

FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

ANCIENT ANSWERS TO MODERN QUESTIONS

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Thanks

By Shayn McMurray, Tulsa, Oklahoma

In 1990 at the age of twenty-nine I was diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy (M.D.). I went to a Neurologist and he had a biopsy taken to identify which form of M.D. I had. The Neurologist said it was Myotonic Dystrophy and it was not life threatening but I would have to learn to do things differently.

Myotonic Dystrophy is the most common adult form of M.D. This disease is the progressive wasting of voluntary muscles and a delayed relaxation after constriction. It is a hereditary disorder affecting a variety of cell types. Some experts think it is a disease of the cell membranes.

About fifty percent of patients show visible signs of the disorder by about twenty years of age, but a significant number do not develop clear cut symptoms until after age fifty. There is a less common form that can occur in infancy.

The first muscles that are affected are in the face, neck, hands, forearms, and the feet, unlike other dystrophies that effect the hips and shoulders first. Early in the disease process weakness and wasting of the muscles in the face, and jaws plus frontal balding in men gives your face a characteristic hatch look.

Other problems that can be associated with Myotonic Dystrophy are cardiac disease, cataracts, testicular atro-

phy, respiratory impairment, and an adverse reaction to anesthesia. It also involves a difficulty in swallowing (dysphagial), and other gastrointestinal tract problems, mental disorders (including mental retardation), excessive output of insulin, an abnormal carbohydrate metabolism, and excessive sleeping.

One of the more troublesome symptoms can be the inability to release your hand from a grip. The older a person is when muscle weakness is first noticed the slower the progression, and less serious the consequences. There are some people with the disorder whose symptoms are so mild they hardly even know anything is wrong, and whatever muscle weakness they experience they take for granted and learn to adapt to it.

For the most part, weakness and wasting slowly progress to a point of some disability, and move beyond the muscles that were first affected to involve the hips, shoulders, and thighs.

Even people with a mild case of Myotonic Dystrophy can pass a serious case of the disease to their children. Children of people with this disease have a fifty-fifty chance of getting Myotonic Dystrophy.

I have to remember that there are limitations to what I can and cannot do.

I use my wheel chair when I go places other than home and this solves

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E-mail the Churches of God
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some of the problems that I might encounter. I can count on my family for support and help. This disease is a trial on my family and me.

II Thessalonians 1:4-5 — So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer” (KJV).

God helps us endure trials and tribulations so we can mature spiritually, and build character.

My parents were baptized in 1970. I went to church with them for about twelve years and then I stopped going. I did not go to church for thirteen years. In 1993 I got anointed for M.D. and started back to church. I knew that I had to change the way I had been living and needed God’s help and healing because I could not get through this alone.

“God helps us endure trials and tribulations so we can mature spiritually, and build character.”

In the fall of 1994, I made a commitment to God and Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior and was baptized.

Proverbs 22:6 — “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (KJV).

At baptism I received God’s Holy Spirit which helps me to have a better understanding of the Bible. In the Bible we can learn about God and Jesus Christ and how to

live our lives by following the examples of Jesus Christ

I Peter 2:21 — “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (KJV).

Even though I have Myotonic Dystrophy, I have a lot to be

“Because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness; where of He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead.”

thankful for. I am thankful for the support of God and my family (I have 17 family members who go to church with me.) I’m thankful that I live in America where we have freedom of religion. I am thankful for God’s blessings. The most important thing that I am thankful for is that Jesus Christ died for our sins and became our Savior.

God has blessed America and as a nation and a people, we need to turn back to God and repent.

“Because he hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness; where of He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

Each and every one of us has something to be thankful for and we should give thanks to God every day.

Receive God's Blessing

by Maxine Kapple, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

If you have never attended the Feast of Tabernacles you are missing out on a tremendous blessing from God. I have been keeping the feast since I began attending The Worldwide Church of God in 1970. Back then I was a single mother with three young children ages 6, 7, and 10. I remember our first feast like it was yesterday.

We were living in Chicago, Illinois at the time. The nearest feast site was nearly 500 miles away at Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri. That first year my children, my parents and I headed south for eight days with \$600 and a gas credit card in our pockets. It was an exercise in faith to say the least.

