

A close-up photograph of a pair of hands, palms up, holding two flowers. On the left is a white daisy with a yellow center. On the right is a pink cherry blossom with five petals and visible stamens. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with more flowers and greenery.

CURRENT

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

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BEHOLD NOW

BEHEMOTH

BITTERNESS

CORONAVIRUS!

NEEDED!

GODLY WOMEN

**NEVER TOO YOUNG
TO SERVE GOD**

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The Free Presbyterian Church of North America is a conservative, Protestant, and Reformed denomination with churches in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. We maintain a biblical position of separation from false ecumenism while seeking to stand with all who stand for Christ and the historic Protestant faith. While we are unashamedly Reformed in our theology, our Calvinism is never a hindrance to our preaching the free offer of the gospel since we always seek to keep our Calvinism Christ-centered and evangelistic. Our great desire is to preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8) in our churches and throughout the world.

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KNOWING WHAT TO DO

Dr. Stephen Pollock

When Jesus confronted Saul on the road to Damascus, He drew a question from Saul's heart— "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6) That question has become an unintended but providential theme of this issue. As I reviewed the first submissions which came across my desk, I couldn't help but note a consistent burden. In her report, Mrs. Huffman alludes to it in the question children ask: "But what can I do?" Mrs. Mooney includes herself when she asks similarly, "How can we so live?" And Rev. Hamilton poses the comparable question of the unbeliever: "What must I do to be saved?" Different people at different stages in life, but they are all asking, "What will the Lord have me to do?"

This is an important question we all should be asking in the face of daily challenges and opportunities in obedience to the Lord. I am asking this question as I take on the role of *Current* editor. I am very thankful to be able to continue the sterling work of Rev. Ian Goligher who steered the magazine to reflect the values of the Free Presbyterian Church, which was founded to make Christ known to sinners and to serve Him as the only King and Head of the Church. Rev. Goligher commissioned and edited articles that sought the continuance of these aims. It is my desire to do likewise as the Lord helps.

This edition has a new look and some new columns. The layout and content of magazines are always changing, but the

aim must never change. In its every endeavor, this denomination seeks the pre-eminence of Christ. *Current* must always strive for this.

I am very grateful for your prayers as we move forward. I'm curious who reads *Current*. I'm curious to know how it is used in our churches. I desire that the magazine be of interest to everyone in our denomination. I also desire that it shows people the best of our denomination. We ought to be able to give this magazine to others outside our own churches as we seek to proclaim Christ to all. I also ask that you join me in praying that *Current* will be used of God in the saving of precious souls. Whether people read the print edition or the online version, we know that the Lord is able to use His Word to bring people to faith in His Son. A magazine steeped in biblical content *will* know the blessing of the Lord.

**"To obey God is not so much
our duty as our privilege."**

Thomas Watson

**"The law of the LORD is
perfect, converting the soul:
the testimony of the LORD is
sure, making wise the simple"**

(Psalm 19:7).

On behalf of the Publications Committee of our North American denomination, we want to express our sincere gratitude to Rev. Ian Goligher for his years of service as editor of *Current* magazine. The winter issue of *Current* 2020 was Rev. Goligher's last issue before passing the baton to Dr. Stephen Pollock at the beginning of the new year. For the past 5 ½ years and 22 issues, Rev. Goligher has labored painstakingly to produce an excellent magazine, full of articles to help us all, young and old, in our growth of grace. His consistently wise choice of themes and topics, as well as reports and photographs of FPCNA events, made each issue well worth reading and a credit to his oversight. Those who worked under Mr. Goligher to produce *Current* testify that his Christ-like manner and God-honoring focus will leave a lasting impression. Only eternity will reveal the full extent of Rev. Goligher's influence in this labor of love for the extension of God's kingdom. May the Father, who has seen the countless hours of service, in addition to his own church ministry, reward Rev. Goligher openly and richly.

Rev. Larry Saunders
Chairman
Publications Committee



BEHOLD NOW BEHEMOTH

The book of Job has fascinated ancient and modern readers. Using a lengthy poetic story, it teaches about God and Satan, about good and evil, about “bad things” being used by God to accomplish His perfect will in the lives of good people. While its message is clear, it contains mysteries for any who study it.

Job is the only biblical book to open with a conversation between God and Satan. It climaxes with the longest speeches of God recorded in the Bible, and they are directed to a single human, Job. God describes Job as “a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil.” But God permits Satan to remove Job's wealth, destroy his family, and ruin his health. Job then receives bad counsel from his wife and friends. Job wants to ask God why he is suffering, but God does not answer directly. Instead He uses object lessons from the physical world to teach Job and us about the relationship between humans and their Creator.

Many of the illustrations God uses as He addresses Job are familiar to us: wind, rain, snow, a horse's strength, a hawk's ability to fly. Some, like ostrich behaviors (which we discussed in a previous article), require observations and thought for us to even begin to grasp them. Bible scholars and scientists alike must admit that they do not completely understand some of what God describes.

At the conclusion of Job's instruction, God describes two animals: the behemoth and the leviathan. Unsure

what animals were being described, translators did not supply modern animal names, as they did for many animal references in the Bible. Instead, they transliterated the names by writing out the Hebrew sounds with English letters. This article deals with questions the behemoth engenders, and the next article will deal with the leviathan.

BEHEMOTH DESCRIBED

Although it is not found outside of Job in the Authorized Version of the Scriptures, the word *behemoth* is used in other passages. It often serves as an adjective, meaning “big,” or “a larger one.” Behemoth cattle, for example, are oxen—when compared to smaller sheep and goats. But in the closing ten verses of Job 40, the word is used as a noun, the name for a specific kind of animal. God's description of a behemoth compares its vegetarian diet to that of an ox, so Job was not to be considering an ox.

The behemoth is called “the chief of the ways of God,” probably meaning that it is the largest (land) animal that God made. He lives along streams or in swamps; his bones are compared to brass and iron; he rests in the shade of trees, and is not afraid of snares or what the elements can do to him. So which animal is a behemoth?

While Bible translators can transliterate, commentators feel compelled to identify the behemoth. Some have suggested the elephant—the only animal they were

familiar with that comes close to the size description. While the commentary may be good doctrinally, its author has probably reached an uninformed and inaccurate conclusion. Elephants live in dry areas and go to water only to drink or for a cooling dip. They do not generally live in swamps or streams.

Some commentators suggest the hippopotamus. He lives in water, but God says the behemoth “moveth his tail like a cedar.” Elephants and hippos have tails better compared to ropes than to cedar trees. Some have suggested the tail description refers to the elephant's trunk. That is confusing the animal's ends. The suppleness of the elephant's trunk and the stiffness of cedar trees appears to belie the comparison.

Permit a brief side note. Many commentators (and their supporters) cite that Job is a poetical book, and thus these kinds of discrepancies from observable facts are acceptable. Poetic language has its forms and uses, virtually all of which can be found in the book of Job. Poetic language also has limits. It is easy to claim “poetry” to justify a person's opinion when it contradicts a direct reading. In this case, however, one must remember Who is speaking and His purpose in referring to the behemoth. More on that later.

Another suggestion for the behemoth is a large sauropod dinosaur. Sauropods were long-necked, four-legged herbivores. They had strong bones and their thick tails could easily be compared

to a cedar tree. They were quite possibly swamp dwellers and their size and strength would have made snares useless. A sauropod-behemoth seems to fit the description better than an elephant or hippo.

