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The Proof That A Man Is Justified By Faith Along And Not By Works

Study 6: Galatians 4:1-7

—Teacher's Outline and Study Bible™

1. There was a time when the world was in bondage

- a. A child: An illustration
 - ◆ Is under guardians & trustees
 - ◆ Inherits the estate at the appointed time
- b. The world or mankind: Is enslaved by the elementary or childish knowledge of the world

CHAPTER 4

F. The Proof of Christ & the Fullness of Time, 4:1-7

1. Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;
2. But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.
3. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

4. But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

5. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

7. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

2. There was an appointed time when God delivered the world

- a. How: God sent His Son as a man, under the law
- b. Why? To redeem the world
- c. The results
 - ◆ We are adopted as God's sons
 - ◆ We receive assurance of acceptance by the Spirit
 - ◆ We become heirs of God

Section III

THE PROOF THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE AND NOT BY WORKS

Galatians 3:1-4:7

Study 6: THE PROOF OF CHRIST AND THE FULLNESS OF TIME

Text: Galatians 4:1-7

Aim: To rest assured that God's time is the right time in all things.

Memory Verse:

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Ga.4:4).

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever watched and waited for a pot of water to boil? It seems to take forever! In the same sense, we sometimes look at God and wonder when is He going to do this or do that? No matter how impatient we get, God will do things in His time—the right time.

Just as water boils at the right temperature, God sent His Son into the world at the right time. God was not early. God was not late. He was right on time...just in time!

Some in the churches of Galatia were teaching that a person is

saved by law; that is, he is saved by being good and religious and by doing the best he can. Of course, every person...

- should be good, ever striving to be better and better
- should be faithful in worshipping God in church
- should do the best he can—always

However, Scripture is clear and forceful: a person is not saved by these things, for no amount of effort or energy or work can make a person perfect. And to be acceptable to God—to be given the right to live with God—a person must be perfect.

How then can man be saved—be justified and made acceptable to God? This passage deals with the issue; it gives the answer. It shows how Christ and the fullness of time prove that a man is justified by faith and not by law nor by works.

OUTLINE:

1. There was a time when the world was in bondage (vv.1-3).
2. There was an appointed time when God delivered the world (vv.4-7).

1. THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE WORLD WAS IN BONDAGE (vv.1-3).

The illustration is brief, yet descriptive: an heir who is a young child is under the care of guardians and trustees until the time appointed for him to receive his inheritance. Until the appointed time arrives, he has no more right to the inheritance than a slave.

The point is striking: there was a time when man was in bondage under the elementary things of the world. What is meant by the elements or elementary things of the world? Very simply, it means man's elementary notions and ideas about God and the various ways he tries to approach God. Letting Scripture interpret Scripture:

- a. It means the first principles (the ABC's) of the Word of God, that is, the sacrifices, observances, rituals, and ceremonies of the Old Testament (Hebrews 5:12).
- b. It means philosophy, the traditions of men, and the rudimentary or elementary teachings of men—the ABC approaches of men to God (Colossians 2:8).
- c. It means the elements, the heavenly bodies of the universe (2

Peter 3:10). (There have always been men who tried to rule their lives by the heavenly bodies or astrology and the signs of the zodiac.)

- d. It means the ordinances, rules, and regulations of men (Col. 2:20).
- e. It means the ceremonial laws, the legal yoke placed upon men as they try to approach God (Acts 15:10).
- f. It means the law of the Old Testament, the yoke of bondage (Galatians 5:1; see 4:3).
- g. It means the observances of religious days, months, and years (Galatians 4:9).

Very simply, the elements of the world refers to all the things that men use to get right with God and to secure the favor and approval of God. It refers to anything that man uses to justify himself before God, any approach to God that is taken by man through his own energy and effort...

- law or works
- ritual or ceremony
- church membership or ordinance
- astrology or science
- philosophy or religion

The point is this: before Christ, all approaches to God were only elementary approaches. No approach was the right approach, for man had only little knowledge of God—an elementary knowledge that required the discipline and guidance of the law.

However, when everything was ready for the world to come of age and to gain an adult knowledge of God, Christ came to release men from the law and to reveal that man was intended to have a father-son relationship with God. In Christ, men are no longer to be slaves to the law, they are to be sons of God. In Christ, they are to enter into their inheritance.

“Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men”
(1 Co.14:20).

ILLUSTRATION:

How often have you heard someone in your church say this: “We’ve always done it this way before”? People tend to be creatures of habit. Often, to our own detriment, we voluntarily give

ourselves over to bondage. Instead of depending on God's divine creativity (the power of the cross), there is the tendency to get stuck on what is familiar, on what we can create. Listen to this scenario:

The school's talent show was filled with young children who were more than willing to dazzle the proud parents in the audience. Of all the talent on display that night, one 1st grader had the most unique talent. Standing on the stage, he held his accordion and played one note. After a few seconds, he played the same note again. For his big finish, he played that same note a third time. With his shoulders held erect and his head held high, he stated to the amused audience that he had written that song—"all by myself!"

