament between those who are honestly trying to serve God and make mistakes and those who are not trying - (1 John 1:6-10). But the point is that God has given us His whole will and it is not up to us to choose to disregard any part of it. None of us are above God's commandments. We are not judges of the law of God but will be judged by the law. We are told to So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. (James 2:12; see also 4:11).

Some think that obedience in most things will compensate for disregard in a few - but no amount of "good works" will compensate for a lawless attitude - (Matthew 7:21-23). We must respect the commandments of God fully and completely. This means I must put aside my preference, my opinion, my convenience, my desire and say "yes" to the Lord's will fully and completely. If and when this loyalty to the Lord puts me at odds with popular opinion, then I must choose the commandments of the Lord. If we set aside God's will when it conflicts with our own, then we are not "obeying" God even when we do what He has said, because we are only doing that we already want to do. It is as if we are saying, "Lord, I'll do whatever you command as long as I agree with it." That is not enough! We will be "transgressors of the law" (James 2:11).

Some Practical Applications

The proper application of this lesson would be to search the word of God and apply it to our lives (James 1:22-25). It would be for each disciple to become a diligent, active participator in the gospel (Philippians 1:5). It would be to worship the Lord full heartedly in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

It would be to daily pattern all of our words and actions by the word of Christ (Colossians 3:16).

Those who truly and completely devote themselves to the gospel of Christ aim to bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). God is God and the Originator of all His will. We simply cannot disregard any of it without disregarding God Himself! We need to be like Joshua and Caleb; to follow the Lord with the whole heart, and receive the blessings of God.

My Sheep Hear My Voice, and Follow Me

(John 10:27-30)

By William C. "Bill" Sexton

{From Editors – see tribute to Bill later in this issue.}

Over fifty years ago, I was taught and accepted the idea that once saved always saved. Jn. 10:28-29 were quoted to me over and over, when I began to investigate, trying to harmonize all of the New Testament scriptures, as I reasoned with my preacher and members of the denomination that Lois and I were attending. On the surface the passage seemed to say what I was told that it did --Once you were saved, you could NEVER be lost. If you said you could be lost, then you were trusting in your own self and NOT the Lord to save you. In fact your were saying there was some force stronger than God. But as I continued my study, I found it difficult to harmonize that with other passages, such as Heb. 3:13; 2 Pet. 2:20-22) and similar passages.

If one has bought into that mindset, it is difficult to change, as I know from experience. Yet, one with an honest and good heart (Lk. 8:15), in time he/she'll discover the truth and take a stand for it, knowing that such is essential for one to be saved ultimately.

Let us examine the passage, more closely:

"27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and my Father are one."

Notice first of all who His sheep are: They are those who hear His voice and follow Him. Beloved the idea that obedience is essential to salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ is claimed through God's revelation. However, there are so many who have been saying that such is not the case, to believe and do so is to trust in the wrong person, source, self. That is NOT scriptural. Jesus identifies those who belong to Him, having His blessing, protection, they are people who listen to His directions and carry them out! That is the only way one is really acting "by faith," friend. One can look at the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews, where so many were successful "by faith," and if you are honest with yourself, you'll see each one carefully followed the Lord's directions.

That is the way one can be SURE of his/her salvation. Truly, no one is wise or strong enough to over power God and take you or me away IF we are loyal to Him. Yet, one can walk away, as we have seen many do in the centuries past, as they are recorded in the Bible for us to see. We are often referred to them you did receive the wrath of God, because they failed to listen and perform as directed.

Remember how the serpent beguiled Eve, in persuading her that she would not experience the consequences that God said she would when and if she failed to follow His teachings. Who was correct in that? We all know that God was strong enough to keep her inside His teaching, but he has given man a free will, able to make choices, but we have been told the blessing of heeding and the suffering that will result from disobedience. What will we choose? Let us choose to follow the Lord and His teachings, and reject the teachings that are contrary to His.

Beloved, THINK: Why would the Lord give so many warnings about being lead astray and falling, IF IT WERE IMPOSSIBLE? Why are we told to make or calling and election sure, if there is no way it can be made unsure? Hear Peter:

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1:5-11)

Yes, you can be sure, by following the teachings of the Lord. Do It! Otherwise, beloved, you shall be lost eternally.