For some people, the problem with the behemoth being a sauropod is timing. God says: “Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee.” God is referring to an animal He created at the same time He made man, and He expects Job to be familiar with the animal. Scientists have repeatedly contended that dinosaurs died off long before man came along. Based on their evolutionary timeline, Job and a sauropod-behemoth could not be contemporaries. Since elephants and hippos are contemporary with humans, many argue that these animals are the only logical choices to be behemoths.

DATING JOB

When did Job live? The book itself gives little help in answering that question. The people and places referred to in Job are not mentioned in other datable passages, and many are unknown to history. A reference to the Law would permit us to date Job after Moses. But the book does not refer to the Mosaic Law, suggesting it was written before Moses went to Mount Sinai. Although there are some cultural references in Job, they do not help to pinpoint his time period.

A number of Christians explain dinosaur fossils using the Gap Theory (a time gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 in which there was a dinosaur-filled creation). This offers a time for dinosaurs without humans, which many Christians of the past found a compelling argument for the Gap Theory. For Job to be contemporary with Gap Theory dinosaurs, he, his family, and friends would have to be pre-Adamic humans. This contradicts so many Scripture passages, it is beyond possibility.

Today, many Christians are comfortable assuming that the vast majority of the fossils we find in the earth today are the

result of the universal Flood described in Genesis. Since there are abundant sauropod dinosaur fossils, this suggests they were antediluvian animals. Thus, some scholars have suggested Job was also antediluvian (living before the Flood).

Occasionally one hears the claim that Job is the oldest book in the Bible. Frequently this is based on Job being antediluvian, even though some who take this position still insist on a behemoth being an elephant or hippo.

Job living before the Flood presents other problems. Who wrote the book of Job? There is no evidence within the book that Job wrote it. It would appear that Job did not know of the God and Satan conversations that open and set the scene of the book. If antediluvian Job wrote the book, did Noah have to take a copy of it into the Ark?

Most of what Moses describes in Genesis happened centuries before he was born. Genesis is true because of God-breathed inspiration, not because of it being an eye-witness account. That could equally be applied to the book of Job. It is quite possible God used another human instrument to pen the book regarding something that happened far previously. Moses and Solomon have been suggested, but without substantial grounds. It is possible, however, that Job and behemoths were antediluvian and the book was written by an inspired, unknown author in the postdiluvian era. Thus the book of Job could have been written before Moses penned Genesis, making it the oldest book in the Bible.

A PATRIARCHAL PERIOD JOB

Job living during the postdiluvian patriarchal period, roughly between the Flood and the Exodus, would explain the absence of references to the Law and to other known people and places. But how could Job be familiar with a sauropod-behemoth in the patriarchal period? It has been suggested that Job

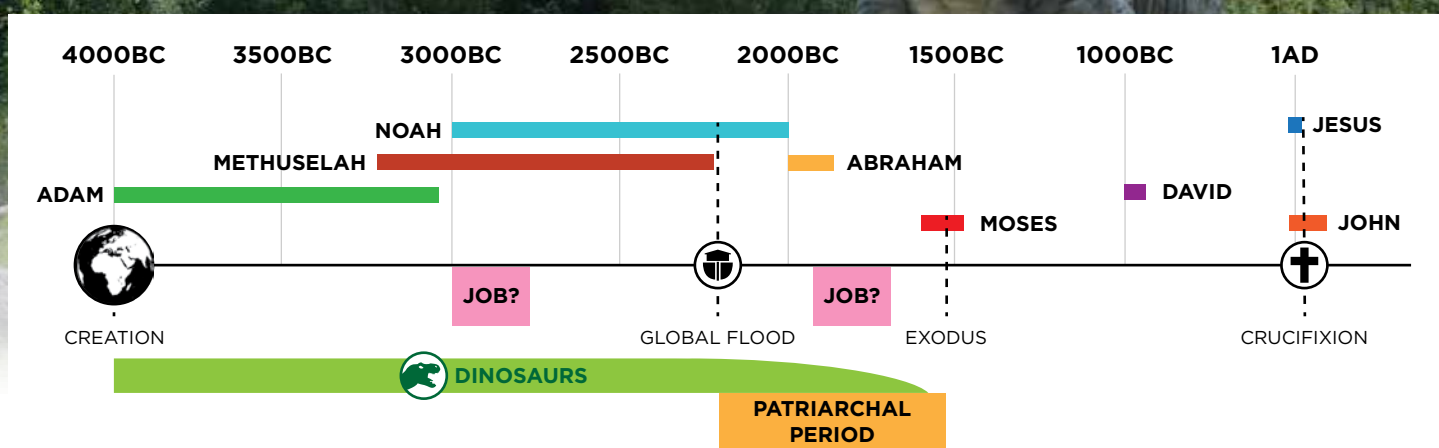
dug up and assembled dinosaur fossils and knew descriptions of dinosaurs which had been handed down through Noah’s family. Job being familiar with *extinct* behemoths is a weak explanation. It is not in keeping with the illustrations God is using as He tells Job to consider various parts of nature.

Wanting Job to be a postdiluvian character, but not a paleontologist supports elephant or hippo behemoths. But is that necessary? These positions presuppose that all dinosaurs became extinct during the Flood. Just because the only dinosaurs we know are ones that died and were fossilized during the Flood does not mean all dinosaurs died at that time.

To some, the suggestion of postdiluvian dinosaurs conflicts with their presuppositions of Genesis. Noah was told to take representatives of every *kind* of animal that God brought to the Ark. Many people do not have a problem with elephants and hippos coming to the Ark—but they assume that some dinosaurs, like many of the sauropods, are too big for the Ark. Some consider the fierce, toothy dinosaurs as too dangerous to be on the Ark. Others assert that since the postdiluvian world would be different, dinosaurs would not fit in after the waters receded. They assume that God led only animals appropriate for the postdiluvian earth to the Ark’s door.

Modern scale replicas of the Ark have laid to rest the idea that the boat was not able to hold large dinosaurs. Genesis seems to indicate that all the kinds of land animals God created were represented on the Ark. One can only guess how many sauropod-like dinosaurs would be on the Ark. There were likely not many, nor were they necessarily mature, super-large ones.

Even with lions and tigers and bears, and scores of other dangerous animals aboard, the Ark’s inhabitants survived the year-long voyage. Also, remember that many of us get our impression of how dinosaurs lived from films produced for theatrical excitement, not to reflect reality.



Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible which contain descriptions of the antediluvian and patriarchal periods, but no mention of Job. Jewish tradition says Job was 70 years old when his suffering began. He did have ten grown children at the time. He lived 140 years after his suffering, and died “being old and full of days” (Job 42:16-17). The period of 210 years was not old for antediluvians, but is in keeping with Job being a patriarchal period figure. The ages of the men are biblically based; the timeline approximates Ussher’s dating of biblical events.

If sauropods and other dinosaurs were represented on the Ark, why are they not alive today? Like the dodo and scores of other animals, they became extinct. It is possible that during the patriarchal period there were large sauropod-behemoths that were familiar to Job. As the earth entered its postdiluvian patterns, conditions for sauropod survival were not met and, naturally, they died out.

Assuming that sauropod-behemoths and Job were postdiluvian contemporaries fits within the parameters of Scripture and within the physical/historic factors we can bring to bear on behemoth identity. Therefore, insisting that a behemoth is an elephant or hippo is unnecessary.

