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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 16 NUMBER 3

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Founder: Christ – Mt. 16:18
Place: Jerusalem – Isa. 2:1-3, Acts 2:5
Time: A.D. 33 – Dan. 2:44, Acts 2
Head: Christ – Eph. 1:22
Organization:
Christ as head – Eph. 5:23
Elders oversee local church –
Heb. 13:17, Titus 1:5
Deacons as servants –
Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim. 3:8-13
Members compose body –
Col. 1:2

Name (group):
Church of God – Eph. 3:15
Body of Christ – Eph. 1:22-23
Churches of Christ – Rm. 16:16
Bride of Christ – Rm. 7:4

Name (individuals):
Disciples – John 15:8
Saints – Rm. 1:7
Brethren – Lk. 8:21
Children of God – Gal. 4:26
Christian – Acts 11:25-26

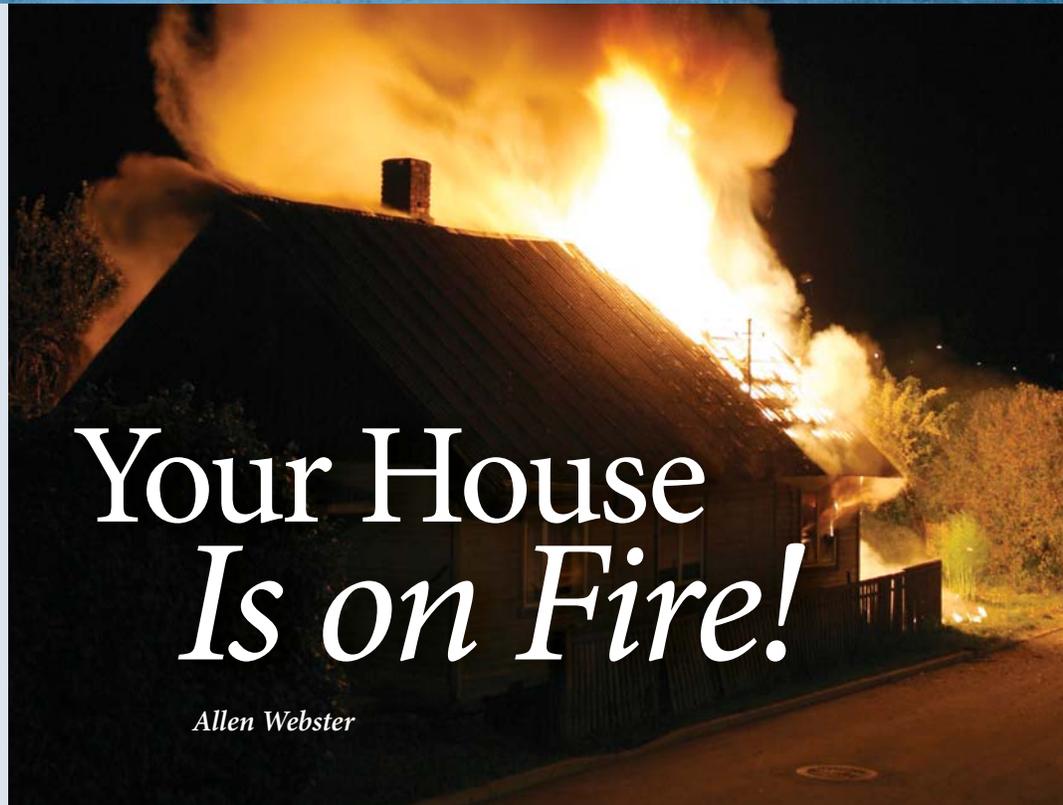
Creed: Jesus/Bible – Acts 8:37
Rule of Faith & Practice:
Word of God – 2 Tim. 3:16-17

Worship: Jn. 4:24
Sing – Eph. 5:19
Pray – Acts 2:42; 1 Thes. 5:17
Teach – Acts 5:42
Communion – 1 Cor. 1:23-26
Contribute – 1 Cor. 16:1-2

Mission: Save Souls – 1 Tim. 4:16
Warning: Be Faithful – 2 John 9

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Your House Is on Fire!

