

SPIRITUAL INSIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE

# FAITH *for life*

*“The **life** which I now live...I live by the **faith** of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20*

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

FROM THE MINISTRY OF FARGO BAPTIST CHURCH

FALL QUARTER EDITION, 2007

## GOOD NEWS FOR THE UNFORGIVEN

*A Message by Pastor Tony Scheving*

William Barclay was on his deathbed, and greatly distressed. He was troubled by something he had done many years earlier. As a young boy he had reversed a sign at a crossroads. It had always bothered him, and in his dying hours he wondered... how many people he had sent in the wrong direction.

You never know what weighs on the heart of some people as they go through life. The Psalmist said in Psalms 40:12 *“Innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.”* It sounds like he was struggling with feeling unforgiven.

### OUR REPERCUSSIVE FAILURES

Many of us have excessive baggage from our past that haunts us. Anyone who has lived for any length of time has encountered a number of failures. Maybe we said or did something we shouldn't have. Maybe we blew a big opportunity. Maybe we were responsible for a tragic event.

Years ago in southern Minnesota a 42 year old man was driving his car when he accidentally hit a 10 year old riding his bike. The boy may have survived with prompt medical care, but the guilty driver drove off and the boy died. When the police went to the home of the boy to give the bad news to his parents,

they found the car involved in the accident in the garage with blood on the bumper, and the boy's dad hiding up in the attic. The man didn't even realize he had killed his own son! What a thing to have to live with!

Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and introduced sin into the world. In a matter of years, their oldest son Cain killed their other son Abel. Adam and Eve were reaping their past failure. In Genesis 37, Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. Five chapters later they were expressing their deep regret for their actions. Many people in the Bible lived with regret such as Jacob, King Saul, David, and even Peter, who no doubt dealt with guilt over denying the Lord three times. Maybe

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*Welcome to the*  
INAUGURAL ISSUE  
*- of -*  
FAITH *for life*

*It is our sincerest desire and prayer that this quarterly newsletter will be a blessing to you and your family. Please let us know if there is anything we may do to be of assistance.*

*- Contact Us -*

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### GOOD NEWS

*continued from page 1*

even you have struggled with the feeling of unforgiveness over a past failure.

### OUR REGRETFUL FEELINGS

Imagine the regret that David felt over committing adultery with Bathsheba (I Samuel 11). Imagine the regret that Moses felt over “striking the rock” which cost him entry into the promised land (Numbers 20). Imagine the regret that Paul felt later in life over having Stephen stoned to death years earlier (Acts 7).

In Luke 7 we find the story of a woman who had lived a wild and sinful past. Her heart was so broken that she sought forgiveness from Jesus by washing his feet with her tears, and drying them with her hair. There are many people who go through life with the regret of a “one night stand,” or an abortion from many years prior, or the night that they made a fool out of themselves while under the influence of alcohol.

Maybe it was a matter of being caught in a lie, or losing an ugly temper. Maybe they feel as if they’ve failed as a parent. Maybe they regret their own selfishness which ruined their marriage. There are hundreds of ways to experience regretful feelings.

### OUR RELEASING FORGIVENESS

Where can a person go to find forgiveness from the trash of the past? King David said in Psalm 103 *“Bless the Lord... who forgiveth all thine iniquities...who redeemeth thy life from destruction.”*

Many people don’t realize it, but there is a “built in” desire within the human heart to know that we have our Creator’s forgiveness.

Atheist Clarence Darrow, the attorney, became nationally famous during the “Scopes Monkey” trial of 1925, when he defended the teaching of evolution in public schools. During the trial and throughout his life, Darrow made many statements of mockery toward the Bible and God.

According to columnist Dr. George Crane and a clerk at the law office of Darrow, the famous infidel attorney

*We are  
saved from  
our guilt,  
shame and  
sin when we  
admit our  
complete  
neediness  
before God,  
and turn our  
life over  
to Him.*

became concerned on his deathbed, and summoned for three clergymen of different denominations. Darrow said to them, “Gentlemen, I have written and spoken many things against God and the churches during my lifetime. Now I wish I hadn’t! Now I realize that

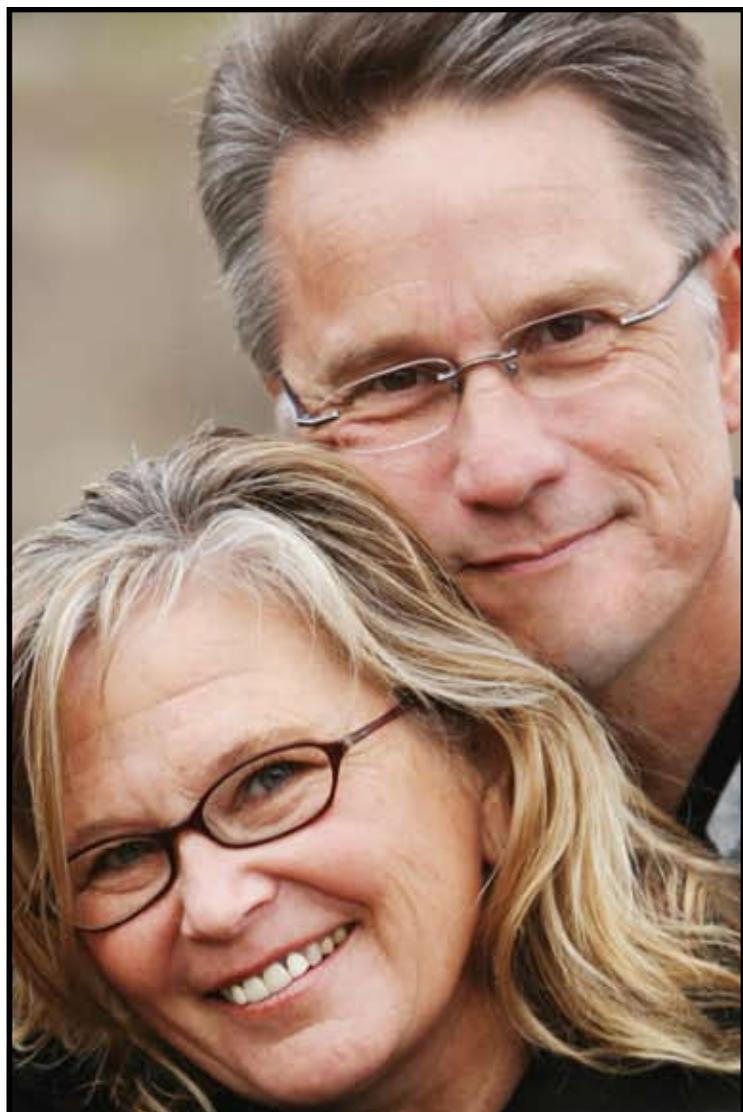
it is entirely possible that I may have been wrong. So I should like to ask a final favor that each one of you intercede (pray) for me with the Almighty.”