God instructs Job to “behold now behemoth” and then uses ten verses to describe this mighty animal. God is not suggesting that Job use his imagination to mentally construct such an animal. Nor is God ascribing characteristics to an animal that does not have them. To do so would weaken God’s arguments. Job could legitimately question if God had really done all the things He claimed to have done in the preceding chapters if God had started making things up at the end of His lecture.

Was Job an antediluvian or a postdiluvian character? Does it matter? The meaning of the book is the same, no matter when Job lived. If the message hinged on when Job

lived, God would not have left it a mystery. More concerning are the Bible interpreters who feel they must bend what Scriptures say about the behemoth to make it describe an elephant or a hippo.

We will investigate more of God’s purpose in this extended object lesson as we consider His final example, the leviathan, in the next article. ❏



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NEEDED! GODLY WOMEN

In the last three years or so, I have transitioned to that new season of life called “older” womanhood. It has not been an easy nor quick transition. Rather, the realities of the emptying nest, the study of God’s Word, and the application of wise instruction have helped me through the struggle. Transitioning to older woman has enlarged my view of God’s good plan for the daughters of the King of kings. In Creation, God made a perfect world in which He planted the most beautiful and good garden for Adam to live in. Only when no suitable help could be found for Adam was it said to be “not good.” So, God crowned His creation by making woman from Adam’s rib. Eve was the perfectly suitable help for Adam. Then God said it was good! When ruined by sin in the Fall, both Adam and Eve learned the promise of gospel redemption through the seed of the woman. In the fullness of time, our Lord Jesus Christ was born of a woman to work redemption for His people. As the gospel of Jesus Christ has spread throughout the world, women have been impacted for good in ways we sometimes fail to understand.

Ever since Satan deceived Eve, women have suffered greatly under various political and religious systems. Through the centuries of time, womanhood has been degraded throughout the world. Today’s culture has been so plundered

by feminism that it creeps in everywhere unawares! The waves of feminism in the twentieth century have brought a rejection of biblical Christianity. It is only in the gospel of Jesus Christ that womanhood finds and regains the beauty of freedom and respect that God originally planned for women in Creation.

If our culture needs anything today, it needs godly women of all ages to live biblically for God’s glory in the places God has them.

How can we so live? The Scriptures are clear! Evidently, the believers of Crete needed some instruction on how to organize their church. The apostle Paul wrote to Titus, the minister of the Cretan church, the beautiful words of Titus 2:1-5. Titus was to teach sound doctrine, so that different ages of people might learn to live godly. Verses 3-5 show God’s special care for the godly women of Crete and the wider Christian church. The words are beautifully caring as they give God’s daughters guidance for daily personal living, family life, work, relationships, and church involvement. God’s purpose comes at the end of verse 5—that the Word of God be not

blasphemed! How older women and young women live biblically or not is a matter of honoring God’s Word! It matters how women live!

John Angell James (1785-1859) traces the treatment of women through the ages in chapter one of *Female Piety*. James says, “God in all his ordinances, Christ in his glorious undertaking, and the Holy Spirit in his gracious work, gave [woman] her proper place in the world, by giving her a proper place in the church.”

So, in the struggle of watching the emptying nest and the transition to older womanhood, I asked the Lord, “What do you want me to do *now*?” The Lord has graciously opened Titus 2:1-5 to my mind and heart. Let the precious, redeemed daughters of the King of kings learn sound doctrine; live holy and vibrant lives; encourage and invest in young women; and honor the Scriptures for the glory of God, for the good of the church, and for a testimony to the world! ❧



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IN WANT OF A WIFE!

At sixteen, I was told to learn the opening words of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune; must be in want of a wife." Forget the good fortune bit, it is usually the case that young men come to the point in life when they find themselves "in want" of a wife. Young ladies are no different. Some have the gift of singleness. Others have the desire, but God's providence overrules according to His wisdom and goodness. Most seek and find a spouse!

The wise man says: "Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing" (Proverbs 18:22). The question is, how does one find a wife? (Or a husband for that matter!) Should my father send a servant with loaded camels? Should I find my nearest threshing floor? Should I work for a man for seven years and hope I get the right daughter? The Bible does not give explicit direction as to how two young people end up together in marriage. The models we have are very instructive in principles, but they should not be read as precepts.

Today's culture has lost its bearings when it comes to biblical marriage. The church has not escaped. Young people, in many churches, play the field, engage in serial dating, and enjoy the moments with little focus or biblical direction. There is a place for boys and girls to interact socially without having marriage in mind, but there is insufficient caution as young people couple up in the spirit of the age. Some questions arise: When can I start dating? Whom should I date? Where can we go on dates? How far can we go on dates?

Let's begin at the end. The Bible sets out marriage as the ultimate boy-girl relationship. When we are clear in our understanding of marriage, it will govern our actions in all other boy-girl relationships. Dating, courtship (call it what you will) is a step between singleness and marriage. Dating is not an end product! No one really wants to date forever. If marriage is the ultimate end, then our views on marriage will alter our views on dating. A clear grasp on the nature and purpose of marriage is vital in today's world, which has so disregarded this institution of God. We often think of the attack on marriage from those promoting same-sex "marriage." We might think of the increasing "normality" of couples living together. Yet, within the church, marriage is sometimes undervalued, joked about, and poorly practiced.

Marriage is God's institution; therefore, He alone has the right to define what constitutes marriage. (Read Genesis 2:18-25 with Matthew 19:1-12). We can glean an interesting definition of marriage from Malachi 2:14: "Yet she is thy companion, the wife of thy covenant." **Marriage is a covenant of companionship.**

Marriage is more than a passing arrangement, it is a sacred commitment, a covenantal agreement. It is a solemn pledge and promise. It involves a binding oath (See Hebrews 6:13,17 to see the oath of God in covenant). Speaking of marriage in terms of covenant is most appropriate. Christ is the groom of the church (Ephesians 5:32; Revelation 19:7). His relationship to the church is covenantal. Some implications arise from this:

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE MARRIAGE BOND

With the making of this covenant come all the duties and obligations of the one to the other. As such, marriage must not be entered into lightly, but prayerfully. Dating must then be conducted within a climate of sobriety.

THE SECURITY OF THE MARRIAGE BOND

The making of covenant is the entering into a relationship of security. It is a binding covenant. Christ will never relinquish or desert His bride. The blood that He shed is called the blood of the covenant. His blood proves His commitment to the covenant and secures the blessings of the covenant. Marriage, in God's purpose, is for life. The ground of this security is love—a love that is emotional and covenantal. Love is an act of the will as well as a delight in the heart. In marriage you must choose to love as well as delight to love. Thus, dating should begin not simply with a desire for emotional, romantic satisfaction, but with a determination of the will to commit, should the relationship lead into marriage.

THE SANCTITY OF THE MARRIAGE BOND

As an institution of God, it is a holy institution. As such, it is good (Hebrews 13:4). When Israel broke covenant they were guilty of spiritual fornication. Intimacy must be expressed only in the context of covenantal marriage. Just because someone might become your spouse doesn't make them your spouse now!

All dates will not end up in marriage. But they might! Dating is not the end—it's a means to the end! ❏



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HEAD COVERING

You can find almost anything on the internet, and if you are looking for answers to biblical questions or desire to view various interpretations of Scripture, you can find that which suits your position. Thankfully, there are some young, zealous writers from various Reformed denominations who are endeavoring to obey the commands given in Jeremiah 6:16: “Ask for the old paths and...walk therein.” Although you will not agree with everything, at least they are trying to conform to some of the neglected truths of Holy Scripture. Some interesting expositions of 1 Corinthians 11 and the head covering issue have appeared in recent years. One of them proves to be very informative to those who are willing to sincerely consider Scripture and logical reasoning.

