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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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December 18, 1973

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE



Beyond the glitter and gifts lies that meaning much more glorious



We wish for you the joy of the first Christ/mas

Thelma Anderson, Charles Ashcraft, Erline Bauer, Johnny Biggs, Jane Birkhead, Nadine Bjorkman, Jeannie Breedlove, Tommy Bridges, Earlene Clearman, Debbie Combs, Don Cooper, Wilson Deese, R.H. Dorris, Robert Ferguson, Susan Garrot, Mary Giberson, Joan Gresham, Neal Guthrie, Bert Haley, Lawson Hatfield, Doris Hinson, Bob Holley, Lucile Holley, Gerald Jackson, Alma Lee Johnson, Jane Jones, Rose Jones, Ervin Keathley, Betty Kennedy, Julia Ketner, Betty Jo Lacy, Roy Lewis, Tom Logue, Fay McClung, Edith Mills, Francis Murphree, Don Norrington, Roger Patrick, Bob Parrish, Carolyn Pence, Willene Pierce, Freddie Pike, Carolyn Plumber, Annabelle Powers, Vera Rankins, Pat Ratton, Jesse Reed, T.K. Rucker, C.H. Seaton, Clarence Shell, Cornelia Shells, J.O. Smith, J. Everett Sneed, Lera Stokes, Ann Taylor, Carita Taylor, Joyce Thomas, Harry Trulove, Betty Tyler, Harold Vernon, Jeanie Weber, Delois White, Bonnie Williams, Annie Mary Wilson, Jane Winstead, and Lynda Wigal.

Your friends who work at the Baptist Building



I must say it

Charles H. Ashcraft Executive Secretary

Parenthood is forever

Kids up and through college, well married and established in a good profession? Is it all over? No! It is just beginning really, because some parents will graduate to grandparents. This opens a whole new exciting kind of parenthood.

Most children assume sovereignty before they can handle it. Many young people bite off too much in installment payments. Others decide after a few years to re-enter school for more advanced degrees to earn promotions in their vocations. Sometimes illness and misfortune overtake the young family. At this point parents and grandparents come in right handy.

The matter of the spiritual development of the family remains a perpetual concern of the parents. It may be a wayward grandson or granddaughter, or it may be an afflicted or retarded child. A death in the family at any age level calls for the support of all the living. Parents hold a place which can never be duplicated in this common happening.

Our day has not been a day when children were disinherited by their parents. Quite the contrary. What should be the spirit of the parents who have been disowned, disfranchised and disinherited by the kids? The same spirit as before.

Parents must remain parents and even more so as the children face their storm and stress. These common problems will one day bring together the families, and decrease the width of the generation gap. When the children have children of their own, more compatibility with the establishment will emerge. Togetherness of a permanent kind will then become the structure. Certain pews in the church will be occupied more frequently.

In the meantime it should not be considered a sin for parents to act like parents. Our tears should not be hidden, nor our concern covered. No apologies should be forthcoming for weeping at the funeral. A parent should not disclaim his parenthood. A hopeless vacuum would exist which would jeopardize God's brightest dreams should parents relinquish their posts as parents.

Let us hope that the common struggles of life, the ever abiding intercession of our advocate in heaven, our committed covenant with God and God's promise that children properly reared will never forsake Him totally, will bring our estranged families together again on a foundation, firmer than ever before.

Letters, thoughtful gifts, phone calls on special occasions, unceasing prayer and pure love will rebuild the finest of all institutions, the family.

The role and station of parenthood is ordained of God and will be sustained by our God, so let's just keep on being parents. Parents are important to God.

While there may be no marrying or giving in marriage in heaven God would be foolish indeed not to retain some of the family virtues. God is family oriented.

I must say it!

In this issue

On the cover

Luke's Gospel brings into focus the Christmas sometimes overlooked in the hurried and harried season—the Christ-birth.

Israel—part 2 6

The second in a series of articles by the editor explores the roots of religions which lie in Israel's heritage, focusing on Judaism and Christianity.

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Arkansas WMU has named a new staff member who will work with Baptist Women and Baptist Young Women.

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Sunday School lessons double up because there will be no issue Dec. 25. Two International Lessons and two Life and Work Lessons are included.

Child services act 24

Baptists should get the facts before opposing a piece of legislation on child care, about which false information abounds, say Baptist lobbyists.

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE

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NUMBER 50

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The incarnation

The editor's page

J. Everett Sneed



In a few more days Christmas will be only a memory. The nostalgia of the day will remain in our minds in varying degrees. Perhaps we will recall the happiness that comes with united families. Some will remember the splendor of the colorful decorations and the thrill of uniting our voices in song. But as the months pass on the memories will fade. Christmas is too important to be confined to only a fleeting day for it represents the greatest of all gifts.

The true message of Christmas is the incarnation. John tells us "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1) The declaration of the evangel is that Jesus was already present before the creation began.

John said "The Word was God." Hence, when we see Jesus we discover perfectly and completely the heart, mind, and character of God. Jesus and Jesus alone reveals to us all that God was, is, and will be.

The idea of the incarnation had been proclaimed long before John. Isaiah, the prince of the Old Testament prophets, said "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Is. 9:6)

The incarnation expresses man's capacity for God. If

man did not have the ability to receive God, God would not have sent his son into the world. Our human nature, then, is spiritual.

Closely related to the incarnation is the Virgin Birth. Both Matthew and Luke present Jesus as being born without a human father. Some argue that the miraculous conception is untrue because it is only stated on two occasions. First, it is not necessary to assert a fact repeatedly to make it correct.

The entire Bible gives credence to the Virgin Birth. As already noted, the preexistence of Christ is foretold in the Old Testament and is repeatedly stated in the New. If Jesus was God, one would expect him to be born in the unusual way.

Finally, the Virgin Birth is closely related to the way one views the saving work of Christ. If one views Jesus as a divine Saviour and the son of God, in an exclusive and peculiar sense, he is likely to believe in the Virgin Birth. But if one regards him as only a son of God as others are, he will doubtless deny the Virgin Birth.

During the Christmas season it is good to enjoy the closeness of loved ones and the beauty of all that surrounds the event. But if the day is to have its greatest meaning we should allow God's greatest gift to be the center of the event. As we magnify the incarnate Christ, the day will find meaning for every day of our lives.

Guest editorial

Family viewing time

The exploitation of sex and violence on television is a continuing national disgrace. When are the American people going to get relief from the serious problem of morally irresponsible television programming?

This fall the networks began a family viewing time, a period of two hours of programs which television network officials have deemed appropriate for general family viewing. How shall we evaluate this innovation? Does the family viewing time deal adequately with the problem of the exploitation of sex and violence on television? No. Absolutely not.

On May 22 of this year the staff of the Christian Life Commission was invited to present testimony before a public hearing on immoral television programming. At this hearing we asked if the family viewing time was an attempt to turn our attention from the other hours on television. We asked what the networks were going to do to clean up the exploitation during these other hours. Now that the new season has begun, these questions are more relevant and more pressing than ever.

Before we allow the networks to lead us in songs of praise for the so-called family viewing time, let us look at what is really happening. We are still bombarded by abnormal presentations of sex, sadistic depictions of violence, dirty jokes, and gross profanity. The networks

are still offering the American people so-called entertainment in which human beings are tortured, wounded, raped, whipped, punched, knifed, hanged, beaten, sliced, jabbed, shot, maimed, and murdered.

What we need from the networks is not the subterfuge of family viewing time; we need social responsibility time. The family viewing time appears to improve some programming for two hours, but it may be attempting to deceive us by drawing our attention from the frequently unhealthy programs during the other hours.

The key point is this: The networks should regulate themselves in order to behave themselves as responsible, civilized guests in the homes of the American people. The record plainly indicates that the networks have not done this. They are not doing it now. They are going just as far as they can in presenting the exploitation of sex, alcohol and drug abuse, and violence. To see the family viewing time as a solution to the problem of unwholesome television programming is to fall into the trap of listening to what the network businesses are claiming for themselves instead of looking at what the networks are actually showing.

