

# Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.  
Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant.  
Psalm 25:14

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## Sabbath School Lesson on John Muddies the Gospel Waters (Part 2)

The purpose of this study, along with part one published last month, is to examine some basic gospel points from the book of John and compare them to comments made in the “Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide” for January – March 2004 entitled, *The Gospel of John*. The lessons in this quarterly present Christ as the second person of the Trinity, co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

There are many problems with the doctrine of the Trinity. In this series we are examining some of the basic issues, in relationship to God’s love, which the Trinity doctrine distorts.

### God’s love in Giving His Son

The Trinity doctrine distorts God’s love in giving the gift of His Son. It denies that Jesus is the literal begotten Son of God. The Bible teaches that we may understand God’s love for mankind by the greatness of the gift He gave for our redemption. “We love him, because he first loved us.” (1 John 4:19) “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” (1 John 4:9) Our understanding of God’s love will be in direct proportion to our understanding of the gift He gave for our redemption. If your understanding of God’s gift is great, then your understanding of his love will be great. However, if you do not see God making any real sacrifice for you, then you will not be able to perceive God’s love for as you should.

The fact that God has a Son to give was the focus of part one of this study. The Sabbath School quarterly teaches the standard Trinitarian doctrine that Jesus is only the Son of God by title or declaration. However, both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy declare Jesus to be God’s “only begotten Son.” Notice how plainly Ellen White states the matter:

“A complete offering has been made; for ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,’— not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father’s person, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” (*Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895) Here we see that Sister White understood Jesus to be the literal begotten Son of God. However, in lesson seven, “The Sacred and the Common,” at least twice Jesus is called the “God of the Exodus.” (pp. 58, 62) This is a term that is never

## Prayer Requests

Pastor Maurice Anyango and the Homa Bay Hope Centre orphanage in Kenya have recently had money donated to purchase a parcel of land to be used to build a new orphanage. The current facility is being rented and the cost of the rent will be increasing next year. The current plans are to build at least a dormitory for the boys and one for the girls as well as a dining hall. your prayers for the success of this project will be greatly appreciated by Pastor Maurice and all those at the orphanage.

I also want to request prayer for a special unspoken request that I have dubbed, Project P.U.S.H. (Pray Until Something Happens) God knows the details about this and I ask that you would be in prayer for Project P.U.S.H. Thank you very much.

*Editor*

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applied to Jesus in inspiration. Ellen White calls Jesus “the leader of the children of Israel.” (*Review & Herald*, June 1, 1897) The book of Exodus calls Jesus “the angel of God.” (Exodus 14:19) While the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is divine, it does not teach that Jesus is the supreme being of the universe, Who is the Father. Using terms like the “God of the Exodus” without a qualifying statement implies to Sabbath School students that Jesus is part of a three person Trinity.

### The Man Christ Jesus

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” (Romans 8:3) The phrase “in the likeness” (*εν ομοιωματι* - *en homoiomati*) means, to make like; to be like, or to resemble. We find the identical expression, *en homoiomati*, used in Philippians 2:7 where we read that Jesus was “made in the likeness [*en homoiomati*] of men.” Adventist pioneers understood this to be a literal description of the incarnation of our Saviour. They understood this “likeness” to be more than a veneer coating, but rather the very nature of Christ.

The Bible teaches that in the incarnation, Jesus emptied Himself of divine power. “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” (Philippians 2:6, 7) Jesus said, “When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.” (John 8:28) He also noted, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.” (John 5:19) “But he humbled himself, and took mortality upon him.” (*R&H*, July 5, 1887) “The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. It is the golden chain that binds our souls to Christ, and

through Christ to God. This is to be our study. Christ was a real man; he gave proof of his humility in becoming a man.” (*YI*, October 13, 1898)

Jesus truly faced temptations in the same manner, and with access to the same divine power, no more, no less, that we have. The Trinitarian doctrine teaches that Jesus had divine power. Some versions teach He used it to perform miracles, while some say He did not. However, the Trinitarian Christ could never answer the questions Satan had raised in the great controversy. One of Satan’s charges was that man could not overcome sin. Satan teaches that if Jesus overcame sin, it was only because of the divine power within Him. Satan wants you to believe Jesus was a type of “Superman” with powers beyond mortals. Satan could rightfully ask, “How can man stop sinning if even Jesus couldn’t stop sinning without using His divine power?” We sometimes hear Trinitarians say, “Well, He didn’t use His divine power, He depended upon the Father for help.” If so, how can it openly and honestly be demonstrated? A rule of law is that a man cannot justify himself by his own words. God’s character is on trial. He can say He is honest and right, but for His creation to *know*, it must be demonstrated as such. If Christ came to this earth with superhuman power, but did not use it, then the crystal-clear demonstration that God needed to make becomes cloudy. Therefore the miracles of Christ could not have been done by His own omnipotent power as the Sabbath School Lesson teaches.

Lesson seven states that “Jesus’ ability to walk on water and to control wind and wave was a powerful affirmation of His divinity, something the disciples needed after their disappointment with Christ’s refusal to be made king.” (p. 58) These are not the kind of miracles that would be a true test of divinity. In Matthew 14:26-29 Peter walks on water and in Joshua 10, Joshua commanded the sun to stand still for an entire day. In 1 Kings 17-18 Elijah stilled the rain. In each of these

times, the act was done by divine power, but that did not make Peter, Joshua, nor Elijah divine.

