

G O D ' S M I S S I O N A R Y

STANDARD



Multiple Choice

When I write those two words I don't know what you think about, but I think about No. 2 pencils and exams. I get kind of a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach. My palms get sweaty because I never really liked tests that much. We've all taken multiple choice tests. We know what they are – a series of questions followed by a series of possible answers. People who do well on the tests circle the right answer; those who don't, well, they suffer the consequences.

I was thinking a while back...life is a lot like a big multiple choice test. We're presented with all of these questions followed by a series of answers. And those of us who choose the right answer, make the right choice, or make the right decision get the most out of life. Those of us who don't, well, we suffer the consequences.

Life is all about decisions. We are all the sum total of the choices we make and our decisions determine our destiny. But I think all of us can look back in the past, and see that we've all made some dumb, "what was I thinking?" decisions. Are you like that? I've made some dumb decisions before. We all have. All of us have things we've done in the past that are kind of "What was I thinking?" dumb decisions.

Some choices we make are big decisions. There are also small decisions. Things that we think might be insignificant or no big deal. Yet, I've discovered that small decisions, when they collect, turn into big issues.

What do I do when I face a big decision? And what do I do when I face what seems to be a small decision? Well, we're going to discover that small decisions are just as important as the big decisions are.

In the book of Matthew, we read of Jesus making some important decisions. The Bible says Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights. After he had fasted, he was emotionally and spiritually and physically drained. The evil one comes along and gives Jesus this multiple choice test. He formulated this test that he had crafted to mess Jesus up, to get Jesus to settle for second best, to get Jesus to make a dumb decision. That was what Satan wanted to happen. Well, let's see what happened.

Satan took Jesus and he said, "Jesus, I know you haven't eaten for forty days and forty nights. Look at these rocks. The rocks look like the bread sold on the streets of Jerusalem. There's nothing like bread, you know, when you're hungry. Just snap your fingers and turn the stones into bread. You can do it. You're God." And Jesus had a decision to make. What would he do?

Matthew 4:4: "But He answered and said, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"



ROBERT BOOTH

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Then Satan took Jesus to the top of the temple. He said, "Throw yourself down. You're not going to die. People will see this miracle, and they'll follow you. People will say 'Wow! Ooh, aah! I'll follow him!'" What did Jesus do? He had a decision to make. What did he say back to Satan?

Matthew 4:7: "Jesus said to him, 'It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'"

Well, then Satan turned up the heat. He said, "Jesus, bow down and worship me. If you do that, I'll give you everything." What did Jesus say?

Matthew 4:10: "Then Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

What was going on? How did Christ make this decision? He asked himself this simple question: "Is it written? If it's in the book, if it's in my Father's word, then I have a green light and I'll do it. I'll go for it. If it's not, then there's a red light and I won't do it. Many of you right now are facing decisions, big decisions, serious decisions. Maybe you're facing a relational decision, a financial decision, a decision to move or not, to take this job or not, or to major in a certain subject. Whatever it is, ask and answer this question. "Is it written?"

I run into people so often who tell me their stories, and so many times their stories begin with two words: "If only." They say, "If only I'd said no to that adulterous relationship." "If only I'd stayed in the marriage." "If only I hadn't said that to my son." "If only I hadn't gotten into that business deal." "If only I hadn't been so greedy." "If only, if only, if only..."

But here's the amazing thing about God. God can work through our "If only's." He can work through our pasts, our dumb "What was I thinking?" decisions, and he can use our past as leverage to help us in the present to make amazing and great and wonderful decisions that will give us great trajectory for the future. Well, how do we do it? We have to ask and answer one question: "Is it written?" It's the same question that Christ asked himself.

We have to have a standard when it comes to decision making. Christ is the standard. Our authority is not man-made. Our authority is the Bible. We need to ask, "What does the Bible say? Is it written?" If it is, we do it. If it's not, we don't do it. It is very, very simple. Your life and my life should be the same. God has taken so much time and energy to write down his counsel, to write down his Word. And his Word is here for all of us to experience the best for our lives.

Have you ever wondered why the guidelines and guardrails are mentioned in the Bible? They're mentioned in the Bible for several reasons. First of all, they're mentioned so we can have the best life possible. So we can discover God's plan for our lives. That's why the Bible was written.