1 Cor. 4:1-8
Servants & Stewards
"What Is Written"
Warren E. Berkley

In the first four chapters of First Corinthians the apostle Paul has one primary object: **to respond to the division in the church.** Men, acting on carnal ambition, had torn the church apart into factions – naming their competing factions after men who did not intend for their names to be used to divide: Paul, Apollos, Cephas. {See 1:11,12; 3:4}.

This division in Corinth showed their ignorance of how men should be regarded. The servitude and stewardship of men like Paul, Apollos and Cephas, *they were not clear about.* They were absorbed in men; boasting about men; exalting human wisdom, thinking and acting *way out of good perspective.*

Paul wrote this:

Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. 1 Cor. 4:1-5

Fidelity to God is the indispensable virtue! Whether you are talking about the apostles and evangelists who delivered the gospel in the first century or the members of the church at Corinth, fidelity is vital. Likewise, every

preacher today; every elder, every teacher; every disciple – **Fidelity to God is the indispensable virtue!**

IT IS NOT ABOUT my little group defeating another group. It is not about men being elevated to celebrity status. It is not about popularity. It is about faithfulness; fidelity to God in every way that fidelity should be expressed. The true dignity of any servant of the Lord is found in his or her fidelity to God. Paul wrote: "...it is required in stewards that one be found faithful."

"Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other." Verse 6.

Observe, in that last phrase in verse 6, how Paul exposes their sin in the church at Corinth: *being "puffed up on behalf of one another against."* One translation has this: *being proud of one man, and hating another (New Century Version).*

Their was a destructive attitude. ***"This is my man; he's the best, and we need to stick with him against the others."***

In responding to this error Paul explains something in verse 6. He uses his name and the name of Apollos – but only "figuratively." He wants to make it clear he is not endorsing the misuse of their names. Paul and Apollos wanted nothing to do with the factions claiming their names. It was only in a figurative sense, not literal, **that Paul used his name and that of Apollos in his letter to them.**

Carefully observe this: **"that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written."** You know what this says, clearly and immediately? In the writing Paul and the other writers did – resulting in the New Testament – **God was revealing a standard!** His written will has been given. Our thinking, our perspectives, our belief, teaching and practice – ought to be according to what is written. Paul was willing to call his own name and the name of Apollos – not to endorse their division, but to expose it - **and teach them not to go beyond what is written!**

God was communicating to the Corinthians through the writing of Paul and they were obligated to **not go beyond what is written.** This verse teaches,

when men form parties or factions, even though they may name them after good men, **they are wrong; they have gone beyond what is written.** This implies an obligation each of us need to acknowledge **not to go beyond what is written.**

Verse 7 is full of questions and I believe the purpose is to stimulate thought; to get the Corinthians to stop and think about their attitudes and actions.

For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

Sometimes, when people are engaged in wrong behavior, one thing you do is try to get them to think about what they are doing and the basis of what they are doing. The Corinthians were boasting about their favored men – puffed up on behalf of one against another and torn apart by pride, envy and carnal competition. These questions were put to them to get them to stop and think.

Who makes you differ from another? Of course the answer is, nobody makes you divide a church! You have wrong attitudes and make wrong choices. Nobody makes you divide a church.

What do you have that you did not receive? This is really a good question for every disciple. We are undeserving recipients of grace. We didn't build the church; we don't own the people; we cannot claim allegiance to our party. We are recipients of grace and that fact should awaken within us, genuine gratitude and humility (with the obedience that should attend such virtues).

Why do you boast? If we are recipients of grace; if we are not owners but stewards and servants, why do we boast? Do you see what Paul is doing? He is getting people to think about what they are doing; he wants the Corinthians – in answering these questions – to think, to repent and become the humble servants they should be.

Verse 8 follows up and this sounds humiliating, because Paul wants them to see their folly.

You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us; and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you!

Perspective! These brethren did not have a good, healthy perspective about who they were and who the apostles were; they were all mixed up - boasting, forming rival parties, with all the envy and strife. Verse 8 places great stress on what they had; the riches they should use and enjoy, instead of dividing, boasting and competing.

