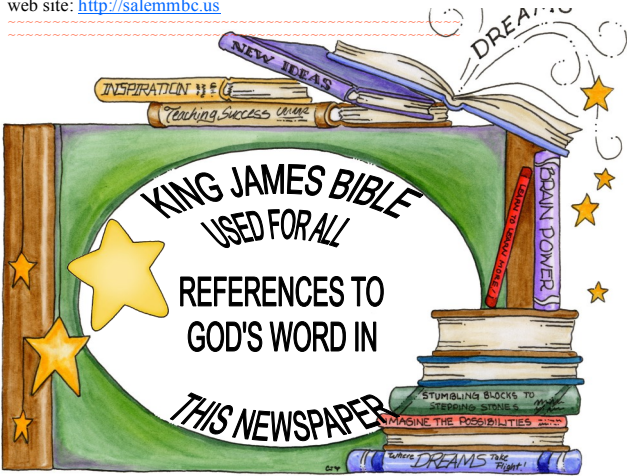


Published by: Albany Missionary Baptist Church web site: http://albanymissionarybaptist.org	Albany OR
Bethel Missionary Baptist Church	Creswell OR
Calvary Missionary Baptist Church	Reedsport OR
First Landmark Missionary Baptist Church web site: www.flmbc.org	Springfield OR
First Missionary Baptist Church of Union Gap web site: www.uniongapfmbc.com	Sutherlin OR
Landmark Missionary Baptist Church web site: http://www.ourchurch.com/member/t/toledobaptist/	Toledo OR
Landmark Missionary Baptist Church web site: www.ourchurch.com/member/v/VancouverLMBC	Vancouver WA
Medford Missionary Baptist Church	Medford OR
Salem Missionary Baptist Church web site: http://salemmbc.us	Gervais OR

First Landmark Missionary Baptist Church
421 South 40th Street
Springfield, Oregon 97478



GOSPEL ILLUSTRATION

SWIMMING ACROSS THE OCEAN

Target audience: Anyone that struggles with self-righteousness, thinking their goodness will somehow get them back to God. This illustration is simple and clear.

Illustration: Suppose we decided to swim across the ocean entirely unassisted. You might make it further than me, and an Olympic Gold Medal swimmer would make it farther than either of us. However, the simple fact is that nobody can do it.

Point: That's the way it is with trying to live up to God's standard. We all fall short. (Romans 3:23) We all need help from God to make it. It is Christ who made it possible.



“For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle?” 1Corinthians 14:8

The Original BAPTIST OBSERVER



“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls...” Jeremiah 6:16

Sounding Out The Faith

THE BLACKEST SIN IN THE BIBLE

September 2010 Issue

ADULTERY

FORNICATION

In Leviticus, Almighty God nine times pronounced the DEATH SENTENCE against sexual sins. A murderer ends a life, but an adulterer or an adulteress ruins two homes and blights many lives, and sends multitudes into Hell because it causes such a stumbling block. The thief steals property that may be replaced, but the adulterer steals virtue which can never be replaced.

Adultery is an unlawful sexual relation by someone that is married to another. It was punished by death under the O.T. law. (Leviticus 20:10) Fornication, the sinful relation between the unmarried and its whoredom, caused God Almighty to kill 23,000 at one time. (1 Corinthians 10:8) This should tell us how “black” that these sins are because of the penalty that God placed on them.

Fornication and adultery are sins committed with the physical body. (1 Corinthians 6:18) Every human body belongs to God because of creation. (1 Corinthians 6:13; John 1:1-3) God's desire is that we would only use our bodies to glorify Him. (Revelation 4:11; Colossians 3:23)

Fornication and adultery are unclean. They are an abomination in the sight of God. (Revelation 17:4; Hebrews 13:4) Adultery and fornication blacken the name, blight the body, and send souls to Hell because of the

mockery it makes of God's Word.

Adultery and fornication are considered to be so “black” because of the lasting effects that come as a result. Effects that not only come upon the ones that commit the sin, but also upon others that know about it. (children, spouses, friends, etc.) Our society today thinks so little of these sins because we are so given over to fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. We are bombarded on every hand through books, radio, T.V., videos, movies, etc. that portray these sins as an everyday part of life. God help us because we have become to “desensitized” to sin!