Allen Webster

We shudder to think that one day a frantic call may come for us: “Your house is on fire!” What would go through our minds? What immediate action would we take? Perhaps a better question is, “What preventive steps have we already taken?”

One day every house on earth is going to burn. No one can mark that day on a calendar, but it will be the world’s last day (cf. Matthew 24:36). It is as sure as the reputation of the eternal God:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up (2 Peter 3:10).

Considering this, we should ask ourselves four important questions.

AM I INSURED?

One of the first questions asked when a house burns is, “Were they insured?” We want to know that the people will have some “starting over” money to restock and rebuild. It lessens today’s pain to know that there is hope for tomorrow.

As important as a homeowners policy is, we should be more concerned with spiritual “fire insurance.” The “uninsured” will face Christ’s wrath when He comes “in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:8). Christians will not be hurt by the fire, for they have “fire insurance.”

The rich man did not have it and lifted his eyes in tormenting, flaming fire (Luke 16:19-31). The Bible refers to hell as a lake of fire >>



When the earth burns *where will we live?*

(Revelation 20:14), a furnace of fire (Matthew 13:42), and a baptism of fire (Matthew 3:11). Jesus referred to it as an unquenchable fire five times in three sentences (Mark 9:43–48). He said, in a fearful thought, “For every one shall be salted with fire” (Mark 9:49).

Jesus said no cost is too great to obtain this insurance: “If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched” (Mark 9:43). He is not speaking of literally mutilating the body, which would be sinful (1 Corinthians 6:19–20); He is speaking in exaggerated terms to impress the skeptical of the seriousness of avoiding hell.

DO I HAVE SOMEWHERE ELSE TO LIVE?

An immediate concern for families left homeless is, “Where will we live?” Family members or friends usually take them in. Lacking that, a church or the government will provide temporary shelter.

When the earth burns, where will we live? Jesus has promised His people a place to live—and it won’t be a temporary apartment! He said,

In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:2–3).

Paul was confident of his future abode (2 Corinthians 5:1).

Have you made reservations for a place to live after this life? (1 Peter 1:4; cf. Matthew 7:13–14, 21–23). If not, the devil is reserving you a place in his “guest house” (2 Peter 2:4, 9, 17; 3:7; Jude 6, 13). It’s not an ideal place—the thermostat is stuck on high, there’s no water to drink, the neighbors are rotten, and you can never leave. Why not have your name written on heaven’s roll now by obeying the gospel? (cf. Philippians 4:3; Revelation 20:12; Acts 2:38).

WILL I LOSE EVERYTHING?

We generally ask those who are burned out, “Did you lose everything?” When this earth burns, many will lose everything

for which they have worked and lived. The rich farmer did. He had built bigger barns in which to store his bigger harvest, but he had sent nothing ahead to where he was moving. He was not “rich toward God” (Luke 12:16–21). God asked him a sobering question: “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?” (Luke 12:20). What good did big barns do him when he no longer had access to them?

We need lose nothing of consequence in our eventual “house fire,” for we can put everything valuable in a safe place. We can store our treasures where no thief can get to them, no fire can consume them, no length of time nor harsh elements can deface them, and where we will never have to leave them behind. That storage vault is called heaven (Matthew 6:19–20).

WILL MY FAMILY ESCAPE?

Losing possessions is serious, but that loss is insignificant compared to losing loved ones. Our hearts are torn up and poured out to those who have lost beloved children, parents, or spouses in fires. But what about when the fire that destroys the world is finished? Will our families survive?

Someone said, “You cannot go to heaven alone, and you will not go to hell alone.” We are influencing others, and usually it is those whom we love the most that we influence the most (Matthew 5:14–16). Whether our spouses and children go to heaven depends largely upon our influence.

Many would spare no cost or effort to save a family member from a burning building, but these same people make only weak and halfhearted efforts to save their souls from eternal destruction. Each of us must ask, “Am I doing all I can to take my family to heaven?” There may come a time when there is nothing else we can do, but have we reached that point yet? Is there another invitation we can extend, another heart-to-heart talk we can have, another Bible study we can conduct, another tract we can give, another visit we can make, another phone call we can take time for, or another prayer we can offer?