This is one of many examples throughout history of man’s “inborn” desire for forgiveness. The “release” that comes with forgiveness is the result of a person being born again (John 3:3). This is accomplished by coming to a place of repentance in our lives where we are willing to turn from our sin and live for God.

In John 8, Jesus told a woman caught in adultery to *“go and sin no more.”* We are saved from our guilt, shame and sin when we admit our complete neediness before God, and turn our life over to Him. We do this by trusting in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross as the only thing that can pay for our sins and erase our guilt. This gives us a fresh start and a new lease on life. II Corinthians 5:17 says, *“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”*

There is no joy like being in a right relationship with our Creator. Do you know that you have been forgiven? This will enable you to forgive yourself, and others as well. You don’t have to live and die in despair.

Not far from New York, there is a cemetery with a grave, which has inscribed upon its headstone just one word—“Forgiven.” There is no name, no date of birth or death. The plain headstone is void of any fancy artwork. There is no epitaph, no eulogy—just that one word, “Forgiven.” But that is the greatest thing that can be said of any man, or written upon his grave, “Forgiven.”



# Beating Stress

— By Rusty Wright —

How do you cope with stress? When you oversleep and you burn the breakfast and the dog is barking and your neighbor is rude and traffic is gridlocked and your car breaks down and it's raining and you're late to work and your boss is angry and your report is overdue and your kid's in the principal's office again and your bank balance is low and your team lost last night and world news looks bad—how do you handle the stress?

**W**e all experience stress, from the simple to the staggering. Excessive stress can impair your health. The famous Social Readjustment Rating Scale<sup>3</sup> assigns numerical values to the stress levels of various life events. “Death of a spouse” ranks highest at 100 points. “Divorce” is next at 73. Other items include “personal injury or illness” (53), “fired at work” (47), and “trouble with boss” (23).

Any of those sound familiar? Accumulate too many points annually and you could be at risk for physical illness and/or mental health problems.

There are several practical things we know to do to keep ourselves healthy. Unfortunately, they are the last things we do when stress bears down on us. Here's a short list:

## Eat Right

Gobbling burgers and fries on the run and postponing the veggies until tomorrow can weaken your coping abilities.

## Exercise Regularly

Don't argue with this. You know it's important. Design an exercise plan appropriate to your health, limitations, locale and schedule. Ask a friend to join you if necessary. Stick with it.

## Get Some Sleep

Those inconsiderate drivers that blasted their horns at me the other day probably needed more sleep. Frankly, I probably needed sleep, too.

## Manage Your Time

Start each day the evening before. Evaluate tomorrow's

activities against your lifetime objectives. Learn to say no. List activities in order of importance, then plan them into tomorrow's schedule. Set out tonight items you'll need for tomorrow's tasks.

There are also several important emotional strategies for keeping us stable in the midst of life's chaos:

## Cultivate A Sense of Humor

An ancient proverb says, *“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones”* (Proverbs 17:22). Frequently, laughter can provide a normal and necessary release of tension.

## Reconcile With Adversaries

Keep short accounts. Confront where necessary. Where appropriate, discuss your differences, admit your wrongs, seek to forgive and be forgiven.

## Cultivate Friendships

A born introvert, I used to be a loner. When my wife of twenty years was divorcing me, some coworkers were harassing me, and my doctor said I might have cancer, I found refuge and solace in good friends. Don't try to endure hardship alone. It can be very painful; *“A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother”* (Proverbs 18:24).

## Spiritual Strategies

As a teen, success in athletics, academics and student government did not bring the fulfillment I wanted. I wrestled with guilt, anxiety and a poor self-image. In

college, I met some students with an attractive, genuine joy and peace. They claimed to have a personal relationship with God. I couldn't believe all they told me, but I kept returning to their meetings because I liked them—and because it may be a good place to get a date.

They explained how their faith affected their lives and relationships, saying that God loved me, but that my own self-centeredness separated me from Him. They said Jesus, God's Son, died to pay the penalty for my selfishness and sin, and rose again to offer new life. That began to make sense. Eventually, through a heart attitude, I asked Jesus to forgive me (based on His death for me), enter my life and become my Lord. No earthquake occurred, but I found a peace of mind, freedom from guilt, purpose and power for living, and the best friend I could ever have.