Before leaving Chicago, the children and I had checked into things to do at Lake of the Ozarks. We made a list of all the activities available. Then I had each of the children sit down and make their own list of the things they wanted to do the most. I then compiled another list from the top two choices on each child’s lists and we all agreed on an order to do the activities chosen. We knew that we probably wouldn’t get to do everything, because of the shortage of funds, but would at least get to do one thing each of the children had chosen to do at the feast.

When we arrived in Missouri we found a nice, clean motel with a 2-bedroom kitchenette which the children and I shared with my parents. We bought some groceries and fixed most of our meals in the room, eating one meal each day at a nice restaurant. On the days that there were two services we ate the meals served on the grounds by the Ambassador College students. By cooking most of our meals and eating meals served by the church, we were able to save

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"Stop, Look, & Listen"

By Ann Adkins, Tulsa, Oklahoma

We hear so much, but we listen so little. As a child I remember my Father reading his newspaper as I would sit talking to him. After a few "uh-huhs" from him, it was apparent that my Father *heard*, but he was not listening. How often throughout the Bible did God's people hear Him speak, but refused to listen? God longs to speak to us and we need to listen and learn.

Two years ago I awoke with a severe headache, suddenly blinded and unable to see. On the way to the hospital I was cold, afraid, and wondering, "Why?" and "GOD, DO YOU LOVE ME?" My sight returned but the agonizing headache lingered as I endured numerous tests to uncover the cause of this affliction. As tears fell upon my face, Psalm 91:14 and 15 came into my thoughts:

"Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him."

This was my cry and deepest prayer to my God! After the test results came in, four doctors entered my room. I listened as my doctor told my husband that I had received a "full-blown" **STROKE!** He said, "Your wife should not be

able to walk or talk, *SOMEONE, has had his hands on her.*"

One of the attending sisters who works at the hospital visited me one day. I asked her, "Do you ever wonder if God loves you?" As the sister moved a chair by my bedside and held my hand she replied "Do you love God?" she continued as I affirmed, "The next time you read Psalm 91, substitute your own name for the word "him" and reread the chapter." What I learned was how my own understanding and practice of love needed to grow. After several weeks I returned to my position as a nurse. One morning I was talking to the head nurse trying to convey my sense of bewilderment in understanding *why* I had received this stroke.

The head nurse replied, "Ann, when a trial or affliction befalls us, God wants us to stop, look, and listen."

In I Samuel 3 we read how Samuel followed Eli's advice and prayed to the Lord, "*Speak; for thy servant heareth.*" Like Samuel, we long to hear God speaking to us, but we are unable to discern His voice.

Today God speaks to us by His Spirit through His precious Word, other people, and our own circumstances. We should set a time to read God's Word every day! Meditating on what we have read and *Stop, Look and LISTEN.*

"Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, was blind and now I see."

(Continued from page 2 - **God's Blessing**)

some of our money for other things.

We met a lot of wonderful people at the feast that first year. The fellowship we enjoyed was uplifting and inspiring. The children and I made some new friends and were even able to take them out to dinner couple of times.

The amazing, miraculous part of this story is that I knew, from the beginning, how much money we had when we left Chicago to attend the feast in Missouri. When we added up all the money that we had spent at the Feast we found we had spent more than what we had left Chicago with, plus we had money left over! There is no way that could have happened without God's intervention.

The lesson of that first feast has stayed with me over the years. My family and I knew that because we had done what God required of us, He had stretched our meager savings beyond our imaginations. It was a true lesson to us how God blesses us when we do what He expects and commands us to do.

Are you looking forward to the Feast of Tabernacles in 1998? Are you making plans to attend or are you feeling like there is just no way you can go?

There is always an abundance of excuses available (i.e. not enough money, no transportation, can't get time off from work, etc.)

You have heard the saying, "Where there is a will there is a way." If you truly have the will, God will make a way! Even if you can't see the way at first, step out on faith. God won't let you fall when you are doing what He has told you to do.

You may be required to make some sacrifices to attend the feast but it will be well worth whatever sacrifices you might have to make. I know it will be nothing compared to the sacrifice God made for us -- His son.

