

DID GOD GIVE FDR POLIO?

By Danny Tunnell

In Ken Burns excellent series on the Roosevelts shown on PBS, some historians suggested that FDR would have never become president if he hadn't first suffered from infantile paralysis (polio). They surmised had he been healthier during the 1920's he would have run for president, been soundly defeated, and soon forgotten. Historians also suggest that FDR, who grew up in a wealthy and privileged environment, may have lacked compassion for the poor and suffering during the Great Depression without the lessons he learned from his own suffering.

These historians have drawn some interesting conclusions. Does God want people sick for a reason? Does He put sickness on them so they can learn a lesson? Does the Bible actually teach that?

In the New Testament, we never see Jesus putting sickness on anyone. It doesn't make sense to say that God puts sickness on people. Jesus, the Healer, said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." (John 14:9.)

If Jesus healed someone that God

had made sick for a reason or to teach a lesson, then Jesus would be opposing God the Father! But we know that God and Jesus are working together on the same team. On the other hand, it is Satan who opposes the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Who is to be blamed for sickness and disease? It is certainly not God or Jesus Christ! If something steals, kills, or destroys it is the work of Satan. Severe illness does all three of those things. Jesus said, "The thief (the thief represents Satan) does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." (John 10:10.)

Acts 10:38 says, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him."

God has always been a healer. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases." (Psalm 103:2-3.)

A lot of folks are giving God a bad rap. When a friend or family member gets sick, they say, "God must have put sickness on them to teach them a lesson," not realizing how that impugns the good name of our good Father. They are ascribing to God something Satan does.

In the Bible there was no sickness until Satan entered the picture. Disease is his invention, not God's. Originally, Adam and Eve lived in a perfect environment that was then marred by sin.

On which day in the Creation account did God create disease? Polio? Heart disease? TB? Infections? Cancer? He didn't. The Bible says when God created, everything He created was good.

Disease comes from Satan, not from God. If you are suffering an illness, it is not God's will that you are sick. God is on your side to get better. It is His will, especially for His children, that they prosper and be in health, even as their soul prospers. (3 John 2.)
— Miami, OK

How Quickly We Forget!

By Joe Slater

Thank God for His long-suffering!

Paul wrote that God's goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering are demonstrations of His goodness which leads us to repentance. (Romans 2:4.) Peter alluded to that very passage, remarking that "the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation." (2 Peter 3:15.)

God was long-suffering with ancient Assyria. During the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III, the Lord sent the reluctant prophet Jonah to preach repentance to Nineveh, capital of the Assyrian empire. Jonah knew all too well the atrocities suffered by anyone who resisted Assyrian domination. He would have been entirely pleased had the Lord wiped Assyria from the face of the earth. Was he ever dismayed when every Ninevite from king to slave repented in sackcloth and ashes!

A little more than a century

later, however, the prophet Nahum announced the impending destruction of Nineveh and the end of the Assyrian empire. "It shall come to pass that all who look upon you will flee from you and say, 'Nineveh is laid waste!'" (Nahum 3:7). Why? They had returned to their former brutal ways: "Woe to the bloody city! It is full of lies and robbery. Its prey never departs . . . There is a multitude of slain, a great number of bodies, countless corpses" (3:1-3).

How quickly they had forgotten!

Yes, thank God for His long-suffering. But do not presume upon it or take it for granted! Peter said going back into sin is like a dog returning to its vomit or a sow that has been washed returning to wallow in the mire. (2 Peter 2:22.)

Yes, sin is that serious! Paul

wrote that it is a grievous error to "continue in sin that grace may abound." (Romans 6:1.) Instead, let God's goodness lead us to repentance!
— Justin, TX

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9.)

Old Paths

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

A WORD FITLY SPOKEN CAN ALSO BE TEXTED!

By Lance Cordle

Most American families have cell phones and the service plans that go with them. In addition, most families have a texting plan. Texting provides a convenient way to get a message to a person in a variety of situations where telephone conversation is not practical. Last minute "to do" lists, quick information, phone numbers, etc. can be quickly and (mostly) quietly conveyed between those who need to communicate.