Adultery leads people to cease from fearing God. (Matthew 19:1-9) It causes people not to care about God's law because they so desire to have their own way. It is so black that God's prohibition of it was written in the ten commandments of stone. (Exodus 20:14)

Adultery and fornication ruin homes, increase murder, and orphan children quicker than any sin in the Bible. (2 Samuel 11) Adultery and fornication have wrecked many great empires of the past: Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Greece, Rome, etc. (venereal diseases were found in mummies and at Pompeii)

More than 20 books in the Bible, over 100 times, warn against adultery and fornication. That is more warning than the flood, which destroyed the whole earth. The blackest thing about fornication and adultery is not that it destroys the body, blasts

the mind, ruins homes, makes more prostitutes and whoremongers, kills one's usefulness and influence, but that it makes the guilty one an enemy of Almighty God. It blocks his prayers. (James 4:8; Psalm 66:18)

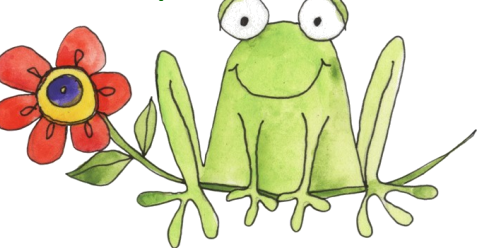
What can someone do that is guilty of these sins? If you are guilty, repent. Return to God. Resist the devil. (James 4:7-8) Forsake all evil companions. (Psalm 1:1-2) Read the Bible and pray daily. Attend all church services and spend time with your brethren in God's Word. Read Psalm 51 of David forsaking adultery. David made absolutely no excuses when he came to God in repentance. David was ready to forsake his sin and turn to God as Isaiah 55:7 says to do.

If you are a parent, you should want to keep your children from these sins because of the devastating affect and reproach that they bring. Warn your children of the penalty for these sexual sins. Guard them while they are young. Control the things they hear and see, so that they will not be feeding the lusts of their flesh more than the spiritual. Be in church worship services and be attentive. Your children are watching how you receive the Word, and they will receive the Word as they have been taught! You should know where your children are at all times. They should stay at home when it is not necessary for them to be away. They should not be out roaming the streets. (Proverbs 4:13-27)

(Continued on page 2)

THE BLACKEST SIN IN THE BIBLE	1
GODLY WOMEN	2
THE BLACKEST SIN IN THE BIBLE (continued)	2
PSYCHOLOGY OR HICKORY - OLOGY	3
THE SUPREME AND SOLE AUTHORITY OF SACRED SCRIPTURES	3
ENCHANTING STRANGER	4
DECEIVE - DECEIVING- DECEPTION	4
ENCHANTING STRANGER (continued)	5
DECEIVE - DECEIVING- DECEPTION (continued)	5
ALL CHRISTIANS SHOULD HAVE A CHRISTIAN HOME	6
THE SUPREME AND SOLE AUTHORITY OF SACRED SCRIPTURES (continued)	6
HISTORICAL CHURCHES	7
GOSPEL ILLUSTRATION	8

Subscriptions are free.



However, there is a significant cost for printing and distribution. Any offerings will be greatly appreciated. Please pray for this ministry and consider partaking with us in this ministry by sending an offering to help publish the truth of



Godly Women

Ladies, as a bride, or bride to be, how much time is spent in preparation for the wedding? How much is spent in preparation for the marriage? As we consider this life, limited by the flesh in time, let's consider eternity and the life to come. As women that are born again, scripturally baptized, members of one of the Lord's New Testament churches, we should be preparing for the wedding and marriage to our Espoused Groom, Jesus Christ. After all, that marriage will last much longer than any that we have here in this life!

In John 3:25-30 and Mark 2:18-20, John the Baptist and Jesus refer to Jesus as the Bridegroom. Those with Jesus are referred to as the bride. The ones with Jesus were His disciples. Jesus' disciples were His church. In Matthew 26:17-30, Jesus gives the Lord's Supper to His disciples. They sing a hymn in vs. 30 and go out. Psalm 22:22 is prophecy concerning Jesus singing in the midst of the "congregation" praise to God. This account of the Lord's Supper is the only recorded place to fulfill this prophecy of Him singing. Hebrews 2:9-12 shows that He fulfilled that prophecy when He sang in the midst of His brethren, the "church", identifying Jesus' disciples as the church.

In II Corinthians 11:2, Paul is writing by inspiration of the Lord to the church at Corinth. (II Corinthians 1:1) He says that the church is the espoused, or engaged, bride of Christ. In John 14:1-3, He tells His church He is going to prepare a special place for them. Jesus, the Bridegroom, has made preparations for the wedding and marriage to His bride. The question is, have we been preparing?

THE BLACKEST SIN IN THE BIBLE (continued)

I Thessalonians 5:22 says to abstain from the appearance of evil. (promiscuity, spending "quality" time with those that do evil, nearly nude athletic sports, etc.) (Proverbs 13:24-25)

The Bible gives us some practical points on how to stay away from these sins. Abstain from all appearance of sin. (1 Thessalonians 5:22; Matthew 5:27-29) Hate evil things and oppose them. (Psalm 26:5; 94:16; Romans 12:9) Sinners hate Christ and those that are saved. Don't be surprised when they want you to behave like them so that they will not feel convicted by

I Corinthians 12:18 says that God adds us to the local, church body as it "hath pleased him". So, ladies, as members of a local body, the church, (Colossians 1:18) we are to be working and functioning in that local body. (Ephesians 4:16; Colossians 2:19) This is how that we prepare for the wedding and marriage to our Espoused Groom, Jesus, that will last for all of eternity.

