

What Does It Mean to Call Upon the Name of the Lord?

Is all that is necessary to be saved is to pronounce the name, 'Jesus Christ'?

By Gregory Dullum

The Feast of Pentecost is June 8. Something was said by Peter on Pentecost as the church began 1,983 years ago that has been MISUNDERSTOOD by many people. It is IMPORTANT that we understand it because it holds a KEY to our salvation.

Peter's Sermon

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

"Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!' Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?'

"Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.'

"Then Peter stood up with the Eleven,

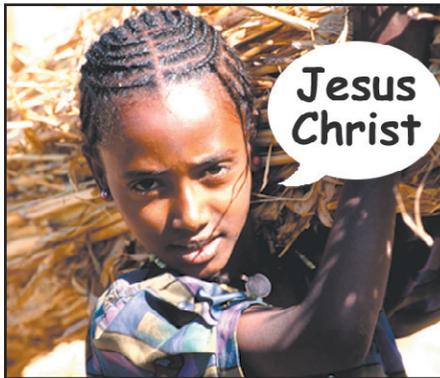


photo by Paul Jeffrey/ACT

Peter said, "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." If an African missionary can get a native to utter the words "Jesus Christ," is that person saved?

raised his voice and addressed the crowd: 'Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved' " (Acts 2:1-21 *New International Version*).

Because of what Peter said in verse 21, some believe all we have to do is *speak the name* "Jesus Christ" and we are saved!

That is *all there is to it*. Isn't that what the Bible says? I have heard that missionaries in Africa and Asia have used this scripture to save the multitudes. They persuaded them to speak the name "Jesus," and no matter how they lived or what they believed, they were considered "saved" because they had called on the name of the Lord.

But is that all there is to it?

The Word, 'Call'

To understand what Peter meant, we need to understand the word "call." Peter's word translated "call" is the Greek word "epikaleo," which means to call upon by way of adoration, making use of the name of the Lord (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* by W.E. Vine, 1981, p. 164).

Adoration is defined as paying honor to a divine being; worship, fervent and devoted love. Can people truly honor and love God if they don't know who He is?

There is MORE to *calling on the name of the Lord* than *speaking the words*.

Paul's Use of the Phrase

Notice this same expression in Rom. 10:13: "For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." This verse is not written in a vacuum. Notice the context. Paul wrote, "that you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation. For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not

THE NAME OF THE LORD

Continued on Page 2

Name of the Lord

Continued from Page 1

be put to shame. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

"How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!' But they have not all obeyed the gospel...." (vv. 9-16).

In verse 9 we are told we must BELIEVE Christ is *raised from the dead*. What does that mean? It means we must believe JESUS WAS GOD. He was NOT just a *good teacher*. It means accepting Christ for who He really was. And that means *believing what he taught*.

Verse 14 tells us BELIEF is required. It is not enough to *call* on a name—we must *believe* the Being who owns that name.

Verse 16 tells us there are some who OBEYED NOT the Gospel. *Obedience is required!*

Not a New Testament Concept

Is it a New Testament concept to call upon the name of the Lord to be saved? Was this something NEW that *began in the church*? No. Peter and Paul were quoting Old Testament scripture from Joel 2:28-32. If we go back and read those verses, we will recognize them as the words that Peter spoke on Pentecost A.D. 31.

Zero in on verse 32 and we'll see the quote we're studying: "And it shall come to pass that whoever calls upon the name of the LORD shall be saved." Notice that the verse doesn't end there. It continues: "For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, Among the remnant whom the LORD calls."

Calling on the Lord is a TWO-WAY STREET! We must FIRST be *called by God*. At the end time, which these verses are describing, there will be remnant whom the LORD has *called!*

The First to Call on God's Name

When did people FIRST call on the name of the Lord? It was NOT in the New Testament! It was *at the beginning* of the Old Testament, way back when Adam's grandson, Enos, was born to Seth. Gen. 4:26 says, "Then men began to call upon the name of the LORD."