Like this little boy, there are many Christians who get stuck on one note—and then brag about how wonderful they are doing. But it takes more than one note to make up a song. And it takes more than your best efforts to become free from the bondage of your fallen nature. It took Jesus Christ, the New Song, and His completed work on the cross to release believers from the power and bondage of the law.

Are you stuck on one note or has Christ freed you and added spiritual harmony to your life?

QUESTIONS:

1. In what ways does man attempt to approach God?
2. Why do these ways always fail?
3. How are you tempted to approach God when your faith seems to be weak? What can you do to guard yourself from wrongly approaching God?

2. THERE WAS AN APPOINTED TIME WHEN GOD DELIVERED THE WORLD (vv.4-7).

This is one of the great passages of Scripture dealing with the mission or work of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Note several significant points.

1. Note that God had prepared the world for the coming of Christ (see A CLOSER LOOK: Fullness of Time—Galatians 4:4 for discussion).

2. Note that God sent His own Son into the world to deliver men. It was not an angel nor some other creature that God sent—nor was it some great leader from among men. It was God's very Son that He sent. God cared for and loved men so much that He would send no less than His own Son to deliver men from the terrible condemnation of the law: the bondage of sin and death.

"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38).

"But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me" (John 7:29).

3. Note that God sent His Son "made of a woman," that is "born out of a woman." He came into the world just as all men do, through a woman. But note the most glorious truth: He was "sent forth" by God. Jesus Christ was "His Son," the Son of God. God spoke the Word and the woman conceived miraculously. The Virgin Birth did take place: God's very own Son has been sent into the world as a man to save men.

"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS" (Luke 1:31).

4. Note that God sent His Son born under the law. Jesus Christ had to live under the law in order to secure the perfect righteousness of the law for man. He had to obey the law in every single precept and stand before God as the Perfect and Ideal Man—the Ideal Embodiment of Righteousness. As stated, He had to do what no other person had ever done: secure the Ideal Righteousness and Perfection so that He could stand for all men.

"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: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:3-4).

5. Note why God sent His Son: to redeem men from the curse of the law. The law convicts us of sin.

6. Note the result of God's sending His Son to redeem men.

- a. Believers are adopted as sons of God. When a person believes in Jesus Christ, God takes his faith and counts the person as being in Jesus Christ. Since Christ is God's Son, the believer is counted as a son of God—all because he is seen as being in Jesus Christ. His faith in Jesus Christ causes God to adopt him as a son of God.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (Jn.1:12).

- b. Believers receive assurance of being accepted by God through the Spirit of His Son. The Spirit of Christ is sent by God to dwell in our hearts and to give us a personal relationship with God. The Spirit of Christ, that is, the Holy Spirit, gives us a fellowship of communication and communion with God: He stirs our hearts to cry out to God as our Father: "Father, Father."

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16).

- c. Believers are made heirs of God. But note: they are heirs because they are sons of God. Both sonship and heirship are "through Christ"—through faith in Him.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs

of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Romans 8:16-17).

ILLUSTRATION:

There is an old missionary tale that describes in a simple fashion why Jesus Christ’s coming was so important.

The missionary was becoming frustrated over his inability to communicate the gospel to his lost friend. There was a very real mental and spiritual block. One day while walking in a field they came upon an ant hill. The missionary and his friend were struck by how hard these ants were working. As they were observing this wonder of nature, they suddenly looked up to see an ant-eater lumbering toward them.

“Well, this looks like the end of this ant hill,” remarked the missionary in a casual tone. Sorry that their study of this ant hill was coming to a close he said, “I wish I could warn them about the ant-eater.”

“That’s it!” said the missionary. “My friend, God saw man as ants who were working as hard as they knew how to. But sin was killing them. The only way to warn them was to become one of them. Then they would understand and take action to save themselves.” God sent His Son into the world as a man to save you from destruction. The choice is yours: listen to Christ and be saved, or shut your ears to Christ and be doomed to death!

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the real reason God sent His Son into the world?
2. Do you sometimes forget the great price God the Father and His Son paid for you?
3. What are some of the results of God’s sending His Son to redeem men?
4. What is the secret to becoming an heir of God?
5. What kind of relationship did Jesus have with the law? What is your relationship to be?

A CLOSER LOOK:

(Galatians 4:4) Fullness of Time: the coming of Christ upon the world scene was not by chance. His coming was under the strategic timing providentially set aside by God. His coming was not one day before or behind the appointed time. A child who is placed under the control of guardians is under their control until “the date fixed by his father” (Galatians 4:2). God and God alone decided the fullness of time for the coming of Christ. Christ was born of a particular person, at a particular time, in a particular way (incarnation), under a particular system (the law). He shared the

frustration and agony of being subjected to the very system from which He came to save men. The world had been wonderfully prepared for His coming.

