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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 28 NUMBER 12

Palm Beach Lakes CHURCH of CHRIST

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SUNDAY

Bible Study..... 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m.
Worship 6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Classes..... 7:00 p.m.

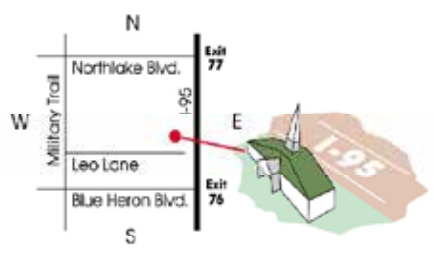
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House to House / Heart to Heart is published monthly by the Palm Beach Lakes church of Christ (4067 Leo Lane, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410). Allen Webster, general editor. It is sent to select area postal routes and to individuals elsewhere free upon request. Send all correspondence to the address listed above.

Curiosity May Have Killed the Cat... but It Saved Zacchaeus



Allen Webster



Zacchaeus may have been a wee little man, but do not sell him short. He is more than a minor New Testament character (Luke 19:1-10). One characteristic that causes him to stand above the crowd is his curiosity. It was no passing interest that caused the little man who collected big taxes to run ahead of the multitude and call attention to his short stature by climbing a tree. This curiosity brought salvation to his house (Luke 19:9).

What about you? Do you have an active mind? Do you find yourself asking "why?" more often than most? Does your curiosity spill over into the spiritual realm? Have you read much of the Bible? Have you wondered about its claims to be inspired of God, its story of creation, its record of miracles, its portrayal of Jesus' virgin birth and bodily resurrection, its claims about heaven and hell? If so, keep reading.

Evidently Zacchaeus had heard some amazing things about Jesus: Somebody came through Jericho a while back who

said He fed five thousand people up by Lake Galilee; another reported seeing Him cast out devils and heal lepers; rumor was He raised a dead man up on the mountain; He walked on the Sea of Galilee, too, some said. And just today, He healed two blind men on the other side of town.¹

And then there were the *other* things: Jesus did not toe the party line with those hateful scribes and Pharisees. He associated with tax collectors, ate with tax collectors, made a tax collector the hero of a sermon, selected a tax collector as one of His apostles, and was even known as the "friend of tax collectors and sinners." He preached about doing away with the traditions of the elders and urged people to follow only the will of God.² It was enough to make a man a little curious.

Jesus was used to being the object of curiosity. As an infant, He aroused the curi-

osity of the magi (Matthew 2:1–2); angels peered from heavenly windows to see their Master’s new form (Luke 2:8–14). As a boy, He excited the interest of teachers in the temple (Luke 2:46–47). After He became a man, two of John’s disciples inquired about where He lived (John 1:38–39). Nicodemus, a busy ruler of the Jews, was curious enough to pay Him an after-hours visit (John 3:1–2). Simon the Pharisee wondered whether Jesus could be a prophet or not and invited Him to a banquet (Luke 7:36). Certain Greeks asked Philip to arrange for them to meet Jesus. (Their request is ours too: “Sir, we wish to see Jesus” [John 12:20–21; cf. 1 John 4:1–21]). Interest never waned; even near His death, Herod wanted to see Him of whom he had heard such marvelous things (Luke 23:8).

Most of us first come to Jesus on this level. Even after two thousand years, He is still the most talked about and the most controversial human ever to reside on Planet Earth. Sure, we have heard some things; we’re not sure if we believe them yet, but we are curious. Things like, “Born of a virgin.” Are you for real? (Yes.) “Put His hands on sick people, and they got better.” Yeah, right. (Exactly right.) “Walked on water.” C’mon. (The only thing that got wet was the bottom of His feet.) “Called His dead friend Lazarus, and he came out of the grave to see Him.” Sounds like a Halloween story. (No story. Lazarus is one man who died twice.) “Was murdered by His enemies on Friday but came back on Sunday morning.” Are you for real? (Absolutely.)³

And then, like Zacchaeus, there are the other things for us too: Jesus forgave people of anything—like a woman caught in adultery and a murderer named Saul of Tarsus. He even prayed for His



executioners! He catered to common folks and tapped ordinary people to be His most relied-upon lieutenants. He made it sound like anybody could please Him if he or she wanted to enough, and everybody could make it to heaven.⁴ It is still enough to make a person inquisitive.