Your house is not on fire—yet. Will you be ready when the earth is destroyed by fire? ❖

Will You Shoot My Mule?



In his autobiography, *Number 1*, Billy Martin told about hunting in Texas with Mickey Mantle.

Mickey had a friend who would let them hunt on his ranch. When they reached the ranch, Mickey told Billy to wait in the car while he checked in with his friend. Mantle's friend quickly gave them permission to hunt, but he asked Mickey a favor. He had a pet mule in the barn who was going blind, and he didn't have the heart to put him out of his misery. He asked Mickey to shoot the mule for him.

When Mickey came back to the car, he pretended to be angry. He scowled and slammed the door. Billy asked him what was wrong, and Mickey said his friend wouldn't let them hunt.

"I'm so mad at that guy," Mantle said, "I'm going out to his barn and shoot one of his mules!"

Mantle drove like a maniac to the barn. Martin protested, "We can't do that!" But Mickey was adamant.

"Just watch me," he shouted. When they got to the barn, Mantle jumped out of the car with his rifle, ran inside, and shot the mule.

As he was leaving, though, he heard two shots, and he ran back to the car. He saw that Martin had taken out his rifle, too. "What are you doing, Martin?" he yelled.

Martin yelled back, face red with anger, "We'll show him! I just killed two of his cows!"

Billy Martin was a great teller of tales, and many doubt that this event really happened, but it does illustrate a very real truth. Anger can be dangerously contagious. As Proverbs puts it, "Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul" (Proverbs 22:24-25).

—Scott Bowerman

*"Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry:
for anger resteth in the bosom of fools"*

ECCLESIASTES 7:9



A Very Special Day

Just whose day is it anyway?

Sunday should be more than another busy, pleasure-filled, weekend play day. It ought to be more than another excuse for sleeping late and lounging about the house. It must be seen as more than another opportunity to water the grass or wash the family car.

Sunday, the first day of the week, is special. It is the Lord's Day—a day for worship.

The apostle Paul tarried seven days in Troas, until "the first day of the week," when he met with the saints of that city in worship (Acts 20:6-7). John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," wrote, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (Revelation 1:10).

And is it any wonder why? Our Lord arose from the dead on the first day of the week (Matthew 28:1-6). The church was established on Pentecost Day, the first day of the week (Acts 2). This day, the Lord's Day, is more than ordinary. It is special.

Justin Martyr, one of the recognized historians of the early church, wrote near the beginning of the second century, "On Sunday a meeting is held of all who live in the cities and villages . . . They rise together and send up prayers."

Early disciples faced terrible persecution in gathering together for worship on the Lord's Day, yet they assembled and worshipped in spite of their adversities. According to John Fox, in his *Book of Martyrs*, many early Christians were burnt alive, others were dragged by their feet through the streets naked until they expired; many were stoned, and a great number had their brains beaten out with clubs. Nero is said to have dressed Christians in shirts made stiff with wax, fixed them to axle-trees, and then set them on fire to light up his gardens at night.

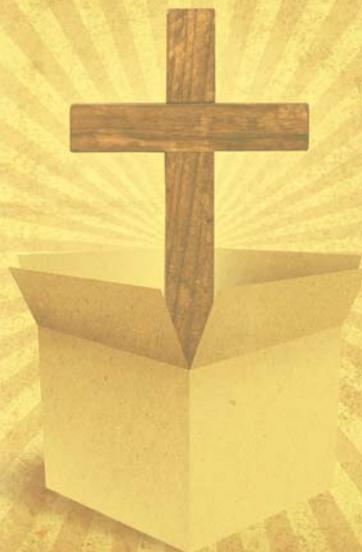
And what of us? We have great difficulty convincing more modern saints, with no fear of physical oppression, to drive the new car down a four-lane, paved highway to a comfortable, climate-controlled building.

By the way, what will you be doing this Sunday?

—Dalton Key, Amarillo, Texas

God's Plan for Saving Man

God's Grace	Ephesians 2:8
Christ's Blood	Romans 5:9
The Holy Spirit's Gospel	Romans 1:16
Sinner's Faith	Acts 16:31
Sinner's Repentance	Luke 13:3
Sinner's Confession	Romans 10:10
Sinner's Baptism	1 Peter 3:21
Christian's Work	James 2:24
Christian's Hope	Romans 8:24
Christian's Endurance	Revelation 2:10





Why Stay Married?