1. The law had done its educational work. It had shown through the Jewish nation that men are terrible transgressors, and despite all of God’s favor and blessings, men still failed to worship God in love. The world now had a picture of the depraved heart of man. (See Ro.3:10-18 for a clear description of man’s sinfulness.)

2. The world was full of people spiritually starved. The worship of self, pleasure, gods, philosophical ethics—all had left many empty and barren. The soul was now ready to have its hunger met.

3. The world was at peace under Roman rule. The world was an open door for the spread of the gospel—without any restraint.

4. The world spoke Greek as a basic language, making communication possible with many from all over the world.

5. The world had a system of roads for mass travel which allowed Christian missionaries to reach the farthest parts of the earth. It also brought commercial travelers to metropolitan centers where Christian believers were concentrated.

“And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark.1:15).

QUESTIONS:

1. What did God do to prepare the world for the coming of His Son?
2. God is always on time. When do you feel most uncertain of that fact? Why?
3. How can you learn to wait on God’s timing, to become more patient?

A CLOSER LOOK:

(Galatians 4:5) Adoption: the word adoption means to place as a son. The picture of adoption is a beautiful picture of what God does for the Christian believer. In the ancient world, the family was based on a Roman law called “patria potestas,” the father’s power. The law gave the father absolute authority over his children so long as the father lived. He could work, enslave, sell, and if he wished, he could pronounce the death penalty. Regardless of the child’s adult age, the father held all power over personal and property rights.

Therefore, adoption was a serious matter. Yet, it was a common practice to ensure that a family would not become extinct by having no male children. And when a child was adopted, three legal steps were taken.

1. The adopted son was adopted permanently. He could not be adopted today and disinherited tomorrow. He became a son of the

father—forever. He was eternally secure as a son.

2. The adopted son immediately had all the rights of a legitimate son in the new family.

3. The adopted son completely lost all rights in his old family. The adopted son was looked upon as a new person—so new that old debts and obligations connected with his former family were cancelled and abolished as if they never existed.

The Bible says several things about the believer's adoption as a son of God.

1. The believer's adoption establishes a new relationship with God—forever. He is eternally secure as a child of God. But the new relationship is established only when a person comes to Christ through faith (Galatians 3:26; 4:4-5).

2. The believer's adoption establishes a new relationship with God as father. The believer has all the rights and privileges of a genuine son of God (Romans 8:16-17; 1 John 3:1-2).

3. The believer's adoption establishes a new dynamic experience with God as father, a moment-by-moment access into His very presence (Romans 8:14, 16; Galatians 4:6).

4. The believer's adoption gives him a very special relationship with other children of God—a family relationship that binds him with others in an unparalleled spiritual union.

5. The believer's adoption makes him a new person. The believer has been taken out from under the authority and power of the world and its sin. The believer is placed as a son into the family and authority of God. The old life with all of its debts and obligations are cancelled and wiped out (2 Colossians 5:17; Galatians 3:23-27; 2 Peter 1:4).

6. The believer's adoption is to be fully realized in the future at the return of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:19; Ephesians 1:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; 1 John 3:2).

7. The believer's adoption and its joy will be shared by all creation on a cosmic scale (Romans 8:21). There is to be a new heavens and earth (2 Peter 3:12-14; Revelation 21:1-7).

ILLUSTRATION:

The single red rose placed at the front of the church was there to honor the newest member of the church family. A little boy had been born and would be raised by parents who would raise him in a loving, Christian home.

But this little boy was fortunate, for he was almost aborted. His nine months in his mother's womb were spent in great

uncertainty. He was conceived in sin and his mother did not want to care for him. Her options ranged from abortion to adoption. Thankfully, she chose to give the gift of life to this little baby boy.

While she was waiting to deliver, adoptive parents were sought out and secured. These willing parents wanted this little boy to become their own. He would be given their name. He would become an heir to the parents. He would become a legal member of their family—and would not be given away to anyone else again.

Our heavenly Father did the same thing for us. He has given each Christian believer His name. We have become joint-heirs with Jesus. We are in the family of God—and He will never give us away again.

Have you been adopted into His family?

QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever doubted God's willingness to keep you as His child? What kind of assurances does the Scripture give you concerning this?
2. Do you know anyone who has been adopted? What kind of life would they have had if they had not been adopted? If God had not adopted you, what kind of life would you have?
3. What special traits did you have that caused God to adopt you?

SUMMARY:

God sent His Son to save us—He did it at the right time and it was a once-for-all act. We can be adopted as God's sons through Jesus Christ alone. Have you taken that leap of faith to accept Jesus Christ as Savior? Remember:

1. There was a time when the world was in bondage.
2. There was an appointed time when God delivered the world.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES (Reflection & Response)

1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
2. The area that I need to work on the most is:
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

Defining faith as it pertains to a Christ-based belief can be a challenging task. What faith means to one person is not necessarily what it means to another. After centuries of Christendom, there are as many definitions of faith as there are denominations or even people.

To many people, faith is inextricably linked to a culture, cultural setting, or traditions. These customs become almost indistinguishable from the word “faith” in the minds of its constituents.