II

It is good to be curious about spiritual things. A child’s favorite word is “why?” Adults should not give up that word too easily. Einstein said, “The important thing is not to stop questioning.”⁵ Charles Steinmetz said, “No man really becomes a fool until he stops asking questions.”⁶ Samuel Johnson said, “Curiosity is one of the permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous intellect.”⁷ James Thurber said, “It is better to ask some of the questions than to know all the answers.”⁸

Paul taught, “Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Jesus told the Jews to “search the Scriptures” (John 5:39) and urged His followers to be fruit inspectors (Matthew 7:15–20). He insisted that God gave us eyes, ears, and brains for a reason (Mark 7:18; cf. Matthew 13:16; Luke 8:18). Curiosity is not a thing to be crushed. Doubt is the prelude of knowledge.⁹

III

Curiosity leads to investigation—and truth is never hurt by investigation. The psalmist invites, “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good” (Psalm 34:8). Thomas was not criticized for saying, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe” (John 20:25). Instead, at their next meeting, Jesus invited him to “look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side.” He does not want any “unbelieving” but all “believing” (John 20:27).

The Ethiopian was curious enough to invite a stranger to explain Isaiah 53 to him, and he left the encounter rejoicing (Acts 8:30–40). God counted the Berean Jews “fair-minded” for their investigation of Paul’s sermons (Acts 17:11).

When we are curious enough, we will ask for answers (cf. Matthew 17:10; Acts 8:31; 1 Corinthians 14:35). We will

take our Bibles so we can know for sure (2 Timothy 3:16–17; 2 Peter 1:3; John 6:69). Each needs his own faith—not a “this is what my parents said,” or a “most of my friends think this,” or a “my preacher teaches this” faith. All Christians need to be able to say, “I believe this because the Bible says. . . .”

Investigation leads to knowledge, which leads to faith (Romans 10:17). If we give Jesus’ claims a closer look, we never come away disappointed. He is not less than we have heard; He is more—much more! He *astonishes* people.¹⁰ Those who actually saw Him “were astonished beyond measure, saying, ‘He has done all things well’” (Mark 7:37). His claims are not empty; He is the fullness of God (Colossians 1:19). He is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. Impressed? Who wouldn’t be?

Faith leads to obedience, which leads to salvation. Faith led Zacchaeus to obey Jesus (Jesus gave him two commands—make haste, come down—and he readily did both), and Jesus told him, “Salvation has come to this house” (Luke 19:9). Zacchaeus gives the impression that whatever Jesus asked him to do, he would do. Jesus asks us to believe in Him (John 3:16; 8:24); to repent of our sins (Luke 13:3); to confess our faith in Him to others (Matthew 10:32–33); and to be immersed in water to have our sins forgiven (Mark 16:16). He asks us to deny “ungodliness and worldly lusts” and live “soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age” (Titus 2:12).

Endnotes

¹ Luke 9:10–17; 8:26–29; 17:11–19; John 11:38–44; 6:15–21; Luke 18:35–43.

² Matthew 23:1–35; 9:10; Luke 18:10–14; Matthew 10:3; Luke 7:34; Matthew 15:6–9.

³ Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18–25; 15:30; 14:25; John 11.

⁴ John 8:1–11; Acts 9:1–17; Luke 23:34; Matthew 10:1–4; Acts 4:13; Matthew 11:28–30.

⁵ <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/einstein/wisd-nf.html>.

⁶ <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/554505>.

⁷ <https://www.samueljohnson.com/curiosit.html>.

⁸ <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1939/02/18/james-thurber-fables-for-our-time-iii>.

⁹ Henry Drummond, “Listening to the Giants,” *Christianity Today*, Vol. 29, no. 17.

¹⁰ Scripture lists 41 times that people were “amazed,” “astonished,” or “marveled” at Him (Matthew 7:28; 8:27; 9:8, 33; 12:23; 13:54; 19:25; 21:20; 22:22, 33; 27:14; Mark 1:22, 27; 2:12; 5:42; 6:2, 51; 7:37; 9:15; 10:24, 26, 32; 11:18; 12:17; 15:5, 44; 16:8; Luke 2:33, 47, 48; 4:32, 36; 5:9, 26; 8:56; 9:43; 11:38; 20:26; 24:22; John 4:27; 7:15).



A Most Handsome Man

Abraham Lincoln was admired by many, but he had critics. But even persistent critics, like Pennsylvania's Thaddeus Stevens, sometimes praised the President's benevolence.