Loving Leadership

Mike Benson, editor of *KneEmail*, included a list of responses to leadership in marriage:

- When a male demands, a female reacts.
- When a male gives, a female responds.
- When a male commits, a female submits. Nothing is more precious to a female than a committed male. Nothing is more depressing to a female than an uncommitted male.
- When a male abuses, a female refuses. Whenever a man abuses a woman, she refuses to respond.
- When a male shares, a female cares. If you find a man who is willing to share with the woman in his life, you will find a woman who is willing to care for her man.
- When a male leads, a female follows. When a man carries out his God-given responsibility for leadership, a woman responds by following his lead. Leadership does not mean being bossy, always telling others what to do. Good leaders lead by example, not by decree. Jesus led by example, and so did Moses, Peter, Paul, and all the other great leaders in the Bible. Leading by example means doing ourselves the things we wish others to do.



—*KneEmail*, Mike Benson, editor

“Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”

EPHESIANS 5:33



For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

Caitlin Flanagan, in the July 13, 2009, edition of *TIME* magazine wrote an article entitled, “Why Marriage Matters.”

She begins by saying, “Buffeted by affairs and ennui, the intact, two-parent family is under assault. What America needs is to get over its commitment issues. (Hint: it isn’t love)” (page 45).

What was so fascinating about the article was that sociologists, feminists, domestic policy-makers, and other experts all came to the groundbreaking conclusion that children are healthier, more successful, and more productive who come from intact, two-parent homes.



Flanagan kept returning to that conclusion, even as high profile cases of infidelity were offered to show how the guilty were selfishly putting their own ideals and needs above what their families truly needed.

While I believe that it is possible for a marriage to grow more romantic, satisfying, and enjoyable each and every day of one’s married life, such is a tangible benefit of the hard work and effort invested in marriage. It is neither automatic nor an entitlement. I should not persevere in marriage or patronize it only when I am having a good time, getting my way, or reaping rewards from it. God created marriage to provide companionship and suitable help (Genesis 2:18-25) and a legitimate sexual outlet (1 Corinthians 7:1-5).

It is thrilling to look back over years of partnership and see in one’s relationship a depth of intimacy built by shared time

and experience. God depicts a loving, close relationship in marriage as the ideal (Song of Solomon, Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7). However, first and last, marriage is a lifelong commitment, an ongoing fulfillment of a vow made to and before God Himself, and a relationship that can be severed with God’s approval only under extreme circumstances (Matthew 19:4-9).

Flanagan said much about marital partners considering how vital their staying married means to raising well-adjusted, optimally-functioning children. She showed the deep-seated, lasting negative effects of divorce upon

families and, ultimately, society.

Yet, while it may only be a matter of semantics, I disagree with her premise. Staying married *is* about love. It is about knowing how to love, God’s way, and intentionally, intensely, and indefinitely nurturing and growing that love in the marriage.

Love involves duty, but it is so much more. It is an act of the will more than a flutter of the heart. Yet, the payoff for marriage gives a man and a woman a lifelong glimmer of light that burns brighter even as the lights of our own lives gradually dim. Let us love our spouses with biblical love and watch the seismic effects for good upon the home, the church, and the culture!

—Neal Pollard, Denver, Colorado

“Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed”

I CORINTHIANS 7:27

Am I Good Enough?



Three men met at the end of a dock on a Florida beach. One is a homeless alcoholic. The second is just an average guy. The third is an honorable man, well respected in the community.

Suddenly, the alcoholic runs and jumps off the dock landing five feet out into the water. The other men yell, "What are you trying to do?"

He yells back, "I'm trying to jump across the Atlantic Ocean!"

The average Joe says, "Watch me, I can do better than that!" He runs, jumps, and lands ten feet out into the water, twice as far as the alcoholic.

The third man laughs and says, "That's nothing. Watch this!" He backs up fifty feet, makes a mad dash across the dock, jumps, and lands twenty feet out, four times as far as the first man.

