

A person with short brown hair, wearing a white cable-knit sweater, is seen from behind, sitting on a dark, jagged rock. They are looking out over a vast, dense forest of trees with autumn foliage in shades of green, yellow, and orange. In the distance, a winding road and a small cluster of buildings are visible. The sky is filled with soft, golden light from a setting or rising sun, with wispy clouds catching the light.

# CURRENT

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

VOL. 10/No. 3 Fall 2021

BEARING WITNESS  
TO THE  
**TRUTH**

**THE SECRET  
OF THE LORD**

**FPCNA**  
CONSTRUCTION CREW

**ABORTION  
THE LIES!**



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# COMPASSION

Dr. Stephen Pollock

The Tokyo Olympic Games are now written in history and one of the stories that will resonate for years to come is the health of Simone Biles. She entered the Olympics with many claiming she was the GOAT (Greatest Of All Time) of gymnastics. Her unexpected withdrawal from the team final came with the news that she was going to prioritize her mental health. Withdrawals from other events followed and the term “twisties” entered the consciousness of sports fans. “Twisties” describes a sort of mental block in gymnastics in which a gymnast will struggle to twist and spin, even “getting lost” in midair.

Confession time—I’m not a big gymnastics fan, but this story caught my attention. There are various elements here that reflect our society, including the obvious reality that human achievement is ultimately fleeting. Success is transient. The greatest are fallible. Many have climbed to the top of the sporting ladder to find the frustration that reaching their goals did not satisfy their longing for meaning. Sport presents us with loud warnings against idolatry and the pursuit of man’s acclaim.

Beyond the obvious you couldn’t avoid noticing the responses to Miss Biles’ afflictions. A BBC headline read, “Why ‘superhuman’ Simone Biles could change attitudes to mental health in sport.” Yet a headline in the Daily Mail online stated, “Sorry Simone Biles...you let down your team-mates, your fans and your country.” Such polarized views engendered fierce debate on social media.

I’m not in a place to make comment on the mental health of a famous US gymnast, but the responses demonstrate a problem we face in the church. How are

we to react to others struggling with their mental health? Is my depressed brother guilty of some hidden, unconfessed sin? Is my anxious sister simply guilty of a lack of faith? Or do we see them as suffering from the effects of the Fall on health and thus conclude the Bible is insufficient to help them? They need the care of psychiatrist or psychologist, but not the counsel of a pastor. Do we sympathize with the sufferer while questioning their spiritual health? Or do we point them to the help of the world and ignore the help of the Lord and His Word? Polarized views about mental health exist in most churches.

Paul gives us some words of counsel: “Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Thessalonians 5:14). We should recognize that different saints will struggle with different problems. Just because we may not suffer as they do doesn’t mean that their battles are not real. We shouldn’t presume to know their minds or to judge their hearts. When confronted with a depressed or anxious believer, we must be careful to treat them as individuals. First and foremost, we must comfort and support them in the spirit of patience. And yet we must not ignore sin. When sin is present, we must engage words of compassionate warning. At all times, our response to someone battling mental issues must be marked by compassion, whatever the cause of the symptoms.

It’s not surprising that opinions are so diverse when people assess an athlete who shows herself to be human. It is more surprising when the children of God, sinners who profess to know the grace of God, fail to show the compassion of God to those suffering in a fallen world. ■

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

(1 Thessalonians 5:14).

We do see every day that among the best of God’s servants, there are those who are always doubting, always looking to the dark side of every providence, who look at the threatening more than at the promise, who are ready to write bitter things against themselves.

C.H. Spurgeon, “Weak Hands and Feeble Knees”

Some of you may be in great distress of mind, a distress out of which no fellow-creature can deliver you. You are poor nervous people at whom others often laugh. I can assure you that God will not laugh at you; He knows all about the sad complaint of yours, so I urge you to go to Him, for the experience of many has taught us that, “the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.”

C.H. Spurgeon, “Remembering God’s Works”



# Bearing Witness to Truth

## Speaking the Truth in Love

In previous articles I have drawn comparison between the days in which Isaiah said, “Truth is fallen in the street” (Isaiah 59:14) and our own days of cultural and spiritual confusion. In this article I want to address the topics of bearing witness to the truth in such times and of our attitudes while doing so.

At a point when the Jews were struggling with their view of Christ, Jesus pointed them to the ministry of John the Baptist and said, “He bare witness unto the truth” (John 5:33). As we shall see, John fulfilled that ministry during days that were particularly difficult, so I want to use John’s ministry as a template for our considerations. But I also want to keep in mind the Apostle Paul’s admonition regarding “speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15), because the flesh always manages to corrupt even our noble efforts. If we are not watchful, on the one hand, our presentation of truth can be corrupted by self-righteousness (and ultimately hypocrisy), while on the other hand, the flesh will seek to present a “loving” ministry which compromises truth in order to avoid giving offense. But compromising the truth can never be truly loving. I want to survey the major incidents in John’s life and make

four observations that apply in our own days.

### He was born into difficult times

While we read of John in our New Testament Scriptures, he really was the last in the line of the Old Testament prophets. He lived during the time of the Roman occupation of Judea. This was the fourth in the succession of Gentile empires that God in His providence had allowed to rule over the people of Israel because of their apostasy. While we must always be careful with our application of things surrounding national Israel to our own situation in the New Testament church, it doesn’t take much imagination to draw the parallels to the apostasy of the Church in our modern context and the cultural and political decay that currently surround us. We live in a society that is now dominated by anti-Christian forces.

The difficulties of John’s times were not merely confined to the worldly culture that surrounded him. He also had to confront a corrupted church that had evolved during those times—and we should be careful to notice that the church had corrupted itself in both liberal and conservative directions. In their attempt to preserve

the prospects of the Kingdom of God during their times, the liberal Sadducees had decided, “If we are going to survive during all this, we are going to have to change and work with these people.” That attitude ultimately led them to abandon key doctrines and to become worldly in their lifestyle. On the other hand, the Pharisees were the separatists of their day, but they let their separatism lead them into self-righteousness and a party spirit. They ultimately lost the truth traveling in a conservative direction. By allowing themselves to focus upon the enemies of truth instead of upon truth itself, they ultimately lost the truth. They asked, “How can we defeat the opposition?” or “How can we feel good about ourselves when we are not in control?” instead of saying, “Let us bear simple witness to the truth even though the opposition now seems to dominate.” This is to say nothing of another faction, the Zealots, who felt that even the separatism of the Pharisees was not enough, so they began to take matters into their own hands and incite violence in their opposition to Rome.

It is not difficult to see how these mindsets that corrupted the church of John’s day can or perhaps already have corrupted the Church of our



own day. How much better to be numbered among the faithful remnant such as John's parents, Zacharias and Elisabeth, or Mary and Joseph, or Simeon and Anna who "waited for the consolation of Israel."

## He spoke truth to a variety of needs

Perhaps the most notable feature of John's life was that he was a preacher. What is preaching but the public declaration of truth? Though it might be easy to imagine it as such, John's preaching was not one-sided. He preached the whole counsel of God. He preached the need for repentance. One of his messages was "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:1). Being faithful in our day will certainly include calling sinners to repentance. It seems that some of the Lord's people are a little reluctant to do so at this juncture. Perhaps this is because sin is so rampant and openly accepted that broaching the subject seems more immediately offensive than it did in prior times when even secular culture recognized the wrongs of an openly sinful lifestyle. Perhaps a reason that others within the Church are hesitant to preach repentance is the fact that some have morphed into preaching it with something of the attitude of the Pharisees, but two wrongs don't make a right.