Did the miracles of Christ show us his divinity? Nicodemus said to Christ, “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.” (John 3:2) The miracles that Christ performed showed that he was sent by God. The miracles of Christ also opened the door and brought attention to the work that Christ came to do. Christ described his mission to Nicodemus, “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” (John 3:17)

The fact is Jesus accepted the physical limitations of humanity. He Himself testified, “I can of mine own self do nothing.” (John 5:30) Jesus did not say that He chose not to do anything, but rather that He could do nothing by Himself. (See John 5:19 also.) Interestingly, in Matthew 14:19 it states, “And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.” Why did Jesus look up to heaven? He was addressing His prayer to the Father. Jesus had “blessed” (given thanks for or asked a blessing on) the bread. Who did He thank? Who would He have asked to bless the bread? The One Whom He looked up to heaven to, when He prayed. Why did Jesus look to the Father and thank Him for the loaves and fishes? Because His Father provided the food. “All the miracles of Christ performed for the afflicted and suffering were, by the power of God, through the ministration of angels.” (*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 67) If Jesus was the sovereign God of Israel, then He never needed to pray for strength, insight, guidance, or wisdom; something that He did on a daily basis. If we have faith in Christ we too will be able to do the miracles of Christ. “Verily, verily, I say unto you,

He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.” (John 14:12)

On page 60 of the lesson the question is asked, “Who really was Jesus?” The answer given is, “He was much more than just a good man who grew up in Nazareth with Joseph and Mary. But what kind of man would claim to be the Son of God who came down from heaven?” Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, not the God of heaven.

The second discussion question on page 62 prompts thought on the danger Christians may have if certain ideas that they entertain about God are not true. “What happens when those expectations are not met?” This is a very relevant question to all who study this lesson. Whether we hold on to tradition or follow the Bible will determine how we answer and how we react to our answer.

## The Fellowship of the Father and Son

The title of lesson 11 “The Spirit ‘Replaces’ Jesus” deals with the coming of the comforter. It teaches the standard Trinitarian teaching that after Jesus ascended to heaven, He sent the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, to give man fellowship. What does the Bible teach? 1 John 1:3 states: “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” (John 14:23) The Bible says that our fellowship is to be with the Father and Son. The Trinitarian doctrine says that our fellowship is with the Holy Spirit. Specifically, the “comforter” that comes to comfort humanity is not Jesus Himself, but rather the third person of the Trinity that never has known the experience of human flesh! But 2 Corinthians 3:17 says, “The Lord is that Spirit.” The basis for Christ being

the Comforter is found in the incarnation. To be able and qualified to comfort and help His people, He had to be made like his brethren.

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” (Hebrews 2:9-11)

The Greek word for “became” is *πρεπο* (*prepo*). It is defined as “suitable,” “proper,” “it is fit or right.” Matthew uses this word in describing the dialog between John and Christ at His baptism. “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh (*prepo*) us to fulfill all righteousness.” (Matthew 3:15) Paul also uses it later in Hebrews: “For such an high priest was what we needed for (*prepo*) us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” (7:26 margin) What then is Paul trying to tell us in Hebrews 2:10? Simply that it is suitable, proper, fit, right, for God to make Christ “perfect through sufferings.” (Hebrews 2:10) Paul continues:

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” (Hebrews 2:14-16)

Christ partook of the seed of Abraham. Paul, in Romans 1:3, says that Jesus Christ “was made of the seed of David [not immaculate or sinless] according to the flesh.” Paul leaves the

reader with no doubt that he has a Saviour that comes close to him.

“Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.” (Hebrews 2:17, 18)

The word translated “behooved” in the Greek is *οπηειλο* which means “to be bound to,” “under obligation,” “indebted,” “owe.” Commenting on this, Elder M. L. Andreasen wrote:

“If Christ is to be a merciful and faithful high priest, Paul says it behooves Him “in all things” to be like His brethren. This is obligatory. It is a duty He owes and must not avoid. He cannot make reconciliation for men unless He takes His place with them and in all things becomes like them. It is not a question of choice. He should, He must, He ought to, He is under obligation to, He owes it. Unless He has to struggle with the same temptations men do, He cannot sympathize with them. One who has never been hungry, who has never been weak and sick, who has never struggled with temptations, is unable fully to sympathize with those who are thus afflicted.” (*Letters to the Churches*, Series A, #1, p. 6)

Christ did not partake of the human experience in order to send somebody else to comfort us! Let us notice closely the words of Jesus to the disciples on the night of His betrayal:

“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for *he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*” (John 14:15-18)

Who was dwelling with them (present tense) and then would be in them?



Jesus stated that He would send the “Spirit of truth” *who was already dwelling with them*. He clearly stated, “I will come to you.” The word comforter is from the Greek *parakletos*, which means “an intercessor,” or “one called beside.” *Parakletos* is also found in: 1 John 2:1. “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate (*parakletos*) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” John says that our advocate or comforter is Jesus.