If we saw such an attempt we would think these men silly to attempt the impossible—jump across the Atlantic

Ocean! But people trying to earn their own salvation are even more foolish. God can't be approached by man on the basis of man's own moral goodness.

Sometimes people are heard to say, "I'm a good person. Won't God accept me into heaven?" The question shows a lack of understanding of the grave nature of sin and the absolute holiness of God. If we were so good that we deserved heaven, salvation would be owed as a debt rather than to be received as a gift (cf. Romans 11:6). Isaiah wrote, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6).

A person may look moral when compared with others, but when compared with Christ, all fall perilously short. Paul states, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). All need grace. This is why the next verse declares Christians have been "justified freely by his grace" (Romans 3:24).

Many do good things for others and

demonstrate a level of morality. However, there is a big difference between morality and righteousness. Righteousness is defined and revealed by a righteous God and seen in His Son "Jesus Christ the righteous" (John 17:25; 1 John 2:1; Hebrews 4:15). To be righteous means that we are innocent or faultless in God's sight. On our own, this is not possible (cf. Romans 3:10). The only way to stand innocent in the presence of a righteous God is to be forgiven and declared righteous by faith in God (Philippians 3:9). We are only accepted "in the Beloved" because we trust in the righteous work He did and submit to what He requires (Ephesians 1:6; Hebrews 5:8-9).

When one realizes this, he is on his way to receiving the free gift of God (Romans 6:23). —Howell Ferguson

To ask a Bible question or view previously answered questions, go to www.HouseToHouse.com.

Bible QUIZ

Send us your answers (address on front) to receive a FREE Bible bookmark. We'll grade and return your questions and enclose the Church of the Bible bookmark as a way of saying "thanks" for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Questions Taken from the King James Version

Answers to Last Issue:

Water, Water Everywhere: 1. Jordan River (Mark 1:9); 2. Remission of sins (Acts 2:38); 3. Cherith (1 Kings 17:3-4); 4. Jordan (Joshua 3:13-16); 5. Euphrates (Jeremiah 13:4); 6. Blood (Exodus 7:17); 7. Peter (Matthew 14:29); 8. Seven (2 Kings 5:14); 9. Sea (Mark 5:13); 10. Water, life (Revelation 22:17); 11. Three (2 Corinthians 11:27; plus Acts 27 records a fourth time that occurred later); 12. Viper (Acts 28:3); 13. Moses (Exodus 2:3, 10); 14. Baptized (Acts 8:38); 15. Amos (Amos 5:24); 16. Hart (deer) (Psalm 42:1); 17. Tree (Psalm 1:3); 18. Cold, good (Proverbs 25:25).



Famous Firsts of the Bible

Directions: Genesis 4:8; 14:18; 19:30; Exodus 28:1-3; Judges 3:9-10; 21:25 (+1 Samuel 11:15); 1 Kings 17:22; Matthew 6:33; Luke 2:8-15; 10:30-31; John 2:1-9; Acts 2:1,41; 7:59; 10:1-48; 11:26; 20:7; Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 15:45; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 6:13-14

1. What is the first book in the Bible named after a woman? _____
2. What is the first book in the Bible named after a man? _____
3. Who was the first judge? _____
4. Who was the first martyred Christian? _____
5. In the parable of the good Samaritan, who first passed by? _____
6. When were the first Christians added to the church? _____
7. What is the first step in the salvation process—hearing God's word, or faith? _____
8. Who was the first king of Israel? _____
9. Who was the first Gentile (non-Jew) convert to Christianity? _____
10. Who was the first high priest? _____
11. Who was the first man recorded in the Bible as having lived in a cave? _____
12. Who was the first murderer? _____
13. Who was the first man? _____
14. What is the first part of the fruit of the Spirit? _____
15. What is the first piece of the armor of God? _____
16. Who were the first people to visit Jesus as a baby? _____
17. Where were the disciples first called Christians? _____
18. What was Jesus' first miracle? _____
19. What is the name of the first priest mentioned in the Bible? _____
20. The disciples assembled on the _____ day of the week to take of the Lord's Supper/break bread.
21. We are to seek first the _____ of God.