Another major theme of John's preaching was the positive side of the gospel. He preached the remedy for sin when he proclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God." This phrase might seem very familiar to us, but think of how shocking and how thought-provoking it must have been to the people of John's own day. They were intimately familiar with the sacrificial lambs of their outward ceremonies. This message forced them to work through the meanings and the truth of their symbols. How much should this cause us to consider the importance of sound doctrine in such times as ours. It can seem that the evils are so great and so many that we need to spend all our time crying out against them. But if we fail to understand and

proclaim the details of the gospel (which of course involves the careful study of our confessed theology and the person and work of Christ), we will be able to do little more than whine about our circumstances instead of preaching the glorious truth of Jesus as John did.

## He didn't hide from the issues of the day

Another notable feature of John's life was his imprisonment and his ultimate martyrdom for speaking out against the incestuous marriage of Herod to his brother's wife. Perhaps this was more notable and even more necessary because of the public nature of the sin. Such a thing would certainly have been news and gossip-worthy fodder in the public arena. Perhaps John was even put on the spot and asked about it. Whatever the circumstances surrounding John's approach to the subject, it is clear that he answered the matter directly and that his answer was communicated to the powers that were. Clearly our generation now openly indulges in various forms of immorality and even perversion. Not content with merely living their sinful lifestyle openly, activists seek the sanctioning of their sin. The Church becomes an inevitable focus of attention during such cultural upheavals. Amazingly, even confessionally evangelical churches are being forced to wrestle with, or reaffirm, or change the obvious in the turmoil that has enveloped our times. Liberal wings of the Church have joined leading secular voices promoting the acceptance of such sins. It is clear from Scripture that those sins were not welcomed into the Church. People were saved from those sins and welcomed into the Church (1 Corinthians 6:11). There is a world of difference.

Perhaps nowhere else is our need to be both truthful and loving put more on display. The graphic nature of the sins of homosexuality and the public acceptance of such sins demonstrates a level of extreme cultural declension and open rebellion against God. Truth isn't neutral with regard to these sins (or any other sins). But the perverse nature of such sins can evoke improper attitudes among the Lord's

people. It is vital to recognize that the most sheltered and morally pure lifelong church member has no more personal right to claim the favor and salvation of God than those whom God graciously has chosen and saved out of such a lifestyle. Let us remember the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20) and rejoice and welcome *any* whom God saves, recognizing that we do not have any more worthiness to enter His Kingdom than they. This gospel mindset, coupled with Paul's comment that some in the church at Corinth had been saved out of such lifestyles, should actually encourage us to lovingly and humbly share the gospel and expect fruit from even these corners of our corrupt nations.

## He faithfully endured hardship

Lastly, we observe that John did in fact endure hardship and even martyrdom because of his commitment to truth. It is clear that not all who hear the warnings and the comforts of the gospel will repent and believe. Just as John experienced, we find that Bible believers are increasingly marginalized and maligned in this world. Let us not react out of fear or anger. Those responses can unwittingly communicate (or reveal) the mindset, "Oh no! Their gods are winning." This is clearly not the case. Read the book of Daniel.

Our Lord has promised, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." So let us not be surprised by the changing winds of culture. For Christians in the West at least, things are merely shifting from the unusual back to the normal. Let us therefore be ever more well-grounded in our understanding and our experience of the grace and power of the gospel. And let us also remember that our Lord followed that statement with, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."



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# Abortion THE LIES!

One of the most powerful weapons in the devil's armory is time. Satan promotes a lie in the areas of theology or morality in the knowledge that initially the lie will be met by horror and opposition. But over time people become more comfortable with it. They hear it so often that they begin to question their previous thoughts. Were they true, or is this "new truth" truth? The pro-abortion movement has made great headway using the weapon of time. A new generation has arisen that doesn't question the "new truth." The devil's lie has become truth. Although the debate has been often rehearsed, the church must continue to challenge the devil's lies. Articles such as this are vital to guard the minds of the Lord's people and, by grace, stop the madness of this modern holocaust.

To demonstrate that something is a lie requires exposing the folly in the thinking of the liar. We must obey the words of Solomon: "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit" (Proverbs 26:5).

## 1. Advocating that abortion is right tells a lie regarding the nature of humanity.

Sadly, there are doctors and scientists who defend a woman's right to abortion. Using their own definitions, they must admit that abortion is the taking of human life. What constitutes life? What makes a human being human? The scientific world defines a living organism as an organism growing, multiplying, and using energy. The embryo is alive by any scientific definition.

How does the scientific world define human? DNA. Our DNA renders us human and not animal. By virtue of our DNA we can be classified as human and not dog or fish or whatever.

According to the secular scientist, the embryo is both living and human. "The human embryo has within it all of the internal information needed—including chiefly its genetic and epigenetic constitution—and the active disposition to develop itself to the mature stage of a human organism" (*Embryonic human persons. Talking Point on morality and human embryo research*. 2009. Robert P. George and Patrick Lee). There is no point between conception and birth where a human being becomes more human or more living. There are various stages of maturity and development, but not any development in the essence of what constitutes living humanity. "This means that the embryo has the same nature—in other words, it is the same kind of entity—from fertilization onward; there is only a difference in degree of maturation, not in kind, between any of the stages from embryo, to fetus, infant and so on."

The devil has sowed the seed of the lie, "Abortion is the death of cells. It's not the death of a child, but only the death of potential life." By their own definitions they must assert that the embryo is developing human life.

The true scientific view of humanity is entirely in accord with the

teaching of Scripture. The unborn child is always deemed a human being in Scripture. Theologically, we know that God's general and special revelation do not contradict each other. The psalmist refers to his person in terms that indicate an undeveloped, "unformed" embryo. "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, **yet being imperfect...**" (Psalm 139:15-16). Dr. Luke asserts that the unborn person can be filled with the Holy Spirit. "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15). The same doctor uses the same Greek word to refer to the unborn child, the new-born child, and the young child. (See Luke 1:41, 44; 2:12, 16; 18:15) Furthermore, the miracle of the Virgin Birth is really a miracle of virgin conception (Luke 1:35). Hence the incarnation of the God-man, the union of the divine nature with the human, must be dated from conception, not birth. This miracle is predicated on the fact that the unborn Jesus is a true, living human being.

The pro-choice, pro-abortion lie is against the truth of God's revealed will. In the Bible, the act of killing the unborn is viewed as murder. There is no euphemism in the word "slew" used in Jeremiah 20:17. The interpretation of Exodus 21:22-25 has been debated, but the most likely view is that a man's actions may bring forth the premature delivery of a child. If the child survives, a fine is the prescribed punishment; however, if the child dies, then "life for life" is to be required. This confirms that the killing of the unborn is the taking of human life, worthy of punishment in the judgment of God.



