

FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

ANCIENT ANSWERS TO MODERN QUESTIONS

Volume 1, Issue 2

Spring 1997

Take Heed That No Man Deceive You

By Barnabas Grayson, Eufaula, Oklahoma

Jesus Christ said, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:4-5).

We live in an age of many Christian movements. From simple operations to huge television productions of religious show-biz, one can pick up just about anything. And Jesus said it would be that way with many preaching Him as though having His authority. Many will even do great works but will be woefully disappointed when Christ says, "I never knew you."

Many will say to Jesus in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And . . . done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22-23). Thus we are warned to beware.

Beware of evil fruit. "Ye shall know them by their fruits," Jesus said in Matthew 7:16. A corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit; this is, hurtful, malicious or vicious fruit as seen in Matthew 7:18.

Jesus compares the fruit of false prophets to thorns and thistles. Thorns and thistles wound. Spiritually, such fruit does not provoke love, but bitterness, malice, and intolerance towards others such as is found in the rhetoric of some hate groups.

"The spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits . . . speaking lies in hypocrisy. ." (I Timothy 4:1).

But, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another" (John 13:35). They will not be promoting hate, lawlessness, how to make bombs, or use arms in some kind of faithless effort. A good tree does not produce evil fruit.

Beware of bold prophecy. Such statements lure many. In one publication, years ago, a writer wrote that the U.S. was to be attacked in May of 1988 and that Jesus would return on the Feast of Trumpets 1994. His proclamation never came to pass. Such predictions have often broken the would-be prophet, no matter how sincere they may have been. Unlike many prophets of the Bible, such as Jonah or Amos, false prophets are presumptuous.

Therefore, "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken, but the prophet has spoken it presumptuously: Thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:22).

Beware of strange doctrines. They usually accompany false prophets. Once a person becomes intrigued by such doctrines, it is easy to be indoctrinated with different slants on scripture.

(Continued on page 2 - **Take Heed**)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

TAKE HEED THAT NO MAN DECEIVE YOU

By Barnabas Grayson

COMMITMENT

By Roger Armer

WHICH DITCH?

Spiritual Comparisons

I WILL MEDITATE ALSO OF ALL THY WORK AND TALK OF THY DOINGS

By Editorial Staff

A NEW CREATURE

By Maynard L. Kappel

VISIT OUR WEB SITE

www.design.tulsa.net/life

E-mail the Churches Of
God Information Center at
Hufton5@gower.net

(Continued from page 1 - **Take Heed**)

Soon, some become bold in proselytizing.

Generally, within any group, beliefs are basically the same. But some divide those beliefs by bringing opposing ideas, taking advantage of a church's liberty; working in sheep's clothing but, inwardly, are ravening wolves, not sparing the flock; testing the convictions of others, not knowing sometimes, that they themselves are being tested. It's too bad, but Christ does say to beware because such will come.

Christians should not fear to raise an eyebrow at so-called **new truth**. There is to come a falling away. And being on guard is only prudent! *"And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily (covertly) to spy out our liberty which we have in Jesus Christ, that they might bring us into bondage; to whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you"* (Galatians 2:5). Paul did not

"Instability in faith may bring about susceptibility to outside influences. . . a Christian may become tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."

put up with such for very long. The only bondage we should be in is to Christ and not some man or another gospel.

Beware of self-proclaimed prophets. One can eventually detect whether their ministry is vainly inspired or divinely inspired by their fruit. It may not be easy right away, but if they preach contrary to the doctrine of Christ (Hebrews 6) or if they preach the

breaking of the law through grace, or the doing away of the fourth commandment, for example, beware!

The apostle Paul said, *"Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ"* (II Corinthians 11:13). So, beware of those who have somehow given themselves the position and boast as one sent from God.

Beware of personal weaknesses. Instability in faith may bring about susceptibility to outside influences. It is good for brethren to dwell in unity but any number of things may bring about disunity -- the failings of others, disappointments, envies, or perceived wrongs among fellow saints. Often it is resentment that allows a root of bitterness to take hold.

Consequently, a Christian may become tossed to and fro, and carried about (turned around) with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive (Ephesians 4:14). *"Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast (fellowship) with you. . . beguiling unstable souls; a heart they have exercised with covetous practices..."* II Peter 2:13-14.