Two words related to *parakletos* are: *parakaleo* and *paraklesis*. *Parakaleo* is the verb form: giving comfort. *Paraklesis* is the noun form: the comfort we receive. *Parakletos* as used by John is the One who gives the comfort. Paul describes the work of a comforter writing to the church at Corinth:

“Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort (*paraklesis*); Who comforteth (*parakaleo*) us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort (*parakaleo*) them which are in any trouble, by the comfort (*paraklesis*) wherewith we ourselves are comforted (*parakaleo*) of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation (*paraklesis*) also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation (*paraklesis*) and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted (*parakaleo*), it is for your consolation (*paraklesis*) and salvation. And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation (*paraklesis*).” (2 Corinthians 1:2-7)

While God is acknowledged as the One who sends the comfort, He does it through His Son, “who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we

ourselves are comforted by God.” (2 Corinthians 1:4 NKJ) A person may sympathize, but he cannot empathize with another unless he has had a similar experience. A comforter can give comfort because he has suffered the same trials and struggles as the one he seeks to comfort. This is why Paul stated that it was imperative for Christ to accept the fallen nature of man so that He could properly comfort him. This concept makes the following Spirit of Prophecy statements shine with increased clarity:

“The reason why the churches are weak and sickly and ready to die, is that the enemy has brought influences of a discouraging nature to bear upon trembling souls. He has sought to shut Jesus from their view as the Comforter, as one who reproves, who warns, who admonishes them, saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” Christ has all power in heaven and in earth, and he can strengthen the wavering, and set right the erring. He can inspire with confidence, with hope in God; and confidence in God always results in creating confidence in one another.” (R&H, August 26, 1890)

“What saith our Saviour? ‘I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.’ ‘He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.’ When trials overshadow the soul, remember the words of Christ, remember that He is an unseen presence in the person of the Holy Spirit, and He will be the peace and comfort given you, manifesting to you that He is with you, the Sun of Righteousness, chasing away your darkness. ‘If a man love me,’ Christ said, ‘he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.’ Be of good cheer; light will come, and your soul will rejoice greatly in the Lord.—Letter 124, 1897 (*Daughters of God*, p. 185—See also, *Adventist Home*, p. 350; 14MR, p. 179; 19MR, p. 296; 8MR, p. 49.)

If Jesus is the Comforter, why did He speak of “another Comforter?” The text in question is John 14:16 where Jesus says: “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.” To express the thought of Christ, John uses the Greek word *ἄλλος* - *allos*. *Allos* means another of the same kind as opposed to *ἕτερος* - *heteros*, which means another of a different kind. Notice the usages as given in the examples:

“Another (*allos*) parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field.” (Matthew 13:24)

“And there were also two other (*heteros*), malefactors, led with him to be put to death.” (Luke 23:32)

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another (*heteros*) gospel: Which is not another (*allos*); but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.” (Galatians 1:6, 7)

Thus when Jesus said that He would send “another (*allos*) Comforter,” He was saying that the comfort the disciples were to receive was to be of the same nature as the comfort that He had given them. This fact the quarterly acknowledges on page 92, “The original language emphasized the similarity between Jesus and the Spirit.”

On the same page, the following statement from *Desire of Ages* is quoted, “Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.” However, the first part of the statement was left off which says, “The Holy Spirit is Christ’s representative, but divested of the personality of

humanity, and independent thereof.” To be divested of something, one must have, at one time, had what he or she was divested of. Christ, not the third person of a Trinity had the personality of humanity at one time and only Christ could be divested of it. The basis for the statement in *Desire of Ages* was written in 1895 and was published in *Manuscript Releases*, no. 14, p. 23: “Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally; therefore it was altogether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to His father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof. He would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent.”

## The Death of Jesus Christ

Lessons 12 and 13 of the quarterly cover the death and resurrection of Jesus. These lessons contain some valuable spiritual concepts but they fail to discuss in detail or depth the nature of Christ’s death on the cross nor the real power of the resurrection.

The first four days of lesson twelve covers the events leading to Calvary. Wednesday’s lesson is entitled, “Humiliation, Death, and Burial.” It discusses the physical nature of the death that Jesus suffered, the mood of Pilate, and the assurance that prophecy was being fulfilled to the letter. The last paragraph on page 100 states,

“In John 19:30, Jesus says, ‘It is finished.’” but what exactly was finished at the Cross? The particular emphasis is chapter 19 seems to be that the Cross is the fulfillment of the Bible prophecies pointing toward the Messiah.”

This statement does not affirm the new theology view of the cross [The atonement is what is finished] or the historic position [The sacrifice was completed at the cross]. Neither does it offend the proponents of either view, but it gives a middle of the road type of response. However, Ellen White noted, “When Christ cried, ‘It is

finished,’ the great sacrifice was complete.” (*ST*, September 23, 1889)

The last two lessons ignore three vital points to the gospel. The first is the truth that Jesus really died. This may seem to be a strange thought, especially since the quarterly speaks of Jesus’ death. However, words only mean what the speaker understands them to represent. All Christians will at first acknowledge that Jesus is the “Son of God.” However, most will qualify that statement or change their position entirely when pressed to explain in detail what is meant by the phrase, “Son of God.” The same is true when we discuss the death of Jesus. The Trinitarian doctrine teaches that Christ did not truly, fully die for the sins of mankind. Rather, it is claimed that the physical body of Jesus died while the spirit continued to live, and three days later resurrected the physical body from the grave.