The Bible, however, gives a different definition of faith by the context in which it appears and also by the Greek term that is rendered faith, meaning steadfast. The question is, steadfast in what? Some careful reading will reveal that we are to be steadfast in our trust and belief that Jesus is the promised Deliverer He claimed to be, and that He will deliver us from wrath and judgment and make us co-inheritors with Him. This promise was first given to Adam and Eve, then to the Patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets and was finally fulfilled through Christ. Over the years, the promise was added to and expanded upon as more revelation was given. It has not yet reached completion and will not be completed until the return of Christ. Then He will truly be the Deliverer that was promised, coming to deliver the ELECT whom HE elected – not whom we have elected. He will deliver them from the wrath that was also promised, delivering them from (or in) the tribulation period.

This is what took place between Abraham and God. God spoke and Abraham believed without adding his own rules or ideas. He simply and completely believed what was spoken to him, and this believing was counted as righteousness for Abraham. Dependency upon the truth of these promises can be defined as faith. Isaiah the prophet wrote the oft-quoted words, *“the just shall live by faith,”*

which are repeated in the New Testament. It does not say that the just shall live by cultural trappings or traditions. We say these things because we think they carry



some merit with God. But our merit does not come from such things, as Scripture plainly states Christ is our justification. “Blessed are those with the best attendance record in the local church” is a message often implied in a typical sermon. But it is we who say it. It is we who assume it. Christ never implied such a thing. In our hearts we are to sanctify *Christ*, not the church institution. Not our customs or traditions. We have no justification for ourselves or from ourselves. It is Christ who justifies us in the presence of God as our high priest – our legal representation if you will. The church can and should act as a support group for its members, but it saves or loses no one. It does not have that ability or authority. That belongs to Christ.

So what should we say about cultural customs and traditions? Are they wrong? They are neither right nor wrong. They are a personal preference or often the result of what one has been born into. Whether you are of this or that culture has little to do with anything other than perhaps an individual choice about how you wish to live. But it is God who sees through cultural choices to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. So if you are part of a nomadic culture that derives its living from its herds and flocks, or a business person on Wall Street, or a Roman Centurion in command of a hundred

soldiers, it is God who sees through your busyness to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. The desires of the heart are a critical issue. As the prophet writes, *“sacrifices and burnt offerings thou would not but a body hast thou prepared me. Lo I come to do thy will oh God.”*

The thrust of the New Testament is aimed at giving meaning to and defining the Old Testament and changing the motivations and desires of the heart. Changing hearts and minds, not creating more rules (which always fail ultimately) is its goal. A changed heart gives us freedom in Christ, not for perverse purposes but for living well, by faith, *“in the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free.”* No longer encumbered by rules which are impossible for us to keep anyway, we await with full expectation the promises which were first given to Adam and his wife, Eve, and to many others along the way. These promises were made to us through Christ. The Cross and the Resurrection confirm and establish these promises and fulfill the previously written prophecies concerning them.

Our confidence in these promises carries with it great recompense of reward according to the writer of the book of Hebrews. We are admonished to not cast away this confidence. This unfailing confidence toward God was witnessed by a man who took a larger view of things and who became “all things to all people so that he might by all means save some.” He left us many admonitions including this statement showing him to be a global citizen of the New Heavens and New Earth by writing:

“if indeed you continue in faith, firmly established and steadfast, not moved away from the hope of the good news that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister” (Col.1: 23).

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This article was originally, written for a local newspaper in the Salem KY area.

We would do well to pause for a time from our many activities and consider where we stand in our spiritual life, to see whether or not we've made any progress in the last year, or years.

We know the secular world has been advancing so fast in the last 150 years that it's hard, if not impossible, for anyone to keep up with the "latest." On the other hand, it is obvious that the Church of Jesus Christ has come far short of the excellence that Paul writes about in Ephesians 3:20: "Now onto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." We must admit we have seen very little of this power of love that Paul is writing about.

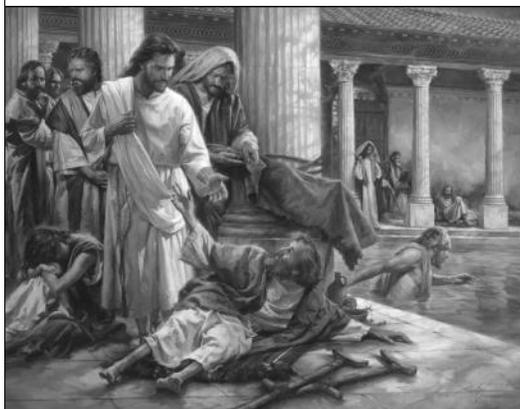
Although the secular world has gone beyond what could only have been imagined a generation ago, are we then to believe the kingdom of darkness has a greater potential than the kingdom of light? I don't think so. We have not come anywhere near unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. I cannot think of anything more descriptive of the sad state of affairs of the church in our day than the figure we have in the first eighteen verses of John 5. Jesus went up to Jerusalem to a feast of the Jews. By the sheep market (or gate) is a pool, in the Hebrew tongue called Bethesda (House of Mercy), having five porches. A great multitude of crippled, blind, and paralyzed people were lying there, waiting for an angel to stir the water. The first one to step in would be made

well of whatever disease he had.