Another reason we have the guidelines is because God wants us to make wise decisions. He knows that if we make dumb decisions, we'll hurt others. So he wants to help us help ourselves. And he wants to help us make decisions that will influence others.

The bottom line is this – the multiple choice test has been handed out. You've got the No. 2 pencil. God is cheering for you. He wants to guide you and lead you to circle the right answer. And the right answer is his answer. ■

"We have to
have a **standard**
when it comes
to decision
making. **CHRIST**
is the standard."





Congratulations to Rev. Aaron and Katrina (Newton) Dorman on their wedding! They were united in marriage on June 2, 2012



Tim and Amy Cooley on the birth of Anthony David. Anthony was born on June 18, 2012

Congratulations to Rev. and Mrs. Kenneth Miles on the birth of twin daughters. Liberty Ann and Charity Jane were born on July 17, 2012.

Gospel Center dedicates new building



For the past few years, the Gospel Center has been searching for a new location. The Gospel Center had reached capacity for some time and it was time to find additional space. After searching for years, and making offers on several locations and receiving rejection notices, God led us to a location only 3 blocks away from our former facility.

We received the keys on Friday, April 13. After seven weeks of hard work, the Gospel Center moved from 26 N. 7th St. to 27 N. 10th St. on June 3, 2012. Pastor Robert Booth preached the first message and that Sunday began a week of special dedication and revival services. Rev. Matt Ellison, Rev. Jacob Martin and Rev. Daniel Stetler were the guest speakers for the week.



The renovated sanctuary was formally dedicated on a warm Sunday afternoon with over 200 in attendance.

We are thankful for God's favor and give Him all the glory and praise. This new location will allow us to continue to expand the ministry of the Gospel Center in the needy downtown area of Lebanon Pennsylvania. Our sanctuary has a capacity nearly three times the size of our old location. We have rooms that we are utilizing for children's ministry, teens and adult meetings. We are also excited that the building has a full kitchen and dining facility downstairs! We will be able to expand our community meals.

Do continue to pray for the Gospel Center as we continue to pursue the direction that God has called us.



Additional photos can be viewed at
www.thegospelcenter.com

Hanover Youth Missions Trip



Seven young people from the Hanover God's Missionary Church along with Pastor and Mrs. Fisher and Donald Kiscadden traveled to Fort Myers Rescue Mission, June 18-26, to assist with ministry and work projects. After a good night of rest the group began cleaning and painting a five room staff apartment. The girls then did work with the mission library and the guys helped clean up some storage areas. On Friday, the girls of the team did some cleaning in the dining hall and the guys

formed and poured a concrete pad. Saturday was a leisure day and Director and Mrs. David Light took the group to see the Gulf of Mexico which is about an hour away from the mission.

The group also was involved in ministry. Each evening at 5:00 the mission holds a chapel service for the street people who are then served an evening meal in the mission dining hall. The youth group sang several songs at each chapel service and Pastor Fisher and Donald Kiscadden took turns giving the devotional. We also were able to connect with some of the men at the mission while showing them the love of Jesus. The trip was a very worthwhile time for each member of the youth group, and Fort Myers Rescue Mission was very grateful for the work accomplished. Please pray for the mission. A wonderful work is being done there and there is a great need for more workers.



Enjoy 10 days this winter in sunny Floriday!