This matter is of vital importance. Some pro-lifers have felt frustration at the difficulty of winning the moral argument. I recall a time when people were presenting papers regarding the harm that abortion does to the woman. That is undoubtedly true, but we must not move the debate away from the humanity of the unborn. I understand the motive of legislators' promotion of so-called fetal heartbeat bills. Commendably they are seeking to reduce the number of abortions. They perceive the impossibility of passing any more extreme legislation. Yet such bills may lead to the conclusion that early abortion is acceptable. The early embryo is living and human. There are differences between the unborn and the newborn. These are differences in dependence and in physiology, but no difference in the essence of humanity. The location of the baby, i.e., in or out of the womb, doesn't change the humanity of the baby. Be clear—the Word of God asserts that abortion is the killing of a living, human being.

## 2. Advocating that abortion is right tells a lie regarding the nature of autonomy.

The agreement about a woman's right to have an abortion often falls on the claim to personal autonomy. The devil has sowed the lie of autonomy. "Autonomy" is a compound of two Greek words for law and self. *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* defines personal autonomy as "the capacity to decide for oneself and pursue a course of action in one's life, often regardless of any particular moral content." In the defense of abortion, autonomy is heard: "It is my right to do what I want with my body."

There are many issues with this claim. As Christians we live with the understanding that we don't have the ultimate right over our bodies. We do not have the right to do as we please with our bodies, but must only do those things which please the Lord. The whole concept of autonomy must be carefully defined. Rightly understood, autonomy reminds us that we are responsible for self. We must exercise self-control! We must govern our own conduct without external constraint. But our conduct in light of sense and Scripture is under a higher authority. We are not governed

by the law of self, but by the law of God. Self-confessed atheists know they are accountable when they reckon with conscience. God is the only Lawgiver. He reveals His will in the Word. Even those without the law have the law in their hearts (Romans 2:14-15). We are not autonomous. We are responsible creatures under a divine law.

What is more, the unborn child within the woman's body is not truly part of her body. The unborn is a genetically distinct entity with his or her own DNA profile. The unborn is not "her body" but dependent. God has ordained that the mother sustains the life in the womb and for a time out of the womb. That is how God has made mankind. Even allowing for the woman's autonomy does not allow for that autonomy to extend to her decision to allow her child to be put to death.

## 3. Advocating that abortion is right tells a lie regarding the nature of morality.

Obviously, this issue is about ethics and morality. The devil has from the beginning asked the question, "Hath God said?" He has questioned the authority of God to deliver the foundational principle of ethic. The only right ethical principle is the one based on the foundation, "God said." When that foundation is removed all manner of confusion arises regarding morality. The devil sows his lies and the foolish heed the lie and ignore the truth.

The devil asserts the lie of pragmatism that, in a moral dilemma, the end can justify the means to the end. If you have ever spoken to someone considering an abortion or to someone who has had an abortion you will know that abortion is not an easy decision. Tragically, there are some who have seared their consciences and who seem to have no trouble exercising their "choice." More often a woman believes an abortion is the best way to deal with a terrible situation. There may be various reasons, but the thinking is that it would be better to have an abortion than to carry and have

the baby. The decision is determined by outcome not by a fixed standard of morality. When we hold to the ethical foundation of God's Word, our decisions will be based on what God thinks, not what we think might work. We will do what is right, even if it is extremely difficult.

The devil has continued to spread his lies regarding morality by the manipulation of people through use of language. The language of "rights" has been used to sway the mind of the masses. One of the first arguments offered was that a woman must have the same right to be "not pregnant" as a man. Such confusion of language has caused people to hesitate in protest. Add to this the confused language of reproductive "health" and you can see the devil at work. The Bible's ethic of healthcare is to help and benefit the needy. Historically, the oath of the doctor was *primum non nocere* ("first, do no harm"). The advocates of abortion turn Christ's Golden Rule on its head. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

What is the Christian response to the propagation of lies? We must tell the truth. We must open our mouths "... for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction" (Proverbs 31:8). One can't help but feel that people are deliberately calling evil good and good evil. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20) God's will is good. Life is good and must be protected. Christians ought to seek to rescue women in crisis and be willing to adopt children who are rescued from abortions. In all this we must proclaim the gospel of a God who is ready and able to forgive our sins by the merits of the blood of His Son. ❧



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## MISSION TEAM

Mr. Ken Walters (Elder of Orlando FPC) speaks for the congregation when he writes, *We at OFPC wish to say a big “Thank you” to the FPCNA construction team. Led by Rev. Derrick Bowman, five adults and ten young people from churches in Winston Salem, Indianapolis and Malvern arrived in Orlando, and on Monday, August 2nd, began the monumental task of remodeling the outside and inside of our church. The ladies prepared three meals daily for the workers, while the men (young and older) along with two young ladies labored under a hot Florida sun.*

*The results are spectacular! All the ceiling tiles were replaced, LED lighting was installed, and all the siding was replaced. It looks like a new building! How refreshing it was to talk to the young people and hear how they were thrilled to serve*

*the Lord, even with manual labor. Praise the Lord for all His goodness!*

It is rightly described as a monumental task. Rev. Bowman and Mr. Gary Thomas (Deacon) spent many, many hours in preparation for the project, working with local authorities in securing the relevant permits. At times it seemed like the Lord was closing the door. As Rev. Bowman observed, it can be difficult to determine when the Lord is closing the door and when He is testing our faith and determination to do His will. Mrs. Lydia Bowman expressed it well in a Facebook post as the team made its way home: “God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply” (Hudson Taylor). *We can truly say God supplied over and over again for our mission team. Many times over the last few months and even*

*this week, doors were closed, and we kept knocking through prayer, and at the last minute the Lord would provide the exact thing we needed. It was truly a testing of faith and a learning to keep trusting the Lord. From permits to siding supply, to inspections, God opened the doors. He also mercifully kept us safe and gave strength to work... We praise the Lord for the team He brought together. Each one was a joy to work alongside! As I was reading 1 Corinthians 12 in my own reading this week, the verses about the varying members of the body came to life in the team. Each person jumped in with eagerness whether it was to demo, do electrical, clean up, hammer nails, or cook. The team members all did their own parts that were necessary to make up the whole. We marvel at God’s kindness in using weak vessels as we are to help in kingdom work.* ■







Rev. Armen Thomassian and his wife Melanie welcomed Leah to their family on June 15, 2021.



To the great joy of his parents, Logan and Amelia, Obadiah Logan Elder was born on June 8, 2021.



Sylas Boyd from the Prince George congregation is pictured with his Sunday school teacher, Mrs. Naomi Simpson. Sylas accurately recited the Child's Catechism.





“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” The twenty-third Psalm teaches that the Lord supplies not only His people’s current and future spiritual needs, but the Shepherd also meets our present physical needs—food, water, safety, rest.

The New Testament reiterates this promise. Christ teaches that God knows our needs even before we pray for them. Teaching that we should be more concerned about spiritual than physical matters, He also points out that God so values His people that we should “take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . . for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” He illustrates this point by reminding us that God cares for the birds and plants, and His children are of greater value than they are. (Matthew 6: 8, 25-34; Luke 12: 22-31)

After thanking the Philippian church for sending gifts to meet his “necessity,” Paul comments, “My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4: 16, 19). While essentially tucked in a thank-you note, this promise appears to reiterate the concept that putting spiritual matters first (in this case, giving to meet another

Christian’s physical needs) results in God supplying His people’s physical needs.