Of course, life has not been without its stresses. But friendship with God aids stability. Jesus said in John 14:27, *“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”*

Have life's stresses got you down? Maybe you need to attend to your physical health, or to cultivate humor and close friendships. Maybe you need to establish a relationship with the One who knows your every hurt and whose love and trustworthiness are infinite. Why not give Him a try? ■

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## God Cares About Our Health By Paul Winje

Wise and caring parents lovingly remind their children to eat fruits and vegetables, drink milk, and eat other foods that will support good health.

Did you know God feels the same way about us? As our Creator, He knows what is best for our amazing bodies and has a history of sharing this with His creation. In Genesis 1:29 he outlined what Adam could eat. In Genesis 2:16-17 he warned Adam and Eve to avoid eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In Deuteronomy 14:3-6 he explained

a proper diet to the children of Israel in great detail. He does this for our benefit that we might live healthy and vibrant lives. We can clearly see His care for us, but what about our responsibility to Him?

I Corinthians 6:19-20 says *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For*



*ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”* We have been given one body and it is our responsibility to treat it the right way so we can serve Him fully. This includes eating the right kinds of foods, avoiding the wrong kinds of foods, exercising, and generally caring for our bodies. Not only will we feel great, but we will please our Maker as well. ■

*“I resolve never to do anything which I would be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.”*

— Jonathan Edwards

## On the Lighter Side

*“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.”* Proverbs 17:22

A little girl, dressed in her Sunday best, was running as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Bible class. As she ran, she prayed, “Dear Lord, please don’t let me be late!” While she was running and praying, she tripped on a curb and fell, getting her clothes dirty and tearing her dress. She got up, brushed herself off, and started running again. As she ran, she once again began to pray: “Dear Lord, please don’t let me be late—but please don’t shove me, either!!!”

Little Joey told his Sunday School teacher; “there’s somethin’ I can’t figger out.” If the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea, and the children of Israel beat up the Canaanites, and the children of Israel built the temple and everything else, then what I wanna know is what was all the grown ups doing?

A little boy was returning home from Sunday School when he ran into a college professor in the city park. The college professor asked the boy what he had learned in church that day. The little boy explained how Moses and the nation of Israel had crossed the Red Sea because God had dried it up. The “enlightened” college professor laughed as he sat down next to the boy and began to try to open his eyes to the “realities” of the miracles of the Bible. “That can all be very easily explained. Modern scholarship has shown that the Red Sea in that area was only 10-inches deep at that time. It was no problem for the Israelites to wade across.” The man, content that he had enlightened a poor, naive little fellow to the finer points of scientific insight, turned to go. Scarcely had he taken two steps when the boy said “Wow!...” “God is greater than I thought! Not only did He lead the whole nation of Israel through the Red Sea. He topped it off by drowning the whole Egyptian army in 10 inches of water!”

The quickest way for a parent to get a child’s attention is to sit down and look comfortable.

*This season, catch the true spirit of Christmas!*

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# CHRISTMAS NATIVITY SCENE

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## QUESTIONS — ON — NOAH'S ARK

BY DR. JOHN R. RICE

“How could a boat the size of Noah’s ark hold the number of animals it necessarily had to hold during the Flood?”

Consider that a cubit varied from eighteen to thirty-two inches or more. The ark had probably more than a million cubit feet of space.

Of the many species of living things, the largest and perhaps the most are in the sea, so they would not need to be in the ark.

The average land animal is only about the size of a cat. There are many more small animals than large animals. There would not need to be more than two square feet per animal on the average.

The vast majority of living things are tiny-things like flies, lice, fleas, gnats—so these would not occupy any extra space.

Those who have figured the space carefully say that

there would be abundant room for the animals and space for sufficient food.

**“Was the Flood caused by rain alone, or does Genesis 7:11 mean that water also came from the earth?”**

There was a mighty rain for forty days and forty nights. Only a tiny fraction of the enormous amount of water contained in the atmosphere ever falls as rain. There is enough water in the atmosphere up to fifty miles above the earth to cover most of the earth if it were all released, I think.

However, “*the fountains of the great deep [were] broken up*” (Gen. 7:11). It seems the Scripture thus indicates that tidal waves from the oceans swept back and forth around the earth and caused all parts of the earth, during the Flood, to be submerged completely.

There is much evidence of such waves of ocean water. Shells and fossils of the sea are deposited on some of the highest mountains of the earth. They were likely deposited there by the Flood.

Some scientists think a great meteor may have struck the earth and caused it to be knocked to its present angle of twenty-three degrees away from facing the sun. Once in the Siberian Arctic area there was lush vegetation; even now mastodons are uncovered in the ice in Siberia, and the tusks have proven a great trade in ivory.

Once that country was continually warm. The earth at one time did not have all the seasons and the same zones of temperature as it has now. Some such event may have happened to knock the earth so that

its axis is twenty-three degrees away from the perpendicular. We do not know, of course. But that could have caused the tidal wave as mentioned. At any rate, the water came from both rain and sea and possibly from the great amount of water within the earth.

**“What does verse 20 of the same chapter mean ‘fifteen cubits upward... and the mountains were covered’?”**

I believe it means the water was fifteen cubits higher than the highest mountains, that is, perhaps twenty-five or thirty feet, so no land animals could live.

