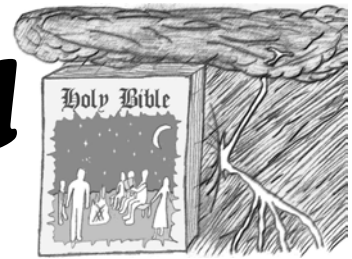


Shelter in the Word

*He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
You are my refuge and shield: I have put my hope in your Word. —Psalm 91:1; 119:114*



Vol.5, No. 1

Helping you become self-sufficient in the Word—for a lasting relationship with the Almighty

Jan-June 2002

The Truth About Heaven and Hell

By John Eastman. socoje@cs.com

This article will show what happens to all humans after they die. Will they go to heaven, hell, or what really happens to them? You may have studied this subject before, but I believe this article will bring some additional information that will be beneficial to all of us.

One popular understanding about death and hell originates in Greek fiction from Dante's play, *The Inferno*. In this Greek play, Dante portrays hell as God's place of vengeful punishment of men who have died, but who are conscious after death and go to a place of never-ending fire that tortures. Out of this drama came the popular belief that if you are judged evil, then you are condemned to go to a place called "hell", where you encounter a "lake of fire" to torture you and burn you continually for all eternity, supervised by Satan and his demons.

And, popular belief also says, if you are judged good, then you go to a place called "heaven", where you sit on a cloud and play a harp in the presence of God. But, while you are in this heaven, you are continuously aware that your loved one is down in "hell", suffering with unbearable and excruciating pain, being tortured with a fire of intense heat, screaming at the top of their voice in an unquenchable fire that will never burn them up. *This is a lie*, of course, inspired directly from Satan in order to deceive mankind.

Satan wants mankind to think the worst about God and to thwart any personal relationship with Him. If Satan can cause mankind to be at a distance with God, man will not fulfill his destiny of living with God as his children and being like Him (1Jn 3:2; Rev 21:3). If mankind has evil thoughts about their God and fears eternal torture after death, they will never understand His true loving nature, full of mercy and righteous judgment of mankind.

God's character and His love would not allow Him to do such a horrible, horrendous thing as torture mankind or evil spirits forever. Have you ever

thought just how long eternity really is? The idea of torture for eternity is the kind of thing Satan would do to mankind, if God allowed it. But, you will find through this article that God will destroy Satan, those demons, and men that are the incorrigibly wicked. God will destroy evil beings because they would sin for eternity, existing in an endless cycle of suffering and sorrow for themselves and others around them. They would always seek to destroy the righteous believers of God. This is why God will eventually destroy all evil at the time of the judgment, so that the universe will finally be at peace under God's holy and righteous government.

In order to know the truth about heaven and hell, we must turn to the one true authority, the Word of God. Some religions believe that the New Testament is the only source of truth and our salvation, but you will find in the Bible that the Old and New Testament are of equal value towards our salvation through Christ and obedience to the Word of God. Some of the Old Testament has been fulfilled. For example, the Passover in the Old Testament pictures the New Testament sacrifice and salvation through Jesus Christ. However, Christ and the Apostles quoted the Old Testament hundreds of times in their New Testament writings. Paul also emphasized the importance of the Old Testament when he encouraged Timothy, "And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith, which is in

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Christ Jesus.... *All* scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instructions in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2Tim. 3:15-17)". Please note that when Timothy was a child, the New Testament had not yet been written, so the scriptures referred to were the Old Testament scriptures. Also read Romans 1:1-2; 15:4.

What Happens at Death?

So, what does happen to a person immediately after he dies? In Eccl. 12:5-7, "...for man goes to his eternal home, and the mourner goes about the streets. Then the dust will return to the Earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it." Our fleshly body *never* ascends to heaven since it decomposes to dust, but what does the Bible mean when it states that the "spirit" returns to God? The answer is that the "spirit in man" goes to heaven at death, not the man himself. In John 3:13, Christ said that no one has ascended to heaven, but He who came down from heaven, that is the Son of Man (Christ Himself).

One verse that is often misunderstood, but actually reinforces the fact that no man has ascended directly to Heaven is when Christ spoke to the thief on the cross. In Luke 23:42-43, the thief asked Jesus to remember him in His Kingdom, to which Christ responded, "Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise." The comma in this sentence is often misplaced, but should be placed *after* the word "today". What Christ is telling the thief is that he would see Christ in the future resurrection. Christ would not have promised this man that he would immediately go to Heaven and see Christ that same day since Christ was **in the grave** for 3 days before He ascended to Heaven (Matt 12:40). In Acts 2:31, referring to Christ, "...His soul was not left in hell, neither

His flesh did see corruption" (KJV). Here, as you can see, Christ was in the grave (see definition #4 below for *Hades*), not eternal hell because it is written in the Old and New Testament that His flesh would not see corruption.