A saint should be *"holding fast, the faithful word because there are many...deceivers, especially they of the circumcision"* (Titus 1:10-11). For sound doctrine the Bible is our guide (Hebrews 6; II Timothy 3:16).

Beware of vain traditions. If one must follow a man, follow him as he follows Christ. But beware if he or she deviates. The

scriptures are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. Anything apart from the Word of God is to deny the authority of His Word! (John 17:17). Support for doctrine outside the Word of God

"The scriptures are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. Anything apart from the Word of God is to deny the authority of His Word!"

can be contrary to scripture and based upon human tradition.

Concerning tradition, for example, Jesus not only called the Pharisees hypocrites, but lawbreakers as well. He said they were full of hypocrisy and iniquity. To those preferring tradition over God's commandment, Jesus said, *"Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition"* (Mark 7:9). Then he cited their breaking of the commandment concerning honoring mother and father, "Making the word of God of none effect."

In John 7:19 Christ said, *"Did not Moses give you the law, and none of you keepeth the law?"* "In vain," he said, *"they worship me."* Jesus set the example. A Christian cannot go wrong in following Christ (I Peter 2:21).

Finally, a Christian should not be easily persuaded. In a multitude of counselors there is safety. Prayer and study are vital; so is faith that God's Spirit will guide into all truth.

The apostle Paul marveled that the Galatians were so soon removed from God and the grace of Christ unto another gospel. Some gospels are after man, but the

(Continued on page 6 - **Take Heed**)

Commitment

By Roger Armer, Kansas City, Missouri

Listen to a popular call-in show on the radio. The subject matter is basically inter-personal relationships. Many times men or women will call in with problems dealing with their live-in mates. They, the callers, will refer to this arrangement as a committed relationship, but the host will quickly interrupt and correct them, telling them that they don't really have a "committed" relationship but are merely "shacking up". These responses from the host only further my opinion that anything worthwhile comes with responsibilities and to take on these responsibilities requires commitment.

I know a little about commitment. I have been married to my spouse for more than 24 years. Though it has not always been smooth sailing, we have stuck it out together, reminded of the vows we took those years ago. I have stood with my wife through bad times and she has stood by me. By doing this, it has only strengthened the bond, trust, and love between us. That commitment we made to each other years ago still holds true today.

I have worked for the same company for more than 19 years. And though it sounds like I'm tooting my horn, I only use this example to point out the need in our lives to commit ourselves to good. My attitude toward my employer is this: As long as I am employed there I will work with the highest possible commitment to the quality and quantity of work I produce. Also, to give loyalty to the company I work for and at times to go

above what is required, taking that extra step. This all works out for the good for me as I can go to sleep at night knowing I gave my best.

So, what is the point? Just this; if we are to call ourselves "Christians" and expect to be blessed in our spiritual lives, we need to commit ourselves to following our Savior's examples. If we do this we are promised eternal life.

"If we are to call ourselves Christians and expect to be blessed in our spiritual lives, we need to commit ourselves to following our Savior's examples."

"To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" (Romans 2:7 KJV).

Talk is cheap. If I tell my wife that I love her and then beat her or commit adultery, does that show love or commitment? It is the same with our Lord. If we say, "Lord we love you" and do not keep His commandments, what should we expect in return?

"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring

forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 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 7:16-23 KJV).

"And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity" (Luke 13:22-27 KJV).

These scriptures are some of the few that scare me. Will I do the right thing? Will Christ tell me

(Continued on page 6 - Commitment)

Which Ditch?

For some people, the admonition to keep God's laws and commandments brings them out in hives. For them, the Law was nailed to the tree, love or grace now abounds. Others seek to gain salvation through their over zealous application of God's commandments. Both sides jump into a ditch, not realizing that they have jumped into the same ditch! God is both Law and Love, Gracious and Just, Reproving and Forgiving.

GOD IS . . .

HOLY - Psalm 145:17 The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

LOVE - I John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

PERFECT - Matthew 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

SPIRITUAL - John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

RIGHTEOUS - Psalm 145:17 The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

TRUTH - Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

GOOD - Psalm 25:8 Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners the way.

JUST - Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

LIGHT - I John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

EVERLASTING - Genesis 21:33 And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.

GOD'S LAW IS . . .

