

MIRACLES JESUS DID NOT PERFORM

By Randy Vaughn

Jesus' four biographies tell of thirty-seven specific miracles He performed during His earthly ministry. He fed thousands with a few morsels. He stilled a tempest and walked on water. He healed the deaf, blind, and the lame. He even raised the dead.

There is much to gain from a study of the miracles Jesus performed, but let us examine some miracles Jesus did not do. There were miracles which were suggested, which He could have done, but which He refused to perform.

After fasting in the wilderness, Jesus was tempted by Satan who said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." That would have abused His power so He refused, saying, "It is written, Man shall not live by

bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:3-4.)

In Samaria, a village did not receive Him. James and John asked, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" Jesus had more power than Elias; He could have called down fire. But he rebuked them, saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." (Luke 9:51-56.)

When the mob came to Gethsemane, Jesus said to Peter, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:51-54.) Here was another miracle Jesus did not

perform.

At the trial, His enemies tried to make Him perform miracles, but He would not. His power was not intended to satisfy their wicked curiosity. (Matthew 26:67-68; Luke 23:8-9.)

Finally, while crucified on the cross, Christ's enemies taunted, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." (Matthew 27:40) He was indeed the Son of God; and He had the power, but He chose to die that others might live.

A study of all the miracles of the New Testament validates the claims of Christ and His apostles. (John 20:30-31.) His works showed that He was God's Son. (Hebrews 2:1-4.) The miracles that He did not do also show much of His compassion.

— Hinesville, GA

MEDITATION

By Wayne Burger

Spiritual gurus and modern day cults have given the idea of meditation a bad connotation. Actually, meditation is a Biblical idea and a wonderful means for spiritual growth. To meditate means to spend time in deep thought about a particular subject.

Jean Fleming suggests another reason few folks do much meditating. "Our practical, materialistic society so values action over meditation, study and prayer that we often feel guilty when we stop to think, study or pray." (Between Walden and the Whirlwind, p. 47.)

"Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening. "(Genesis 24:63.) When Joshua took over leadership of the nation after Moses' death, God instructed, "This book of the law shall not depart from your

mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night." (Joshua 1:8.) Several times in Psalm 119 David said that he meditated (v. 15, 23, 48, 78, 97, 99.) Even though we do not have a specific mention of Jesus meditating, it is implied in that He spent time alone. (Matthew 4; 14:13, 22-23; Mark 6:31; Luke 6.)

Of course our goal should be like the righteous man in the first Psalm and it says of him, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night." (v. 2.)

Somewhere I've come across a statement which should be our challenge: "In the midst of our chaotic lives of activities, demands and responsibilities, it is possible to retreat, reflect and read and by so doing to feed the inner man, to grow in our spiritual lives, while

remaining intensely involved in a very needy world."

Let's find the time, even if it is just a few minutes a day, to meditate on God's word.

Each one must find his special spot and time. Isaac's time and spot was evening and in a field. (Genesis 24:63.) David said that he meditated during the night watches while in bed. (Psalm 119:148; Psalm 63:6.) Some folks prefer morning, others prefer evening and some during the day. The time matters to no one except you. What's best for you? Hopefully, you can find a time when you can be alone with your Bible and your God.

Great blessings await us when we meditate.

— Littleton, CO

Old Paths

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"ask for the old paths" (Jer. 6:16)

THE NATURE OF OUR LORD'S SPIRITUAL BODY

By Milton Smith

Ekklesia is the Greek word that is translated into our English word church. It is derived from the very ekkaleo which carries the meaning "to call out." The word, in its simplest form, refers to any "group" of people who might be called forth or assembled together for any particular purpose. Thus, as one reads through the New Testament he will notice that Ekklesia is used in more than one sense.

