I picked up a copy of the Jefferson Bible while visiting Poplar Forest, Jefferson's Palladian retreat in Bedford County, Virginia.

I have a keen interest in Jefferson, and have read more about him than any other modern figure. I've stood in the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C., and read his famous words carved in stone. I walked his footsteps in Natural Bridge, Virginia. I've been to the University of Virginia, which he designed and founded in his old age. Jefferson was a remarkable man for his day—in many ways, he was far ahead of his time. I always come away from Monticello impressed with his curiosity, inventiveness, attention to detail, wide-ranging talents, and boundless energy. But Jefferson had his flaws, and recent history has been less flattering to him than the previous two centuries. Suffice it to say that he was a man—a remarkable man in many ways, but he still walked on clay feet. We see the clay prints most clearly when we pick up The Jefferson Bible: The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth, which he completed in 1819. The dust cover of Jefferson's Bible says,

Working in the White House in 1804, Jefferson set out to edit the Gospels in order to uncover the essence of true religion in the simple story of the Life of Jesus. Jefferson was convinced that the authentic...
message of Jesus could be found only by extracting from the Gospels Jesus’ message of absolute love and service, rather than the miracle of the Annunciation, Virgin Birth, or even the Resurrection.

Jefferson’s Bible gives us, according to the back cover, “a preaching Jesus of distinctly human dimensions, without miracles or resurrection.” We are not surprised, then, to find that the last sentence in the Gospel According to Jefferson reads: “There they laid Jesus. And rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, and departed.” You see, Jefferson’s Bible is a page short—it ends in Matthew 27 instead of Matthew 28, on Friday afternoon instead of Sunday morning.

What did Jefferson miss? What evidence do we have of the resurrection? There is much, but let’s focus on the witnesses.

The most outstanding proof that Jesus rose from the dead is that at least 515 eyewitnesses saw Him on twelve different occasions over a period of forty days. “He shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). Jesus had six weeks to establish His identity for all time, and He used the time wisely.

The resurrection of Christ is a fact to be proved, like all other facts, by competent and credible witnesses. If you hit a hole-in-one playing golf Saturday, how would you prove it to incredulous friends on Sunday? You would call over your golfing partner to confirm that he saw you do it. If that failed, then you would bring in others who were there to confirm your story. Any sensible person will believe a report corroborated by several credible witnesses. Paul uses the same logic to prove the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15. He appeals to the witnesses who had attested to the resurrection, and then showed that it was not possible that so many witnesses were deceived (1 Corinthians 15:5–7).

THE WITNESSES ARE SUFFICIENT. The apostle Paul, when writing a letter to a group of new Christians, laid it all out in 1 Corinthians 15:3–6. If every person the Bible identifies as being an eyewitness to Jesus’ resurrection were called to the witness stand for cross-examination, it would take 129 hours to hear their testimony, at only fifteen minutes a person. In other words, it would take from opening session on Monday until the closing session on Friday at dinnertime, listening around the clock to hear the testimony of those witnesses. We in the twenty-first century have a decision to make: whose report will we believe—the more than five hundred eyewitnesses, or the skeptical “scholars” seventeen hundred years removed from the events?

THE WITNESSES WERE DIVERSE. Skeptics, most of whom live centuries removed from the events, would have us believe that the appearances can be explained by mass hysteria or mass hallucinations. Yet the facts do not fit this hypothesis. The time frame does not fit. The interactions were spread over forty days—not merely a few hours or a couple of days (cf. Luke 24:13–35; 1 Corinthians 15:5–7). Most of these five hundred witnesses were still living twenty-five years later when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. There is no record of a single one who ever changed his mind and recanted his testimony.

The number of witnesses and the circumstances do not fit these theories. A large number of people saw Him alive in different locations, at different times, and under different circumstances. No two appearances were exactly alike.

Several saw Him more than once, some alone, and some in large groups. One was in the morning; another in the evening. In some cases Jesus ate with them; one time He cooked a meal; another, He did a miracle like one He had done in His early ministry—the large draft of fish (John 21; Luke 5). The reactions to seeing the resurrected Christ were also diverse. Some worshipped; perhaps others wept for joy. Yet all were transformed by the encounter.