Jamieson Fausset and Brown's *Com-*

mentary on the Whole Bible says this means rather, they were CALLED BY the name of the LORD. They were called for the first time "God's people," a name applied to them *in contempt* by the world.

Apparently Seth and his family called on the name of God and *had a relationship with God*. They were called the *people of God* and *looked down upon* by the MAJORITY of people living at that time, who were EVIL.

Abraham

Abraham called upon the name of the LORD (Gen. 12:8, 13:4, 21:33). What two qualities did Abraham possess? If we possess them, we too, can call on the name of the LORD as he did.

1. Abraham *believed God* and it was counted to him for righteousness (Rom. 4:3, Gal. 3:6, James 2:23). James 2:23 adds that Abraham was called the FRIEND of God.

2. Abraham *obeyed God*. He kept all his charge, commandments, statutes and laws (Gen. 26:5, Heb. 11:8).

Abraham BELIEVED and OBEYED. He had *faith AND works*.

Other Old Testament Examples

Ps. 99:6 says Moses, Aaron and Samuel called upon the name of the LORD and He answered them. They had relationships with God. Verse 7 says these men KEPT his testimonies and ordinances.

Could ALL OF ISRAEL have had this relationship with God? Moses told them, "The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways. Then all peoples of the earth will see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you" (Deut. 28:9-10).

Again, there was a two-way street. Israel was required to BELIEVE God and OBEY Him. Then He would have called them by his name and they would have been called the people of God.

The Church Today

What about we in the Church today?

The Apostle Paul wrote an epistle which states, "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord..." (1 Cor. 1:2).

To whom is this epistle addressed? To the CHURCH OF GOD. To those who are CALLED to be saints. In John 6:44, Jesus Christ says no man can come to Him except the Father draw him. The saints are people who call upon the name of Jesus.

Only those true Christians who BELIEVE and OBEY God can *truly* call upon the name of Jesus. Calling upon his name is more than *pronouncing* the words "Jesus Christ."

How many Jews SPOKE THE NAME of Jesus in Paul's day? Many, I am sure. And they did not always speak it with respect. Were those Jews SAVED because they SPOKE HIS NAME? No. To call on the name of Jesus means to live the Christian way of life—OBEDIENT to God's LAWS and *filled with love*.

In Acts 9:14, Ananias was praying to God about Saul (who became Paul). God was calling Saul, but Ananias was skeptical about this calling. Ananias complained to God, "He has the authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." Saul was not arresting JEWS who *spoke the name of Jesus*. He was after TRUE CHRISTIANS who were *living a different way of life*.

When we read the words of Paul or Peter stating, "All who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," we now know the DEEP *meaning* of these words. It does not mean to yell out the name "Jesus" and be automatically saved. It means BELIEVING *who He was* and OBEYING *what He said*.

Salvation is only offered to those who are *called first*—who have a relationship with God. God has not called everyone. From the time of Seth's son until now God has dealt with only a *few* CHOSEN people. Only they have had the opportunity to call on His name and be saved. Today, God has made salvation available to those *in his church*. Later, salvation will be offered to *the whole world* when it gets to know God after Christ's return—and in the time of the white throne judgment.

We in the church have a relationship with God NOW. *Let US call on his name!*

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How Kind Are We?

One of the fruits of the Spirit is kindness. Are we as kind to others as we should be?

By Gregory Dullum

Who is the kindest person you know? The first person to come to my mind is our former church piano player, Polly Burrow, who died of cancer many years ago. Granted, I wasn't with her 24 hours a day, seven days a week to see how she behaved all the time. But any time I was with her, she was a very kind, gentle person. And anyone who knew her would agree.

Take a moment to answer this question for yourself. Who stands out in your mind as an example of kindness?

Now ask yourself, why did you pick the person you picked? What is it about that person that says "kindness"? Why do you think *that person* is KIND?