The second vital point missed is the nature of Christ’s sufferings and death. Christ’s sufferings were not just physical. The emotional and spiritual experience was one without hope that could not see through the portals of the tomb. The weight of the sin of the world crushed His heart.

The third vital point missed concerns the resurrection of Jesus. The Trinitarian doctrine states that Jesus rose from the “dead” by His own power and life that was within Himself. This concept is the natural result of the misconception that Jesus did not really die. However, the Bible plainly states that Jesus truly died the death of the cross for our sins and was raised to life the third day by the Father.

## The Depths of Calvary

Paul noted in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.” The most graphic and detailing account of Christ’s death is found in Isaiah chapter 53. This chapter describes the totality of Christ’s death. We have been counseled: “The entire chapter should be committed to memory. Its influence will subdue and humble the soul defiled by sin and

uplifted by self-exaltation.” (*Youth’s Instructor*, December 20, 1900) The last three verses of chapter 52 and the first six verses of chapter 53 begin with the sufferings of Yahweh’s servant. However, it must be remembered that the law required death, not torture. Verses seven through twelve speak explicitly of death.

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” (verse 7) Here Christ is described as being brought as “a lamb to the slaughter.” I grew up in an area where there were cattle and various animals on farms and any farmer knows what happens during slaughter time. The animal is killed! The Hebrew word for slaughter (תִּבְחַח- *tebach*) can also be translated “massacre.”

“He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.” (v. 8) The expression “cut off” is used in Daniel 9:26 to describe the death of the Messiah. Further, the verse states that the Messiah was to be “cut off out of the land of the living.” If one is not living, he must be dead.

“And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.” (verse 9) This text which describes Christ’s burial states plainly that He was to be put in a “grave.” Friends, it is neither legal nor proper to bury people in graves unless they are dead! Further, this text speaks of “his death.”

“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.” (v. 10) This is perhaps one of the strongest statements in all of Scripture concerning the atonement. Of all people who should be able to fathom the

importance of this, it's Seventh-day Adventists. Few understand the implications of the usage of the term "soul" as Adventists do. The Word of God does not say that the Messiah would give his human body alone for the offering, but instead His "soul." The Hebrew word for "soul" is נֶפֶשׁ - *nephesh*. This refers to the total being, all which lives and breathes!

"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (verses 11, 12) Here is a clear allusion to the drink offering which was poured out to show total and complete sacrifice. The Word states that Jesus "poured out his soul unto death." Here "soul" is again the Hebrew *nephesh*. The word for "death" (מָוֶת - *maveth*) is from the root word translated "die" in Ezekiel 18:4 where we read, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." We have preached for years that Satan wants you to believe that you don't really die when you die. Beloved, Satan is even more interested in you believing that Jesus didn't really die on the cross.

## Christ's Experience on the Cross

The type of death that Jesus experienced is equally important to the fact that He fully died. The Bible says that Jesus "was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Hebrew 2:9) The Bible speaks of death and it also speaks of a second death. Notice the following verses:

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;

He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." (Revelation 2:11)

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Revelation 20:6)

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." (Revelation 20:14)

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8)

Clearly the lost will experience the second death, the destruction in the lake of fire. The second death is a death of utter despondency, a death without any hope or expectation of a future existence; a death without a resurrection. The *emotional experience* of Jesus was equivalent to that of the second death. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm opens a window into the mind of Christ as He hung upon the cross. Notice the graphic account of some of His thoughts:

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon

thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.

"Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death." (Psalm 22:1-15)

The extreme anguish Christ experienced at the cross is described in the following verses: "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah." (Psalm 88:6, 7)

In His mind, Christ recounts how the Father always helped the rebellious children of Israel when they cried out to Him. Yet, He, the spotless Son of God is left alone, deserted, as it were, at His worst hour! He feels that he has sunk below even humanity to the state of a worm. Before the cross, Jesus had stated, "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." (John 8:29) Now the One who has sent Jesus on this terrible mission has left Him. Jesus felt as if He was "poured out like water." Water cannot be held without a container. When you try to remove a container away from water, the water does not stay together but disperses. In His spirit, with the weight of the sin of the world upon Him, Jesus felt like He was coming apart.

"The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt." (*Desire of Ages*, p. 753)

"Sin, so hateful to his sight, was heaped upon him till he groaned beneath its weight. No wonder that his humanity trembled in that fearful hour.



Angels witnessed with amazement the despairing agony of the Son of God, so much greater than his physical pain that the latter was hardly felt by him.” (*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 163)

“The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father’s acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father’s wrath upon Him as man’s substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God.” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 753)

Christ made the conscious decision that if it meant He must die for eternity so you can live with God forever, then He was willing to do it For just you friend, Jesus would have suffered the death of the cross. But not only did Jesus suffer, but the Father suffered with Him.

