

# Expository Files 18.7

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*Kindle Edition Soon To Follow*

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**Front Page 18.7**  
**Do Not Hold Back**  
**By Jon W. Quinn**

Isa 43:5-7

<sup>5</sup> *"Do not fear, for I am with you;  
I will bring your offspring from the east,  
And gather you from the west.*  
<sup>6</sup> *"I will say to the north, 'Give them up!'  
And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.'  
Bring My sons from afar  
And My daughters from the ends of the earth,  
<sup>7</sup> *Everyone who is called by My name,  
And whom I have created for My glory,  
Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."**

Israel had fallen. In another century, Judah would as well. Both would be in captivity. From Judah's fall, it would be another 70 years until God called His children to come back home.

Though that time was yet almost two centuries in the future, Isaiah writes of the anticipation of the Lord to receive back His sons and daughters. When that time comes, the Lord says, Do not hold back!"

"Do not hold (them) back" "Them" is actually supplied by the translator. It changes the meaning slightly. Either way: consider:

If "them" is correct: Then this admonition is to the world: Do not inhibit or discourage those who hear and decide to respond to the Lord. Don't hold them back.

If without the "them" is correct: To the sons and daughters: "Come on home. Do not hesitate. Do not hold back. It is the right thing to do. The Father is waiting for you."

So which is it? Either way it is a powerful admonition and certainly both are valid concepts. I prefer to go with what the translators decided, but either way, it is something worth thinking about!

**With the King on His Throne**  
**“...to the one that overcomes”**  
**(Revelation 3:21)**  
**By Jon W. Quinn**

*“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne,  
as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”*  
(Revelation 3:21)

When it comes to pleasing God with our lives, those who failed did so for a reason. Those that succeeded did so for a reason. Success or failure do not happen in a vacuum. Neither “just happens.” The problems are often caused by a lack of dedication or love as some try to simply do as little as possible. Others simply put off needful changes or obligations. Sometimes it is a matter of ego. Some have failed because they have allowed themselves to be deceived by others into believing something false. Some have simply not taken the time to prepare for a successful life of true faith.

We have seen some things promised to those who overcome in Christ. First, we looked at the promise of Jesus to allow those who overcome access to the “tree of life” in the paradise of God and some of the things that entailed. Then we considered that overcoming in Christ grants unto us the security of knowing we will not be hurt by the second death. Then we saw the promise of “hidden manna” and “a white stone”. Since these are somewhat cryptic messages, we looked into the meaning behind them to the people who directly received the promise from the Lord... that He would sustain them and vindicate them in the midst of a world that was at that time treating them harshly. Then we saw that those who overcome are

promised “authority over the nations” and “the morning star”. And finally, “white garments” and that their “names would not be erased from the book of life” and that Jesus would “confess his/her name to the Father.” Last time we noticed the promise to those that overcome that they would have a permanent place in God's dwelling place and that they would receive His name; the name of the eternal city, and the name of the Son. Upon investigating all these, we saw what important things they pictured.

We will now look at the seventh and final of seven such statements. Before you is a vision, not a dream. It is a vision of eternal victory, even out of a conflagration of earthly hardship, persecution, sorrow and loss. The enemies of the cross would fall, and the faithful overcomer would endure forever.

### **Jesus Overcame First**

Jesus said, “Just as I overcame...” We have good reason to have confidence in Jesus' promises about overcoming. He's been there and done that. He overcame temptation (Hebrews 3:14-16). Jesus has sat on His Father's throne and it is a “throne of grace”.

Jesus also overcame Satan's devices; even the “good” ones. Sometimes these are the most difficult to overcome. Satan, for example, used Peter's sense of justice and his love for Jesus against him seeking to distract Jesus from His mission and purpose! (Matthew 16:23).

And finally, Jesus overcame death (Luke 24:5,6; Acts 2:23,24).

The victory of Christ was prophesied. He would receive dominion over an eternal, spiritual kingdom. This has now been

fulfilled. Jesus is King! (Daniel 7:13,14). This is where He is now, reigning, interceding, advocating in our behalf. He is watching, providing and strengthening. He is the Lord. He is king, ruling in the hearts of His disciples from His heavenly throne, the spiritual throne of David in the spiritual city of Jerusalem.