THE WITNESSES WERE UNIFORM IN IDENTIFYING THE LORD. Each told similar stories about his or her experience. How could they be sure that the person they were seeing was not an imposter? Jesus kept the scars from His crucifixion, which no one else could imitate (Luke 24:39–40). Presumably He could have had any resurrected body He wanted, and yet He chose one identifiable, mainly by scars that could be seen and touched. Doubtless the reason could be summed up in the theme of John’s biography: “To the intent ye may believe” (John 11:15). Dr. Luke recorded Jesus’ reference to His body as “flesh and bones” (Luke 24:39), which is the only time that phrase is used in the New Testament (usually the body is identified as “the flesh and blood”—five times in New Testament). Some see in this a change in Jesus’ resurrection body—that it was bloodless—and tie it to His giving His blood for us. Evidently His body did still have a gaping hole large enough for Thomas to insert his hand (John 20:27).

As a group, these appearances comprise overwhelming evidence for the resurrection—evidence that would stand up in any court of law in the world. Jesus said, “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:29).

No thanks, Mr. Jefferson, we will keep that page of the Bible.

Endnotes:
1 Charles S. Adams, Religious Studies Review.
2 Jefferson Bible, page 147.
3 Albert Barnes, Barnes’ Notes.
5 Tim LaHaye, Jesus, Who Is He?
6 LaHaye.
LOVE

The Price of Children

The government recently calculated the cost of raising a child from birth to 18 and came up with $160,140 for a middle-income family. Talk about sticker shock! That doesn't even touch college tuition. But $160,140 isn't so bad if you break it down. It translates into:

■ $8,896.66 a year,
■ $741.38 a month, or
■ $171.08 a week.
■ That's a mere $24.24 a day!
■ Just over a dollar an hour.

“Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them.”

PSALM 127:5

Burdens Give Us Wings

An old legend says that long ago God had a great many burdens that He wished to have carried from one place to another on earth, so He asked the animals to lend a hand. All of them began to make excuses for not helping: the elephant was too dignified; the lion too proud; and so on.

Finally the birds came and said, “If you will tie them into small bundles, we’ll carry them for you. We are small but we would like to help.”

So God fastened upon the back of each a small bundle, and they all set out walking across the plain to their destination. They sang as they went, and did not seem to feel the weight of their burdens at all. Every day the burdens seemed lighter and lighter, until the loads seemed to be lifting the birds, instead of the birds carrying the burdens.

When they arrived at their destination, they discovered when they removed their loads, there were wings in their place, wings which enabled them to fly to the sky and the treetops.

They had learned how to carry their burdens, and their loads had become wings of the spirit, to lift us into happiness.

—Author Unknown

“I was sinking deep in sin, Far from the peaceful shore,
Very deeply stained within, Sinking to rise no more;
But the Master of the sea, Heard my despairing cry,
From the waters lifted me—Now safe am I”

“Love lifted me . . .”

Won’t you allow Jesus to lift you from the deadly depths of sin?

—David A. Sargent, Mobile, Alabama (Story adapted from Tom Moore, Avenue T Church of Christ; Lyrics written by James Rowe 1912.)
Financial Advice for Hard Times

- **Set a budget.** Determine where the money leaks are. Evaluate priorities.
- **Do not wreck your finances for big ticket items**—even for a fancy house.
- **Do not allow the “tyranny of the urgent” to outvote the important.**
- **Do not buy items not on the budget.** For “big ticket” items on the budget, wait thirty days before signing. This allows clearheadedness and cancels impulse buying. On most purchases, wait twenty-four hours—in other words, sleep on it. Merchants arrange their stores to promote impulse spending. It keeps them in business; it puts you out of business. Impulse buying concerns wants, not needs, so stay away from it.
- **Evaluate your budget monthly.** If this takes more than an hour, then your budget is too complicated.
- **Remember, your budget is your friend and not the law.** It can be changed when necessary. It is your best paper friend. It may be a lot of fun to get into debt, but it is sheer misery to get out of debt.
  
  “Strong men retain riches.”
  PROVERBS 11:16

Parenting Tips

- **Motherhood**—If it was going to be easy, it never would start with something called labor!
- **Parents:** People who bear infants, bore teenagers, and board newlyweds.
- **Shouting** to make your children obey is like using the horn to steer your car, and you get about the same results (Proverbs 15:1).
- **To be in your children’s memories tomorrow, you have to be in their lives today** (Genesis 44:30).
- **Good advice on child rearing:** enjoy them while they are still on your side.

