

The Difficult Part

By Bill Hall

Many, before entering the Lord's service, no doubt feel that once they have been baptized, become accustomed to attending worship periods regularly, and overcome some of their old habits, they will pretty well "have it made" in serving the Lord. Doing these outward services, however, is the easy side of obeying Christ. The difficult side involves that which is within; it involves keeping the heart right.

It is easy to attend the worship periods, but it is difficult to worship, to rid the mind completely of worldly things, and to concentrate fully on the Lord. It is easy to sing, but it is difficult to meditate on the words, making the sentiment of the song one's own sentiment. It is easy to bow the head, but it is difficult to pray. It is easy to eat bread and drink fruit of the vine, but it is difficult to concentrate as fully as one should on the suffering of Christ. Sitting through a worship period is not in itself worship, for true worship must proceed from the heart. **(Eph.5:19; Jn.4:24).**

In moral realms, the difficult thing to do is to keep the heart pure.

It is relatively easy to refrain from killing, stealing, or committing adultery. After all, one is hindered in such matters by the laws of the land, social pressures, forbidding circumstances, fear of being caught, etc. It is difficult, however, to completely rid the mind of jealousy, selfishness, discontent, lust, hatred, bitterness, a spirit of revenge, etc. Anyone who has ever been jealous of another knows the difficulty involved in cleansing the heart of this terrible sin. So it is with all the sins of the heart.

It is easy to develop a friendly way and gracious manner with others, but it is difficult to develop genuine love and concern for others within the heart. It is easy to give something to some charity drive, but it is difficult to develop real compassion for the poor. It is easy to say, "Forgive me, Lord," but it is difficult to repent.

The wise man said, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." **(Proverbs 4:23)**. This is an essential part of serving the Lord...and the difficult part.



The Auburn Beacon



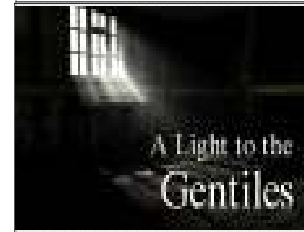
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. **(Matthew 5:16)**

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The Dispersion

By Alan Jones



Thoughts to Ponder

... I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth. **(Isaiah 49:6)**

"Has Ezekiel gone mad?" This may have been the reaction of some after they watched Ezekiel shave his head and beard, weigh the hair, divide it into thirds, and then burn a third, strike a third with a sword, and scatter the remaining third to the wind. However, Ezekiel was not mad, but he was signifying the punishment soon to fall on Jerusalem, a punishment which would pave the way for the salvation of the world **(Ezek. 5:1-12)**.

Through God's use of the Diaspora, his Servant became a light of the nations so that his salvation might reach the end of the earth (Isa. 49:6). Aren't we thankful for the fulfillment of Ezekiel's hair scattered to the wind?

When Ezekiel tossed his hair into the wind, he was not telling God's people anything new. In giving the blessings and curses of the Law **(Deut. 28-30)**, God had sworn that if Israel disobeyed him, he would scatter them among all the peoples from one end of the earth to the other **(Deut. 28:64; Ps. 106:26-27)**. Soon after Ezekiel's hair was swept away by the wind, Jerusalem fell and the Diaspora or Dispersion began.

taking Jeremiah with them **(Jer. 43)**. When the Persians gave the order that those taken captive by the Assyrians and Babylonians could return to their homes, only a small proportion chose to do so. The sons of Korah wrote that God had scattered them among the nations **(Ps. 44:11)**. Haman described the Jews to the Persian king as "scattered and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom" **(Esth. 3:8)**.

