

# Expository Files

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## The Front Page

### Rolling On With the Lord

By Jon W. Quinn

*"Commit your way to the LORD,*

*Trust also in Him, and He will do it." Psalm 37:5*

The word "commit" ("galal" Heb.) means to "roll with" or "roll on with". In this case, we are to "roll on our way with the Lord". This implies a unity of action between a man or woman of faith and his or her God as one travels through life. As we choose our course, we do so with the Lord; our decisions are made out of our determination to stay with the Lord. We are "rolling on" with Him as one through whatever course of our lives take. It is an interesting figure describing a real relationship between God and man.

There are very positive results of "rolling on with the Lord" suggested in the context of the verse.

1. I am stronger than my enemies - if you gauge strength by the measure of who will last longer (Psalm 37:1,2). This is the inevitable, eternal conclusion in the King's universe. Victory is eternal.

2. "Rolling with the Lord" means living on the earth and spending my days doing that which is good and right as I live by a higher standard, and hopefully spread the seeds of faithfulness (Psalm 37:3). The Day will come when the faithful will be vindicated and the justness and righteousness of their cause will be obvious to all (Psalm 37:6).

3. But in the meantime, what do we do when the wicked seem to prosper as they mock and ridicule? Well, the answer is that I wait patiently for the Lord, confident of the final and abundant blessings He has in store (Psalm 37:7-11).

4. But also, sometimes the righteous have been severely persecuted even unto death. What then? We maintain our confidence that the Lord will do the just thing and that there will be an accounting for the evil done to the faithful (Psalm 37:12-15)

And now listen the Psalmist's righteous conclusion:

*Better is the little of the righteous*

*Than the abundance of many wicked. (Psalm 37:16)*

It is better to live righteously and, if need be, have a little for a short time, taking refuge in the Rock and waiting for the victory to be brought by the King. Those who "roll on with the Lord" will not be disappointed!

*The LORD knows the days of the blameless,*

*And their inheritance will be forever. (Psalm 37:18).*

## **There and Back Again**

### **John 3:12-15**

By Jon W. Quinn

Jesus said, "If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life." (John 3:12-15).

Jesus had much to say about life here on earth. Not everyone was willing to listen and hear. Jesus was also interested in instructing us about "heavenly" things beyond this earth and the life we live here. Those things are even more difficult for us to grasp at this time. Those unwilling to hear Jesus concerning earthly things will certainly be unable to grasp the significance of heavenly things, and that is a shame because the heavenly things are eternally important.

There are questions we have about God, heaven, and the realities of the spirit-realm or the "heavenly places". The mysteries of death and what will happen to us are perplexing questions.

We do not have access to everything that we might wish to know, but we do have access to some things. The information we do have, if we go to the right source, is not a guess, a philosophy, an opinion or imagination. Revelation from God, in the Bible, will provide us with more than guesswork. Of all the religions of the world, only Our Lord is one who came from heaven, went back to heaven, and is now in heaven. The hymn says, "heaven came down and glory filled my soul" and expresses the concept that we have an eyewitness who has told us of a realm which He fully knows. Notice some points made by Jesus in His statement quoted at the beginning of this article.

### **Jesus Has Unique Knowledge About the Spiritual Realm**

Jesus asked, "Who has descended from heaven?" (3:13). Can we find such a claim in Mohammed? Buddha? -- no. But that is Jesus' claim.

There are many theories about the spirit-realm, but only Jesus has been there and came here to tell us about it. The Christian's knowledge of heaven comes from One who has been there. His knowledge is first hand (Proverbs 30:3-4) "Neither have I learned wisdom, Nor do I have the knowledge of the Holy One. Who has ascended

into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His son's name? Surely you know!”

Through Jesus, we can know God better than in any other way. While we can know some about Him through His creation or through His past actions, we can learn of Him even better through His Son. In fact, the only adequate way to know Him is through Jesus (John 1:17-18; 6:46,47; 13:2,3; 14:8-10; 17:5; Colossians 1:19,20; Hebrews 1:3). To know the Father, we must know Jesus. To know the Father and the Son, we must keep their commandments (1 John 2:2-6).