Continuing on our study, what is the "spirit in man"? I often use a simple analogy of a computer and a diskette. If the human brain is likened to a computer, then the "spirit in man" is likened to a diskette that makes an imprint or mold of the person's memories, personality, character, and deeds. When the person dies, this spirit returns to God. The Bible tells us the "spirit in man" has no thoughts of its own separate from the physical body (Eccl. 9:5-6, 10). Christ explained that death is like going to sleep in John 11:11-14, "...Our Friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up. Then His disciples said, 'Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.' However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead.'" When you put these verses together, what happens is that the body decomposes, there are no more thoughts (like sleep), but the "spirit in man" returns to God and awaits a future resurrection and judgment. The Bible explains, "And, it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

Raised from the Dead

The Bible speaks of a "first resurrection" of the "first-fruits" which are those lived a Christ-like life during their lifetime on this Earth, and will rule with Christ. *The Living Bible* translates this section well: "They had come to life again and now they reigned with Christ for a thousand years. This is the First Resurrection. (The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the thousand years had ended.) Blessed and holy are those who share in the First

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Shelter in the Word is published 6 times a year by Church Bible Teaching Ministry; 3690 Bath Rd, Perry, Michigan 48872 (this is not a mailing address) Issues are sent free to people who request the publication and are genuinely interested in it. Church Bible Teaching Ministry reserves the right to refuse service for any reason. Postmaster: send address changes to *Shelter in the Word*, PO Box 107, Perry, Michigan 48872-0107.

Circulation: 2200

Shelter in the Word staff: Bill Buckman, Norm & Marleen Edwards, Missi Lara, David Meidinger, Jon D. Pike, Christine Yoos

You may receive *Shelter in the Word* and other literature by mail or e-mail. Please send requests to the nearest location, below. (If you want to help with our expenses, please write checks to the name shown below).

Church Bible Teaching Ministry
PO Box 107 • Perry, Michigan 48872-0107
517-625-7480, Fax: 517-625-7481, info@ShelterInTheWord.com

Australia: Dale Heslin; 9 Alice Jackson Crescent; Gilmore, ACT 2905
e-mail: dale@pcug.org.au

Canada: C. Zimmerman, 268 Pennswood Wy SE, Calgary, AB T2A 4T3

Philippines: Cesar Lumbuan; 2298 Florida St.; Balagtas, Pandacan; Manila
e-mail: maxen@skyinet.net

U.K.: Jenny Whiteman; 2 Warren Rd; Narborough, Leicester, LE9 5DR
e-mail 100623.734@compuserve.com

Resurrection. For them the Second Death holds no terrors, for they will be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4-6). The “rest of the dead” are raised later in God’s plan of salvation of mankind. This is sometimes referred to as the “second resurrection”, though the Bible does not use the term and we cannot be sure if there are just two or possibly more times of resurrection.

In the First Resurrection, the “spirit of man” joins with God’s Holy Spirit to receive the understanding from God’s Spirit and to be with Christ forever (1Cor. 2:10-11, 1Thes. 4:16-17, 1Cor 15:52). Those who are in the First Resurrection are those called as “first-fruits”, the ones that “overcome” through Christ in their physical lifetimes (Luke 12:42-48; Rev 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21). When a “first-fruit” dies in Christ, their resurrection is to a spiritual body brought to conscience by joining their “spirit in man” with God’s Holy Spirit. Once again, God’s Spirit will be in them from which they receive their understanding and awareness of life. John tells us, “Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed (spirit) remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God” (1 John 3:9).

The “rest of the dead” will be resurrected after the 1,000 years in the Second Resurrection. We might refer to these as “second fruits”, God still loves them, but he is “harvesting” them later. When they are resurrected to a physical body, their “spirit in man” receives consciousness and understanding through the intellect of the human brain. The Bible explains this:

1Cor 2:11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

These “second-fruits” will stand before God for a future time of judgment and repentance called the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). Some may have lived fairly “good” lives, but did not do all that Christ wanted them to do. Others may have been very evil. Those who will not repent upon learning the truth will be condemned to the Second Death (Rev 2:11; 20:6,14; 21:8).

To summarize the above, the “spirit in man” is a record of our past deeds and works, returns to God when we die, has no thoughts or consciousness of its own. Finally at a resurrection, the “spirit in man” either joins with God’s Holy Spirit in the First Resur-

rection, or with the physical body in the “Second Resurrection”. Now that we understand that at death we do not go to Heaven or Hell in the way most religions teach, let us go on to understand what is the true meaning of Heaven and Hell found in the pages of the Bible.

What is “Hell”?

The word “Hell” in the KJV Bible actually comes from four (4) completely different words:

1. *Sheol* – the Hebrew word in the Old Testament. Hebrew dictionary #7585, the word means “Hades, grave”.
2. *Gehenna* – a Greek word in the New Testament. Greek dictionary #1067, the word means “Valley of Gehenna”. Note: This is where trash from Jerusalem was taken and burned outside of the city, as well as corpses of criminals were thrown into this valley for burning.
3. *Tartaroo* – a Greek word in the New Testament. Greek dictionary #5220, the word means, “incarcerate or the deepest abyss of Hades”. Note: This is referred to only once in the Bible and is a place of restraint of Satan and the demons (2Pet. 2:4).
4. *Hades* – a Greek word in the New Testament. Greek dictionary #86, the word means, “grave, hell”. Note: In the past, the English often referred to putting their potatoes in hell (a hole in the ground). *Hades* has the same meaning as *Sheol* in the Old Testament.