Head Covering: A Forgotten Christian Practice for Modern Times was written by Jeremy Gardiner in 2016. Gardiner’s work of 136 pages covers the subject quite thoroughly. Not only does he explain the pertinent Scripture using good commentary references, he reveals some historical facts that are both informative and shocking to a tender Christian conscience. For example, he quotes a secular work written in 1903 by Alice Morse Earle: *Two Centuries of Costume in America*. She said, “One singular thing may be noted in this history, that with all the vagaries of fashion, woman has never violated the

biblical law that bade her cover her head. She has never gone to church services bareheaded” (pp 9-10). To change professing Christendom from this biblical practice took something extremely drastic and even revolutionary. “Head covering was not innocently lost in North America, but it is tied to the rejection of biblical roles for men and women” (p 17).

The National Organization of Women (NOW) was founded and presided over by Betty Friedan. Sadly, she despised the very name of the Lord Jesus Christ. She was a trained Marxist, who supported lesbianism as part of NOW’s platform; she gave an interview to *Playboy* magazine; she advocated abortion, and national daycare for little “un-aborted” children. In 1968, as an agnostic activist, Friedan led her organization in a nationwide hat burning event. They touted the event’s purpose, “To protest the second-class status of women in all churches. Because the wearing of a head covering by women at religious services is a symbol of submission” (p 16). Dr. R.C. Sproul noted this disturbing connection with women ceasing to wear hats in church. He said, “The wearing of fabric head coverings in worship was universally the practice of Christian women until the twentieth century. What happened? Did we suddenly

find some biblical truth to which the saints for thousands of years were blind? Or were our biblical views of women gradually eroded by the modern feminist movement that has infiltrated the Church of Jesus Christ?” (p 51)

Even one of the modern “Reformed” enemies of the head covering eloquently states online: “From colonial times even up to our father’s generation, our culture which was undeniably influenced by biblical Christianity, saw women regularly don caps, bonnets, hats, and veils in the church.” Was that a bad influence? Is it wrong for biblical Christianity to so influence American society today? Absolutely not! Oh, that the twenty-first century church would again ask for the old paths and walk therein with the godly of the past and be a part of restoring biblical Christianity to the nation rather than following a multitude to do evil. ❧

Head Covering: A Forgotten Christian Practice for Modern Times can be obtained from Amazon and ABE books for under \$10.



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GENESIS

GOD'S BOOK OF BEGINNINGS STUDY NOTES

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 5:

This genealogy, which covers 1556 years after Creation, links Adam to Noah through the line of Seth. It gives the names of the patriarchs with the dates of their births and deaths. It provides means to calculate the year of the flood, which works out to the year 1656 after creation. It is proof of the use of real years and destroys the possibility of dating the age of the world by evolutionary methods.

Enoch, the seventh from Adam (Jude 14), stands tall as the man who walked with God and his testimony shows that it was possible in those times to keep up communion with God through faith and obedience to His revealed will. The grave tone of the record shows a world groaning under the curse due to sin. This is highlighted by the repeated comment, “and he died,” after the history of each patriarch. Adam must have felt the bitter pain of a fallen world as he compared it to his prior perfect life in Eden.

Key verse:

“And Enoch walked with God and he was not; for God took him” (v 24). Enoch’s walking with God is interpreted in Hebrews 11:5, as obedience and faithful witnessing, “...for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”

Enoch was a faithful messenger for the Lord, warning of God’s judgment upon the wicked, even while he felt the power of sin and apostasy around him (Jude 1:14).

OBSERVATIONS:

1. The reference to “the book of the generations of Adam” in Genesis 5:1 reveals that the Genesis record was committed to writing. It was not an oral tradition handed down by word of

mouth. This is an important fact to remember as many oppose the validity of this record in Genesis.

2. Confirmation is given to God’s work of creation on day six making man in His own image and making them male and female. The word “create” in Genesis 5:1 is the same term used in Genesis 1:1 for the creation of the earth. God took dust from the ground and made the physical body of Adam. God blessed Adam and Eve. They were the apple of His eye and the focus of His love. He breathed His life into their bodies and gave them a soul. The name Adam means red; the term is also used for the red earth. The first man would have had a ruddy, or reddish complexion.

3. The genealogy of Cain ends in chapter 4. The line of Cain includes his ungodly son, Enoch, a builder of a city after his own name (Genesis 4:17) and a very ungodly Lamech, the polygamist and anarchist (Genesis 4:18-24). That line has no part in the promised Savior.

4. The record of the antediluvian patriarchs leading to the time of Noah is taken from the line of Seth. Seth’s name means substitute. So, Seth was God’s replacement given to Adam and Eve in the place of Abel. Enoch the Sethite (Genesis 5:21-24), who walked with God, is to be contrasted with Enoch the Cainite and city builder. Enoch the Sethite has his walk with God recorded twice. It is first stated in Genesis 5:22 when Enoch began to walk with God at 65 years old, which was also the time of Methusaleh’s birth. It is repeated again (Genesis 5:24) as an obituary after his translation from earth. This was

Enoch’s clear testimony for God. The New Testament references to this Enoch make him a true witness and a herald to warn the ungodly (Jude 14-15).

It should be noted that while Enoch is the seventh from Adam in the line of Seth, Lamech, the wicked one, was also the seventh from Adam, but in the line of Cain.

- **The line of Cain in chapter 4:** Adam, Cain, Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Methusael, Lamech (Genesis 4:16-18)
- **The line of Seth in chapter 5:** Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Ma-hal-a-leel, Jared, Enoch (Genesis 5:4,6,9,12,15,19)

5. Noah was the tenth generation after Adam, in the line of Seth. His name means “comfort” (Genesis 5:29). The name given to him at birth by his father, Lamech, speaks to the burden of life due to the Fall and to the spread of wickedness in the world prior to the great Flood. Hear Noah’s distress in his words, “concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed” (Genesis 5:29). Life was hard due to the curse that was upon the ground. It was so deficient and different from life in Eden.

6. Mortality was universally stamped upon all men due to the curse for sin. There is a repeated emphasis after each patriarch’s name upon the certainty of death, with none escaping the final caveat, “and he died.” All the sons of Adam were cursed with the sentence of death. Enoch was an exception. His walk with God was rewarded by a deathless translation. Elijah is another exception. Otherwise, death is universal. It is the last enemy. It is the final lot of each and every son or daughter of Adam. This highlights our great need

for a Savior to conquer death and deliver His people from the curse of sin and all of death's horrors. The good news is that Christ has triumphed over death and is a living Savior who is mighty to save sinners and to bring them to glory.

APPLICATION:

How does this apply to me?

- The record of the antediluvian world, as written by Moses (Genesis 5:1), makes it part of divine inspiration. We are to accept these first chapters of the Bible as we do any other part of

inspired Scripture. These are not legends of oral tradition. They are the written Word of God and form part of the canon of Scripture for our learning.