We read in the Scriptures of Jesus' rule and throne as a present reality, not something to begin in the future. We read of His rule (1 Corinthians 15:24-26; Ephesians 1:22); of His throne (Revelation 3:21; Acts 2:30-32; Hebrews 1:3,8); and of His Kingdom (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9; 5:10). As a result of Jesus' overcoming, He is seated on the throne of God, next to the Father with His eternal glory restored. He invites us to overcome through Him and join Him there! (Hebrews 12:1-3). His kingdom exists now, and when He comes again, He will take it home.

### **Jesus is On The Throne**

Jesus was faithful even to the point of death (John 12:27,28). He was diligent and committed. (John 4:34). He humbled Himself so that He could achieve His purpose in God's plan; putting God's will before His own. Therefore God exalted Him (Philippians 2:5-11).

Sometimes its disheartening to see the evils which plague the world. Satan often seems so powerful and pervasive. Do not be despondent or hopeless even when the times seem dark. It seemed that way when these words in Revelation were written too. We are assured that victory belongs to our king (Revelation 17:14).

We honor the king by submitting to Him (1 Timothy 6:13-16). There is no other way to honor the Lord than to do with diligence what He bids us do (Luke 6:46).

## **Jesus Invites Us To Join Him**

Our exaltation will come after we have trusted the Lord. He is at the door inviting you to come join Him on the throne (Revelation 3:20). "What do you need? A personal invitation?" OK... now you have one!

The church at Laodecia had serious issues (Revelation 3:15-18). These included a lack of zeal and deadness. Physically everything was OK but spiritually they were starving. Listen! The status quo is not enough! These brethren were in danger of failing to overcome because of what they were not doing... they were indifferent about the work of the Lord... too busy... Remember how committed to His Father's work Jesus was? See how different these people are? Are you following in the footsteps of Jesus or the Laodeceans?

We saw in Phil. 2 that Jesus humbled Himself so that He could achieve His purpose in God's plan; putting God's will before even His own. Therefore God exalted Him. Do you have that kind of humility before God?

Overcoming by faith means being steadfast, diligent and dedicated. Faithful Christians today live in hope.. It is to those who overcome that Jesus promises eternal victory!

## Jerusalem the Woman (Ezekiel 16) Ethan R. Longhenry

The Old Testament is filled with all sorts of evocative images and metaphors, but few are as gripping, comprehensive, telling, and as utterly inappropriate for a younger audience than the description of Jerusalem as woman in Ezekiel 16:1-63. The imagery, while appalling, is rather easily understood; some of the aspects to its meaning, however, pose some challenges. Nevertheless, rarely do we find a more emotional, bitter, and yet comprehensive description of what happened between God and His people in Judah.

Our text begins with the word of YHWH coming to Ezekiel– he is to make known to Jerusalem her abominations (Ezekiel 16:1-2). Even though it is most likely that the inhabitants of Jerusalem are also under discussion, in order to maintain the consistency of the metaphorical image, we will first describe the text just as Ezekiel does– in terms of Jerusalem the city herself.

The description of Jerusalem is not like we have ever seen before. Jerusalem is described as being a girl who was born in Canaan to an Amorite father and Hittite mother who apparently abandoned her at birth– she is kicking in her blood, with umbilical cord uncut, blood and other secretions unwashed, naked and exposed (Ezekiel 16:3-4). There was none to have compassion on Jerusalem; she was abhorred (Ezekiel 16:5). God is then described as passing by, seeing Jerusalem in her blood, commanding her to live, and on account of God’s care, Jerusalem was able to grow into (sexual) maturity, although she remained naked and unadorned (Ezekiel 16:5-7).

God then passes by her later when she had matured to the age of love, and He then covers her with His garment, making a covenant with her, and she became His (Ezekiel 16:8). He then cleans her up, adorns her with clothing and jewelry, and provides her with sustenance (Ezekiel 16:9-13). Her great beauty was made known to all the nations, and the Source of her beauty was God (Ezekiel 16:14).

Sadly, the woman Jerusalem begins to trust in her beauty, and she begins to play the whore (Ezekiel 16:15). She took the things YHWH gave her– the garments, the ornaments, the food– and made shrines and idols and offerings to those idols from them (Ezekiel 16:16-19). The children born to woman Jerusalem she burned in the fire, and in all of these things she did not remember when she was born, wallowing in her blood (Ezekiel 16:20-22).

