

## OVERCOMING EVIL AND PERSECUTION

By Danny Tunnell

“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome (conquer) evil with good.” (Romans 12:21.)

The Christian will face persecution in this world. Jesus said, “In the world you shall have tribulation.” (John 16:33.) “Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves.” (Matthew 10:16.) “You will be hated by all for My name’s sake.” (Matthew 10:22.)

The Bible says, “All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” (2 Timothy 3:12.)

That was certainly true in Bible times. Herod had John the Baptist beheaded. (Matthew 14:1-11.) Herod the king killed James the brother of John with the sword. (Acts 12:1-2.) Paul spoke of being whipped by the Jews five times, 39 lashes each time. Three times he was beaten with rods, once he was stoned. He experienced many perils. He was

often in hunger and thirst, endured cold, was poorly clothed, and suffered sleepless nights. He still gloried in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:24-31.)

Are modern day Christians exempt from persecution? No! The Christian is still a person of heaven temporarily living on earth. He lives in the midst of fallen men. In many ways he is like them, but in others he is so radically different from them that they cannot but see and resent it.

From the days of Cain and Abel, evil men of earth have always sought to punish those of heaven. Why? Mainly because they are different. The long history of persecution and martyrdom confirms this. Jesus was not crucified because He was like everyone else. (John 19:4-7.)

With what we’ve said, it is important that we do not look at

the Christian life as one continuous conflict. It is not one unbroken irritating struggle against the world, against evil people and the devil.

Jesus came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10.) When we die with Christ to the evil of this world we have the blessed experience of rising with Him to a far better life. (Romans 6:1-9.) All the world’s persecutions cannot take that away. Our soul becomes the actual dwelling place of Christ and His Spirit. (Acts 2:38; Romans 8:9-11.) “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4.) Jesus said, “In the world you shall have tribulation (trouble); but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33.)

— Miami, OK

## GOD’S WORD AND CHRIST’S CHURCH

By Bobby Key

When Jesus was on earth, He taught the parable of the sower. In His explanation of the parable He said that the word of God is the seed of the kingdom. As the apostles and evangelists and members of the early church went forth preaching, their message was nothing more than the Word of God. It was, therefore, the seed of the kingdom; and wherever this seed was sown and an increase given, it produced the kingdom of God, or the church. The church of the first century was the model church for all ages to come.

Those of us who believe that God has given a sufficient pattern for all ages seek to restore the old church - that is, the church as it was built by the Lord.

To restore the church simply means to go back to the church as it was before men departed from the faith by planting other seed than God’s Word. When men began to sow new seed, they produced a great

monstrosity of a plant that had no resemblance to the Lord’s plant. The reason there are so many denominations today is because such a variety of seed has been sown over the years.

The Bible alone must always decide every question involving the nature, the character or the designs of the church. Hence, to restore the church, one simply must return to the New Testament. To become members of the church people must obey the Lord; they must believe, repent, confess Christ, and be baptized for the remission of sins. When one does this God forgives his sins and adds him to the church.

The Word of God produces nothing but the church of Christ.

We do our best to plant the old seed, believing that it will produce after its kind. It will produce the kingdom of heaven.

— Miami, OK

“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers . . . And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:37-42, 47b.)

# Old Paths

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“ask for the old paths” (Jer. 6:16)

## “WE WILL COME REJOICING, BRINGING IN THE SHEAVES”

By Joe Slater

My dad was probably one of the last farmers in Colorado to stop using a binder. “Use it up, wear it out, make it do, do without.” Why buy a baler when you have a perfectly good binder? (Well, functional at least.) So I actually remember “bringing in the sheaves!” After binding, we leaned the sheaves upon each other to make shocks. Later we hauled them in to feed or to be thrashed.

We have long sung of bringing in the sheaves relative to a harvest of souls in God’s kingdom. The song points out that if we are to bring in any sheaves, we must first sow the seed. Dad used the binder on cane, sudangrass, oats, barley - but never without planting the seed first! Jesus said, “the seed is the Word of God.” (Luke 8:11.) The soil is the human heart, and the harvest (if any) depends on the soil’s condition.

But there can be no harvest unless the seed is sown!