Looking at these promises some Christians find not only comfort in and assurance of God’s care, but also license to engage in certain practices which many consider wasteful and unwise. What is an appropriate, Christian view of human use of natural resources?

## NATURAL RESOURCES

Although we may think of natural resources as being valuable commodities found in an area (oil, trees, aluminum, gold, etc.), ecologically speaking *natural resources* are anything and everything in an area which can be used to meet the needs of an organism in that environment. For frogs, pond water is a natural resource. Frogs do not live where suitable water is lacking. If the water supply is adequate and their other needs are met, frogs thrive in that area. If the pond dries up, frogs either suffer, migrate, or die.

The same is essentially true for humans. But unlike frogs, humans are the ultimate ecological managers. (See *Current*, Vol. X, Issue 1, p.10.) To survive we cannot only relocate, but we also can move natural resources. We manipulate environments to suit us. Food or other staples found in one area can be moved to a place that lacks them. Dry deserts can be irrigated to produce

strawberries. Wetlands can be drained to become pastures. To obtain prized natural resources, like gold and gems, humans have relocated and managed vast amounts of natural resources.

God’s population growth command (“replenish the earth”) was made prior to man’s sin (Genesis 1:28). We can assume that the pre-Curse world would be able to sustain that population. After the Flood, the “fill the earth” command is repeated (Genesis 8:1). It seems equally logical that the postdiluvian world has the natural resources to sustain a “full earth” population. But because of man’s sin, the earth’s bounty is not available “just for the picking.” The Curse involves human “sweat” and the earth producing “thorns and thistles” (Genesis 3:17-19). But does the Curse limit the natural resources available to humans?

God’s mandated population growth is joined with the so-called *Magna Carta* of science: the “subdue” and “dominion over” phrases of Genesis 1:28. Science is man’s method of solving the physical problems of subduing and having dominion over the physical world. This verse gives man the authority to engage in scientific endeavors. Apparently, science is part of God’s plan for meeting our physical needs. We need to manage earth’s natural resources (think: “sweat” overcoming “thorns and thistles”). To do so God has given us the needed mental abilities (think: *science* and *wisdom*) and authority (think: *subdue* and *dominion*). The natural resources are there, but humans must physically and mentally work to obtain them.

Since the world had abundant natural resources and mankind had the authority and ability to use them, it appeared that all humans needed to do was “go out and get what you want however you can.” That mentality seemed to work well—in the past.

## KINDS OF NATURAL RESOURCES

It is true that some natural resources are virtually limitless. There is an abundance of water on planet earth; running short is virtually inconceivable. The water may not be where we want it (deserts lack



water, other areas have too much), it may not be in the desired form (ice cap water is unusable for many purposes) or it may be mixed with undesirable substances (certain chemicals dissolved in water make it unusable for many purposes; for example, salt water cannot be used to irrigate most crops). These problems are not because of a planetary lack of water, and with work, can be solved.

Some natural resources are renewable. Lumber, for example, can be grown. We may need to practice forest husbandry and have to work out distribution difficulties to maintain the supply, but for the foreseeable future, globally running out of wood would be a result of mismanagement. The same is true of foodstuffs and some other natural resources.

Some natural resources, however, are limited. There is only so much aluminum in the world. When we first recognized aluminum as a natural resource, the supply may have seemed limitless, but it is getting harder to obtain, and there is no way of producing more. To supply future needs, we may need to recycle it or, perhaps, devise a substitute for some of its uses. The quantities of natural coal and oil are also limited. These resources, however, are not recyclable. Ways of using less can postpone the problem of running out, but if the Lord tarries beyond the point of our consuming the earth's supply, alternative energy sources will need to be found.

For many natural resources, the older "go out and get what you want however you can" methods are demonstrably not wise. As the earth's population has increased, challenges in meeting our physical needs have also grown. Unless Christ returns, those challenges will likely increase. Some Christians point to Scriptural promises and assume that, if the Lord tarries, God will need to work miracles to supply their needs.

## MIRACULOUS SUPPLY

When necessary God has worked miraculously to supply the physical needs of His people. Occasionally this has been on the long term, grand scale.

Examples: forty years worth of daily manna and water from desert rocks to meet the needs of over a million people (Exodus 16:15-36, 17:1-7). Some miraculous supplies were grand scale but short term: Christ feeding thousands from five loaves and two fish (Matthew 14:14-21). Other miraculous supplies are on the individual level: ravens bringing food to Elijah and the widow's endless meal and oil (1 Kings 7:3-7, 17:9-13). These and other miracles of supply served not only to meet the needs of people, but they were also testimony of God's power and care for His people both then, since they were recorded in Scripture, and now.

Today God can work miracles to supply our physical needs. But He is not limited to what could be termed "obvious miracles." Rather than ravens, a kind person may be His instrument of supply. The supply of food may appear explainable, but actually God was no less involved in the supply than He was in the endless meal and oil for Elijah, the widow, and her son.

While some Christians assume that a lack of natural resources will cause God to work miracles to fulfill His promises, others claim "Jesus will have to come back before then." If there is Scripture to support the idea that what humans do or don't do in anyway affects the date of Christ's return, I have not found it. After checking what Scripture teaches about Christ's second coming, to me it seems almost heretical to imply that the day we run short of some natural resource(s) sets the date of Christ's return.

## MISMANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Generally in Scripture the recipients of miraculous supply were in need because they were doing what God commanded or expected them to do. When God puts one in a place where normal supply is not possible, He can miraculously supply. But what if the short supply is not directed by God, but is the result of mismanagement?

Suppose a man works, is paid, and thieves rob him on his way home. The money needed to meet his family's

needs is gone. We can understand him calling his family together to pray, reminding God (and themselves) of His promises, and expecting God to answer.

Suppose the man gambles away the money on his way home. As he calls his family to prayer, we sense something is wrong. God supplied their needs. Their current need is not because God directed them to this situation. Mismanagement has resulted in their need. It could be argued that God resupplying would be endorsement of the gambling and justification for doing it again.

God has promised us safety, but we do not jump off the roof to experience the thrill of the fall and the joy of God miraculously catching us before we get hurt. We are not to "tempt our God" (Deuteronomy 6:16; Matthew 4:7). Does this apply to the thrill of gambling and God's promise of supply? Is God obligated to supply the family's needs a second time? Should this reasoning be applied to man's use of the earth's natural resources?

Our just God will keep His promises. The method He uses, however, may not be what we expect. Although the eternal punishment of sin can be washed away by the blood of Christ, the temporal results of sin should still be expected. And we have no way of knowing what the scars of a particular sin will be.

What environmental scars may humans face because of inappropriate use of the world's natural resources? What should be a Christian's position regarding our use of natural resources? Those are topics for future articles. ■



**Mr. William Pinkston**

served as a science teacher at Bob Jones Academy for 50 years. He is a charter member of Faith Free Presbyterian Church of Greenville, SC.





# GENESIS

## GOD'S BOOK OF BEGINNINGS STUDY NOTES

### GENESIS 10

#### SUMMARY

Genesis chapters ten and eleven form a table of nations. It is the link between pre-flood and post-flood peoples. All peoples of the world find their origin in the line of Noah and his three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Chapter 10:2-5 list how the sons of Japheth were divided into various nations.

Chapter 10:6-20 record how the sons of Ham were divided into nations.