House Speaker Schuyler Colfax recalled that Stevens used to tell, with great gusto, this story of his own personal experience. Mr. Stevens had gone with an elderly lady from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (his district), to the White House to ask the pardon of her son who was condemned to die for sleeping on his post. The President suddenly turned upon his cynical Pennsylvania friend, whom he knew had often assailed him for excessive leniency, and said, "Now, Thad, what would you do in this case if you happened to be President?"

Mr. Stevens knew how many hundreds of his constituents were waiting breathlessly to hear the result of that elderly woman's pilgrimage to Washington. Of course, Congressmen who desired to be reelected liked to carry out the desires of their constituents. Stevens did not relish the President's home-thrust, but replied that, as he knew of the extenuating circumstances, he would certainly pardon him.

"Well, then," said Mr. Lincoln, after a moment's writing in silence, "Here, Madam, is your son's pardon."

Her gratitude filled her heart to overflowing, as her son had been snatched from the gateway of the grave. She could

only thank the President with her tears as she left, but when she and Mr. Stevens had reached the outer door of the White House, she burst out excitedly, "I *knew* it was a lie! I *knew* it was a lie!"

"What do you mean?" asked her astonished companion.

"Why, when I left my country home in old Lancaster yesterday, the neighbors told me that I would find that Mr. Lincoln was an *ugly* man, when in fact . . . he is really the most handsome man I have ever seen in my life!"

And certainly, when sympathy and mercy lightened up those rugged features, many a wife and mother pleading for his intervention had reason to think him handsome indeed.

Interestingly, the Scriptures do not contain an exact description of the physical appearance of Jesus Christ. Perhaps it is a prophecy given some seven hundred years before His birth that provides the closest thing to a portrait: "He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isaiah 53:2).

Yet many would describe Jesus as the most handsome Man that has ever lived. Why? Because Jesus died so that we might live! (1 Thessalonians 5:10).

—David A. Sargent



Keynotes of Galatians–Colossians

Reviewing key words, verses, phrases, and messages from the New Testament books refreshes our memory (2 Peter 1:12) and helps us to find key ideas as we read.

Book: Galatians

Key Word: Liberty

Key Verse: Galatians 5:1

Message: Christ is the deliverer

Book: Philippians

Key Words: Joy; Love

Key Verse: Philippians 1:21

Message: To live is Christ

Book: Ephesians

Key Words: The church

Key Verses: Ephesians 1:22–23

Message: The church is the body of Christ

Book: Colossians

Key Word: Fullness

Key Verses: Colossians 2:9–10

Message: Christ is all and in all

—Frank J. Dunn, *Know Your Bible* (Frank and Yvonne Dunn Publications, 1997), 430–648

God's Plan for Saving Man

Divine Love: John 3:16

God's Grace: Ephesians 2:8

Christ's Blood: Romans 5:9

Holy Spirit's Word: 1 Corinthians 2:12–13

Sinner's Faith: Acts 16:31

Sinner's Repentance: Luke 13:3

Sinner's Confession: Romans 10:10

Sinner's Baptism: Acts 22:16

Christian's Love: Matthew 22:37

Christian's Work: James 2:24

Christian's Hope: Romans 8:24

Christian's Endurance: Revelation 2:10

Watch
on youtube





Special Dog

A minister delivered a sermon in ten minutes one Sunday morning, which was about a third the usual length of his sermons. He explained, "I regret to inform you that my dog, who is very fond of eating paper, ate portions of my sermon which I was unable to deliver this morning."

After the service, a visitor from another church shook hands with the preacher and said, "Preacher, if that dog of yours has any pups, I want to get one to give to my minister."

Serious question: How much hunger for the Word do you bring on Sundays? Read Matthew 5:6.

"A merry heart does good."

PROVERBS 17:22

Jesus is...

The One who often wept (John 11:35), yet He dries our tears (Revelation 7:17; 21:4).

The One who was sold for the price of a common slave (Exodus 21:32; Matthew 26:15), yet He redeemed man from his sins (1 Peter 1:18–19).

The One who was led as a sheep to the slaughter (Acts 8:32), yet He is our good shepherd (John 10:11).

The One who gave His life (Galatians 2:20), and by His dying made it possible for us to live eternally (Mark 16:16).

—V. P. Black

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain."

REVELATION 5:12



To watch videos, read articles, answer Bible questions, and more go to house-to-house.com

Do Not Give Up

Babe Ruth struck out 1,333 times, but we remember him for his 714 home runs. Cy Young won 511 games, but the number he lost is forgotten.

