

YOKEFELLOW

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From The Director JOB, WHO WAS TRIED AS GOLD (V)



WAS JOB BLESSED AFTER HISTRIALS?

Jehovah answered Job but not in the way Job might have wished and anticipated. Having challenged Job to act like the dignified person [made in God's image] he was, to "stand on his own hind legs" [God certainly was not trying to belittle Job.], God answered the many questions and challenges Job had asked and made, with questions. Did God explain why Job had suffered? No. Did He give the charges, or indictment, which Job had requested? No. Did He allow Job to defend his innocence? Of course not, since he was innocent. Did God call upon Job to repent? No. Really, God did not answer a single question Job asked. Such was not needed. God did let him know that he had "darkened counsel by words without knowledge" (38:1-3).

When a person sits at God's feet, in His school, being asked His questions, he is getting the best education possible; the world does not have nor can it discover true wisdom (Job 28; Rom. 1:18ff). After asking Job certain questions, God by so doing challenges Job to realize that the universe is larger than is he, that Job has been too buried in his own self-interest. God was hardly going to set aside the laws of the universe for Job; He had more things to direct than just Job's immediate concerns. Given the opportunity to be "King of the universe" for a day, as it were, Job is told by God that he must be absolutely perfect in justice, not respecting any man's person, and certainly he must be at least strong enough to conquer two powerful animals [likely dinosaurs], behemoth and leviathan (40:6-41:34).

Job had not thought about it that way before; he acknowledged, "Who is this that hideth counsel without knowledge [notice, now, his repentance and confession of hasty words spoken in ignorance, though not sin deserving of his great afflictions received; also, please notice that the hasty words were spoken after his destruction]? Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not, Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not...I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; But now mine eye seeth thee: Wherefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes" (42:3-6).

How then, if God did not tell Job why he had suffered, was Job satisfied, how able to face the future? Just to know that God was still his Friend was much more than adequate. Really, no matter what they discussed, for Job to realize that things were still all right was wonderful indeed. He did not have to know why he had suffered; to know that God knew and cared was more than enough. [Time does not permit a full discussion regarding the problem of human suffering. People, even the righteous, suffer for sundry reasons: man's inhumanity to man, man's own sin and personal abuse,

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Co-Editor's Column CAN A SENSIBLE MAN BELIEVE THE BIBLE?



NOTE: Brother N. B. Hardeman was a great Bible teacher and writer. The following article from his pen is excellent. Garland Elkins.

CAN A SENSIBLE MAN BELIEVE THE BIBLE?

Enemies of God's word would be glad to see this question made prominent in all newspapers, magazines and periodicals, because of what they think it implies. Why not put it: "Can an honest, sensible man reject the Bible?" Such is my query now, and I submit this article with the hope of strengthening the faith of those who read it. For twenty centuries the enemies of the Bible have filed every objection possible—nothing new has been presented for generations—and, yet, the Bible proves itself adamant to all attacks. Many a hammer has been beaten to frazzles on the anvil of God's truth.

An objection has been raised to the effect that during the time Jesus is supposed to have lived practically nothing is said about him in the secular press or by the historian. The fact that but little is said is perfectly natural and altogether human.

Nothing new in the way of objections to the Bible has been presented for generations. At that time the world was engaged in military affairs, and only heroes and heroines on the field of battle received publicity. Worldly glory and deeds of valor occupy the pages of publications. The weapons used by Christ and his disciples were not carnal. He had no great armies clad in brilliant uniforms to unfurl his banner. There was no great political power of men of wealth to shout his praise. He lived in a despised town and belonged to the common people. Why waste ink and space in telling about the carpenter's son? But, there were a few references made by some of his enemies, and, while not intended, these but confirm what the Bible says.

The story of Christ as told by his apostles was corroborated by unbelieving historians. Among the Jews, Josephus is the outstanding historian. He was born only four years after Jesus was put to death. He was seven years old when James was beheaded, and he lived until the end of the first century. At the age of nineteen years, he took his stand with the Pharisees, the leading denomination of his day. As a historian he could have said but little about Jesus and his teaching without uprooting his own sect. He tells of the war between Herod the Tetrarch and his father-in-law Aretas, and of the intrigue between Herod and Herodias. Herod was defeated in the war; and Josephus says: "But some of the Jews were of the opinion that God had suffered Herod's whole army to be destroyed as a just punishment on him for the death of John, called the Baptist." He also says, "Herod had killed John who was a just man and had called upon the Jews to be baptized and practice virtue."