Chapter 10:21-32 record how the sons of Shem were divided into nations.

Without this information we would have no record of how the world was divided into people-groups after Noah's flood, and how they came to be scattered around the world. This history is also vital to counter racism. Many nations developed from the line of Noah, but there is only one human race, which became diverse in cultures with people of different color and physical characteristics. Embedded in this history of nations is the confusion of languages at the tower of Babel that led to the dispersion of peoples due to their inability to function alongside people of other "tongues" (Genesis 10:5, 20, 31).

#### KEY VERSE:

"These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth and after the flood" (Genesis 10:32).

This verse summarizes the content of the chapter and declares that the families of Noah's sons became distinct nations after the flood.

#### OBSERVATIONS

These family genealogies record the rise of the nations of the world. Each family genealogy is listed "after their nations" (10:5, 20, 31). To a large degree, ethnologists can trace cities and peoples to the names listed in Genesis 10. Dr. W. F. Albright, universally acknowledged as the world's leading authority on the archeology of the Near East, though himself not a believer in the infallibility of Scripture, said concerning this Table of Nations: "It stands absolutely alone in ancient literature, without a remote parallel, even among the Greeks, where we find the closest approach to a distribution of peoples in genealogical framework... The Table of Nations remains an astonishingly accurate document." [*Recent Discoveries of Bible Lands* – article appended to *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible* and cited by Dr. Henry Morris in his book, *The Genesis Record*, p. 245].

Dr. Morris said: "There is nothing in any other ancient writing discovered by archeologists which is at all comparable in scope and accuracy." Some names can be immediately associated with names of nations that existed in later biblical and secular history, such as Babel and Nineveh, which were associated with Nimrod. Canaan, son of Ham and Canaan the land of the Canaanites is an obvious example. Others can be listed, such as Eber (10:24), and Hebrews; Mizraim (10:6) and Egypt; Asshur (10:22) and Assyria; Lud (10:22) and Lydia; Aram (10:22) and Aramea; Uz (10:23) and the land associated with Job.

It is difficult to be specific in every instance; however, a lot of effort has gone into tracing each people group and their line of descent with each particular

name listed in this table of nations. It is fascinating to history buffs, but every Bible reader can stand upon the basic fact that we all descend from Noah and his sons. It is enough to accept this table of nations, and its summary (Genesis 10:32) as inspired and, therefore, as a reliable record of the formation of the peoples and nations of the world. When Paul the apostle stood on Mars Hill discoursing with the Greek philosophers, he had no hesitation in stating: "...[God] hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26).

While we take care to note that the line of Christ came down from Noah through Shem, the forefather of Abraham, the line of the Messiah does not limit the scope of the gospel message as good news to sinners of all nationalities. The gospel is for the Gentile as much as for the Jew. The gospel is to be preached to every creature—people of every tribe, nation, and tongue.

#### Nimrod became a rebel to God and the architect of the tower of Babel.

Nimrod was a great-grandson to Noah. Ham was the father of Cush who "begat Nimrod" (10:8). At first reading, the reference to him being a hunter in the earth seems innocent enough, as the need to hunt for food was real and he seemed to excel at hunting. He probably had his trophies to show for it! The real character of Nimrod, however, began to show at the establishment of a kingdom called Babel (Genesis 10:10). This makes him the chief architect behind the project to build the tower of Babel in defiance to God. That tower got its name from God's judgment upon it in confusion of languages, whereby people spoke in confusing sounds to one another to the point that they were perceived to be babbling. The Hebrew word "babel" means



confusion. It seems that Nimrod was an aspiring leader who wanted all the peoples of the earth under his control in one location. Note what the promoters of the tower of Babel stated, “Let us make a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the whole face of the earth” (Genesis 11:4). They were aspiring to be one people under the control of one leader. That was in defiance of God’s will to multiply and replenish the earth (Genesis 1:28; 9:1).

**The name Peleg refers to the division of the people after the tower of Babel was stopped by God.** The Scripture states that Eber named his son “Peleg, for in his days was the earth divided” (Genesis 10:25). Some might take this as a reference to some catastrophic opening of the earth’s crust, or a mega-earthquake. It is, however, more in keeping with the theme of these two chapters, which we call the table of nations, to interpret this as the division of the people into different groups according to language. This conviction is further bolstered by the references to “tongues” or languages in (Genesis 10:5, 20, 31). God’s confounding the languages was the cause of the division of families into their own nations as they went in different directions and settled amongst their own language groups.

### APPLICATION

Any history that promotes the idea of the evolution of man from lower forms of life is the true culprit of racial profiling, not biblical Christianity. This table of nations found in Genesis 10 teaches us that all men and women are equally human and all men and women are made in God’s image, and all have souls that will live for all eternity.

The Lord’s command to “love thy neighbor as thyself” applies to people of all nations. The Church of Jesus Christ is an international church, and we need an international attitude in ministry and

evangelism. We must repent of prejudice toward people because of their nationality, for God commands that we love our neighbor as ourselves. This is the proper basis for fellowship in the church and for evangelism. New Testament Christians displayed this new attitude in their evangelism when Jewish converts to Christianity preached the gospel to the Samaritans and to Gentiles. The New Testament church was born in multi-ethnic diversity in Jerusalem during Pentecost and later in cosmopolitan cities like Corinth and Rome.

People of every nationality need to hear the good news of the gospel. For this, we must labor and pray. Pray for missionaries to be called and sent forth into the fields that are white unto harvest. In Canada and the United States, we have a greater opportunity than ever to reach peoples of the world as they come to our countries as immigrants. This greater opportunity lays upon us a greater duty to minister to differing nationalities and cultures. If there is coldness toward sinners of other nationalities, we fail to fulfill the great commission. We must remember that Christ died for all kinds of men. The Scriptures plainly teach that all kinds of men and women can be saved, whether they be Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female. Those who are brought to faith in Christ “are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:22-29).

### TO DO

Take a family of another nationality to heart and find ways to witness to them. Give them a Bible, pray for them, and, if possible, bring them along to church with you to hear the preaching of the gospel, with the burden that they might be saved. Your minister will be delighted that a mission field is opened up to him as he preaches the gospel. ☒



**Rev. Ian Goligher**  
Retired Minister of Cloverdale  
FPC, BC







# THE SECRETS OF THE LORD

I remember as a teenager sincerely wanting to know what the Lord wanted me to be when I grew up. I was an idealistic young person with hopes and dreams, but my parents had wisely instilled in me the truth that I needed to know the Lord's leading for my life. I remember my mother saying a hundred times, "You are better off being a ditch digger in the Lord's will than being a millionaire outside of His will." As usual, Mom was right! Praying for the Lord's guidance in life is important in youth, and it is equally important for adults. A verse of Scripture that serves as a great help is Psalm 25:14, "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant." The Lord has promised to guide those who fear Him.

To fear the Lord simply means to factor the Lord into every part of your life. Every decision must be made in the context of the Lord's will. The Lord sees and knows everything you do and think, so His opinion must be taken into consideration. For a Christian, the fear of the Lord is not a fear of punishment. You love the Lord, so you want to please Him. The fear of the Lord is a healthy fear of doing anything that would hinder or hurt your daily relationship with Him. As you walk in the fear of the Lord, He will guide you.