She persists in her whoredom, making chambers and high places everywhere, offering herself to the Egyptians, for which she was punished at the hands of the Philistines, embarrassed at her behavior (Ezekiel 16:23-27). She increased her whoredom by going after Assyria and Babylonia in turn (Ezekiel 16:28-29).

God declares how lustful her heart is, seeing that she persistently acts like a brazen whore (Ezekiel 16:30). Yet she is not your average whore, because whores at least get paid for their services– woman Jerusalem commits whoredom and pays for the “privilege” of committing adultery, not receiving payment (Ezekiel 16:31-34)!

God has had enough of this whoredom and infidelity. He is going to gather all Jerusalem’s lovers to suffer the same fate as Jerusalem at the hand of their enemies (Ezekiel 16:35-37). He will pronounce upon

Jerusalem the sentence of an adulteress and a murderess: she will be publicly exposed and humiliated; everything God had given her will be taken away and will belong to another, and just as at the beginning, Jerusalem will again be naked and exposed (Ezekiel 16:38-43).

God now turns to how Jerusalem has acted like her mother and sisters— her mother and sisters loathed their husbands (Ezekiel 16:44-45). Her mother is the Hittite, her elder sister is Samaria, and her younger sister is Sodom (Ezekiel 16:46). Jerusalem walked in the way of her sisters but became even more corrupt than they, so corrupt that Samaria and Sodom seem righteous in comparison (Ezekiel 16:47-52). God intends to restore the fortunes of all three, but just as Sodom was a byword and a reproach, so Jerusalem will be to those around her who despise her (Ezekiel 16:53-58).

Therefore God will deal with Jerusalem just as He dealt with previous covenant breakers Samaria and Sodom, but He will remember His covenant with them afterward (Ezekiel 16:59-60). Jerusalem will receive her sisters as daughters, but not because of the covenant God is making with her (Ezekiel 16:61). This covenant will only take place after Jerusalem comes to understand how shameful her conduct was, and then God will forgive her, and she will know that He is YHWH (Ezekiel 16:62-63).

What does all of this mean? The metaphor of Jerusalem as woman is put rather crudely at times, with God presenting vulgarity quite intentionally to make His point. God is describing His experience as the “husband” of Jerusalem, and what Jerusalem as His “wife” has done against Him, and thus why He will be punishing her so severely. The metaphor of spiritual covenant as marriage is seen throughout the Prophets because it is so parallel— the only other covenant that involves a similar understanding of devotion and intimacy as God

and Israel is between a man and his wife. The adultery and whoredom that takes place represents the idolatry and condemned practices surrounding that idolatry that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were doing during this period— that metaphor often breaks down throughout the narrative (e.g. Ezekiel 16:15-29), but the image makes sense— just as committing adultery or being a prostitute violates the marriage covenant, so serving other gods and lavishing offerings and service upon them violates Israel’s covenant with YHWH (cf. Exodus 20:3-6).

It makes sense to see the city Jerusalem as the woman throughout the metaphor. The woman lives for many years before YHWH takes her as His own (Ezekiel 16:1-8); Jerusalem only became an Israelite city with the Temple of YHWH in it in the tenth century BCE (cf. 2 Samuel 5:6-10, 1 Kings 5:1-9:9). YHWH visits the woman Jerusalem in-between her birth and “the time of love”; Melchizedek is priest of God Most High in Salem in Genesis 14:17-20, and perhaps that is what Ezekiel is referencing. Jerusalem is later compared with Samaria and Sodom, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the infamous city of Genesis, respectively. Israel cannot be under discussion since the woman Jerusalem is seen as the elder sister of Sodom (Ezekiel 16:46), and Sodom was destroyed in the days of Abraham (Genesis 18-19). It is more challenging to see how Samaria is reckoned as the older sister, considering that the city proper is built in the days of Omri (1 Kings 16:24), long after Jerusalem and Sodom were established, unless Ezekiel is either aware of an older city on that site of which we are unaware, or he is speaking in terms of prominence or power. Those two cities and the sins that took place within them were well-known to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the prospect of making them seem righteous in comparison was no doubt

intended to really hammer home to the inhabitants of Jerusalem just how sinful they had become!