Plan now to attend the feast and rejoice and receive God's blessing!

The Quest for Eternal Life

A series by Charles Pope, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

How Physical Life Begins

A tiny cell, about the size of the pointed end of a small sewing needle, travelling with millions of other cells produced with it, to an environment prepared for it, unites with another similar type of cell which is one of many produced every 28 days over a life span of about 40 years. The two cells become one single cell attached to a protected area. The single cell instantly begins to divide, subdivide, and grow from one single cell to about 60 trillion cells which is about the size of an average human being! With 10 billion of these cells, which make up your brain, you were able to see and understand what you just read. Your existence and awareness of it is truly a miracle! Ecclesiastes 9:

“With 10 billion of these cells, which make up your brain, you were able to see and understand what you just read. Your existence and awareness of it is truly a miracle!”

7-11 tells us that time and chance are how we came to be in this physical body. Remember, time is a non-spacial continuum in which events occur in irre-

versible succession from the past, through the present and to the future. Time for us is counted by each complete rotation of the earth. Time is relative to where we are when the rotation of the earth causes us to see changes in the light to dark and vice-versa. Chance is the abstract nature shared by unexpected, random, or unpredictable events.

Life is so precious to us and should be guarded with care and respect. This can help ensure that our purpose for existence can eventually be fulfilled! The premeditated destruction of this body by death caused by others or by self-destruction virtually goes against the very creative process God has designed into it for existence. The Bible says in the book of

Ecclesiastics that, “time and chance happens to the sons of men.” Jesus, when he referred to the mass death of many people when a tower at a place called Siloam, collapsed on them, said they were no worse sinners than others who continue to live. They were just at the wrong place at the wrong time! How can we as physical human beings get an edge on time and chance? Circumstance!

We can allow circumstance to become a part of our life. That circumstance is the recognition of and belief in Jesus Christ! Who He was before He became a physical human being, what His mission was while He was here on this earth, and what He is doing to insure our existence on into the future. When we accept Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, experience the waters of baptism, and receive the Holy Spirit from God, we become the begotten “sons of God” and that gives us an edge on just being the “sons of men.” Commitment to Christ can give us the edge on just time and chance and its effect on your life.

To be continued . . .

“I will meditate also of all Thy work, and talk of Thy doings.”

When Christ spoke to the people concerning what we call the “Beatitudes.” He concluded His lesson with a peculiar statement. He said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled” (Matt 5:17-18).

Many argue over this passage of scripture — some in support of God’s commandments and holy days, and others against the blind obedience of the law which cannot

save a single soul. In the end, we are still faced with the fact that Christ made it plain He did not intend to destroy the law. To understand this scripture I believe we have to take a look at some other words of Jesus and tie them in together. Before we do that however, let us refresh ourselves about some of the names for Jesus.

In Revelation we find that Jesus told John He is the first and the last, the *Alpha and Omega*, the beginning and the end. We know that Jesus was at the beginning (John 1:1, 14) and that He is

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Making A Difference One At A Time

By Patrick Dennis, Coffeyville, Kansas

There is a story about a young man who was walking down a deserted Mexican beach at sunset. As he walked along, he began to see another man in the distance.

As he grew nearer he noticed that the local native kept leaning down, picking something up, and throwing it out into the water. Time and again he kept hurling things out into the ocean.

As the young man approached even closer, he noticed that the man was picking up starfish that had washed up onto the beach, and one at a time, he was throwing them back into the ocean.

The young man was puzzled. He approached the man and said, "Good evening friend, I was wondering what are you doing?" And he replied, "I'm throwing these starfish back into the ocean. You see, it's low tide right now and all these starfish have been washed up onto the shore. If I don't throw them back into the sea, they will die from the lack of oxygen."

"I understand," my friend replied, "but there must be thousands of starfish on this beach and you couldn't possibly get to all of them. There are simply too many and don't you realize that this is happening on hundreds of beaches up and down this coast . . . can't you see that you can't possibly make a difference? The local na-

tive smiled, bent down, picked up yet another starfish and as he threw it back out into the sea, he replied, "It made a difference to that one!"

