



# Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

Volume XVI

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## Changes On The Home Front

As the graphic insert indicates, our office secretary is leaving in order to be free to travel with her husband. We will miss her, for she has been of tremendous service to the school. Rachel has always taken pride in her work and has continually sought to improve things in the office. She has developed ways in which we can locate books in our libraries, keep our financial records in better order, and has adapted things in the office so that all our catalogues are printed in house with our computer equipment. We shall miss her and wish her and Robert well in their travels. Perhaps they will send us a card so we can know of their progress in their journey.

**Thanks to  
Mary Garrett**

It is appropriate that we also say thanks to Mary Garrett for her assistance in the past months. Mary comes in and helps prepare the *Harvesters*

for the monthly mailing. In doing so she has taking some of the load from Rachel, and the school is grateful for her sacrificial service in this matter.

**Kathy Strickland  
and  
Clara Robinson**

We have two ladies who will be assuming office duties the first of April. Kathy Strickland has kept books for a private school in Lakeland and has agreed to work in that capacity with the school. Kathy and her family were members of South Florida Avenue for a number of years where Fred, her husband, served as one of the Deacons. They are now attending the North

Lakeland Church of Christ. Assisting her will be Clara Robinson. Clara has served as Bank Manager in the past for a branch of Peoples

Bank where the school has done business for a number of years. These two ladies will share office duties and will be receiving calls and assisting you as well as faculty and administration in the coming months. With a number of new items anticipated for the school, it is believed that having two to assume these duties will enable the school to better serve all involved.

**Phone  
FAX and 800 Numbers**

At this writing we have a number of new items in the office. The school may now be reached by dialing an 800 number. The FAX machine has a separate number so

(941) 683-4043  
FAX (941) 683-0750  
1-800-320-9780

that you may send a FAX to the school at any time of the day or night. The old number for the school remains the same with the exception that our area code has been changed. **THE NEW AREA CODE IS 941.**

**Visa/MasterCard**

We have completed arrangements for you to order

*In  
Appreciation*

To  
Rachel Capps

*For  
Faithful Service as Secretary*

Board of Directors  
Florida School of Preaching  
March 5, 1996

items from the school, such as lectureship books or tapes, by using Visa/MasterCard. By calling the school and providing us with the card number and expiration date, we can place your order immediately. This service should enable the school to be of greater service to you in the coming days.

#### On-line Service

By summer we should have a computer set up to be on line and to send and receive electronic mail. This service will enable us to have direct communication with foreign inquiries relative to the school.

Recently, we received a request for information from a prospective student in the Ukraine. In the letter he provided an E-mail address from a preacher who was working there. One of our students, Howard Johnson, has a computer that is on-line and sent our reply late one afternoon and received a reply from the preacher the next morning. This was done without expense to the school and enabled the communication to be direct. When we go on-line with the school, we will publish our E-mail address so that you may

communicate with us in that fashion (assuming you have the equipment).

#### Computers

In the summer we will purchase additional computers for the school to use in the teaching program on a continual basis.

The speech class will be using these computers in assisting students to utilize the computer to develop sermons and topical studies.

In addition to the speech class, we plan to use computers to assist in teaching basic and fundamental English to the students. We have a number of students who do not have English as their mother tongue, and we have some who need to understand how to use their mother tongue of English in a proper way.

We plan to develop the class with part of the time in lecture and assignment and with at least half the time with hands on computer skills. There are some software programs that will be helpful in teaching both English and Bible/Speech.

Alternating years we will develop a two semester class that will enable the preacher student to understand how the computer can be of use in the local congregation. We have done this in a one semester class in the past and found that much more time and development needed to be done if we are to properly assist them in their development.

Summer is going to be a busy time as we get the above items in place.

The elders of the South Florida Avenue have completed renovation of class room space and installed carpets and electrical outlets that will enable us to have the twelve to fourteen computers for class use. By assigning two students to each computer, we should have enough equipment to make our teaching more effective.

We will keep you posted as things further develop and hope these additions will enable us to be more effective in our training preachers.

\* \* \*

## Will Earthly Relationships Continue In Eternity?

There are times when a person will use family and relatives to excuse them from being responsible for their own actions. This is true in this world as well as in the world to come. Have we not seen high-priced lawyers use such tactics to excuse criminal activity in their clients? This person or that did what he did because of his family or lack of family, etc.

The same type excuse is often cited when a person does not want to be responsible for spiritual conduct. It is true that we will

know one another in heaven, but it is not true that family ties and family units will extended into the world to come. Moses and Elijah were known by Peter, James and John in the mount of transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8). The position of Moses, Elijah, Peter, James, and John will not extend to heaven. They each had a role to play (a function in the eternal scheme for things in this world), but in heaven that scheme of redemption will be over. Paul describes it as follows: "Then

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(cometh) the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power" (I Cor. 15:24).