The family viewing time scheme it appears was
(See 'Family Viewing Time' on page 5)



One layman's opinion

Daniel R. Grant / President, OBU

How to pray about Ouachita athletic contests

One of the more burning theological issues at Ouachita Baptist University in recent days has been the question of appropriate prayers concerning Ouachita athletic contests, especially with our long time powerful rival Henderson State University.

Some would argue that Ouachita has a tremendous inherent advantage over Henderson because separation of church and state forbids Henderson from having any official institutional involvement in prayer of other religious activities designed to provide spiritual power for an inter-collegiate contest. Ouachita, it is argued, can engage in official "prayer without ceasing" concerning the athletic contest. Still others argue persuasively that official institutional prayer is not nearly so vital as that of the individuals

themselves and that there is nothing to prevent individual students and faculty members at a state institution from praying without ceasing for any legitimate purpose. Most of the controversy revolves around the serious question of whether athletic contests really are "legitimate purposes" for anyone's prayer.

Take the prayer of Mrs. Leon (Rosie) Dunham, for example. On the evening before Ouachita's super-exciting Homecoming football victory over Henderson State University, by a score of 21-20, she concluded a prayer at our alumni board meeting by saying "and please let Ouachita beat Henderson!" There followed a very profound theological discussion on the possible need for adding "nevertheless Thy will be

done," or even the possibility that this was a very selfish prayer and that God is not interested in the outcome of the Ouachita-Henderson game. This is reminiscent of the cynical comment of Kaiser Wilhelm in World War I in reply to someone who asked whose side God was on. He is said to have replied, "God is on the side of the heavy artillery."

It was a few years ago in Fayetteville that Dr. Andrew Hall, pastor of First Church, placed the slogan in bold letters on the marquee in front of his church (shortly before one of the Texas-Arkansas shoot-outs): "Spiritual things are eternal and football is only a game; nevertheless, Beat Texas!"

When you get right down to it we will probably never know the relationship of prayer to Quarterback Billy Vining's last two sensational passes in the Ouachita-Henderson game. When your team is trailing by 20-14, and it is fourth down and 25 yards to go with less than two minutes remaining, historians may declare the completed pass to Gary Reese for 25 yards and one inch to be an amazing miracle. The same is true of the touchdown pass that followed to Ken Stuckey. However, it may well be that half of the screaming fans were praying for completions and the other half were praying for interceptions.

Honesty requires me to confess that I doubt seriously that God takes sides in football games. However, honesty also requires me to confess that I have breathed several prayers of thanksgiving for those two completed passes.

Family viewing time

(From page 4)

worked out behind closed doors by the Federal Communications Commission and the network officials. Evidently there was no public input in the decision to set it up. The FCC is supposed to be representing the American people; yet, it will not even hold hearings to deal with the just complaints of the people about social and morally irresponsible television programing. Here is another tragic example of a fact that a federal agency is insensitive to the American people it is supposed to serve. Here is another example of the regulator representing the regulatee instead of the public to whom it is supposed to be responsible.

According to news reports, a recent Neilson poll shows that at 9:30 at night, there are still 9.7 million children watching television. The family viewing time ends at 8:00 or 9:00 p.m., depending on where you are in the country (a curious inconsistency in itself!). What about the programing for these millions of children who are still watching television when the family viewing time is past?

The air waves belong to the American people; and the networks must quit ignoring their moral responsibility to such a large audience of children.

Television is a wonderful technological development. At its best it should be celebrated; but let us not be enticed by that industry into apathy by the family viewing time scheme. The exploitation of sex and violence is worse than ever. It is increasing. The family viewing time is an inadequate solution to the serious problem of immoral television programing. We must have something far better. —Harry N. Hollis Jr. Director of Family and Special Moral Concerns, Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

No paper next week

Because there will be no issue of the "Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine" on Dec. 25, Sunday School lessons for Sunday, Dec. 21, and for Sunday, Dec. 28, are included in this issue. Only 50 issues of the Newsmagazine are published each year.

Association marks debt repayment

When Liberty Association held their annual meeting this year they witnessed a burning and a drowning—of notes on debts, that is. The property and building for the associational offices was paid off, so the association burned that note at the meeting. The other note—on money borrowed to construct a swimming pool at the Beech Springs camp—was drowned instead of burned.

The religious significance of Israel

by the Editor
(Part two, of a three-part series)

Three world religions have deep roots in Israel. Two, Judaism and Christianity, had their inception in Israel. The Islam faith, although not born in Israel, does have many ancient and significant places of worship there. This article will deal only with Judaism and Christianity.

Many aspects of both the Jewish and Christian religions come into focus when one sees the actual surroundings. It is impossible to place many events completely in perspective through the written page.

The foundation of Christianity is Judaism; so it is impossible to separate the two religions. The purpose of this article, then, will be a brief look at a few of the places of religious interest. In each instance the effort is to highlight or clarify an understanding of some portion of Bible background.

Jerusalem

Jerusalem is the most important Hebrew city of Bible times. It was the national capital of Israel during various periods of history and still is today. Located on hills near springs, it is at least 3,000 years old.

The City of David has indelibly stamped in her soil words and deeds of the Judeo-Christian heritage. The name "Jerusalem" means "peace," yet many bloody wars have raged about her.

The half-square mile of the old city shelters many shrines of Judaism, Christendom, and Islam. Many call it "The holiest half-square mile on earth."

In the old ruins of the temple there are various types of architecture. Each of the two later temples, Zerubbael and Herod's, were built in connection with or on the ruins of Solomon's temple foundation.

It was Herod's temple in which Jesus worshiped. The temple was completed in the 18th year of Herod's reign or in 19 B.C. During the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the Jews themselves used the temple as a fortress. After the conquest, the Romans threw down the walls, destroying the temple.

As one observes the ancient ruins, the place of worship almost comes to life. One can imagine the busy sale of sacrificial animals in the outer court (or the Court of the Gentiles). You almost visualize the men and the women going to their separate places of worship.

The separation of each area—the Court of the Gentiles, Court of the Women, Court of the Men, Holy Place where the priest serves, and the Holy of Holies —

rings through the mind of the observer. One remembers the ancient Greek inscription forbidding the non-Jew to go beyond the Court of the Gentiles which said "Let no Gentile enter inside of the barrier and the fence around the sanctuary. Anyone trespassing will bring death upon himself as a penalty."

Even today the area which is believed to be the place of the Holy of Holies is avoided by the Orthodox Jew. It was



The lower courses of stones in the Jerusalem Wall (right) date back to the time of King Herod. To the right, on Mount Zion, is the Tomb of David and the Church of the Dormition.

between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies that the veil of the temple was rent in twain at Christ's death. (Mark 15:38)

As one walks up the Via Dolorosa (The way of sorrows) where Jesus carried the cross, it is easy to imagine the event. The old twisting narrow streets makes a visitor feel that he has turned back the clock 2,000 years. The general route that Jesus walked carrying the cross is accepted by almost all Bible students. It is probable that the actual ground where Jesus walked is several feet deeper than the streets of today.

The sites of Jesus' burial and crucifixion are debated.

Those outside the city wall are the

most plausible, since execution and burial were forbidden by Jewish law within the city. The most logical location then would be north of Jerusalem.

Some visitors are disturbed by the numerous churches which are erected over locations (or supposed locations) of significant events. It is likely, however, that these locations would have been lost except for the churches.

Nazareth

Nazareth is a town of Galilee where Joseph and Mary lived. It is the place where Jesus was brought up and spent the greater part of the 30 years prior to his entering his public ministry.