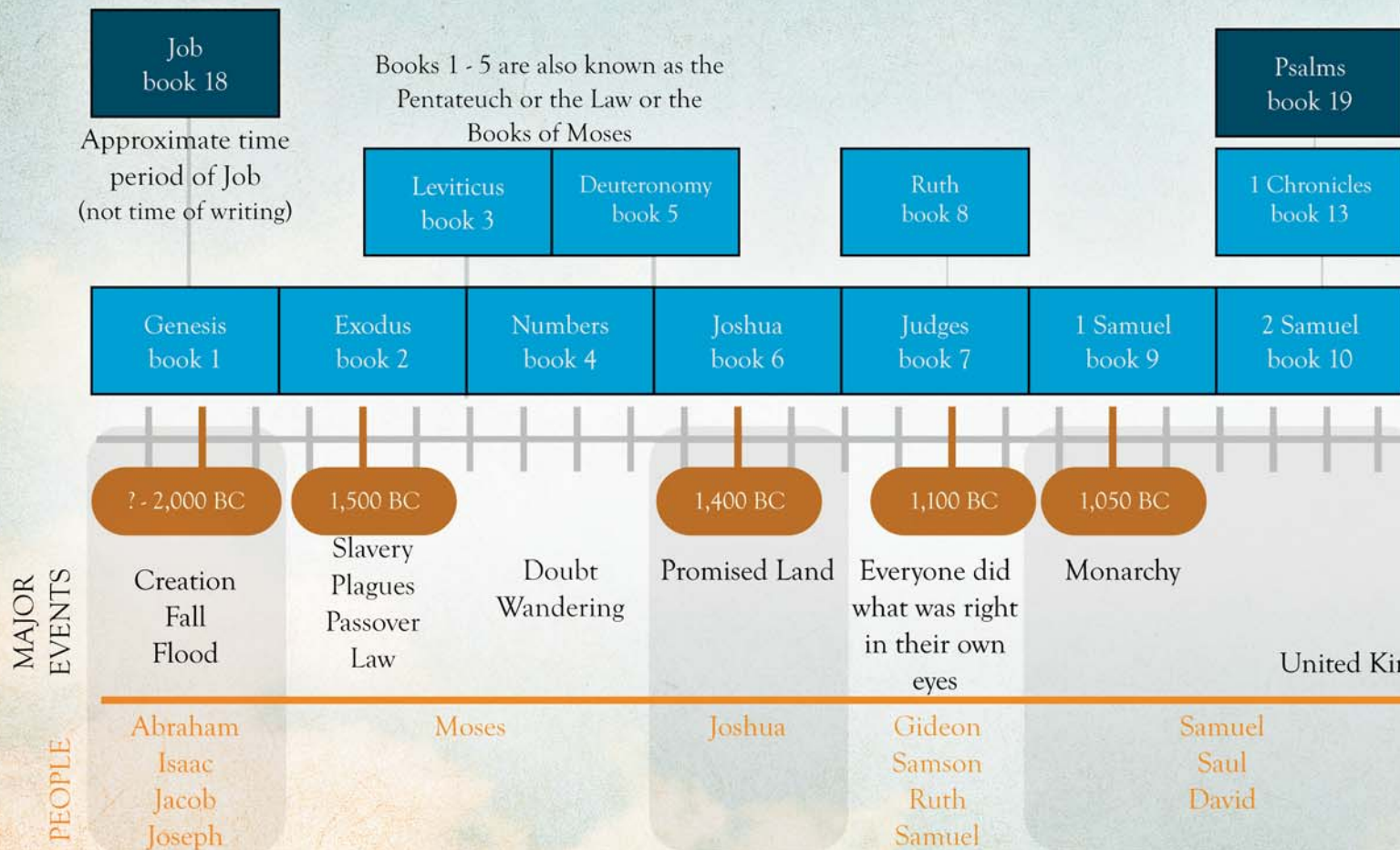
January 17-27, 2013

Evangelists and Singers:
The Dan Durkee Family and
Brian and Cheri Spangler

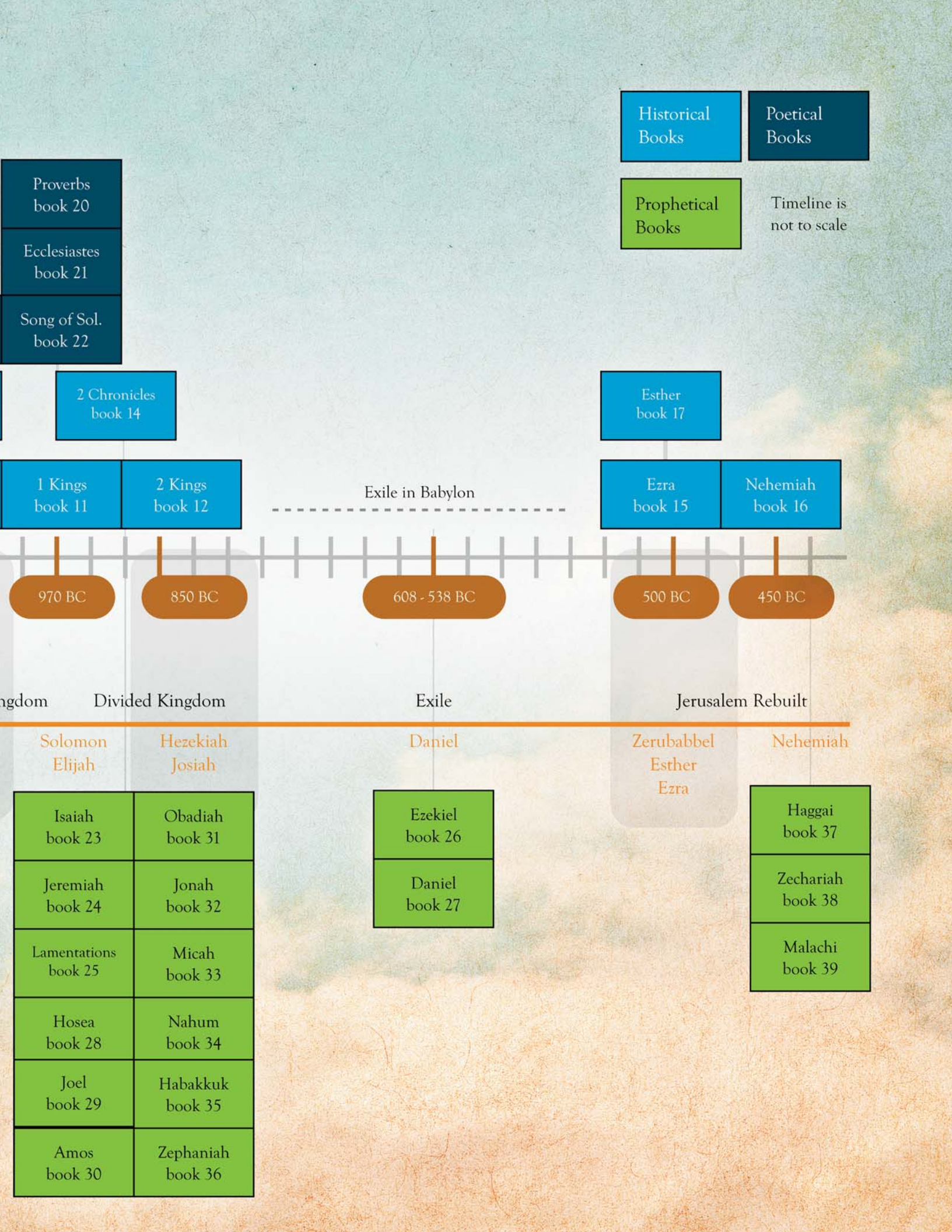
Children's Workers:
Mary Braun and Penny Ford

For more information, call
570-837-3083.

TIMELINE AND STRUCTURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT



Part 2 of a series of Scripture Charts. The first one is a chart of 1 & 2 Kings and is available to download in the August 2012 issue of the Standard at www.godsmissionarystandard.com





Choose Forgiveness

PAUL E. GAGNON

"And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." —LUKE 17:4

Some people we meet love to tell us some of their life stories and experiences. Probably most of all, they enjoy talking about their children and grandchildren. It's easy to find out about their families, friends and even glean something of their background, politics and religion. Unfortunately, some are too openly conversant in sharing their personal issues and problems. Ever had a conversation with someone and the first thing that comes through are their resentments and unforgiveness? Difficulties abound in most of our lives and we do get hurt, however, some poor souls carry unforgiveness around like a friend with them wherever they go. They have to tell you all about it, too. There are others that aren't too talkative about it, but still carry their friend, unforgiveness, with them when they go around folks. That unforgiveness is so dear to them that like a friend, they cling to it and refuse to let it go. It's there; hanging close beside them and its presence is easily sensed by most of us.

Unforgiveness could be likened to a cancer that infects a part and then spreads to affect the whole of the person infected by it. It could be considered contagious to others, as well, as they catch portions of it and carry it around to others. In the end, like a deadly contagion, unforgiveness will rob the life from its benefactor. The remedy for this poisonous friend is, to change their story, to get a different friend and to find their center of joy and peace in Jesus Christ and God's everlasting love.

In a fallen, wicked and diseased world, who can expect not to be affected by illness, infirmities or evil? We should be expecting to be hurt by someone, sometime, or many times. We shouldn't be shocked when someone betrays us, cheats us or deliberately harms us. That's what happens to humans in a fallen environment! We should be more shocked and wary if we haven't been hurt, because it is coming. We can be sure of that. The Devil has a variety of resources to use against us and unfortunately, he uses people and natural events in our lives to begin the spiraling staircase of destructive unforgiveness. However, he doesn't have the final option.