When reading the King James or similar Bibles, it is easy to think that every time the word “hell” appears, it is referring to the home of Satan and demons. In reality, only one word, *tartaroo*, has a meaning anything like that—and it more refers to a place of restriction for demons than a fiery torment. The Bible never mentions people being in *tartaroo*.

Lazarus and the Rich Man

Luke 16:19-31 is one of the most misunderstood scriptures about “Hell”—the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man. Lazarus spent his life outside the gates of the Rich Man’s home, begging for the table scraps that were thrown to the dogs. The Rich Man only took care of himself in luxury. Both men died,

were buried, and were later resurrected from the dead. At the First Resurrection, Lazarus is found in “Abraham’s bosom”, meaning he was resurrected as a spirit body and part of the family of God.

By contrast, the Rich Man: “In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in **torment** [Greek *basanos*], and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in **agony** [Greek *odunao*] in this flame.’” (Luke 16:23-24, NASB 1995). The Rich Man opened his eyes (was resurrected) and was being judged. The Greek word here for “tormented”, *basanos*, is from the word for a touchstone used to test the purity of metals. The same word is used in the judgment of Babylon in Revelation 18:7: “In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her **torment** [Greek *basanos*] and sorrow; for she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’”

The Rich Man was receiving what is promised frequently in the Scriptures:

Obd 1:15 The day of the LORD is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head.”

2Thes 1:6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well.

7 This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels” .

Jms 2:13 Because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

The Greek word for “agony”, does not mean pain like one would experience from being on fire, but is more a mental agony—the same word is used when Mary and Joseph could not find Jesus (Luke 2:48) and when Paul told a congregation they would never see him again (Luke 20:38). The reason he asked Lazarus to dip his finger in water and put a drop on his swollen and dry tongue was because of his suffering in his judgment. If he was in a literal hell fire, he would have asked for a barrel of water to put out the flames because his whole body would be on fire, and not just ask for a drop for his tongue.

Jesus explained resurrection this way, “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a **resurrection of life** [first resurrection], those who committed the evil *deeds* to a **resurrection of judgment**” (John 5:28-29, NASB 1995). Numerous times, the Bible compares the trials people go through to fire (Zech 13:9; Mal 3:2-3; 1Cor 3:11-13; Luke 12:49, etc.) Peter says: “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you” (1Pet 4:12, NKJV). This does not have to be a literal fire that the man was in.

The parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man was given because the Pharisees loved money, were not kind to others, yet claimed to be righteous (Luke 16:14-15). They thought they had everyone, even God, fooled. The parable shows that those who make other’s lives difficult now will have a difficult time in judgment. Jesus told another group of falsely-righteous leaders, “...Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God **before** you” (Matt 21:31). Here, Christ is addressing all sinful people in the Second Resurrection—but some will go into the Kingdom of God before others.

Lazarus is in the First Resurrection at the beginning of the 1,000-year reign of Christ. The Rich Man is able to see Lazarus in the Second Resurrection at the end of the 1,000-year reign (Rev. 20:4-6). In death, the “spirit in man” has no concept of time passing. The Rich Man found that his judgment was difficult and **not** realizing that Lazarus was in the First Resurrection 1,000 years earlier, he asked Lazarus to back and warn his friends. In Luke 16:26, Abraham explains to the Rich Man, “And besides all this, between us and you [plural in Greek] there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you [plural in Greek] cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.” The “great gulf” here must be referring to time. The Rich man those like him (the “you” above is plural in Greek) had simply missed the first resurrection and there is not a way to undo that—even God does not “go backward in time”. This could not be talking about a physical barrier keeping those in the Kingdom of God away from those in the second resurrection because they will be judged by those in the Kingdom of God (Rev 20:4), and many will eventually enter the Kingdom of God. Only three chapters earlier Christ explained it like this:

Luke 13:24 “Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

25 “When once the Master of the house has risen up and **shut the door** [the first resurrection is finished], and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door [second resurrection], saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’

26 “then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’

27 “But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’

28 “There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God [just like the Lazarus story], and yourselves thrust out.

29 “They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God [people who had little for which to be judged]

30 “And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last [but it does not say, “never”].”

Nowhere in the Bible is death followed by a continual torture in Hell, nor an immediate ascension to Heaven without first being resurrected. First, the Bible tells us in Heb. 9:27, “And it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment”. Secondly, the Bible tells us there are two possible scenarios after death, a resurrection to eternal life or a resurrection to judgment. Finally, the Bible is clear that in death, the “spirit in man” has no thoughts, no consciousness, and no concept of time. If you think you are seeing a spirit of a deceased loved one walking around, this is none other than a demonic spirit (see 2Cor. 11:13; 1Sam 28:7-13).

The Wicked Will Be Destroyed

The Bible shows that if people insist upon remaining wicked, they will be destroyed:

Ps 37:20 The wicked shall perish and not be anymore.

Mal. 4:1 “For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven....And the day

which is coming shall burn them up....

3 You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this, says the Lord of hosts”.

Rom. 6:23, “The wages of sin is death, and the gift of God is eternal life.”

Matt. 3:12, “He will *burn up* the chaff [evil ones] with unquenchable fire.”

