

# Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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## PLEASE, SAVE THE CHILDREN!

(Part 1)

by Ted J. Clarke

### INTRODUCTION

This isn't a plea to feed the starving children of Bangladesh or the Sudan in Africa, although such would be a noble cause. We are not talking about giving money to clothe and school the poverty stricken little ones in Romania or Mexico, even though we wish we could provide money enough to relieve all such suffering. Rather, we are discussing a different concept of saving the children. Many are disturbed by the pictures or stories of such desperate needs as we have just described, and well we should be. However, if we look closely at our own families with "spiritual" eyes we might be more horrified to see the starving and diseased souls of our own children!

There is something worse than physical starvation and poverty; that is, a failure to have one's soul nourished and clothed with the provisions of God's Word. Job said, "I have esteemed the words of [God's] mouth more than my necessary food" (23:12). Jesus asked, "For what is man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Elsewhere Christ said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). We may give our children the best and most abundant supply of food available; we can see that they are clothed with the clothes they most desire; we can give them the best of care from doctors and dentists; we can provide them with a happy and secure home environment; but if we do not train them in the way of the Lord, to recognize that their souls are their most important and valuable possession, **we will have failed to be the right kind of**

**parents!** We will not be parents who wanted to see their children saved eternally above everything else.

While we would desire to save the souls of all the children, this article addresses saving those in our own families. Even preachers are not exempt from neglecting their own families while they go about serving others in the world. What are you doing to spiritually nurture and care for the souls of your children? Are you helping them to have healthy splendidly clothed bodies while starving their naked souls? What can you do to assure that you have carried out your God-given mission to your children? We'll try to give some answers from God's sacred Word.

### YOUR CHILDREN'S SPIRITUAL WELFARE IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Society in general will not teach your children spiritual values which will save their souls. Quite the opposite, the apostle John declared, "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19). Most people are not New Testament Christians and it is folly to think that they will be a good source to feed your children healthy spiritual food. School systems cannot even talk about God, Christ, or the Bible in positive terms. Entertainment media such as television, movies, and magazines, etc. are not geared to teach the truth of God's Word. Rather, indecent dress and immoral acts are portrayed as the things to do. Vulgar language, including blasphemous use of God's names are now being used to educate your children as to what is common and cool. The apostle Paul warned, "Be not deceived: evil companionships cor-

rupt good morals" (1 Corinthians 15:33, ASV). Obviously, we cannot be with our children every minute of their lives, but what are you doing to educate them about and protect them from the evil companionships that corrupt good morals?

Your children unguided will not likely choose to seek the spiritual training they need. "Oh Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). The wise man stated, "a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Proverbs 29:15).

It may be a surprise to some neglectful parents, but no Scripture teaches or implies that the church has been given the primary responsibility of spiritual training for our children. Indeed, the church through its Bible classes and worship (and any other proper activities) should **supplement** the training in the home, but it cannot take the place of the home by any of the above. As seen below, God has given the home the primary responsibility of raising spiritually healthy children. No substitute can adequately do the job that God commissioned to parents and grandparents (and other concerned family members).

In each dispensation God has given **fathers**, as the heads of their homes, the primary responsibility to see that their children are spiritually healthy and whole. Under the Patriarchal Age, God said of Abraham, "For I know him, that **he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him**" (Genesis 18:19). The Law of Moses gave similar instruction, admonishing fathers, "Only take heed to thyself, and

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TED J. CLARKE ..... EDITOR  
Phone ..... (870) 625-3217  
Fax ..... (870) 625-3137  
E-Mail ..... cocfcgn@ozarks.com

**Website**[www.fultoncountygospelnews.org](http://www.fultoncountygospelnews.org)Joseph Chase - Webmaster  
E-mail: chasejoseph@yahoo.com

*keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but **teach them to thy sons, and thy son's sons** [grandchildren]" (Deuteronomy 4:9). Finally, demonstrating that the same is still God's intention for His creation, the apostle Paul noted, "**And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord**" (Ephesians 6:4).*

**TRAINING IN THE HOME**

Having made clear that God has chosen the father to be the primary provider of the children's spiritual well being, we hasten to add that others can assist tremendously in the effort. As a spouse and co-parent the mother is a **vital** part of children's spiritual training. Solomon said, "*My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the **law of thy mother***" (Proverbs 1:8; cf. 6:20). A woman is especially equipped to be an excellent teacher and role model in the early years of a child's life. The love and affection of a

mother, exerted early and often, forms a bond of attachment and fosters a desire to please that often can influence children throughout their entire lives. Sadly, many men ignore their God assigned role as head tutor and provider for their children's spiritual guidance, leaving the burden upon the mother and whomever she can call to assist her. Timothy's mother and grandmother are splendid examples of those who step into the role abandoned by neglectful or ungodly fathers. Paul spoke of such when he wrote to Timothy, "*When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, **which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in thee also***" (2 Timothy 1:5).