The sins are committed by the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the infrastructure of a city cannot commit sin. Most of the description of whorings and adultery involve idolatry, as previously noted. YHWH's Temple was in Jerusalem, and so He has a special attachment to that city and its inhabitants, and yet they have taken all the things that He has provided them and lavished them instead on serving other gods (cf. *etiam* Hosea 2:5-9). Yet that is not the only sin that the inhabitants of Jerusalem have committed— they have also put their trust in political confederacies with Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon in turn, perhaps also “borrowing” their gods and religious services, and God has also called all such things whoring (Ezekiel 16:26-29; cf. 2 Kings 16:5-9, Isaiah 30:1-5, 39:1-8). God takes special offense at the inhabitants of Jerusalem offering their sons and daughters in the fire to Molech (Ezekiel 16:20-21, 36; cf. Jeremiah 7:30-31).

The sins described and the condemnation decreed because of them are not somehow unique to Ezekiel 16; they represent the consistent message of all of the prophets of that time. It is the description of Jerusalem as the abandoned child, dependent on YHWH, yet ultimately being the whore who must be condemned that is quite evocative and powerful. It is hard to get past the vulgarity that so easily offends modern sensibilities; nevertheless, sometimes it is the vulgar that makes the point and communicates the message in ways which the sensible and rational cannot. The raw emotion displayed throughout the description of the metaphor is haunting. In Ezekiel 16 we come face to face with the very hurt yet ultimately forgiving Husband, along with the wife who owes everything to Him but is more interested in everyone else until it is too late.

Let us learn a lesson from the whore Jerusalem: let us not serve idols but serve the One True God who has provided us with every blessing!

## **“Return To The Lord”**

**Joel 2:13**

**Warren E. Berkley**

Built in to the message of the prophets was the appeal to repent. These men were sent by God to expose sin and urge the guilty to repent. Often the appeal was framed as a challenge to return to the Lord (Isa. 6:10 ; Jer. 3:1; Jos. 6:1; Mal. 3:7). For instance, Joel’s appeal to Judah was for the people to repent of their sins. “So rend your heart,” and “return to the Lord your God.”

Through the distribution of His judgments (locusts, drought, desolation), God intended to admonish His people to come out of their sin and back to Him. It was His loving purpose to prompt a change in their direction.

The essential definition of repentance has not changed through the dispensations. We can, therefore, use Joel’s statement as the basis for our understanding of returning to the Lord. And this study can find application for those who have been baptized but have left their God.

**Repentance is a change in direction.** The simple word “turn” shows that to be so. Those guilty of sin (before or after baptism) need to turn; a change of direction is needed. If you’ve been letting the world influence your thinking, your speech, your conduct, your dress or attitude, you need to change your direction. If you’ve abandoned the assembly, harbored ill-will in your heart, accepted false teaching, helped false teaching advance, participated in party strife or refused to grow, God seeks a change in your direction. Repentance is a change in your direction, turning from your sin to the Lord (1 Thess. 1:9-10).

**Repentance occurs in the heart.** Observe in verse 12 of Joel 2 , “with all your heart.” Everything we do before God ought to be done with a whole heart. Repentance, to be complete and genuine, must come from a whole heart: a heart of reverence for God, love for God; a heart influenced by the cross of Christ. Repentance should be the product of a heart of mature responsibility toward everything that is holy and right. The conviction of sin from the Word should be let in, so that repentance finds its true and good expression.

**Repentance is not just a ritual.** “So rend your heart, and not your garments...” It was customary among the Jews to express their emotions in very public, visible ways. To this day in middle eastern cultures, when a family member dies, there may be public weeping and wailing; throwing dust in the air; beating the breast and the rendering of garments. The problem to be noted here is, the emotion must not be ritualized and confused with true repentance. The fact that someone may cry in public or come down an aisle doesn’t assure wholehearted repentance. Repentance is a personal decision to leave sin behind and come to God. It is a decision of heart, productive of good fruit. It may be accompanied by some open expression, but the essence of the matter lies in the heart and the results in life.

**Repentance is made possible by a gracious God.** “Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love...” If you are alive to hear the Word, be convicted and repent, thank God that you have such a blessed opportunity. Thank Him for the precious blood of Christ. “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.” If you are alive today, you can repent. Thank God for

the time He has given you to return to Him, but don't presume upon His grace and providence. "He relents from doing harm," but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. Repent while there is time.