**“How could the water disappear so soon after the Flood?”**

Principally by flowing back into the seas and by the tidal wave subsiding. It would also disappear by evaporation and by soaking into the ground, just as floods do today. ■

## ARCHEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

Archeology is a unique field where one may actually see modern evidence of the Bible’s past. We as Christians do not need to see evidence to verify the Bible—that is not faith. But the Bible as a history book, and a book that makes the incredible claim as it does of being error free, will obviously coincide with actual evidence uncovered by the spade. Has this been the case? To those who believe in its promises the answer comes as no surprise—every single time!

Archaeologist Nelson Glueck states, “It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference. Scores of ...findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible.”

One English revisionist, challenged the Bible in

1997 with the following statement, “King David is about as historical as King Arthur.” Then, just a few months later, a stone was discovered in Syria with the writing of an ancient King named Hazael (also mentioned in the Bible in II Chronicles 22) bragging of defeating Ahaziah of the House of David! Once again, the Bible confirmed an archeological find, and a critic looked foolish.

There are literally hundreds of names, places, cities, kings etc., which have been unearthed or found on ancient documents. The following is a brief list of some archeological finds:

**Cities:** Jericho, Ur of the Chaldees (Abraham’s hometown), Babylon

**People:** Pontius Pilate, many kings of Israel and Egypt, Kings David and Solomon, King Cyrus, Herod the Tetrarch.

**Places:** Pool of Siloam where Jesus healed a blind man, the amphitheatre in Ephesus (Acts 19) where the Apostle Paul was mobbed.

**Nations:** Assyria, Babylonia, Moab, Rome.

**Customs:** Travel, ceremonies and even modes of execution such as crucifixion.

No doubt there are still more artifacts lying under the Middle Eastern soil waiting to be discovered that will attest to the accuracy of the Bible. ■

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## HOW DOES A PERSON GET TO Heaven?

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

There are three things you can know for sure...

**1) That you are going to Heaven.** *"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life"* (I John 5:13).

**2) That your life will be changed when you get saved.** *"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).

**3) You will never lose your salvation.** *"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."* (John 10:28).

It all revolves around Jesus Christ!

Who is Jesus Christ? John 1:1 says, *"In the beginning was the word (Jesus), and the word was with God, and the word was God."* John 1:3 continues, *"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."* Jesus was God in flesh or God the son who created everything.

He came to earth to save us. *"For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10). The first step in

going to heaven is to realize we need to be saved.

How do we get to heaven?... *"Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"* (John 3:3).

There is a difference between a physical birth and a spiritual birth. *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit"* (John 3:6).

Why do we need a spiritual birth? Man was originally created a three part being in God's image—a trinity. *"And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: so God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them"* (Genesis 1:26). Man is made up of body, soul, and spirit.

God placed Adam and Eve in the garden. *"And the lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest*

*thereof thou shalt surely die"* (Genesis 2:16-17). Man ate of the fruit and though he didn't die that day physically, he died spiritually!

When Adam and Eve had children they were now born spiritually dead as well (no longer in God's 3-part image). Genesis 5:3 *"And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name seth."* That is why we must be re-born spiritually.

That is also why we have a sin nature. You don't have to teach a toddler to be selfish, lie, steal things, sass back, fight with siblings, etc... it is also our nature as we grow up. The 10 commandments reveal our sinful condition.

**#1 "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me"** (Exodus 20:3). No one can claim that they have never put anything ahead of God (money, career, another

person, own goals, pleasure, sin & vice, etc).

**#2 "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image"** (Exodus 20:4). Many have been guilty of inventing a God of their own imagination and liking (a "God that over looks sin and takes everyone to heaven").

**#3 "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain"** (Exodus 20:7). Read it carefully—are you guilty of ever doing this?

**#4 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy"** (Exodus 20:8). Have you always been faithful in this area?

**#5 "Honour thy father and thy mother"** (Exodus 20:12). Who can say that they have always honored their parents?

**#6 "Thou shalt not kill"** (Exodus 20:13). While most have never committed murder, Jesus clarifies this commandment when he tells us that to even hate or be bitter at someone is murder of the heart (Matthew 5:21-2).

**#7 "Thou shalt not commit adultery"** (Exodus 20:14). While many have never committed adultery, Jesus tells us in the Bible that to even lust after the opposite sex is adultery of the heart (Matthew 5:27-8).

**#8 "Thou shalt not steal"** (Exodus 20:15). Who could claim that they've never taken anything that doesn't belong to them?

**#9 "Thou shalt not bear false witness"** (Exodus 20:16). (ie; lie) No one could honestly claim they have never told a lie.

**#10 "Thou shalt not covet"** (Exodus 20:17). Have you ever desired anything you didn't need, or that wasn't yours?

Many places in the Bible tell us that liars, adulterers, idolaters, thieves, the covetous, etc. will spend eternity in hell (Revelation 21:8, I Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21).

Romans 3:10 tells us, *"As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one."*

Romans 3:23 says *"for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."*

Romans 6:23 explains that sin has a penalty, *"For the wages of sin is death"* (hell).



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## GET TO HEAVEN?

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We cannot possibly get to heaven by keeping the law (10 Commandments).

The 10 Commandments were given by God to show us how impossible it is to be saved by doing good works. *"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith"* (Galatians 3:24). The law (10 commandments) shows us that we are condemned and need a Savior.

You will never get to heaven by doing good works. Titus 3:5 says, *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us."* *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Romans 5:1).

Yet getting to heaven is not automatic just because Jesus died for your sins! Salvation is a gift that must be received. *"For by grace are ye saved*

*through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God"* (Ephesians 2:8). That means that baptism has nothing to do with being saved. Romans 6:23 explains, *"The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

How does a person know when they are ready to be born again? When they mean business with God and are ready to repent of sin. Acts 3:19 says *"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."* II Peter 3:9 says the Lord is *"not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* Jesus said, *"except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:5). That means being willing to also turn from false religion or false teaching—anything contrary to the word of God, the Bible.