The Monks point to sites for the annunciation of the birth of Jesus, the ruins of the home of Joseph and the ruins of the home of Mary. Although the sites are in the vicinity of the original ones, most scholars do not believe they are authentic.

In the midst of the garden, however, is the Fountain of the Virgin, where scholars believe Mary went frequently to obtain water for her household.

As one walks down the street of old Nazareth, he can easily imagine that the calendar has been turned back and that he is here to visit Mary and Joseph, or perhaps, even Jesus. The busy market place, the narrow streets, and the smell of spices mingled with onions, grapes, and artichokes, all captivate the mind of the visitor.

Nazareth, today, is scheduled to be the administrative center of lower Galilee. Its population numbers about 40,000. Approximately half of the people are Christian, representing five denominations. Most of the remainder are Moslem. There is a recently-established Jewish community in the newer township of Nazareth.

Masada

Masada is the ruins of a massive fortress on the mountain top in the Jordan desert overlooking the Dead Sea. The sheared cliffs of the mountain and its remoteness remove the area from normal human habitation. Yet, the difficult approach explains its choice as a location for a fortress.

Masada has been intimately involved in many periods of history. The first temple was erected on the site in the tenth to seventh century B.C. The greatest development of the area, however, came under Herod the Great. Some of the developments made under his leadership

included an extensive fortification surrounding the plateau on the top of the mountain, a northern palace, a western palace, villas, store rooms, a bath house and a water storage system.

Herod developed the fortress as a refuge from any emerging danger. He feared that the Jewish people might depose him and put a king on the throne from the Royal House. But his greatest fear was of Cleopatra, queen of Egypt.

From a military standpoint the beginning of the great revolution against Rome started in 66 A.D. A group of Zealots captured Masada from the Roman garrisons which had occupied it since the death of Herod.

The Jews are truly a unique people. Being a Jew involves blood, religion, and a commitment to the territory of Israel. The Zealots had a resurgence of all these elements. They said "For from olden times we have undertaken to serve neither the Romans nor any other lords, except God only, for he alone rules over man in truth and justice." (From the oration of El'azar, Jewish War, Book 7)

Masada was never in the forefront of the fighting. It remained on the sideline and became a refuge for Zealots or desperate elements.

The Zealots' purpose was to isolate themselves and organize their religious life to the fullest. They provided for their religious needs, for example, by erecting a synagogue and ritual baths. The revolution which began in 66 A.D. ended in 70 A.D. with the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. But Masada, the banner of the insurrection, remained for another three years. In 72 A.D., Silva sent out the 10th Legion numbering some 10,000 to 15,000. The population in Masada was exactly 967 persons.

The Romans made a dam of dirt to protect themselves from the rocks and stones which the few Zealots cast down. Finally, when the wall was breached, the Zealots were faced with their final decision. Their choice was "We shall die before becoming slaves to the enemy, and remain free as we leave the land of the living - we, our wives, and our children."

In El'azar's final oration he said in part "If only we had all died before seeing the

Sacred City utterly destroyed by enemy hands, the Holy Sanctuary so impiously uprooted! But since an honourable ambition deluded us into thinking that perhaps we should succeed in avenging her of her enemies, and now all hope has fled, abandoning us to our fate, let us at once choose death with honour and do the kindest thing we can for ourselves, our wives and children, while it is still possible to show ourselves any kindness. After all we were born to die, we and those we brought into the world: this even the luckiest must face. But outrage, slavery, and the sight of our wives led away to shame with our children - these are not evils to which man is subject by the laws of nature men undergo them through their own cowardice if they have a chance to forestall them by death and will not take it."

Much of this same dedication and commitment has been a part of Jewish heritage. To understand the Jew of the past and the present, one must see this total commitment.

The mountain of Masada on the Dead Sea was the site of the stronghold of the last of the Jewish rebels against Rome, and the place of their suicide. The square walls are the site of one of the siege camps at the base of the mountain.



Preaching has been the prevalent means of communication among Baptists. History records many of their names. A favorite son who demonstrated this art in a most eloquent, but practical manner, was Dr. John A. Broadus, Scholar, university and seminary professor, favorite of students, President of Southern Seminary, denominational leader, and in every sense a Christian gentleman Dr. Broadus stamped his imprint upon the heart and life of Baptists.

On Dec. 14, 1854, his essay "The Best Mode and Preparation of the Delivery of Sermons" was published in the *Religious Herald*. He was 28 years old. This paper served the basis of his book *The preparation and delivery of sermons* 16 years later. The book was the result of carefully prepared lectures which Dr. Broadus delivered to the one, blind student in his homiletics class in Southern Seminary when it opened, Nov. 1, 1865, immediately following the Civil War.

This book was proved to be of inestimable value to preachers in their work.

and that's how it happened in Baptist life 110 years ago.

A.T. Robertson, *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus*, American Baptists Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1901, pp 122-123



MISSIONARY AWARD— Ouachita Baptist University President Dr. Daniel R. Grant (L) presents the Director of Associational Missions of the Year Award to Hugh Owen of Malvern, director for Central Association. The University's annual award was given at a banquet honoring all the directors of associational missions of Arkansas Dec. 2 at OBU. Owen, who retires this year after 18 years serving Central Association, is being provided a house in Malvern in appreciation for his service. Owen was a pastor before becoming director of missions. He and his wife have two sons, both graduates of Ouachita.

Letter to the editor

On ordaining women

I read the *Arkansas Baptist* with interest each week. It is indeed a joy to read the many thought provoking articles. The editorials by Dr. Ashcraft of Oct. 16 and Nov. 20 were so good that I saved them for future use. I also enjoy the articles each week by Doctors Sneed and Grant. Yet, I must take exception to the editorial in the Dec. 4 issue by Dr. Ashcraft on "Ordaining Women."

I shall limit my discussion to three points:

(1) Biblical—how do we dispose of I Timothy, Chapter 3 and Titus Chapter 1 if we ordain women as ministers? Though I, in essence, can accept the position of Dr. Ashcraft on proper utilization of people who are trained—he failed to mention one thing: The Holy Spirit does not act contrary to the scriptures! Oh, I suppose it could be debated that Paul did not really mean what we think he meant. But, to find a woman the "husband of one wife" is very basic. If you discard this teaching in the bible, then please don't

burden me about tongues, tithing, church attendances, and many other things we hold dear. Once you take the door down—you must let the flies in with whatever else may fly in too.

(2) Logic—I can find no place in the Bible where it even implies that education, or lack of it for that matter, is the key to the calling of the Holy Spirit. Thus, education before God's call must be placed secondary to obedience to his will. After the call though, the Bible teaches that "We must study to show ourselves approved." In the Nov. 13 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist*, Erwin L. McDonald's article "Finding God's Will" applies here very well. We many times conclude that because such and such appears to be "ideal" and "best" for us, it must be God's will. Not so! The reverse may be just as true—possibly many times more than we know.

(3) Historically—if one uses the New Testament as a guide, never does God place a woman as the minister. True,

there were many women such as Aquila and Prisca who apparently were of great significance, or they would not be mentioned. Yet, it does not imply that they were ministers. I have two daughters and two sons, and I have prayed that God might call any or all of them. Yet, I have no fear that my daughters will be ministers—though there are many other positions where they can be used of God.

Dr. Ashcraft, I pray that God will continue to call our sons and daughters by the thousands for his work. Yet, I think we must be very careful not to allow the "Pressures of the times" to cloud our thinking about God and the Bible. My daughters are not inferior to my sons—but I am not God either. If the Bible says that a minister must be the "Husband of one wife," I will have to leave the reasons to God. But, I will tell my daughters what He says. I can do no other. — Bob Mathis, Mountain Home

Staff changes

David C. George, pastor of First Church, Stuttgart, since 1969, has resigned to accept the pastorate of Immanuel Church, Nashville, Tenn., effective Jan 15. Dr. George, a native of Monroe, La., has been pastor in Jack County, Tex. and was assistant to the pastor of First Church, Shreveport La., before coming to Stuttgart. He holds the B.A. degree from Howard Payne College, Brownwood, Tex., and the B.D. and Th.D. degrees from Southwestern Seminary. Dr. George was chairman of the Advisory Committee for Baptist Student Union in Arkansas in 1974 and 1975. He is a member of the 1975 Committee on Boards for the Southern Baptist Convention, and a member of the corporation of the Baptist Medical Center Systems, Little Rock. He is married to the former Peggy Ratliff of San Antonio, Tex. They are the parents of a daughter and two sons.