If you are reading this as one convicted of your sin, now is the time to repent. If you just plan to repent someday, that isn't good enough. Ask God to relent, turn from your sin and enjoy peace with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Put to the Test**  
**Psalm 139:23, 24**  
**By Steven C. Harper**

In the Psalms, we see the heart of the psalmist and what is his main priority in life. We see the one who was called a man after God's own heart and who was said to have "done what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except" in one matter (1st Kings 15:5). In just these two verses, we again are able to look into the heart of the psalmist and see a man who desires more than anything to stand approved in the sight of God.

I believe it would be beneficial for us to look at the request of the psalmist and why it would be just as beneficial for us to do the same. Knowing the heart of this man, we know of his sincere desire to be pleasing in God's sight, so he stands as an example for us. Let us now consider the need for the Lord to search us, try us, reveal any wicked ways in us, and to lead us in the right way. When this is done, I am confident we will be a better person and servant.

"Search me." (v. 23) The psalmist here is asking God to, in the most literal meaning, examine him closely. As one who desired to be pleasing to God in all ways and at all times, he did not try to hide from God, for he said earlier in the psalm (vv. 7-12) that it was not possible. Furthermore, he did not want to hide from Him; he wanted God to find out who he was. He wanted God to know his heart.

I believe he also asked God to do this because he truly sought to be approved of God. David was a man of whom it was said was "a man

after God's own heart." This being true, we may know that he was one who wanted to be like God in having a pure heart. He was willing to have God search him and discover even the things that were unpleasant and unrighteous — not to simply know about himself, but that he might remove those things and stand approved in God's sight (cf. Psa. 19:12).

"Try me." (v. 23) The psalmist here is asking God to, in the most literal meaning, prove him — or put him to the test [like metals]. As it is used here, David is asking God to try him and refine him — to do what must be done to ensure he is pure. The basest of metals needs refinement, and even the most precious metals are made more valuable through the fire. Faith, like gold, is more precious when tried by fire. Further, the request of the psalmist is that He would know his anxieties. [This is the better translation, as the original Hebrew means disquieting thoughts.]

In the request that God know his anxieties was a desire that they be known to God that he might be comforted. Once our fears are known, we may find a way to overcome those fears and conquer that which may hinder us from doing more. He went to the One who would know what fears he had and could give him comfort.

"Reveal me." (v. 24) The request of the psalmist here that God would see if there was any wickedness in him. But, in the literal translation, what we see is that he is asking God to see if there is any hurtful way in him. Was there something he did that was harmful, especially to God? In this word's most literal meaning, it was the act of setting up an idol in the place of God, and the resulting feeling of rejection that God felt when this was done.

As he had petitioned in another psalm, David desired that he be cleansed from secret faults (Psa. 19:12). Here, he requests that God might look into his life and reveal those hidden sins and hurtful ways that they might be removed. But he also wanted to see himself honestly. When you know yourself, you know both your strengths and your weaknesses, and will be able to improve on both. Failing to know our own weaknesses will leave us vulnerable to those trials and temptations in those areas.

“Lead me.” (v. 24) The psalmist now gets to the heart of his desire in that he desires to be led by the Lord. He knows and he understands that if he wants to walk in the paths of righteousness, it is only by following the way of the Lord that it could be done. This way is not just any way, it is “the way everlasting.”

Again, this is requested because he understood his own inability and limitations. The psalmist understood that if that was his desire, he needed to go to the originator of the promise, the giver of life, the source of salvation. Who better to ask than the One who provides that which we desire? When we seek to establish our own ways, we will always fall short and will never please Him. Without Him, we are without the light of knowledge and we will be truly lost (cf. John 12:35).

I believe we would do well to follow the pattern of the psalmist and have such a desire to be Put To The Test. Would we want our real self to be known — to the Lord? In reality, He already knows. The real question is: Do we want to know who we really are? The disciple who wants to grow will have such a desire, facing his shortcomings and imperfections — not to wallow in self-pity or to be embarrassed

before the world, but to know himself that he may become better and more acceptable in the sight of His Lord. Let us have such a desire.

## Successfully Investigating the Word of God "Do you understand what you are reading?"

By Jon W. Quinn

*28 and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah.*

*29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot."*

*30 Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"*

*31 And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. (Acts 8:28-31)*

Well, the treasurer was riding in his chariot investigating the words written by the prophet Isaiah some seven hundred years before. He was a nobleman and so probably had his own driver, so we won't talk of the dangers of text messaging while driving just now and press on toward other points.