The question that so many young people ask is, "What is the Lord's will, and how can I know it?" The truth is that the Lord is not trying to keep *secrets* from His people. He has communicated His will—His *secrets*—for you through the Scriptures. As you follow His will today, He will show you His will for tomorrow. I vividly remember a sermon I heard when I was fifteen years old. The preacher read from Ephesians 5:15-17, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." He emphasized that as a person does the Lord's will today, the Lord will reveal His will for tomorrow. I remember the searching question he put to all of us, "If you are not following the Lord in obedience today, why and how can you expect the Lord to reveal to you what He wants you to do ten or fifteen years from now?" That question came to my heart as an obvious truth. I already knew that the Bible was full of commands and instructions that I was not consistently following, and it made sense to me that if I were not obedient in the little things, I had no reason to expect the Lord to reveal what I wanted to know in the big things.

That pastor was preaching the same truth that is found in Psalm 25:14. Being obedient in the little things today is precisely what it means to walk in the fear of the Lord. (If you want to study some examples of those "little things," I would encourage you to study I Thessalonians 5:12-22). The Lord has promised to reveal His will to those who fear Him. If you seek Him, He has promised that you will find Him. That includes seeking and finding His will. One thing you can be sure of is that the Lord is not trying to play some heavenly game of "hide and seek" with His will. He does not have a will for your life that He does not want you to know. In fact, it is the opposite. He has made His daily will for you plain in the Scriptures. As you live in obedience to the Scriptures day by day, the Lord will guide you by His Spirit into what He wants you to do tomorrow. From that perspective, finding the Lord's will is not a *secret* at all. It is simply the Christian's daily walk of obedience. ■



**Rev. Derrick Bowman**  
Associate Minister, Grace FPC,  
Winston-Salem, NC





Thanks to Hudson Bowman's math I realized it had been 735 days since we all had said farewell to each other and to Rock Mountain Bible Camp in July 2019. Needless to say, there was a lot of excitement, despite the rain, as the young people began to assemble. Of course, for some of the new campers there was some nervousness but there wasn't time to linger on that as people hurried to get stuff into the cabins between the heavy downpours.

I suppose every camper looks forward to camp for different reasons. Some, quite rightly, can't wait for the Sunday dander in the drizzle! Others love the competition as the campers are divided into two teams for a week-long contest. This year was a close-run thing as one Bowman-Munger led team defeated the other Bowman-Munger team! Despite swimming being prohibited, the lake is a popular venue as the canoes and kayaks are occupied. Most of the campers are involved in the afternoon sports—basketball, volleyball, ping-pong and gaga ball. This year, Mrs. Lois Carper along with Mrs. Andri-Ellen Peters, organized craft activities. Many thoroughly enjoyed this and will look forward to more of this next year.

Central to our camp purpose is that the young people are presented with the Word of God. That happens throughout the day via the counselors in the cabins as well as in organized times of Bible teaching. In the mornings Rev. Pollock taught the young men while Mrs. Barbara Mooney taught the ladies. During the Lord's Day and each evening there is a time of worship and Bible instruction. The theme was "Truth." Various ministers presented aspects of the Bible's teaching regarding truth—so important in a day when the very existence of absolute truth is called into question. For the first time, we had the pleasure of hearing Pastor Adam Eshleman (Reformation Bible Church, Maryland) open the Word. He did so with great effect. The young people from RBC have been attending camp for several years and we're thankful that this relationship continues to develop. We were glad to watch one of their Bible Quiz teams come out victorious!

Thank you for praying for our Youth Camp. Keep our young people in your prayers. They need the Lord in their lives, and they need to live for the Lord.

Stephen Pollock  
Camp Director







In a world that seems increasingly unfriendly toward biblical truth and God's way, Christian women of all ages may fear, worry, and sorrow as they seek to live for the Lord. Storm clouds can darken our skies. In my own life, the untimely homegoing of my friend, Amy Frank, cast a shadow over the latter part of 2020. In stark contrast to the shadows of life and darkness of the world, the Scriptures abound with reminders that God is light, in Him is no darkness at all, and we walk in the light! From the beginning, Creation light takes its origin from God who is pure, brilliant Light Himself. God's light is especially revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. John the Baptist bore witness to the true Light through whom salvation came (John 1:4-5; 9-10). Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

The glory of God is especially revealed in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures provide those heavenly glimpses of Christ's glory for us to behold with the eye of faith. The shepherds' dark night was brightened with the angelic choir's message of Glory to God and Peace on Earth. At Jesus' baptism and again on the Mount of Transfiguration, Heaven opened to

reveal the bright cloud and the voice saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16; 17:5). The brightness of God's glory centers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the brightness of His Father's glory "and the express image of his person...by himself purged our sins and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3). God has highly exalted the Lord Jesus, and the saints in Heaven behold Him in His glory and sing His worthiness! Truly, the Lamb is all the glory of Immanuel's Land! Such knowledge of Heaven's glory brought wonderful comfort to my sad heart when I lamented that Amy Frank wouldn't see her grandchildren present their Christmas program. Instead, the Lord brought home to my heart her fullness of joy in the brightness of her Savior in glory!

The Lord is reigning; He cares for His people; Jesus Christ is the Advocate with the Father. How can we respond when fears, worries, and sorrows darken our skies? Remember the Scriptures! "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6). The light of the knowledge of God shining in our hearts is what we

need! We know Him through His Word. Has God shone in your heart? Seek Him until His light shines into your soul (2 Peter 1:19).

As Christian women, we affirm with the psalmist, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" We journey on the path of the just which is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day (Proverbs 4:18). We daily take the promises of God by simple faith and walk in the light. We behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord and are changed into the same image from glory to glory by God's Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18), and our lights shine before men so they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in Heaven (Matthew 5:16). In the shadowy and dark world, may Christian women walk in gospel sunlight, thereby giving testimony to joyful Christian womanhood for God's glory! ■



**Mrs. Barbara Mooney**  
wife of Rev. Myron Mooney,  
Trinity FPC, AL



## Champion of the Kingdom:

The Story of Philip Mauro by Gordon Gardiner

In the compass of only fifty pages, Rev. Gordon Gardiner recounts the remarkable life, sound conversion, and faithful ministry of Rev. Philip Mauro. Gardiner was only thirteen years old when he had the privilege of hearing Rev. Mauro for the first time. Mauro's powerful preaching of Christ made a lasting impression upon the young Gardiner.

Philip Mauro was born in St. Louis, Missouri on January 7, 1859. His parents died while he was still a boy; therefore, he and his older brother, Lewis, were sent to live with an uncle in Washington, D.C. There, they had the advantage of a fine education. Philip obtained his law degree from the law school of George Washington University and soon entered a successful career winning cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. He was so popular in the nation's capital that his Alma Mater hired him to teach aspiring attorneys how to prepare legal briefs to be presented to the high court.

Philip married Emily Rockwood in 1882 and the happy couple was blessed with two lovely daughters. Brought up in the Presbyterian tradition, they became members of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in D.C. Mauro owned homes and offices both in D.C. and in New York City. His life, success, wealth, influence, homes, and family were the envy of multitudes of Americans. But Philip was a very unhappy man. He had

listened to hundreds of sermons, yet he was in gross darkness regarding the meaning of life.