Dr. George



Hayes

William D. Hayes is the new pastor of First Church, Corning. He graduated in May from Southern Seminary. He had served for 10 years as a youth director in Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Hayes is a graduate of Ouachita University and holds the M.R.E. degree from Southwestern Seminary. He has written for Baptist publications, including the *Church Recreation Magazine*. Hayes and his wife, the former Alice Louise Hall of Hernando, Miss., are the parents of two sons.

Lloyd A. Sparkman, associate pastor of Tabernacle Church, Little Rock, has taken a leave of absence to serve as interim pastor of Calvary Church, North Little Rock.

Bill Bailey has accepted the pastorate of Pines Church, Quitman. He is a native of Conway and a student at University of Central Arkansas. Bailey is married to the former Anne Watkins. They are the parents of a daughter.

Wed 50 years

Mr. and Mrs. John Griffis, members of Sylvan Hills Church, North Little Rock, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary Dec. 7. They were married Dec. 5, 1925, in Lonoke. Mrs. Griffis is the former Maggie Autry.

The couple are the parents of two sons, and they have four grandchildren.

New WMU state staffer has missions background



Willene Pierce

A visit to a Choctaw reservation at the age of 13 was the beginning of an interest in missions for Willene Pierce, new Baptist Women-Baptist Young Women Director for Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union. This interest grew and during her college days at Oklahoma Baptist University she was an active member of an Indian Mission for two years.

After her graduation from Oklahoma Baptist University she taught school for five years before enrolling at Southwestern at Ft. Worth where she received her master of religious education Degree in 1971.

During these years she continued to work each summer with the Indians in Vacation Bible Schools and other events. Her missions interest expanded when,

she served as youth director, she led in a Vacation Bible School in the Rio Grande Valley, and later as she worked for a summer at the Friendship Center at Casper, Wyo.

In her family of four sisters and a brother, two other girls are involved directly in missions. One sister has worked with the Christian Service Corps and another, Mrs. Bill Sargent, with her husband, is serving as a Southern Baptist missionary to Korea.

Miss Julia Ketner, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of Arkansas WMU said, "I am grateful to God for leading Willene Pierce to us. Her spiritual depth, leadership abilities, vitality and enthusiasm for the work will make her a valuable addition to our staff."

Mid-winter Bible conference set

The annual mid-winter Bible conference will be held at Spring Lake Assembly at Lonsdale Jan. 12-16. Ministers will take part in Bible study from the historical and critical, personal, doctrinal, and practical perspectives. They also will discuss four aspects of the minister and his ministry, and four men will speak on preaching.

In the evenings they will hear Graydon Hardister, missionary to Jordan, and Bernes K. Selph, pastor of First Church, Benton.

Further information can be obtained from Bernes K. Selph, First Baptist Church, Benton, Ark. 72015



Mr. and Mrs. John Griffis

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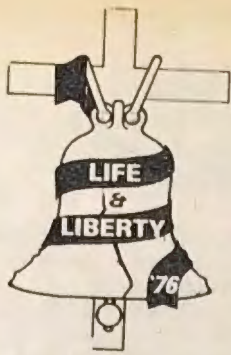
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Little Rock, Arkansas

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by R. Wilbur Herring

1,776 minutes of prayer will be a tremendous launching pad for our '76 Life and Liberty Campaign. It is hoped that every church will observe this 1,776 minutes of prayer preceding the bicentennial year of 1976.



Dr. Herring

Our State Prayer Committee has asked the Brotherhoods of the churches to promote this prayer program preceding the year 1976. It might be, however, that your church does not have a Brotherhood and the Prayer Committee of your Life and Liberty Campaign Steering Committee will need to promote these minutes and hours of prayer.

Someone has figured out that the prayer program will have to start at 6:24 p.m. Tuesday night December 30 and end at midnight Dec. 31.

Most of the prayer chairmen have recruited their prayer warriors by having the time blocked off in 30 minute periods and having the people to commit themselves for half an hour or an hour's prayer time.

It will take some work and some prayer to enlist your people in this 1,776 minutes of prayer but nothing will be able to give the power to our '76 Life and Liberty Campaign like starting the year with this prayer time. Most of the churches have always observed a midnight service on December 31 and so many of the churches start with the supper on Wednesday night December 31 and have a solid program up to the midnight hour.

Whatever arrangement you need to make, please observe these 1,776 minutes of prayer with all of your other Baptist brethren over the state that our Lord might hear our prayers and bless the Life and Liberty Campaign to His honor and glory.

Prayer is the main thing. Prayer is the first thing. Prayer is imperative if we are to reap the souls and proclaim the gospel.



Woman's viewpoint

Iris O'Neal Bowen

His promise fulfilled

Silently, silently, Mary is resting,
Holding the Peace of the World near her heart,
Pondering upon the plan and the purpose,
Thankful and willing that she be a part.

Distantly, distantly, music is falling,
Carried on wings of angels in flight,
Filling the air with anthems of gladness,
Pouring their praises into the night.

Awed by the wonder, the shepherds go searching,
Led by some power to a small manger-bed,
Kneeling to worship, and instantly knowing
This is the Savior to which they are led.

Far across deserts, the eastern star shining,
Telling the Magi that this is the day
That Jesus is born. It beckons them onward,
Leading and guiding and lighting their way.

In Bethlehem the people are sleeping,
Still unaware that in their small town
God's greatest miracle now is completed,
His promise fulfilled and Heaven's come down.

Providing for the pastor

(7th in a series of 15)

A minister finds himself in a unique position in relation to federal tax laws, some of which are not even consistent or always equitable. One of these paradoxes occurs at the point of Social Security tax.

Under present law, every minister of the gospel is required by law to be covered by Social Security and to pay Social Security taxes. The only exception to this are those ministers who sign and file a specific form indicating that they are conscientiously opposed to such coverage. Very few ministers have been able to sign such a statement, even if they might think it desirable to be excluded.

The strange part of the law is that the minister is covered as a self-employed person, even though he may be paid entirely by salary. As a self-employed person, his tax rate is higher than that of the ordinary salaried employee, since the employer makes no contribution in his name. This means that the minister this year, whose salary requires him to be

covered for the maximum, is paying more than \$1,000 in Social Security taxes.

Since he is classified as self-employed, the church (as employer) is not allowed by law to pay the Social Security tax for him. However, some churches have desired to assist their pastors with this major expense and have budgeted an amount for that purpose. In those cases, the church can legally assist the pastor by giving him the amount designated for Social Security, but he must include it as taxable income when he files his income tax return.

If a minister enters Social Security at an early age, and if his church participates in the retirement plan provided by the Annuity Board, the combination of these two should provide an adequate retirement income when he reaches retirement age. Churches have a responsibility to see that such provision is made and should be aware that Social Security coverage is required and is expensive.—Roy F. Lewis, Secretary, Stewardship-Cooperative Program

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for all 1975 issues of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

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Foreign Mission Board REPORTS

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Foreign Mission Board, SBC
P.O. Box 6597
Richmond, Virginia 23230

In search of the King

Matthew 2:1-12

Dec. 21, 1975

It is fitting at Christmas time that we should re-examine the birth of Christ. This is the greatest historical event ever recorded. Regardless of how many times we may review this beautiful story there is always some fresh, new insight that warms our hearts. It never loses its appeal.

