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# House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 27 NUMBER 9

## Madisonville CHURCH of CHRIST

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### SUNDAY

Bible Classes..... 10:00 a.m.  
Worship ..... 11:00 a.m.  
Afternoon Worship..... 2:00 p.m.

### WEDNESDAY

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

Welcome. The members of the Madisonville Church of Christ are happy to invite you to join us for Bible Study and Worship anytime. It is because of Jesus that we assemble here to praise and glorify His name as instructed in God's word. You will be strengthened by your visit with us. We look forward to seeing you soon.

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HOUSE TO HOUSE/HEART TO HEART is published monthly. It is sent to select Madisonville routes and individuals free upon request. Send all correspondence to address above. To God be the glory.



# THE Peace JESUS OFFERS

Allen Webster

**Indira Gandhi**, former prime minister of India, said, "The desire for peace is universal."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the desire is strong because the condition is rare.

A cynic once said, "Peace is the brief glorious moment in history when everybody stands around reloading." In the last 3,000 years, the world has been at peace a total of 286 years (eight percent of the time). In 14,531 wars, 3,640,000,000 people have been killed. More than 8,000 treaties have been broken.<sup>2</sup>

What is true on the world stage is also true in individual hearts. In fact, wars in the heart produce wars in families, nations, and churches. If we can fix enough hearts, then we may fix the world.

Christianity is the peaceful religion (Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9). Some have sullied its name with violence, but they did not represent the Prince of Peace any more than the "Indians" of the Boston Tea Party represented the native peoples of America.

How does the Bible picture the peace Jesus gives?

### CHRISTIANS ARE SHEEP IN THE SHEPHERD'S HAND

Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand" (John 10:27-29; cf. Isaiah 49:2).

In every generation, evil men mistreat, abuse, and persecute good people (2 Timothy 3:8, 13). God protects Christians in answer to their prayers (Matthew 6:13; cf. Acts 26:17-18; 2 Timothy 4:17), although at times He allows their faith to be tested (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). Evil men cannot ultimately harm God's child. Jesus said, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

A challenge to shepherds is the sheep's tendency to wander off. Few shepherds could say they have never lost a sheep to terrain, beasts, elements, or thieves. Jesus

*“Who shall  
separate us from  
the love of Christ?”*

**ROMANS 8:35**



can. He will never lose us in the uneven terrain of eventful lives, to the beasts of persecution, to the elements of cold hearts and hot passion, or to the devil's thieving hands. We may forsake Him (1 Timothy 5:12; Galatians 5:4), and lose ourselves (2 Peter 2:20–22), but He will never forsake us (John 10:1–10; 17:11–12).

This promise grants tremendous peace to Christians in an evil generation (Acts 2:40). Paul asked, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (Romans 8:35). The answer is no one. Families cannot. Friends cannot. Strangers cannot. Enemies cannot. Satan cannot.

Jesus was a carpenter (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3), and carpenters have strong hands. Swinging a hammer, carrying lumber, sawing boards, and laying blocks build strength. His hands no longer do physical work, but the devil's claws are no match for their spiritual strength.

Christians can say with confidence, “I am on my way to heaven” (2 Timothy 1:12; 1 John 2:3, 5; 4:13; 5:4, 14). While John 10:28 is not a promise to everybody (it is for sheep) or even every Christian (only those who hear and follow), it is for every faithful Christian.

Paul said, “I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7–8). By God's grace (Isaiah 40:31) and through His strength (Philippians 4:13), we can make it to heaven (Matthew 25:23). Knowing this brings peace that money cannot buy.

### **CHRISTIANS ARE APPLE TREES IN THE WOODS**

Applying a figure from Solomon's song to Christ's bride, the church, paints a com-

forting picture. It says, “Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons” (Song of Solomon 2:3). An apple tree in a wooded area is overshadowed by taller trees that absorb moisture and sunlight. Yet because it is an apple tree, the owner pays attention to it, cultivates it, and cherishes it above other trees. It will not be neglected nor allowed to wither.