What did Jesus mean in Mark 9:47-48, when He said, “And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire, where **‘their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’**”? Christ was quoting Isa. 66:24 to bring His point to the Jews that they should not fear the first death, which could result in worms or death by fire, *but rather they should fear the Second Death*. As explained above, the Second Death is the “Lake of Fire” (2Pet. 3:10), which burns the entire Earth up and results in a **final death** to all physical things on its surface. The Jews believed that to die by fire or worms was the worst possible death, but Christ explained that the Second Death is by far worse. The Second Death is so complete and final that there is no more resurrection, no more flesh, no more spirit, no physical worms or maggots, and nothing more to burn. To explain, there is no such thing as an “eternal worm” because some day the Earth will be burned up and there will be no more physical life (Rev 21 & 22). Christ was speaking a parable to hide the understanding from those that were not called. What Christ was talking about is the death of the physical body (the flesh eaten by maggots) and for those who are evil, the death of the spiritual body (burned up in the Lake of Fire). These two deaths result in an eternal death. He was not talking about a place of Hell where there is a fire that burns forever to torture the wicked. Rather, in His mercy He will punish the wicked with the Second Death, which is an eternal and permanent death.

Satan Destroyed, Too?

Above we discussed what happens to wicked mankind, but what is the fate of Satan and his demons, which are made of spirit? Some believe that evil spirit beings cannot die, but rather they will be tormented for all eternity in a hell fire. This belief is based on Rev. 20:10, where the Bible says:

Rev 20:10 “Then the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the Lake of Fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had already been thrown; and they will be *tormented* day and night, forever and ever.” (Today’s English Version).

While this may sound like there is no end to his torment, the Greek word for “forever” here is *aión*, from which we get our word “eon”, which means a long, but indefinite period of time. Young’s Literal Translations says: “to the ages of the ages”. This punishment will certainly include torment for all the evil that Satan has caused—and it may seem to take forever. The effect of Satan’s punishment, death will last for all eternity. Notice the clearer definition of Satan’s end in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. In these chapters we have the whole life of Satan from his creation as Lucifer through to his sin, resulting in his death:

Isa 14:15 “But you are brought down to the grave [death], to the depths of the pit”.

In the KJV, verse 12 refers to Lucifer, and verse 15, “Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell (*Sheol*), to the sides of the pit”. Lucifer’s permanent death is also found in Ezekiel 28 (RSV):

Ezk 28:17 Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you.

18 By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries; so I brought forth fire from the midst of you; it consumed you, and I **turned you to ashes upon the earth** in the sight of all who saw you.

19 All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have come to a dreadful end and **shall be no more for ever.**”

2Pet. 2:17 “These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for

whom is reserved the **blackness of darkness forever**” (RSV).

Darkness represents death, not an eternal hell fire where there is light.

2Pet 2:12 But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish.

Jude 1:9 Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

1:13 raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

Christ says He will destroy the devil:

Heb 2:14, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

Conclusion

When will Christians ultimately see Heaven and what is Heaven really like? The Bible speaks of a future time when the New Jerusalem, God’s Holy City, will be brought down to the Earth (Rev 21:2). This will be after the 1,000-year rule of Christ on this Earth, when mankind has been judged and the Earth has been purified by fire. No words could be more inspiring about man’s future with God than this part of the Bible:

Rev 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from

the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

4 “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

5 He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

11 It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

22 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it.

Rom 8:20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it,


in hope

21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

Dan 7:18 But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever [Christians are called “saints” in the Bible, 1Cor 6:2-3]

In the New Heavens and the New Earth, which Christ and the saints (spirit-born Children of God) will rule the entire universe. We do not need to fear the future after studying these verses. There are billions of galaxies that astronomers can see—enough so that every person who has ever lived can have their own. Each galaxy has billions of stars. Whether children of God will populate this vast creation, or some new creation, or both, is not clear to me. What is clear, is that God will make it awesome and wonderful. “But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him’” (1Cor 2:9).

And, what is even more exciting is the knowledge that the true **purpose of our physical life now** is to learn and obtain a future spiritual life, eternally joined with God. 

Divine and Human Suffering

by Tommy Willis

Most Christians have probably read or heard Revelation 21:4, which says:

Rev 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death; neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed way.

Many Christians also relate it to the next life, thinking that they will be in such a state of bliss that they will not even have a strong reaction to anything, but will just go along in a blissful emotionalist state.

But I cannot imagine an existence like that. I think the above relates in part to the physical pain that we experience today; and that much of ‘the kind’ of suffering that we have today won’t be there in the next life.

God not only gets angry (which the Scriptures make clear), but He also suffers with painful emotions. But there's a tendency with human reasoning that we often feel God does not suffer. But God has painful emotions now. He suffers when He watches us take directions that cause us pain, just as any loving parent does when they see their children in trouble. And those emotions will not be done away with when the Kingdom comes to earth. And we as God's children will have the same capacity to have these painful emotions as He does now, yes, even when we get changed into Spirit.

But I don't think that God looks at suffering the same way that we do. He is more than willing to pay the price for the benefit of others; just like He did when He offered His Son on the cross. Scriptures say that it "pleased God to bruise Him" (Isa 53:10).

Just think of the Father watching His Son suffer on the cross. We often hear about someone who is in a terrible car accident, with burns over 80 percent of their body, etc. And we can often hear one of the parents say something like, "O, I wish it was me instead." They suffer greatly at watching their child suffer so much. Now in the light of that, just think of our Father sending Christ to the cross, the ultimate Sacrifice was done by the Father.