First, this word is used to refer to an assembly of people in a most general way. For example, we find ekklesia being used to refer to a gathered assembly of citizens (Acts 19:39), Israel as a group of people who were called out of Egypt into the wilderness (Acts 7:38), and, of course, people gathered together for religious worship. (Hebrews 2:12.) Thus, we find that this word is used in the New Testament in a general sense of a group of people gathered together for any special purpose. But we quickly notice that this word is used to refer to an assembly of Christians in a local area. Thus, we read of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1), the church in Antioch (Acts 11:26), the church in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 1:1), and the church at Corinth. (1 Corinthians 1:2.)

But we notice that this same word is used in the plural to refer to congregations that assembled at different locations. When Paul addressed "the churches of Galatia" (Galatians 1:2), he was referring to congregations that assembled in different areas of Galatia. Likewise, the apostle John was instructed to write to "the seven churches of Asia" in Revelation 1:4; a reference to seven churches located in the region of Asia Minor. But this same word is also used to refer to the collective body of Christ. (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18.) In other words, every Christian in the world belongs to the spiritual body of our Lord. No greater honor can be bestowed upon a person than to belong to this particular body. All Christians should rejoice every day that our Lord has given to us the privilege of belonging to His body - His special "called out group."

— Tulsa, OK

"And He put all things under His feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all." (Ephesians 1:22,23.)

WHATEVER BECAME OF SIN?

By Danny Tunnell

In the early 1970's, prominent psychiatrist Dr. Karl Menninger wrote a book entitled, "Whatever Became of Sin?" He noted that the word "sin" had almost disappeared from our vocabulary, but a sense of guilt remained in our hearts and minds.

Forty-plus years later, things seem to have only gotten worse. Recently, a preacher told his congregation, "In this sermon we are going to talk about the "S-word," that nobody wants to discuss. Today we do not say that someone has sinned; instead we say he or she has "issues."

Few today are willing to admit publicly that they have sinned. During his administration, President Clinton became a rare exception. After his inappropriate conduct while in office, he told a group of ministers attending a prayer breakfast at the White House, "There is no fancy way to say this. I have sinned." The president used exactly the right words to describe his behavior.

David is described as a man after God's own heart, not because he was sinless, but because he acknowledged his sins and repented. He told the Lord, "I have sinned greatly." (2 Samuel 24:10.) "I have sinned, and done wickedly." (2 Samuel 24:17.) After he sinned against Bathsheba and her husband (Uriah), David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." (2 Samuel 12:13.)

Whatever became of sin? Today many are calling evil "good" and good "evil." (Isaiah 5:20.) The world talks about the "stupid good people" and the "clever wicked ones."

In the Bible, when people sinned, they always exercised bad judgment. Wisdom deserts a person when he sins. He has accepted a lie for the truth. It is like he is driving on the highway, ignoring all the signs with his eyes shut! Is that a wise way to travel?

Those who sin do not take into account their souls. They give their souls little thought as they transgress God's laws, or fail to do good when they know they should.

Sin is never the wise thing to do. It always ignores consequences. Don't buy the world's notion that the sinner is the "smart fellow," and the righteous individual is "stupid." We have peer pressure throughout our lives, not just in high school. Always remember there is nothing smart about wrongdoing and nothing stupid about righteousness. The one who sins against God is not the bright rebel he fancies himself to be. Rather, he is showing his weakness and stupidity.

Our country has many intelligent people whom God has helped to build a great nation. But so many today seem to be greatly lacking in moral wisdom. Isn't it time to bring back the "S-word" (sin) into our vocabulary? The first step in solving any problem is to properly identify it. If in our minds sin does not really exist, what would ever motivate us to repent of it?

— Miami, OK

WE CAN'T HEAL OURSELVES

By Bobby Key

There was rebellion in the camp. The way had been hard, and the people were discouraged. Complaining about food, water, and hardships of the journey now turned into speaking against their leader, Moses. In fact, it went further and turned into speaking against Almighty God.

Punishment was equally swift. Fiery serpents appeared among the people, and by their bites the Israelites began to die. "We have sinned," the nation cried. "Save us. Take away these snakes!" Their plea was presented to God by an interceding Moses, and a gracious God hearkened unto them. "Make a fiery serpent. And it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he sees it, shall live."