What if we could change the story to: "My abuser and perpetrator of painful experiences was won to the Lord through my ability to forgive and love that sinner". Wouldn't that make for a much more wholesome outcome? Forgiveness brings with it healing not only for the perpetrator, but especially for the victim. Could it be that the abuser was ignorant of how great an evil that was being perpetrated? Not to excuse the abuser, but some people are so limited in life skills and coping tools useful in handling situations that they hurt others, because of their ignorance and lack of social refinement. Some, of course, are deliberate abusers of mankind and are just plain old selfish sinners. Brothers and sisters in the Lord can sometimes be hurtful and cutting too, or even slick in their business dealings, or manipulating in their relationships with others. Consequently, we can be hurt, abused, embarrassed and taken advantage of by various sources. Again, we shouldn't be surprised or shocked, but need to learn how to *continued on* **page 10**

Why I Choose to Trust

JEREMY O. MORFORD

She waited and watched. Certainly any moment now he would come. She needed a miracle. She prayed for a miracle. She believed a miracle was on the way. In the distance, she saw a lone figure making his way toward her. It was the messenger she had sent. Surely, the miracle was on the way, but one look into his eyes told her that her miracle was not coming. Mary made her way to her brother's room where Martha was placing another cool cloth on Lazarus' forehead. No words were spoken. None were needed. Jesus was not coming to heal their brother. Disappointment, heartbreak, and confusion flooded their hearts. Their minds swam with questions that seemingly had no answers.

Some testify that Jesus does not disappoint. This just is not true. The Bible is full of examples of people who were disappointed by God. Mary and Martha were disappointed that Jesus let their brother die. Jonah was disappointed that God spared Nineveh. Elijah was so disappointed that God did not send revival after Mount Carmel that he asked God to take his life!

However, God has not stopped disappointing people. Loved ones get sick and die, jobs are lost, and children stray from the faith -- all despite fervent prayers by good and godly people.

Some tell us that if we are right spiritually, then we can "name it and claim it!" Yet, Mary and Martha were serving the Lord. Jesus does not question their obedience. He does not uncover hidden sin in their hearts. He does not question their motives nor chide them for lacking faith and spiritual maturity. So where was the problem?

First, Mary and Martha did not understand God's power. They knew that Jesus had the power to heal the sick, but they did not know that Jesus could raise the dead. Martha understood that in the last days there would be a general resurrection of the dead, but did not know that Jesus could raise Lazarus from the dead that day. They believed that Jesus was four days too late to meet their need.

You would think that we would have a better understanding of God's power. We have the whole Bible to show us what God can do, but yet we find ourselves worrying about our problems. Sometimes we even tell God how to solve our problems. "Lord, will you lay it on someone's heart to send a check in the mail?" we pray, but God sends us an odd job instead. We pray for God to change others instead of asking God to change us! We look at our problems and say they are too big for God to do anything about them.

We do not understand how much power God has. By the power of His word He created the sun and the stars. NASA tells us that our sun alone produces "enough energy every second to melt a bridge of ice two miles wide, one mile thick, and extending the entire way from the Earth to the Sun." By the power of His word, the wind and the waves stopped their raging. By the power of His word, He would raise Lazarus from the dead! By the power of His word, He will keep every promise He has made you and me!

Secondly, they did not understand Jesus' purpose. They did not know why Jesus waited. The disciples didn't understand it either. In fact, Jesus tells *continued on* **page 10**



continued from **page 8** change the story, like Jesus taught us. When He could have been bitter, unforgiving and angry, He turned to His Father, the Creator, and our God of love, who could even be called the “Father of Forgiveness”. We too, need to find out that “...there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” (Pr. 18:24). Find the Spirit of Jesus and exchange that old friend of unforgiveness for Him!

In Luke 23:34, we read about Jesus with arms outstretched on the cross saying, “...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do...” Forgive who? Here, Jesus was demonstrating forgiveness at different levels. Certainly, we can surmise that he was asking forgiveness for His tormentors and killers, in an ultimate sense, who someday may be led to the light, because of their heinous crimes against Him. Out of total ignorance of who He really was, they were led by Satan to carry out his plan against the Son of God. True, they all had their own motives for crucifying Jesus, but ultimately, they were willing pawns in the Devil’s hands. They were also blinded by their own sins. He challenged the Sanhedrin’s authority and created a security risk for Rome and they had to be rid of Him. But He prayed for them and all sinners in similar places of power or authority.