The words "kind" and "kindness" are rather common words, but what do they *really mean*? What QUALITIES make up kindness? Is it friendliness? Generosity? Gentleness? Showing concern? Having empathy or sympathy for others? Offering to help others in time of need? Going above and beyond what is required? Having a quiet disposition—not raising his or her voice, not getting angry easily? All of these things are part of kindness. I'm sure there are more qualities than these. The person you chose as the kindest person you know has qualities that YOU see as *kind*. What are THOSE qualities?

Why is this important? Why should we examine KINDNESS? Because we should be developing those qualities that make us kind. We all must become kind people, like the ones who came to mind when answering the question. The person we chose is a really good, concrete example for us to follow.

We may think we are kind already, but we probably have room for improvement. All of us can strive to be kinder *to others in the church* and to those *in the world*.

A Fruit of the Spirit

Kindness is one of the fruits of the holy spirit. The fruits, listed in Gal. 5:22, are: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, KINDNESS, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Kindness is listed *by itself*, and is separate from love, goodness and gentleness, which are also listed as fruits. Yet, when I think of a KIND person, I think of one who has love for others, and is good and gentle. Although listed separately, these qualities are *related*.

Apostles Tell Us to Be Kind

After being baptized and receiving the holy spirit, we are to put off the old man—our old way of behaving and thinking—and put on the new man. We are to become like God (Eph. 4:22-24).

Paul explains in detail how to do this in the following verses: "Therefore, put away lying, each one speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another, '*Be angry and do not sin*': do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.... Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor [loud quarreling], and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice [wishing to hurt or make suffer]" (vv. 25-31). These things which we are to STOP doing are the *opposite of kindness*. Then Paul specifically adds: "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you" (v. 32).

Paul wrote very similar instructions to the Colossians in Col. 3:5, 8, 12-13. We are to put on several things relating to and including kindness: "put on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with one another..."

Peter, in his second epistle, lists several qualities we NEED TO HAVE. In chapter 1, he adds each one onto the one before. As he gets to the end of his list, he tells us to add godliness to perseverance, and in verse 7 he concludes, "to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, love."

Brotherly KINDNESS is one of the qualities WE NEED! It's right up there *next to LOVE*. I think it's one of the ways we *show our love*—we put love *into action* by showing kindness to others. We must NOT *skip over* kindness in this list! We must have ALL the things that Peter lists, including kindness.

Peter tells us in verse 8, "For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Kindness is one of the things we need if we want to bear spiritual fruit. What if we don't have these things? Peter says in v. 9: "For he who lacks these things is short-sighted,

even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

We have discussed two reasons to become more kind. One is because we have the holy spirit, and as we exercise that spirit, we should be developing the fruit of kindness. Secondly, Paul twice and Peter once told us to be kind to one another. We should heed those instructions. There is a third reason.

Become Like God

We should be kind because we are to become more like God, and He is kind. Notice to whom God shows kindness. Is it only to those who obey him? Jesus tells us, "But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Highest. For He is kind to the unthankful and the evil" (Luke 6:35).

The shortest chapter in the Bible, Ps. 117, says: "Oh praise the LORD all you Gentiles! Laud Him all you peoples! For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the LORD endures forever." God has merciful kindness toward ALL people.

Let's think about the kindness that God has shown each one of us, individually. How has God been kind to us? Let's think about what kindness is. Meditate on the qualities that make up kindness.

Meditate on Kindness

I mentioned some things earlier that make up kindness. Here are some more qualities of a kind person: Humble. Someone who LISTENS to others and doesn't have to talk all the time. Someone who isn't always *criticizing or correcting*. Someone with a *positive attitude*. I'm sure there are more qualities that will come to your mind. These are just a few ideas to get the ball rolling.

Think about how God shows kindness, and how those other people who came to mind exemplify it. Then let's STRIVE TO BE MORE LIKE the *person* who came to mind when we thought of a kind person, and be MORE LIKE OUR God.