In this lesson we will join the Wise Men in their search for Jesus the King.

How the search began

(Matt. 2:1-2)

Matthew's is the only one of the four gospels that records the visit of the Magi. Matthew records such incidents of the birth and infancy of Jesus as would point up the fact that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the King of the Jews.

At first glance it might seem the writer had missed the point in recording the visit of the Wise Men from the East. These Wise Men in search of the Christ child were from the Gentile world. That strengthens the case. The homage these men paid the Christ child is one of the strongest proofs of his Messiahship.

How did these men, probably from Persia, Arabia, or Babylonia, become so interested in the birth of Christ? Where did they get their information?

At that time many Jews of the Dispersion were scattered over the East. Though these Jews were in a strange land, cut off from their people and place of worship, they carried in their hearts the hope that the Messiah would come. The Magi may have received some knowledge of Israel's hope from these Jews. Also, we do well to remember that the holy expectation that the Messiah would be born was a universal expectation. It was shared by many outside of Palestine.

There is reason to believe that God used the knowledge the Magi gained from the study of the stars to speak to them concerning Christ's birth. They began to follow the light they had at that time. Naturally they came to Jerusalem inquiring where the King had been born because the current belief in their country pointed to Judea. It was a logical thing for them to go first to Herod, the king in the capitol of the country, in their search for the new born king.

Reactions to the search

(Matt. 2:3-8)

God had acted. The Magi realized that "the desire of all nations" had appeared. They were excited. These Gentiles from the East showed greater responsiveness to divine revelation than Herod and the religious leaders in Jerusalem.

Herod was troubled and filled with alarm when he heard the report of the

Magi. He was not alone in this reaction. The whole city was disturbed with him. The reason for this agitation of the people was not far to seek. It all stemmed from the savage, murderous spirit of Herod.

Herod (called Herod the Great) was part Idumean, part Jew. He was appointed king of Judea by the Roman Senate in 40 B.C., having been sponsored by Anthony. He gained full power in 37 B.C.

Only a short while before the Magi arrived on the scene Herod slew many of the relatives of his wife. Eventually he ordered the death of his wife Mariamne, and later the death of his mother-in-law. In his rage of jealousy toward anyone who might supplant him on the throne of Palestine he secured the death of his two favorite sons, Alexander and Aristobulus. The city reacted with fear to the revenge of this cruel and cunning king.

Against this background we can readily understand why Herod got a quick, definite reply from the High Priests and Scribes of the people when he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. They hastened to reply: "In Bethlehem of Judea: for so it stands written through the prophet." These men spent many hours copying the Hebrew Scriptures, and knew at once the definite prophecy in Micah 5:2.

The High Priests showed no interest in the possibility of their Messiah's birth. It is an amazing thing how much they knew and what little use they made of it. They quickly pointed to the place where the Lord was to be born, but never troubled themselves to make the journey to look upon the Lord Messiah from heaven. The Wise Men alone made the journey, following the star to Bethlehem.

Herod called the Magi together secretly, and apart from the Priests to inquire of them accurately the time that had elapsed since the star appeared. He was already making plans for a search in Bethlehem among the male children whose age fell within the period since the star appeared.

He made pretense to the Magi that he himself wanted to pay homage to the recent-born King. He made them the unconscious instruments of his bloody plan to destroy Jesus. He directed them to continue their search, seek out accurate information concerning the child and bring back a report to him. The deceit of Herod seemed complete. Humanly speaking the Child's life was doomed. But all human strategy fails when the God of providence intervenes.

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The end of the search (Matt. 2:9-12)

The men from the East received information about the place of the birth. Apparently they accepted the friendly invitation: from Herod, at least for the moment, to search further for the King.

As the men left Jerusalem behold a miracle happened before their eyes. The star which they saw at its rising appeared once more and went before them. It kept on going in front of them, until coming it stood over where the child was. The Magi rejoiced with exceeding joy when they saw the star.

Approximately a year and a half had elapsed since they saw it. Their hopes grew brighter as it reappeared and stood over the house, probably a house to which Joseph and Mary had moved soon after the birth.

Some have tried to explain the character of this star from the standpoint of a natural occurrence in the movement of the stars. There are certain facts in the history of oriental astrology which indicates an unusual conjunction of stars at that time. Chinese astrologists testify to the appearance of an unusual comet. All of this happened around the time the Magi left Jerusalem.

The Wise Men said "we saw his star." The expression "his star," and the Greek word for star does not indicate a group of stars. The whole supernatural atmosphere of the birth of Christ would lead us to conclude that the star was miraculous.

The Magi had special supernatural guidance as they followed "his star" from Jerusalem to the house of Joseph in Bethlehem. Its no wonder they rejoiced. At the end of a long journey they found more than learning could give. They found more than wealth could buy. They found the king of righteousness and peace.

When these Gentile emissaries from a far away country came into the house they saw for the first time the new-born King. They worshiped with a homage which is given only to a king. They brought gold, a fitting gift for a king. They brought frankincense, the incense usually offered to their dieties. They brought myrrh, which signified death because it was used in embalming. These were doubtless the most appropriate products of their own country, which they could present as offerings. These were symbolic of the tribute of the nations to the King of Kings.

We do not know how many were in the party of journeymen from the East in
(Continued on page 23)

Wrestling with temptation

Dec. 28, 1975

Matthew 4:1-11

Our study last week led us on a journey with the Wise Men in search of the King. These were men of faith. The desire of their hearts was satisfied when they saw the Christ Child.

In this lesson the king is about to begin his public ministry. The intervening years from infancy to the beginning of his public ministry are referred to as the silent years. Little is recorded of his life and activities in that period.

Immediately following his baptism, Jesus is engaged in combat with the devil, his enemy and ours.

Tempted to misuse his power (Matt. 4:1-4)

The problem of how Jesus could be tempted has always been a disturbing matter. Though he did not yield to the temptations the fact that he might have is definitely implied. Christ was a real human being and his unfallen nature was capable of sinning. Temptation was felt and overcome.

Though Jesus was human and capable of sinning, yet by virtue of his divine nature and the indwelling spirit, it was morally impossible that he should sin. He was tempted both to commit positive evil and shrink from doing the right.

The first temptation was in the sphere of the physical appetites. After 40 days of fasting Jesus was hungry. This temptation and the others is a type. Mankind is tempted in the realm of physical appetites and passions. Appetite is not sinful but its wrong use and gratification is sin. The use of our God-given power to satisfy and gratify ourselves defeats God's purpose in us.

In a very subtle way Satan seeks to destroy the faith of Jesus in God's work of approval and sanction at the baptism. The Heavenly Father had said, "Thou art my Son in whom I am well pleased." In the approach Satan does not deny the father-son relationship. He acknowledges such relationship, but places it on the same level as any one of God's children. This was an effort to instill doubt in the mind of Jesus that he was to pursue a ministry and mission that would take him to the cross.

The temptation of the devil was for Jesus to rationalize concerning the Father's will rather than to exercise faith. He had been led by the Spirit into the desert wastes. His body was overcome with hunger. Satan's suggestion is that God should provide bread for his hungry body in order that he might continue in his intense study of the plans of the kingdom. If God was not willing to do that in a miraculous way, was Jesus more

than a mere son, just as any other creature? Why should he not use his miraculous power to change "these stones," lying at his feet, into loaves? Thus subtly did Satan tempt Jesus to be disloyal to God and distrust his providence.

If Jesus had yielded, he would have put himself outside the circle of common human experience. He came from heaven to be incarnate as a man. If he had used his power as Son to satisfy his hunger by a super-human miracle this would have undone the incarnation. He would have refused to live as a man. By the sweat of the brow man is to gain his bread. For Christ to refuse to live the life of a man would be to turn aside from the great mission that brought him into the world.

