
◆ THE EDIFIER ◆

Volume 14

CHURCH of GOD 7th DAY - AUSTRALIA

JUNE 2008



Busy?



Almost everyone seems to be busy. Australia seems more like the 'busy country' than the 'lucky country' (as it is called), with so many people working long hours. Both parents usually work. People have little time or energy for one another after work, or are unable to connect with each other because they work different shifts. A recently arrived African immigrant once expressed his amazement to me about all the busyness. Now he is very busy too.

Despite our industriousness, many of us feel however that we are not really getting anywhere. Maybe we can relate to the lamentation of Haggai the prophet who wrote:

"You have sown much, but bring in little, you eat, but do not have enough. You drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages earns wages to put into a bag with holes. Thus says the Lord of hosts consider your ways".

God's work remains

Limited time is a big problem. Most of us are busy and tired.

Yet our Bibles tell us that we must be fruitful in every good work and zealous for good works. We are instructed to grow in knowledge and to be doers of the word and not hearers only. Jesus said that the harvest is plentiful, but the labourers few. When He said these words He looked at the multitudes and had compassion on them as He saw just how weary they were and how they were scattered abroad like sheep having no shepherd. If we look at the multitudes today we will also see many people in great need spiritually and physically, but we are too busy or tired to help.

We know however that if some of our work mates were unable to come to work (so that the labourers were few) then we would have to work longer and harder because of the urgency of the situation. The shortage of labourers for the Lord is also an urgent situation, but Satan has us trapped, bound or ensnared. He's laughing at us and mocking us. Some of us feel frustrated and sorry before the Lord because we know that in our busyness we are barely doing the work of the Lord at a time when greater urgency is required.

It's a bad situation, the gravity of

which I hope we realize. Many Christians don't. Many don't even appreciate that to be a Christian is to be a dedicated servant of the Living God. Many Christians have been going to church for years, but are not servants of God and will not be saved and don't even realize it. Satan has done a really good job because many of us are tied up, doing little for the kingdom of God. That's the bad news. But what can we do about it if our conscience is being pierced? What are our options?

Our options

Firstly, we could do nothing and go on pretending that nothing is wrong. The parables of the sower and talents would however come into play. We would be like the seed sown amongst thorns that was choked by the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches, or we would be like the wicked and lazy servant who buried the one talent he was given and who was cast out.

Secondly, we could forsake all and follow Jesus on faith alone. That's what one tax collector named Levi did. Perhaps God is calling us to turn over a new leaf and to step out in faith as He also called Abram (Abraham) to do.

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uplifting and transforming
peoples lives through the
uncompromised word of God.*

Is there another option you might be hoping because certainly the first is out, and the second one is a very Godly one, but it might just seem too hard or too radical at this time? Is there anything else the busy and tired might do? Maybe God's call for us is to take the second option, but then again, maybe it's not, as we certainly don't see every Christian in the Bible taking up their sandals and knapsacks and following the Lord or the Apostles on their arduous journeys. Many first century Christians lived and worked in one area where they could feed their families, support the local congregation, and provide funds to help other Christians and the work of the Lord. Perhaps you are extremely busy in your occupation and earning a good income. Well the Lord can even use you greatly, as busy as you are, if you are willing to obey and give. Giving financially is a ministry that does not put a drain on our time or energy.

As the scripture says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked. What ever a man sows that he will also reap. He who sows to the flesh will of the flesh reap corruption and he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. Therefore let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith". Not only are many Christians failing in their service to God's kingdom because Satan has them bound being B.U.S.Y (Burdened Under Satan's Yoke), but he has also deceived many of us into not even giving 10% of our income to the Lord's work, let alone giving

generously – something we all at least have time for.

Not every Christian literally took the second option of leaving their jobs and leaving all and following Christ or the Apostles over land and sea. Many stayed in the state they were in when they were called by God. Some were literally slaves when they were called, while others, like many of us today felt like slaves to the circumstances or commitments they found themselves in. One thing, however, they did do in their circumstances (our third option) is something expressed in Colossians 3:22-24 which we can all do today and must do. That is, attempting to glorify God in all that we do. Even while we are busy at work we can work to the glory of God, be a good witness to our co-workers and/or clients and share the gospel with them at opportune times.