Christians are people who enjoy great fullness from God. Christians are rich. Christians are people who reign as kings; this is not literal, but descriptive of the high privilege of citizenship in the kingdom. The apostles and the Christians in Corinth jointly held the privilege of citizenship in the kingdom. To participate in the blessings of citizenship, then form rival parties, boast about men and seek your own ambition is to go beyond what is written.

The humble sense of grace received, and the burden of responsibility in so high a trust, should keep all Christian teachers in their right place.
R. Tuck, Pulpit Commentary, 1 Cor. 4:6

Worthy of the Calling

Eph. 4:1-6

Preserving Unity

by Don Hooton

As concluded his praise of Christ's work of grace and the result, the church of the Lord, he wrote,

"Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:1-6).

Paul's foremost plea is that Christians walk "in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called." Since he has said this more than once (1Thessalonians 2:12; Philippians 1:27; Colossians 1:10), it must be crucial. Yet we need to see is that our conduct reflects what we believe this call of grace in Christ is all about. Paul says, we "adorn the doctrine of God in every respect" (Titus 2:10). What we believe *about the call* itself will manifest itself *in the walk we make*.

Also, Paul says the worthy walk has the right attitude. As is the case with all worthy endeavors, how we perceive our place in it not only changes our appreciation of it but also are effectiveness in it. We'll *walk* the talk, as today's lingo might say, because we *believe* the talk. When we know the truth, our duty is to prove by our conduct we believe by this five characteristics:

All Humility. Humility is that characteristic acquired not by the swift or the powerful but by the heart who yields to the sovereignty of God. Then, humility was no virtue and according to MacArthur, 'Christians coined the word *tapeinophrosune* translated "humility" because it never appeared in classical Greek' (*The Body Dynamic*, 64). For a model of humility, you have only to look to Jesus (Philippians 2:5) who considered what others needed as more important than he did of himself. It is this kind of selflessness that will see itself clearly in the shadow of God's sovereignty. Comparing ourselves to others we may think "Isn't the world happy they have me", but humility compares ourselves to God and thinks, "I'm so glad I can be whole in Christ." Walk with all humility.

All Gentleness. Translated *meekness* in older translations, *gentleness* describes a behavior that responds to suffering without regret and without wickedness. It is grace manifested by a sweet spirit where personal rights are less important than human kindness. This is, of course not, insipid spinelessness. If God is maligned, faith demands we rise to shout out the truth. Yet when we suffer, like Jesus, we pray "forgive them for they do not know" (Luke 23:34). This submission will cause us to act kindly and gently with others as we aim to the goal God has for us all. Walk in all gentleness.

With Patience. Long ago, Albert Barnes wrote, "*Makroyumei*, denotes longanimity, slowness to anger or passion... patient endurance... It is opposed to haste; to passionate expressions and thoughts, and to irritability. It denotes the state of mind which can BEAR LONG when oppressed,

provoked... and when one seeks to injure us" (NT Commentary, 1Cor 13:4). No matter how wronged we might feel, patience demands that we not retaliate but walk with patience.

Showing Tolerance. Translated elsewhere as "forbearance", the word suggests that we hold ourselves back from one another. This tolerance is the outworking of humility, gentleness and patience. In the face of slander, insult and abuse, Jesus "while suffering, uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1Peter 2:20). The forbearing heart will leave room for people's mistakes and know how to "show it in love." The reason is that every Christian should know that if we love only perfection, then we don't have Christian love. And honestly, how could God love us? Walk in tolerance with love.

Being Diligent to Preserve the Unity of the Spirit. The objective of these attitudes are that Christians would walk diligently to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We must exert effort - it just does not happen. So, when one decision will lead to discord and the other to unity, there should be no choice. Secondly, we must apply this diligence *to preserve* the unity. It is not a unity created by Ecumenical Councils, Papal decrees or Unity movements. It is not created by us at all. Rather, we *preserve* the unity the Spirit has brought. Already, God's Spirit made one body. Already, God's Spirit made one truth. Already, God's Spirit "has once for all handed down [the faith] to the saints" (Jude 3). It is our calling to preserve what God wants in Christians - not concoct new ways to keep us all together. That diligence makes us worthy of the calling.