Christians in society are like apple trees in wooded areas. They might seem non-descript among the rich in the community, the talented at work, the powerful in government, the intelligent in school, and the popular at parties, yet God knows their names (Luke 10:20; 2 Timothy 2:19), hears their prayers (1 Peter 3:12), watches over them (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5), and makes life better for them (John 10:10; Philippians 4:19; James 1:17). They are fruitful—producing what He cherishes (John 15:1–8). Soon their God will publicly praise them (1 Corinthians 4:5).

### **CHRISTIANS ARE CHICKS UNDER CHRIST'S WINGS**

Jesus wanted to gather Jerusalem's citizens together, “as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings” (Matthew 23:37). Although they would not, Christians have gathered under those wings. Psalm 91:4 says, “He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.”

Christians are “preserved in Jesus Christ” (Jude 1:1) “for His heavenly kingdom” (2 Timothy 4:18). Wood that is preserved lasts while untreated lumber rots; fruits that are preserved are still good long after fresh fruit is gone.

Jesus the High Priest saves “to the uttermost” them that come to God by Him

(Hebrews 7:25). Jesus the Advocate will present Christians faultless at judgment “with exceeding joy” (Jude 1:24). Jesus the King will say to those on the right, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). Knowing this lets the peace of God rule in our hearts (Colossians 3:15).

### **CHRISTIANS ARE RESIDENTS OF GOD'S CITY OF REFUGE**

In ancient Israel, God designated six cities, three on each side of the Jordan River, as cities of refuge.

Manslayers rushed to them for protection from avengers of blood (near kinsmen with authority to take life for life) (cf. Genesis 9:6; Exodus 21:23; Leviticus 24:17). If a manslayer stayed there, he was protected. If he left, he could be killed (Numbers 35:26–28; Joshua 20:1–9).

Humanity's avenger of death is Satan (John 8:44; Revelation 12:9). He prowls, looking to devour (1 Peter 5:8). The whole world is guilty of manslaughter, for man's sins killed Jesus (Hebrews 6:6). Though we did not personally participate, we have personally sinned, so we are culpable (Romans 3:23; 6:23). If we continue wandering in sin, eventually death will catch us, and we will fall into the avenger's hands (2 Thessalonians 2:9–12).

The church is God's city of refuge. It is a sanctuary from condemnation (Romans 8:1). Those who have fled to Jesus for protection have found strong consolation (Hebrews 6:17–19). He is a “refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1, 7, 11; 62:7–8; Proverbs 14:26; 18:10; John 15:4–5).

Satan cannot get to those in the city, so he tries to lure them out (James 1:13–15). The New Testament epistles were primarily written to exhort Christians to remain in the city—faithful to Christ in the church (1 Corinthians 9:27; 15:58; Hebrews 3:14; 2 Peter 1:5–11; Revelation 2:10; 22:14). If we do, Satan cannot condemn us (Romans 5:1–2).

### **CHRISTIANS ARE TRAVELERS IN THE CLEFT OF THE ROCK**

One caught in the wilderness by a sudden, violent storm looks for a rocky over-

hang or a shallow cave to protect from lightning, wind, and rain.

Every life faces storms—health problems, family issues, financial crises, loss, tragedy, death, depression, or hardship. Storms come with living in a fallen world among sinful people.

When Moses faced a storm, God said, “I will put you in the cleft of the rock” (Exodus 33:22). He does this for His children today. Songs celebrate this truth. Augustus Toplady wrote (1776), “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee.”<sup>3</sup> Cleland McAfee wrote (1903), “There is a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God; a place where sin cannot molest, near to the heart of God.”<sup>4</sup>

David said, “The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold” (Psalm 18:2). “The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him, who shelters him all the day long” (Deuteronomy 33:12).

### CHRISTIANS ARE MEMBERS IN CHRIST’S BODY

In Jesus, His disciples have peace and can be of good cheer (John 16:33).

God’s blessings have often been restricted to locations:

- The tree of life was in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve were driven from Eden, they had no access to the tree’s blessings (Genesis 3:24).
- Salvation from the flood was in the ark. All outside perished (Genesis 6–9).
- When firstborn children in Egypt faced the plague of death, safety was in houses where the Passover lamb’s blood was sprinkled on door posts (Exodus 12).
- Rahab was saved in the house with the scarlet cord (Joshua 2; 6:25).
- Paul said in a storm: “Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved” (Acts 27:31).