Most Stolen Book

Thou shalt not steal is a prominent teaching in the world's most stolen book. The Bible is also the most read and bestselling book worldwide. Here are some interesting Bible facts:

- There are 1,189 chapters in the Bible.
- The shortest verse in the English New Testament is "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). This was right before he raised Lazarus from the dead.
- The Bible was written over a 1500-year span.
- The Bible was originally written in three languages—the Old Testament in Hebrew and a little Aramaic; the New Testament in Greek.
- The longest and shortest chapters of the Bible are both in Psalms, and just two chapters apart. The longest is Psalm 119 while the shortest is Psalm 117.
- Read just a half hour a day and finish the Bible in one year.

"Blessed is he that readeth"

REVELATION 1:3



Free Audio Downloads!



- ▶ Judge Not One Another —Matt Vega
- ▶ God's Love for Man —Eric Owens
- ▶ Proverbs for Youth: Watch Your Companions —Cliff Goodwin
- ▶ The Battle for the Soul —B. J. Clarke
- ▶ Assurance of Forgiveness —Guy N. Woods
- ▶ How to Identify the Church —C. A. Cates
- ▶ Which Way Should a Grave Face? —Allen Webster

To listen to these and more than 5000 others, go to www.HouseToHouse.com/hth/audio



Free Marriage Enrichment

Do you need a little encouragement in your marriage? Just starting out? Going through a rocky time? Each year the churches of Christ host the Great Smoky Mountain Marriage Retreat in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. This year's instructors were Jim Dearman of Chattanooga, Tennessee and Glenn Colley of Huntsville, Alabama. Their seven sessions will provide laughter, insights, and motivation for building the marriage God wants you to have. Listen at www.housetohouse.com/hth/Audio/marriage.htm



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- Quiero Recibir *Casa a Casa* en Español.
- I want to learn more about your Bible school and programs.
- I have a prayer request: _____
- I have a Bible question: _____
- I want to know more about what God requires for salvation. Please have someone schedule a personal visit with me.

I want to learn more about the Bible!

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone: _____

Bible Study Helps:

- Enroll me in a Free Survey of the Bible Home Study Course. *Pressure-free . . . work on your own at home.*
- I want to see the *Visualized Bible Study* series (an in-home personal study). *These popular videos have been seen by people of all religions all over the world.*
- I would like a daily Bible reading schedule.

Tracts:

- NEW!** When Jesus Arrived Late
- NEW!** Who Is at the Controls?
- NEW!** God's Olympics
- NEW!** In Pursuit of Godliness
- Don't Fall
- Saving the Church
- Kingdom of Christ
- Is the Kingdom the Same as the Church?
- Worship Fads or Timeless Truth?
- I Want to Look Upon His Face
- The Discipline of Children
- History's Most Famous Anonymous Wedding
- Jesus Made a Blood Donation for You
- Why Caleb Lived on a Mountain
- Six Sermons a Drunk Preacher Preached (Noah)
- Love Thy Neighbor. The Story of the Good Samaritan
- Heaven Is Four Steps from Any Place on Earth (Step 4)
- In the Way He Should Go (parenting)
- Curiosity May Have Killed the Cat
- Old Age: Taking Care or Taking Advantage?
- A Heart That Devises Wicked Imaginations
- Wait Till the Honeymoon? Many are. Here's why . . .
- A Man with a "Wait" Problem
- Does Heaven Have a Smoking Section?
- Be Swift to Hear. Learning to listen.
- Sweat the Small Stuff
- Under a Bushel of Bushels
- Pornography's Pain
- The Scourging of Jesus
- In Pursuit of Excellence
- God's Hospital
- God's View of Abortion
- Grandparenting
- Back issues of *House to House/Heart to Heart*

Surprising Bible Teachings on Prominent Religious Subjects

Some are surprised to learn that the Bible's teachings differ from what they have always heard. What have you heard about these prominent doctrines?

Falling from grace? The Bible teaches such is possible (Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 6:1-6; 2 Peter 2:20-22).

Inherited total depravity? The Bible teaches that sin is of such a nature that it cannot be inherited (1 John 3:4). Furthermore, the offspring does not bear the iniquity of the parent (Ezekiel 18:20). Children are innocent and safe (Matthew 18:1-4).