Because God the Father cannot be in the presence of sin, and Christ had to pay the penalty alone, therefore we see that He had to leave Christ alone when He became sin for us (2Cor 5:21). Christ had always been able to reach out and feel the Father with Him, but He felt forsaken when the Father left Him, and cried out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me." (Matt 27:46). This ought to do something to our hearts when we read this.

When Jesus took the walk to the cross, He manifested the nature and character of God as it had never been seen before. God's love was supremely expressed on Calvary.

Even angels, who are able to travel from one galaxy to another, and have seen no telling what all, stand amazed at what was done on this planet, saying, ".Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.." (Rev 5:11-12).

How important is it that we learn how to suffer properly?

Rom 8:17 "And if children, then heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we might be glorified together." (Ro 8:17).

Phil 2:5 But we often complain and are not willing to suffer in the trials that we go through. But if we will seek God as we should, then He will give us His mind to suffer with; we will look upon it with the mind of Christ.

And therefore will have the attitude to suffer rather than to sin.


What needs to be kept in mind is that God suffers also when He sees us go through the torment and pain. He is inside of us, with us, and suffers right along with us, and He doesn't complain; but we often put ourselves above God by complaining at our plight. Scripture tells us that we should guard against complaining (1Cor 10:10). Remember that it was the complainers that never went into the promise land.

We as God's children will have the same emotions when we get changed into Spirit; we will be able to get angry as God does. Even now God gave us the capacity for a wide range of emotions. We are made in God's image, and God gave us these emotions so that we can have a relationship and communication with Him.

Our emotional makeup is a blessing. The way God set the body up with the central nervous system with the nerve endings and brain, we can experience everything from agony to ecstasy. All this is a blessing. Without one we couldn't experience the other. God cannot work with robots. But we often don't feel it is a blessing when we are going through the suffering, and complaining gets us on dangerous ground.

Let us touch down on the reality that God understands our plight. And that He suffers with us. As we allow God to put the mind of Christ in us we will be able to control our emotions and learn to even rejoice at the suffering.

Although God's ultimate goal for us is not this life, He certainly wants us to be happy now. But many people consider happiness as the absence of pain and suffering; but pain and suffering are an inevitable part of life that God will teach us to deal with.

Paul had to learn this process; at first he kept asking to be relieved; but then he learned to rejoice in his thorn in the flesh (2Cor 12:7-10). As we learn how God is using the suffering, and let Him teach us how to suffer, then the more peace we will have. And we will like and love ourselves more, because we will be becoming more like God. 



News of Interest to Christians

Letters Make a Difference!

International Criminal Court

The March/April 2001 *Shelter in the Word* (page 15) contained a news item about the dangers of the Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court, which was signed by Bill Clinton on December 31, 2000 without any debate by Congress. If implemented, it would drastically alter the basic rights and freedoms of citizens of the USA and many other countries. People would lose our rights to trial by jury, a speedy trial, to be imprisoned in their own country. Furthermore, the definition of "genocide by causing serious bodily or mental harm" (Article 6 b) was so broad that it could easily include preaching the Gospel to a group of people of another religion.

This writer read much of the statute and confirmed many of the problems in it. I signed an e-mail petition produced by Alan Keyes, a former presidential candidate. I do not know exactly what effect the petition had on the Bush administration, but probably the combination of this petition and many other actions caused them to reconsider the issue. On May 9, 2002, I received the following e-mail from Alan Keyes:

Success! — U.S. Frees Itself of ICC!!

On Feb 10, 2002 you signed the petition *Oppose the International Criminal Court Before It's Too Late!*. You were joined by 40,929 other people who also signed this petition.

Success! The objective of the petition you signed to keep America free of the ICC was achieved this week when the Bush administration renounced any obligation to cooperate with the new International Criminal Court. The decision, formalized in a letter to the United Nations, means the U.S. reserves the right to ignore the orders of the court.

As you know, former President Clinton signed the treaty setting up the court in 2000, and American justice—provided and protected by the U.S. Constitution—has since been at risk. But now "the United States has no legal obli-

gations arising from its signature on Dec. 31, 2000," U.S. Under Secretary of State John Bolton said in the letter delivered at U.N. headquarters.

Pierre-Richard Prosper, U.S. ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues, said the letter makes clear "we are not going to be a party to the process. It neutralizes the signature.... It frees us from some of the obligations that are incurred by signature," he said.

I want to thank you again for your support on this crucial issue. Our efforts, and those of other grassroots activists, have helped to secure our liberties by achieving this result. I appreciate your willingness to stand up and be counted. Let me call your attention to other crucial efforts at ConservativePetitions.com that need your support, such as:

- Demanding Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura stop the publication of a pro-pedophile book that promotes the sexual molestation of children. View it at: http://www.conservativepetitions.com/petition.html?name=stop_pedophile_book
- Urging Congress to approve the Sudan Peace Act with the Bachus amendment that would stop the flow of oil profits to a government bent on terrorism at home and abroad. View it at: http://www.conservativepetitions.com/petition.html?name=NO_money_for_sudan
- Asking the Senate to pass the Child Protection Act that would make it a felony to transport a girl across state lines in order to avoid her state's parental notification laws. View it at: <http://www.conservativepetitions.com/petition.html?name=childprotectionact>

Together we can and will exert a positive influence on our nation and the world.