Peace, prosperity, and safety are where God placed them—in the church (Ephesians 1:3; 3:21; cf. Psalm 122:7). Being in Christ is synonymous with being a member of His church (Galatians 3:26–27; Ephesians 1:22–23; 4:4). Some of the blessings found in Christ (a phrase Paul

used 169 times) include the following:

- Redemption (Romans 3:24; Colossians 1:14)
- Peace (Romans 5:1)
- Joy (Romans 5:11)
- Grace (Romans 5:17)
- Abundant life (Romans 6:11; John 10:10).
- Eternal life (Romans 6:22; Ephesians 1:3–13; 1 John 5:11)
- Newness of life (Romans 6:4)
- Forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7)
- Salvation (2 Timothy 2:10; Acts 4:12; John 14:6).

Since all spiritual blessings are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3) and none are outside, to have them one must be in the church.

How does one get into Christ? Only three Scriptures answer that question, and they all say the same thing—one is baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

One is brought **to** Christ by hearing the gospel (Romans 10:13–14); believing it (Hebrews 11:6); repenting of sins (Acts 17:30; Luke 13:3); and confessing Christ (Matthew 10:32–33; Romans 10:10). One is brought **into** Christ by baptism.

Is there a storm in your heart that Jesus can calm?

### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Dhawan, S. K., and Gandhi, Indira. *Selected Thoughts of Indira Gandhi: A Book of Quotes*. India, Mittal Publications, 1985. Page 239.

<sup>2</sup> Guy McGraw as quoted in *Turn Your Worry Around*; Carter, Joe. 2018

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.lyricfind.com/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://hymnary.org/text/there\\_is\\_a\\_place\\_of\\_quiet\\_rest](https://hymnary.org/text/there_is_a_place_of_quiet_rest).



## Well Said

We do not stop laughing because we grow old. We grow old because we stop laughing.

You may be only one person in the world, but you may be the world to one person.

Instead of putting others in their place, let us put ourselves in the place of others.

From some, prayer is as natural as breathing; for others it is like the hiccup—once in a while, and we are glad when they are gone.

*“Meditate on these things.”*

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

## What Jesus Offers

On January 6, 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed Congress about the state of the war in Europe. As he closed, he said that he looked forward to a world founded upon four essential freedoms:

- Freedom of speech
- Freedom of worship
- Freedom from want
- Freedom from fear.

Upon consideration, is not this what Jesus offers? He says we can come boldly to the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16); we are priests in God’s temple, offering up spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5, 9); He promises to care for us (Matthew 6:33; Philippians 4:19); He fills us with courage (Matthew 10:18–20). —Allen Webster

## God’s Plan for Saving Man

**Divine Love:** John 3:16

**God’s Grace:** Ephesians 2:8

**Christ’s Blood:** Romans 5:9

**Holy Spirit’s Word:** Romans 1:16

**Sinner’s Faith:** Acts 16:31

**Sinner’s Repentance:** Luke 13:3

**Sinner’s Confession:** Romans 10:10

**Sinner’s Baptism:** Acts 22:16

**Christian’s Love:** Matthew 22:37

**Christian’s Work:** James 2:24

**Christian’s Hope:** Romans 8:24

**Christian’s Endurance:** Revelation 2:10

## Things to Ponder

The easiest way to find something lost is to buy a replacement.

The purpose of a middle name is so a child can tell when he's really in trouble.

How long a minute is depends on what side of a bathroom door you're on.

If ignorance is bliss, why aren't a lot more people happy?

Dogs have owners. Cats have staff.

We cannot change the direction of the wind, but we can adjust our sails.

—Glenn Hitchcock



## Hidden Treasures

A young man left home to be on his own. His mother tearfully said goodbye to him and gave him a Bible with the admonition that if he read it every day, it would keep him strong. After a time, when things had not gone well and the young man had run out of money, he returned home.