His disciples also failed Him and He may have prayed for them here, as in Jn. 17, but not only for them, verse 20, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;...” It is apparent that He prayed for all future people, who were sinners after the similitude of the Sanhedrin, the Romans and even the disciples. He prayed for them in John 17 and in Luke 23:34, with outstretched arms on the cross, the embodiment of unarmed love. Who else did he pray for while

hanging between Hell, Earth and Heaven? The Bible informs us that Old Testament Saints also had the Gospel preached to them and were released from their captivity during the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So, prior to the cross and while on the cross, He prayed forgiveness for all that would receive it, past, present and future. Now, the question is: ‘Did any of us deserve forgiveness?’ and the answer will always be: ‘Absolutely not’.

In conclusion, unforgiveness strains our relationships, causes us spiritual difficulties and severe emotional problems. People lose sleep, lose their appetites or have digestive or nervous afflictions. There is sufficient data to show that unforgiveness affects our physical well-being and is somewhat responsible for anxiety, depression and, in some cases, psychotic reactions can be triggered by the stress. How much violence and anger in lives can be attributed to unforgiveness? What about heart problems? Maybe, cancer? We don’t really know. However, the question that needs to be asked of friend, brother or sister is, Exactly, what has unforgiveness done for you? Is it a friend that you take with you wherever you go or is it a mill-stone around your neck? Is this friend the joy of your life and conversation or is it a demonic burden that weighs you down and kills your joy and peace? You do have a final option. Matthew 6:14,” For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you...”

Oh, come to him who spread his unarmed love on the cross! Think of His hands. They’re no longer on that cross, since He won the Crown of Glory. His nail-pierced hands are an outstretched and cupped altar for you today. You could place your head in those hands and choose forgiveness, right now. ■

continued from **page 9** his disciples that He was glad he wasn’t there to heal Lazarus, because He was about to do something that would strengthen their faith. Jesus had a reason for being late. He wanted to build the faith of those who followed Him. They had witnessed blind eyes see, lame legs leap, and leprous flesh restored, but they had yet to see a man raised from the dead after four days of decay!

Sometimes, God allows things to happen that we don’t understand. The world points and tells us that if God loved us that these things would not happen. They try to wreck our faith. Satan is quick to tell us that God does not care. It is easy to become discouraged and defeated. We are disappointed. God didn’t do what we thought He would do – what we thought He should do. It is hard to trust when we do not know God’s plan. It is then that we must trust His heart. We have to know that God’s love for us has not changed.

So often, we think that God’s plan for us should be our happiness, but He never promised that we would always be happy. In fact, He will sacrifice our happiness to bring about His ultimate purpose – our holiness. He wants us to be like Him.

Finally, they did not understand Jesus’ personality. They understood that Jesus was the Messiah, but they did not understand what that meant. They knew that Jesus loved Lazarus, but they did not understand that Jesus came to fulfill His Father’s plan. They knew that Jesus was full of compassion, but they did not know that He allows pain in those He loves to accomplish His purpose.

Mary and Martha expected Jesus to come and rescue. They expected Jesus to solve all their problems. They expected Jesus to be what they thought He was.

We sometimes fall into the same trap. We expect God to be close and are confused when He seems to be distant. We expect Him to calm our storms, but instead offers to give us peace in the midst of the ongoing, raging storm. We expect Him to come in power, but instead He speaks in a still, small voice.

You can trust Jesus because He is trustworthy. We may not fully understand His power, His purpose, or His personality; but we can know that He loves us and wants what is best for us.

I choose to trust because God is always good even when I do not understand. ■



travel notes from the president

June 1: Rachel and I traveled to North Carolina.

June 2: We were honored to attend the beautiful wedding of Aaron Dorman and Katrina Newton near Salisbury, NC. After learning that the funeral of a dear friend and former parishioner was scheduled for Tuesday, we decided to detour to Rachel's parents for over the weekend since the funeral would be on our way home.

June 3: We attended services at the Light House Chapel in Harkers Island, NC.

