

TRUSTING GOD IMPLICITLY

by Wayne Robbins

When things are going well we don't have any trouble trusting God with our prayers. However, when things are not going so well, and our situation continues for a long period of time, and especially if suffering is involved, we have the tendency to think God does not care. After all, if we were God we would have taken care of our problem long before now. But we are not God. What we must do is trust God implicitly - no matter what. Here are a few reasons why:

God has promised that He will be ever present to help us. He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). He is not very far from any of us (Acts 17:27). He is ever present when we need His help (Psalm 46:1). We must trust that He will be there for us.

God wants to help us. God knows what we need before we ask Him (Matthew 6:8). Every good and perfect gift comes from Him (James 1:17). God wants to give us good things (Matthew 7:11). If we ask according to

His will, He hears us and gives us our petitions (1 John 5:14,15). He asks us to cast all our cares upon Him for He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). God really does want to help us.

God knows the best way to help us. God knows all things. (Psalm 147:5.) God is all-powerful (Genesis 17:1). He knows absolutely the right things to do with our prayers. This may not be to our liking because most of the time we want instant action and relief. But God is not limited by our human emotions and shallow thinking. Every prayer is answered with God's unlimited wisdom and on His timetable. When we pray, we are limited in our scope of vision. But God is not limited and sees the big picture that our prayers involve.

We must trust God implicitly. He will answer our prayers in the best possible way, even thought it may not be to our liking or timetable (and, yes, sometimes He says, "no").

We are not God! God is God! We must trust Him

— Arkansas City, KS

"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:26-28).

We Are Not Yet Home

by Dalton Key

The moral and spiritual fabric of this world is ripping apart before our very eyes. The violence, corruption, and growing decadence of our day remind us of the "perilous times" described by Paul in 2 Timothy 3 — times in which "evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." That prophecy reads like today's headlines.

Living as God's children in an age of ever-increasing depravity, we share an unwanted kinship with Lot, who while dwelling in Sodom was "oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked...tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds" (2 Peter 2:7-8). Lot endured that daily assault on his soul — and he didn't even own a smartphone.

But trials and tribulations are neither new nor novel. There was sin in the Garden of Eden. There was evil in the days of Noah. When Jesus came to earth, He lamented, "And this is the

condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deed were evil" (John 3:19). Atrocities and iniquities will be with us since the dawn of time and will remain until the end.

This world has never been inclined toward God. In the God-breathed words of John, "the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one" (1 John 5:19).

And yet — we have every reason for hope. The cross stands as both evidence and answer to all of this. Heaven's own promise settles the matter: "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"(John 16:33). And further still: "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Fellow believer, never forget this: "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20). We are not yet home.

"So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (Romans 5:6-8).

"There remains therefore a rest for the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9).

Old Paths

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"ask for the old paths" (Jer. 6:16)

THE RISE AND FALL OF NATIONS

by Bobby Dockery

The Bible insists that there is a connection between the moral vigor of a nation and the survivability of a nation. The strength of any nation lies in the goodness of its people.

"Blessed is the nation, whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:12).

"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people" (Proverbs 14:34; Goodspeed's Translation has: "But sin is a people's ruin").

History is full of examples of nations which fell because they forgot God and failed to walk in His ways. Because of their national iniquity, God allowed Israel to fall to Assyria in 722 B.C. The wickedness of Assyria, in turn, led to their fall to the Babylonians in 612 B.C. The nation of Judah fell to these same Babylonians in 586 B.C., and, once again, God said it was because of sin. Mighty Babylon became so steeped in corruption that God overthrew it in 539 B.C. Eventually Rome, the mightiest empire the world had known, collapsed when its burden of wickedness became too great to bear.

And America?

Righteousness is America's greatest defense; sin is our window of ultimate vulnerability.

Do you love your country? Do you want to do something good for it? Then do all you can to help turn America's heart back to God! — Fayetteville, AR

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the Lord has spoken: 'I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me; The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not consider.' Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward" (Isaiah 1:2-4).

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord . . ." (Psalm 33:12).