### **Jesus Alone Can Bring Spiritual Healing**

Jesus uses as an example the Old Testament record of the poison and death among the rebellious Israelites. When they cried out for mercy, Moses was told by God to put a brass serpent in a pole in the middle of the camp. Whoever would look upon the serpent would live (3:14; cf. Numbers 21:4-9).

This was not meant to be merely a short term fix just for those people. It was also meant to be an illustration of man's problem and God's solutions. When we are poisoned with sin, there is one hope for us as well. We will suffer eternal death unless we depend on the one who has been “lifted up” for us. No brass serpent this time. Instead, our hope is in the Son of God lifted up on the cross!

The Son of God became also the Son of Man as He took upon Himself a body which could be lifted up. We are encouraged to “fix our eyes” upon Him who had been lifted up for us (Hebrews 12:1,2).

### **Without Jesus We Will Die Forever**

The poison of sin is eternally deadly (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Jesus is the only way to avoid this tragic, unending end. (John 3:18; cf. John 14:6). Though man in his arrogance may think so, sin is never a small matter. Think about the flood. Think about the cross. Whether we ask Cain or the people of Sodom or Pharaoh or King Saul or Jezebel or Judas. What one among them would advise us to be as accommodating to sin as they once were? Think about Hell. If God warns us of this awful consequence of sin, then why should we ever compromise with it (Revelation 20:10-15)?

### **With Jesus We Will Live Forever**

Heavenly things are eternal things. The one who has left the heavenly realm and has come to this earth to tell us about it knew it would be difficult for us to accept. For this reason He brought credentials. His proof consists of His miracles, His

fulfillment of many prophecies, and His resurrection from the dead. All these things are proof. We all ought to carefully consider their significance.

The hope of eternal life and the peace it brings is a wonderful thing to have! Our confidence in Jesus has not been blindly given to Him. He has earned it, and our confidence in Him brings great benefits to us.

If Jesus was raised, then we will be raised. (1 Corinthians 15) As disturbing as God's description of being lost in eternity is, how wonderful are the descriptions of heaven given to John from our friend who is there! (Revelation 21:3-5).

First, Jesus was there. Then, Jesus was here, and then was caught up to Heaven again. He went there because His work here was done, but His work there is not done. He went to prepare a place for us (John 14:3). He is interceding in our behalf right now as our High Priest. "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:14-16). He is our friend, our advocate and our mediator. Our friend can tell us the truth about heavenly things. No guesswork involved at all.

Jesus had quite a bit to say about how life ought to be lived here on earth, and about what exists in the heavenly realm as well. We had best listen carefully to His instructions about earthly living and obey Him. He gives us direction here and now, so that we can be with Him there. What He says must be very important. He came an awfully long way to say it.

## **God's Mercy Upon His People**

**Hosea 2:14-20**

**By Wayne S. Walker**

Even though the Old Testament is not God's law for us today, the New Testament reminds us that the Old Testament scriptures were written for our learning and contain admonitions for us. The historical information is very helpful in understanding the execution of God's scheme for our redemption, and the lives of various individuals furnish wonderful examples of good and evil. The writings

provide good advice on wisdom and praise. And the prophets make predictions by which we can identify the Messiah and also reveal things by which we can see God's attitude towards His people and their sin.

The story of the prophet Hosea as recorded in the book bearing his name is extremely interesting. Not only did he preach against the sins of the northern kingdom of ten tribes, but his life also illustrated their faithlessness. His own wife, who bore him three children (many scholars believe that at least the last two were not his), then became unfaithful to him and left him to live a life of degradation. This illustrated the apostasy of the Israelites and their punishment. However, Hosea went out to search for her, and when he found her he took her back again. This illustrated God's love for Israel and his willingness to receive them back after they repented. Based on the prophet's experiences, Hosea 2:14-20 talk about God's mercy on His people.