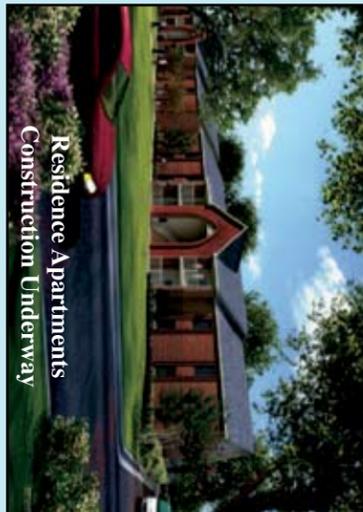
The details of the above mentioned war are not given in the Bible, but Matthew, Mark and Luke tell of John the Baptist's rebuking Herod for taking his

(Continued On Page 2)

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GENERAL INFORMATION

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SPRING, 2006 CAMPAIGNS

Four campaigns were conducted by MSOP students April 2-6, 2006. Campaigns took place in Duluth, GA; Hardy, AR; West Helena, AR; and, Scottsboro, OH.

Totals were: 6,639 doors knocked; 741 Bible Correspondence Courses left; 125 Bible studies set up; 155 Bible Correspondence Courses set up; and, 500 "Searching For The Truth" DVD'S distributed. There were 4 baptisms and 4 restorations during the campaigns.

(Cates: Continued From Page 1)

inadvertent violations or inability to cope with the laws of nature, etc. It is not evil that suffering exists. Sometimes people suffer for unknown (to them) reasons, as did Job. But, as Job, we do not have to know why we suffer. But, we must have the Lord with us if we would be able to suffer patiently.]

The righteous Job was approached by his three friends [in obeying God's command to repent] to offer sacrifices on their behalf, that they might be forgiven. Job's mediatorial work was accepted when bloody sacrifices were offered, because of the sacrificial death and atoning blood of Christ, who was prefigured by those sacrifices. Notice the immediate forgiveness evident on the part of Job and his prayer on their behalf, when the three friends repented. He had a forgiving spirit toward these friends in spite of the fact that they had spoken wrong about God and had ruthlessly attacked Job (42:7-9); his prayer and sacrifice on their behalf was accepted. It was then, "...when he prayed for his friends," that "Jehovah turned the captivity of Job." Would he have been restored, blessed by God, had he refused to forgive and to pray for his friends when they had repented and approached him with their request (Matt. 6: 14,15)? Whereas the answer was No to the question Job had asked his friends, "Is it good that he should search you out?" (13:9), the answer was Yes about Job when God searched him out.

The friends, so sure that Job needed them and their advice, were actually the ones who needed Job. Job came forth as gold, for he had been gold all along. God and Job had won the battle between God and Satan. God blessed him greatly, doubling all of his possessions. Still, with all those riches, a man needs friends, companionship, and comfort. The former trials had still taken place and were very much in his mind; his brethren, sisters, and former acquaintances would help Job (42:10-12); the gifts would be a small token of their desire to help him cope with the memories and hurt. [Question: Did God double Job's age?]. Some modernists have been critical of the idea that God blessed Job with happiness and great wealth after his destruction, BUT, what is wrong with God's bestowing His grace upon a righteous man?

CONCLUSION

Job was able to face the future with great enthusiasm and optimism. He had been tried by fire, but was refined in the process, coming forth as pure gold. Even righteous men suffer; they may never learn the cause of their suffering. It is not necessary always to know the "why" of suffering; it is critically important as to the "how." "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations [trials]; knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. And let patience [steadfastness, ASV margin] have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing" (Jas. 1:2-4).

The friends sought to understand the nature of God and the problem of suffering and how to deal with it through human philosophy-it resulted in perversion and condemnation by God. Job sought for wisdom from above; it resulted in a fuller knowledge of God and a richer, more abundant life. What an example, what an encouragement, what a hope Job gives to all who are wise enough to profit therefrom!

Curtis A. Cates

ALUMNI BOOK OF OUTLINES

The Alumni Board approved publication of a book of outlines for use at nursing homes, meetings of city councils, PTAs, civic clubs, and other events. Outlines should be brief (10-14 minutes), biblical, and bring glory to God.

Proceeds will aid MSOP and student housing. Alumni are deeply indebted to the school and its supporters. How wonderful it would have been if, when we were students, we could have been housed on campus. Let us work to make it safer and more convenient for those who follow us. All alumni are urged to help make this project a great success by sending at least one outline, as soon as possible, to: Danny Butler, P.O. Box 112, Carbon Hill, AL; E-mail: jdb@sonet.net

(Elkins: Continued From Page 1)

brother's wife. Thus, between the historian of opposite faith and the writers of the New Testament there is perfect harmony.