Abraham Lincoln was soundly defeated when he ran for the legislature. He failed in business and was seventeen years paying off debt. He failed to get an appointment to the U. S. Land Office. He was defeated in his race for the Senate and in his effort to be Vice President. Again, Lincoln was defeated by Douglas. But he eventually became the President of the United States.

Many believe for a while but "in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:13). Like Israel, we have a tendency to forget God (Jeremiah 2:32). In most communities, there are those who once were more faithful than they are now. They do not attend Bible classes, night services, or other meetings as they once did. They have ceased to participate in church activities. Their light has gone out. They have virtually quit.

Everyday religion is the antidote to failure. Practice these safeguards:

Every day let God say something to you. Keep the line of communication open between you and God by reading His Word (Revelation 1:3).

Every day say something to God.

Stay in contact with the source of our strength through prayer. We cannot walk alone. Prayer avails (James 5:16).

Every day say something for God.

Share the good news. Tell a friend. Speak a kind word (Colossians 4:6).

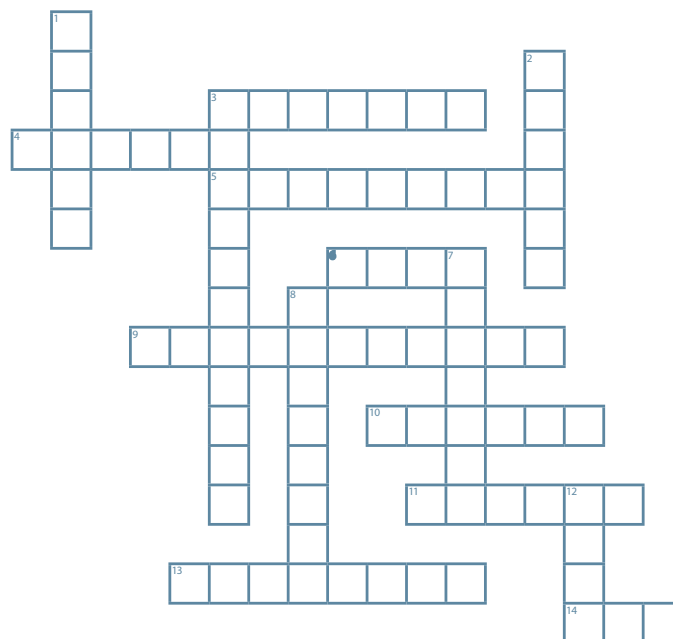
Every day do something for God.

Look for opportunities to serve. Opportunities are abundant; only a blind man could not see them. Give a helping hand. Encourage the downtrodden. Exhort the wayward. Comfort the sorrowful. Support the weak (1 Corinthians 15:58).

My dear brethren, let us be doers—not quitters! —Clarence DeLoach



Just for Fun Crossword Puzzle



I cried out to You, O Lord:
I said, "You are my refuge,
My portion in the land of
the living.

Attend to my cry,
For I am brought very
low;

Deliver me from my
persecutors,
For they are stronger
than I.

Bring my soul out of
prison,
That I may praise Your
name;

The righteous shall
surround me,
For You shall deal
bountifully with me."

PSALM 142:5–7

1. ATTEND; 2. PRISON; 3. PORTION; 4. REFUGE; 5. RIGHTEOUSNESS; 6. LORD; 7. DELIVER; 8. STRONGER; 9. SURROUND; 10. BOUNTIFULLY; 11. PRAISE; 12. SOUL; 13. SURROUND; 14. LOW

Man's Questions— God's Answers

- 1. Am I accountable to God?** "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).
- 2. Does God know all about me?** "There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:13).
- 3. Will God punish sin?** "To give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
- 4. Will I perish if I do not obey God?** "The Lord is not slack concerning

- His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).
- 5. How can I escape?** "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).
 - 6. Is He willing to save me?** "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." (1 Timothy 1:15).

—Saks church of Christ, Anniston, Alabama

"We ought to obey God rather than men."

ACTS 5:29



Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.



Bible Quiz

VOLUME 28:12

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark. We will grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "Annual Bible Reading Chart" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City/State: _____
 Phone: _____

Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 28:10 Starts with the Letter "J": 1. Jesus (Matthew 1:21); 2. Jair (Judges 10:3-4); 3. Jairus (Mark 5:22, 42-43); 4. James (Acts 12:1-2); 5. James (James 2:26); 6. Japheth (Genesis 5:32); 7. Jealousy (Proverbs 6:34); 8. Jehu (2 Kings 9:20); 9. Jeremiah (Jeremiah 9:1); 10. Jericho (Hebrews 11:30); 11. Jerusalem (1 Kings 14:21); 12. Jesse (Ruth 4:17); 13. Jethro (Exodus 3:1); 14. Jew (Galatians 3:28); 15. Jezebel (1 Kings 19:1-2); 16. Job (Job 1:8-2:7); 17. Jochebed (Exodus 6:20); 18. Jonah (Jonah 1:17); 19. Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:1); 20. Joseph (Genesis 39:1-7).