— Alan Keyes

ConservativePetitions.com is just one of many groups that attempt to influence our lawmakers to support good laws and oppose bad ones. I have not agreed with every petition that they have produced, but I have agreed with many. Christians that believe they are training to rule with Christ (Rev 20:4) might want to apply their rulership ability in determining which laws are good and bad.

— Norman Edwards

Help Keep Our Airwaves Clean

I received a copy of a magazine article stating that the FCC was investigating the ads and television program for Victoria's Secret—a fashion show featuring nearly unclad women. The investigation was prompted because they had received about 50 emails complaining about the show. If about 50 email complaints was all it took to investigate the show, then I

thought, "why not at least make it 51"?

I had seen some of the ads while watching other programs, and found them inappropriate. I am not opposed to beautiful women—God gave them their bodies. But I think this kind of television is not good for the men and women who produce it or the men and women who watch it. The only reason it exists, is because somebody makes a lot of money for the people who own it.

So, I found the FCC web site, and wrote the Commissioner this letter, and then a few days later I received the answer that follows:

November 19, 2001

Dear Commissioner Michael Copps,

I am sure that you are already well acquainted with "The Victoria's Secret Fashion Show" and the promotions for it.

Our military forces are helping to liberate some of the women of Afghanistan from a repressive regime that imposed harsh physical penalties upon women who let virtually any part of their skin see the light of day in public. May those women now be blessed with a more normal life!

But is it any less repressive when our own country airs programs, available to the widest audience, that create harsh social penalties upon women who do not let virtually every part of their skin see the light of day in public?

Most women have a strong desire to dress in the style of the day. Do we, as a nation, want 15-year old girls going to school dressed like the women on this program? Would we want their teachers to dress this way?

This is not a freedom of speech issue. There are numerous venues to distribute this information to those who want it. It is a public decency issue. Also, it should be a product liability issue. Tobacco companies are required to carry health warnings with their advertising. Should not Victoria's Secret be required to inform their audience that fashion models have higher rates of alcoholism, drug abuse, STDs, divorce and suicide? Or do we want our nation's beautiful young women to figure that out after it is too late?

The Bible is full of stories where nations became immoral and God allowed their enemies to attack them—sometimes to defeat them. The enemies were often unjust people, too—but God used them as a means of punishment. When these wars came, some nations acknowledged sin and changed, but others did not and continued to suffer. Many refused to admit that God had anything to do with their calamities.

I realize that it is not your job to impose either your or my religious ideas upon the USA. But it is

your job to uphold standards of decency that represent the entire nation. If the nation's standards are low, then the nation is responsible. But if you give in to those mainly interested in making money by airing deceptive sexually-oriented programming, and do not represent the people, then I believe God holds you responsible.

May God strengthen you to do the right thing!

—Norman Edwards, info@shelterintheword.com

Snail: PO Box 107; Perry, Michigan 48872; USA

Tel: 517-625-7480 Fax: 517-625-7481

November 23, 2001

This is in response to your complaint regarding Victoria Secret Fashion Show broadcast on ABC network.

The FCC is currently reviewing the complaints to determine if the airing of ABC's Victoria Secret Fashion Show is subject to obscenity and/or indecency enforcement action.

Generally speaking, the Commission is prohibited by law (Section 326) of the Communications Act from involving itself in the content of specific programs or otherwise engaging in activities that might be regarded as program censorship and taking action that would interfere with free speech in broadcasting, a freedom guaranteed in our Constitution's First Amendment.

Being restrained from censoring and in the absence of information indicating violation of a specific law, the Commission ordinarily has very limited authority to act on complaints regarding programming that viewers may consider offensive.

The prohibition to broadcast obscene or indecent programming is set forth at Title 18 United States Code, Section 1464 (18 U.S.C. § 1464). Congress has given the Federal Communications Commission the responsibility for administratively enforcing 18 U.S.C. § 1464.

It is a violation of federal law to broadcast obscene programming at any time. Indecent programming is protected by the First Amendment and cannot be banned entirely. Programming that fit within the indecency definition is restricted in order to avoid its broadcast during times of the day when there is a reasonable risk that children may be in the audience and may not be aired between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.

Detailed information regarding the review and enforcement procedures of documented indecency and/or obscenity complaints is available on our web site at: <http://www.fcc.gov/eb/broadcast/obscind.html>

I hope this information proves helpful.

— Sharon E. Jenkins

Consumer and Industry Affairs Specialist

Consumer Information Network Division

Consumer Information Bureau

202-418-0227 (voice) 202-418-0232 (fax)

I was glad to receive the response, even though it was a form letter. Hopefully somebody is counting how many responses they receive. What would happen if everyone who considered themselves living a Christian life who say the advertisements decided to send a letter, e-mail or phone call clearly stating that they ads were obscene? The FCC would clearly understand that the show was considered obscene by their viewing audience and would have to enforce the law.