To repent means to change your mind about your sin, and make Christ the Lord of your life—are you willing to turn from your sin and turn to God? Do you believe that Jesus

paid the full price on the cross for your sins?

Though God hates sin, he loves you and sent Jesus to die for your sins. *"But God commendeth (proved) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8).

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16).

If God is convicting you of your need of forgiveness, and you would like to be saved (born again), the final step is to ask God for the gift through a simple prayer. *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"* (Romans 10:13). Notice the promise of this verse from a God who cannot lie. Titus 1:2 says, *"God...cannot lie"*. Do you believe that God will save you simply because He said He would? Christ will save you if you are willing to make him the Lord of your life.

If you know that you are ready, you can pray and ask God to save you in your own words such as: *"Dear Heavenly Father, I know that I am a condemned sinner unable to save myself, but I*

*am willing to turn from my sins and make Jesus my Lord and master. I now trust in His sacrifice on the cross to pay for my sins. Please forgive me and save me. Amen."* ■

*Heavenly Help for Your Family*

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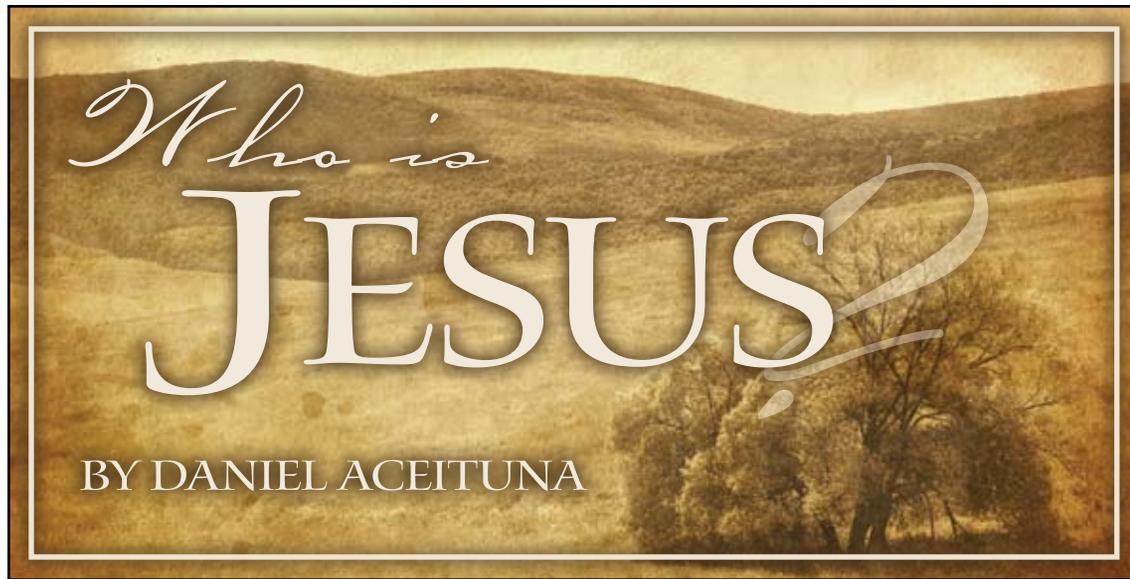
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There are many ways to answer this question. We'll take a novel approach by first asking: Suppose God came to earth in the form of a man; what would that man be like? Regardless of what you think God is like, I'm sure I'd get little argument concerning the following three attributes.

God would be a teacher. There are few acts more sacrificial and loving than that of patiently instilling beneficial knowledge in someone else.

God wouldn't hold us to a standard He wouldn't follow Himself.

God wouldn't throw his weight around. In other words, while He could destroy everything with His mere thought, He would have enough restraint and self-discipline to hold back, exhibiting self-control in extreme circumstances.

Now, keeping these God-like attributes in mind, let's look at how the Bible describes Jesus Christ. First of all, we find many references such as: *"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing*

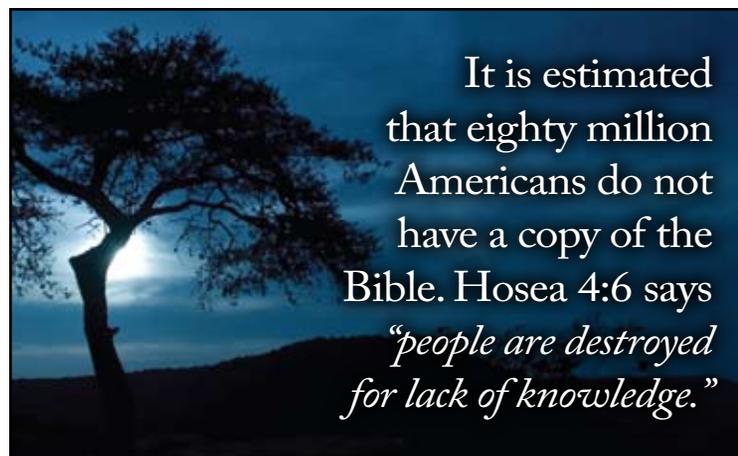
*every sickness and every disease among the people."* Matthew 9:35 (see also, Matthew 4:23, Matthew 21:23, Matthew 26:55, and Mark 6:6).