HOLY - Romans 7:12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good.

LOVE - Romans 13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

PERFECT - Psalm 19:7 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

SPIRITUAL - Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

RIGHTEOUS - Psalm 119:172 My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.

TRUTH - Psalm 119:142 Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.

GOOD - I Timothy 1:8 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully.

JUST - Romans 7:12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

LIGHT - Proverbs 6:23 For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.

EVERLASTING - Psalm 111:7-8 The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commands are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.

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

The relentless urgency in which our world races for the next "new thing" leaves many exhausted and confused. Technology antiquates itself almost daily and people have less and less time for anything other than zipping through their fast paced and high-tech lives. Where does one look to find something enduring?

The wonderful words of life spoken by Jesus Christ are timeless. They are as relevant today as when they were spoken by Him when He walked among his creation. They are truly "Ancient Answers to Modern Questions."

One example of the timelessness of His teaching is found in the 2nd chapter of the Gospel of Mark in verses 21 and 22:

"No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; otherwise the patch pulls away from it, the new from

the old, and a worse tear results.

And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and the skins as well; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins."(NASB)

In this lesson, Jesus presents for us the results of enjoining the old with the new of certain *physical* items. The Apostle Paul adds insight to the depth of Christ's words in his second epistle to the Corinthians; verse 17 of chapter 5 explains:

"Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."


In Romans 6 and verse 6 Paul contrasts this "newness of life" to the "old self of sin".

"Knowing this, that our old self

was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin"(NASB).

To walk in the newness of life through Jesus Christ (Romans 6:4) and follow Him, we as disciples of Jesus must be transformed by the *renewing* of our minds (Romans 12:2). By becoming new in Him we are to leave the old behind. Not by simply adding a small "portion" of the *newness* in Christ Jesus to our *old self*, nor housing this *newness* in the "skin" of the *old self*.

We must put away all things that are opposed and contrary to our Savior Jesus Christ and His words of life. Not by our own power however, only in the power of Jesus our Savior.

Until next time: "...Meditate on His work...and talk of His Doings!" 

A New Creature

By Maynard M. Kappel, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Signs of Spring are all around us once again. Some signs I do enjoy seeing are the newborn calves and leggy foals running with endless energy, exploring a new and intriguing world around them. How fresh and energetic new life is. Seemingly, there is something that affects us when we see new life. What is it that moves us in this particular way? Could it be the unspotted cleanness of these new creatures? Unfortunately, in our lives this freshness and energy are all too often missing. As we progress through life, we accumulate "battle scars" which take the form of burdens we bear. Some of the greatest burdens someone can carry are those caused by guilt over past mistakes, wrong decisions made, human weaknesses, etc. (The list could go on and on). Do you see yourself described here? Have you lost the joy and excitement that **should** be there? Are you someone that needs a **new** start, someone whose burdens are getting heavy to bear?

The Bible is a book that deals with new beginnings. This vitally important fact is what I want to share with you. Many of you are familiar with the first book of the Bible, Genesis. The word Genesis is a Hebrew word meaning "beginnings". This book deals with, among other subjects, the **re-creation** of the physical world. But you see, this re-creation did not stop here in Genesis. God is not interested in just re-fashioning or re-creating, a physical creation.

He is doing something vastly more important. God is in the process of re-fashioning and re-creating, through Jesus Christ (*Hebrews 2:10*), a family for Himself, an eternal family which can include you!

The Apostle Paul wrote:

"God is in the process of re-fashioning and re-creating, through Jesus Christ, a family for Himself, an eternal family which can include you!"

*"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a **new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new**" (II Corinthians 5:17, KJV).*

The word translated "new" means something that has never existed before. A new creation! Realize this: Something that is new has no past! It is as if the person you were, everything you have done, every mistake, every human weakness given into is like it never happened! They are, as Paul states, **passed away**. Yes, it's true, you can start all over, you can be "re-created" through Jesus Christ.

As mentioned previously, guilt over what we have done in our lives is indeed a heavy burden to bear. In addition,

this guilt can also prevent us from going to the source that can make us a "New Creature". Have you ever listened to that little voice inside that tells you that "you've gone too far" and God won't ever listen to you? Well don't! If you are willing to humbly go before your Heavenly

Father in heartfelt repentance, He will listen.