It is interesting to note that Jesus chose as his weapon of defense in these temptations the word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit. In this he serves as our example. Our life is to be ordered in the Word and Will of God. In the Word there are cases and examples to suite every situation. We are not to live by appetite alone. Our life is to be lived entirely in the elective purpose of God.

The Father could sustain the life of Jesus Christ, his Son, in the ordinary or the extraordinary way. The Son should not distrust either his Father's ability or desire to do what was best for him. A chief device of Satan is to make man believe that bread, in that which represents of material prosperity and substance, is the supreme thing in life. In the moment of victory over temptation Jesus strikes at the very foundation of selfishness. There are many other things more important than bread for a man's life. Man should seek to make a life and not a mere living.

Tempted to abuse his relationship (Matt. 4:5-7)

In the second temptation, Satan suggests a measure of daring and heroic confidence and seeks to involve Jesus in presumption. The suggestion is that Jesus jump from the pinnacle of the Temple and depend on the Father to bear him up. He urges that if he is a son of God he has the right to presume on God's special providence. Satan insists that he put providence to the test.

Again, the devil, in a very astute way takes the weapon of the Word from the hands of Jesus as he makes his attack. "Thus it is written," he said, then he

quotes Psalm 91:11-12. Satan leaves out one very important phrase "to keep thee in all thy ways." In addition to leaving a phrase out the devil misinterprets the whole passage. The promise of protection is for the normal course of life, not acts of presumption.

Jesus struggles with the methods he would use to present himself to the people. In the background of the temptation to jump from the pinnacle of the Temple was the popular idea of what his kingdom was to be like, and how it would be established. Contrary to the teachings of the Old Testament prophets the Jews believed the Messiah would come and set up a splendid political kingdom in a spectacular way. This kingdom was to be world-wide, with Jerusalem at its center. The Jews did not give the moral and spiritual elements first place in the concept of the kingdom. Their concept was material and political.

Satan suggests that Jesus use the spectacular to gain control of his kingdom. If Jesus would ally himself to these messianic hopes he would at once receive the popular acclaim and leadership of Israel. It was expected that the Messiah would suddenly appear in the Temple in a spectacular way.

Jesus takes the sword of the Spirit once more. v. 7 "Again it stands written," he said, "thou shalt not put to the test the Lord thy God." Satan had said "it is written." Jesus retorted, "again it is written." The word "again" is emphatic. It is as if he had said, "Satan, the promise which you quote must be explained by another passage of scripture." Herein lies the secret of our safety and defense against all distorted use of isolated passages in holy scripture. Much confusion, distortion and error can be avoided if we enter into the unity of scripture.

"Thou shalt not put to the test the Lord thy God." Jesus quoted Deut. 6:16, and declared by this reference to Israel that testing is not trusting. He was tempted to take into his own hands the work of his ministry and make God responsible for his success.

The man Jesus will not use the Divine Son's power or supernatural resources to establish by improper means his kingdom. He will follow God's plan of a long period of development and his ideal of a spiritual kingdom. If we trust God completely, we will not doubt in the least or seek to put his work to the test.

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(Continued on page 23)

What can we give him?

Dec. 21, 1975

Matthew 2:1-12



Cupples

For the study of this lesson we will step aside from our progress through the book of Matthew to turn back to an appropriate passage to study on this Sunday before Christmas Day. Our study today concerns the visit of

magi to the Child Jesus.

The title of our lesson today is in the form of a question. What can we give Him? Christmas time is a time of gift giving. If it were not for Christmas shopping, our economy would be in a far more serious predicament than it is. Though we have been told that "it is more blessed to give than receive," it is a joy to receive gifts at Christmas. We exchange gifts among our families and friends, but what have we given Jesus on his birthday? When it comes to gifts given and received at Christmas time, each of us have received the highest kind of gift. God sent his Son Jesus to be born in order that we may receive the forgiveness of sin and the abundant, eternal life.

Let us learn from the magi what we can give Jesus in return.

What can we give him our faith

(Vss. 1-8)

These men from the east exercised faith when they followed the star to Jerusalem and Bethlehem. These men were probably not kings as tradition would lead us to believe. They were magi, wise men who studied astrology, medicine and natural science. The number of men is not known. Tradition has given us the numbers from three to 12. The number three is suggested because three different gifts were given. These men had been studying the stars when a new, bright star appeared. Attempts have been made to explain away the star by calling it a comet or a conjunction of the planets. This star moved at will and stopped at will; that is, at the will of God. Why not accept this star as a special placed star? God made the other stars, why not this one, too?

Stars were thought in those days to announce a great event in history, like the birth of a king. The magi followed the star to Jerusalem to find the king who was born. These were the days of King Herod. This king was known for his benevolence but far greater was known for his murderous fear of losing his

throne. He murdered many of his family members for fear of losing his throne. When he heard of the birth of the King of the Jews, his fear was aroused.

King Herod requested a quick but thorough study to determine where a king might be born. According to Micah 5:2, the king was to be born in Bethlehem. The conniving king sent the magi off to Bethlehem to find the newborn king. The magi were then to return to tell King Herod. The magi were left with the impression that King Herod desired to worship the new-born king as well; but in reality murder was on his mind.

One gift we can give Jesus on his birthday is our unquestioning faith. As the magi embarked on a journey with many questions unanswered, God calls upon us to follow His will one step at a time. God has a purpose and plan for each of our lives. The beginning of the plan is when we, in childlike faith, trust Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. Faith does not stop at the moment of conversion but only begins. Daily we are called upon to exercise faith in Jesus Christ in what we do and where we go. One of the greatest gifts given to Jesus would be the exercise of faith to accept Jesus as Savior; or if already a child of God, to renew that commitment to Jesus in daily living and service.

What can we give him our worship

(Vss. 9-11a)

The magi with their newly acquired information saw the star again, and it moved before them until it stopped over the house where the Child was. Despite what the nativity scenes show, Jesus was not in the manger when the magi appeared. He was in the house with his mother. The age of Jesus at this point is unknown but by the choice of the word child, we assume he was no longer an infant. When the magi saw the star and saw that it stopped over a particular house, they rejoiced and went into the house, fell down and worshipped Jesus. True worship always includes rejoicing.

Another gift we should give Jesus on his birthday or any time is the gift of worship. Worship may take on many forms. It could be a regular or special worship service during the Christmas season. Choirs are presenting special Christmas Cantatas, children are preparing special Christmas programs, special caroling activities are being conducted. Our Christmas worship is as varied as people are varied. Worship is more than a formal or informal church

service. Worship is an attitude of the heart. Worship is recognizing God for who and what He is, recognizing our own needs, permitting God to move in our lives and responding to that need in definite decision of heart and action.

We can give him our possessions

(Vss. 11b-12)

The magi, upon entering the house where the young child Jesus was, fell down, worshipped him and gave the gifts they had brought. Gift giving to a king from visitors was a common practice of that day as it is today. The gifts that were given by the magi—gold, frankincense and myrrh—were symbolic gifts. The gold was symbolic of the kingship of Jesus. The frankincense was symbolic of the priesthood of Jesus. The myrrh was symbolic of the death of Jesus.

The magi were warned by God not to return to Jerusalem and report the birth of Jesus to King Herod. In response to God's warning, the men returned to their homes, after a successful journey, by a different route which did not include passing through Jerusalem.

There is truly much to be learned from the presentation of gifts to Jesus by the magi. What is it we can give to Jesus on his birthday? First of all, we can give him our spiritual commitment. (John 3:16) We can give him our bodies in Christian service. (Romans 12:1-2) We can give him our possessions. (I Corinthians 16:2)

Christmas Day is now upon us. The Christmas shopping is about over. What have you given Jesus for his birthday? Some, perhaps, need to make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Others may need to make some Christian dedication of life, talents or time. While even others need to make some definite stewardship commitment of possessions to Jesus. Some have found the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions an excellent opportunity to express love for Jesus through possessions at Christmas time. Whatever your need is, if you will give that gift which the Holy Spirit leads you to give, you will have a very Merry Christmas.