### **Effort**

First, we see God's effort in v. 14a. "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness." The word "allure" means to attract. When a young man is trying to win the affections of a young woman, he does everything that he can to attract her attention, perhaps even taking her off by themselves from time to time so they can talk and get to know one another. What has God done to attract us to His plan for our salvation? He sent His Son to live a perfect life as an example for us (1 Pet. 2.21-23). We often sing a song which says, "Let the Beauty of Jesus Be Seen in Me"

Even more importantly, God planned for His Son to die as an atonement for our sins. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5.8). Then He raised His Son from the dead to demonstrate that everything that He told us is true. "Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was...declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" ( Rom. 1.3-4). Through the centuries, these things have attracted literally millions of people to God's way.

### **Communication**

Second, we see God's communication in vs. 14b-15. He said that He would "speak comfort to her" and that "I will give her her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt." We all know that one of the basic needs for a strong relationship is good communication. Young people who are thinking about getting married need to talk a lot together. What has God done to

communicate with us? The purpose of His sending His Son was not only to be our example, die for our sins, and be raised again, but also to reveal His will to us (Heb. 1.1-2).

The means by which Christ reveals God's word to us is through the written word, which is known by many terms, such as the gospel or the scriptures. It is in the gospel that the Lord makes known His plan for our salvation. Paul says that the gospel “is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek, for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’” (Rom. 1.16-17). Furthermore, God's communication with us does not stop with just revealing the plan of salvation, but He continues to lead and guide us through the scriptures that we might be equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3.16-17).

### **Affection**

Third, we see God's affection in vs. 16-17. “And it shall be in that day,’ says the Lord, ‘that you will call Me “My Husband,” and no longer call Me “My Master,” for I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals, and they shall be remembered by their name no more.” A young man and a young woman who get married usually show a lot of affection toward each other in various ways, including the use of terms of endearment, such as honey, dear, and sweetheart. Even though Israel had forsaken the Lord, He was willing to allow them once again to call Him Husband. God's affection for us is seen in allowing us to be married to Christ (Rom. 7.1-4).

Of course, while a married couple's calling one another husband and wife shows affection, being husband and wife is not just an honorary position; there are responsibilities—the wife is to submit to the husband and the husband is to love his wife (Eph. 5.22-27). Christ has already showed His affection and love by giving His life for us; we show our affection by submitting to Him. This affectionate relationship between Christ and His church on earth is symbolic of the eternal relationship that will exist between God and His people in heaven, as the New Jerusalem is pictured as a bride adorned for her husband (Rev. 21.1-2). The marriage that we make with the Lord now will find its ultimate expression in the new heaven and the new earth.

### **Commitment**

Fourth, we see God's commitment in v. 18. “In that day, I will make a covenant with them, with the beasts of the field, with the birds of the air, and with the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth to make them lie down safely.” When two people get married, they make a commitment or covenant with each other in saying their vows. This is why unscriptural divorce is

pictured in the Bible as something that the Lord hates. "...Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant" (Mal. 2.13-14).

God had already made a covenant with Israel. He revealed His will through Moses at Mt. Sinai following their Exodus from Egypt, and they agreed to it, saying, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (Exo. 19.1-8, 24.7). The terms of the covenant were if they would keep His laws, He would bless them. However, the Israelites did not keep this covenant. They forsook the Lord and were punished by being sent into captivity; yet, God planned to make a new covenant under the Messiah to provide blessings for all mankind (Jer. 31.31-34). This He did through Jesus Christ (Heb. 8.7-13). The promises of the New Covenant show God's commitment to us today.

### **Righteousness**

Fifth, we see God's righteousness in v. 19. "I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy." Righteousness means always doing what is right. One thing that a husband and wife must always do to treat each other right is to keep themselves pure and never join themselves to another. God, as our spiritual Husband, is perfectly righteous. "They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness" (Ps. 145.17). We know that the Lord will always do what is right and never leave nor forsake us. The problem is that we, like the Israelites, are not always righteous in our relationship with God--we know this is true because "all have sinned" (Rom. 3.23).