As we change, we will *put on kindness* as we have been instructed to do three times in God's Word.



Photo by Greg Dullum
Polly Burrow, an example of kindness.

JOHN THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED

John learns that Gentiles may join the Church of God without first becoming Jews.

By Gregory Dullum
Part 20

Gentiles Welcomed to Church

Peter traveled through all parts of the Holy Land. This time he was NOT accompanied by John, who had gone with him to Samaria in the past (Acts 9:32).

Most of the original apostles, including John, probably remained in Jerusalem. After awhile, they began to hear reports about Gentiles receiving the word of God through Peter (Acts 11:1). They weren't sure what to make of these reports. Had the door of salvation been opened to non-Jews? If true, this was BIG NEWS! ALL converts up to this time had been *Jewish!*

When Peter returned to the headquarters church in Jerusalem, he was criticized by strict Jewish Christians who believed Gentile males had to be circumcised before becoming Christians.

Peter then recounted what had happened to him. He explained how he had seen a vision of a great sheet dropped down from heaven, full of unclean animals, and heard a voice commanding him, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat" (vv. 5-7).

Peter refused to eat the unclean animals, because TRUE Christians obey the commands from the Old Testament regarding what meat should be eaten (see Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14). He told the voice, "Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth" (Acts 11:8).

The voice instructed Peter, "What God has cleansed you must not call common" (v. 9). This happened three times and the sheet was drawn back up into heaven.

Some teach that this shows ALL meat was made *clean to eat*; it became okay from this time on for Christians to eat pork, seafood and other things which God called "*detestable*" (Deut. 14:3). But Peter knew this vision was NOT about FOOD at all! It was about *Jews calling Gentiles UNCLEAN* (Acts 10:28).

Peter continued his story. "At that very moment [that the vision ended], three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing" (Acts 11:11-12).

Peter went with the men to the home of a Gentile named Cornelius. Cornelius told Peter an angel had appeared in his home and had instructed him to send men to fetch

Peter from Joppa, so he and his household could be saved. When Peter began speaking to them, the holy spirit fell upon the Gentiles just as it had fallen upon the Jews on Pentecost A.D. 31 (vv. 13-16).

Peter then asked his accusers and others listening to his story (perhaps including John): "If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

Silence filled the room. "When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, 'Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life'" (vv. 17-18).

Famine of 41

John probably was in Jerusalem when a severe famine struck the area. The famine was foretold by a prophet named Agabus: "And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar" (Acts 11:27-28).

"Four famines occurred during his reign. This one in Judea and the ancient countries took place, A.D. 41 [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 20:2, 5]" (A *Commentary on the Whole Bible* by Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset and David Brown, 1964, pp. 1098-99).

If John were in Jerusalem at this time, he probably was thankful to see Paul (Saul) and Barnabas arrive from Antioch with relief sent from the brethren there (Acts 11:29-30).

John's Brother Martyred

About this time, King Herod Agrippa began persecuting some members of the church (Acts 12:1). Herod Agrippa was the son of Aristobulus, and the grandson of Herod the Great.

In the year 44, Herod had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword (v. 2; *New Testament Survey* by Merrill C. Tenney, 1976, p. 254).

Can you imagine the feeling of loss John went through at this time? James was probably a few years older than John (since he is mentioned first when both names are found in the same scripture), so there was never a moment in John's life when his brother was not a part of it. They

had worked together as fishermen and had been called together to follow Christ (Mark 1:19-20). As disciples, they (at times) acted together, earning the nickname, "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17). Now, at a fairly young age (probably in his 40s), James was violently taken out of the picture, killed on orders from the king!

This was not the FIRST martyrdom John had endured—he witnessed the crucifixion of his cousin, Jesus, and was aware of the stoning of Stephen. But this time it was *his big brother* who was taken away! Brothers share a *special* relationship: "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (Prov. 17:17). John had counted on James being there for him in times of adversity. Now, he no longer could. There was a HOLE in his life.