V. 28:11 Joshua's Only Defeat (and Comeback): 1. Two or three thousand (7:3); 2. About three thousand (7:4); 3. Thirty thousand (8:3); 4. About thirty-six (7:5); 5. They took some of the accursed things (7:11); 6. Twelve thousand (8:25); 7. Transgressing God's covenant, taking some accursed things, stealing, deceiving, and putting it among his stuff (7:11); 8. A beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels (7:21); 9. The lust of the eyes (7:21); 10. They were stoned and burned (7:25); 11. Achor (7:24); 12. Trouble (7:26); 13. They could take the spoil and cattle as booty (8:2); 14. With, with (8:9-10); 15. With (8:11); 16. His spear (8:26); 17. Altar, Ebal, stones, Gerizim, Ebal (8:30-35).

Starts with the Letter "C"

Directions: Find answers in Genesis 4:1, 8; Leviticus 25:38; Numbers 13:1-6; Psalm 37:8; 92:12; Ezekiel 1:1; Matthew 16:16; 26:3; Mark 6:3; 10:25; Luke 2:1; 18:17; John 1:42; 2:1-10; 16:33; Acts 8:27; 10:1-48; 11:26; Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 10:8; 2 Corinthians 9:7; 1 Timothy 6:7; Hebrews 12:5; 1 Peter 5:7; Revelation 22:14 (not in order). Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

- High Priest who presided at Jesus' trial. _____
- Son of Adam and Eve; murdered his brother. _____
- Son of Jephunneh; faithful spy (with Joshua). _____
- Where Jesus turned water to wine. _____
- Place of Israel's inheritance after Egypt. _____
- "A eunuch of great authority under _____ the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship."
- Jesus' occupation. _____
- River by which Ezekiel sat. _____
- Famous trees from Lebanon. _____
- First Gentile convert; centurion in Caesarea. _____
- Another name for Simon Peter, son of Jonah. _____
- "_____ from anger, and forsake wrath."
- "The disciples were first called _____ in Antioch."
- "Blessed are they that do His _____, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter . . . into the city."
- "Neither let us _____ sexual immorality."
- "God loves a _____ giver."
- "My son, do not despise the _____ of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him."
- "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can _____ nothing out."
- "Casting all your _____ upon Him; for He cares for you."
- Jesus was born during the reign of _____ Augustus.
- "It is easier for a _____ to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."
- "Be of good _____, I have overcome the world."
- "Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little _____ will by no means enter it."
- "Peter answered and said, 'You are the _____, the Son of the living God.'"
- "The _____ of Christ greet you."

Saying Goodbye to Mom

It is Mother's Day weekend, and my mom is dying from pancreatic cancer. She is only sixty-five, and I will miss her very much. We are a family who believes in and loves God very much. Faith is the victory that overcomes. Right now, faith is what is needed to overcome my grief. I would like to tell you our family good-bye story.

Over the last six months my parents have read their Bible together every day. They started with the Psalms and then moved on to passages concerning heaven. Mom asked Dad to read the Bible to her, even if she were to slip into a coma. As we have all gathered together, our family has drawn strength from the Lord as much as from one another.

My mom has been under hospice care, and we were told that she would drift into a nonresponsive state within twenty-four hours. Mom has not been able to respond much. Dad leaned over, kissed her, and

told her would be okay and that we kids would take care of him. Mom replied, "I am tired." Dad told her it was okay. We gave them alone time, and Dad talked to her. He came out to us and cried. He asked us to all go and say good-bye one last time. One by one we all said our good-byes and cried. When the last one was finished, we gathered around her. We asked if she would like us to sing "Amazing Grace." Her response was, "Ninety-four verses." We began to sing, and this little woman of ninety pounds began to mouth every word. No voice, but her spirit was singing. As we finished, she cried. In the strongest voice she could muster she said, "I love you." She reached out and hugged Dad, then asked that we carry her to bed.