Our access to Jesus, as the Bridegroom, is through the local body that He placed us in. We have no ability to glorify God with our work outside of a local New Testament church. (Ephesians 3:21; Romans 16:27; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23) I Corinthians 12:12-14 says that the body is made up of many members, but it is one body. The Bible is clear that the local church, the body, is His espoused bride. Ladies, it would be to our advantage to search the Scriptures to see if our functioning and supplying in our local church bodies is according to His standards. (Revelation 3:8-13) Please don't let the preparations be made in vain by ignoring His Word!

Jesus gave His life for His New Testament churches. (Acts 20:28) Ephesians 5:22-33 gives us just a small glimpse into how much that Jesus loves His bride. Jesus, our Bridegroom, is coming soon. Are we ready? Have we prepared for that wedding? Have we prepared for that eternal marriage with our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ? Are we functioning in the local body where He placed us and nourishing the body with the work we are doing according to the Scriptures?

your testimony. (John 15:18-19; 17:14; Jude 23) Let your light shine. (Matthew 5:6) Evildoers, including adulterers and fornicators, hate the light. (John 3:18-20) Divorce and unscriptural remarriage is adultery and we need to be sure to teach this to our children. (Matthew 5:31-32) God's Word has not changed, even though our society has, and His standard for judgment will be the Word that we are to be studying. It would be the best for our children, as well as ourselves, if we would "conform" our lives to the Word of God today! (Romans 12:1-2)

HISTORICAL CHURCHES

To establish our doctrine and practice by the New Testament is of chief importance. The New Testament makes some declarations concerning the history of churches. When our LORD established His church, He declared He would build it up, edify it, enlarge it, and the gates of Hell should not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:18) The Greek word "oikidirmeso", in Matthew 16:18, translated "will build" means "will build up", "enlarge", "edify". His church was already in existence when He uttered these words, as can be proven by numerous passages. Hence, we are forced to so understand this passage.

When did the company or congregation of baptized believers begin? Peter answers the question in Acts 1:21: "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the LORD Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John." etc. This passage affirms that certain men "companied" with Jesus and that this "company" began "with the baptism of John".

This makes it clear that the LORD had a "company of baptized believers", a church with Him all through His personal ministry. He called it together Himself, choosing from the material John the Baptist had made ready for Him, for John came "to make ready a people prepared for the LORD". (Matthew 3:3; Luke 1:17) These prepared people are the ones that Jesus called into His company or congregation. (Matthew 4:17-25)

In Luke 6:12-18, we can find this company clearly distinguished from the mixed multitude. He took this company up with Him into a mountain to pray. He did not go to the mountain to originate His company, or church, because He took it with Him into the mountain. While there, of them, He chose His apostles. "Of them", the company, "He chose twelve, whom He named apostles." Then the names of the apostles are given. "And He came down with them and stood in the plain, and the company of His disciples, and a great multitude of people." The inspired writer speaks of the "company of the disciples and a great multi-

tude", even while mixing and mingling with that "multitude", Jesus' church was recognized separately.

Peter says this "company" began "with the baptism of John". All the Master did on the mountain was to pray and choose His apostles. The apostolic office was the LORD's first spiritual gift bestowed on the church. In 1 Corinthians 12:1, we learn that the subject there under discussion is spiritual gifts: "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." In discussing spiritual gifts, the apostle declares that the first spiritual gift put in the church was the apostolic office. 1 Corinthians 12:28: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles. . ." It would have been impossible to set apostles or anything else in the church if the church had not been in existence. So the fact that Christ "set the apostles in the church", proves that the church existed before going up on the mountain.

Ephesians 2:20: "Are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." This is an instance when the "possessive case" is expressed by the preposition "of."