Caius Cornelius Tacitus was a heathen writer of the first century. He rose in the realm of Rome to become consul in the year 97. His reliability and superior style are recognized by the fact that some of his texts are used in many of our colleges to this day. He hated the Christians of his time because they would not worship his idol gods. But, in writing the story of affairs, the following is a summary of what he says regarding Christ and his disciples:

1. Christ was the founder of a sect of Christians. 2. Christ was put to death as a criminal. 3. He was executed by Pontius Pilate. 4. Tiberius was Emperor of Rome—hence, 5. Jesus was born in the reign of Augustus. 6. This "pernicious superstition" was checked for a time by the death of its founder. 7. This "pernicious superstition" broke out again and spread not only over Judea but reached the city of Rome. 8. Christians were persecuted in Rome as early as 64. 9. Vast numbers were discovered and condemned because they were accused of burning the city and because of their hatred for mankind. 10. They were hated as the offscourings of the earth and the filth of all things. 11. They were destroyed to gratify the cruelty of one man.

Pliny, the younger, was another great Roman writer and was made Proconsul of Bithynia from 106 to 108. Upon entering this district to assume the office he found a great persecution being waged by the Government. He continued it for a while and finally wrote a letter to the Emperor Trajan at Rome to know what to do about the matter.

From the letter he wrote the following facts were stated: 1. Many Christians of every age and rank and of both sexes were then in Bithynia. 2. Their teaching and influence were such that heathen temples were almost deserted and the victims for sacrifices could hardly find a purchaser. 3. None who were really Christians could, by any means, be compelled to make supplication to the image of Caesar, or the statue of the gods. 4. After the most searching inquiry, including torture to force confessions, he had found no vice among them. 5. They suffered for the name of being Christians without any charge of crime. 6. They were accustomed, on stated days, to hold two meetings; one, for singing "in concert" hymns to Christ, and for making vows to live righteously; and the other, for eating a "harmless meal." 7. Those who were Roman citizens were sent to Rome for trial.

This testimony comes from writers who lived in the first century of the Christian era. They were all enemies of our Lord, but they wrote as historians an accurate account of things then going on. Scholars and infidels have never questioned the authenticity of their statements about secular affairs. I must insist that but for prejudice and downright hatred of Christianity they would be forced to accept the Bible, seeing its statements are so perfectly corroborated by those who lived with the apostles and early disciples and knew whereof they spoke. Were the whole New Testament blotted out, the world could get a pretty fine idea of its teachings and influence upon the hearts and lives of men from these and other historians who, though enemies of the cross of Christ, in giving the story of their day, confirm the words by inspiration given.

But for prejudice and downright hatred, the Bible would be accepted. The period covered by New Testament history was characterized by frequent and complicated changes in the political affairs of Judea and of the countries around it. None of these is accurately described in the New Testament, and, yet, it contains many allusions to each in an incidental way. Josephus gives a detailed account of all. This fact affords a most excellent opportunity to test the accuracy of sacred writers. Agreement can be accounted for on no ground except perfect information on both sides. The New Testament reader who has no other source of information is left in great confusion. In the history of Matthew and Luke we read of "Herod the King." In Matthew 2, we find that Herod the King dies, yet, in chapter 14, Herod the King beheads James. In these statements not a word of explanation appears. In Matthew 2, Archelaus is king of Judea, and in Matthew 27, Pilate is governor of the same region. In Acts 12, Herod is king of Judea, and in Acts 23, Felix is its governor.

No explanation is made, and, yet, by consulting Josephus, all is in harmony with the facts of history. The Herod under whom Jesus was born died and was succeeded by his son Herod as ruler of a part of his father's dominion with the title of both king and tetrarch. The Herod who beheaded James was a grandson of the first, and was made king by Claudius Caesar. Herod the tetrarch was deposed by the Romans and procurators were sent to rule in his stead.

After these, the government of Palestine was again changed, and Herod who beheaded James was made king over all the land. Upon his death three years later, governors were again appointed, of whom Felix was one. Thus, it appears that the Bible is absolutely accurate in all these matters pertaining to political changes so frequently made.

N. B. Hardeman

Thanks To All Who Contributed To The Lectureship's Success!

The 2006 Memphis School Of Preaching Lectures, on "THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST," were conducted March 26-30, 2006. Attendance was high, interest was great, and the attitude characterizing the speakers and listeners was enthusiastic and optimistic. We are indebted to the Forest Hill elders for their providing such a splendid opportunity for us to study the Bible, gather for fellowship, and worship God together.

We were delighted to see the great crowds of people from far and near, to renew acquaintances, to have our spirits lifted, and to be encouraged to follow faithfully in the way of the Lord. The lectures helped renew our confidence in the power of the Gospel, and our hopes of the joyful homecoming in Heaven one day.

Our prayer is that the combined efforts of all who labored sounded forth the "good news," brought honor and glory to God, lifted up the Christ, and encouraged men to follow Him. Thus, we happily and gratefully extend our most sincere appreciation to ALL who helped.