*His [Jesus Christ] mission was to die on the cross for our sins.*

There are even more references to Jesus Christ acting in this God-like

manner when it came to teaching. More importantly, his teachings addressed those questions that no earthly man could answer: How do we get to heaven? How does one please God? How are one's sins forgiven? These are spiritual questions, demanding a spiritual answer. Some have argued that if Jesus was God, He would have taught us modern medicine and science, but those things require an infrastructure that did not exist then. No, God would be more practical than that. He would teach those things that only He could teach; eternal things that address one's soul.

Secondly, We find Christ teaching: *"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your*



It is estimated that eighty million Americans do not have a copy of the Bible. Hosea 4:6 says *"people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."*

*enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you"* (Matthew 5:43-44). This is one example of a standard that goes against human nature. God expects us to love our enemies; return good for evil (1 Peter 3:9). Would God hold Himself up to the same standard? Or He is immune because He's deity? After being beaten for no just cause, Christ is nailed on the cross. How does He respond to His enemies? Notice: *"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots."* (Luke 23:34). Jesus prayed *"for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you"*; something you would expect God to do.

Finally, in spite of the wrong accusations, the beatings, and the crucifixion

that was to come, Jesus told His disciples: *"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"* (Matthew 26:53). In the Old Testament, one angel wiped out 185,000 Assyrians. Imagine the destruction 144,000 angels could bring about. All this power at Christ's disposal, and yet He displayed a God-like restraint. His mission was to die on the cross for our sins; God finishes what He starts, no matter how rough it gets.

In conclusion, while these three attributes by themselves may not definitively prove that Jesus was God in the flesh, they don't deny it. Couple them with many other attributes that Christ shares with God, and add Jesus' very claim to be God, and we get a very good idea of: *"Who Is Jesus?"* ■

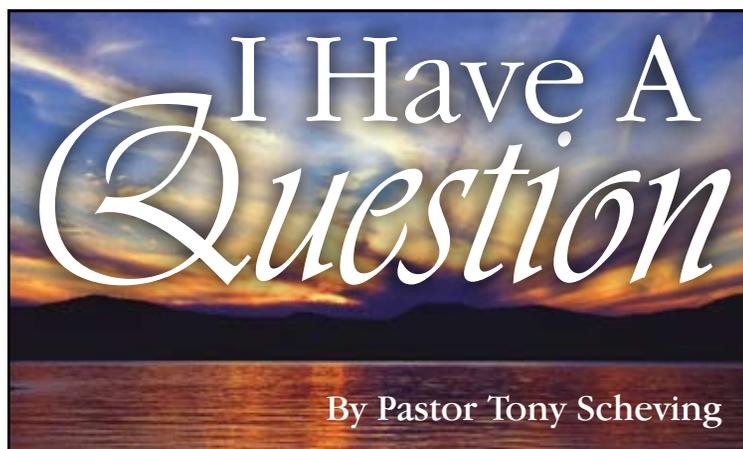
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## What does the Bible say about Heaven?

What do John Wayne, John Lennon and John Kennedy all have in common? They all once walked this earth, but have since died and are forever gone. But have they ceased to exist, or has their “never to die” soul just re-located?

The Bible is clear about the “after life.” This month our question is about heaven, and first of all, where does the Bible say that heaven is located? The apostle Paul said (II Corinthians 12:4) that he was “caught up” into heaven, and the apostle John also spoke of going “up” in order to get to heaven (Revelation 4:1).

Evidently heaven is up in space somewhere at this

time and the Bible hints that it is toward the north (Psalm 75:6). Someone asks, “How will we know how to get there when we die?” According to Luke 16, we will be escorted there by angels when we die.

But how long after our death will it be before we can go there? If someone is truly saved, their soul will go to heaven immediately when they take their last breath (II Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:23). The Bible doesn’t teach any such place as “limbo or purgatory.” What will Heaven be like? We will be able to see each other, and will still be known by the same name (Philippians 3:21, Luke 13:28). We will walk on literal streets of

gold (Revelation 21:21). The saints in heaven will live in mansions according to Jesus (John 14:2).

An incredible description of the beauty of heaven is given in Revelation 21:10-21. Heaven will also be a place with perpetual wonder and excitement (Psalm 16:11). The greatest ten minutes you’ve ever lived on earth won’t compare to it. Heaven will also be a place without suffering, pain, tears, crime, or death (Revelation 21:4). There will not be any sin or unsaved sinners there (Revelation 21:8).

The sad reality is that according to Jesus, not many will go to heaven (Matthew 7:14 says, “narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life (heaven), and few there be that find it”). The Bible tells us that only truly saved believers will be there (Revelation 21:24). The good news is that getting to heaven is available to everyone (II Peter 3:9), and that we can know for sure we are going to heaven when we die (I John 5:13). Do you have such assurance? ■

*I have always said, that the studious examination of the sacred Volume (the Bible) will make better citizens, better fathers, and better husbands.*

Thomas Jefferson

*“When people stop believing in God, they do not believe in nothing. They believe in anything and everything.”*

- G. K. Chesterton

*“Right is right even if everyone is against it, and wrong is wrong even if everyone is for it.”*

- William Penn

*“Prayer is not learned in the classroom, but in the closet.”*

- E. M. Bounds

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# the monkey's finger

By Daniel Aceituna



In 1968 a film entitled “2001 A Space Odyssey” hit the screens. The opening scenes depict the day-to-day activities of a tribe of monkeys, assumed to be our ancestors. Their typical day involves fighting with a competing tribe over the only water hole for miles. It doesn’t get more exciting than that, that is, until the day the monolith shows up.