June 4: We traveled part way home and stayed the night in Salisbury, MD.

June 5: In the morning, we attended the viewing and funeral for Joe Fowler at the Delmar, Maryland church, officiated by Revs Rob Dicken, John Walter and James Plank. We have many great memories of Bro. Fowler's thoughtfulness and generosity to pastors, Bible college students, missionaries, etc. Many years he brought carloads of Eastern Shore sweet corn and melons to be used in the cafeteria at Penns Creek Camp Meeting.

June 8: It was good to hear John and Barbara Baker and their helper, Teri at Beavertown's Vacation Bible School.

June 9: We helped on the campgrounds, placing mattresses and cleaning in preparation for God's Missionary Youth Camp. In the afternoon, I made a trip to the State College Hospital to visit Pastor Mike Hoskins and returned missionary Bonnie Williams.

June 10: This was the final day of dedication week for the new location and beautiful building of the Lebanon Gospel Center. I was honored to have a part in the dedication ceremony. Many people worked hard in painting, repairing and remodeling to have this building ready for use.

June 11: I enjoyed breakfast with former college friend, Dale Stratton.

June 13: We attended Youth Camp and appreciated the message by evangelist, Dan Durkee. Many young people prayed at the altar.

June 14: In the morning, we stopped in again at youth camp. In the afternoon, we enjoyed a meal at the Chinese Buffet with some of our children and grandchildren to celebrate Father's Day a little early. In the evening, we attended a sad viewing for two month old Brianna Baldwin at Millmont Calvary Chapel.

June 17: We attended the Beavertown Church where I, along with all the fathers, received a pie for a Father's Day gift. We enjoyed Sunday dinner at Jim and Marie's home. It was nice to have my mother with us for the weekend.

June 20: Rachel and I enjoyed lunch with Supt. Paul Miller and wife Janet, in honor of his recent 75th birthday. In the evening, we went to the Millmont Church to hear missionary Sally Sebo tell of her work in the Romanian orphanage.

June 21: I spent most of this very hot day with Steve Aurand and Darvin Donahey at the Penns Creek campground, helping to install heavy electric cables from the Straub Memorial Tabernacle to the old dormitory. Thank you to Steve Tomek and Dean Sickler for helping also.

June 22: Darvin Donahey and I worked with Steve Aurand again at camp on the electric. Tim Robertson, Paul Gengrick and Frank Heidler also helped part of the day.

June 24: We spent the day with Rob and Christa Dicken and children Ryan and Regina. I preached in the morning service and Pastor Dicken in the evening. We appreciate the great meals and fine lodging!

June 26-28: We were at the Inter-church Holiness Convention in Harker's Island, NC. The Grace Holiness church family fed several meals to the many out-of-town visitors. It is encouraging to see this IHC grow each year. It was great to see cooperation from area churches and fellow Christians from several states. My mother-in-law, along with helpers, Kim and Jennifer, also prepared a wonderful seafood feast for us. We heard good preaching by Henry Miller, Leonard Sankey and James Plank and great singing by Henry and Jan Miller and the Harkers Island Trio, also known as Grace Holiness Trio.

June 30: I preached in the afternoon service at the Mount of Blessing Camp.

July 1: We attended camp meeting again at Mount of Blessing. Evangelists were Paul Peirpoint, David Spivey and the Shrout family singers. Camp President, Matthew Ellison reported that there were the most camping RV's ever on the grounds.



HARRY PLANK

president who had every one of his evangelists cancel including the scheduled singers. The substitutes were Revs John White, Brian Black and the Jeremy Fuller family as singers.

July 5: I preached again at Hanover Camp in the absence of Brian Black for the morning service. In the evening, Rachel and I helped Rev. & Mrs. William Reese move into their "new" home in Middleburg, along with a few people from the Beavertown Church who also helped. It was another very hot day with temperatures rising over 100.

July 7: I took a flight from the Harrisburg airport and landed in Orlando around 7:00 pm. I then traveled on to Intercession City where I stayed at the home of Stanley and Deborah Fink in their very nice RV.