- The definite distinction of the sexes sets God's standard for all people for all time. God's creative work, making man male and female, is part of our DNA. A person's sex is determined by biology. Due to man's fall, into depravity, we cannot allow emotions to control us. There are deviant thoughts, temptations, and practices to be labelled as sin for they are

contrary to the will of God, the Creator of man as male and female. Christ confirmed the divine order of man and woman in Creation when He stated: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female" (Matthew 19:4). ▀



Rev. Ian Goligher
is the pastor of Cloverdale
FPC, Vancouver, BC

A GENEALOGY DERIVED FROM THE GENESIS RECORD

Patriarch	Year of Birth	Age at Birth of Next Patriarch	Year After Son's Birth	Year of Death
Adam	0	130	800	930
Seth	130	105	807	1042
Enos	235	90	815	1140
Cainan	325	70	840	1235
Ma-ha-la-leel	395	65	830	1290
Zared	460	162	800	1422
Enoch	622	65	300	1187
Methusaleh	687	187	782	1656 (Year of flood)
Lamech	874	182	595	1651
Noah	1056	500	350 after flood (Genesis 9:28)	2006

THINGS TO DO IN LIGHT OF THIS STUDY:

- Memorize Genesis 5:24.
- Pray earnestly for a testimony that you please the Lord in your walk with Him.
- List ways in which you can walk with God by putting God's Word into practice in your life.
- Research why people lived such long lives before the Genesis Flood.
- Research where Cain found his wife.

FPCNA'S

CHURCH EXTENSION COMMITTEE

Editor Interview with Rev. Ian Goligher

The work of the CEC might be less well known than some other committees. Could you tell us where the concept for the committee originated?

Since the inauguration of our presbytery in 2005, the *Book of Church Order* includes a Church Extension Committee (CEC) "to develop plans to promote the work and witness of the church by all scriptural means and to submit such plans to the presbytery" (Section 11.2). It includes the need to encourage churches involved in extension works and provide guidelines to bring a church plant to maturity where it can establish a membership with office bearers, call a minister, and at the same time, move to constitution within the presbytery.

How did you get involved?

I was appointed to this committee at the inception of our presbytery and I was later appointed as its convener in 2015. It fell to me somewhat for being the longest serving minister in the presbytery and being involved in a few church plants in the past.

What are the main challenges to the work?

The number one challenge is the lack of men to pioneer new mission churches. Then there is the tremendous commitment that is demanded of any young man who has been licensed by

our presbytery to obey the call of God to minister in a place where there is no established church. We also recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all approach that will work repeatedly. Every new church is a miracle of God's sovereign grace where the Lord is at work in many different ways through different kinds of people. The issues facing urban churches and rural churches are very different. The cost of real estate can be astronomical in urban centers and in rural areas the distances between scattered communities can be prohibitive to bring people together in one location. There are also difficulties when men minister in remote parts of the continent where they are hundreds of miles away from the next FPC congregation. Also, from state to state there are different laws and different heritages that need to be considered. Here in Canada, we have an international mosaic, creating the burden of how to minister the gospel to people from so many different countries, many of whom know nothing of Christianity.

What is the CEC involved with presently?

Regrettably, we have no church plants or budding congregations at the present. Our presbytery's focus has been on filling vacant pulpits. We have radio ministries in Canada and the USA that we pray will lead to inquiries about the ministry of our denomination. In

fact, in the last months we have had such inquiries from Texas, Maine, and Wisconsin. These inquiries often come to us by email through SermonAudio or by phone calls in response to messages on radio. We pray that we will soon be able to join the dots of these inquiries and be in a position to focus on a particular area to plant a new mission church or churches.

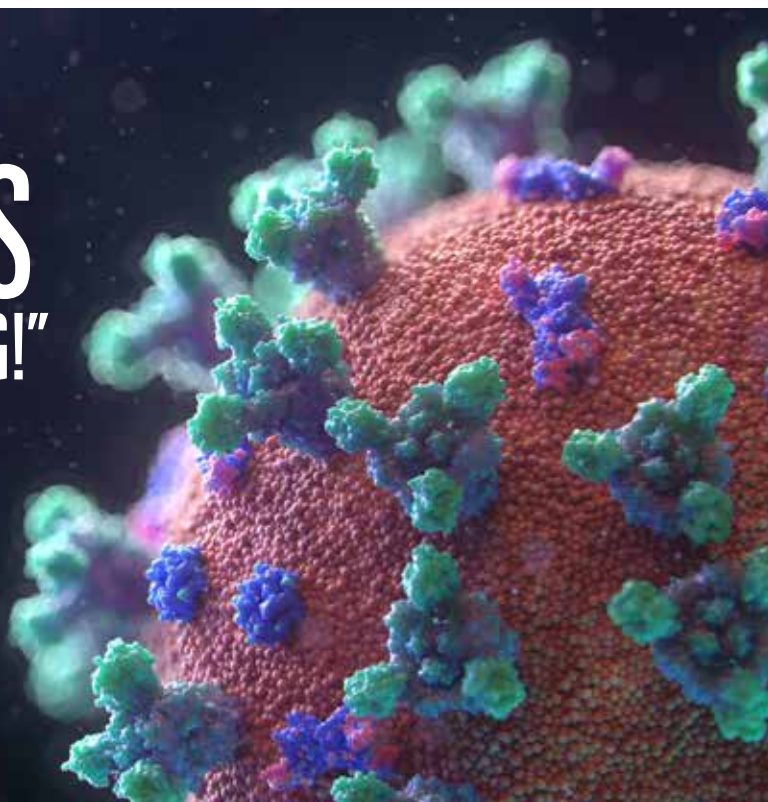
Could you outline your vision for the future?

The use of radio is showing itself to be effective to let people know we exist as a denomination. By weekly or daily radio preaching, people get to know the message we preach, not just the name we adopt. Our churches which webcast their services will continue to facilitate people in different time zones who have no biblical church to attend. It is possible that a family or two who meet to worship via webcast services may see their numbers growing and perhaps lead to a nucleus of people to form a mission church. By such webcast ministry the quality of worship and preaching is not compromised, which so often happens when people do home church.

With such a pressing need for ministers and a small number of ministerial students, there may be a place for evangelists, who work part-time alongside our churches. Many churches are in metropolitan areas where outreach and other forms of ministry would be of huge help. With the possibility of several workers, the church could become a hub with different ministries in the community or city. If such evangelists provided leadership and impetus to members of our churches, a great work could be done. Such helpers in local churches would also solve the problems of distance and burn-out of ministers, who can become overwhelmed with the workload they must carry. Of course, only the power and blessing of God can make any gospel effort effective. May we live to see the power of God calling sinners to the Savior and worshipers to form churches for His glory. ■

"CORONAVIRUS HAS CHANGED EVERYTHING!"

Dr. Stephen Pollock



No area of society has been untouched. On the original draft of this page was an article by Rev. Derrick Bowman encouraging people to prayerfully support a mission team heading to Liberia in the summer. In God's providence, that mission team will not be going. We pray that God will permit a team to visit our missionaries in the near future. In the meantime, I was left with a blank space as the coronavirus effect impacted this publication.

It is my hope that this global pandemic will impact our hearts as it continues to impact our world. There has been, and will be, no shortage of controversy surrounding this crisis: lock down or not; public worship or not; reopen or not; masks or not. Christians have not avoided these debates and indeed, a prudent, biblical perspective should be brought to bear upon the issues of society. I trust that as we do so the ungodly will see that the true follower of Christ is marked by the compassion of Christ for His neighbor.