There was no New Testament at this very early time in the church's history. Those messages would be written down as the Holy Spirit directed in the next several decades and then compiled into the book we know as the New Testament. With what we know from these writings, we can fairly easily see that it is Jesus of whom Isaiah had prophesied in the passage the treasurer was reading (Isaiah 53:7-8). Specifically, Isaiah spoke in detail about the atoning death that Jesus would one day die to secure our salvation from sins. That day had come and passed, but without the writings of the New Testament the treasurer had no way of knowing this unless and until someone told him.

You and I do not have that problem. The writings of the covenant of Jesus Christ have now been written so we have access to information that the Ethiopian treasurer did not have.

But we still need to seriously investigate the written message to know the things God means for us to know. The New Testament, along with the Old, tell us of the beginning; of man and his nature, of history and future, of salvation and hope for those who live by faith in Christ. It tells us of our eternal destiny-everlasting life or everlasting nightmare, and how we may have the former instead of the latter. We need to know this book!

### Investigating Materials

The Bible The first item in our investigator's briefcase is the Bible itself. It is first in every way. It must not be left out, or even treated as something less than the single most important and necessary item out of all the tools we may employ.

Realize that God is communicating with you and me through this Book. Carefully read the text itself. People say all kinds of things about the Bible based on hearsay and tradition that are totally inaccurate, and not just “relatively unimportant” misstatements such as the claim that the Bible says Eve ate the apple or that there were three wisemen or that money is the root of all evil. The Bible says none of these things, and there is plenty more where these came from.

Probably the simplest approach would be to ask three questions about the text that you have personally read yourself:

1. What does God say? (the text).
2. What does this mean? (God's meaning).

### 3. How is it suppose to affect me? (application).

Correct Attitude Right up there in second place in importance is our attitude toward the message itself.

We need to recognize and humbly accept the authority of God as expressed in His holy word. Though there are several, a good passage to consider in this is the writings of John who made the following observation concerning the words of the apostles and prophets, selected and sent forth by Jesus Himself and inspired by the Holy Spirit: "We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." (1 John 4:6).

This reverent attitude toward the Scriptures needs to be partnered with openhearted receptiveness, will and commitment, a desire for exactness and a dissatisfaction with guesswork and assumptions. And finally, a willingness to work at it. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15).

Writing Tools - Whether scratch paper to write down thoughts and notes or better quality paper upon which to make permanent notes, every student knows that the things he or she writes down is easier recollected in the future. Writing some of the things learned down for future reference just makes good sense. Over a lifetime, one will accumulate lots of personal notes and insights due to such efforts, and it will be easier to build on this foundation in future studies. For example, if one studies the second coming today, and then does so again five years from now, why start all over? Good notes from the

previous study will help immensely to go further and deeper the second time around.

Outside helps This would be good reference materials. Some of these are more helpful than others, and probably a good concordance would be the most helpful of all. Other reference books such as word studies, Greek-English dictionaries and a good Bible encyclopedia and/or handbook would also be very helpful. Commentaries and the notes of others might also be helpful, depending on how accurate the comments are.

### Other Suggestions

Certainly one should take a hands on positive approach to investigating the Word of God. Prove what is right and then apply it (Romans 12:1,2).

Consider the context. This is the only way to ensure that a proper understanding will be reached.

Consider all the passages on a subject to establish the complete truth about it.

Pray with faith and without any doubting to the Divine Author of Scripture for wisdom and guidance. He will hear you (James 1:5-8). God bless all who seek to better know and serve God through His word!

## **The Plan of Salvation**

**By Jon W. Quinn**

### Plan #1 - God's Plan

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 - Man's Doctrine

On the back page of a tract, sinners 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**

### **Joy In Tribulation**

**By Warren E. Berkley (quoting J.W. McGarvey on Rom. 5)**

*More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. (Romans 5:3-5 ESV)*

"...the joy of the believer is not confined to this expectation of future good; he rejoices also in present [problems], even in tribulation, because tribulation develops in him those elements of character which make him useful here, and prepare him for heaven hereafter; for tribulation teaches him that patience and steadfastness which endures without flinching, and this steadfastness wakens in him a sense of divine approval, and the thought that God approves adds to his hope that he shall obtain the blessings of the future world..." – J.W. McGarvey

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