Against the Word of the Lord through Jeremiah, a remnant from Jerusalem went to Egypt,

In the 400-year period of silence between Malachi and John the

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Classes This Week

Sunday Evening College Devo at Lauderdale's, Douglas Bethea teaching!	Monday 7:00 PM Men's study at Walker Davis' house	Tuesday 10:00 AM Ladies' class at the Rouse's on "seasoning your words"	Thursday 7:00 PM ladies' class at Savannah Spohn's house on "Seasoning your Words"
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Lisa Carter (Luke's mother)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	Nell Holcomb (Ben's grandmother, Joannetta's aunt)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Jamin Hymel (Chad's son)
Madeline Morton (Greg Lanier's g'daughter)	Alexander Locke (Jeremiah's cousin's son)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives)
Ricky Tucker (Tyler's cousin)	Ermogene Laxson (Sara Lail's grandmother)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Arabelle Rich (Joannetta's aunt)	Sasha Rozier (Makenzie Reynolds' cousin)	Eva Jean Cavender (Matt's grandmother)
Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann's Granddad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	James Palmer (Rachel Hobbard's grandfather)

November Birthdays

- 1-Paulina Zacarius
- 2-Debbi Coleman
- 6-Troy Godwin
- 6-Bridgette Borden
- 7-Amy Godwin
- 8-Ashley Miller
- 9-Darla Hahn
- 11-Andrew Hahn
- 12-Randal Porterfield
- 13-Toni Herd
- 13-Emerson Daniels
- 13-Dylan Bartlett
- 13-Ronaldo Henriquez
- 16-Nicole Pender
- 16-Alexander Dunaway
- 18-Alaina Bagents
- 23-Mary Ann Roberts
- 25-Olyvia Winslett
- 25-Silas Weldon
- 27-Scott Fowler
- 28-Will Harris
- 30-David Simpson

News and Notes

- Group Meetings tonight!
- Chuck Hunt's dad, Charles, will begin a series of chemo treatments for bone marrow cancer.
- Laura Humphrey's mom, Crystal, had a CT scan on Tuesday.
- Jessica Anderson's grandfather, Bill Simmons, was able to go home this weekend after receiving stints and medication.
- Please pray for Abbie Harrison's grandmother, Jean Buchanan, who is suffering with cirrhosis.
- Please pray for our expectant mothers: Amanda Stephens, Brooke Perkins and Jenna Vaughn.
- Blake and Bethany Tolliver has identified with the University church!
- Please keep those in your prayers who are in the adoption process: Kevin and Jessica Anderson.
- Please pray for the Moreno's in the visa process...
- All audio is posted to www.auchurch.com.

Elders

Walker Davis (334) 703-0050
Larry Rouse (334) 734-2133



SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

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Baptist, the dispersing of the Jews continued both by force and free will. Ptolemy I of Egypt (322-285 B.C.) captured Jerusalem and took home captives, adding greatly to the Jewish population of Alexandria. Antiochus the Great of Syria (223-187 B.C.) removed 2,000 families from Jewish communities in Mesopotamia and Babylon and settled them in Phrygia and Lydia. Pompey captured Jerusalem in 63 B.C. and carried away hundreds of Jews to Rome. During the period “between the Testaments,” the Jews also voluntarily emigrated for the purpose of trade and commerce, as well as colonization, which was encouraged by the Greek kings who sought to “Hellenize” or to bring Greek culture to all of the peoples under their control. The Sibylline Oracles (mid-second century B.C.) say of the Jewish people, “every land and every sea is full of thee.”

God promised Abraham that he would bless all nations through his seed (**Gen. 12:3**). In his providence, he used the punishment of dispersion as part of the “fullness of the time” (**Gal. 4:4**) so that the good news of salvation through his Son might be readily presented and accepted throughout the world.

The large Jewish population in Alexandria led to the translation of the Old Testament in Greek. The Septuagint or LXX (named so because of its 70 translators), began to be translated between 300 and 200 B.C. and was the “Bible” of Jesus, the apostles, and the first Christians. More importantly, this translation made what was once only a Jewish book, not only accessible to the world, but an influence upon it.