Christ showed compassion to the sick. "And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick" (Matthew 14:14). The sinless Son of man epitomizes a sinless response

to illness, viz. compassion. Sickness is unavoidable in a fallen world, but we must never be calloused in heart. Familiarity breeds contempt and when we are exposed to relentless accounts of illness, we might not be moved with compassion as we ought.

Christ showed compassion to the poor and hungry. "Then Jesus ... said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way" (Matthew 15:32). Coronavirus in its wider effects has plunged people around the world into poverty. May the Spirit work compassion in us. Let Paul and John inform our actions: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3:17)

Christ showed compassion when He saw death. At Lazarus's grave, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). There have been very few times in recent decades that we have been hearing of rising death tolls daily. Once more, we must guard our hearts

from becoming unmoved. Pray that we will know the love of Christ as we see the curse of sin being worked out before our eyes and as families suffer the pain of loss.

Christ showed compassion for the lost. "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). The Lord knew that suffering comes due to the Fall of man into sin. He knew that those who died in tragedy entered eternity. Hence in Luke 13, when confronted with human tragedy, Christ responds, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:5). Across the world, people are dying—that has always been the case. May the thought of multitudes going to a lost eternity drive us to pray, to go, to send missionaries, and to share the gospel in our neighborhood as the Lord gives opportunity.

These days of concern, confusion, and conflict demand that Christians show Christ's compassion. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). ❏



The Sin of Bitterness

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled” (Hebrews 12:15).

There are two reasons why I have preached often about the particular sin of bitterness. It is a dangerous sin deserving of our special consideration, due to its subtle nature. It has caused Christians to backslide, church fellowship to go stale, and even denominations to divide. Also, many Christians will struggle with bitterness. I am surprised by the number of people who, after I preach on this topic, approach me confessing their struggle. I am in no doubt that this sin has existed since the Fall, but it seems to be that in today's spiritual climate and culture, more believers are battling with it.

I want to examine what the Scriptures have to say about bitterness, with special consideration being given to Hebrews 12:15. In the first eleven verses of this chapter, believers are encouraged to look to Christ as they run the race through various difficulties and trials. In verses 12-14, they are exhorted to

recommit themselves and follow peace and holiness. Then in verse 15, they are told to “look diligently” or carefully examine themselves lest there be a root of bitterness in their hearts. The connection between these verses is that Christians will stumble in their pursuit of peace and holiness if bitterness resides in their hearts.

This appeal to examine ourselves is not one that we can ignore. People are often too quick to excuse themselves and direct the command to another believer. Perhaps even as you read this, you are thinking, “I hope so and so is reading this because they need it.” We must not forego our responsibility to examine ourselves.

The Characteristics of Bitterness

In Hebrews 12:15, bitterness is described as a “root.” I believe the Holy Spirit uses this word so that we can

glean spiritual truths from this analogy, because the physical root illustrates two characteristics of bitterness. First, roots are usually hidden. Whenever you look at a tree, you see the trunk, the branches, and the leaves, but the roots are hidden beneath the ground. When someone is bitter, it may not be immediately detectable to them or others. The waters of Marah that appeared drinkable were only found to be bitter when tasted. Someone may appear to be “sweet”, but time spent with them will soon cause you to taste their bitterness of heart. Bitterness will inevitably reveal itself in many forms such as anger, or slander; however, often the root of these sins is overlooked because the bitterness is hidden in the heart.

Roots grow deeply. When Naomi and I lived in Ulster, beautiful oak trees surrounded our house. On a stormy night, the trees would sway to and

fro with the wind, often making me wonder if they would fall, but their roots were deep and secure in the ground. Bitterness is like a root: if left in the heart, it will continue to grow until it has a firm hold. This is why many people struggle to uproot this sin because it has deeply gripped their heart. We must guard diligently lest a root of bitterness would unknowingly begin to grow down deeply in our heart.

The Cause of Bitterness

Every root begins with just a seed. Even the mighty oak with its deep, expansive roots started with just a tiny acorn. Bitterness like a planted seed will grow in the soil of the heart until it consumes the individual. But what causes bitterness to be planted in our hearts?

I want to look at an example of someone who became bitter, and how that happened. In Genesis 25–28, we have the story of Jacob and Esau. A prophecy had already been given to Rebekah in Genesis 25:23 that “the elder shall serve the younger.”

In Genesis 25, this was partly fulfilled when Esau sold his birthright, but Jacob also needed the “blessing.” Rebekah knew that it was God’s will for Jacob to receive the blessing; however, instead of trusting God, Rebekah used manipulation and deceit to steal the blessing from Esau. What led her to do this? Many commentators suggest that both Isaac and Rebekah favored one son over the other. Isaac favored Esau and Rebekah favored Jacob. It was Rebekah’s lack of trust in God and her favoritism that led her to deceive and steal the blessing.

This had a significant effect on Esau. We read in Genesis 27:34 when Esau heard he had lost the blessing “he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry.” Rebekah’s partiality towards Jacob planted a root of bitterness in Esau. This root of bitterness went deep and manifested itself in Esau’s life. In verse 41, we read that he hated his brother, and meditated on murder. In Genesis 28:6-9 he married a foreign woman to hurt his parents.

Bitterness had been planted in Esau’s heart by the sinful actions of others. Jacob and Rebekah were wrong, but this does not excuse Esau from becoming a bitter man. We must guard our hearts to make sure that bitterness does not take root. Even though those who have wounded us are in the wrong, we must guard against bitterness.

The Consequences of Bitterness

In Hebrews 12:15, we learn that there are two consequences of bitterness taking root in the heart. First, there is personal trouble (“trouble you”). Bitterness will cause great trouble. Unless rooted out, bitterness will entangle every room of your heart. It will rob your relationship with God, it will rob your fellowship with believers, and it will stunt the growth of the fruit of the Spirit.

Has something in your life planted a seed of bitterness and you have let it grow?

There will also be a second consequence, which is public trouble (“and thereby many be defiled”). When a person is bitter, they rarely keep their bitterness to themselves. They seek out and tell people whom they hope will agree with them, but in doing so, they spread their bitterness to others. Be careful what you choose to share with others. You won’t be able to keep your bitterness to yourself. It’s contagious, and it will cause great trouble to those around you.

The Cure for Bitterness

To discuss the characteristics, causes and consequences of bitterness does not treat the problem. The cure for bitterness is found in Ephesians 4:31-32: “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

It is interesting how that bitterness is included with these other sins; it almost patterns Esau’s life. He was bitter, filled with rage, angry, and unforgiving; he cried out, he slandered, and was filled with malice against his brother. Bitterness will always come to the surface and manifest itself in our actions and attitudes.

This verse urges us to be kind to those we have sinful feelings against. This may sound like a strange command, but it makes sense in light of the example we are given. God is directing us to think upon the cross-work of Christ. We must consider how He has paid the sin-debt of His people and pardoned them. Because of Christ, God was kind toward us, forgiving our sins; therefore, we ought to forgive and be kind to those who have wronged us. If we say like some, “I could never forgive that person”, we are essentially rejecting the very gospel that has delivered us.

Being kind to a brother or sister, praying for them, caring for them is a proven way of uprooting bitterness out of the heart. However, this does not ignore the reconciliation procedure of Matthew 18:15-20. If there is an issue with a brother or sister, we should seek to deal with the problem and be reconciled to them according to the principles of that passage.