There is one final option I want to exhort you to consider though. If you do not feel that you are called to leave all and follow in the same manner as Abram and Levi did, as indeed anyone can in faith, then at least pray and plan to one day be free of your busyness and tiredness brought about by secular concerns. This might seem impossible, but all things are possible with God. God has blessed me personally in this way. I obtained a law degree, but realized that if I did become a

lawyer that I would be too busy and too tired to make as great a contribution to the Lord's work as I wanted. Praise be to God though, because He found me a creative way of using the legal skills I had acquired in a way that was not taxing on my time or energy. I am very thankful to God for providing for all of my needs, as He promises and indeed doing more than I imagined. Now I have a successful business as an author and publisher in the law and I have the flexibility and time to serve the Lord where needed.

Not busy?

A final note for those who may not be busy and who have a lot of free time - you should value such time very highly as it is an extremely valuable thing in this day and age. Learn to appreciate it and to use it wisely. Be like the slave discussed in 1 Corinthians 7:21 who was told to use his freedom for the Lord if such freedom should come his way. Don't be like the carnal Christian who suddenly finds they have plenty of time on their hands and gets bored and feels like a new challenge so they seek that challenge in everything, but the service of the Lord. There are plenty of difficult and exciting challenges in Christian ministry, from overseas missions to evangelism to helping the oppressed, to great works of kindness and generosity, to name but a few. Don't be like the rich man in Jesus' parable either in Luke 12:6 who was very successful, but decided to build bigger barns, take it easy, eat, drink and be merry, but who soon

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Operation Eternal Rescue

Hope for now and the future

The images will remain forever in our memories: the twin towers of the World Trade Center belching smoke and spewing debris, then collapsing; terrified New Yorkers running, their clothes covered in ash; the west side of the Pentagon burning in the nation's capital. We could hardly believe that terrorists had slipped in among us and carried out such a calculated plan of death and destruction.

Bright lights in dark places

The violence displayed on September 11, 2001, smothered us in grief, pain, and shock. Even now we find ourselves juggling a variety of emotions: anger at the terrorists, fear about the future, insecurity over our personal and nation safety. These are dark days.

But despite this darkness, a thousand points of light have been shining from ground zero in New York City. They first beamed from firefighters and

police officers, who staged heroic rescue efforts during the early moments of the attack. These heroes rushed into the burning towers without concern for their own lives. Unfortunately, when the dust settled, many of them lay dead beneath the mountain of rubble. But the light continued to shine out of the darkness as more rescuers arrived on the scene from other parts of the city and from all across the nation.

God and prayer

It is said that more people called on God on that September day than at any single moment in recent history. Restrictions about prayer in public places were suddenly forgotten. At Washington's National Cathedral men and women of renown, including four former presidents, sang "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" and prayed for deliverance and comfort.

As the whole world listened, Billy Graham preached plainly and simply the good news about God's plan of salvation. In the days that followed, news analysts and commentators observed that more people were turning to religion than ever before — if not for faith, for comfort.

But some still regard God with suspicion. Why would a loving God allow the deaths of innocent people? If God is sovereign, why didn't He prevent the terrorists from attacking? What good can He do now as we brace for possible future attacks?

Rescue and rest

Actually, God already has done something. The most dangerous terrorist of all time is Satan. He

struck death and devastation in the Garden of Eden, polluting the whole human family with sin and subjecting God's perfect creation to death and destruction. Sin in the human heart — not God — caused the calamities of September 11 and all others throughout human history. At the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.

But God set in motion a plan to rescue the human race, not just for the present but for eternity: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Jesus Christ, God's Son, came into a dark world to rescue dying people. Declaring Himself the light of the world (8:12), He rushed into a human inferno with no concern for His own life. He died on a wooden cross so that the victims of Satan's terror may find salvation and safety.