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How people respond to God's word

Dec. 28, 1975

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23



Cupples

This lesson is the conclusion of the Unit, "What Will You Do With Jesus?" The question is, how will people respond to God's word? This is a timely question on this last Sunday of the year. We are faced with the new year of 1976. The

new year is a time of looking back over the past twelve months and looking forward to the possibilities of the new year. How you respond to God's word today and during the new year will certainly determine the joy or sorrow that the new year offers.

Today's lesson deals with, perhaps, the best known of all the parables of Jesus. Known by many names (Parable of the Sower, Parable of the Soils, for instance), this parable speaks directly to the question of the response to God's word.

The parable used

(Vss. 1-3a)

The popularity of Jesus was at a high point. The multitudes flocked to see Jesus, the miracle worker and master teacher. The house where Jesus was staying probably had become too crowded. Jesus left the house and went to the seaside. With a ship as his pulpit and rostrum and the sea shore as the pews, Jesus spoke to the people in parables. The best definition of a parable that I have read is "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning." Oftentimes the only words remembered from the preacher's sermon is a story or illustration that was used. Jesus used the parables as illustrations or simple stories to carry a spiritual truth. He used well-known objects and situations to demonstrate his message.

In order to understand the parables of Jesus, there must first be an understanding of what the parable said to the original hearers. Then applications can be made to present-day situations. The parable method of teaching is a successful tool of presenting a timely message.

The Parable Told

(Vss. 3b-9)

The parable under consideration tells of a farmer, a sower of seed, who went out to his field to sow seed. The method of seed sowing of the first century and of today are quite different. In a day when farmers have sophisticated tractors and planters, it is hard to imagine the sower

going out to sow by casting the seed across the prepared field at the mercy of the wind and birds.

Naturally, with this type of sowing, not all the seeds fell on prepared ground. Some of the seeds fell on the walkways between fields. The walkways were packed hard because of the traffic. The seeds did not fall into the soil but remained on top. Therefore, the birds came along and devoured the seed.

Other seeds fell in shallow soil. A layer of rock was located just below the surface of the soil. Not enough depth in the soil and the warmth caused by the sun on the rocks prevented the plants from ever reaching maturity.

Other seeds fell where the sower had worked hard to remove all the roots of the thornbushes but not all had been removed. The competition for the nutrients of the soil caused the plants to be limited in growth.

But there were seeds that fell on the good ground. One would like to think that most of the seeds fell on the ground that had been adequately prepared to receive the seeds. When the seeds reached maturity, the fruit came forth in abundance. Varying amounts of fruit were harvested but all were bearing fruit.

The parable explained

(Vss. 18-23)

The disciples sometimes had difficulty in understanding the teachings of Jesus even though the teachings were simple. Jesus was patient with them and explained the parable in detail.

The sower is probably a reference to Jesus himself. In his brief ministry, Jesus was sowing the seed about salvation and eternal life. Soon Jesus would be returning to the Father, leaving the disciples to be the sowers of seed. From one generation of Christians to the next is passed the responsibility of sowing the seed of the Word of God.

The seed falling on different types of soil refer to the way the word of God is received in the lives of people then and today. There are people on whom the Word of God falls but they turn a deaf ear to the instructions of the word. Their ears seem only to be in tune with Satan's instructions. These are the people who are determined not to receive the word of God. Such were the seeds falling on the wayside.

The seed falling on the stony soil represent those who hear the word of God, seemingly rejoice over hearing the word, but soon turn away from their hearing. These are the people who make

an emotional decision but not a spiritual one. Expecting all problems to miraculously disappear they are unable to handle the problems, temptations, and trials when they come. They are unable to cope because their decision was only superficial and did not have depth.

The seed falling among the thorns are those who hear the word of God and accept it but return to the same old habits, temptations and clutter to be choked by Satan and sin. These are the Christians who never quite makes a go of being fruitful children of God. They have their tickets punched for heaven but do not quite find the time or energy to serve the Lord. Instead, the cares of the world and materialism become more important to them and they fail in being spirit-filled Christians.

Fortunately, there are those seeds that fall on the good ground. These are the ones who hear the word of God and respond in faith and commitment to Jesus Christ. But, the faith and commitment do not end at the moment of profession of faith but continue through baptism, prayer, Bible study, fellowship, witnessing and stewardship. Spiritual growth steadily continues and the fruit begins to appear. Some, because of opportunity and God-given talents, bear quickly and much. Others perhaps do not bear as much. The importance is not so much in the amount of fruit one bears as compared to others but rather that the best be done as God has blessed. All can not be preachers, music directors, missionaries or some other special-talent person; but all can do what God has equipped them to do. Be faithful to the Lord and leave the amount of fruit-bearing up to Him.

Only a few days remain until 1975 is over. Not much can be done at this point about what you failed to accomplish this year, but you can do something about the future. The year of 1976 can be the greatest year in your life if Jesus Christ is your Savior and you are willing to totally commit your life to Him during the new year. The Bicentennial celebration and the Life and Liberty Campaign offer the greatest opportunity ever known to turn this nation and world back to God. Such turning only begins when individuals hear and respond favorably to the word of God.

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International lesson (Dec. 21)

(From page 19)

search of the King. Actually the number is not important. The number of three has been accepted in many circles because of the three gifts. It is important to us that these men in search of a king acknowledged Jesus as such. They readily presented their treasures to the son of a Jewish peasant couple. They did it without pomp and ceremony. This is a tremendous testimony to their faith.

Once again heaven intervened to protect the life of the Infant Jesus. These Wise Men were admonished by an angel in a dream not to go back to Jerusalem and inform Herod. They were to return by another way to their own country. They made their way eastward across the fords of the Jordan and avoided being trapped by the treachery of Herod.

The Magi went back with a gift far greater than they brought to Bethlehem. They had found the gift of God, the King of the Kingdom of heaven.

International lesson (Dec. 28)

(From page 20)

**Tempted to forsake his mission
(Matt. 4:8-11)**

Satan failed in two attempts to ruin the man Jesus. He now tries to deceive him by presenting a quick way to become in reality the king of the world. In this last supreme test he uses his most subtle and powerful strategy. He takes Jesus with him up into a very high mountain. He causes to pass before him all the kingdoms of the known world and the glory of them in a moment of time.

Evidently Satan brought a mental vision of Damascus, Egypt, Persia, Greece, Rome and other places. He offers to Jesus all of these kingdoms and all the glory of them if only he will for a moment fall down and worship in his presence. Of course for Jesus to have done so would be to recognize the sovereignty of the devil.

There is no doubt that the world lies in darkness and the dominion of the devil. He is designated as the Prince of Darkness of this world, but he is a usurper. It does not rightly belong to him. This poses a difficult question. Could Satan actually give Jesus dominion over all the world? Did he have that power?