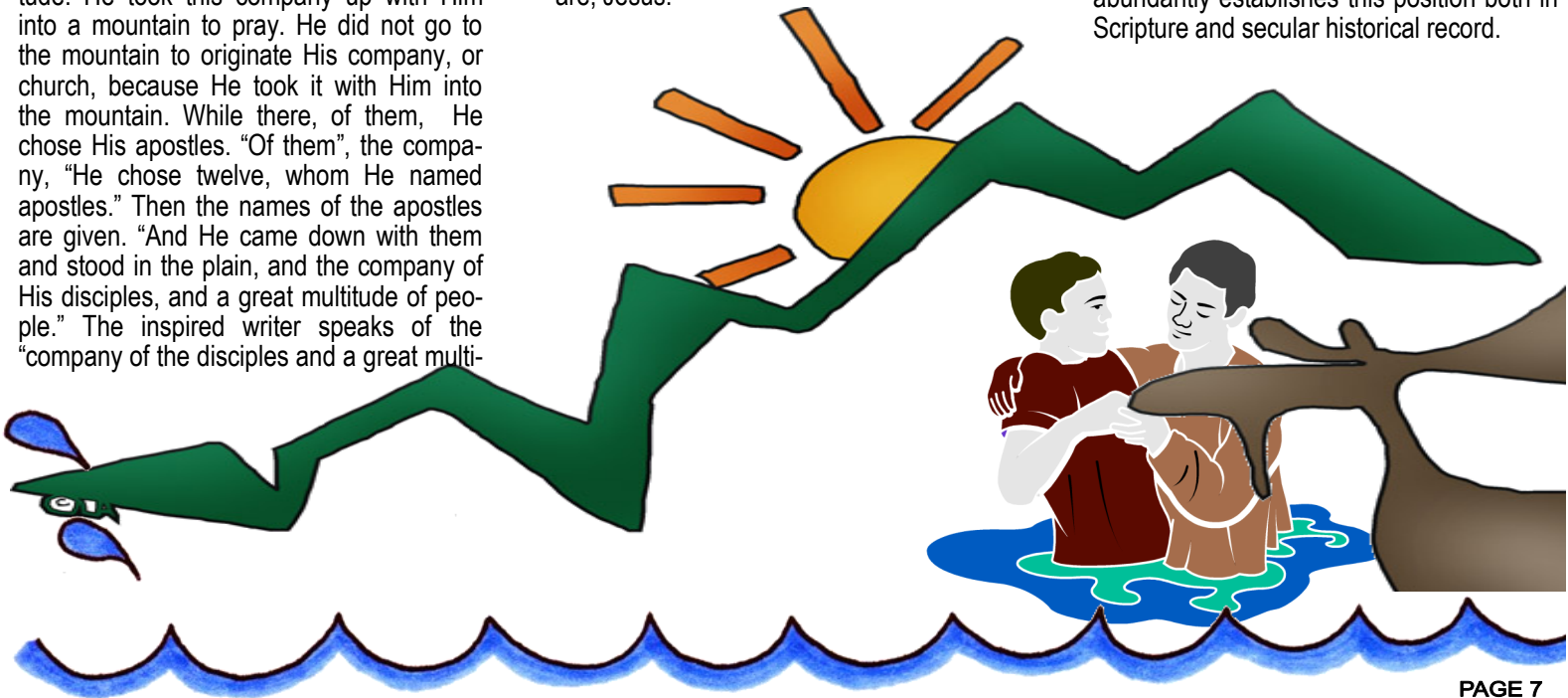
To illustrate: We say, "That is the capital of Mississippi", when we mean, "It is Mississippi's capital." "That is the farm of Johnson", when we mean, "It is Johnson's farm." So, we are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, that is, on the apostle's and prophet's foundation. In other words, they have no advantage of us since we are built on the same foundation they are, Jesus.

The apostles and prophets form no part of the foundation of the church. 1 Corinthians 3:11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Thus, we see that the church is founded on Christ, Himself, that the LORD, Himself, established it during His personal ministry on the seashores of Galilee, using the people made ready for Him by John the Baptist. This company, or church, traveled with Him during His personal ministry, and that the apostolic gift was the first set in the church, and that this was done on the mountain. It was to this church the Master gave the commission promising it perpetuity to the end of the world. (Matthew 28: 18-20)

Ephesians 3:21: "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages." It therefore follows that the church should live in all ages, for there could not be glory in a dead church. Neither should the church apostatize, for there could be no glory in an apostate church. It can be shown that Baptist churches have existed in all ages since Christ. It confirms our faith in the LORD's words. If, on the other hand, it can be shown that no church institution in existence has come down uncorrupted through the centuries, it will be enough to make infidels of us all. For if the LORD's promise has failed, if His Word be proven false, what confidence could we place in Him as our Savior? (Hebrews 6:17-20)

The LORD's promise has been kept. There has never been a day since He ascended in the presence of His church, that a church just like the one which saw Him ascend could not be found on the earth. History abundantly establishes this position both in Scripture and secular historical record.



ALL CHRISTIANS SHOULD HAVE A CHRISTIAN HOME

Christ was present at the first marriage, and heard the laws about the first home. (Matthew 19:4-5) To disobey God's law is to put one's opinion against God's command. (I John 2:4; Proverbs 14:12) The "home problem" is the greatest problem to-day, as evidenced by crime, violence, and juvenile delinquency. Sociology (the secular study and classification of human societies), eugenics (the study of methods of improving genetic qualities by selective breeding) (especially as applied to human mating), and etc. are contrary to the Bible. They are failures to help anyone without the Word of God.

THE CHRISTIAN HOME – To have a Christian home, you must know what a Christian is. Acts 11:26 says that the disciples, follower or learner, were called Christians at Antioch. Antioch was where the Lord had one of His local New Testament churches. These people were walking as Christ did. They were called names by their enemies because they recognized their conduct to be like Christ's. I Peter 4:16 says not to be ashamed if you suffer as a Christian. Verse 14 of that chapter says that it should be for the name of Christ. In other words, a Christian is identified with Christ by his lifestyle and conduct. This is not dealing simply with salvation, but the way of serving God after salvation.