In 1898, an event occurred that shook the earth beneath him. His law partner, Anthony Pollok, took his wife and children on vacation to Paris. They begged Mauro and his family to go with them. For some unknown reason Philip said, "You folks go ahead and in a short time we will come and join you in Paris." Not many days after, he read the shocking news that on July 4 his partner's ship sank drowning all 562 passengers! Thus, in the Providence of God the Mauro family was spared. But why?

Philip was spending his life merely for pleasure and accumulating wealth. Not being satisfied, he was prone to depressing and gloomy thoughts. The prospects before him were unspeakably dark and forbidding. Such was his condition on "the never-to-be-forgotten-evening" which he experienced in New York City during the spring of 1903. He wrote, "I strolled out in my usual unhappy frame of mind to seek diversion at a theatre on Broadway Street. This purpose carried me as far as the ticket line, but an unseen hand turned me aside, and the next thing that I remember was hearing a faint sound of singing fully a mile away. The sound emanated from a plain and unattractive building bearing the sign 'Gospel Tabernacle.' I took a seat and remained through the meeting. I was not much impressed

by the service, but as I was leaving several people greeted me with pleasant words and one man inquired about my spiritual condition."

Although these people were on a social grade below him, Mauro felt irresistibly drawn to the preaching of the Presbyterian minister, A. B. Simpson. On the evening of May 24, 1903, with counsel from the man that had asked about his soul, Philip was compelled by the Holy Spirit to fall upon his face in prayer where he remained until midnight. Upon leaving, Philip was a man changed forever.

Mauro was converted in a meeting that was greatly influenced by dispensationalism, but his careful study of the Bible gradually delivered him from those errors. Like his contemporary A. W. Pink, having authored many books he was compelled by his conscience years later to largely revise some of them. The Lord used both Pink and Mauro to deliver multitudes from the blindness of Arminian dispensationalism.

Philip Mauro became a champion of the faith. With his legal and scientific background, he became a prolific writer and conference speaker. One of his most notable feats was preparing the brief used at the Tennessee-Scopes trial in 1925 to prohibit evolution being taught in schools. He was also able to share the gospel of Christ to a wide range of people, including Thomas Edison, whom he met in Edison's eightieth year.

Although we cannot endorse every fine point of this man of God, we can rejoice in Mauro's powerful books exposing evolution, supporting the King James Version, and a biblical understanding of holiness.

This out-of-print book can be freely read at: [philipmauro.net](http://philipmauro.net) or purchased at Rare Christian Books for \$6.99 ([rarechristianbooks.com](http://rarechristianbooks.com)). ■



**Rev. Myron Mooney**  
Minister of Trinity FPC,  
Trinity, AL





## Martin Luther: Father of the Reformation



Each October 31, we celebrate the Protestant Reformation. A Protestant rejects Roman Catholicism, *protesting* against its false teaching. *Protestantism* began with a protest against Charles V, Emperor of Germany in 1529, who had banned writings by a former priest named Martin Luther, the father of the Reformation.

Martin Luther was born on November 10, 1483 in Eisleben, Germany to a copper mining family. He was baptized into the Roman Catholic church and was named after Saint Martin whose day it was. Luther received a Latin-based education and later studied law, achieving bachelor's and master's degrees at Erfurt University. Martin read Scripture for the first time at age twenty after finding a copy in the University library. Can you imagine not reading the Bible until age twenty? How privileged we are!

Martin worried about his soul after a friend's sudden death. He began reading about the righteousness of Christ in the New Testament. One day, a terrible storm came as he was

traveling, and he feared for his life. He vowed to become an Augustinian monk instead of a lawyer so he would be closer to God and gain peace. He later became a priest and taught at Wittenberg University. As he wrote lectures on theology, he came to understand salvation through faith *alone* in Christ *alone*.

In early 1500s Germany, a man named John Tetzel sold "indulgences" to poor people, which promised pardon from sin and relatives released from purgatory (an imaginary place where people were supposed to go to be made clean for Heaven). Luther became angry at this superstitious custom. So, he decided to write 95 questions about Roman Catholic Church teaching, including the practice of selling indulgences. On October 31, 1517, he posted them on the Wittenberg church door for everyone to see, hoping to spark discussion among fellow scholars. Instead, copies were spread all over Europe. These questions became known as Luther's 95 Theses.

Martin Luther began teaching salvation by grace *alone* in Christ *alone*. His

teaching made people question Roman Catholic doctrine, which taught salvation through good works. The Protestant Reformation had begun and spread quickly through Europe.

In 1520, the pope excommunicated (banned) Luther from the Roman Catholic Church. Shortly after, Luther appeared at the Diet of Worms: a group (Diet) of church leaders in the city of Worms (pronounced *Worms*). He was asked to retract his writings and teachings, but he refused. Luther's exact words are unknown, but he said something like: "Here I stand, I can do no other. God help me. Amen."

The council made Luther an outlaw, meaning anyone could kill him, he could be arrested for being a heretic (one who rejected Roman Catholic teaching), and Germans were forbidden to give him food or shelter. Friends hid him in a castle where he spent over a year translating the New Testament into German. His translation paved the way for Tyndale's English translation just a few years later.

Christ *alone*. Faith *alone*. Grace *alone*. These truths transformed Luther's life. Have you come to Christ by grace through faith *alone*?

Over 500 years later, Martin Luther's legacy still impacts our spiritual heritage. As Protestants, we owe a great debt to this famous Reformer. ✎



**Rachel Huffman**  
member of Lehigh Valley  
FPC, PA

## A WORD WORTH KNOWING

### FAITH

Receiving and resting in Christ as your Savior

## SUMMER 2021



★ **Calvin Backhurst**  
Calgary FPC

★ **Thomas Backhurst**  
Calgary FPC

★ **Alana Rose**  
Toronto FPC

★ **Abigail Seifert**  
Malvern FPC

★ **Elissa Thomassian**  
Faith FPC (Greenville, SC)