The death of Christ proves the love of God. “We love him, because he first loved us.” (1 John 4:19) That love is what motivates the Christian: “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.” (2 Corinthians 5:14) Christ is the perfect revelation of the character of God. When Paul saw Jesus lifted up on the cross, he didn’t just see the Son of God, but the Father Himself crucified with His Son. Of course the Father did not physically die, but the message of the cross is a revelation of the eternal, unselfish principles of God’s character. In the giving of His son, God has loudly declared that He will serve His creation, no matter what the personal inconvenience, pain, and suffering to Himself. The Father is willing to serve and save man at any cost to Himself. Referring to the charges that Satan had made against God, Ellen White wrote:

“Satan had accused God of requiring self-denial of the angels, when he

knew nothing of what it meant himself, and when he would not himself make any self-sacrifice for others. This was the accusation that Satan made against God in heaven; and after the evil one was expelled from heaven, he continually charged the Lord with exacting service which he would not render himself. Christ came to the world to meet these false accusations, and to reveal the Father.” (*Review & Herald*, February 18, 1890)

Not only did the cross answer questions concerning the character of God, the death of Christ revealed the true nature of Satan and sin. Calvary revealed the character of rebellion. It showed that Satan would go to any length to cause suffering to God. There is no limit to the effort Satan would put forth to have things his way. Satan was demonstrating the principle that has motivated him: he expects others to serve him at any expense necessary. Unlike God, who is willing to offer service at His expense to us, Satan expects our service to him at our expense!

Jesus said in Matthew 16:24, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” What Christ is telling us is that as our love for Him grows, we will accept the principle of the cross: a willingness to serve others at our own expense. The unconverted heart follows the principle of Satan. The converted heart follows the principle of Christ. Only the true death of Christ as demonstrated at Calvary can motivate men’s hearts to make such a change.

## The Resurrection of Jesus

Though Jesus had received the world’s sins upon Him causing His death, the Father could raise Him to life. Peter stated, “Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.” (Acts 2:24)

At least thirty times, the Bible says that God, the Father, raised Christ from the dead. Paul said that he was an apostle, “not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God, the Father, who raised him from the dead.” (Galatians

1:1) (See also, Acts 2:24,30,32; 3:15,26; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:23,30,33,34,37; 17:31; 26:8; Romans 4:24,25; 6:4; 8:11; 10:9; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:15; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2 Timothy 2:8; Hebrews 13:20; and 1 Peter 1:2.)

In Ephesians 1:19, 20 Paul declared “And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.” If Christ had actually raised Himself from the dead, as some people believe, then Paul’s words could not have been true. It would not have been the Father’s power, but the power of Christ that would have been demonstrated.

As noted earlier, the Trinitarian doctrine claims that Jesus raised Himself. This does not match thirty different Bible verses! When one starts with a distorted foundation, then that which follows is sure to be wrong.

## Conclusion:

The Trinity doctrine distorts God’s wondrous love on several vital points. It distorts God’s love in the gift He gave to mankind. It distorts the ability of Jesus to truly become a man and live as we must live. The Trinitarian doctrine denies full fellowship and access to the Father and Son. The Trinity doctrine denies the death of the cross and replaces it with a mystical partial death that really isn’t death. In fact, some churches even teach that while Jesus was “dead” He went to “hell” and preached to lost souls before He resurrected Himself Sunday morning! Such is the effect of this satanic teaching.

How thankful I am that we can believe John 3:16 for exactly what it says. That God does love us so much that He really gave His only begotten Son to die for our sins.

*Allen Stump*

# “The Passion of the Christ”

This February 25<sup>th</sup>, Ash Wednesday, “The Passion of the Christ” was released by writer and director Mel Gibson. Gibson, a pre Vatican II Catholic who believes in the Latin Mass and fish on Friday, has created what is proving to be one of the most controversial films of all time.

The play comprises the last twelve hours of Christ’s life, from the Garden of Gethsemane to His death on the cross. Gibson’s purpose was to share what Christ suffered for mankind. The emphasis is on the physical sufferings of Christ and is so graphic and explicit that the movie received an “R” rating because of violence. In an interview with Diane Sawyer, shown on a special Monday night edition of “Primetime,” Gibson defended the extreme violence in his film saying:

“I wanted it to be shocking. And I also wanted it to be extreme. I wanted it to push the viewer over the edge. And it does that. I think it pushes one over the edge. So, that they see the enormity, the enormity of that sacrifice; to see that someone could endure that and still come back with love and forgiveness, even through extreme pain and suffering and ridicule.”

While the movie displays some flashbacks to earlier times in the life of Christ, the context of the gospel narrative is missing. The accuracy of the film has its proponents and its critics as well. Pope John Paul II is credited with saying, “It is as it was,” after seeing the film. Others, such as *Newsweek* magazine (see accompanying article, “*Newsweek* attacks the Bible”), fear that Gibson took sections out of context from the Bible, added non-biblical scenes, or presents materials from a distorted viewpoint. Gibson states that he stayed close to the Biblical text, preferring it to historical accounts.

We cannot judge Gibson’s heart or motives. While he is a devoted Catholic, so was Martin Luther at one time. The movie does have extra Biblical

scenes and its music presents an emotional environment that would not be found reading the Bible. Gibson does not deny that he has been influenced by the writings of Nun Anne Catherine Emmerich of France (*The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*) who claimed to have visions on the passion of Christ.

Evangelist Billy Graham was so moved that he wept after seeing the film. Newscaster Paul Harvey called it a “masterpiece” and said that he was greatly moved by the film. But will it really make a difference? Many evangelicals think it may be the greatest witnessing tool in this century or ever. Does the film evoke passion and feelings? Yes it does. However, so do many soap operas and many other fictional works.