Those who did as they were bidden, lived. (Numbers 21.)

More is embraced here than just an historical event. Christ says this is an analogy of the redemption of fallen man. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:14,15.)

Sin is the deadly malady that has spread through the world. Wherever man is found, there sin is found also.

Like the venom from the snake, sin is deadly. Victims died from the venom. In a more awful way the victim of sin pays the penalty of death.

Remedy for both snake bite and sin are prescribed by the Lord. The Israelites could not heal themselves; neither can we!

— Miami, OK

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16.) "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." (Acts 2:38.) "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.) "There is also an antitype which now saves us - baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 3:21.)

Editorial . . .

AIM IS EVERYTHING

By Dalton Key

Ask a sportsman. Ask an athlete. Ask the Apostle Paul. They'll all tell you the same thing: aim is everything. Note Paul's words to the brethren at Philippi: "Brothers, I do not consider myself to have laid hold, but I do one thing: forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are ahead, I press toward the goal, toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13,14.)

The apostle knew what he wanted, knew where he was headed, and took definite aim in that direction. A few verses later he wrote, "Our citizenship is in heaven." (Philippians 3:20.)

One anonymous sage, worlds wiser than most of us, has opined, "Aim at heaven and you'll get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you'll get neither."

With this in mind, these further words from the inspired Paul seem especially worthy of our attention: "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on the things on the earth." (Colossians 3:1,2.) "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Romans 8:6.) "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life." (Galatians 6:7,8.) "While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:18.)

Paul's words reflect the instruction of our Lord, Who taught, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also . . . But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness . . ." (Matthew 6:19-21, 33.)

Most any dog will scour the ground looking for odd scraps and crusty crumbs. But those of us created in the very image of God have been made for more; we have been blessed with the capacity for looking up - to heaven - and laying our treasures up there.

It all depends on our aim.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Remember the dates for the OLD PATHS Spring Family Camp, June 2-4, at Flint Hills Christian Camp, just north of Sedan, Kansas. ALSO, thanks to those who have been so kind in helping with this paper's ongoing expenses. May your tribe increase.



DO NOT BE CONFORMED

By Cecil Burch

"The Lord said to Moses, 'Behold, the days approach when You must die; call Joshua and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting that I may inaugurate him.' So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of meeting." (Deuteronomy 31:14.)

Inauguration Day for Joshua must have been a sad day in the life of Moses, not that he himself was going to die, but because the Lord said, "This people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go to be among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them." (Deuteronomy 31:16.) God revealed to Moses that, after entering Canaan, Israel would conform to the society of the idol worshippers even after God had fed, clothed, provided water, and fought their battles. The frightening

part of the message is that God said, "Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them." (Deuteronomy 31:17.)

The Apostle Paul instructed the Christians in Rome not to conform when he said, "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:2.)

The Apostle John said, "Do not love the world, or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15.)

Jesus said, "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole

world and lose his own soul." (Mark 8:36.)

There is One who, long ago, refused to conform and was crucified outside the city of Jerusalem.

— Amarillo, TX

"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.' Therefore 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.'" (1 Corinthians 6:14-17.)

GOVERNED BY GREED

By Dalton Key

I once read of two unusual grave markers, hidden beneath the brush of an old, long-forgotten English cemetery. Over one grave, the marker bears the curious inscription, "She died for want of things." Alongside that stone is another which reads simply, "He died trying to give them to her."

We live in a strange age of short cash, easy credit, and out-of-control covetousness. Confusing wants for needs, too many of us race through life in a mad scramble for more and more of less and less, never fully satisfied, never completely content. Ours has become a world governed by greed.

Jesus warns, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." (Luke 12:15.)

Paul teaches, "Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Timothy 6:6-10.)

Life is too short, death and judgment are too certain, and eternity is too endless for us to give undue importance to money and the things money can buy.

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of

the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:15-17.)

The world, "lying in wickedness," may be obsessed with material things, but "we are of God." (1 John 5:19.)

It's time we starting acting like it!

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