Wherever the Jews went, if ten men were present in a city, they set up synagogues for the teaching of the Old Testament. Some Gentiles were proselytized to the Jewish religion. Other Gentiles became “God-

fearers,” those who accepted Judaism, but were not fully proselytized. As Paul and others evangelized throughout the Roman world, they first sought out the synagogues (**Acts 13:14-15; 14:1; 17:14; 10-12 etc**). In the midst of the desert of an idolatrous and immoral world, the preachers of the gospel found an oasis, an audience who believed in the one true God, who believed in the Scriptures, who had concern for moral living, and who had Messianic hopes.

Tacitus, Suetonius, and Josephus, all wrote of widespread expectation that from Judea would rise a ruler whose dominion would be over all the world. Therefore, as the result of teaching in the synagogues, many converts were made, especially among the Gentiles.

The gospel had its beginning when the dispersed had gathered from around the world for the feast of Pentecost First-fruits) (**Acts 2:9-11**). That the gospel was preached on this occasion was no accident. The first-fruits were gathered unto God from those around the world, who later would scatter because of persecution and take the gospel home with them (**Acts 11:19-20**). The Diaspora certainly was the key to the spread of the gospel to all the nations, leading to the obedience of faith (**Rom. 15:26**).

As Christianity was accepted by the Diaspora and they received the blessings of the gospel, God fulfilled in a spiritual way his promise “to bring His scattered ones back together, to give them the land of Israel and a new heart and a new spirit” (**Isa. 11:11-12; Ezek. 11:16-20; Zeph. 3:9-10; Matt. 24:31**). And, this restoration of Israel was too small. Through God's use of the Diaspora, his Servant became a light of the nations so that his salvation might reach the end of the earth (**Isa. 49:6**). Aren't we thankful for the fulfillment of Ezekiel's hair scattered to the wind? - **Truth Magazine—May 4, 2000**



The “Hierarchy” of Loyalty

By Aubrey Belue

Through time, based on principle and experience, most of us appreciate folks who are loyal... How rare, but how great it is to have loyal friends, who as David says, “stick closer than a brother”...(**Prov 17:17;18:24**). In God's world, one is expected to be loyal to Him, to be loyal to His word, to be loyal to His kingdom, to be loyal to His “order of things”...

But, in life, there are conflicting loyalties... what then?

Realistically, each of us must deal with a world in which there are times when being loyal to a certain thing or person means you must NOT be “loyal” to another. The first “level” is easy – our first loyalty is to God. There are many other “layers” of loyalty, but getting THAT one right is helpful in dealing with the rest.

To illustrate: I am loyal to myself. “no man ever hateth his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church” – **Eph 5:29**. And yet, there are times, because my first loyalty is to God, when I must “love not my life unto the death” – **Rev 12:11**; when I must “crucify myself” – **Gal 2:20**

I am loyal to my country. In important ways, I put “country” before many other things...but because my first loyalty is to

ALL earthly loyalties have their limits, and sometimes truly fulfilling them might call for action in a direction that men (even those who expect loyalty) might consider as disloyal. That greater loyalty to God must be factored in.

God, I must often detach myself from it, and count myself a “pilgrim” and a “sojourner” here. **Heb 11:8-16**.

I am loyal to my family. My parents, my wife, my children, my extended family have a special place in my heart and my priorities. And yet, if I do not “hate father and mother, etc” I cannot properly express my

greater loyalty to God.

I am loyal to my friends (or at least, try to be). I will defend them when appropriate, support them in every way I can. But I am not so “loyal” to them that I overlook their shortcomings, ignore their spiritual needs, and fail to “wound” them when necessary (**Prov. 27:6**). Holding back in such circumstances would in fact be “disloyal”.

I am loyal to “my” church – its elders and fellow disciples (I take the command to practice “brotherly love” seriously); but at times I must exercise my greater and first loyalty to God and His truth by respectfully disagreeing and even opposing them (**1 Tim 5:17-23**).

ALL earthly loyalties have their limits, and sometimes truly fulfilling them might call for action in a direction that men (even those who expect loyalty) might consider as disloyal. That greater loyalty to God must be factored in.