Jesus' bodily resurrection from the grave does not prevent bad things from happening in our world. Rather, it reminds us that good eventually triumphs over evil. One day Jesus will return and destroy Satan forever, and we will be resurrected to a new life, free of pain and tears. In the meantime, we have peace in our hearts that the world cannot give and no terrorist can destroy. "In this world you will have trouble," Jesus once said. "But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

As He watched His Son die two thousand years ago, God looked

ahead to September 11. For those with broken hearts, who fear tomorrow and their own deaths, He offers rest through Jesus:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28).

A sure thing

A general in the battle of Normandy told his company of fearful soldiers, “There are only two types of men on this beach: those who are dead and those who are dying.”

This statement is a sober reminder that whoever has survived death so far will eventually die, though maybe not through terrorism. The question is, will we just die or die with the hope of eternal life?



Jesus recalled an incident in His day in which a tower fell and killed 18 innocent people. He stressed that the victims of that tragedy weren't any guiltier than other people but that all of

us will die with no hope of eternity unless we repent. (Luke 13:4, 5).

That's why Jesus wants to rescue you *now*. Only by turning from your sins and inviting Him into your heart will you gain the benefits of God's rescue efforts: life for eternity, free of violence and death. You can say a simple prayer, asking Christ to deliver you from sin, and He will give you the rest He has promised.

“Operation Eternal Rescue” is a booklet printed by Bible Advocate Press, Denver, Colorado USA.

Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.

Photos: Internet



Bless the Lord, O my soul;
And all that is within me, bless
His holy Name!
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits.
Who forgives all your iniquities;
Who heals all your diseases;
Who redeems your life from
destruction,
Who crowns you with
lovingkindness and tender
mercies,
Who satisfies your mouth with
good things,
So that your youth is renewed like
the eagle's.

Psalm 103:1-5



Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John (Matthew 3:13-15)

Christian Baptism

A number of questions come to mind: Is it necessary to be baptized? Should there be any spiritual preparation for baptism? Does baptism wash away our sins? Does it matter which method is used: sprinkling, pouring, or burial? May infants be baptized? Should anyone be “re-baptized”? This study will address these questions.

Please send for this free booklet.

Could It Happen Today?

If Jesus were to return today to the society we live in, would Christians be found to be behaving in ways similar to the Jewish sects of the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes and Herodians who were in great conflict with Jesus at His coming 2,000 years ago? As individuals we ought to each reflect on this since it is easy for the religious to suffer the same pitfalls, even after having started on a good footing or solid foundation.

Each of the above mentioned sects had the background of being Jewish. This was a wonderful foundation when we remember that the Apostle Paul said in Romans 3:1-2 that the Jews had an advantage in every way especially because to them were committed the oracles of God. The Pharisees, known as the 'separated ones', and the Essenes, also had a good foundation in so far as they were descended from the Hasideans who from approximately 150BC showed much dedication to God by fighting against the corrupt influence of Greek culture (or hellenization) on the true worship of God. The Sadducees around the same time, whilst being more politically minded and less religiously minded could be commended for at least supporting the Hasmonean priests/kings who sprang from the noble Maccabees who had zealously opposed the desecration of the temple and the true worship of God. These sects therefore had some admirable roots.

However, despite these roots, when Jesus came on the scene in first century Palestine their behaviour appalled Him. The middle class Pharisees who were dominant in the local synagogues, and who were admired by many of the average Jews, were exposed by Jesus as being nothing more than hypocritical 'legalists'. Jesus, for example, pointed out to them their double standard in being willing to get their ox out of a ditch on the Sabbath whilst not permitting the healing of sick people on the same day. (see Luke 14:1-6).