We realize that most would never know ALL that must be done in the preparation and presentation of such a lectureship. First, we thank all the good brethren of the Forest Hill Church of Christ, and the godly men who serve as elders, for their wisdom and foresight in the work of the Memphis School of Preaching. Thanks to all the members who expended countless hours of labor, and did so with such joyful willingness! Truly, Forest Hill is a great congregation of loving, dedicated, hard working brethren.

Thanks to all who worked to prepare the buildings, and to keep them clean, to those who worked so hard in preparing and serving delicious meals for hundreds every day, to those who made our surroundings so beautiful and

2006 MSOP LECTURESHIP PHOTOS AND REPORT IN THE MAY YOKEFELLOW

comfortable, decorating and arranging things so well, to those who welcomed guests into their homes, to those who helped with parking RVs, and parking cars, to those who recorded the lectures, and made the sound systems and internet broadcasting all work so well, to those who directed our worship and led us in such thrilling singing, to those who cared for children and taught children's classes, to those who directed visitors, to those who worked in the book displays, "and such like."

Thanks to the Phillips Street congregation, and to OABS.org under the direction of Tom Bright, for broadcasting the lectures over the Internet. Go to OABS.org (or link from MSOP.org) to view them.

A very special thanks to the Griders for all their help, to the students and their wives for all they did, and to the members of area congregations for their splendid help in providing meals every day.

Thanks to brother Curtis A. Cates for his superbly capable direction of the School, his faithful, exemplary life, kind encouragement, and wise counsel. Thanks to all the faculty and staff of MSOP and Forest Hill, with whom it is such a blessing to work. Every detail was handled flawlessly, with a delightful spirit of cooperation.

A special thanks to brother Paul Sain, and to Sain Publications for their excellent work in printing the lectureship book, and in working with brother Tony Lawrence, to make possible the CD (containing all the lectureship books from 1982 through 2006, and much more valuable material). We are deeply indebted to sister April Meacham who devoted hundreds of hours to help proofread the manuscripts, and who was a constant source of encouragement.

Thanks, also, to all the speakers whose dedicated labors brought forth such a rich study of "THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST." Who knows how many souls may be encouraged to salvation, and to greater service by their work? Especially, are we grateful for all who attended the 2006 Lectures.

Most of all, we express our thanksgiving to our loving Heavenly Father for His great mercy and loving kindness. To God be the glory, honor, and praise!

We look forward to your being with us next year, **March 25-29, 2007**, for the Forty-first Annual Memphis School of Preaching Lectures on "**Epistles To Corinth.**" See you then!

Bobby Liddell

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2006 Honorary Alumnus Awards

We were happy to honor sister **Joanne Bradshaw** and brother **B. J. Clarke** with Honorary Alumnus Awards this year:

2006 Alumnus Of The Year

Congratulations to our Alumnus of the Year, brother **Anthony Hixson** of the class of 1984.

PERSONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Alumni Book Project

The Alumni Association has decided to pursue another book project to raise money for the school. This one is going to be a book of sermon illustrations, based on the personal experiences of graduates. All alumni are encouraged to write down any anecdotes from their personal lives, which they have found useful in illustrating points of Scripture, and send them to me. They may be funny, sad, or inspirational stories and they may be short or long, but they must be useful as sermon illustrations, and they must be original with the graduate offering the submission.

My home address is Russell Kline, 1810 Dundee Drive, Madisonville, Kentucky, 42431, and my e-mail address is msop1989@yahoo.com. My role in this project is to compile the accounts, and edit them to prepare them for publication. My vision for this book is that it may be broken down into chapters of illustrations suitable for sermons on various subjects, like Biblical Authority, Persevering in Christ, and the Brevity of Life, to name a few. This will all depend upon the nature of the submissions received. I am looking forward to working on this project. I am sure that this is a good idea, and assure you that I will work very hard to see it through.

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NEW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

We are happy to announce the election of **Michael McDaniel** as President, and **Skip Andrews** as Vice-President. Both men have proved themselves by years of productive service in preaching the Gospel, and as true friends and hard working supporters of MSOP. Brethren McDaniel and Andrews are faithful, talented, dedicated servants of the Lord, and will provide excellent leadership for the MSOP Alumni.

They join **Larry Powers**, Recording Secretary, and **Keith Mosher**, Treasurer. Our sincere thanks go to Clifford Newell, outgoing President, and Jerry Murrell, outgoing Vice-President for their service.

Already, brother McDaniel has produced an informative newsletter, called, "**Laborers Together Newsletter.**" All alumni will want to receive it. To do so, send your email address to brother McDaniel at mrmcdaniel@juno.com.