What is a *monolith*, you ask? The audience watching the film initially doesn’t know either. It is a tall, rectangular, slab-like object towering above the frightened monkeys, who are immediately intrigued by the angelic hum emitting from its black polished surface. The audience on the other hand, quickly accesses that the slab is out of place. It’s obviously not produced through natural causes; it is too evenly proportioned, symmetrical, and emits an unnatural choir-like sound. The audience assumes that it was created and put there by some higher intelligence, well beyond that of the monkeys.

The monkeys eventually muster up enough courage and inch their way toward it, perhaps hoping it is a giant Hershey bar. One bold monkey slowly extends a finger toward the monolith and touches it. Freeze the film. Look closely at the finger as it touches the monolith. Take a closer look; go inside the finger.

Keep moving several orders of magnitude below the skin, until you see one of the cells. See the cell’s complexity? It’s safe to say most of the audience didn’t see it. They were too busy pondering the seeming complexity of the monolith to notice the vastly more complex finger touching it. Why is that? Why is it we often find people admiring the complexity of a cell phone without considering the hand holding it or the ear using it?

For years Christians have pointed toward the design found in nature as evidence for a Creator, while secular scientists have been arguing that design proves nothing. They’ll argue that design is not quantifiable. That is to say, there is no objective, formally defined, criterion to determine if something has been designed. Design, they argue, is subjective, in the eyes of the beholder. As an engineer I can appreciate the need for an objective criteria. However, as with most human beings, I

still possess this sense of knowing design when I see it. To me a monkey’s finger shows evidence of being designed. And yet, many don’t see it that way. Why is that?

What tells the average person something has been designed? What is your personal design criterion? What tells you something required a designer? Is it an object’s complexity? The monkey’s finger is complex. Is it symmetry? A finger has symmetry along one axis. Is it order or functionality? Again, the monkey’s finger has all those things, so why would a monolith be considered designed, while a monkey is not?

Perhaps there is another part of a person’s design criteria that is so ingrained they don’t even think about it, yet it’s used every time. Perhaps the vital determining factor that something was designed is its purpose; its reason for existing. You see, the 2001 audience assumes the monolith has a purpose; it was put there for a reason. And that implies that some higher intelligence is behind its existence. The monkey’s finger? Well apparently few people feel the monkey has

a purpose for existing. And where there’s no purpose, there is no design, and thus, no designer.

The Bible says: “*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created*” (Revelation 4:11). We were created for a purpose. However, many don’t like the reason for our existence. Read it again: “*for thy pleasure they are and were created.*” Many would rather assume that we have no purpose, no reason for existing, and thus, not have to be accountable to a Creator. How do you personally feel about it? When you ponder your existence, are you here for a purpose? If you feel you are, then that implies you have been designed with that purpose in mind. You have a Creator, and everything else that implies. ■

## HUNDREDS LEAP TO THEIR DEATH

ISTANBUL, Turkey – Turkish shepherds left their sheep to graze while they had breakfast. First one sheep jumped to its death over the edge of a drop off. Then stunned shepherds returned to find other sheep following. The Turkish media reported 1500 sheep jumped in all. In the end 450 animals lay dead at the bottom of the drop off. Those who jumped later were saved by the cushioned effect of landing on top of the higher pile of sheep bodies. “There is nothing we can do. They’re all wasted,” said Nevzat Bayhan, a member of one of 26 families whose sheep were grazing together in the herd. The estimated loss to the families in the town of Gevas is over \$100,000 which is a significant

amount in a country where the average GPD per head is around \$2700.

The Bible compares human nature to that of sheep (Psalm 23, Isaiah 53:6, John 10:27, etc). It is easy for people to follow someone in their simplicity, who they think has the answers. Many are not concerned about their eternal destiny because some clergyman has told them that “everything would be alright, and not to worry.” Jesus said in Matthew 15:14 “*if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.*” It does matter what you believe spiritually. A person would be wise to diligently seek the truth.

## COUPLE'S GUIDE TO Common Money Myths



The wedding was complicated and expensive. But it's over and now it's time to settle back and enjoy your new life together.

Lucky for you I'm here to warn you about some common money myths that newlyweds have been known to bring with them into their marriages.

### Myth

Double the income, half the expenses. This is what I call newlywed fuzzy math: Merging your lives and incomes into one household is the equivalent of getting a

raise. Don't believe that, not for a second.

### Counter

Start out living on only one income and save the rest. This will require going against everything the culture insists you deserve, but it will allow you to move seamlessly into parenthood. When that day comes you'll have an impressive savings account and options. And a gallery of envious friends.

### Myth

There's stuff we can't live without. No there isn't. But it will be easy to convince yourselves that

you absolutely must have matching furniture, new cars, and all kinds of gadgets and services to make your lives easier and to keep up with your expectations to say nothing of your friends.

### Counter

Make a pact that you will never go into debt for "stuff." Period.

### Myth

If we qualify, we can afford it. Whether it's a new credit card or a new nothing-down, interest-only mortgage for a house that in your hearts you know you cannot afford, never allow your ability to qualify to be the determining factor. If you cannot pay the entire credit card balance in full each month or the mortgage plus insurance, taxes and maintenance is more than 30 percent of your net income, you can't afford it. Getting in over your heads is the recipe for a marital disaster.

### Counter

Never think of a credit card company, real estate agent or mortgage broker as a financial advisor. They are sales people looking to close deals. Get advice from a wise person who will not benefit financially from the decision you make.