Yes, remember that God also assigned a role to grandparents to be spiritual examples and instructors of their grandchildren (cf. Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:2). There are too many times when both parents of a child abandon their roles to train their children spiritually. Thank God for godly and concerned grandparents who also take seriously the teachings of Scripture regarding their charge to teach their grandchildren.

**WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?**

The answer to that question is easy. Applying the answer to one's life is a responsibility that takes both thoughtfulness and much time, just as our roles as husbands and wives. We will find the rewards will be worth all the effort we put forth. Deuteronomy, Chapter 6, is a magnificent and fairly detailed example of how parents are to train their children in the ways of the Lord. Verse 1 indicates that our obligation as parents and grandparents is to be taught God's will for us and then "to do" what His Word teaches. Verse 2 speaks of "fearing" God (literally to hold Him in reverence, seeking to avoid anything that would displease Him), while we keep His commandments ourselves and influence our children and grandchildren to do the same. Verse 3 notes that the obligation properly carried out brings great

rewards, that it "*may be well with thee*" as God has promised.

Verse 4 calls upon God's people to recognize that "*God is one Lord*"; He is the only God to whom we must give our allegiance. He is our Creator and knows what is best for us in every area of our lives, here especially child-rearing. Accordingly, we must model for our children the example of what it means to "*love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might*" (verse 5; cf. Matthew 22:37 et al.). This is a tremendous responsibility, but doing so will go far in fulfilling our duty to train our children spiritually. Verse 6 demands that God's Word must be "*in thine heart*" or we will not live it out in our daily lives nor know what to teach our children. Paul reminded Timothy, "*from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*" (2 Timothy 3:15). Paul went on to exalt God's purpose in giving us sacred Scripture, claiming, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine [teaching], for reproof, for correction for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect [complete], thoroughly furnished unto all good works*" (verses 16-17). Parents, you cannot know what you need to know from God's Word by attending worship once a week! Is that showing children what it means to love God with all one's heart, soul, and might? You know better. Even if you attend all of the Bible studies and worship assemblies of your local congregation, you and your children still need additional study and training at home. **Please do not underestimate your need to know fully God's Word in order to properly train your children in the spiritual values they need to go to heaven!** Read Psalm 119 and see the many ways in which knowing God's word will help both you and your children live victorious and godly lives.

[Part Two will continue a discussion of Deuteronomy 6, giving more specific instructions on how to be the kind of parents who desire to see their children saved.]

## LIGHT FROM GOD'S WORD

by Owen D. Olbricht

David wrote, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105).

The Old Testament was all the light Israel had. It was a lamplight for them but was not *the Light*, as sunlight. The same was true concerning John, the one who immersed. Jesus said concerning him:

You have sent to John, and he has born witness to the truth . . . He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light" (John 5:33, 35).

The Old Testament was as a lamplight in its immediate message as also was John's teaching. Their prophetic message was as a spotlight focused on Jesus. This prophetic beam of light left in darkness all outside its beam, except that on which it was focused. This could be compared to those who are sitting in darkness seeing a spot of light from a spotlight focused a large picture. They would be in darkness and be able to see only a small part, but were in the dark concerning the complete picture. Each prophet received revelation concerning a part of God's plan but did not know concerning the whole of what God planned (Eph. 3:3-5; 1 Pet. 1:10-12). This was the situation of those during the Old Testament period.

Jesus, the great Light, was yet to come. Until He came, comparably speaking, the world remained in darkness. Isaiah revealed this by prophetically writing, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined" (Isa. 9:2; quoted in Matt. 4:16).

Those who rely on the Law contained in the Old Testament are living in the shadow. They do not have *the Light*. "For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never

with these same sacrifices, which they offered continually year by year, make those who approach perfect" (Heb. 10:1).