Perhaps the martyrdom of James caused the remaining son of Zebedee to place *even more* TRUST and RELIANCE upon God *the Father and Jesus Christ*. John had much more to go through, and it would require a lot of strength!

Peter Imprisoned

The Jews who opposed the Church of God were pleased with Herod's execution of James. When Herod saw that his action pleased the Jews, he had Peter imprisoned. Then came the Passover and seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown's *Commentary* says the Jews did not approve of death-penalty trials or putting anyone to death during the Feast of Unleavened Bread (p. 1099). So Peter remained in prison, and Herod intended to execute him when the feast was over (Acts 12:4).

John and the other members of the church were still grieving for the loss of James, and now it appeared that Peter was about to die as well. John was close to Peter. They may have grown up together; they worked in a fishing business together; and were, along with James, part of the inner circle of Christ's disciples. Peter and John had been sent on missions together after the church had started.

John had just lost his physical brother. He could not bear the thought of losing a close spiritual brother as well. He and the other church members offered up "constant" (or "earnest"—see marginal note) prayer to God for Peter's release.

Perhaps John reminded God of how He had already freed ALL the apostles from

prison (Acts 5:19-21), and could He now please rescue just ONE MAN?

While many of the brethren (perhaps including John) were gathered at the home of Mary, mother of John Mark, to pray for Peter's release, there was a knock at the door. Rhoda, a servant girl, went to the door. She recognized Peter's voice and was so excited she failed to let him in. Instead, she ran to tell the others that Peter was outside!

Just as no one believed the witnesses that Christ had risen from his tomb, no one believed Rhoda. "You are beside yourself!" they told her. When she insisted, they said, "It is his angel" (Acts 12:12-15).

Meanwhile, Peter stood outside knocking. Finally someone opened the door, and everyone was *astonished* to see PETER!

"But motioning them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of prison. And he said, 'Go tell these things to James and to the brethren.' And he departed and went to another place" (vv. 16-17). Their *earnest prayers* had been ANSWERED!

Why did Peter tell those present to *report to James*? This is more evidence that James (the half brother of Jesus) managed the day-to-day operations of the church under the direction of the 12 apostles.

Herod Agrippa died unexpectedly later that year (A.D. 44). "So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them" (Acts 12:21). This occasion was probably Emperor Claudius' birthday, Aug. 1 (*New Testament History* by F.F. Bruce, 1972, pp. 262-263).

"And the people kept shouting, 'The voice of a god and not of a man!' Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died" (Acts 12:23). John probably shed no tear at the news of Herod's death. Instead, he may have recognized it as a *divine* act of *justice* and was *encouraged*.

After the death of Herod Agrippa, the word of God grew and multiplied (v. 24).

Preaching Abroad

It was about this time that the remaining apostles began taking the gospel of the Kingdom of God to faraway lands. They had been told by Jesus to preach the gospel "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mat. 10:5-7). The House of Israel was taken captive by Assyria in 721 B.C. The people were transplanted beyond the Euphrates River in Assyria and in the cities of the Medes around Lake Urmia, southwest of the Caspian Sea. These Israelites never returned home to Palestine. They lost their true identity. It was to these Israelites that

Christ sent his apostles.

During the first 12 years of the church (A.D. 31-42), the apostles stayed in Palestine, getting things established. Beginning about 43, they began taking the gospel to the lost tribes of Israel in the locations to which they had migrated—into Europe and around the Black and Caspian seas.

Greeks who were converted by Paul in southern Asia Minor and by Peter in northern Asia Minor left records of where each of the 12 apostles went. The Greeks never lost the New Testament and they did not lose these records either. But scholars have not believed these Greek historians because the scholars have confused the House of Israel with the Jews ("Where Did the Original Apostles Go?" Part 2 by Herman L. Hoeh, *The Good News*, September-October 1987, pp. 15-16).

Two sources of information are the Greek and Latin *Ecclesiasticae Historiae* of Nicephorus Callistus, and, written in English, *Antiquitates Apostolicae* by William Cave.