Her body is with us, but her eyes are closed, and she no longer grabs my hand. We watch now as she anxiously waits to be with the Lord she loves. Her faith preaches sermons beyond any I preach

from the pulpit. She is dying with dignity, but even greater, she is dying with the Lord. As David so beautifully said, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Psalm 116:15). While that verse has never been easy for me to understand, I think I glimpsed some of the preciousness that God sees in the death of my mother. I will miss her. My mother taught me how to live, but now she has taught me how to die.

Are you ready to die? Are you confident that in your death you will be with the Lord? If you struggle knowing, I hope you will contact us. We would like to share with you the greatest story ever told. Then, together with the Lord, we will not say "good-bye" but "hello" to Christ our Lord. —Jeffrey Dillinger

"When I was my father's son, tender and the only one in the sight of my mother."

PROVERBS 4:3

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

Recommended Resource



International Gospel Hour radio has been on the air over 85 years! Sponsored by the churches of Christ and faithful Christians, IGH broadcasts over 100 AM/FM stations, internet radio, and is also available through several podcast apps. They never ask for money and all study offers are free. Check out their website at internationalgospelhour.com.

I want to learn more about the Bible!

If you knew for sure that the religious path you are on would not get you to heaven, would you change? If there was the possibility of a doubt, would you investigate? Why not request a personal Bible study today?

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Prayer requests or comments: _____

I would like:



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- In Pursuit of Patience
- Investing Time Wisely
- My Preacher Says



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My Preacher Says



The Safe Channel



The Way



In Pursuit of Dreams



Helping Widows



Seven Things a Loving God Hates: Hands that Shed Innocent Blood



Four Reasons Jesus Sent the Holy Spirit



Is Being a Good Person Enough?



Don't see the topic you need? Visit www.housetohouse.com for more subjects.

VOLUME 28:12



5 MODERN RIGHTS

THE OLD TESTAMENT GAVE

CRIMINALS

1. PRESUMPTION OF INNOCENCE

Everyone was presumed innocent until proven guilty, and the burden of proof rested with the accuser. When only one person's word stood against another's, the accused was acquitted by default. Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15.



2. FAIR TRIAL

Anyone could bring a case before a judge at any time, and everyone was judged by the same law. Both sides had to be heard simultaneously, and perjury was severely punished. Exodus 18:13-26; 22:9; Leviticus 24:22; Deuteronomy 1:16-17; 16:18-20; 19:16-21.

3. SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE

Claims had to be backed by tangible evidence and the testimony of multiple witnesses. If these could not be found, the case was settled by an oath and no one was punished. Exodus 22:10-13; Numbers 5:11-28; 35:30; Deuteronomy 19:15; 22:13-19.



4. LIMITED PUNISHMENT

Criminals were protected from excessive punishments by the limits of "eye for eye" equivalence, concrete sentence maximums, and the requirement that judges supervise the punishments they ordered. Exodus 21:22-25; Leviticus 24:19-22; Deuteronomy 25:1-3.

5. LEGAL AUTONOMY

No one could be punished for another person's crime. No social or economic status could revoke autonomy, so cases between husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and slaves all had to be brought before civil authorities. Exodus 21:5-6, 26-27; Leviticus 24:19-21; Numbers 5:14-15; Deuteronomy 1:16; 21:18-21; 22:13-19, 23-27; 24:16.



"FOR THIS IS YOUR WISDOM AND YOUR UNDERSTANDING IN THE SIGHT OF THE PEOPLES WHO WILL HEAR ALL THESE STATUTES, AND SAY, 'SURELY THIS GREAT NATION IS A WISE AND UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE.'"



We Are So Blessed

If you own just one Bible, you are abundantly blessed. One third of all the world does not have access to even one.

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation, you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death, you are more blessed than three billion people in the world.

If your parents are still married and alive, you are very rare, even in the United States.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace, you are among the top eight percent of the world's wealthy.

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head, and a place to sleep, you are richer than seventy-five percent of this world.

"A faithful man will abound with blessings."



Saved by the BIBLE

Pfc. Brendon Schweigart, age 22, was on a mission to recover a tank that had broken down in Baghdad, Iraq. Upon reaching the tank, he was struck in the chest by a sniper's bullet. Fortunately for Schweigart, the bullet became embedded in a Bible he carried in his shirt pocket. The Word of God had quite literally saved his life!

Pfc. Schweigart's experience reminds me of a passage in the Bible. "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

Pfc. Brendon Schweigart learned that keeping a Bible near your heart can literally save your life. But more important than that, by keeping a Bible near your heart you will also be able to stop the tracks of the devil and will save your soul. —Steve Higginbotham

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