However, because He still loves us, God makes it possible through the cleansing available in Christ for us to be made righteous or justified in His sight. "For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness'...Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: 'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered'" (Rom. 4.3-7). This is possible through Christ, "who was raised because of our justification" (Rom. 4:22-25). None of us is perfectly righteous in and of ourselves, but we should always strive to do that which is right before God to the very best of our ability. "Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous" (1 Jn. 3.7). The fact is that we can be married to God and remain married to Him only through righteousness.

### **Faithfulness**

Sixth, we see God's faithfulness in v. 20. "I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord." Husbands and wives must be faithful to one another. Faithfulness includes being righteous but it involves much more. It demands that

each partner fulfil his or her responsibilities to the other. A husband may never become involved with another woman, but he can be unfaithful in other ways. Over and over God has proven His faithfulness as a Husband. For example, when God told Sarah that in spite of her old age and physical condition she would have a child, “she judged Him faithful who had promised” (Heb. 11.11).

Thus, we can be assured that God will be faithful to us. He is faithful not to allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able but to make a way of escape that we may be able to bear the temptation(n 1 Cor. 10.13). And even when we sin, if we confess our sins, He is faithful to forgive us (1 Jn. 1.9). Given His “track record,” there can be no doubt about the faithfulness of God. The real question, then, is will we be faithful to Him? “Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Rev. 2.10).

## **Conclusion**

No, the Old Testament is not God's law for us, but there is so much that we can learn about God, His nature, and His love for mankind from the Old Testament, including the prophets. Hosea reminded Israel, and he reminds us, that no matter how far we may stray away from God, the Lord still loves us and wants us to come back to Him so that He might save us from punishment for our sins. And if we truly repent and turn to Him, He will forgive and accept us. What a wonderful God who sent His only Son to seek and save the lost! What a privilege and a pleasure it should be for us to worship and serve Him!

## **Listening & Living: A Vital Connection**

### **James 1:19-27**

Warren E. Berkley

*So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

*Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*

*If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. (Jas. 1:19-27)*

When I read a paragraph in the Bible, once I'm convinced I have a united section or complete thought, it helps me to observe **how it begins and how it ends**. Once I find the beginning and end, I can go back to trace the movement from start to finish. That process pays rich dividends in learning.

With James 1:19-27 it is easy to do this. **It begins with listening and ends with living**. "Let every man be swift to hear," or "quick to listen," (NIV). As you move toward verse 27, **listening moves toward living**: "be doers of the word," (22), and "what kind of man," (24), etc.

In the attention we give to the Bible, if we don't get this we miss the whole point! If we listen and learn, but never live what the Bible teaches, we fail. The whole point of having a Bible class – for example – is to listen with such a good heart, you leave the class prepared to live better. Listening that falls short of practical living is incomplete.

Typical human behavior is the perpetuation of a careless pattern of living: *we don't listen, we talk too much and we get mad too easy and we make little progress*. And it may be, we read the Bible, attend Bible classes and listen to Bible preaching – but never get it all connected in daily life. James wants us to see the vital connection between listening and living. Consider what emerges from the text.

(1) **In order to listen, you'll have to be quiet**. Our elementary school teachers admonished us, "You cannot talk and listen at the same time," and they were right. Try it. It is very hard to listen efficiently while you are talking. Could this be one reason why the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians (in 1 Cor. 14:22-40), about only one speaker at a time? Have you ever observed in television interviews and debates, when several speak at the same time, no information gets through that mumbled

barrier. In order to listen to what God is telling us in His Word (whether we are reading or listening to biblical instruction), we must be quiet. One of the ringing phrases from the Old Testament is, “Let all the earth be silent before Him...”