Parenting Tips

- **Raising a teenager is like nailing Jell-O to a tree.**
- **The joy of motherhood:** the time when all the children are finally in bed.
- **Life’s golden age** is when the kids are too old to need babysitters and too young to borrow the family car.
- **Grandparents** are similar to a piece of string—handy to have around and easily wrapped around the fingers of grandchildren (Proverbs 17:6).

“Forget a merry heart doeth good.”
PROVERBS 17:22

Come Again?

A woman went to court and told the judge she wanted a divorce. “Do you have any grounds?” the judge asked.
“Just two acres,” she said.
“No, I mean do you have a grudge?”
“No, we park the car in the front yard.”
Frustrated, the judge continued, “Does your husband beat you up?”
She replied, “No, I get up before he does.”
“Then why do you want a divorce?”
“Because,” she confessed, “we just don’t seem able to communicate.”

“A merry heart doeth good.”
PROVERBS 17:22

Misery Is Good?

The key to a happy relationship could be accepting that some miserable times are unavoidable, experts say.

The Journal of Marital and Family Therapy reports that the pursuit of relationship nirvana can actually be potentially damaging, the unrealistic aim leading couples to feel they’ve failed. “Nobody’s life or relationship can be in a permanent state of happiness,” says Jan Parker of the Association of Family Therapy. “There will always be difficult times.” Instead, “Couples need to build strengths, such as understanding, into their relationships to help them cope with hard times and appreciate the good times.”

“The trying of your faith worketh patience.”
JAMES 1:3

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.
Although it may sound arrogant for one to say, “I know that I am saved,” the Bible teaches that the Christian can know that very thing. John wrote, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:13).

How can we have such confidence? Both trust and obedience play a part. John wrote, “Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments” (1 John 2:3). Jesus told Nicodemus that one must be born again of water and of the Spirit in order to enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:3–5). A person is born again of the water and of the Spirit by being baptized into Christ. This person is then saved—and can know it. Thus begins a life-long journey of the “babe in Christ” growing into the mature Christian.

We must also trust God to keep His Word. Christians are not perfect, and God does not expect us to be. We still sin, but God forgives those sins as we repent of them and confess them. As God expects a forgiving attitude of Christians, He shows a forgiving attitude as a Father.

Salvation does not depend on how few sins or mistakes we make, but upon whether or not we accept God's grace and are obedient to Christ. As we continue to serve Christ, the Lord continues to bless and forgive us. If we walk in the light, following the pathway of Christ, His blood continues to cleanse us of sin (1 John 1:5–7).

Many Christians have doubts because they are not maturing as Christians should, but are moving backward. This often happens when a person does not give his whole heart to Christ. Jesus said, “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it” (Luke 9:24). The person who tries to live as a Christian while not fully surrendering his life to Christ must have doubts, because he cannot walk in the light if he does not give his whole heart to the Lord.

As the hymn says, “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.”

—Bob Prichard, P. O. Box 3071, Oxford, AL 36203

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

A survey of churchgoing people revealed the following:

- The most widely known Bible verse among adults and teens is “God helps those who help themselves”—which is not actually in the Bible and even conflicts with the basic message of Scripture.
- One-third could not put the following in order: Abraham, the Old Testament prophets, the death of Christ, and Pentecost.
- Half could not sequence the following: Moses in Egypt, Isaac’s birth, Saul’s death, and Judah’s exile.
- One-third could not identify Matthew as an apostle, from a list of New Testament names.
- When asked to locate the biblical book supplying a given story, one-third could not find Paul’s travels in Acts, half did not know that Jesus’ birth was in Matthew, half did not know that the Passover story was in Exodus.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”
HOSEA 4:6

Free Audio Downloads!

- Who Is a Christian? —Winford Claiborne
- The Gospel in a Nutshell —Wade Webster
- Righteous Remnant: Few That Find It —Tom Holland
- The Virgin Birth of Christ —Winfred Clark
- Our God is Alive —Mack Lyon
- There Is Power in the Blood —Allen Webster

To listen to these and more than 1000 others, go to www.HouseToHouse.com/hth/audio

Recommended Viewing

We recommend Getting to Know Your Bible with Billy Lambert, well-respected gospel preacher. The program can be seen on DirecTV Channel 367 WHT Sunday, 6:30 p.m. / 8:30 p.m., and on Channel 377 TCT Sunday, 8:30 p.m., and Monday–Friday, 9:30 p.m. Open your Bible and tune in each week.