His mother asked him if he had read his Bible while he was gone. He confessed that he had not. "Son, if you had read your Bible, you would not have been hungry." She had placed money throughout the book. She opened the Bible to Psalm 23, and there was a \$20 bill. She turned to John 3, and there was a \$10 bill. If only he had read his Bible.

That was only money, but there are real hidden treasures waiting for us all in God's treasured Word. —Glenn Hitchcock

*"More to be desired are they than gold."*

PSALM 19:10



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## Ask the Children

Who said, "A bad marriage is better than a good divorce?" Probably a preacher, you say? Perhaps a well-meaning father or mother-in-law? My guess is a person verbalizing a view of divorce's innocent victims—the children.

In a 15-year study of 60 mostly middle class families including 131 children from 2 to 18 years, psychologist Judith Wallerstein found that a large number of children continue to suffer for the sins of their parents for years after a divorce. In her book, *Second Chances*, Wallerstein reports the following:

Three of five children feel rejected by one or both parents.

One-half grew up with parents continuing to war with each other.

Two-thirds of the girls, many of whom reacted calmly during the divorce, suddenly became deeply anxious as young adults, unable to make lasting commitments out of fear of betrayal.

Many boys, overtly troubled in post-divorce years, failed to develop a sense of self-confidence, purpose, or independence. They drifted in and out of college and from job to job.

In an article in *Pediatrics*, Dr. Max Sugar of LSU Medical School noted that divorce often leaves children with a bit-

tersweet legacy of an enduring "Magic Wish" for the parents' reconciliation. Many children unconsciously maneuver parents into reunions, especially during holidays, from this undying desire.

Godliness is sharing God's values and viewpoints and carrying them out in our lives. In one of Scripture's strongest statements, God says that He "hates divorce" (Malachi 2:16). All children hate divorce, as all of God's children should.

In a *Newsweek* article, Susan Jordan wrote, "I think people should be upset about divorce . . . I'm grown up; I have responsibilities; I am in the middle of a life-long marriage, hanging in there, sometimes enduring, sometimes enjoying. For some reason we make no such assumption about staying on the job, keeping the same religion, voting the same ticket."

Many good things can be said about "hanging in there" in marriage; nothing good can be said of divorce. Though at first it may appear a panacea, it is more often a Pandora's Box of insoluble problems that plague parents and children.

So is a bad marriage better than a good divorce? It depends on whom you ask. If seriously seeking the answer, do not forget to ask your Father, His children, and your own. —Shawn Jones

## Just for Fun Bible Facts Quiz

1. Number of books in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of verses? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of Old Testament books? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of New Testament books? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Number of writers? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Shortest book? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Longest book? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Shortest chapter? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Longest chapter? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Shortest verse? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Longest verse? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Longest word? \_\_\_\_\_

1. 66; 2. 31,102; 3. 39; 4. 27; 5. 40; 6. 2 John; 7. Psalms; 8. Psalm 117; 9. Psalm 119; 10. John; 11. Esther 8:9; 12. Maher-Shalah-Hash-Baz

# Dangerous “Nations” among Us

In the history of the world, many nations have posed great danger to people who lived around them. In ancient times, Egypt, Assyria, Chaldea, Rome, and others were dangerous. In recent history, Germany, Japan, Russia, and China have been seen as dangerous.

However, the most dangerous “nations” are not earthly powers. They are spiritual forces.

1. Some things are **abomi-nations** to God, for they pervert and destroy man spiritually. In Deuteronomy 18:9–12, Moses taught that idolatry and many practices of the occult were abominations. Solomon said seven things are an abomination to God: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet swift to run to evil, a false witness, and one who sows discord among brethren (Proverbs 6:16–19).

2. Many Christians are eternally ruined by **contami-nation**. They fall prey to worldliness—immorality, drinking,

dancing, cursing, and gambling, for instance. They become spotted by the world (James 1:27).

3. **Discrimination** is a great danger to world peace and well-being. All people are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27); in Christ all are of equal importance and value to God (Galatians 3:28). Why do some practice discrimination between rich and poor, young and old, male and female, black and white?