The Essenes, who lived like monks, and who probably wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls, whilst not specifically mentioned in the Bible, would have attracted the same, but probably sterner rebukes from Jesus since it is said that their Sabbath observance had become so rigid that they refrained from bowel movements on the holy day. The still politically influential Sadducees, who controlled the priesthood and the temple and who wanted things to stay as they were, were often criticized by Jesus for their faulty doctrine. For example, they did not believe in angels or the resurrection of the dead. Jesus in Matthew 16:12 warned His

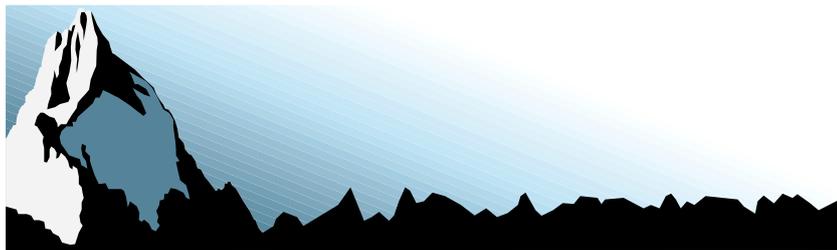
disciples to beware of the leaven, or doctrine, of the Sadducees and Pharisees.

Finally, the aristocratic Herodians, who were a Jewish group supporting Herod Antipas and hence Roman rulership, joined with the Pharisees and others in opposing Jesus. For example, they joined the Pharisees in, of all wicked things, plotting Jesus' death (Mark 3:6) and in trying to trick Jesus into angering the Romans by speaking against them and in not paying His taxes to them (Mark 12:13-17).

One may well ask how religious people of such good pedigree could fail so miserably? The answer in a nutshell I believe is because commitment to the Word of God had given way to tradition and self interest. They had not received the love of truth that they might be saved. As Christians we have no better foundation than Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us not allow tradition or self interest to similarly affect us, or what was true of these sects at Christ's appearing in the first century will also be true of us when Jesus comes again in glory.

David Kidd

(Sources: Gundry's Survey of the New Testament, Holman's Bible Dictionary and NKJV Bible)



Look Unto Jesus

*My friend, when your journey is rough,
Look unto Jesus and pray,
Every rough path shall be made smooth...
As the Lord directs your way.*

*When you walk through the dark valleys,
He's the lamp unto your feet,
And every valley shall be filled...
For in Him you are complete.*

*When faced with high mountains to climb,
Your Shepherd will bring them low,
As you walk His narrow pathway...
His mighty hand He will show.*

*When things do not seem fair and right,
Look unto Jesus and wait,
All power is given unto Him...
He will make the crooked straight.*

*Yes, life can sometimes be so rough,
But look unto Jesus, friend,
He sticks closer than a brother...
And is with you to the end.
Look Unto Jesus.*

Connie Campbell Bratcher

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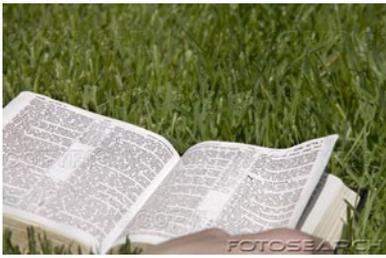
after was dispossessed of his life by God. Don't be side-tracked either with things that are not likely to make a real difference in the lives of people. As Christians we sometimes waste our time in areas of ministry that we are not really suited or gifted for, or which do not provide real benefits to others. Let's be careful to use our time wisely.

Some of us have had plenty of time on our hands for a long while, but don't seem to know how to use it fruitfully for the Lord and this is very frustrating to us. One sure answer I suggest is to follow Jesus' example of being busy caring for the physical and spiritual needs of people. I urge you to find ways to serve people through personal contact with them because people hardly have time for one another these days and many will therefore greatly appreciate your spending time with them and you will make a great difference. The Lord will be well pleased with you because, as the parable says, when we feed the hungry or visit the sick or the prisoners we are doing it to Christ.

Conclusion

This article invites a response from the reader other than a 'do nothing' response. If your heart has been hardened – tremble. Reconsider, because God has sacrificed His Son for you and He has a wonderful gift of eternal life for you. Show Him your gratitude, or risk falling away through the cares of the world or the deceitfulness of riches. If something in it has pricked your conscience say "hallelujah" or "amen" – you are alive spiritually. Now wholeheartedly take up one of the options other than the first. Thus says the Lord of Hosts consider your ways.