Predestination? The Bible teaches that certain kinds of individuals (those who are holy and love God) have been predestined to be saved (Ephesians 1:4-5; Romans 8:28-38); however, it is left up to the individual to choose to become such (Revelation 22:17; Joshua 24:15; Matthew 16:24).

The nature of the soul (spirit)? The Bible teaches that man has a spirit, and that it is immortal (2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Luke 16:19-31; Matthew 25:46; Psalm 22:26).

The reality of hell? The Bible teaches that hell is as real as heaven (Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29). If there is a heaven to gain then there is hell to shun! A comprehensive description and picture of hell is found in Revelation 14:10-11 and Luke 16:19-31.

Divorce and remarriage? The Bible teaches that marriage is for life (Romans 7:1-4). There is one exception: if one's spouse becomes a fornicator, the innocent partner can divorce and remarry (Matthew 19:3-9).

Women preachers? The Bible teaches that women are not to teach in a way that usurps authority over the man (1 Timothy 2:11-15). See also First Corinthians 11:3.

Premillennialism? The Bible teaches that (a) no one knows when Jesus is coming, Mark 13:32; (b) there will be one general resurrection, John 5:28-29; (c) the kingdom is now in existence, Colossians 1:13; (d) Jesus is now reigning as king, Acts 17:7; 1 Corinthians 15:22-27; (e) there will be no earth to come back to after the so-called rapture, 2 Peter 3:10; (f) the land promises to Israel have already been fulfilled, Joshua 21:43-45; 2 Chronicles 9:25.

—Wendell Winkler, *The Church Everybody is Talking About*

Soma Tonga

In India, if you're walking through rural roads, you'll occasionally come across a post with a sturdy shelf about shoulder height. It is called "Soma Tonga," which means "resting place." When people are traveling with a heavy load, they place their heavy load on the shelf for relief. Once rested, they continue their journey.

What do you think Christians in India call Jesus? "My Soma Tonga."

"Cast your cares upon him"

1 PETER 5:7

To Die is Gain

If for me to live is money — then to die is loss.

If for me to live is self — then to die is loss.

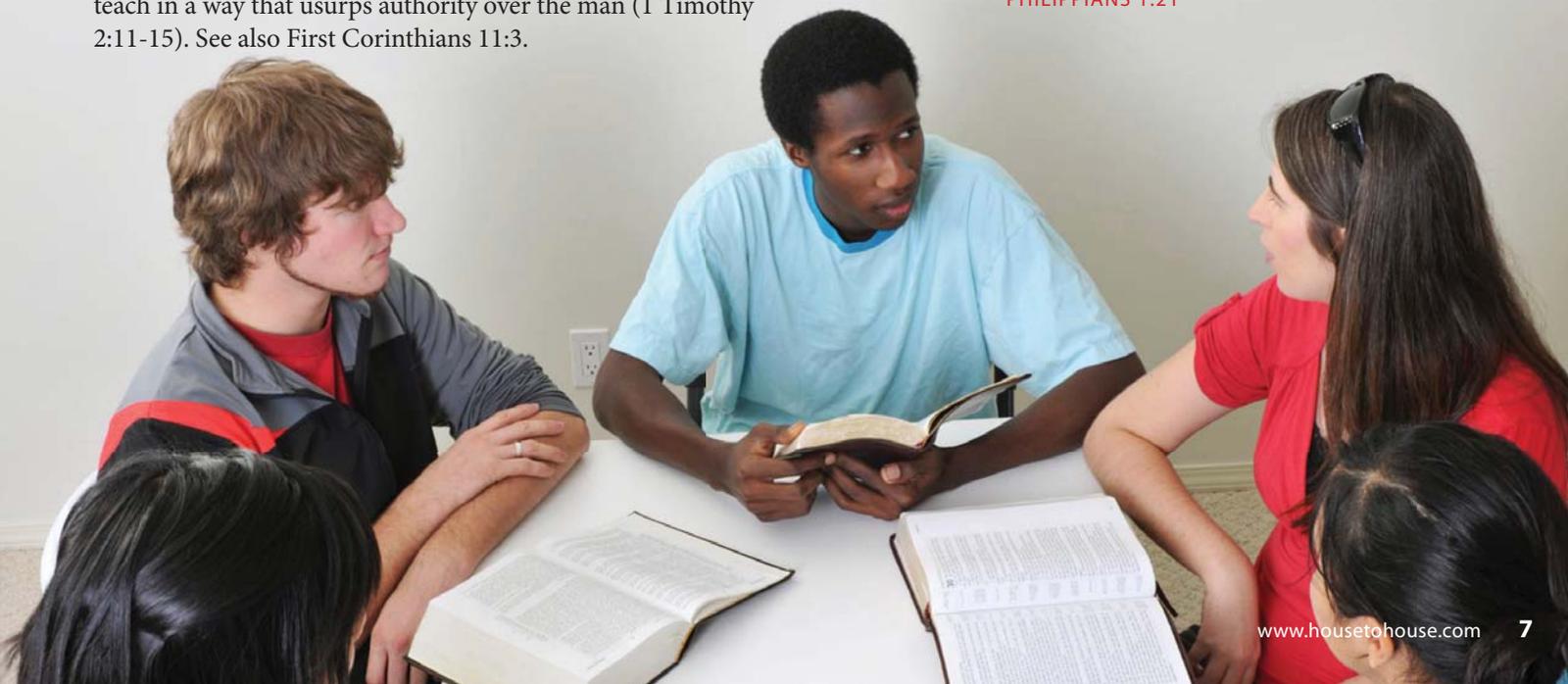
If for me to live is ambition — then to die is loss.