4. Some are defeated by **termination**. It may be that one becomes unhappy or upset with something in the local church such as family problems, disagreements among brethren, or hurting someone’s feelings. What happens? They terminate—give up church responsibilities, stop contributing, and quit attending. In the end, they become entangled and overcome by the defilements of the world (2 Peter 2:20–22).

5. As innocent as it looks, **procrasti-nation** is a dangerous nation. One may

convince himself that he means well and will do better some day while completely dominated by this “nation.”

6. **Denominations** are dangerous because, while appearing beneficial, they divide believers in Christ into separate competing groups. Christ came to unite all in one body (John 17:20; Ephesians 4:4), the undenominational church of Christ (Romans 16:16).

Paul taught against this “nation,” saying there should be “no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

The ultimate danger to our souls is eternal **CONDEMNATION**. One day all will stand before God in judgment to receive eternal victory over these dangerous “nations,” or to be condemned because of them. —Darrell E. Beard

*“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”*

PSALM 9:17

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



## Bible Quiz

VOLUME 27:9

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark. We will grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark “Noah by the Numbers” as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

### Answers to Previous Quizzes

**V. 27:7** Starts with the Letter “P”: 1. Potiphar (Genesis 39:1); 2. Passover (Leviticus 23:5); 3. Peninnah (1 Samuel 1:1–4); 4. Patmos (Revelation 1:9); 5. Paul (Acts 13:9); 6. Paul (Romans 16:3); 7. Pharisees (Matthew 3:7); 8. Pheobe (Romans 16:1); 9. Perez (Genesis 38:29); 10. Phinehas (Numbers 25:8); 11. Philip (Acts 8:35–40); 12. Peter (Matthew 8:14); 13. Priscilla (Acts 18:2,24–26); 14. Philemon (Philemon 1:11); 15. Publius (Acts 28:7–8); 16. Pilate (Matthew 27:2); 17. Pergamos (Revelation 2:12–17); 18. Psalms; 19. Proverbs (1:1–13); 20. Pentecost (Acts 2:1).

**V. 27:8** Starts with the letter “R”: 1. Rabbi (Matthew 23:7); 2. Raca (Matthew 5:22); 3. Rachel (Genesis 29:9–30); 4. Rahab (Joshua 2:1); 5. Ram (Genesis 22:13); 6. Raamses (Exodus 1:11); 7. Raven (Genesis 8:7); 8. Razor (Numbers 6:2–5); 9. Rebekah (Genesis 25:20); 10. Rebellion (1 Samuel 15:23); 11. Red Sea (Exodus 15:4); 12. Reed (Mark 15:19); 13. Rehoboam (1 Kings 11:43); 14. Repent (Acts 17:30); 15. Rose from the dead (Luke 24:46); 16. Reuben (Genesis 29:32); 17. Revelation (1:1); 18. Reverence (Hebrews 12:28); 19. Riches (Proverbs 22:1); 20. Riddle (Judges 14:12); 21. Righteous (James 5:16); 22. Ring (Luke 15:22); 23. Ruth (Ruth 1:4).

## Starts with the letter “T”

**Directions:** Find answers in: Genesis 38:11–26; Exodus 25:9; 1 Kings 17:1; 2 Chronicles 17:5–8; Psalm 34:8; 107:21; Daniel 5:25; Jonah 1:3; Amos 1:1; Matthew 6:13; 8:12; 18:24; 27:29; Luke 1:3; John 11:16; Acts 1:1; 9:11, 36; 16:8–9; 18:3; 20:6–10; Romans 16:12, 22; 2 Timothy 1:7; Titus 1:4; Revelation 1:11. Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