I wonder, dear reader, are you struggling with bitterness? Has something in your life planted a seed of bitterness and you have let it grow? Let me remind you that the cure for bitterness is found alone in Jesus Christ. Look to Him by faith today and let your heart be filled with the love of Christ. Meditate on the forgiveness of God, through the work of Christ in order that our hearts are godlike and any root of bitterness is removed. ■



Rev. Andrew Simpson
is the minister of Heritage
FPC, Prince George, BC



REPORT ON THE DELEGATES OF THE FPCNA TO THE PRESBYTERY MEETING AND WEEK OF PRAYER OF THE FPC IN ULSTER

In keeping with the practice of exchanging delegates for their weeks of prayer, Rev. Geoff Banister and Rev. Reggie Cranston were appointed by the North American Presbytery to attend the week of prayer in Northern Ireland as well as the monthly presbytery meeting. For Rev. Cranston, it was a homecoming of sorts since he is an Ulsterman and on Monday evening it was a blessing for him to be in his former church, Newtownabbey FPC for the communion service that was held for the ministers and elders. For Rev. Banister the trip marked his third trip to Ulster, the last one being eleven years earlier in 2009. On Friday night both delegates attended the Presbytery meeting hosted by Newtownards FPC. One major highlight of that meeting was Rev. Paul Backhurst formally receiving and accepting the call to become the next minister of Calgary FPC.

The week of prayer was held at the Templepatrick Hilton Hotel. The conference room was well suited for the ministers and the prayer meetings were wonderful times of blessing. A couple of employees at the hotel shared with one of the ministers how blessed they were in hearing the singing that took place at each prayer meeting. One of them said that she had never heard anything like the strong male voices of the ministers.

In the evenings, Revs. Banister and Cranston had the opportunity to preach at a number of prayer meetings at the churches, as well as preaching on the Lord's Days. It was with a keen sense of history and his spiritual heritage that Rev. Banister had the privilege to preach on the Lord's Day at Martyrs' Memorial FPC as well as at the church in Crossgar where the Free Presbyterian Church was born. At the latter, Rev. Banister was able to meet two elderly brethren that were among



the ninety-four souls converted at that mission in Crossgar that gave rise to the birth of the Free Presbyterian Church more than fifty years ago. All in all, it was a time of renewal and spiritual refreshment which made it readily apparent that the practice of sending delegates to each other's presbyteries is certainly a worthwhile activity to strengthen the ties between both presbyteries. ■



Rev. Geoff Banister
is the minister of the
Indianapolis FPC, IN



Rev. Paul Backhurst (Calgary)

We are thankful to report the arrival of Rev. Paul Backhurst and his family in Calgary. They humbly acknowledge the provision and protection of their heavenly Father in bringing them over to North America. Arriving on March 9, after three hours in customs, Rev. Backhurst received authorization to commence laboring as pastor of the Calgary congregation.

On this occasion, immigration permission did not mean that the new ministry was set for a smooth start. After a few weeks camping in the church building, the Backhursts moved to a house just over ten minutes from the church. The children were just about to start school when the schools closed. Then the installation service, scheduled for the end of March, had to be postponed! As for all of our ministers, pastoral work is by email, telephone, and Skype, etc. and pulpit ministry is in front of a camera! The family knew there would be adjustments with housing and schooling, but who could have predicted the way coronavirus would challenge the Lord's work?

A new ministry is a challenge at the best of times. Add a new country, a new culture, and a coronavirus and you get an appreciation of the need to be in prayer for our brother, his family, and the church family.



The Backhurst boys looking out over the big city.



Rev. Thomas Laverty (Orlando)

The Orlando church had cause to rejoice at the end of March as the news came that Rev. Thomas Laverty had accepted the call to become pastor of the church. That joy has been dampened a little as the reality dawned that coronavirus will mean that Rev. Laverty will not be able to move to Florida as soon as would be desired. Please make that a matter of prayer. Pray that the immigration process will go smoothly and that soon the door will fully open for Rev. Laverty to commence his ministry in Florida.



Cloverdale FPC

Mr. Verne Hanson and Mr. Charlie Escobar were elected on January 29 and are already actively fulfilling their new roles as deacons in the church. The congregation is thankful for their testimony and willingness to serve the Lord as deacons.



Never too Young

To Serve God



As a child growing up in Glasgow, Scotland, I watched my dad, who was a pastor, and my mom, who was a Sunday School and Bible Club teacher, stay busy doing the Lord's work. Sometimes, I wondered what *I* could do for God, even though I was very young. Do you ever feel like this? Do you think doing something for the Lord is just for your parents or adults?

In the Old Testament, Jeremiah felt exactly this way! In Jeremiah 1, God calls Jeremiah to become a prophet—someone that tells a group of people or a nation truth from God. Because Jeremiah was only a teenager, he felt like he couldn't do what God asked: "Behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child." God comforts Jeremiah's fear by saying He would be with Jeremiah as he spread the gospel. Jeremiah preached bravely until he was old, but he started serving God when he was young.

King Josiah is another example of a young person who accomplished great things for God. He was only eight when he became king of Judah! God used him to help get rid of false idol worship in the kingdom. Think of Mary who was just a

teenager when she was chosen to become the mother of Jesus. What an amazing privilege! Then, I'm sure you know the story of David and Goliath. David was also a teenager when he faced the great Philistine giant and killed him with one stone. Perhaps you've heard the story of Naaman who was healed of leprosy? Naaman's maid was a little girl, who told him the prophet Elisha could show him how to be healed. God used a child, not only to cure Naaman's disease, but also to bring him to salvation.

Over the next few weeks, spend some time reading these stories and the stories of other young people in the Bible who served the Lord like Samuel, Daniel, Esther, Joseph, Miriam, Rhoda, and many others!

"But, what can *I* do?" you ask.

Do you have friends at school, in your neighborhood, or even at church who don't know Jesus? Maybe you have unsaved family members? If you know Jesus as Savior, be an example to them by how you live and by what you say. Maybe you're afraid they'll laugh at you. Some friends in Scotland laughed

at me when I told them about Jesus. But the Lord will help you witness for Him just like He helped young Jeremiah preach boldly to people who didn't like what he had to say. You can serve the Lord by being obedient to your parents and showing kindness to your siblings. Also, ask your pastor or Sunday School teacher what you can do to help at your church.

You are never too young for God to use you in His service. Pray and ask what you can do for Him and then obey His will!

"There's a work for Jesus, ready at your hand,
'Tis a task the Master just for you has planned.
Haste to do His bidding, yield Him service true;
There's a work for Jesus none but you can do." (Elsie Duncan Yale) ✎



Rachel Huffman
attends Lehigh Valley FPC, PA

A WORD WORTH KNOWING

Obedience

Willingly doing what you are asked to do



Winter 2020

★ **Ilise Munger**
Grace FPC (Winston-Salem, NC)

★ **Kyle Munger**
Grace FPC (Winston-Salem, NC)

★ **Kaylee Nymann**
FPC of Indianapolis (Indianapolis, IN)

★ **Annalise Nymann**
FPC of Indianapolis (Indianapolis, IN)

★ **Lilyanna Seifert**
Malvern FPC (Malvern, PA)