Jesus said, “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.” (John 6:63a) The flesh profiteth nothing and representations of it profit little also. Jesus continued by saying, “the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63b) If the sinful heart cannot be brought to repentance by the recorded words of Christ as given in the inspired word of God as recorded in the gospel accounts, then do not expect an uninspired passion play on Christ’s life to inspire people to true Godly repentance. The words of God in the believer’s mind, with the workings of the Holy Spirit can portray a much clearer picture of Christ’s passion to the believer than an uninspired motion picture. Once someone views a picture of Jesus or a movie about Him, his or her mind carries a limited idea about Jesus that will be hard to have removed.

The real issue of Christ’s death is not the physical sufferings that He endured. Yes, His physical sufferings were great, but you can read *Foxes’ Book of Martyrs* and see equal or greater physical suffering. The issue is

the emotional and spiritual experience that Jesus went through and this the film cannot portray like God’s word teaches. While the gospels accurately tell of Christ’s physical sufferings, the emphasis is not on the physical agony that Jesus received, but rather on the emotional and spiritual suffering that He endured. Jesus suffered “the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:8) If this is just physical suffering, then Jesus’ death was neither unique nor special. But the Bible portrays the death of Jesus to be an experience that no human has ever tasted. Inspiration tells us that the weight of the world’s sins killed Jesus and the guilt of the world tortured Jesus to the point that He hardly felt the physical pain!

“Sin, so hateful to his sight, was heaped upon him till he groaned beneath its weight. No wonder that his humanity trembled in that fearful hour. Angels witnessed with amazement the despairing agony of the Son of God, so much greater than his physical pain that the latter was hardly felt by him. The hosts of Heaven veiled their faces from the fearful sight.” (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 163)

“The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 753)

The film is charged by many to be anti-Semitic. To these charges, Gibson says that the film simply tells a part of the gospel story. Gibson acknowledges that we all killed Jesus. He died for the sins of the world. True, it was at the hands of the Jewish leaders and the Roman Empire, but this is also part of the facts, just as it was part of the fact that the German government killed over 6 million Jews during the holocaust. We have Auschwitz still with us as a memorial whose upkeep is paid for by the Germans! The movie



“Schindler’s List” (1993) tells of Oskar Schindler who uses Jews to start a factory in Poland during the war. He witnesses the horrors endured by the Jews, and starts to save them. This movie did not cause hatred toward Germans, nor an uprising against them.

Some evangelical Christians believe that the opposition to the film proves it must be good and correct and that

Satan is working against it. However, rejection by certain critics does not mean that it is acceptable, neither does acceptance by the Pope make it bad. Popular opinion never decides good or bad. I believe that the focus of the film is off the mark and that it portrays a mystical Christ with an emphasis on physical sufferings instead of the Biblical Christ whose sufferings were

primarily emotional and spiritual. Further, I believe that the physical representation of the gospel scenes will only limit our minds to the working of the Holy Spirit. I do not recommend that Christians view or encourage others to watch this film.

*Allen Stump*

## Newsweek Attacks the Bible

The writers of *Newsweek* magazine has been one of the most vocal critics of the film, “The Passion of the Christ.” Much of their criticism is based upon their view of the Bible. In their February 16, 2004, issue they wrote:

“But the Bible can be a problematic source. Though countless believers take it as the immutable word of God, Scripture is not always a fateful record of historical events; the Bible is the product of human authors who were writing in particular times and places with particular points to make and visions to advance.” (*Newsweek*, February 16, 2004) This charge was

echoed by NBC’s *Today Show* co-host, Katie Couric when she recently interviewed a writer from *Newsweek*, and Franklin Graham, son of Billy Graham.

“The Bible did not descend from heaven fully formed and edged in gilt. The writers of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John shaped their narratives several decades after Jesus’ death to attract converts and make their young religion—understood by many Christians to be a faction of Judaism—attractive to as broad an audience as possible.” (*Ibid.*)

The magazine states that historically, Pilate was an “inflexible,

stubborn, and cruel disposition,’ and known to execute troublemakers without trial.” (*Ibid.*) This is contrasted with what *Newsweek* says the Bible portray as a “reluctant, sympathetic executioner.” *Newsweek* states “it is very difficult to imagine Caesar’s man being bullied by the people he usually handled roughly.” (*Ibid.*) However, the magazine does not mention that Pilate’s wife suffered many things in a dream about Jesus nor discuss the effects that having the Son of God stand before a person could have on the individual.

*Allen Stump*

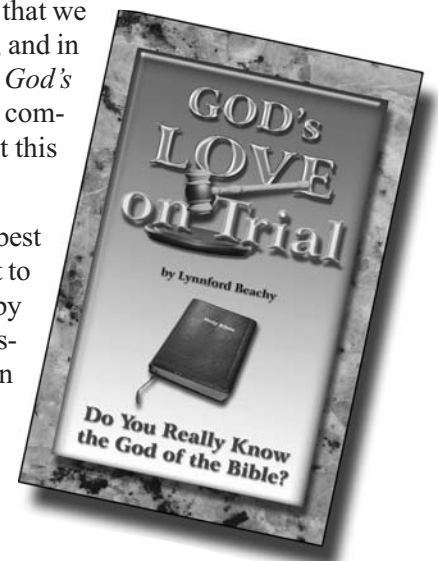
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## New Book on God’s Character Finished

Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, came to this earth to give us an understanding, that we may know the true God of the Bible. Do you know Him as He is revealed in His Word, and in Christ, or have you settled for some philosophical conception of God in His place? *God’s Love on Trial* will answer that question. It details what the Bible says about God, and compares it with the trinitarianism, tritheism, modalism, and unitarianism. We believe that this 44-page book will clarify these issues for you and your friends.