Now, to have a Christian home after marriage, one must enter marriage with the understanding that only death can end it. (Romans 7:2-3) Marriage is a partnership, recognized by God, where the husband is the head. (Genesis 3:16; Ephesians 5:23) The husband is to love the wife as Christ

loves the church, which is an increasing love, with more kindness, and tenderness. (Ephesians 5:28)

The wife is the weaker vessel. She is "of finer material", and a more complex mechanism. She is to recognize her husband as lover, protector, and head. (Ephesians 5:22) Children are a heritage of God. (Psalm 127:3; Isaiah 8:18; Psalm 139:13-16) Onan, who resorted to humanism to keep from having children as God had said, was killed by Almighty God. (Genesis 38:9-10) To-day's society is leaning more and more toward this idea of "eugenics". Man has replaced God as the "Giver and Creator" of life and he has decided to try and take matters into his own hands. (i.e.: abortion, legislation concerning how many children people should have, and legislation determining to whom children should or should not be born)

ALL CHRISTIANS SHOULD HAVE A CHRISTIAN HOME: This can only be by following God's plan of Christians marrying Christians. (II Corinthians 6:14; I Corinthians 7:39) Christians should marry and have families to serve God. (Psalm 127:5) The wife should joyfully recognize the husband as head. (Ephesians 5:23) The husband should delight in loving his wife through life. (Ephesians 5:28) Children should be commanded to obey. (Genesis 18:19; Ephesians 6:1-3) The rod should be used in this modern age, just as God commanded. (Proverbs 22:6; 13:24; 28:14) A family altar ties children to the unseen God, and creates a fear of sin. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

OBJECTIONS: *When people are incompatible should they be allowed to divorce and remarry?*

REPLY: Except for fornication, God said no! (Matthew 19:9) This was a commitment of virginity that had been made, and then it was lied about. After it was discovered on the wedding night, the husband had that option. However, his decision had to be made that night. He could not prolong his decision to "try things out" and see if he wanted to remain married or not. God's ways have not changed, even though society's has.

HOW MAY I HAVE A CHRISTIAN HOME? If you are single, and desiring marriage, pray for God to lead you to a Christian partner. Follow Abraham's example, in Genesis 24. Attend church, prayer meeting, and study the Bible. If married & your mate is lost, pray, lean to the LORD, and live right. (I Peter 3:1-7) If you are married, yoked equally, apologize for wrongs, and pledge to live for God together. Start a family altar, and bring your children into the Word. Teach obedience by example and doctrine. (II Timothy 2:22)

PRACTICAL POINTS: Forget sociology, psychology, pedagogy, and eugenics that contradict any of the Bible. Read Proverbs and Ephesians throughly, and frequently. Teach children they have immortal souls, sin, and they need salvation. When they reach accountability, they need to obey God to be happy. Explain the harm of indecent movies, dances, indecent and immodest apparel, gambling, promiscuous behavior, etc. God sees everything and we must meet every sin at the judgment bar of God. (II Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

THE SUPREME AND SOLE AUTHORITY OF SACRED SCRIPTURES (continued)

PRACTICAL POINTS: This "God-Breathed" Book warns of Hell, Luke 16:19-10)

The Bible shuts the mouth of every sinner. (Romans 3:19)

The Bible tells of eternal salvation through God's love and Christ's sacrificial and substitutionary death. (John 3:16, Isaiah 53:11)

The Bible tells of sudden and fearful destruction of those who delay. (Reveltion20:11-15)

The Bible tells of an awful Hell and glorious Heaven. (Revelation 21:1-8)

The Word of God furnishes the Christian unto every work in which Almighty God would have him, or her, engaged. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

The curse of God is on those who emasculate the Bible through false interpretation. (Revelation 22: 18-19)

THE SUPREME AND SOLE AUTHORITY OF SACRED SCRIPTURES

THE GOD-BREATHED WRITINGS. *Note: Inspiration means "God-Breathed." There are three theories of Inspiration: #1 The Bible is inspired just as Shakespeare or Shelley, Lowell or Longfellow. That view is false. #2 The Bible is not inspired as the poets, for the Holy Spirit watched over, and if He saw the writers were going to make an error, He prevented same. This is called "The Superintendency Theory." It is false. #3 The Holy Spirit took such complete possession of each writer, that each one wrote exactly what the Holy Spirit determined. The Holy Spirit dictated the very words of the Bible to various writers. This is called "The Dictation Theory", but is indeed not a theory, but fact. This is the only true meaning of "God-Breathed".