"Universal Greek tradition declares that the apostles did not leave the Syrio-Palestinian region until the end of 12 year's ministry. The number 12 symbolizes a new organized beginning" (Hoeh, p. 16).

According to these sources, Peter went to Britain; Andrew traveled along the Black Sea; Simon went to Africa; James (the brother of John) was martyred in 44; James (the brother of Jesus) preached in Spain, Ireland and Britain; Thomas, Matthew and Bartholomew went to Parthia near the Black Sea; Jude preached in Assyria and Mesopotamia; Phillip went to Scythia; and Matthias went to Romania and northern Greece.

None of these journeys were taken in the first 12 years of the church (A.D. 31-42). They probably did not all happen immediately in 43. It is likely the trips were staggered. While some of the apostles were in faraway regions preaching the gospel, others remained at Jerusalem to take care of business at home.

If James indeed oversaw the day-to-day operations of the church under the authority of the apostles (much like the president of a corporation does under the authority of the board of directors), then one of the other apostles may have taken his place temporarily while he was preaching in Spain, Ireland and Britain.

The Bible doesn't record the journeys of the original apostles. It focuses on Paul's first journey, which took place A.D. 46-49 (Acts 13-14). Some of the other apostles may have accomplished their preaching missions during this time. Others may not

JOHN

Continued on Page 6

Fun Fact



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

Mother's Day in France is celebrated much like a family birthday, and it occurs on the last Sunday in May. Traditionally, the family gathers for dinner, and, at the end of the meal, a cake is presented to the mother.

Witerature

Wit and wisdom to complement the truths of the Holy Bible can be found in secular writings.

Here is this month's selection:

You, Inc. by Harry and Christine Beckwith, Warner Business Books, 2007, p. 219.

Express Your Thanks

"Remember the last time you thanked someone?"

"How did you feel then and for the few moments that followed?"

"Content. You felt content because you experienced gratitude. It was your own gratitude, but your gratitude pleases you, too."

"We rush along life's road and slam into potholes. You can feel overwhelmed, cheated, dismayed. Then you reach out with a word of thanks, and a tiny miracle occurs: that feeling passes."

"Thanks feels good to you too."

Ps. 30:12, 92:1; Eph. 5:4;

1 Thes. 5:18

Quotable Quotes

"A mother is not a person to lean on, but a person to make leaning unnecessary."

—Dorothy Canfield Fisher

Memory Scripture

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

—2 Chron. 7:14

John

Continued from Page 5

have begun their journeys by 49. What we do know for a fact is that when Paul returned from his journey in 49, he reported to the apostles in Jerusalem.

What about John? Where did he go?

John Goes to Gaul

When Jesus was hanging on the stake, He committed his mother, Mary, into the care of John (John 19:25-27).

One ancient historian says John remained in Jerusalem until the death of Mary: "Probable therefore it is, that he dwelt still in his own House at *Jerusalem*, at least till the death of the Blessed Virgin (and this is plainly asserted by *Nicephorus* from the account of those Historians that were before him) whose death (says *Eusebius*) hapned [sic] *Ann. Chr. XLVIII.* about Fifteen Years after our Lord's Ascension" (*Antiquitates Apostolicae* by William Cave, 1684, p. 156).

On the other hand, French tradition says Mary visited Gaul (modern France). Because *she was in John's care*, it would make sense that she would be where John was *working*. So John may have taken the gospel to Gaul (Hoeh, p. 20). If John and Mary went to Gaul, it had to be prior to her death, which Eusebius says occurred A.D. 48.

The Jerusalem Council

Certain Christians from a Pharisee background went from Jerusalem to Antioch (where Paul and Barnabas were preaching), and taught the brethren that Gentile males must be circumcised to be saved.

Paul and Barnabas argued with them, and it caused a big dissension in Antioch. Finally the matter was referred to church leadership: the apostles and elders in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-2).