If for me to live is sin — then to die is loss.

But if for me to live is Christ — then to die is gain.

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

PHILIPPIANS 1:21



Thoughts from the HEART

Ready or Not



In a cemetery in Hanover, Germany, is a grave covered with huge slabs of granite and marble, fastened with heavy steel clasps.

It belongs to a woman who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Yet she directed in her will that her grave be made so secure that if there were a resurrection, it could not reach her.

In time, however, a seed began to grow and push its way out from beneath the slabs. As the trunk enlarged, the stones were gradually shifted and the steel clasps were wrenched from their sockets.

The dynamic life force contained in that little seed is only a faint reflection of the tremendous power of God's creative word that someday will call to life the bodies of all who are in their graves. Willing or not, all will be resurrected (John 5:28–29).

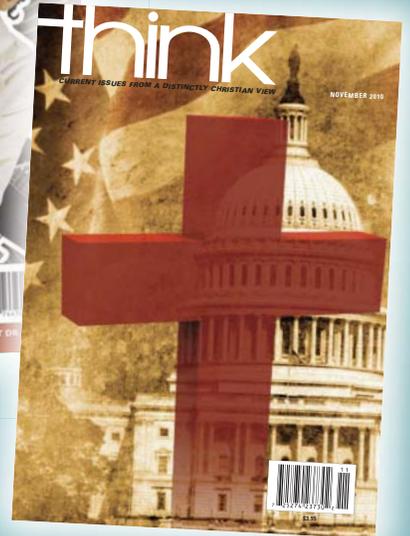
A messenger from God revealed this truth to Daniel. As this angelic messenger opened the door to the hallway of time, he revealed to the prophet many things: the rise and fall of various kingdoms, the invasion of the army from the North, and, ultimately, the resurrection of the dead. For those who are prepared—whose names are written in the Book of Life—it is a resurrection to everlasting life. For those unprepared, it is a resurrection to everlasting damnation.

This Old Testament message is also echoed throughout the New Testament. The apostle Paul declared that “the dead in Christ will rise first” (1 Thessalonians 4:16), while the apostle John saw the dead, who were “judged every man according to their works” (Revelation 20:13).

There is no way you can avoid the resurrection, but you can be ready for it. Make sure that your name is written in the Book of Life. Only a fool fails to prepare for what he knows is coming. Have you believed in Christ (John 3:16), repented of your sins (Luke 13:3), confessed the name of Christ (Romans 10:9-10), and been baptized for the remission of sins? (Acts 2:38). If not, prepare for your grave to be opened one day!

—Tom Moore

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