So take time and take care in your walk - make your walk worthwhile by making it a worthy walk *with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

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The Passing Of Bill Sexton

Tribute by the Editors of Expository Files
June, 2006

Obituary as it appeared in the Forth Smith, Ark. paper:

William Sexton

William Sexton went to be with the Lord on Monday, May 8, 2006. He was preceded in death by his mother, Mamie Sexton; father, Carl Sexton; sister, Wanda Jean; brothers, Ray, Roy and Johnny Sexton; daughter, Geneva Sexton; and granddaughter, Lora Sharp. He received his bachelor of general studies degree in 1981 from Wichita State University, master of theology degree in 1987 from Christian Bible College. He has been a minister for Churches of Christ for 49 years, serving churches in Kearney, Mo., Lowell, Ind., St. Joseph, Mo., Wichita, Kan., Kansas City, Mo., Van Buren, as well as many other communities.

He leaves behind his wife, Lois (Keech) Sexton of the home; daughters, Betty Ashworth and Sheryl Harden; son, Randy Sexton; sisters, Jurlene Collins, Maxine Kemp and Marie Williams; a brother, Haskell Sexton; as well as 10 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral will be 2 p.m. Friday at Ocker Funeral Home in Van Buren with burial at Highland Cemetery in Ozark. The family will receive friends at a visitation at the funeral home Thursday evening from 6 to 8 p.m.

Pallbearers will be Don Douglas, Jeff Bryant, Les Davis, Steve Jones, Ellis Westbrook and Don Allen.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 8006, Fort Smith, AR 72902.

The editors of Expository Files enjoyed good association with Bill Sexton in Kansas in the 1970's. Bill was engaged with local churches in Wichita and Manhattan. Not only was our relationship with bro. Sexton pleasant, we are

certain we were both influenced for the better. There was much work to be done throughout the state, and Bill was always ready to go. In addition to his local work, first in Wichita and then in Manhattan, Bill drove to Lewis, Great Bend, Herington, Fort Scott, El Dorado, Topeka and other places to do what he could. He never imposed himself or intruded. He simply offered himself and responded as brethren requested. (It is our understanding, over the past several years, though hindered by poor health, he “rode the circuit” in Arkansas. He preached regularly in rural Yell county Arkansas.)

He was an excellent home Bible teacher. We remember him having several appointments through the week, holding Bible classes in homes, often resulting in baptisms. He challenged false teachers and engaged in appropriate debate, privately and publicly. What the world might consider the more menial tasks, Bill was ready for. He would take people to their Doctor’s appointments, visit folks in the hospital, sit with families, bring groceries to people who were confined.

Bill was always quietly devoted to improving himself. He was mostly self-educated, but spent a great deal of time in formal education to better equip himself to serve the Lord. Many who knew Bill did not know of his behind-the-scenes efforts to better himself. He always wanted to be a better preacher and writer. There was no element in his personality at all to boast or promote himself. No malice or guile, he spoke the truth in love.

His kind manner and humble disposition made him such a great servant and friend. People all across the country will miss his helpful manner, his solid teaching and his desire to encourage and build up. Readers of Expository Files will remember his good combination of exposition and devotion. We’ve lost a good writer and friend. He always wanted people to have a good day, living by God’s Word.

Personal From Warren – My first local work was at Etna, Arkansas (near Ozark and Ft. Smith). Within my first few months there I met Bill. He came to my house in Ft. Smith just for a visit. We became acquainted several years before our time together in Kansas. My first impressions were never altered. Kindness and soundness combined in man of more humility than most preachers. Every meeting I’ve held in Northwest Arkansas, Bill was there with words of encouragement. He helped me in writing for special issues of the Preceptor and frequently wrote for Expository Files. What a great man we have lost.