David Kidd



The Youth Section

BIBLE WORD SEARCH : THE BIBLE

All the words listed below are in the puzzle—left, right, up, down or diagonally.

A	M	A	T	T	H	E	W	F	I	S	H	E	R	S
M	B	K	S	U	T	S	U	G	U	A	G	L	L	H
S	S	R	L	N	I	S	L	M	V	S	E	P	A	E
A	H	A	A	P	A	U	L	O	I	U	N	M	M	A
C	O	M	M	H	F	I	H	E	V	S	E	E	B	V
R	L	E	I	D	A	E	S	J	D	E	S	T	Y	E
E	Y	A	N	R	J	M	R	E	E	J	I	I	R	N
D	S	N	A	I	T	S	I	R	H	C	S	S	O	S
S	P	C	D	B	W	A	G	E	S	P	S	R	T	N
N	I	I	A	L	I	B	H	M	D	S	E	A	S	E
A	R	E	V	E	L	A	T	I	O	N	R	E	I	D
K	I	N	I	S	J	N	E	A	O	A	T	L	H	R
E	T	T	D	S	O	R	O	H	L	M	R	I	G	A
W	E	R	B	E	H	A	U	A	B	O	O	F	O	G
H	T	A	E	D	N	B	S	H	H	R	F	E	D	A

Abraham, Ancient, Animals, Augustus, Barnabas, Bird, Blessed, Bloodshed, Christians, David, Death, Ephesians, Faith, Fishers, Fortress, Gardens, Genesis, God, Heaven, Hebrew, History, Holy Spirit, Israel, Jehovah, Jeremiah, Jesus, John, Lamb, Life, Love, Mark, Matthew, Mission, Noah, Paul, Revelation, Righteous, Romans, Sacred, Snake, Temple, Wine

Insights From the Past



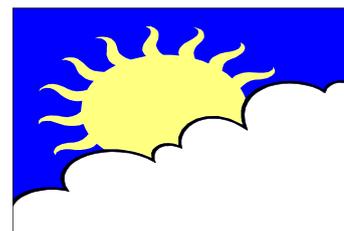
IS THE BIBLE TRUE?

By A. N. Dugger

This is a question we frequently hear asked and commented upon at the present time. It is feared that many who do not properly consider the subject will give it a doubtful answer. There is but one way we have of answering this question correctly, and this is by comparing the prophecies the Bible contains with the history written by man. In God's prophecies He has foretold the beginning of nations, named the empires which should exist, foretold their end, limited the time of their human rulers, designated what the order of succession should be, and what should follow after these human governments had passed away. Now these prophetic utterances, made long before the historical events transpired, were not mere guesses, but statements of what would be even to the farthest bounds of time. Laying our Bible aside and turning to history, we find that man has unwittingly done as the prophets foretold and has in ignorance of the declaration of the Bible followed exactly the index finger of prophecy. God gave His history of the future, then after centuries had elapsed, the events came up to fill the mold which prophecy had prepared for them. This certainly proves beyond a doubt that the Bible is true, that it came from the infallible hand of God. With these facts in view, we cannot help from knowing that God makes good what He has spoken and that the future events will just as certainly transpire as those of the past have been fulfilled.

*“Then may this book go forth to be
Instruction to the seeking soul,
That all may by its teachings see
How onward time's vast ages roll.
God grant His blessings on the book,
On all who on its pages look,
And so may grace all readers bring
Into the presence of the King.”*

Editor's Note: The above article appeared in the November 22, 1910 issue of The Bible Advocate and Herald of the Coming Kingdom. Andrew N. Dugger was a leading minister of the Church of God (Seventh Day) in the first half of the 20th century.



The Weekly Cycle

Some find it hard to believe that the continuity of the weekly cycle has been maintained for thousands of years. Many are of the opinion that it has not been kept accurately over the centuries.

Some believe that the Sabbath was not observed from Creation until Moses and that therefore the weekly cycle of Israel's Sabbath keeping was not a continuation of unbroken weeks.

So what is the rational conclusion?

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