When we read in Matthew 28:19 where Jesus tells us to, "Go you therefore, and teach all nations, and baptize them teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," does that seem daunting to you? Does it seem like an almost overwhelming responsibility? Thankfully no one of us is charged with the total responsibility for fulfilling Matthew 28:19. However, God is looking for intercessors, people who will make a difference in the lives of others.

Just like the man in the story above who understood that he was making a difference one starfish at a time, we need to understand that we can make a difference in the lives of people all around us one life at a time.

Television programs and radio programs have their place and can be very effective but they cannot replace that one-on-one experience where there is an interpersonal exchange between you and another human being. It could be something as simple as offering someone a booklet on a subject you tell them you found interesting and thought they

might also. As the millennium approaches many people are beginning to think about some of the larger issues of life.

God inspired the prophet Isaiah to write about a man God was searching for, a man who would intercede or make a difference in the lives of those He loved. Isaiah writes in chapter 59 verse 16 ... "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. Verse 17 ... For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak."

This passage is speaking about the Savior Jesus Christ who brought salvation and righteousness to humanity. We are to represent that same kind of salvation and righteousness to the world and put on that same kind of armor as Paul tells us in Ephesians 6.

The Churches of God Outreach Ministries, who sponsors the Fountain of Life Magazine, has many free booklets available on the great spiritual questions of life. We invite you to send for these booklets. Multiple copies are even available so that you may begin making a difference in someone else's life. God is looking for intercessors. Put on your armor and join us, making a difference one life at a time.

**To request additional materials and information please write to us at:
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"The local native smiled, bent down, picked up yet another starfish and as he threw it back out into the sea, he replied, "It made a difference to that one!"

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the end. You may be surprised to find that in the Old Testament there is a similar phrase or word used as a title of Jesus. This phrase has the same meaning as the Greek Alpha and Omega only in Hebrew it is Aleph and Tau (Pronounced Toff).

Jesus has always been, since the beginning, and will be here at the end. Some fascinating images appear when we use this knowledge as a kind of biblical magnifying glass.

The answer to our initial question, of did Christ destroy the law, is found in Psalm 119. Psalm 119 is broken up into 22 sections- each for a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, each section or stanza contains eight verses each.

If we look closely at the first eight verses under the section entitled "Aleph" we can see a strong emphasis on the observance of God's commandments.

But notice something else as we read on to verse 9. Each verse uses a different word to describe "Commandments." One verse will say "statutes," and then another verse will say "testimonies" and another "word" (verse 9).

Throughout this Psalm we can read of the benefits of keeping all of God's commandments. The beginning of this Psalm starts with

Jesus - Aleph - and ends with Jesus - Tau. It would seem that Jesus *is* the Word or the commandments or the statutes of God. He is the very living word of God. We can then take this thought to its fullest extent to see that if Christ is the embodiment of God's commandments then we should also be the embodiment of God's commandments.

In conclusion, let us take a look at Psalm 119 verse 9 again. "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word." This is a remarkable statement, it seems to surmise that rather than "grace" it is taking heed or *acting* upon the commandments of God that saves us from sin ". . . to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16). But how can this be the case since we know what Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:8? He said that grace is the gift of God by which we are saved. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Well, let us look closer with our scriptural magnifying glass.

If Christ is the embodiment of God's law and the embodi-

ment of God's grace "so as to create in himself one new man from the two, thus making peace," (Ephesians 2:15) then we are saved not by works, but by grace that we might perform that which Christ

The PSALMS

Translated into modern English by
Adrian Steinfert,
Voorburg, Holland.

PSALM 1

It is not recommendable to get along with people who do not do their utmost to live in the way that God wants us to behave. Valuable and useful are God's Words, they are an outstanding means to protect us against temptation. They are stimulation to good works. May God always work in this way in our hearts so that God's final judgment in His mercy and mildness may be our blessed part.

PSALM 2

Many people who are not educated in Jesus Christ have a prejudice against our Mediator. Usually they despise Him and resist Him. Nevertheless ultimately all people shall have to deal with Him. Those who have learned to know Him now already, have to try to submit themselves completely to Him. Happy are they who look for protection in the Name of Jesus Christ.

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