Paul admitted the glory of the first covenant. However, he taught that its glory faded and paled in comparison to the glory of the new covenant (2 Cor. 3:10,11). The Law foreshadowed the coming of Jesus. It was simply a shadow of a reality but not the reality itself.

### Jesus Is the Light

Jesus is not just a beam of light. He is the light that can enlighten the whole world. He said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12). Those who do not have Jesus are in darkness because they do not have the light.

And this is the condemnation that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God (John 3:19-21).

All who seek to live by the Law of the Old Testament are not in the light but in the shadow. The true Light has come into the world. Those who are following the Law or the teaching of men, and are trying to follow Jesus at the same time, are seeking to serve two masters. Jesus said that this is not possible (Matt. 6:24). Those who follow Jesus are the only ones who have the light of life.

### Men Are Not the Light

The philosophies, traditions, and commandments of men are not the light of the world. The teaching of religious leaders like Martin Luther King, John Wesley, John Calvin, Muhammad, Joseph Smith, Ellen G. White, Mary

Baker Eddy, or any other human being are not the light of the world. Jesus is the only light of the world.

Satan transforms himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). It is not surprising that his servants parade themselves as messengers of light. Those who are ignorant of Jesus' teaching and who follow the teaching of this age have minds that are darkened. Paul described them as "having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their hearts" (Eph. 4:18).

### Light From God's Word

In the Christian age, our light is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Satan has blinded the minds of the unbelieving world, "lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them" (2 Cor. 4:4). The light we now have is the revealed and written gospel.

While Jesus was in the world, He was the light of the world (John 9:5). Jesus is not now in the world so we cannot see Him as the light. Without the written word we would not know about Jesus, our light, or about His word. Through understanding the gospel, the light of Jesus can be ours. "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). This treasure has been placed in earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:7), the messengers through whom the truth has been revealed and recorded for us to follow. The light of Jesus has shown through them so that we can see the glory of Jesus through these earthen vessels, which we have today in the things they have written.

### Conclusion

As long as Jesus was in the world He was the light of the world (John 9:). Now that He is not in the world, His light, which is revealed in His teaching, can be found only in the writings of His inspired apostles and prophets (Eph. 3:4,5). We have that light

only when we have His teaching and understand it.

The study of the book, *Light From God's Word*, can point to Bible passages that can bring the reader out of the darkness of ignorance into the light of understanding of God's Word. It walks the student through the Bible to put its message in proper perspective. Of special interest are the discussion of the message and a comparison of both the Old and New Testaments. It is available for \$6.00 postage paid as a special offer to those who write to Owen D. Olbricht, 305 W. Maryland Ave., Sherwood, AR 72120.

**[Editor's Note:** Owen D. Olbricht has performed a great service in writing **Light From God's Word**. One of the most crucial pieces of information we can bring to a study of the Bible is the understanding that there is a vital distinction to be made between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In his clear and informative manner of writing brother Olbricht leads us through a study of how the Bible was written and its books collected into its present form. He discusses the "Makeup" of the Bible, including the inspiration of the Bible and its general divisions, all of which is needed for a reasonable approach to studying the Scriptures.

The bulk of the book deals with understanding the various covenants God has made with His people at different times and for different purposes, with chapter divisions on "Bible Covenants, Covenants With Israel, The Law & the Covenant, Law & Commandments, Messianic Covenants, The New Covenant, and Old & New Compared." The final five chapters cover some essential subjects in the New Covenant, such as "Forgiveness, New Life, Change of the Law, Sabbath Keeping and The Lord's Day."

Along with covering the positive side of these topics, brother Olbricht also refutes many of the religious errors which have developed as men left the light of God's word to promote their own doctrines. The 190-paged book

sufficiently covers the topics needed for you to come to God's Word and understand its general structure and essential truths for salvation which are focused on Christ. In addition to buying this book for your personal study it would be an excellent Bible class book or a great tool to give to those you are seeking to convert or to new converts. The price of \$6.00, which includes postage, makes it a real bargain. Remember to request this book from the author's address. **FCGN does not sell books.**]

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Thank you - Ted J. Clarke, editor

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**GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION**

- Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
- Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
- Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
- Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
- Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
- After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (1 Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

**THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

- The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:13).
- Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
- Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
- Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
- Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
- Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
- Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
- Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

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