A KINGDOM THAT WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED

by Milton Smith

One of the great prophecies of the coming of our Lord's kingdom on earth is found in Daniel 2:44. Addressing King Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel said, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." In the book of Daniel, we learn that King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream in which he saw a great image. What this image represented puzzled him. His wise men were unable to make known this dream or its interpretation. But the prophet Daniel was able to do both.

The dream involved a great image. It had a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet part of iron and part of clay. Daniel interpreted this image as representing four great worldly empires. One would follow the other. Babylon was the first, followed by the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greek Empire, and the Roman Empire. Daniel prophesied that it would be during the Roman Empire ("in the days of these kings . . .") that the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed. It becomes clear by reading the New Testament that this kingdom that was to arrive during the days of the Roman Empire would be the church. During the days of this powerful empire, our Lord's church (the kingdom) began as recorded in Acts, chapter two.

We read in Mark 1:14,15: "Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe the gospel." We notice here that this kingdom would involve preaching the gospel as well as repenting and believing that gospel, requirements clearly associated with the Lord's church. In Matthew, chapter 10, we read of Jesus sending forth His apostles, saying to them, "Go and preach, saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand." We also read, "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, 'Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matthew 3:1,2). Here, John (the one sent to prepare the way of the Lord) made the same declaration as Jesus did: The kingdom is "at hand" (i.e. "close; near").

In Mark 9:1, referring to this kingdom that was "at hand," Jesus said to his disciples,

"Truly I say unto you; there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God come with power." Shortly before Christ's ascension, the apostles inquired about the kingdom (Acts 1:6). Jesus responded, "You shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit is come upon you . . ." Here, Jesus makes it clear that His kingdom would arrive when this "power" arrived. In the very next chapter (Acts 2), we read of this power (the Holy Spirit) coming upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost. From this point on, the kingdom is spoken of as being in existence. In Acts 11:15, Peter referred to the events of Pentecost day as "the beginning" (Acts 11:15). The church, the kingdom which would never be destroyed, began on this day. The promised kingdom - the Lord's church - had arrived!

— Tulsa, OK

FAITH THAT SAVES

by Bobby Key

Sometime ago I ran across a religious tract with these words staring up at me: “Faith, plus nothing and minus nothing, is the way of salvation. Man has eternal life the minute he believes.” Millions of people both believe and teach that one is saved the moment he believes.

The Bible teaches no such doctrine! Please observe the following scriptures:

Faith Without Works is Dead. “But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?” (James 2:20).

Faith Alone is Dead. “Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (James 2:17).

Faith Without Love Will Not Profit. “And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:2).

Faith Without Words is Like the Body Without the Spirit. “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26).

Faith Only Can’t Justify. “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only” (James 2:24).

Faith Only Can’t Save the Demons. “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe - and tremble!” (James 2:19).

Faith Only Couldn’t Save the Cowardly Rulers of Jesus’ Day. “Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (John 12:42,43).

Faith Must Work to Avail. “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love” (Galatians 5:6).

“He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36, ASV).

Faith and obedience go together. My friend, one does not have eternal life the minute he believes! Faith must move us to obey the Lord.

Obedient faith is the faith that saves. (1929-2018)

EDITORIAL . . .

YES, WE CAN KNOW THE TRUTH

By Dalton Key

When Jesus promised, “you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,” He provided the much-needed answer to so many questions of biblical interpretation which have troubled pious souls throughout history (John 8:32). These few words from the lips of our Lord make it clear that truth - absolute spiritual truth - exists, and that it can be known or understood.

It may seem odd, at least in light of more modern theology, that Christ did not speak of this hermeneutic or that hermeneutic. He spoke openly, unabashedly, of truth; and of truth which is available and expected to be understood.

The inspired writers of the New Testament continued this same attitude toward truth. To the Ephesian brethren Paul wrote, “Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:17). He commended the early spiritual training of Timothy, his own son in the faith, by urging, “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:14,15).

Take note of Peter’s words as well. He allowed little sympathy for those “untaught and unstable people” who were twisting the inspired Scriptures “to their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:16). Though Peter recognized there were in God’s Word “some things hard to be understood,” he nonetheless expected his readers to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:16,18).