July 8: In the morning, I preached at the Lakeland Church. It was good to be with Pastor and Mrs. Chester Handfield and in their home for a good meal. In the evening, I spoke at the Kissimmee Church. After the service was the election for the new pastor. The results were 100% for Rev. Jeffery Asbell. The Barry Swetzer family will soon be moving to pastor the Calvary Community Church in Summerfield, FL. After the evening service, I, along with several others, was invited to the home of Stanley and Debora Fink for a lovely lunch.

July 9: I arose at 2:30 a. m. to catch a very early return flight.

July 13: We attended the beautiful wedding of Melanie Kearney and Justin Stanton. This was the first wedding in the new Beavertown Church.

July 14: We stopped in Mifflinburg to congratulate Dwight Rine on the Grand Opening of Rines Auto Sales. In the afternoon, we traveled to Stonboro, PA for the Allegheny Wesleyan Methodist Youth Convention. We appreciated the preaching of Evangelist Randy Neville and the singing of Derek and Alana McIntire. Many young people responded to the altar call. It was also good to be with Brian Spangler and family. He was also serving as evangelist.

July 15: I preached in the afternoon service at the Youth Convention at Stoneboro. We appreciated the warm welcome and great fellowship of these fine folk.

July 18: I spent part of the day doing outside painting at home. In the evening, we attended camp meeting at Oakland Mills, PA where Rev. Aaron McCarty is director. Evangelist Archie Atwell Jr. preached a good message and we enjoyed the great singing of Mike and Brenda Mahyle. 🎵

crusaders

Choose God's Way!

Joel Sickler

I was stuck! As I climbed off and tried to wade out of the mud hole I'd created, my stomach sank just as fast as the four-wheeler I'd just buried. I'd been having fun on our farm, crossing the creek and wallowing through wet spots in a swamp, when I decided to go in a little deeper. MUCH deeper! But as I rammed into the pool of murky water all four tires disappeared and there was no chance of turning around. As the mud flew and steam hissed off of the exhaust pipes, I rocked the machine back and forth trying to find just a little traction. But as the tires dug deeper into the muck, it was clear that this slimy swamp mud wasn't going to release its new prisoner. I was wishing I hadn't tried this, it just wasn't fun anymore. You see, I wasn't really supposed to be out running through mud. I was to bring a cow and calf in to the barn, but I had gotten distracted by the fun I was having (I really didn't even need the four-wheeler, but I had chosen to use it). Now I was wading out through the mud with the cow only halfway to the barn and a very stuck ATV. I wasn't having a very good day and I knew it was my own fault. I had been more interested in having fun than doing my job.

Have you ever been in a similar situation spiritually?

Things were going well, but you started focusing on having fun and getting into things you should have left alone? It seems

that the options and opportunities for having fun grow daily. Some of them are just good, wholesome, fun (like my four-wheeler muddin'), but if we're not careful the "mud" can distract us from what is really important. The priority we put on our spiritual lives, entertainment, relationships and so on, matter! It's going to take strength and courage to make the right choices and put God first! God told Joshua, "Only be thou strong and very

courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest." (Joshua 1:7) I

don't know the plans God has for your life, but wherever they may take you, the decision to trust God and stand for the truth will face you time and again. Many times a way that looks like "fun" will tempt you to turn slightly from the path you are on and see what the "mud" is like. Some of the things the world offers for entertainment aren't wrong, but just as I was distracted by mud when I needed to do my job, don't let things distract you from the path you should be on. Some choices will be hard, but God will be faithful to guide you if you take them to Him. It's not easy to stand your ground when "everyone else" is doing it, but that is what it's going to take if you're going to serve God. He is ready to give you the strength you need. The temptations to give in are very real, and the friends you surround yourself with will influence your choices greatly, but in the end it's up to you. Determine in your heart that you're going to choose God's way no matter what may come. Don't try to excuse things when God tells you no. It doesn't matter what the hypocrites, backsliders, and worldly-minded people do. In the end, you will be judged on the choices YOU made and the paths YOU took! Your influence may even help keep your friends out of trouble. I would love to see you take a stand for truth and righteousness with a zeal and passion that brings new life to the church!

Oh by the way, I did get the four-wheeler out! But not without help and some work! If you are feeling stuck spiritually there is hope for you! It may not be easy, but God will ALWAYS be faithful to you. Trust Him with your life and you will never regret it. Also find a friend that you can trust to pray for you and help you along the path. It will keep both of you on solid ground, and help you to go with God. Choose God's way, and beware of the mud! ■

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