The Bible claims to be of "Divine Origin". There are only six ways that the human mind can conceive of how the Bible came: #1 From Good Men - If they had said it came from God, as it does, when it did not, then they were liars and not good men. #2 From Bad Men - Certainly they would not have consigned themselves to Hell. #3 From Good Angels - They would not have been "good" angels if they had lied about the origin of the Bible. #4 From Bad Angels - They would not have made an endless Hell fire for themselves. #5 From Satan - Surely Satan would not have pictured himself as a failure if he had written the Bible. #6 The only other place the Bible could have come from was God, just as it declares, and just as it is. The Bible claims God's Son as Author. (Hebrews 1:2)

The Bible declares the Holy Spirit used holy men. (2 Peter 1:21) The Bible claims holy men were "moved". (translated "beat down") God's Word is unchanged and settled in Heaven. (Matthew 24:35; Psalm 119:89) *Note: *The same tune may be played on flute, oboe, or cornet, and all are different individually, yet it is the same tune.*

THE SACRED WRITINGS ARE PROFITABLE, SUPREME AND SOLE.

No portion of the Bible contradicts any others, yet, there were about 40 different writers over 1600 years. It also agrees with known facts: earth is round, ocean's tides, etc. (Isaiah 40:22; Matthew 24:41)

It is a lamp to light our way. (Psalm 119:105)

It furnishes completely the man of God, unto condemnation of sin, and unto salvation, service, doctrine, correction, and instruction. (2 Timothy 3:15-17)

Lover's of the Bible and Christ gladly die as martyrs. (Revelation 1:9; 3:8; 20:4)

(Continued on page 6)

PSYCHOLOGY OR HICKORY-OLOGY

WHICH IS THE BEST WAY TO "RAISE" CHILDREN?

Proverbs 23: 13-14 - This text gives the words of the wisest man the world has ever had, and they were dictated to him by the Holy Spirit. He had ample experience, as he had 700 wives, 500 concubines, and many, many children. (I Kings 11:3) J. Edgar Hoover, former head of F.B.I., said that the chief cause of crime in youth is the let-down of parental authority. The Bible affirms these words as true!

Children are undeveloped, foolish, and given to falsifying and disobedience. Humanism in psychology of today denies this, but God's Word affirms it.

- 1. Foolishness is bound up in the heart of children, Proverbs 22:15.
- 2. Children are without good judgment, Ecclesiastes 10:16; 11:9.
- 3. Children begin to tell falsehoods as soon as they are born, Psalm 58:3.
- 4. Children are born in sin, with desires inclined to evil, Psalm 51:5, and no human remedy can bring morally clean out of unclean, Job 14:4.
- 5. Children are inclined to do wrong because they have inherited the "germs" of Adamic sin, Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-4.

Psychology alone cannot produce obedience, therefore, the rod is needed. Humanism of today's psychology denies this, but again, God's Word affirms it.

- 1. Psychology appeals only to mind and heart, but the mind and heart are corrupt and depraved, Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 15:18-19.
- 2. Perfect obedience comes only through suffering, Hebrews 5:8; 2:10.
- 3. If children could be reared without punishment as the Bible teaches, then obedience would be without suffering and the Bible would be branded false by such teaching, 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21.
- 4. For "Hickory"-ology, or corporal punishment, and reproof must be inflicted on children because it gives wisdom, Proverbs 29:15.
- 5. For a child never punished bringeth shame, Proverbs 29:15.
- 6. For the rod of correction delivers children from Hell because it shows them that there is a wage for sin physically, so that they can learn it spiritually, too, Proverbs

23:14; Romans 6:23.
7. For he that spareth the rod hateth his child, Proverbs 13:24.

Some objections may be: *"I suggest and substitute things for my child."* A college professor of psychology did the same to try to get his child to go back to his house. His child said, "I don't want to, and I'm not going." Now who is in control in this scenario? Isaiah 3:12 is pretty clear what happens when children rule!

After a sermon, a lady came forward with her two children and said, "I have never whipped my two boys." As she left, a brother turned and said, "Maybe she hasn't, but God knows that they have needed whipping." Proverbs 29:15 is proven once again, that without doing things God's way, a mother will be brought to shame. Perhaps the mother doesn't know it, but everyone else will!

How may I train my child as the LORD would have me?

- 1. Set the right example before your child, Genesis 18:18-19; II Timothy 3:15.
- 2. Read the book of Proverbs frequently, memorizing it, and then practicing Proverbs 22:6; 13:24; 22:15; 23:13-14; Psalm 119:9.