Inspired New Testament writers did not pen their letters as discussions of this interpretation compared with that interpretation. They wrote - and wrote concerning - scriptural truth which could be learned, understood and agreed upon.

Paul never suggested that we all have the right to handle spiritual truth as we choose; he never spoke of truth as absolute but our understanding as relative; he never sacrificed truth at the alter of the latest poll-tested, pseudo-intellectual hermeneutic. No, the peerless apostle expected workmen in the “word of truth” to rightly divide it, to handle it aright (2 Timothy 2:15, NKJV, ASV).

Divine truth could be learned and understood, known and handled aright in the first century. Are we to believe the same is not possible for those of us living in the twenty-first century?



Homologeo: Confessing We Are In Christ

by Danny Tunnell

Jesus made several “I am” statements: “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35). “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). “I am the door” (John 10:9). “I am the vine” (John 15:5). “I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11). “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

The Bible teaches that Jesus found Himself in the scriptures, in the book of Isaiah (Luke 4:16-21; 24:7). As Jesus found Himself in the scriptures, Christians can find themselves there too.

We need to say what the Bible says about us, and then hold fast (firmly) to our profession or confession (Hebrews 4:14).

Traditionally, people have associated confession with the negative, something I’ve done wrong. Father, forgive me. To them confession is only to confess faults and failures, our sins (1 John 1:5-10). Another aspect is to confess Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9). These types of confession are good and vitally important, but it is also important that we continually confess who we are in Christ.

The greek word is “homologeo” - “homo” which means the same, and

“logo” which has to do with words or with what you say. In other words, we need to come up to God’s way of thinking (Isaiah 55:8,9). We need to renew our minds with the word of God (Romans 12:2). We need to say exactly what God says about us.

It’s not boasting when you say what God says about you (1 Corinthians 1:31). You are simply agreeing with what God says. It is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18). You can’t lie saying what God says (John 17:17; Romans 3:4).

The word “gospel” means “good news.” If it isn’t good news to you, then you don’t understand it, or you don’t believe it.

What did God say in His word about those in Christ? We can say the same thing, and say it with confidence and conviction. I am a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

I always triumph in Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14). I am more than a conqueror (Romans 8:17). I am healed with the stripes Jesus bore on His back (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24). I am redeemed from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13). I am filled with God’s peace (Philippians 4:7). I am the dwelling place for the Holy Spirit

(1 Corinthians 6:19). I am the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16). I am redeemed by the blood of Jesus (Ephesians 1:7). I have been made the righteousness of God in Christ (1 Corinthians 5:21). I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13). God supplies all my needs (Philippians 4:19). The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want or lack (Psalm 23:1; John 10:11). I am a child of God (1 John 3:1). I am a member of God’s family (Ephesians 2:19). I am an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ (Romans 8:17). I am blessed (Ephesians 1:3). I am sealed by the promise of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13,14).

Throughout our Christian life, God wants us to believe with our heart and say with our lips all He says we are in Christ. “Homologeo” is saying exactly what God says, and nothing is more edifying for a faithful child of God. Don’t try to talk God into something you already have. “You have everything when you have Christ” (Colossians 2:10, TLB)

— Miami, OK

QUOTES WORTH NOTING

“If, being devoid of love, you make war upon me and try to work my ruin, I shall neither defend myself nor try to injure you . . . I am for peace, and no word of bitterness shall ever fall from my lips, even in self-defense” (T.B. Larimore).

“Sunshine is delicious, rain is refreshing, wind braces us up, snow is exhilarating; there is really not such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather” (John Ruskin).

“It is easier to fight error than it is to practice truth” (David Lipscomb).

“It ain’t the parts of the Bible that I can’t understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand” (Mark Twain).

“Worry is concern allowed to linger in the absence of faith” (DK).

“America is great because she is good. If America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great” (Alexis de Tocqueville).

“We cannot choose our external circumstances, but we can always choose how we respond to them” (Epictetus).

“It is the present living generation that gives character and spirit to the next. Hence the paramount importance of accomplished and energetic teachers in forming the taste, the manners, and the character of the coming age” (Alexander Campbell).

“It took one day to get Israel out of Egypt; it took forty years to get Egypt out of Israel” (attributed variously).

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