Here is the picture: Jesus is the gate to the sheep. At the House of Mercy, the sheep market, people sell their souls from one denomination to another. In the presence of the five porches, the five helps, where the fivefold ministries move the Living Waters every Sunday morning, we have a multitude of impotent folk, lame, diseased, and helpless. We also have restlessness, contention, envy, strife, and bitterness. The list goes on and on of deeds that hinder our walk with Jesus.

Now there was one man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. Jesus asked him if he wanted to be made well. Since the man had no one else to help him, Jesus told him to rise up, take his bed, and walk. This happened on the Sabbath. When the Jews who followed the scribes and Pharisees, the theologians of their day, saw the man carrying his bed, they said it wasn't lawful to do so on the Sabbath Day. When they learned that Jesus had told him to do so, they sought to slay Jesus.

Jesus told the Jews that he was only doing what the Father was doing. This, however, did not satisfy the Jews who



imagined they knew the will of God better than Jesus did. They sought all the more to kill him, not only because he had broken the religious order of the day, but also because he was making himself equal with God.

The number thirty-eight appears in another Scripture which fits in beautifully with this picture. In Deut. 2:14 the Israelites had come to the doorstep of the Promised Land, but they drew back in unbelief. In consequence they had to spend thirty-eight years in the howling and barren wilderness, because they didn't believe they could overcome the enemy.

The fact of the matter is, we must meet the lowly Nazarene like the man at the pool did. When He tells us to get up and move on, we must heed His command, and do His will as He did the Father's will. Then we can have victory and make progress.

If we don't believe in taking up the battle and gaining the victory over sin, we will be wasting our life in the wilderness, not going anywhere. Or we will remain with the rest of the helpless and unbelieving at the House of Mercy, entertaining the thought that Jesus will come momentarily and rapture us. The Jews had little to offer the suffering at the pool.

In the same way the church, as a whole, has made little headway in the last 1,650 years by reading the scriptures through the lenses of the theologians who would have us believe they understand the will of God better than Jesus did.

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What does 'propitiation' mean?

Romans 3:25 and 1 John 2:12, 4:10

Propitiation is a big word that means satisfaction. Because God is a holy God, His anger and justice burns against sin. And He has sworn that sin will be punished. There must be a satisfactory payment for sin. But God said, "If I punish man for his sin,

man will die and go to hell. On the other hand, if I don't punish man for his sin, My justice will never be satisfied." The solution? God said that He would become our substitute. He would take the sin of mankind upon Himself in agony and blood—a righteous judgment and substitute for sin. His wrath burned out on the cross when His only Son died as man's propitiation for sin. And this is love (see 1 John 4:10). —by Adrian Rogers

Sometimes I stop and wonder why God in his merciful love
Sent His only son, Jesus, down from the beautiful heaven above.
Was it because our gracious God could see beyond that huge loss,
And this was the only way to teach us to accept our own cross?

God, in His great wisdom, must have known right from the start
There was only one way to get this message planted in our hearts.
He could have explained to us in the Bible with words ever so clear,
But without the example of Jesus, we would not be able to hear.

Not only did Jesus say, "Take up the cross and follow me,"
But he lived out His own words for the whole wide world to see.
if we truly accept this cross, then our flesh must be crucified
In the same way Jesus was when He hung on the cross and died.

Jesus also said if we want to save our life we must first lose it.
God does not force a cross on us; we will have to choose it
By avoiding all earthly pleasures that are so fleeting and in vain,
While knowing if we bear our cross it will bring us eternal gain.

If we choose the cross, we will not be living on life's easy street,
But it's the only avenue that leads to victory instead of defeat.
Straight is the way and narrow the gate that leads to eternal life
Means turning the other cheek and never causing strife.

If we carry our cross, we will love and pray for all our enemies,
And we will not talk about others unless we are down on our knees.

The cross will keep us from striving for worldly riches and human fame,
And our only goal in life will be to bring honor and glory to God's name.

If we choose to carry our cross, Heaven will become our destiny,
But if we travel down our own path we will have to spend eternity
With the wicked devil and his demons in a lake of everlasting fires,
All because we refused the cross and followed our selfish desires.