We sing of sowing in the morning, at noontide and evening and we should be sowing in all conditions (sunshine, shadows, clouds, cold breezes). Sowing can be long, hard work, but the end result - the harvest - is worth the effort. Ask any farmer if conditions are always ideal for planting. Neither is there always an ideal time for approaching someone with the gospel.

Not every seed a farmer plants will germinate and not every person with whom we share the gospel will become a Christian. But unless we spread God’s Word far more than we are doing now, harvest will be mighty slim!

Will we come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves? There is no reason we can’t. But the first order of business is to plant the seed.

What do you say?

— Justin, TX

“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.” (1 Corinthians 3:5-7.)

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” (Galatians 6:9.)

## THOSE NOBLE BEREANS

By Mark Lindley

There is an interesting statement in the book of Acts about certain Jews who lived in the city of Berea. It is written, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.” (Acts 17:11-12, KJV.)

Notice first that these Jews were “more noble” than the Jews of Thessalonica. Then, reasons are given which indicate why they were considered such noble people.

1. They were noble because they were Bible students. The passage says that they searched the “scriptures.” This is a reference to the Old Testament scriptures. The New Testament had not yet been completed. The Bereans understood that the scriptures are the proper standard of authority in all religious matters, and that the scriptures are inspired of God. (2 Timothy 3:16-17.)

2. They were noble because they were “diligent” Bible students. The passage says that they “searched” the scriptures. The Bereans were not content to be vaguely familiar with the scriptures. This indicates that they searched God’s Word with interest, intensity, diligence, and with perseverance.

3. They were noble because they were “honest” Bible students. The passage says that they searched the scriptures to see “whether those things were so.” This implies that they went to the scriptures to “get” their doctrine, instead of going to the scriptures to “prove” their doctrine. The Bereans based their beliefs on the teachings of the scriptures, not on what any man said.

4. They were noble because they were “regular” Bible students. The passage says that they searched the scriptures “daily.” They did not study only on the Sabbath. Rather, they studied “daily.”

What a difference it would make in our lives if we would apply these principles to ourselves! If we all were diligent, honest, and daily students of God’s Word, this would certainly make a positive impact on our lives. Let us determine to spend time with God’s Word, searching the scriptures, that we might know, believe, and obey the truth of God.

— Ripley, MS

## A WRITER WRITES

By Luke Bower

There is a story of a young man who made an appointment to meet with a well-known published writer. The first question the writer had for the young man was, "Why did you want to see me?" The young man replied, "Well, I am a writer, too. I was hoping you could share with me the secrets for success." The author asked a second question, "Well what have you written?" "Nothing, at least nothing that I have finished," the young man replied. "If you have not finished anything yet at least tell me what you have been working on?" the author inquired. The young man replied, "Well I am in school, so right now I am not currently writing anything." The author asked him one final question, "So, why do you call yourself a writer?"

A writer writes, a painter paints, a cook cooks, and a teacher teaches. You can't call yourself something unless you are doing the work. The same is true for people calling themselves Christians. You shouldn't call yourself a follower of Christ unless you are following Christ.

When it comes to Christianity there are too many people sitting on the sidelines doing nothing, claiming to play the game. A lot of people claim to be Christian, but when it comes down to it, what have they done to follow Christ? How has their life changed? What are they doing in service to Him? Jesus said in Mark 8:34, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Being a Christian is not a spectator sport. So let us not just claim to be followers of Christ.

Let us show whose we are by the way we live.

— Abilene, TX

"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked." (1 John 2:3-6.)

Editorial . . .

## "KNOW THY SUBJECT"

By Dalton Key

(FOR YOUR INFORMATION: As of the time of this writing, the Old Paths is running behind each month to the tune of \$400. A sudden loss of support, beginning with January of this year, from both congregations and individuals, has left this little paper in an awkward and untenable position. The Old Paths goes out each month to thousands of readers across the nation and around the world and has always been available to one and all on a subscription-free basis. Should you be able to help, please know that any assistance is both much needed and greatly appreciated!)