- Jehoshaphat sent \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ among others to teach the law.
- Tent which God commanded Moses to make for sacrifices and worship: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name of the disciple who was also called Didymus: \_\_\_\_\_ (KJV)
- A large weight of metal: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name of the man to which Luke and Acts are addressed: \_\_\_\_\_
- Jonah tried to run away to \_\_\_\_\_.
- The other name of Dorcas: \_\_\_\_\_
- Paul was originally from \_\_\_\_\_.
- Worker in the early church known for being timid: \_\_\_\_\_ (spirit of fear)
- Worker who has a New Testament book addressed to him: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ and see that the Lord is good.
- Two women Paul mentioned in Romans 16:12 who worked hard for the early church: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
- One word written on the wall at Belshazzar’s Feast: \_\_\_\_\_
- Served as Paul’s secretary when he dictated Romans: \_\_\_\_\_
- Amos was from \_\_\_\_\_.
- Lead us not into \_\_\_\_\_.
- Became pregnant by her father-in-law, Judah: \_\_\_\_\_
- Paul’s trade, which he used to support himself financially: \_\_\_\_\_
- Paul was in \_\_\_\_\_ when he had a vision of a man from Macedonia.
- Eutychus was raised from the dead in \_\_\_\_\_.
- Elijah is often called ‘Elijah the \_\_\_\_\_.
- One of the churches that John wrote to in Revelation: \_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus wore a crown of \_\_\_\_\_.
- “Oh, that men would give \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord for His goodness.”

13. There will be weeping and gnashing

# What Will Happen When the Books Are Opened?

The trumpet voice of the Son of God will have called the court together and all will be judged—you and I stand to be sentenced (John 5:28–29; 1 Corinthians 15:52).

Life is over. Death has come and gone. Then we shall realize the significance of such passages as James 4:14, Job 14:1–2, and Psalm 90:10.

On the world's last day, the world will be burned up (Matthew 24:25; 2 Peter 3:7–13). Do not expect a rapture because the Bible does not teach it. The works that are therein will be burned up:

- Paris—Eiffel Tower
- London—Big Ben, Parliament
- Rome—Vatican
- New York—Empire State Building and the 9/11 Memorial

- Athens—Ancient Acropolis
- Washington, DC—presidential monuments, the Smithsonian
- Los Angeles—Hollywood
- Nashville—Music City
- All our houses will burn.

Have you made preparations to live elsewhere—in heaven?

—V. P. Black

*"Then comes the end."*

1 CORINTHIANS 15:24



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VOLUME 27:9



# WHY STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM?

The jailor's question, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30) is still on the minds of thinking individuals. According to the Bible, the answer begins with hearing the gospel of Christ (Romans 10:17) and believing in Jesus as God's Son (Acts 16:30–34; John 8:24). Next, one must repent of sins (Acts 17:30–31;

Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38) and confess faith that Jesus is the Christ (Romans 10:9–10; Matthew 10:32–33; Acts 8:37). Then consummating act of one's obedience is baptism to be saved (Mark 16:15–16).

A question often arises: "Why stress the baptism so much?" These answer Bible references give the answer:

- Water stands between the sinner ..... and cleansing (Ephesians 5:26).
- Water stands between the sinner ..... and sanctification (Ephesians 5:26).
- Water stands between the sinner ... and putting away sins (Colossians 2:11–13).
- Water stands between the sinner ..... and new life in Christ (Ephesians 2:6).
- Water stands between the sinner ..... and living with Christ (Ephesians 2:5).
- Water stands between the sinner ..... and forgiveness (Colossians 1:13–14).
- Water stands between the sinner ..... and the kingdom (John 3:5).
- Water stands between the sinner ..... and the blood of Christ (John 19:34).
- Water stands between the sinner ..... and a good conscience (1 Peter 3:21).
- Water stands between the sinner ... and the promise through Christ (Acts 2:39).
- Water stands between the sinner ..... and the body (1 Corinthians 12:12).
- Water stands between the sinner ..... and salvation (1 Peter 3:21).
- Water stands between the sinner ..... and sonship (Galatians 3:26–27).