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The Church of Christ

During His ministry upon the earth, Jesus promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18). Although He was rejected and crucified, His promise did not fail. God’s promises never do (2 Peter 3:9; Numbers 23:19). In Acts 2, we find the church in existence on the earth just as Jesus had promised (Acts 2:47). His death was not an unforeseen occurrence but rather a part of the “determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23; Isaiah 53; Revelation 13:8). His death facilitated, rather than frustrated, God’s eternal plan (Ephesians 3:10–11).

It was through the shedding of His blood at Calvary that the church was purchased (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25).

The difficulty that faces man today is not whether the church of Christ exists, but rather how to find it among the hundreds of man-made churches that dot the religious landscape. For sure, the search can be frustrating. In fact, some have given up on ever finding the church, while others have simply settled for something less than the church recorded in the New Testament. While identifying the church among so many counterfeits may be difficult, it is not impossible. God has given man a blueprint by which he can prove that which is good and reject that which is bad (1 Thessalonians 5:21; 2 Peter 1:3).

From the beginning, the followers of Christ have been identified by their steadfast adherence to the commands of Christ. To some Jews that believed on Him, Jesus declared, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed” (John 8:31). In like manner, concerning the church, Luke recorded, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

How do you identify the true church in the midst of so many churches today? You find it in the same way that men and women found it in the first century. You find it by finding those who are abiding in the doctrine of Christ in all aspects of their work and worship (2 John 9–11). We humbly ask for you to put us to the test (1 Thessalonians 5:21). We sincerely invite you to “come and see” if we are that church (Isaiah 2:2–3; John 1:39, 46; 4:29).

Wade Webster, Southaven, Mississippi
What Really Changed Paul's Life?

All of Jerusalem was disturbed (Acts 21:30). Paul had been seized, dragged out of the temple, almost beaten to death, and falsely charged with desecrating the temple (Acts 21:30-32, 35).

Of interest, when he was finally allowed to defend himself, he talked about—of all things—his conversion. He spoke of

- his “education” at the feet of Gamaliel (22:1-3)
- his “convictions” relative to the strictness of the law (22:3)
- his “dedication” as a zealot, persecuting the church (22:3-5)
- his “immersion” for the remission of sins (22:6-16); and
- his “commission” as one sent to the Gentiles (22:17-21).

**Question:** What really changed Paul’s life? What turned him from one religion to another? What redirected his energies? Why was he converted?

**Answer:** He saw Jesus! On the road to Damascus, his associates saw the same light Paul encountered, but only Paul was temporarily blinded. Why? Paul was the only one actually to see the Lord in His glory, and it changed his life forever (Acts 22:6-9; 9:7).

Even so, when you and I study the Old Testament, we are encouraged to anticipate a Savior. When we study the New Testament, we are introduced to Jesus as that Savior. If we are baptized into Him (Galatians 3:26-27) and allow Him to live in us (Galatians 2:20), like Paul, it will make all the difference in our lives . . . and our eternity.

—Dan Winkler, Huntingdon, Tennessee

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**Bible QUIZ**

Find the answers as you read this issue of House to House / Heart to Heart.

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

**Questions from Pages 1 and 2**

1. **T** or **F** Belief in the virgin birth or the resurrection is not essential to true Christianity.
2. **T** or **F** There is not much evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.
3. **T** or **F** We should be able to prove that Jesus was resurrected before we believe it.
4. **T** or **F** Witnesses are not a reliable way to prove that Jesus was resurrected.
5. The most outstanding proof that Jesus rose from the dead is that at least _________ eyewitnesses saw Him on __________ different occasions over a period of ________ days.
6. **T** or **F** Most of the five hundred witnesses that saw Jesus were still living twenty-five years later when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. There is no record of them ever changing his or her testimony.

**Questions from Page 3**

1. According to the popular gospel hymn based on Scripture, what lifted us when we were sinking deep in sin? __________
2. __________ proved His love for us by dying on the cross.
3. **T** or **F** God doesn’t have any specific plan for saving man. We can do whatever we want to be saved.
4. What six things do we need to do to be saved? __________ __________

**Questions from Page 4**

1. **T** or **F** Experts say that some miserable times are unavoidable.
2. **T** or **F** Read Matthew 5:45. God says that He will not allow bad times to come for His children.
3. **T** or **F** Modern experts on relationships agree with what Jesus said over 2,000 years ago.

**Answers to Last Issue:**


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