# Kids' Crossword Puzzle

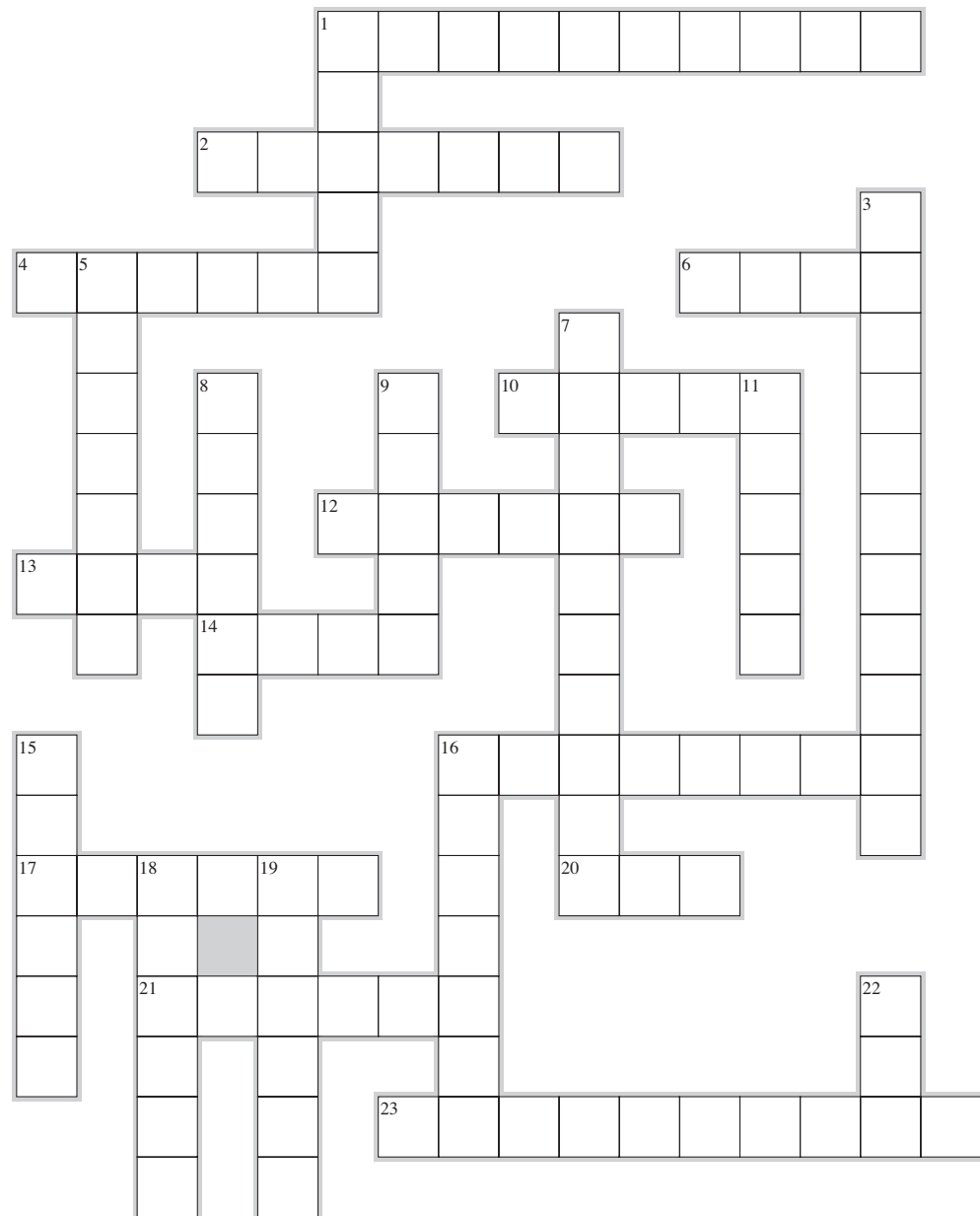
Answers are found in the article on Martin Luther on page 18.  
Answers must be spelled as they are found in the article.

## Across

1. University where Luther taught
2. Luther's home country
4. Questions
6. Luther posted his questions here.
10. True salvation is through \_\_\_\_ alone.
12. Excommunicated
13. Group
14. Instrument Luther played
16. Birthplace of Martin Luther
17. Luther's age when he read the Bible for the first time
20. Number of children Luther had
21. Martin Luther is called the \_\_\_\_ of the Reformation.
23. Someone who rejects Roman Catholicism
15. Because Luther was made this, anyone could kill him.
16. Charles V
18. University where Luther studied
19. Sold indulgences
22. Luther's wife had been this.

## Down

1. City where Luther refused to retract his writings and teachings
3. What Luther did while he was in hiding
5. Someone who didn't follow Roman Catholic teachings
7. Luther wrote two of these to help people learn Bible truths.
8. Place where Luther hid
9. True salvation is by \_\_\_\_ alone.
11. Luther wrote these musical pieces.



**PLEASE NOTE:** Please send your completed puzzle to Current Kids' Corner, c/o Judy Brown, 651 Ponden Dr., Greer, SC 29650 or to [ljsbrown2@gmail.com](mailto:ljsbrown2@gmail.com) by December 13, 2021. Include your name, address, age, and the name of the church you attend. Please also include an email address in case we need to contact you about your entry. 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.





# BARRIERS TO ASSURANCE OF FAITH

Rev. Stephen Hamilton

The Lord would have you to seek after the full assurance of faith, and not to rest content until you are persuaded of your position in Christ. This is clearly God's desire for His people (1 John 5:13 and 2 Peter 1:10). Yet, those who enjoy such assurance may, from time to time, live without the experience of full joy and peace in believing. There may be many reasons for this. "True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preserving of it; by falling into some special sin, which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation; by God's withdrawing the light of His countenance, and suffering even such as fear Him to walk in darkness, and to have no light..." (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, Ch.XVIII, Section 4). There are certain impediments to assurance of salvation. Let us examine some of these:

## FIERCE TEMPTATIONS THAT WE MUST SUBDUE

Assurance of salvation deepens as we live in obedience to God's Word. Increasing obedience usually produces an increasing sense of spiritual well-being. "Assurance is the daughter of holiness" (Thomas Brooks). But the child of God may be afflicted by great temptations and may be tempted by the following:

### The Committing of Past Sins

God promises never to remember forgiven sin (Hebrews 8:12; 10:17). The problem for believers is their own recollection of their past sins. Our memories of such can be acute. Sins that God has forgiven can thus become a problem to the Christian. Satan remembers our past sins, and he helps us to remember them too! Note these scriptural examples in Job 13:26 and Psalm 25:7. How can we counter this great problem? By fixing our minds upon the promises of God (Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 43:25; 1 John 1:9).

### The Committing of Present Sins

Temptation to sin is *not* sin, but giving into it is. Yielding to temptation is a frequent cause of doubt among Christians. One Puritan called sins "kill-joys." Nothing robs us of the felt presence of God more than our own waywardness. We lose the sense of God's favor as we grieve Him by our falls. Puritan Thomas Brooks said: "Worldly Christians, remember this: you and the world must part, or else assurance and your souls will never meet. God will be out with that man, that is in with his sin." Holiness brings happiness! Another barrier to assurance is false teaching.

## FALSE TEACHINGS TO WHICH WE MAY BE SUBJECTED

Sadly, many of God's people are assailed by doubts because of erroneous teaching and spurious doctrine. Consider the following:

### Totally Unbiblical Doctrine

"Saved today—lost tomorrow." God's Word is clear on this issue. Christ will *not* lose one soul for whom He shed His blood! (John 5:24; 6:37; 10:28; Romans 8:35-38)

### Tremendously Unbalanced Doctrine

Some preachers insist upon the necessity of certain post-conversion experiences; others major on fanciful prophetic theories; yet more will lay greater stress on Christian activity "doing and serving" than on the great truths of the Christian faith. Believers must be disciplined and taught those things that Christ has commanded—learning more of *Who* Christ is and *what* He has done (Matthew 28:20). It is vital that Christians are taught the sound doctrines of the gospel on a consistent basis (Ephesians 4:11-15, 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9; 2:1,15). Under doctrinally deficient ministries the saints are unlikely to grow in assurance, because they are *not* being grounded in those truths upon which assurance rests.

The answer to false or deficient teaching is solid, biblical instruction. The blood of Christ makes one safe; the Word of Christ makes one sure. Believers themselves must be diligent in the daily reading and studying of God's Word, while attending upon a faithful, scriptural public ministry. Under the preaching of God's truth, the flower of assurance will grow upon the root of faith, as we rest upon what God has said.