## Were Jesus' Resurrection Appearances Hallucinations?

Hallucinations are uncommon and only happen under unusual circumstances. Hallucinations are:

- Individual-based. More than 500 saw Jesus at once (1 Corinthians 15:6). Could 500 people be fooled at one time? This many could not have been predisposed to see visions.
- Experienced only by certain kinds of people—those highly strung, imaginative, nervous. Hallucinations are most common among paranoid schizophrenics. Do the apostles—fishermen, tax collector, scholar—strike you this way? The disciples were not credulous, excitable persons but men who were reluctant to believe even after seeing the empty tomb.
- Linked to past experience. The opposite happened regarding Jesus' resurrection. The witnesses were not reenacting previous experiences with Jesus.
- Restricted as to when and where they can occur (associated with nostalgia and familiar surroundings). Several persons, at different times, in various moods, and in different places saw Jesus.
- Have an atmosphere of anticipation or hope. Jesus was recognized not by persons who expected to see Him alive, but by women who went to anoint His dead body. His apostles thought the women's report was like idle tales (Luke 24:11). Thomas flatly stated, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). Every person to whom He appeared was taken by surprise.
- Long-term. The appearances of Jesus stopped as suddenly as they started, 40 days after the resurrection.

—Allen Webster

# The Abortion Question

On June 24th, 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States overturned a long-

standing law, *Roe v. Wade*, ending nearly 50 years of a federal answer to the abortion question. The original decision made abortion legal in all fifty states. Some states enacted restrictions, but the ruling stipulated that it could not be outlawed. With the abolishment of *Roe v. Wade*, the abortion question returns to each state, where elected representatives and citizens can determine the laws they wish to enact regarding abortion.

We wish to make it plain that the intention of this article is not to argue the legalities or controversies surrounding governmental interest in the abortion question. We mention this recent ruling because it has propelled the abortion question to the top of people's minds. It has again become a national conversation as people grapple with abortion. Questions such as, "What makes abortion wrong?" and "Why should it be anyone's business?" have entered people's minds. What we intend to do is examine the Scriptures to answer these questions. We recognize that abortion is a controversial subject with strong opinions on either side; however, what the Bible teaches overrides these thoughts and cuts to the heart of the question.

From the outset of the Scriptures, we read that human beings are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). What this means is that each person has within God's identifiable imprint. All humans, regardless of age or gender, have this imprint within them. Scripturally, that must include the unborn. David testifies to this fact in Psalm 139 when he states that God Himself formed him in the womb (Psalm 139:13-16). The king praises the Lord for His wonderful work and how He was integral to David's being. Even before David was born, he had within him God's imprint. The prophet Jeremiah speaks of a similar experience. The Lord explicitly said that before the prophet was born, God knew who he was and what he would do (Jeremiah 1:5). Like David, Jeremiah had the imprint of God within him prior to birth.

While it is not a personal testimony like David or Jeremiah's, we discover in Luke's gospel that John the Immerser—who was

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still in the womb—leapt when Jesus' mother Mary entered the presence of Elizabeth, John's mother (Luke 1:41). Such an action is an expression of joy on John's part, which shows that even while in the womb, John the Immerser had within him the imprint of God. Whether we refer to David's psalm, Jeremiah's testimony, or the record of John the Immerser, the conclusion is the same: the unborn share in the image of God with all people. To seek the destruction of the unborn, regardless of the reason, is to destroy image-bearers. There can be no doubt that such an action dishonors God and His purposes.

We have sufficiently answered the moral question of abortion from the Scriptures, but our other question remains without an answer. Why is it mine or anyone else's business what a woman chooses to do with her body? It may surprise you, but it is not any human being's business what she chooses. It is, however, God's business, for He places within the unborn His image. That is why Christians take firm stances on the subject at hand. It is not that we judge based on our own opinions about the nature of life; rather, we know what we believe and do because of what the Scriptures teach.

Before we conclude, it is important to acknowledge that many harsh judgments have been passed on people who support abortion or who have perhaps had this procedure themselves. The Scriptures do not view abortion as any more grievous than other sin. Like any sin, it must be repented of to receive forgiveness (Luke 13:3, 5). It is also critical to recognize that Christians have a great responsibility because of the stance we take on the subject. We must be ready and willing to help expectant mothers and supply them with the resources they need. We are taught by the Scriptures to meet urgent needs, which includes the needs of mothers and their unborn children (Titus 3:14). If we make bold statements about abortion but do nothing to help those in desperate circumstances, then can we truly stand for unborn image-bearers? Let us rally around those in these situations and choose life, for it is the only answer to the question at hand.

Stephen Null