While I certainly was glad that I took the biblical approach and told the people at the FCC that God holds them responsible for carrying out their job, I also learned that I could have been more clear in my writing. I should have clearly stated that I considered the ads “obscene”, since that is the word that the law

is tied to. If the ads are simply classified as “indecent”, then the FCC only has jurisdiction to limit the time when they appear. New legislation will probably be required to stop “indecent” programming from being broadcast on regular TV. But new arguments can now be raised that were not possible 10 years ago. With hundreds of cable channels and the Internet, removing indecent programming from broadcast TV does not really limit anyone’s First Amendment rights because there are so many other ways it can be distributed.

Maybe I—or you—need to write some more letters!

— Norman Edwards 

Creation Corner

For I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are thy works (Pslm 139:14)

by C. Frazier Spencer
frazier@corecomm.net



Introduction

Logically, there are only two alternatives. Either we are:

- 1) The result of a Creator God, or
- 2) The result of accidental Evolution.

On the one hand is the Bible which says it was written by a Being who is above *all other* gods because He created the wood, stone, metals, the sun and stars; the *very things* which make up other gods. Strong words indeed! (Pslm 95: 3-5; 115:3-8; 135:5, 15-18; Isa 44:all; Jer 10:2-15). Moreover this Being writes *He* is the giver of life. (Job 33:4,; Pro 4:4; 7:2; Rom 6:23; John 1:3-4). This Being further writes in Rom 1:20 that the invisible things of Him are *clearly seen*, being understood by the things that are *made*.

Therefore *proving* the Creator God seems to be a logical starting place for people interested in Christianity. Notice Paul used the Creator God as a starting place (Acts 17:24-25) when first revealing God to the pagan philosophers at Athens.

On the other hand is Evolution which says every living thing is the result of mindless, purposeless, accidental *chance*. It goes even further by saying humans “are just animals”. Evolution is now taught in our schools and acclaimed by the media as established fact and has itself taken on many aspects of being a religion.

The goal of this column is to counter evolution doctrine by presenting some of the things that have been *made* so the Creator God can be *seen*.

Italics or underlining may have been added to the various quotes in this article.

Little Noticed Systems

In the air, all around us birds are darting back and forth. On the ground, the fields, forests, and often our own backyards, there are field mice, squirrels, and various other small animals scurrying to and fro. Deer, muskrats, beavers, foxes, and other large animals inhabit rural areas and forests. We are literally *surrounded* by all kinds of creatures busy doing their thing.

This vast multitude of creatures *live*—and then they *die*.

Yet, how often do we see the corpse of a dead bird, a dead squirrel, a dead rabbit, a dead deer, or whatever? Very rarely indeed. So rarely that when it does happen it seems to be so out of place that it

troubles us for some little time. The same thing when we see an occasional man-killed road animal, that too generally troubles us.

But if we think about it for a minute—the ground *should be littered* with naturally dead birds and animals.

Why then do we see so little of dead things?

Ponder for a moment - is it by pure *accident* that there are so few dead carcasses to be seen? Is it by pure *accident* that with rare exception we can hike all day through a forest and never see a dead thing? Is it by pure *accident* that we can enjoy strolling a lake or ocean beach that seems in a pristine state with little or no dead litter that would spoil our enjoyment?

Or, could it possibly be *waste disposal systems* have been put in operation? Systems so quiet, so efficient, so routine, that we don't even realize they are at work? Systems so effective that the only time we might think about them is when *one item* has *not* been taken care of?

A Thoughtful Example

John N. Clayton(1) writes the story about his family as they watched a National Audubon Society documentary on African wildlife. The segment was about a herd of large elephants. In the film, one of the elephants stopped and deposited a huge mass of dung on the ground.

We have seen similar happenings many times. But then came the penetrating logic of a child. The youngest daughter whispered to her father the question:

“Who cleans up the mess?”

Good question youngest daughter! One we ourselves should have asked. But instead we take it all for granted and don't even exercise child-like questioning wisdom.

You see, elephant messes *are* taken care of! Those who travel in Africa report they rarely see elephant dung on the ground. There *are* elephant mess cleaner-upperers that have been assigned that *very task*.

Scientists recognize the collectors and have named them *dung beetles*. Clayton explains, “When an elephant deposits a pile of dung, the odor of the material attracts the beetles. Within 15 minutes of being deposited over 3,800 beetles were observed on one sample studied by scientists. Within 30 minutes this sample of over 30 quarts of dung, weighing about 75 pounds, *was gone!*” Does that seem like an extremely efficient waste disposal system to you? It sure does to me.

Clayton continues, “The beetles had cut the dung into various sizes—from BB size to tennis ball size—and had *buried* the balls in the ground. Each ball had a beetle egg placed in it. When the baby beetle hatches out of the

egg it has all the food it will need until it is able to function on its own.”

Consider for a moment if there were no elephant dung beetles. Just four elephants produce a metric *ton* of dung per day. As a constant week end visitor to Grandpa's farm, this writer has stepped around, and yes stepped *into*, his share of cow pies, so I can well imagine the problems with odor, flies, germs, suffocation of vegetation, etc. that huge 75 pound piles of elephant pies all over the place would cause!

You might think one specific beetle handles elephant dung. Not so. Actually there are over 2,000 species of dung beetles in Africa. Why so many? Wouldn't just one be enough to do the job? Clayton tells us,

“Well, with so many species, each with its own habits, the dung is scattered and spread out. Some beetles bury the balls as far as three feet under ground while others go just deep enough for it not be visible. Some beetles bury it on the spot, while others roll the ball to a distant location - sometimes as much as 150 feet away.”