Though it should go without saying, I'll say it anyway: A teacher should have a good, working knowledge of the subject at hand. In the realm of teaching, the ancient axiom, "Know thyself," could well be replaced with, "Know thy subject!"

Winston Churchill once described an opponent as "one of those orators who, before they get up, do not know what they are going to say; when they are speaking, do not know what they are saying; and when they have sat down, do not know what they have said."

The apostle Paul urged young Timothy to take a more serious approach. "Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect that gift the is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you." (1 Timothy 4:13-16.)

Few scenes are as painful to witness as that of an unprepared, disinterested teacher feebly attempting to "use up his time." Such a teacher may provide boredom and a foolproof cure for insomnia, but precious little knowledge or motivation.

The teacher of the Bible should possess a deep and discernible love for both God and His Word. He should be able to say, with David of old, "Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day." (Psalm 119:97.) As the most eager and avid student in the class, he should fully immerse himself in the inspired text and splash about freely in the invigorating truths of Holy Writ.

Of the renowned B.C. Goodpasture it was said, "He impressed his audiences that he knew what he was talking about and that he knew more than he was telling." May such be true for all of us who attempt to teach the unsearchable riches of Christ.

## GOD'S WORD AND THE COW LOT

By Joe Dale Wilson

1 Timothy 2:1-2: "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence."

Christians are to pray for all of those who have some type of preeminence in their world. The purpose is so that a Christian can live his life without any outside disturbances and may have peace or tranquility within his own heart and life. God wants Christians to pray for those in government who rule over us so that we can have a peaceful existence.

I once bought forty-two bred heifers at half price because the young veterinarian who ran the blood

test for brucellosis and pregnancy, in checking them, stirred them up so badly that the titers in their blood elevated. This made them fail the brucellosis test. One had to be disposed of, and the others were quarantined for a hundred and twenty days before they could be tested by a state veterinarian. Calmness and peaceful behavior would have had a beneficial effect on the cows, but the opposite produced the opposite.

This is true for Christians living in a sinful world. It is also true for the church, a family, in the workplace, at school or in a cow lot.

Meanness, bullying, cruelty and malice obstruct peace and serenity. For this reason we are to pray for "all men" and "all that are in

high places," that we can have an undisturbed life serving God. How long has it been since you prayed for the school board, teachers, city officials, county officials, judicial officials, state and federal officials, congress, and the president?

— Vernon, TX

Harbored, hateful unforgiveness,  
Seeming harmless at the start,  
Soon becomes malignant business,  
Like a cancer in the heart.

Words of cutting, caustic mien,  
Sailing swiftly from the tongue,  
Inflict a suffering rarely seen,  
And maiming more than just the one.

(DK)

## MAN'S TRUE ORIGIN

By Milton Smith

One of mankind's most sought-after quests is the desire to truly discover where he came from. For many years now, the public school systems in this country have been offering less-than-inspiring answers to this question. With the kind of answers that are now being given, it leaves one to wonder if most young people honestly question if man has any real worth at all.

Beginning in the twentieth century, it became fashionable to teach that the original "father" of mankind was some sort of "barely living" organism that somehow came into existence from some primordial pool of dirty water. Beginning in the dim and distant past, this prehistoric "soup" began with the formation of inanimate chemicals that all arose from hydrogen gases. Once this process got started, organic evolution took over.

I guess this means that man ultimately came from hydrogen gas.

Not much adventure and romance involved in this rather fanciful suggestion.

The Bible has proven itself to be accurate over and over again in areas such as archeology, science, history, etc. So why do so many want to abandon this amazing book at its very first verse which states that it was "God" who created the heavens and the earth? The inspired record also tells us that this same God created the first man (Genesis 1:26) and the first woman (Genesis 2:21-23.) But not only this, God made them in His own image. (Genesis 1:27.) He did this by placing an eternal soul (spirit) within them. Many centuries later it would be none other than the Son of God Himself who verified the inspired record of Genesis. In Matthew 19:4, Jesus asked, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female . . .?"

Does man want the answer to

the age-old question "where did we come from?" The answer has always been available to us, and it is found in the first book of the Bible. When scientists begin to say "in the beginning God," they will begin to find those elusive answers that keep evading them.

— Tulsa, OK

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