Many of those who have already read this book have reported that it is one of the best books they have read on this subject to date. It is designed to clarify some of the difficult to understand issues about God. It is written in simple language that is easily understood by all. From the drunk on the street, to the minister in the pulpit, this book is sure to have a positive impact, drawing people to love and worship the only true God, and His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

If you do not have a copy of this book, we strongly encourage you to get a copy for yourself and your friends. (The suggested donation is \$1.50 per book, plus actual shipping costs.)



*Lynnford Beachy*

## Youth's Corner - Music

Music is one of the most popular forms of entertainment in modern society today. It calls thousands to the concerts and bands that characterize this highly admired “art.” Some claim it as the center of their lives. It is no secret that music can have a powerful influence over our minds and that listening to some forms of popular music can be extremely habit forming.

Sensitivity over this subject is familiar since many individuals consider music a part of their personality—who they are. Everyone has their own preferences and everyone has their own reasons for listening to music. It is not my purpose in writing this to present arguments regarding one kind of music versus another. Rather I would just like to share some thoughts and principles that I have discovered to help you make your own distinctions between the music you will truly benefit from, and the music that will do just the opposite.

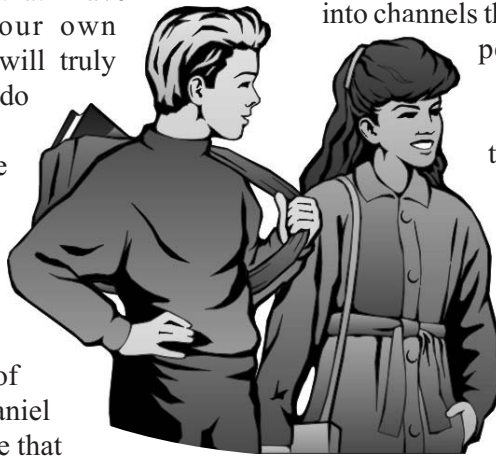
Music, when mentioned in the Bible is always associated with worship. Usually the praise of God, but it is also found to be a part of false, idolatrous worship (such as the incident of worshipping the golden calf in Exodus 32:18 or the worship of Nebuchadnezzar’s image of gold in Daniel 3:5). With this in mind we can conclude that music can be used for good, uplifting purposes, or bad, degrading purposes.

The purpose of our creation was to live for God “for ... thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” (Revelation 4:11) Thus we ought to count it a privilege that we are asked that “... whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31) The talent of music as with all talents, ought to serve that purpose. Songs in which the lyrics are not in accordance with sacred themes therefore, ought to be excluded. Psalms 11 says: “sing praises unto the Lord.” Think of it in the light that if it’s not for God it’s really for Satan, because there’s no “in between.” If you’re not singing the song to the Lord, who are you really singing it to? If the lyrics magnify the evil practices of this world or uplift an un Christ-like character or thought, why sing/listen to it at all? We are told not to conform to the world (Romans 12:2) so why should we conform to its standards in songs—songs that were written for the glory of the world, not the glory of God? We are also told to “love not the world” (1 John 2:15), but if we love its songs/music don’t we love a part of the world?

Then, aside from the actual song/lyrics part, is the music part. We know that it can have an influence over our minds.

For example, some forms of music appear to create this unbeatable “high” or some forms tend to make one sad or depressed. These may be extremes, so we’ll look at a perhaps, more moderate view. Just think of how many people listen to music to “forget about something” or “get this feeling.” And in many cases it motivates or inspires them to do things that they normally would not do, and lead them to thoughts that otherwise would not come to them. The more subtle forms of this influence are many times not even recognized by the person under its sway.

This is why so many forms of music can be dangerous. We cannot allow anything, including music, to blind our discernment of right and wrong or subtly direct our minds into channels that Satan has devised. You may not really perceive any danger, but listening to certain kinds of music can become very habit-forming. This can become a trap that Satan has set for you to keep you under his influence.



Some good questions to ask yourself when trying to make a determination are: does it inspire me to think on things of God? does it encourage pure and noble thoughts? do I place my music above more important things such as study and prayer? Really think about it! If your music can’t completely correspond with a life

totally in harmony with Biblical principles, it’s not worth listening to. You are placing yourself under the wrong influence. Remember, there are only two sides and two influences. “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (Matthew 6:24) So if it’s not the influence of God, it’s obviously the influence of Satan.

Music is a gift from God. If you have that special gift of voice or the ability to play an instrument, use it for God. Even if you don’t really think you have such talents, use whatever you do have and use it for God! If you’re the kind who just listens to music for personal enjoyment, listen to music that will advance your walk with the Lord, not lead you away. “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” (Proverbs 3:6)

*Janine Corklin*

Janine Corklin is a teenager writing from her home in the beautiful country area of northwestern Pennsylvania.