(2) **Certain emotions can get in the way of good listening**, “for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” There is a mature objectivity we must bring to the task of listening. For example, if we are emotionally sensitive to certain subjects, we need to deliberately set those emotions out of the way when listening to God’s Word. If we are defensive, sensitive, or in a reactive mood, those feelings can stand in the way of good listening. Talking, getting mad, impulsive self-defense and a debating mode can all keep us from good listening and learning.

(3) **Good listening and learning is enhanced by good intentions**. One who intends to “lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness,” and become a “doer” is prepared to listen and learn. Every time we open the Bible, sit at the feet of a faithful teacher or listen to a gospel preacher, foremost in our mind there should be a basic desire to give up sin and actively embrace what is right. That expectation of mind (I want to learn and change and do better) is vital to wise living and eternal hope.

(4) **There is a difference between learning and living**. First, we must listen and learn what God wants us to know. But as we are listening and learning, we must be translating that knowledge into practice (living). James begins this passage with a call to listen. It ends with a call to live out daily, pure and undefiled religion.

Listening and living. Does that resonate with you?

## **“God Is Light”**

### **1 John 1:5-10**

Hal Hammonds

The difference between *being* light and *being in* light is so basic that we probably don’t think about it too much. After all, no matter how bright the sun may be on a given day, and no matter how much time we spend in it, we never really think of ourselves as actually shining. True, we are illuminated because of our relationship

with the light, but that is a comment on the light source, not the lighted object.

John writes to us, *“God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all”* (1 John 1:5). Light, of course, being a Biblical metaphor for righteousness, we learn here that God is goodness and holiness incarnate. His spiritual status is not a result of a certain behavior pattern; in fact, it is the other way around — He engages in righteous behavior because of who He is, as a reflection of His nature. He cannot choose to sin any more than you or I can choose to breathe water.

Christians are God’s spiritual children, and therefore partakers of His nature. (2 Peter 1:4). Of course, that does not mean that we become completely separated from sin, as He is. However, it does mean that we learn how to “walk in the light as He Himself is in the light” (1 John 1:6). We choose a pattern of behavior that mimics His nature; as He is always “in the light”, we strive to walk in that same light.

Choosing this walk carries with it two very important benefits, as John describes in verse 7. First, he says this walk puts us in a relationship with others who have chosen the same walk. This relationship is what he calls “fellowship”. Despite the carnalization of the concept, the true meaning of fellowship is evident. It depicts a sharing, a cooperation, a communion — and as with other passages that discuss the subject, this “fellowship” is of a purely spiritual nature, with no reference to purely social interaction and certainly no references to “fellowship halls”. True fellowship is the spiritual connection we share with all believers who have chosen to walk with Christ as we have. And not only does it bind us together with brethren of our own local body, but it also connects us to all the saints of all the ages, including the apostles and even our Lord Himself (1 John 1:3).

But it also brings a second benefit — “the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” (v.7). This may seem incongruous at first — after all, John has just told us in the same verse that we are to “walk in the light”, and now he is telling us about provisions that have been made for when we sin. But our “walk in light” depicts a general pattern of behavior, not every single isolated step of that walk. I may be going to Houston and yet take some steps (detours, errors in judgment, etc.) that do not necessarily further the greater goal; but when I keep the goal in mind, I make necessary course corrections along the way and remain generally focused on my final destination.

Likewise, our “walk in light” will be marred by occasional steps in darkness; in fact, John writes in verse 8, *“If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.”* Although God does not excuse our sin, He does anticipate it and account for it. We are told in verse 9, *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* God is righteous when He forgives in that He has atoned for sin with the death of His Son; the price that must be paid for sin (Romans 6:33) has been paid (Hebrews 9:22-26). And He is faithful in that He fulfils His promise to us that we will be saved when we call upon Jesus’ name (Romans 10:13); no amount of sin on our part can interfere with that as long as we continue to repent and confess.