Satan did not have the power to wrest the world from the hands of God. His power lies in his ability to strike a bargain. The devil's appeal to Jesus was to ally himself with the injustice, irreverence, rebellion of humanity. If Jesus would do this he would have the sanction and help of the devil and could

Attendance report

Dec. 7, 1975

Church	Sunday School	Church Training	Church Adms.	Church	Sunday School	Church Training	Church Adms.
Alexander, First	100	73		Mount Ida, First	156	43	
Alma, First	204	101		Mulberry, First	146	109	
Alpena, First	67	37		Murfreesboro, First	122	42	
Bentonville, First	259	33		North Little Rock			
Berryville				Calvary	413	129	1
First	176	75		Indian Hills	225	75	2
Freeman Heights	195	69		Levy	451	117	
Rock Springs	71	53		Park Hill	777	146	5
Blytheville, Trinity	241	92		Paragould			
Booneville				Calvary	241	195	3
First	255	217		East Side	247	104	6
South Side	97	69		First	466	92	3
Bryant, First Southern	119	69	2	West View	299	120	1
Cabot, Mt. Carmel	226	120	2	Paris, First	416	123	1
Camden, First	471	71	2	Pine Bluff			
Cash, First	131	67		Centennial	142	79	1
Charleston, First	167	64		East Side	215	121	
Concord, First	98	33		First	710	106	
Conway, Second	213	112	4	Green Meadows	102	61	
Crossett, Mt. Olive	434	202	8	Lee Memorial	223	126	2
Delark	25	19		South Side	703		2
Damascus, South Side	154	64	2	Oppele	17		
El Dorado, West Side	424	422	4	Tucker	0		
Elkins, First	80	5	7	Sulphur Springs	214	92	1
Forrest City, First	705	98		Watson Chapel	209	98	3
Fl. Smith				Pollard, New Hope	107	45	1
Grand Avenue	916	257	2	Prairie Grove, First	141	68	
Mission	27			Rogers, Immanuel	553	193	
First	1300	296	3	Rustellville			
Haven Heights	247	162		First	547	120	
Temple	151	62		Second	159	82	1
Trinity	167	63		Sheridan, First	239	85	2
Fouke, First	80	46		Springdale			
Gentry, First	157	65		Berry Street	110	40	1
Grandview	55	41		Caudie Avenue	152	67	2
Greenwood, First	349	155	6	Elmdale	225	96	
Hampton, First	146	71		First	1222		11
Harrison				Oak Grove	105		
Eagle Heights	325	138	2	Texarkana			
Woodland Heights	114	63	2	Shiloh Memorial	99	62	
Hatfield, First	74	40		Trinity	222	103	
Helena, First	264	82	1	Van Buren, First	394	197	
Hope				Mission	32		
Calvary	142	77	9	Vandervoort	80	41	4
First	450	91	2	Walnut Ridge, White Oak	76	54	
Hot Springs				West Helena, Second	197	93	
Grand Avenue	500	165	2				
Leonard Street	105	42	2				
Memorial	87	26	2				
Park Place	349	105					
Hughes, First	211	76					
Jacksonville, First	473	94					
Jonesboro, Nettleton	275	97	4				
Kingston, First	62	41					
Lavaca, First	334	104					
Little Rock							
Crystal Hill	147	47					
Oeyer Springs	748	179					
Life Line	542	144	2				
Martindale	120	57					
Wakelield	174	39	2				
Woodlawn	112	50					
Magnolia, Central	644	200	1				
Melbourne, Belview	120	65					
Monticello, Second	219	81	1				

win the place of world ruler. Of course he would, under such arrangement, become a vassel ruler sharing his kingdom with the devil. He must win the world, and here is a quick and easy way.

If Jesus will not follow this way, there is but one other left to his choice. That will be the way of suffering and the cross. He will have no political prestige or powerful friends to help him. It will be a slow process of centuries of time and great cost. Millions will go down in wreck and ruin, while the mill of God grinds on. The spiritual way was a hard and long way. Jesus wrestled with the temptation to take the easy way.

Jesus met this temptation to forsake his mission with a positive command: "Get thee hence Satan!" The Prince of Light had won the ascendancy over the Prince of Darkness. Jesus would have to face the allies of Satan at every turn in his ministry. He would come to the cross by their wicked devices, but he has gained the victory over all Satan's allies.



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Set the record straight about Child Services Act

WASHINGTON (BP)—Have you seen a circular warning you that the Federal Government is plotting to take away your children if you insist that they take out the garbage?

The bills which the circular asserts contain this alleged plot are H.R. 2966 and S. 626, the Child and Family Services Act of 1975. These bills, which are almost identical, are currently pending in House and Senate subcommittees, but the allegations contained in the circulars are false and misleading.

The Child and Family Services Act of 1975 is actually designed to help both children and parents—particularly those parents who are working or cannot, for a variety of reasons, adequately care for their children during working hours. It provides for full-time or part-time child care programs, before and after school as well as summer programs, education and consultation for parents, prenatal medical care for mothers who cannot afford it to help protect the unborn child, food and nutritional services for poor children, treatment of medical and psychological problems of children if their parents request such treatment, and help for children with handicaps or special learning disabilities.

The fact that Congress is even considering this act has generated a wave of unusual protest—unusual in that most of it seems to be the result of unsigned circulars which have been widely distributed by churches and individuals.

These circulars, often headed "rearing children by the government or by parents," contain a welter of inflammatory misinformation and untruth.

Several versions of the circular assert that the office of Senator Dewey Bartlett (R-Okla.) had issued the information in the circular. Another version links a member of Senator Bartlett's staff to a proposed letter writing campaign against the act. Senator Bartlett's office denies it has had anything to do with the circular or letter writing campaign. That office rejects the circular as a misleading document.

Senator Walter Mondale (D-Minn.), chairman of the Senate subcommittee handling the Child and Family Services Act, in a speech on the Senate floor (*Congressional Record*, Nov. 19, 1975, pages S20397-S20401), stated that the act is "... being subjected to one of the most distorted and dishonest attacks I have witnessed in my 15 years of public service."

Mondale went on to speak of the allegations in the circulars and about the circulars themselves. "These allegations are absolutely and completely false. There is not a shred of truth in any one of them. If there were, neither I nor any member of Congress would be sponsoring this legislation. . . . Yet mimeographed materials being circulated . . . allege that the so-called 'children's rights' quoted (on the Senate floor in 1971 from a British) document are 'becoming part of' the Child and Family Services Act.

"That allegation is totally false, and I believe that the individuals or organizations making the allegation know it is false. I say that because the materials containing these allegations are unsigned — a clear and significant sign that the organizations or individuals circulating these allegations know that they cannot defend or document them."

Some falsehoods attributed to the act are that parents who are not doing a good job will have their children taken away from them, that parents cannot teach their children about God, that a charter of children's rights is being added to the act, and that parents would lose the right to form their children's characters. *Ark. Bapt. News*

To set the record straight and to refute the above untruths the following facts about the act are given:

-1. The act, instead of taking child rearing away from parents, clearly states that "... Child and Family Service Programs must build upon and strengthen the role of the family and must be provided on a voluntary basis only to children whose parents or legal

guardians request such services, with a view toward offering families the options they believe to be most appropriate for their particular needs."

-2. There is no "child advocacy clause" nor is there a "charter of children's rights" anywhere in the bill, and neither of them will be added. The "charter of children's rights" was developed years ago by the unofficial British Advisory Center of Education but was never even seriously proposed in England. Senator Carl Curtis (R-Neb.) read a portion of this British group's proposal into the Congressional Record in a Senate debate on another child services bill on Dec. 2, 1971. The text is found on page 44128 of the *Record*. However, that material was not a part of the 1971 bill and is not a part of the present act.

-3. The act specifically prohibits any practice which would "... infringe upon or usurp the moral and legal rights and responsibilities of parents or guardians with respect to the moral, mental, emotional, physical, or other development of their children."

-4. The act prohibits any medical or psychological examination or treatment unless the parent or guardian provides written permission.

-5. The privacy of families is protected by the provision that no "... section of this act be construed or applied in such a manner as to permit any invasion of privacy otherwise protected by law, or to abridge any legal remedies for any such invasion which are otherwise provided by law.

The statements of fact given above should not be interpreted to mean that the act is free of potential church-state problems. The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs gave testimony on the act before a joint House-Senate committee last spring.

In that testimony it was pointed out that the inclusion of religious organizations as possible operators of some child care programs would raise the problem of using public funds for what might be religious education and indoctrination.

In summary, close examination of the current bills simply makes it obvious that the allegations in the circulars now flooding the country are a "parade of imaginary horrors." If one is to oppose this act it should be done on the basis of informed judgment and not on the basis of a circular made up of patent untruths and wild distortions.

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