### Spiritual Family

In preparation for the world to come, Jesus taught people that spiritual relationships would transcend earthly ties and existence. Jesus did this when it was reported to him that his earthly relatives were seeking him. "And there come his mother and his brethren; and, standing without, they sent unto him, calling him. And a multitude was sitting about him; and they say unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answereth them, and saith, Who is my mother and my brethren? And looking round on them that sat round about him, he saith, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Mark 3:31-35). The Hebrew writer calls upon all to recognize the supreme spiritual family of God—"to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23).

On a different occasion we are informed that family units are not the significant issue. God is able to produce children that are not related to family units. Note the following: "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matt. 3:9). The church of the Lord prepares people for eternity. The church of the Lord is also His family. This family is comprised of people from all nations and kingdoms of the world.

"These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:14-15). Recall the vision of the redeemed that John described as follows: "And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou was slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood (men) of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them (to be) unto our God a kingdom and priests; . . ." (Rev. 5:9-10).

### A New Creation

There is another term for what God does in preparing people for the eternal state, and it is termed a new creation (creature if the individual is the point of emphasis). "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, (he is) a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). "For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. 6:15). Again we read, "having abolished in the flesh the enmity, (even) the law of commandments (contained) in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, (so) making peace" (Eph. 2:15).

### Personal Responsibility

Beyond these principles is the fact of personal responsibility in the day of judgment. The final judgment will not be determined by family, church, or nation. It will be personal. Not father and child, not mother and child, not race, but each individual giving account to God for his or her action or inaction. Consider the teaching in these verses: "For it is written, As I live,

saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow, And every tongue shall confess to God. So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:11-12). "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things (done) in the body, according to what he hath done, whether (it be) good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10).

Ezekiel pressed for personal responsibility upon his people. While nothing could deter God dealing with the apostate nation, an individual could rescue himself personally. Ezekiel, Daniel, Daniel's three friends, and others who were faithful could be saved. Consider the following passages and contexts. "Son of man, when a land sinneth against me by committing a trespass, and I stretch out my hand upon it, and break the staff of the bread thereof, and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast; though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord Jehovah. They should deliver neither son nor daughter; they should but deliver their own souls by their righteousness. . . . Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver neither son nor daughter; they should but deliver their own souls by their righteousness" (Ezekiel 14:13-14, 20). God would act to remove a familiar excuse of blaming others rather than being morally and spiritual responsible. Read carefully Ezekiel 18 and note that it is not the parent and the child but both parent and child will be evaluated. Read carefully the expression: "The word of Jehovah came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As

I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, ye shall not have (occasion) any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:1-4). Again, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezekiel 18:20).

### Close Physical Bonds Will Not Continue In Heaven

The closest physical tie on earth is that of husband and wife. Yet, Jesus teaches that this bond or union will not be a part of the world to come. "On that day there came to him Sadducees, they that say that there is no resurrection: and they asked him, saying, Teacher, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first married and deceased, and having no seed left his wife unto his brother; in like manner the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And after them all, the woman died. In the resurrection therefore whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. But Jesus answered and said unto

them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven" (Matt. 22:23-30).

### Questions

If it is asked what about David, did he not plan to go to his son, and is not this generally understood to have reference to the life to come? "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me" (II Sam. 12:23). The position is true, but this is not teaching that David will be to his son in eternity as he is on earth—father to son, etc. The same could be said when the Bible talks of being gathered to the fathers. Such passages as the following may be cited: "And Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full (of years), and was gathered to his people" (Gen. 25:8). "He lieth down rich, but he shall not be gathered (to his fathers); He openeth his eyes, and he is not" (Job 27:19). These passages and others like them do not teach family relationships will obtain in the eternal state. Such passages do teach that heavenly blessings will await those who are faithful and that they will enjoy these blessings forever.

### Conclusion

What are some of the les-

sons for us from such reflections? (1) This world is the time, and the only time, we have to prepare for the final state. (2) Our fate in eternity will not be determined by nationality, race, or social status in this world. (3) While it is true that social conditions may influence us, and we may be able to influence others, it is not the case that influence alone will save or condemn. We will give a personal account to God for how we have influenced others or have permitted others to influence us. (3) Those who may use the thoughts of earthly ties (father, mother, mates, child, race, et al.) as justification for acting or not acting spiritually or morally are going to be alarmed in the final judgment—each will give an account for his or her own actions and for none other.

Think about it. You cannot be judged for another neither may another be judged for you. You will not be judged with another neither may another be judged with you. Judgment and the final state of things will be a matter of personal development. Think on these things. May it help us in teaching others and may it help us in living the life God expects each one to live. [Editor]

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