But there is a difference between a sinless state and a forgiven state. We must not make the mistake of assuming that, since God has promised to forgive our sins, then sin is not a problem in our lives. Many people, content in a perceived relationship with God, live their lives in total abandon, oblivious to any violation of God’s will for their lives. He writes in verse 10, *“If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”* We can become so self-sufficient in our righteousness that we forget how much we need Jesus. But to refuse to turn to Him for continued forgiveness is to say we have no further need of Him in our lives. He tells us exactly the opposite. If we have truly accepted Jesus as our Savior, we have done so by taking His word into our hearts and accepting it as the agent of our salvation (James 1:21). We must be prepared on an ongoing basis to use it to make necessary “course corrections” and keep us in His light — or as the case may be, get us out of Satan’s darkness as quickly as possible.

## **Silas ... Our Faithful Brother**

### **Topical Article**

**By Jon W. Quinn**

Silas is one of the faithful men who made it his life's purpose to serve the Lord by being a companion of Paul and sharing with him the experience of evangelizing the first century world. He well understood the importance of spiritual matters. He obeyed and served after the pattern of the prophets of the Old Testament, often suffering imprisonment, shipwreck, and persecutions. He meant a lot to the efforts put forth by disciples of the first century. His life made an impact.

## **Early Mention**

Though we know Silas best for being Paul's companion that is not how we are first introduced to him. First, we find him as a messenger for the church at Jerusalem, especially the apostles and elders there. We read: "Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas -- Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren," (Acts 15:22).

He and Barsabbas were described as leading men of the church at Jerusalem. They were chosen to take the message to churches in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia which was of particular concern to the new Gentile converts. Some had been requiring them to keep portions of the Law of Moses. This was condemned as words that lacked the proper source of authority: "Since we have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you with their words, unsettling your souls," (Acts 15:24).

The brethren in Antioch were assured and encouraged, and Silas joined Barsabbas (also known as Judas) in instructing the brethren as teachers and as prophets (Acts 15:32-35). Silas remained on at Antioch as Barsabbas returned to Jerusalem. Also working at Antioch about this time was Paul and Barnabas, having returned from the first missionary journey. It is evidently here that Paul comes to know and appreciate Silas as a disciple and worker for Christ.

## **Paul Chooses Silas as a Companion**

When Paul and Barnabas disagreed over taking John Mark with them on the second missionary journey, Barnabas and Paul split up. Barnabas took John Mark with him to spread the gospel in Cyprus while Paul took Silas with him to Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:37-41). Here, Paul met another young disciple who also joined the group. That young disciple's name was "Timothy".

## **Paul and Silas to Europe**

Instructed by the Lord to take the gospel from Asia Minor to Europe, Paul and Silas cross the sea and arrive at Phillipi. Lydia became the first of Paul's converts in Europe. He and Silas stayed with Lydia in Phillipi where Silas was arrested along with Paul (Acts 16:11-40). This resulted in the conversion of the Philippian Jailer and his family.

Silas went with Paul to Thessalonica where there was trouble with the envious Jews (Acts 17:1-9). There was such danger from the threats of the enemies of the cross that they were sent away by night to Berea. When the Jews followed them to stir up trouble, Silas and Timothy stayed while Paul went on to Athens (Acts 17:10-15). Silas and Timothy later caught up with Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5).

### **Silvanus or Silas: Same Man; Same Noble Endeavor**

Silas continued to serve the Lord and the apostles. It is important to note that he is also called "Silvanus." We find him preaching at Corinth (2 Corinthians 1:19) and also assisting Peter in the writing of his first epistle (1 Peter 5:12).

Silas evidently considered that teaching others the gospel was a great privilege. There's nothing you can do for a person that is more worthwhile than to tell them of Jesus. Note this passage: "...for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia." (1 Thessalonians 1:5-7). The "we" and "our" and "us" of these verses refer to Paul, Silas (Silvanus) and Timothy (see vs. 1).

It is the preaching and teaching of the same apostolic doctrine will result in numerical and spiritual growth, for it is the seed of spiritual growth. As Paul and Silas were revisiting the churches that had been established during his first journey, the Bible says this is what they were doing, and a maturing process was taking place as a result. "Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe. So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily." (Acts 16:4-5).