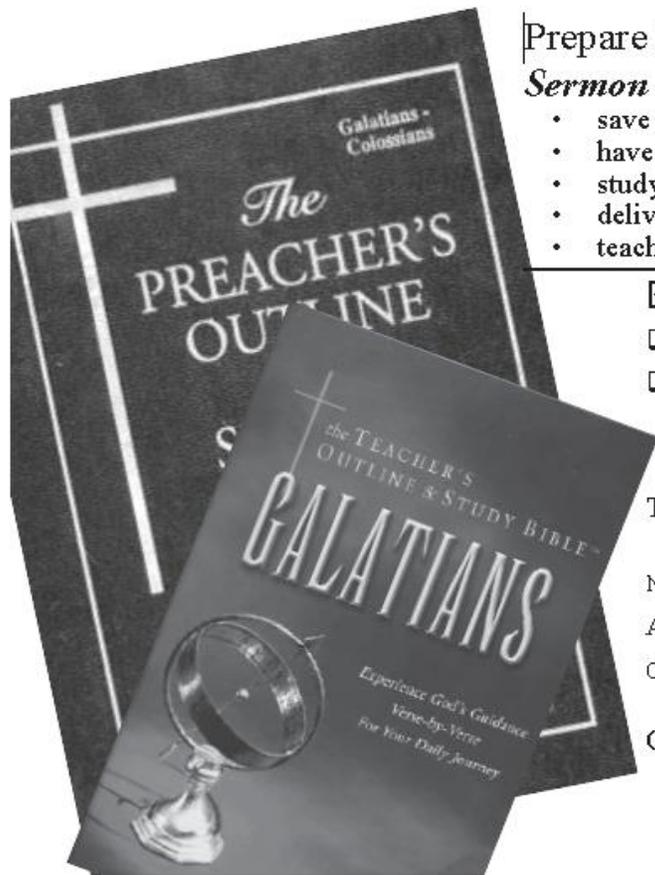
So let us choose our cross in this short life we were created to live,
And become a person who always wants to love and to give
All your heart, soul, and mind to our wonderful God who cannot sin.
We have nothing to lose, and the cross is the only way to win.

Jesus' death on the cross was not the end of God's only son;
It was more like a new beginning of better things to come.
After three days and three nights He arose to live forever more,
And was taken back up through the clouds to Heaven's bright shore.

Jesus is now sitting at the right hand of God's holy throne,
Waiting till God tells Him to go bring His children on home;
So all we have to do to be with our God through all eternity
Is obey the words of Jesus, "Take up the cross and follow me."

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Children of Who?

Continued from back page

of Acts, it was easy for them to see that Jesus was the Christ, that John the Baptist was a true prophet, and that their disciples were righteous. They had no problem seeing that the scribes and Pharisees who rejected them were children of the devil. These state church leaders were positive that if they had lived in the days of the apostles, they would have lived in perfect unity with each other. They were sure that if the apostles could somehow step into their own era, Peter, John, Paul, and the others would have given them a right hand of fellowship. But they could not identify the righteous people and true prophets among them, and thus rejected them.

When we, today's descendants of the Anabaptists, read about the revivals of the Reformation, it is easy for us to see that the Anabaptists were the true church and righteous followers of the Lamb. We easily recognize that the Catholics and Protestants who rejected and persecuted them were children of the devil. We are positive that if we had lived at that time we would have been in one accord with them. We are sure that if the early Anabaptists could somehow step into present-day America, Conrad Grebel, George Blaurock, Hans Hut, and the others would surely give us the right hand of fellowship. But can we identify the righteous people and true prophets that are among us today? Or do we reject them?

Having 20/20 vision when we look into the past, but being totally blind to the present day situations is not a problem of certain people in certain areas at certain times. It is a universal and perpetual problem. In fact as I compare what has happened with what is happening, I believe the adage that the more things change the more they stay the same!

Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel were mighty prophets of God. But they did some very peculiar things. Imagine your-

self living in their days, if you can. You would have seen one of these men walking about barefoot and naked for three years (Isaiah 20). Or you might have seen one of them build an illustration of Jerusalem with a tile, an iron pan, and some other objects. He then reclined beside this odd array of objects. Every day as you passed by this scene, there this man lay. He never turned from one side to the other. For 390 days he remained there on his left side. After that he rolled over onto his right side and lay there for another 40 days. During this whole year and two months he remained there in all kinds of weather eating a multigrain bread he had baked with manure (Ezekiel 4).

Or perhaps you would have seen a young man standing at the busy, public gate weeping, lamenting, and lifting up his voice, declaring the doom that was to come. His message was so dark and dreary that the hands of the men of war were weakened. Even the most positive thinker could turn negative by listening to him (Jeremiah and Lamentations).

What kind of men were these? They were radical, odd, eccentric, and disrupters of peace and order. Where did they get their authority?

Also bear in mind that among those who rejected these prophets were many nice people, men who were level-headed and friendly. Men who helped those in need. Men who were older than the prophets. Men who preferred righteousness over iniquity.

How easy would it have been to discern who the true and righteous ones were? Which side would you have identified with?