Personal From Jon - My first local work was at Topeka Kansas. My new wife and I moved there in 1975. Several preachers in eastern Kansas started meeting together monthly for Bible studies. We took turns preparing s study on a selected topic and everyone profited greatly. This is where I met both Warren Berkley and Bill Sexton. Bill was always very friendly and encouraging. It was easy to tell he had the Lord's will at heart, as well as a love for you and your soul. He wanted to go to heaven, and he wanted to take you with him. We moved from Kansas in 1978 to Lowell, Indiana. Bill had preached there in the past, and gave me a good recommendation. That carried much weight with the brethren there and they welcomed us, speaking highly of Bill. Though, after Kansas, Bill and I never again lived in close geographical proximity, we saw each other at lectures in Florida (he loved going to those!) on several occasions and he always seemed so happy as we greeted one another and visited. And, he loved to write, As Warren said, he was a frequent contributor to Expository Files. In fact, we have one of his articles submitted for publication, and you will find it elsewhere in this issue. I look forward to seeing Bill again one day.

Why The DaVinci Code is Broken
(Topical Study)
By Jon W. Quinn

No doubt you have heard of it, or you will. It is a fictional novel and also a movie. The author, Dan Brown, claims that his novel, though fiction, is based on reality. He claims the historical events really happened. The book is titled, "The DaVinci Code".

While some wish to tear down faith in Jesus as God's Son, I also know that it will provide opportunity for us to talk about our faith. It may cause people to ask us "Why do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?" and I always look forward to the opportunity to tell others why I believe as I do (1 Peter 3:14-16). By all means, prepare yourselves to take advantage of the opportunity to give answer to those who ask!

A Serious Divine Warning of Things to Come

First, I wish to affirm that Jesus is the Son of God (John 20:30-31; Colossians 1:13-23). My eternal salvation is in His hands and no one else's

(John 3:34-36). But some would deny this. The early church was warned that there would arise false teachers even from among themselves (Acts 20:28-30). Some of them would come to deny the truth about Jesus (2 Peter 2:1) The remedy - return to the teachings given by Jesus and His apostles from the beginning of the gospel (2 Peter 3:1-2). Do not accept later gospels with different messages about Jesus.

Toward the end of the first century, doctrines denying the nature and role of Jesus in God's plan of eternal salvation began to make some inroads at some places. The apostle John was yet alive and dealt with this near the end of his life (1 John 1:1-5; 2:18-19; 22; 4:1-3; 4-6; 5:20-21). These false teachers made disciples, who in turn made others, and began a movement that became known as "Gnosticism". They taught that people were not saved by faith, but rather by mystical knowledge concerning the nature of God, the human spirit and the flesh. This movement lasted for several centuries before dying out, but some of their writings have endured time. While the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John date from the first century, the Gnostic gospels date from no earlier than mid-second century. To get people to more widely accept them, they assigned names to them such as "The Gospel of Peter" or "The Gospel of Truth" or "The Gospel of Judas" (which Irenaeus in 180 AD refers to as a "fabrication"). Note that these gospels were not really written by those whose names they bear. They were forgeries. Also, note that not all Gnostics agreed with one another on everything.

Concerning some of these "lost gospels", early Christians wrote of them and noted them as forgeries. Concerning the Gnostic gospel "Gospel of Truth" one wrote, "For if what they have published is the Gospel of Truth, and yet is totally unlike those which have been handed down to us from the apostles, any who please may learn, as is shown from the Scriptures themselves, that that which has been handed down from the apostles can no longer be reckoned the Gospel of truth." - Irenaeus; Against Heresies; Book Three 11:9 - (180 AD).

The same writer also discussed the "Gospel of Judas" and said, "They declare that Judas the traitor was thoroughly acquainted with these things, and that he alone, knowing the truth as no others did, accomplished the mystery of the betrayal; by him all things, both earthly and heavenly, were thus thrown into confusion. They produce a fictitious history of this

kind, which they style the Gospel of Judas." - Irenaeus; Against Heresies: Book One 31:1 (180 AD)

There were such men as Valentinus, who considered himself a Christian. He died about 160 AD. He did the most to combine Greek mystical thought with Christianity to produce Gnosticism. This philosophy held that knowledge of and fellowship with the Supreme God is impossible; that a lesser god created the world; that all matter is evil and that Jesus only seemed to be human, that He did not die on the cross and that only men who are spiritual by birth and therefore can know these things can be saved. Others, such as Marcion and Arius were also leaders among these teachers. It was to address these views that the Council of Nicea was called in 325 AD. They did this by examining the teachings in light of the writings handed down from the apostles and their associates.