I am fully aware that there are inappropriate uses of text messages. What has come to be known as "sexting" - the sending of sexually explicit words and/or pictures via text messages - has gotten many people (including a congressman awhile back) into big trouble. Cruel and demeaning (bullying) messages are out of place as well. We should not allow texting to be an avenue of sin or rudeness.

However, with such inappropriate possibilities avoided, texting can be a vital link for you and those who you hold dear as family and friends. This means communication can provide you with the opportunities to reinforce your emotional connection to those you love. An "I love you" sent at just the right time can cheer and comfort a husband or wife separated from his or her spouse for any amount of time. A message of "I know you can do it!" can encourage and motivate a child or friend to press on through a difficult test or task. A text consisting of "Great job!" can be the modern day version and variation of a pat on the back for someone tackling a difficult speaking assignment, role in a play, or athletic contest.

With adequate consideration, you can be creative and timely in a variety of circumstances and enrich the relationships within your life.

Not only will texting allow you to communicate your feelings immediately, but it also provides the receiver an opportunity to respond immediately. That positive message you send will likely be matched by a similar one, sent from a grateful heart. A word of caution or concern will likely bring a response of thankfulness or a promise to consider your words.

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver." (Proverbs 25:11, ESV.) Today, the word "fitly spoken" can be texted as well. Try it! I think you will like it.
— Calvert City, KY

"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers." (Ephesians 4:29.)

WHAT WILL A MAN GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL?

By Milton Smith

The above question will be quickly recognized by most readers as a question asked by Jesus. It was meant to serve as a rhetorical question. In other words, the answer is actually implied in the question itself. But Jesus spoke these additional words on this occasion: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:24-26.)

The word "soul" is often used in the Bible as a synonym for the word "spirit." Now it should be pointed out that the word is not always used in this way. One must carefully consider the context of each passage to determine how the inspired writer was using this word. For example, Moses wrote in Genesis 46:26, "All the souls who came with Jacob into Egypt were sixty-six persons in all." Here it is obvious that Moses was using the word to merely refer to physical human beings. But when Jesus said in Matthew 10:28 to "fear him" who is able to destroy "both soul and body in hell," it is obvious that Jesus was using word "soul" in a vastly different way. On this occasion, Jesus was referring to man's eternal spirit that survives death.

When a person dies, his spirit (soul) returns to God; it is only the physical body that returns to the earth. (Ecclesiastes 12:7.) When Resurrection Day arrives, the Lord will call us from the grave and our spirit will then be reunited with our body; only this time we will be given a spirit-dominated body that will be suited for an eternal habitation with God. (1 Corinthians 15:42-44.)

Considering the fact that the soul is being used in our passage to represent our eternal spirit, what would you be willing to exchange for *your* soul?

When a Christian turns back to the world and begins to drift away from God, what value is he placing on eternity? He is actually exchanging his eternal soul for something of far less value, a tragic decision that such a person will live to regret for all eternity!

— Tulsa, OK

FROM THE ARCHIVES . . .

By Bobby Key

As a boy, I remember a preacher coming to the little congregation where we worshipped. He lectured us for over an hour on the sins of standing while we prayed and using literature in Bible classes. After he had finished his talk, and invitation was given, and while still standing, he asked one of the deacons to lead us in a dismissal prayer. When the prayer was finished, he said, "I have some papers to hand out that will show the truth of what I have just preached."

For the first time in my young life, I clearly saw inconsistency. The brother may have meant well, but his logic was faulty.

The more a person knows about the laws of correct reasoning, the easier it is to avoid such obvious fallacies. It is inconsistent to oppose one wrong thing and practice something similar.

"Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things." (Romans 2:1.)

An elder said, "Our minister has resigned, and our pulpit is vacant."

In thinking about the statement, I can't help but wonder whether several of our pulpits are vacant even though there is a full-time preacher involved!

Gospel preaching has fallen on hard times. In too many congregations these days, the saints listen for half an hour to a display of nothing more than babbling nothingness. If the truth were told as members filed out of the building, they would have to admit, "The pulpit was vacant today!"

Paul admonished young Timothy, "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching." (2 Timothy 4:2.)