John is not mentioned by name at the Jerusalem Council A.D. 49. The only apostles named are Paul (v. 2), Barnabas (v. 2), Peter (v. 7) and James (v.13). However, John may have been included in the overall mention of "the apostles" (v. 6) and could have taken part in the "much dispute" that took place (v. 7).

After discussing the matter at length, James (not Peter) made the ruling that circumcision was not required of a Christian. Gentile converts did not have to become Jews before they could become Christians (vv. 13-19). The rest of the church leadership concurred and were happy to send this message back to the areas where Gentiles were being called (v. 22).

(To be continued!)



Midwest Soil Still Suffers From Drought

"A University of Missouri researcher says the soil in the Midwest has not recovered from the recent two-year drought despite significant precipitation this winter. Randal Miles, an associate professor of soil science at the MU School of Natural Resources, says the inadequate soil is hurting farmers.

"The soil in Missouri is still dry about four to five feet down where crop roots live,' Miles said. 'This is an improvement from a year ago when two years of drought left many prime growing areas bone dry down to almost six feet. However, without enough moisture and nutrients, crops will produce poor yields resulting in a loss for farmers.'

"In order for soil to be suitable for crops, the soil moisture must 'recharge.' This is a process where water from rain and snow moves downward from the surface and fills the space found in soil. A soil moisture recharge normally comes from snow melt and rainfall in winter and early spring.

"Missouri needed a long-term drizzly type of rain or snow to replenish the soil for it to have enough residual moisture available for use at planting and harvest, but most of the precipitation this winter came in heavy doses.' ...

"Miles says it could take another year of solid rain and snowfall for the soil to get back to normal moisture levels" ("Midwest Soil Still Has Not Recovered After Two-Year Drought Despite Heavy Snowfall, MU Researcher Says" by Nathan Hurst, MU News Bureau, March 14, 2014, pp. 1-2).

God promised his people that drought would be a problem if they didn't obey Him (Deut. 28:23-24), and famine will be a sign leading up to the return of Christ (Mat. 24:3, 7).

Earthquakes Strike Chile, So. California

"A total of 115 aftershocks jolted the Los Angeles area by Saturday morning [March 29] after a magnitude 5.1 earthquake on Friday night, a federal seis-

mologist said....

"Friday's largest temblor struck near the cities of Brea and La Habra, southeast of Los Angeles, shortly after 9 p.m. Pacific time and was preceded by a foreshock" ("Aftershocks Follow an Earthquake Near Los Angeles" by Daniel Slotnik, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, March 29, 2014, p. 1).

Within a few days, a magnitude 8.2 quake struck Chile:

"A magnitude 8.2 earthquake struck off northern Chile on Tuesday night [April 1], setting off a small tsunami that forced evacuations along the country's entire Pacific coast. Officials reported two deaths and several serious injuries, but the area apparently escaped major damage as landslides blocked roads, power failed for thousands, an airport was damaged and several businesses caught fire" ("Magnitude-8.2 quake strikes northern Chile" by Luis Andres Henao, Associated Press, *Southeast Missourian*, April 2, 2014, p. 7A).

"Earthquakes in various places" are a sign leading up to Christ's return (Mat. 24:3, 7).

America's Middle Class No Longer the Richest

"The American middle class, long the most affluent in the world, has lost that distinction.

"While the wealthiest Americans are outpacing many of their global peers, a New York Times analysis shows that across the lower- and middle-income tiers, citizens of other advanced countries have received considerably larger raises over the last three decades" ("The American Middle Class Is No Longer the World's Richest" by David Leonhardt and Kevin Quealy, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, April 22, 2014, p. 1).

God promised that his people would be blessed economically if they obeyed Him and cursed if they disobeyed (Deut. 28:1, 12-13, 15, 43-44). Our disobedience will lead to national captivity before Christ returns (vv. 45-50). When Christ returns, He will free the captives (Isa. 11:10-12, 14:1-2).