We tend to think if we had lived in Palestine two thousand years ago, we would have recognized Jesus as the Son of God, and believed that every word he spoke and every deed he did was right and holy. But can we be sure? Remember that at the time we would not have antici-

pated His death on the cross or His resurrection. There was nothing about His form that would cause us to desire Him (Isaiah 53:2). There were times when He got visibly angry (Mark 3:5, Mark 8:12, John 11:38). Many times His speech and rebukes to people were anything but tactful (Mark 7:25, Matthew 23, Luke 11:39-52). He called Herod a fox (Luke 13:32). One day He turned around and told His followers that they must hate their fathers, mothers, wives, children, brethren, sisters, and selves to be his disciple (Luke 14:26). He walked into the temple one day, and with a mighty heave He overturned the seats and tables where the people sat. He made a scourge and drove the animals and people out of the temple (Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, and John 2). This same man tells us that if we don't eat His flesh and drink His blood there's no life in us (John 6:53-58).

What kind of man was this? He was radical, odd, and He stirred up all the people with His teaching. Where did He get his authority?

Bear in mind that among those who rejected Him were many nice people. Men who were level-headed and friendly. Men who helped those in need. Men who were much older than Jesus. Men who preferred righteousness over iniquity.

Picture a people in this land today, yea right in our midst who are zealous of good works and on fire for the truth. A people whose teachers would go about baptizing anyone who truly repents, sometimes by immersion, sometimes by pouring, day or night, and at any time of the year. These men would be found on the street corners and alleys of our small towns preaching the Word of God to passers-by. They might publicly sing and leap and praise God. Even their women would witness of the truth and, being constrained to do so, would not keep silent.

Picture them meeting and having

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Children of Who?

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communion often, on any day of the week, and at any time of the day and night. They sing songs written by one of their own members. If people present only understood the English language, they would refuse to speak German. Any brother inspired by the Holy Spirit was permitted to speak in their meetings. These people would have no problem with working on Sundays, and they would hold very little esteem for any holidays.

Picture a people who send out young men for weeks and months at a time, leaving home, a wife, and children, to preach the gospel to the lost.

These people would have a high regard for inner conviction (Gemuth), and a low regard for the voice of a church. They would reject the idea of "group conviction" and surrender all "personal conviction" and follow the only thing that was left, "inner conviction" (the light and inborn knowledge of truth within us).

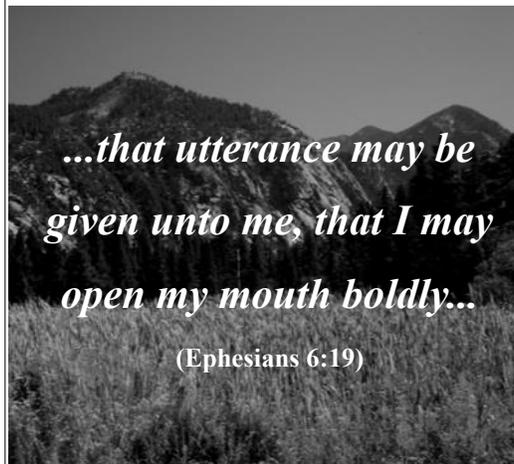
Most of these people would be poor. If they had been rich with money and possessions, they would voluntarily become poor. The group would mostly consist of young people ages fifteen to thirty-five.

What would we think of such a people? I don't mean those who live on the other side of the globe. I don't mean those who lived sometime in the past. I mean if they lived right now, right here in this land of ours, right in the midst of our communities. Some of them would be of "unser Leit" [our people]. What would we think of them?

I think I know. These people would be called radical, odd, individualist, Pietists, rebels, heretics, fanatics, stubborn, disrupters of peace and order. Where did they get their authority?

But wait a minute. That is exactly

what the Catholics, Lutherans, Zwinglians, and Calvinists called our forefathers in the 1500's! Every one of the characteristics I have listed was found among them. Most of these characteristics brought fear and alarm to the state churches. Most of the disputes between the early Anabaptists and the "children of the Pharisees" revolved around baptism, sacraments, swearing oaths, holy oil, etc. But for the most part the Anabaptists could have escaped persecution, and been granted the privilege to keep their beliefs if only they would have agreed to remain silent and leave the preaching and teaching for the clergy of the state church.



We pray for revival in our land, but what would revival look like? Are we sure we would recognize it? It might not look like we imagine it. It might not begin with the people we think it would. For God is able to raise out of these stones children of the Anabaptists, which are children of the apostles, which are children of the prophets, which are children of Abel, which are children of God. As it has always been, they will look odd, radical, eccentric, disrupting peace and order to the world and religious leaders who are children of the Catholic priests, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. These are children of the scribes and Pharisees, Pilate, and Herod, which are children of Ahab, Joash, Zedekiah, and King Manasseh, which are the children of Cain, which are the children of the

devil.

Why make all this ado over whether or not we can recognize God's people? Didn't Jesus simply say, *By their fruits ye shall know them?* Aren't the fruits of the spirit love, joy, peace, etc.? Indeed that is true. But if we lean on our own understanding of what God's love, joy, and peace looks like when it is manifested through earthen vessels, we will most likely have another blind spot. Jesus is our perfect pattern. When He overturned the tables, called people serpents and a generation of vipers, and called Herod a fox, it was the fruits of the spirit in action.