Kids' Crossword Puzzle

Answers are found in these passages

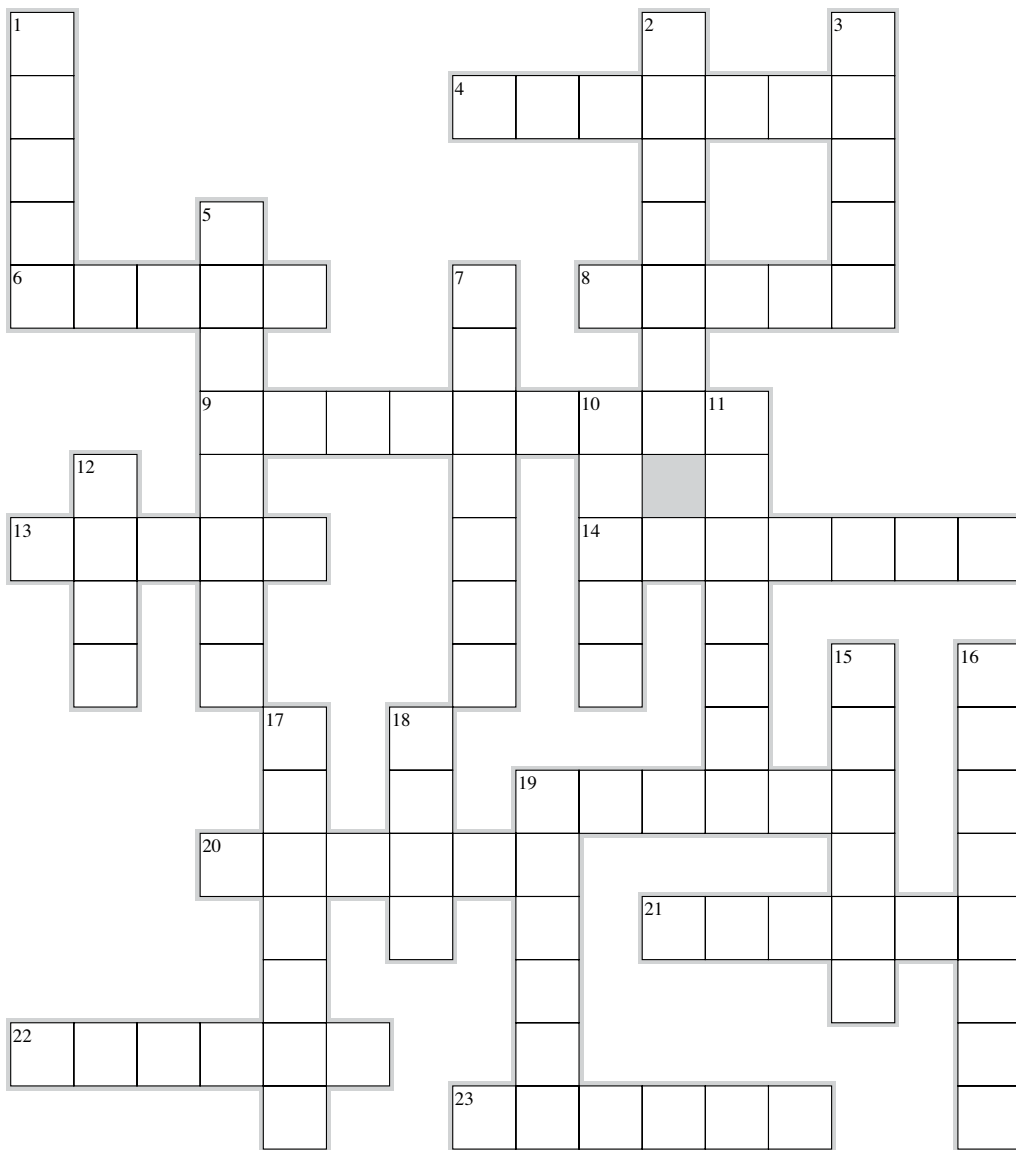
(KJV): Genesis 39; Exodus 2:1–10; 1 Samuel 3 & 17; 2 Kings 5:1–14; 2 Kings 22:8–20; Esther 4; Jeremiah 1; Luke 1:26–56; Acts 12:1–17. **Note: Answers must be spelled correctly.**

Across

4. Naaman's disease
6. David had this many brothers.
8. Heard Peter's knock.
9. Mary visited her.
13. Said, "The battle is the Lord's."
14. Champion of the Philistines
19. Said, "If I perish, I perish."
20. Said, "Speak, for thy servant heareth."
21. Said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"
22. Tore his clothes when he heard God's Word
23. Called Belteshazzar
16. The stone hit the Philistine where?
17. Friend of Daniel's, also called Abednego
18. Number of times the Lord called Samuel
19. Prophet who helped Naaman

Down

1. His sister talked to Pharaoh's daughter.
2. Jeremiah was ordained as what?
3. Naaman's country
5. Said, "I am a child."
7. People were doing this when Peter knocked at the gate.
10. Josiah's age when he became king
11. Found the book of the Law in the house of the Lord
12. Said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord."
15. Home country of the maid who helped Naaman



PLEASE NOTE: Please send your completed puzzle to Current Kids' Corner, c/o Judy Brown, 651 Ponden Dr., Greer, SC 29650, or by email to ljbrown2@gmail.com by June 19, 2020. Include your name, address, age, and the name of the church you attend. Five winners will be drawn from all correct submissions received. The contest is open to young people ages 5–12. Winners will receive a \$10 cash prize.



SEEKING THE LORD

Rev. Stephen Hamilton

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55:6).

Here is a wonderful promise and a gracious invitation. Despite this divine assurance, some would-be "seekers" of God, who are "not far from the kingdom", are unwilling to take Him at His Word. Like those C.H. Spurgeon described, they "have come right up to the wicket gate which stands at the head of the way of life" but have not taken "the great decisive step." In these articles, I want to address specifically, though not exclusively, those who are standing at the gate of life, but have not yet entered upon the road to heaven. I want to begin by referring to the gospel message itself.

The Call Delivered in the Gospel Message

It is a call to repentance and faith. Many examples of this twin call are given. "Repent" was an oft-sounded cry in the New Testament. Christ Himself preached, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." This was the message of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:2), of Peter (Acts 2:38), and of Paul (Acts 17:30). "Believe" was likewise a much-heralded word. The Gospel of John contains over 100 references to believing and related terms. The Philippian jailor asked how he could be saved. The answer was "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ..."

The Compliance Demanded by the Gospel Message

Of course, repentance and faith are sovereignly bestowed by God. It is "given" to men "to believe" (Philippians 1:29). Faith is "not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). In Acts 11:18, it says God "granted repentance unto life." God gives "repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Timothy 2:25).

Yet, the gospel is a command to be heeded. Sinners are exhorted, "Seek the Lord", and "Call upon Him." Thus the Bible speaks of the "obedience of faith", and some who "obey not the gospel." The message demands a response. You will not be saved unless you actually come to Christ. You must repent (Acts 17:30). "Except ye repent, ye shall...perish." You must believe. John 6:29: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." 1 John 3:23 states: "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ..."

The Comfort Derived from the Gospel Message

It is a message from God for all who will receive it. The offer of mercy and grace is sincere. C.H. Spurgeon said: "The Gospel is preached to you, and God has not sent it with the intention that after you have heard it you should seek mercy and not find it. God does not tantalize. He does not mock the sons of men. He asks you to come to Him. Repent and believe, and you shall be saved." God assures sinful men that He may be approached, for "He is near", and He may be apprehended, for "He may be found." (Isaiah 55:6) It would be an awful thing to die just outside the gate of life. Puritan Thomas Boston said: "Hearers of the gospel who perish are inexcusable; the door was open, but they would not enter in." Linger no longer! Seek the Lord today!