Psalm 103 is very meaningful to me in revealing the Heavenly Father I have come to know and love.

"For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust" (Psalm 103:11-14).

Someone tell me. Just how high is the heaven above the earth or how far is the east from the west? That's how far our Heavenly Father has removed our transgressions from us. He also knows how weak and frail you and I are, that we are just so much "dirt" walking around down here, with all the pulls and weaknesses that go with this earthen vessel.

"Much of the heartache we experience in our lives occurs as a result of not remembering God's commandments"

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep His covenant, and to those

that remember His commandments to do them" (Psalm 103:17-18).

Much of the heartache we experience in our lives occurs as a result of not remembering God's commandments, which tell us the way to live so we can have the joy and happiness we so desire.

(Continued on page 6 - New)

(Continued from page 2 - **Take Heed**)

gospel Paul was taught, was by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:6-12). A Christian should let God be true and every man a liar when it comes to believing God or man; scripture or tradition.

Conclusion - Christ said deception would come (Matthew 7:15-23; Jude 4). Some will even say they know where Jesus is, but we are told to believe it not! (Matthew 24:23-26). Instead, we are to **hold fast** the profession of faith (Hebrews 10:23) and "**Let no man take thy crown**" (Revelation 3:11).

The fruits of God's Holy Spirit should be working in a Christian; following peace with all men because God loves His children and would have all be saved. But we must be wise as serpents. And, as the woman at the well said to Christ, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet" we should look to Jesus Christ the same way. Then, we won't be so easily deceived. FL

(Continued from page 3 - **Commitment**)

to go away and that He doesn't know me? I hope not, but it is up to **me** to do His will, and strive for that straight gate. That takes commitment! And with commitment comes sacrifice.

Our sacrifice is quite small compared to that of our Savior and the Father.

Think about it. Would you be willing to have your son or daughter murdered to save the lives of sinners of all kinds? This is exactly what the Father did. John 3:16 is an often used scripture. However if one sits down and ponders the deep meaning of the true commitment and sacrifice made for mankind, it is so humbling, how can we not say, "Yes Lord your will be done"?

So husbands and wives, commit yourselves to each other, your children, family, and friends. But commit yourselves to doing the will of our Father and that of our Savior. You will be blest! FL

(Continued from page 5 - **New**)

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Philippians 3:13).

Life is a series of events leading to perfection. I'm not there yet, not by a long shot!. I do know however that my Heavenly Father removes my transgressions as "far as the east is from the west" each time I go to Him in prayer and ask for forgiveness. I don't have to carry my burdens with me. I can just leave them there and reach forth to those things which are before. I can go forward with my life as God wants me to. I am reminded, like the Apostle Paul said, that I am a new creature, fresh and clean.

How about you? Are you ready to lay down your burdens and become the "New Creature" your Heavenly Father wants you to be? FL

Writer's Comment and Clarification

A clarification is required for the article "Of Making Many Books There is No End" (*Fountain of Life*, Volume 1 Issue 1). On pages 5 and 6 I stated that the disciples were gathered "*upon one of the Sabbaths*" and that this phrase is a direct reference to Pentecost. I was not inferring that this meeting took place on Pentecost. Secondly, I state that the disciples were gathered on day one of the fifty days culminating in Pentecost. This is an error. In Acts 20:7, the phrase translated "first *day* of the week" refers to the disciples being gathered on a Saturday evening during the 7 weeks between Passover and Pentecost. I apologize for this oversight and appreciate those "Bereans" who brought this to my attention.

Love in Christ, Ron Willhoite.

Published by the Churches of God

Provided by:

For further information and literature, you can contact us at any of the addresses shown below:

The Churches of God
Information Center
RR 2 Box 114
Hawkins, Texas
USA 75765
or call toll-free:
1-800-611-8080

Churches of
God, UK
PO Box 2525
LINCOLN
LN5 7BR
England,
Great Britain

Churches of
God, Canada
639 Grand
Avenue West,
Ste. 521
Chatham,
Ontario, N7L 1C5

Churches of God
Australia
100 Northcote
Street
Aberdare
New South Wales
2325

This publication is not for sale. The Churches of God is a non-profit organization and does not charge for this publication. You can, however, make a donation by contacting the Churches of God Information Center.