What is the "DaVinci Code"?

The DaVinci Code denies that Jesus is the Son of God; denies His death, burial and resurrection and denies that eternal salvation from sin depends on Him. The story borrows from and depends on ancient philosophies, propaganda, forgeries such as the Gnostic gospels and historical inaccuracies to formulate the fiction, much of which can be disproved.

The fiction of the book claims to be based upon the following alleged "facts":

1. Up until 325 A.D., disciples of Jesus held Him to be a great Rabbi and teacher, and that is all He was, and all He had ever claimed. He did not die on a cross. He married Mary Magdalene and they had children. He was a great teacher, but that is all. He was not the Son of God. Note that it is not suggested that there were debates about this. "The DaVinci Code" suggests no one had even thought of Jesus as Lord before Constantine.

2. Mary Magdalene has a much more prominent role among Jesus' disciples, becoming "an apostle to the apostles". There is a rivalry between her and Peter. She is actually "the holy grail" (because Jesus' bloodline was passed on through His and her children) and identified as "the sacred feminine" (This also was a part of Gnostic teaching).

3. There circulated stories about Him describing His life in this manner. However, in 325 AD, Emperor Constantine called together a council of church leaders at Nicea and from there changed the doctrine about Jesus. In order to cement his political power, Jesus was changed from a great teacher into the Son of God and it began to be taught that you could be saved from sins and go to heaven through accepting His Lordship. He was never referred to as "Lord" before Constantine. Constantine, with the blessing of the church leaders, became powerful because now people, in order to be faithful to Jesus and go to heaven, had to submit to Constantine. (By the way, why didn't someone notice such a thing? If they were not worshipping Jesus before the Council, what caused everyone back home to forget that?)

4. A secret society, called "The Priori of Sion" continued to know the truth about all this through time. DaVinci was associated with this group and wove into some of his work hints and codes.

5. The book and movie is a fictionalized account of how the Romans Catholic church resorts to murder and mayhem to keep it all a secret. However, says the author, though the book is fiction, it is based on this concept of Jesus which is true. Many people are going to be led to think this is true. What shall we say to them?

In What Ways is the Code Inaccurate?

First, The Holy Grail - supposed to have been the cup Jesus used at the Last Supper, according to legend (not according to the Bible - the Bible does not mention a "Holy Grail" but does talk of the cup Jesus used at the Last Supper). At any rate, Jesus did have a cup, though no special significance is attached to the container itself. But rather, the contents that represented His blood to be shed was where the emphasis was (Matthew 26:26-30). The source of the idea that Mary Magdalene was the Grail appears to be a recent story called "Holy Blood, Holy Grail" written in 1981 and based on Gnostic gospels (the authors sued Brown but lost - but if it is true history and not total fiction, then how can they sue for "stealing" their idea in the first place?).

Second, concerning Constantine - The idea that Constantine and the Nicean council elevated the status of Jesus is disproved by the many, many documents preserved from times before 325 AD which clearly show they

believed that Jesus was the Divine and only begotten Son of God. For example, the Didache (the "teachings") is a list of the beliefs of disciples that dates from not later than 100 AD or soon thereafter.

Third, concerning the secret organization; "The Priori of Sion" - In WW2, a forged document speaking of the secret society was planted in French archives and used as a means of promoting anti-semitism in Vichy France, by a man named Pierre Plantard who claimed to have been an descendant of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. It was proven a forgery in court. Then later, in 1956, he began a secret organization called "The Priori of Sion." It did not exist before then. Listen, anytime someone comes up to you claiming to be a descendant of Jesus and Mary Magdalene, you need to be at least a tiny bit circumspect about believing what he has to say!

Also, when we consider the place of Jesus in the early church and consult the writings of early Christians, such as Clement of Rome (95 AD); Hermas of Rome (100); Ignatius of Antioch (110); Polycarp of Smyrna (117-118), we find that they did, in fact, hold Jesus to be the Son of God and Lord. In their writings they quote the Scriptures as authoritative because it came down from the Apostles.