Does it all matter whether or not we can recognize the saints of today? I'll be the first to admit that we live in perilous times, and there are many false prophets and Antichrists. But I submit to you by the authority of scripture that whoever rejects, avoids, forsakes, shuns, or excommunicates the children of God has done the same to the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 9:4-5, Matthew 25:40, Proverbs 14:31, Hebrews 6:10). We also have the striking account in 3 John 9-11 of Diotrephes who loved pre-eminence and received not the apostle John or the brethren. John simply calls it evil.

The early Anabaptists saw the Catholics and Reformers as the Babylonian Whore. For us to look back it is easy to see that indeed it was. I do not claim to have perfect knowledge of the book of Revelations, but here is something to think about. The Catholics and Reformers in the 1500's were not the Whore of Babylon because they baptized infants, swore oaths, and worshipped idols. They were the Whore of Babylon because they were drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. The Babylonian Whore, according to Revelation 17 is a mother of harlots. That means she has children.

I believe that from the time of Cain and Abel to the second coming of Christ,

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Children of Who?

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every generation has its dragon, beast, and Babylon the Great making war against the Lamb, the woman, and the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 12).

Note the last part: they have the testimony of Jesus Christ. They walk the way that He walked. They are willing to drink of the cup that He drank and be baptized with the baptism He was baptized with. They are those who, like their Master, love righteousness and hate iniquity. The world is full of nice people, people who are level-headed and friendly. But they are opposed to the cross of Christ.

If you find it hard to discern who the disciples of Jesus Christ are today, then put on the armour of God. Set your eyes on Christ and press forward against unnumbered foes.

Against the lust of the flesh, against the lust of the eye, against the pride of life, against self, against father, against mother, against brothers, against sisters, against the world, against friends, against religious leaders, against theologians, against riches, against fame, against popular opinion, against positive thinking,

against anxiety. Press on without fear, without looking back, without glancing left, without glancing right, until your hand cleaves to the sword and every foe is vanquished.

You will quickly discover who the children of the serpent are that lie in wait for your soul. You will also recognize the followers of the Lamb who bring you sweet fellowship.

I repeat the advice that Anna of Rotterdam gave her son in 1539: "Where you find a poor, simple, cast-off little flock, which is despised and rejected by the world, join them; for where you hear of the cross, there is Christ; from there do not depart."

If this way sounds too narrow, too difficult, too rough, or too lonesome, then choose you this day whom you will serve. But think not to say, "We have the Anabaptists as our fathers." For they were willing to take up the cross and walk this way, a way found by so few and walked by still fewer. The way that was walked by our smitten, rejected, falsely-accused, and bleeding Lord, Jesus Christ. And he still beckons, "Follow me."

Several years ago Duane Troyer, leader of a small Amish settlement in northern

Missouri, began to write what he felt the Lord wanted all modern-day Anabaptists to know. His prophetic words struck a chord with believers far and wide. About half-a-year ago he wrote another article (the one in this letter), and soon afterwards he moved with his family and the entire group to a new settlement in the southwestern corner of the same state. Here they found fellowship with the Church of Monett, a small but very zealous Anabaptist congregation that has taken Jesus' words in Matthew 28:16-20 literally.

What will come of this?

A lot of trouble to start with. But precisely what Duane Troyer is saying now is what started all earnest revivals – like the first Anabaptists – through the centuries. This is where the Light breaks in, the new wine of the Spirit flows out, and the real Church wakes up to take up its cross and follow Jesus again.

We want nothing more than for our children and grand-children (if the Lord tarries) to fight and conquer in this same great war. So let us pray one for another and faint not!

Duane Troyer 660-734-0461, or
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See notice inside this newsletter...

Children of Who?

— Duane Troyer

The apostle Peter wrote his second epistle to stir up the people's pure minds by way of remembrance (2 Peter 3:1). My heart's intent, as I begin to write this letter, is to stir up the minds of God's people, especially the brethren among the Amish and other Anabaptist descendants who attempt to preserve the faith of our forefathers.

Man can nearly always recognize the people of God who lived in the past, but somehow to recognize the people of God living today is not so easy. It has always been that way. Nathaniel Howe phrased it well, "The way of the world is to praise dead saints, and persecute living ones."

Jesus found this problem among the religious leaders during His days on earth. In Matthew 23:29-31 He says, *Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of*

the righteous, and say If we had been in the days of our fathers we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.



Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. When the scribes and Pharisees read the books of the Old Testament, it was easy for them to distinguish the righteous people and the true prophets from the children of the devil who rejected them. They were positive that they themselves would have been in one accord with the righteous ones. The scribes and Pharisees were sure that if the prophets of old could somehow step into their own present era, they would surely give each other a right hand of fellowship. But they could not identify the righteous people and the true prophets that were among them in person, and thus they rejected them.

Likewise when the leaders of the state church during the Dark Ages and Reformation era read the gospels and the book

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