This is the proper diet for the church; not the religious creeds of men, not the philosophical fads of men, but the doctrine of Christ to the glory of God as delivered from God through those ordained as His apostles.

### **Conclusion**

Something Silas understood was that he owed a great debt to Jesus. He could never pay him back, but he could devote his life to Him. Faith means to trust and obey. Make no mistake, we will be judged for the things we have done (Matthew 16:27). By God's grace, the bad can be taken away so that we may stand before the Judge as guiltless men and women.

God's promises are true. Silas (Silvanus) knew this. His message as well as his example included the idea of complete assurance in the promises of God. God's promises are always "yes" - that is, they will always be kept by Him. But as God is faithful, our word to you is not yes and no. For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us -- by me and Silvanus and Timothy -- was not yes and no, but is yes in Him. For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. (2 Corinthians 1:18-20). May we have this same confidence, and may it perform the work in us that it did in Silas.

## **Plan of Salvation**

**By Jon W. Quinn**

### Plan #1

Announced by the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to new believers in Christ who asked what they must do:

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ -- this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:36-38).

### Plan #2

On the back page of a tract, sinner were urged to pray this prayer to be saved. This prayer is not found in the Bible; nor were alien sinners commanded to pray for their forgiveness.

The Sinner's Prayer: "O' Lord, I accept that I am a sinner and that Jesus died for my sins. I now accept Him into my heart as Lord and Savior asking for your mercy and forgiveness in His name. Amen."

The editors of Expository Files are happy with plan #1 and thankful to the God of all grace for it. We cannot recommend Plan #2 at all, but will change our minds when this prayer can be shown to us in the Bible.

Final Page:

## **Punishing The Wrong People: “Not Good”**

*Warren E. Berkeley*

*“To impose a fine on a righteous man is not good, nor to strike the noble for their uprightness.” Prov. 17:26*

**There is a sense of justice or fairness we develop from an early age.** I see this when my grandchildren stay with us. We recently had seven spending several nights at our house. It is an exercise in little-people management I am ill-qualified for and can only endure a few days. But I always learn something if I pay attention. All of these little children (one with particular vigor) have an inner sense of fairness that causes them to sound off when they believe the adults have not dealt fairly. Usually, this signal goes off when the spokesman for justice believes he or she has been treated unfairly, or is not getting exactly what the others are getting (almost to the point of measuring and weighing the pancakes!). While this sense of justice is not fully developed at these ages, it is unwise for adults to dismiss it. In fact, we want our children to learn fairness and we entertain the highest hope, it will develop in a direction that is virtuous, unselfish and godly.

Throughout the Bible fairness, equality or justice is upheld. There is no guarantee that everybody on the earth will be treated equally, but the ideal is upheld and we are called to be people who encourage and promote justice to the best of our ability.

Terrible inequities are reported in the Bible, but never celebrated. God is perfectly fair, and He expects His people to think, speak and act from a heart that respects Him and seeks to be like Him.

**To take this sense of justice into your personal practice:** (1) before you react negatively to someone (spouse, child, parent, neighbor, friend, etc.) be certain there is evidence that requires the negative reaction. “Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding,” (Prov. 17:27).

And remember, “if one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame,” (Prov. 18:13).

(2) Get in the habit of praising good behavior; this will help you conquer any spirit of being impulsively or overly critical (quick on the draw). Love “rejoices in the truth,” and clings to what is good (1 Cor. 13:6, Rom. 12:9). Where praise is deserved, do not hold back or remain silent. Generous encouragement sincerely given to good people will help them maintain their goodness, and will nurture your spirit against the harsh, critical, negative thoughts that accomplish nothing.

Part of our character development must be that in finding the knowledge of God, we also “understand righteousness and justice, equity and every good path,” (Prov. 2:9). To punish good people is wrong. Let’s pray and study to avoid that.