YES! Contrary to the fiction of the DaVinci Code, they did refer to Jesus as "Lord" before 325 AD! "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Sceptre of the majesty of God, did not come in the pomp of pride or arrogance, although He might have done so, but in a lowly condition, as the Holy Spirit had declared regarding Him." - Clement of Rome; Epistle to the Corinthians; 16:2 (see also 20:11; 21:6; 24:1) - 96 AD

YES! They did teach the literal death, burial and resurrection of Jesus before 325 AD! "All these sufferings, assuredly, He underwent for our sake, that we might be saved. And He suffered really, as He also really raised Himself from the dead. It is not as some unbelievers say, who maintain that His suffering was a make-believe. In reality, it is they that are make-believes: and, as their notion, so their end: they will be bodiless and ghostlike shapes!" - Ignatius of Antioch; Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans - (Before 110 AD).

(IMPORTANT NOTE: In this outline, all quotes of men such as Clement, Ignatius, Irenaeus, et.al. are for the purposes of showing that the early church did, in fact, historically believe what Dan Brown in "The DaVinci Code", denies they believed. They

are not being quoted as authorities, only the inspired Scriptures have the authority of Jesus Christ).

Speaking of the Scriptures, consider:



Papyrus Bodmer II – from @ 200 AD: “Perhaps the oldest book in substantial condition” - Neil R. Lightfoot in *How We Got the Bible* - This papyrus contains Gospel of John; includes John 1:1-3; 14 (read John 1:1-3; 14). This manuscript predates the Nicean Council by 125 years! The DaVinci Code says the Nicean Council doctored the documents and people started believing these things only after the Council (re. that Jesus, the Word, was with God and was God from the beginning)! This manuscript utterly disproves Brown's faulty history.

The Gnostic Gospels - The reason they (the so-called "lost gospels") lost out is because they were fabricated. Early disciples do not quote from the “lost gospels” before mid-second century (because those forgeries did not exist yet). Remember, not only were these people fighting against the developing false teachings the apostles had warned would come, but also against severe Roman persecution. They believed that Jesus was the Divine Son of God (John 1:1-3; 14).

They did not appear at the right time at the right place, they were not written by the men they claimed to have been written by and contradict those writings of the eyewitnesses to these events which were actually there!

Jesus said "Know the truth" (John 8:32). That is the first step in reacting to this or any other thing that challenges our Lord. Second, is have the courage and conviction to stand for the truth. It saddens me that old battles must be refought over this same material. This should have been settled centuries ago, and was, but now is being recycled. But hear this: Those who propagate these things are in the same situation as those who taught them centuries ago. They "have not God" (2 John 7-9).

The 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

Warren E. Berkley

*Inversion Therapy
Or The Testimony Of The Apostles?*

The Da Vinci Code book and movie supply to our culture just what so many people are looking for: radical feminism is promoted in the plot; it is a story of sexual intrigue; it has no regard for the New Testament account of Jesus Christ; and it is filled with story lines critical of the Bible. The movie pushes all these buttons. So all the hype is not surprising.

For some people this may be just what they have been waiting for - something everybody hears about that cast doubt on the Bible. It is *an entertaining public video drama that says, “Maybe the Bible doesn’t have it right.”* Just the celebrated refrain so many have welcomed.

The book by Dan Brown has been out for some time. The movie will be released later this month. On Monday Messages, I’ll have something to say about this today and next week (after I have viewed the movie).

The bottom line is, who will you believe? The writings of Dan Brown, or the writings of the apostles of Jesus Christ?

Here is one observation you can think about before the movie comes out.

Dan Brown has told his fans that when he has “writer’s block” he uses inversion therapy to get his mind started again - - What is “inversion therapy?” **Hanging upside down!**

(Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dan_Brown)

I’ll take Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

The apostle Peter said, “...we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty,” (2 Pet. 1:16).

Dan Brown was not there; he didn’t come along until 1964 – and by his own admission, he had to spend some time hanging upside down to write the book.