Here are some practical suggestions:

- 1. To substitute psychology (secular science of mental health), pedagogy (teaching or instruction), or any other thing for the Bible command to chastise, is to deny the verbal inspiration of the Bible, 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
- 2. Parental chastening produces respect and reverence for the parents, Hebrews 12:9.
- 3. The great crime wave of youth is caused by failure of parents to obey the Bible command to chasten children, Proverbs 22:15; Proverbs 1:10-19.
- 4. The only way to stop the crime wave in youth is for parents to repent of disobediences of God's Word, use the rod of correction, establish a family altar in your home, and set the right example before your children. (II Chronicles 7:14; Jeremiah 6:16; Revelation 3:14-19; Psalm 19:7-12)



DECEIVE -- DECEIVING -- DECEPTION

Our text in **James 1:19-27**, deals with the danger of self-deception. Verse 22 says, "...deceiving your own selves". Verse 26 says, "...deceiveth his own heart...". If Satan deceives us, it is one thing, but if we deceive ourselves it is far more serious.

People may be self-deceived in several areas. They may be deceived about their salvation. "Many will say to me in that day, LORD, LORD, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7:22-23) They may be deceived about spiritual maturity concerning their Christian walk. Spiritual maturity is NOT an emotional state. Hallelujah! Spiritual maturity faces himself and his problems honestly from a Biblical perspective, trusting God for the answer.

James stated that we have three responsibilities toward God's Word that will guide us toward spiritual maturity. First of all, we need to RECEIVE THE WORD. (James 1:19-21) We should plant the Word of God in our lives. James calls God's Word the "engrafted word" or "implanted" word. Jesus, in the Parable of the Sower, compares God's Word to the seed and the human heart to the soil. God wants His Word implanted in our lives that it might bear fruit, therefore being a fruitful life. However, the Word of God cannot work in our lives unless we receive it in the right way. Jesus

not only said, "Take heed what ye hear:" Mark 4:24, but also said, "Take heed therefore how ye hear;" Luke 8:18. We must take heed of those things that will hinder our ability to listen to God. Too many people are in the tragic condition of being "dull of hearing". "...hearing they hear not, neither do they understand". (Matthew 13:13) They attend Bible classes and church, but never seem to grow spiritually.

Here are some instructions for receiving the Word. We must be attentive to God's Word. James 1: 19 says, "...swift to hear..." "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear". (Matthew 13:9) "...faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." (Romans 10:17) As the servant is quick to hear his master and the mother to hear her baby, we must be attentive to what God is trying to tell us. (Illustration: David was hiding from the Philistines at Bethlehem and thirsting for water from the well, he sighed, "Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem." (2 Samuel 23:15) Three of his men heard the King's sigh and risked their lives to bring him water. They were "swift to hear".)

We must also be slow to speak. (James 1:19) The fact that we have two ears and one mouth should illustrate this point! We are not to argue with the Word of God! Even if we don't do it audibly, we should make sure we are not doing it in our hearts and minds as well. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise." (Proverbs 10:19)

"He that hath knowledge spareth his words:" (Proverbs 17:27)

We must be slow to wrath. (James 1:19) Don't get angry at God or His Word because it reveals our sins. "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." (Proverbs 14:29) A quick temper is a sign of immaturity and spiritual conviction. (Illustration: David's reaction to Nathan's story of the "stolen ewe lamb." David became angry at the wrong person. When Nathan said, "Thou art the man," David finally confessed, "I have sinned.") Anger towards God's Word is just the opposite of the patience God wants to produce in our lives. (James 1:20) Many church fights are the result of short tempers and hasty words. An angry spirit is the wrong climate for spiritual growth.

One must prepare their heart to receive the Word. (James 1:21) God tells us He wants us to "weed" our spiritual garden. There are some things He wants to plant there, and also some things He wants to be plucked out. If left to itself, the garden of our lives will only produce weeds. "Lay apart all filthiness." Get rid of the filth and dirty things in our lives which will hinder the growth of God's Word in our lives. "Superfluity of naughtiness" speaks of the rampant (overflowing) outgrowth of wickedness. Every form of uncleanness, whether in thought, word, or deed, must be rooted out of the Christians' life.

How do we prepare the soil of our hearts

for God's Word? Confess our sin and ask forgiveness. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) We must have an attitude of meekness, not rebellion. We must accept God's Word! Do not argue with it, nor try to twist it to conform to your own way of thinking. Let God plow the hardness of your heart. "For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns." (Jeremiah 4:3)

Our next responsibility is to PRACTICE THE WORD. (James 1:22-25) Hearing the Word of God is not enough. We must do it! (James 1:22) Hearing the Word does not make you spiritual! It is the doing that brings blessings. If you think you are spiritual because you hear the Word, (have Bible knowledge), but never put it into practice, then you are only deceiving yourself. James compares the Word to a mirror. (James 1:23-25) The purpose of a mirror is self-examination, to see if you are neat and clean, or to make corrections. God's Word shows our natural face. It shows us as we really are.