Never before in our lifetime have we heard so many church members complain that their preacher is failing to exalt the gospel of Christ. Worldly knowledge will never be enough.

Jesus said, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.) The truth must be preached; otherwise, the pulpit is vacant.
— Miami, OK

(UPDATE AND CORRECTION CONCERNING RETREAT: Last month's Old Paths included an announcement concerning our annual Men's Retreat. Due to a number of factors - some unexpected, all unavoidable - the Men's Retreat slated for September 13-15 has been cancelled. Please accept my apology for any inconvenience this may create. - DK)

EDITORIAL . . .**I WILL CONTINUE
CALLING
THE CHURCH,
THE CHURCH**

By Dalton Key

The past several years have produced an uneasy, unfounded shift in brotherhood terminology, with the church's very identity taking the brunt of the damage.

More and more is being heard from writers and speakers - our writers and our speakers - concerning "our fellowship" and "our movement," while less and less is being said about the Lord's church. We enjoy both our fellowship and the fruits of the Restoration Movement, but we are members of the church which Jesus built.

A generation ago, preachers of the gospel proudly proclaimed the singularity and beauty of the Lord's church. But times have changed and so has the language of many of our more modern preachers, editors and church leaders. It appears that now, at least in the minds of what looks to be a sadly growing segment among us, loyalty to the Lord and His blood-bought church is being blindly bartered for affiliation with either an historical, humanly devised movement or some undefined, nebulous and vaguely-bounded fellowship.

It is true that we, as God's people living now in the 21st century, owe much to the honest and truth-seeking leaders of what has been commonly coined, "The American Restoration Movement." Good and courageous men such as Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone, James O'Kelly - along with a host of countless others of like faith and fortitude - performed a tremendous service to the world by leading men and women back to the Bible. But our roots run deeper than the American Restoration. Our history traces all the way back to the first Pentecost Day following our Lord's resurrection, that wonderful day of beginning described in the second chapter of Acts.

We were not members of a denomination founded by Alexander Campbell. Campbell never intended such. He rather sought to point men back, beyond himself, to the risen Savior. He urged men to unite in the one, non-denominational, New Testament church.

Such was his plea. Such is ours.

I am thankful for "our movement." I appreciate the blessings and warmth of "our fellowship." But my allegiance, my loyalty, yea my very life, belong to the Lord and His church.

Regardless what seems to be the politically correct message of the moment, I'll continue using the language of the Bible. I'll continue calling the church, the church.

**PATIENCE AT HOME**

By Joshua Ortiz

It may be easier to show patience to a random stranger than to a family member. Perhaps this is because we know it is easier for a family member to forgive us. But God demands patience from all of us in the home.

In 1 Peter 3:4, God commands wives to have "a gentle and calm spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God." Wives, this will help you submit to your husbands. (Ephesians 5:22.) And for wives with unbelieving husbands, your gentle and quiet spirits will enhance your husband's desire to become a Christian. So whenever you want to lose patience with your husband's decision, remember these verses. Some ladies will look at this and say, "God is oppressive toward women." But God turns right around to husbands and forbids them from being oppressive.

1 Peter 3:7 says, "Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with

understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered." Husbands need to take time to understand their wives. "Being heirs together" means a Christian husband views his Christian wife as a sister in Christ. If there is ever a time you want to raise your voice to her, then ask yourself, "Would I treat the sisters of the church this way?" Also, husbands are to honor their wives. Whenever you make a decision, have her best interest in mind. A husband who is patient will take time to think about his decisions and consider his wife.

Ephesians 6:4 commands, "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." One way we train our children is through our actions. Patient fathers help their children to be patient. Fathers, think about how the Almighty

Father has patience with you.

Children need to have patience with their parents. Ephesians 6:1 commands, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." But Paul also says, "Honor your father and mother." (Ephesians 6:2.) Why does Paul say obey and then honor? It is possible to obey grudgingly and angrily. Patience allows you to obey and honor at the same time.

Let us work on patience in the home.
— Miami, OK

WHY WERE THE BEREANS NOBLE?

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 Berean's 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 Berean's 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

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