## 2004 West Virginia Camp Meeting Notice

Smyrna Gospel Ministries would like to invite all who are interested in preparing for the return of the Lord to attend camp meeting June 15-19, at the Smyrna Sabbath Chapel in West Virginia. We pray that this will be the best camp meeting the movement has ever had, so plan now to bring your Bibles and a cheerful heart.

We will be feasting upon God's Word, special music, testimonies, and great fellowship. Brother David Clayton of Restoration Ministries, Jamaica, will be our featured evening speaker. Some of the other speakers include, Dennis Robertson, Lynnford Beachy, Ken Corklin, and Allen Stump.

While we acknowledge that meetings are the main focus of camp meeting, we realize that it is, at times, difficult to find the time for personal time with God, and time with one another, when a camp meeting schedule is very full. To help provide time for personal time with the Father and the Son, as well as time for fellowship with each other, we have scheduled meetings in the following manner:

The first meeting will be Tuesday evening, June 15. Each day will begin with an early morning, before breakfast, devotional. After breakfast there will be a morning service with a health presentation and message from God's Word, and a midmorning service with a message from God's Word. Except for Sabbath, only youth meetings (ages 4–young adult) will be scheduled in the afternoon. Each day will end with an evening service, which will consist of a health presentation and a message from God's

Word. We hope to have special music for all services. If you wish to contribute, please contact the camp meeting's music coordinator, Malcolm McCrillis, (423) 772-3161.

This is a *camp* meeting. You need to bring a tent or make other arrangements. We *do not* have cabins or rooms available. Interest is running very high, and while we hope to have enough space for all, we will be much more tightly packed than last year. Smyrna will have a few tents and camping supplies for those who do not have, and cannot afford to purchase them. The supply is limited, so if you need to use a tent, camp stove, etc., please request early. We hope to have four showers with hot and cold water available. Don't forget items such as tents, bedding, flashlights, food, toiletries, insect repellent, and modest casual and Sabbath clothes.

While there is room for RV's, we do not have hook-ups. RV's will need to be self-contained. For those who wish, there are motels in the area. The nearest motels are; The Pocahontas Motel (304) 436-2250; Woody's Motel, (304) 732-6540; The Cow Shed, (304) 732-7000; and Twin Falls State Park Resort, (304) 294-4000.

All campers will need to be responsible for their own food. Meals will not be served. For those who use ice chests, ice is available one mile away. We are planning on having a *vegan* haystack Sabbath afternoon fellowship meal for those interested.

For further information contact us by using the contact information on page twelve of this newsletter.

*Allen Stump*

## Whitewater Rafting Trip Planned

Last year a few of those who attended the WV camp meeting got together the day after camp ended and went on an impromptu whitewater rafting trip on the New River in the scenic New River Gorge in West Virginia. Several have asked if we were going to do something similar this year. So that all who might be interested can plan ahead, we are making preparation for a return to the New River Gorge for a rafting trip on Sunday, June 20th.

Our outfitter will be North American River Runners (NARR), one of the oldest outfitters in West Virginia. NARR has the safest record on the river and they go out of their way to ensure a great time for all. The minimum age for this trip is 14. Anyone with a

serious heart problem or other serious illness should not go. The planned trip will go through class 2-4 rapids. There will be an experienced, professionally trained guide on each raft.



Refreshing Whitewater Rafting

This is not a trip for the passive. Whitewater rafting requires each participant to paddle and be directly involved with the experience. If you don't like getting wet, don't consider this. However, if you like water and enjoy a beautiful view, this experience is awesome! NARR is located in Hico, WV, about an hour and ten minutes from Smyrna. The experience will begin at 9:00 a.m. and end late in the afternoon. A vegetarian

meal will be provided. For further information contact Allen Stump at (304) 732-9204.

*Allen*



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## Announcements:

### New Beachy Baby

We are thankful to announce that Zachariah Beachy was born to the Lynnford and Kendra Beachy on February 16 of this year. Zachariah is their third child and the brother of Josiah and Rebekah Beachy. Please keep the family in prayer as they make all the adjustments of having an extra child in the family.



Zachariah Beachy

### Bank Cards

Sometimes we are asked if we accept credit/bank cards to help cover the expense of materials requested or to make donations to the ministry. We do not accept credit/ bank cards. All of our materials are sent on a donation basis. We can send out literature immediately upon request, and after receiving it, you may send a donation by check or money order. We do not recommend sending cash through the mail. ✍

## Next Month:

Brothers Erwin Zoor of Germany and Vlad Ardeias from Romania have written to us about the progress of the work in their part of Europe. We had wanted to print these reports this month, but due the timing of the Sabbath School lesson studies, we have had to delay these reports till next month. Please keep these men, and all of God's workers, in your prayers.

We will also have a study on Babylon and a report on the Florida camp meeting in the next issue. ✍

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*Old Paths* is a free monthly newsletter/study-paper published by Smyrna Gospel Ministries, HC 64 Box 128-B, Welch, WV 24801-9606 U. S. A. The paper is dedicated to the propagation and restoration of the principles of truth that God gave to the early Seventh-day Adventist pioneers. *Duplication is not only permitted, but strongly encouraged.* This issue, with other gospel literature we publish, can be found at our web sites. The urls are: <http://www.smyrna.org> and <http://www.presenttruth.info>. Phone: (304) 732-9204. Fax: (304) 732-7322.

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