James lists several mistakes people make as they look into God's mirror. They merely glance at themselves. We need to take a long hard look at ourselves as we meditate on God's Word and not just a " cursory" reading. These looks are much like the difference between a candid photo and an x-ray. They forget what they see. If they

were looking deeply enough, the sight would be unforgettable! Isaiah cried after his vision of God, "Woe is me! For I am undone" (Isaiah 6:5) Peter cried out at the glorious power of Jesus, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O, LORD." (Luke 5:8)

They fail to obey what the Word tells them to do. They think that hearing is the same as doing, and it's not! You cannot substitute hearing and talking, for doing! Only as we practice the Word of God are we blessed. This is why some miss out on blessings. A passing glance will not work! We must examine ourselves, and then continue on and put this knowledge into practice. Clean up what we see! It is examination then restoration. King David saw from the Word, obeyed in repentance, then was restored by forgiveness and cleansing of sin. The Word of God is the perfect law of liberty, but we are only set free as we obey. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32) There are three ministries of the Word: Examination, Restoration, and Transformation. After the LORD restores us, He wants to change us. "... be ye transformed (metamorphosis) by the renewing of your mind." (Romans 12:2) (Illustration: An ugly worm turns into a beautiful butterfly.)


Our last responsibility is to SHARE THE WORD! (James 1:26-27) Pure religion has nothing to do with ceremonies, temples, or

special days. Some have a vain or useless religion. It has no effect on their lives; it doesn't do anything. They do not live by the Word of God.

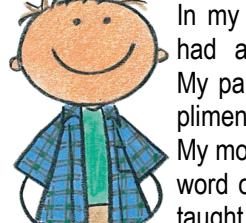
There are three areas of our lives which detect whether we have pure or vain religion. Our speech is the first. (James 1:26) A deceived Christian is one who cannot control his tongue. (not slow to speak) It is the tongue that reveals the heart. By his speech, he reveals that religion did him no good, that is, his vain religion. (James 2:14-16) Secondly, is our service. (James 1:27) After seeing ourselves, we must see others and their needs. Words are no substitutes for deeds of love or benevolence. (James 2:14-16) Lastly, separation from the world shows what our religion is. (James 1:27) The term "world" refers to the "society without God". The world wants to "spot" the Christian and to defile him. Note the progression in our relationship to the world: First, we have a "friendship of the world". (James 4:4) Second, this develops into a "love for the world". (1 John 2:15-17) Third, we are then, "conformed to the world". (Romans 12: 1-2) This results in being "condemned with the world". (1 Corinthians 11:32) (Illustration: Lot lost all he lived for.)

The conclusion asks this question. Are you just kidding, or deceiving, yourself when you say that you are a Christian? "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

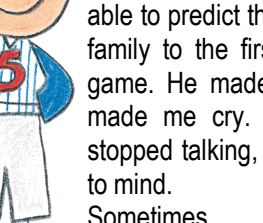
ENCHANTING STRANGER



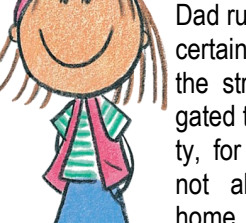
A few months before I was born, my dad met a stranger who was new to our small Tennessee town. From the beginning, Dad was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer, and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted, and was around to welcome me into the world a few months later. As I grew up, I never questioned his place in my family.



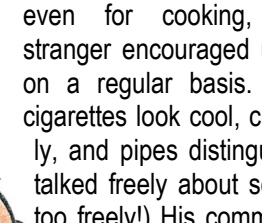
In my young mind, he had a special niche. My parents were complimentary instructors. My mom taught me the word of God, and Dad taught me to obey it. But the stranger, he was our "storyteller". He would keep us spellbound for hours on end with adventures, mysteries, and comedies. If I wanted to know anything about politics, history, or science, he always knew the answers about the past, understood the present, and even seemed



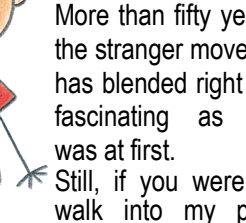
able to predict the future! He took my family to the first major league ball game. He made me laugh, and he made me cry. The stranger never stopped talking, but Dad didn't seem to mind. Sometimes Mom would get up quietly while the rest of us were shushing each other to listen to what he had to say. She would go to her room and read her books. (I wonder now if she ever prayed for the stranger to leave?)



Dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions, but the stranger never felt obligated to honor them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our home...not from us, our friends, or visitors. Our long time visitor, however, got away with four-letter words that burned my ears and made my dad squirm and my mother blush. My dad was a teetotaler who didn't permit alcohol in the home, not



even for cooking, but the stranger encouraged us to try it on a regular basis. He made cigarettes look cool, cigars manly, and pipes distinguished. He talked freely about sex. (Much too freely!) His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing. I now know that my early concepts about relationships were influenced strongly by the stranger. Time after time, he opposed the values of my parents, yet he was seldom rebuked, seldom silenced, and NEVER asked to leave.



More than fifty years have passed since the stranger moved in with our family. He has blended right in and is not nearly as fascinating as he was at first. Still, if you were to walk into my parents' den today, you would still find him sitting over in his corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and draw his pictures. His name? We just call him TV.