### Myth

We have plenty of time. It does seem as though you have a lifetime ahead. And that you don't really need to save money now while things are tight and you are

struggling to get going. But that's a myth. The truth is you cannot afford to go one more day without a savings commitment for many reasons. You will want to retire. You do not want to feel forced into debt when something unexpected happens. You do not want to get used to spending all that you have. You want to create a sense of security and peace in your marriage.

### Counter

See ten percent of your net income as a mandatory financial obligation, just like your rent or mortgage payment. Pay it to yourselves without fail starting right now, if not sooner.

### Myth

Some money issues are best kept private. Whether it's the \$20 pedicure you launder through your grocery tab using the convenient "cash back" feature, the \$80 cash you collected from your lunch buddies when you put the whole tab on your credit card or a secret credit card account—keeping money secrets from your spouse is not good for your marriage. You might be able to pull off financial infidelity for a while, but eventually it will come back to bite you.

### Counter

Start out with a commitment to full-disclosure and total honesty. That will build something into your marriage that money cannot buy: trust.

### Myth

Everything will be fine as soon as we make more money. It does make sense that if you are struggling now, you won't once you get a big raise or you finish school or you get your grandmother's inheritance or you win the lottery. The truth is that more money will never be enough until you learn how to manage well the money you have already.

### Counter

Make the necessary adjustments now to live beneath your means. That will insure when more money comes into your lives, you'll know exactly how to take care of it.

### Myth

It's too late. No matter how long you've been married or how difficult your situation may appear it's not too late. It will take longer and be more challenging, but you can turn your situation around. Two people committed to reaching a single goal is a powerful force.

### Counter

Decide right now that you are going to do whatever it takes to debt-proof your marriage. ■

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## PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

*"The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."*

PSALM 126:3

It was a cold January day back in **1987** when we held our very first service at Fargo Baptist Church. There were three visitors from the area in attendance, and our first offering was \$12! There were services afterwards with no one in attendance except my wife and our baby son. When he would act up during a service, and my wife would have to take him out, I was left preaching to no one! Those were the "hungry years" and my family and I lived in the church basement, and held Sunday School in our living room.

I can smile now as I look back at those days, but they weren't very funny at the time. That first year we made it a matter of prayer for a bus in order to bring children to church. We didn't have the money, but stepped out by faith and found one at a local dealership. We trusted God to enable us to buy it, and that very week three

checks came in the mail unexpectedly for exactly the amount that we needed to purchase the bus. God was faithful as we slowly began to grow, and after three years we were outgrowing our little brick facility and it was time for a building project. In June of **1990** we broke ground on a 6000 sq. ft. facility and for the next six months it was a seven day work week for me without ever leaving town. The building was built by volunteer help and when it was finished it was nearly debt free.

We grew some more as a church and in **1993-94** we added on to the building. In **1997** we went on the air with a 100,000 watt FM Christian radio station. I found myself getting an education from broadcast people for a year beforehand, and even climbing a broadcast tower hundreds of feet in the air.

We found a transmitter that had been damaged in a storm down in Nebraska and brought it back to Fargo for an overhaul. It has been working 24/7 ever since. I will never forget that night in November when we "flipped the switch" and were broadcasting over a 40,000 sq. mile area. Heaven 88.7FM will celebrate it's 10th Anniversary next month! In **1999** we broke ground on the west wing of our current facility along I-94. Again we were building with volunteer help from within the church.

We then built the east wing across the lot without the main sanctuary yet in place to connect it

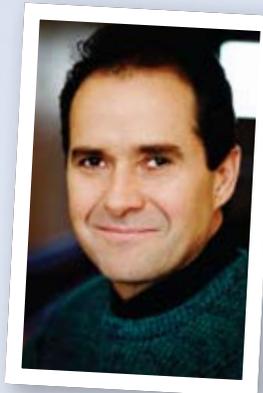
all together. Someone locally quipped that it looked like we had had a church split with two separate buildings! The following year we finally began to erect the main sanctuary which gave us a total of 40,000 sq. ft. in our facility. It was a wonderful night in November of **2002** when a weary group of church folks dedicated the new facilities nearly debt free. We have since added staff and have taken on other endeavors including a tuition-free Bible college in **2005**. We have sent out missionaries across the state as well as the globe, and support about 60 missionaries around the world. Last year our faithful group of church folks gave nearly \$175,000 to missions work.

We give God all the glory for what He has done. For some time now we have wanted to publish a Christian newspaper that would feature spiritual insight to things people wonder about. It has now come to fruition in **2007**.

It is our hope to be able to distribute *Faith for Life* on a quarterly basis, and eventually monthly. If you have any questions or comments, please drop me an e-mail at [revskev@faithforlife.net](mailto:revskev@faithforlife.net).

God bless you,

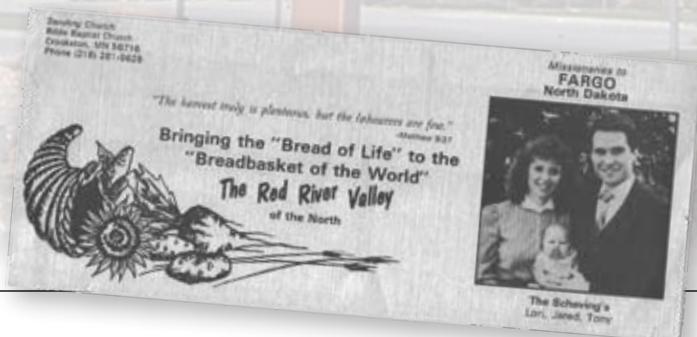
*Pastor Tony Scheving*



*Pastor Tony Scheving*



*First building of the Fargo Baptist Church*



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