Is it possible there has been a carefully thought out scattering plan? Not only is the ground cleared of the dung, the burying also “fertilizes the soil at several different depths, it puts moisture into the soil that otherwise would evaporate, it aerates the soil by putting holes in it, and it provides food for the life forms that live below the soil.”

Without Dung Beetles

What if there were no dung beetles? Obviously they are very important to the disposal of elephant dung. The book “Alien Empire”(2) gives us another example illustrating their importance. Cattle do not naturally occur in Australia. When cattle were imported, the only dung beetles available were those handling the hard, dry pellets produced by kangaroos. The author tells us:

“These native dung beetles could not cope with the soft cowpats produced by the vast herds of cattle. This created problems. Because the dung was not being disposed of, it acted as a superb breeding site for the bush fly, *Musca vetustissima*, which is a serious nuisance to both cattle and people. The scale of the problem is huge: each cow produces enough dung annually to cover about 13.5 acres.”

The solution? “The African dung beetle, *Onthophagus ferox* was imported and now helps dispose of cattle dung in Australia”.

The book, “Natural History of Insects”(3) gives more information about dung beetles. “One approach (by beetles) is to *construct* a series of branching subter-

ranean chambers directly beneath the dung. This then lies conveniently to hand to be pulled down below and moulded into a spherical, pear-shaped or sausage-like brood mass.”

Small Corpse Disposal

The author tells us how the corpses of some small animals are handled by the *Necrophorus* burying beetle. “A small animal corpse, such as a mouse, is the trigger for a *complex* suite of behaviors, usually performed by a male and female working together....The pair toil away to scrape and bite the fur off the corpse as they gradually inter it inside a “crypt” beneath the ground. Once safely hidden from competitors, the nice clean-shave meaty corpse can now easily be molded into a more or less globular shape, in which the female chews a bowl-shaped depression. It is into this that the larvae eventually crawl, sticking out their tiny heads and begging for food from their parent’s mouths, like chicks in a nest. Parents and offspring also communicate with each other through a series of chirps.”

Bees, Another Example

Let’s look at one of the tinier creatures. John N. Clayton(1) writes about a study done by Karl Visscher of Cornell University. His study shows “1% to 2% of a bee hive colony is devoted *solely* to the job of removing dead bees from the hive. These *undertaker bees* remove any bee that dies in the hive to a distance up to 400 feet away from the hive. To prove that dead bees are truly selecting dead bees,...Visscher deposited freshly killed bees and balsa wood models that resembled dead bees into a hive.”

“Within an average of seven minutes, the dead bees were removed from the hive, but it took more than seven hours for the models to be removed...more as a nuisance evidently” So the “undertakers” were shown to be legitimately after dead bees.

The reasons for such fast removal are obvious. Clayton explains, “by removing them, the diseases from which they might be dying are also removed from the other bees. Left to rot, the dead bees could draw undesirable scavengers and fungus that could threaten the hive.”

As we ponder which is true, evolution or creation, we might consider a couple of questions:

1) If honeybees evolved, as some say from a fruit fly—becoming a 25% honeybee, to a 50% honeybee, to a 90% honeybee, finally to become a full 100% honeybee - if this is so, at what point did the undertaker bees evolve?

2) How does the undertaker bee ratio of 1 to 2% remain so constant? Just enough to do the job, yet not too many so as to burden the hive?

An Example Within Our Own Body

Inside our own bodies are several waste disposal systems. M. Scott Peck, M.D.(4) describes the marvelous system that heals a wound. The process includes *waste disposal*. The author writes, “Moving through the porous walls, the white blood cells (called “phagocytes” or eating cells) go to the diseased spot and gobble up dead cells, bacteria, dirt, and other debris. They actually *digest* this debris and then return through the porous walls into the blood vessels. It is a *remarkably efficient, microscopic garbage and collection service.*”

The Example Of Human Corpses

Upon our death another waste system kicks in. In my digestive system, and in yours, at this very moment, are bacteria ready to start the disposal system the minute death occurs.

In addition to those internal ones, within working distance are various flies and insects ready to respond to scents that emanate from a new corpse thus signaling them to do their job of disposal. This part of the system is so exact, so well programmed, that detective story fans, such as this writer, are well aware scientists use disposal creatures’ habits to make surprisingly accurate calculations regarding the time of human death.

This is because disposal insects follow an exact and pre-determined order.

In the book “Maggots, Murder and Men”(5) veteran Forensic Entomologist Dr. Zakaria Erzinglioglu explains this in more detail:

“As time passes and decomposition progresses, different insect species will be attracted to the body at different stages of decay. Bluebottles and greenbottles will arrive to lay their eggs which hatch into maggots that feed voraciously on the tissues. Beetles will arrive, not only to feed upon the tissues, but also upon the maggots. Minute wasps will arrive to parasitize the maggots. Tiny flies, whose very existence remains unguessed by most people, will similarly arrive at various stages of decay and will leave tell-tale signs of their visits.

Myriads of other creatures will arrive at various times, each to leave its mark for future interpretation by those who look into such things.

On the basis of the fact that anything that changes with time can be used as a clock, the succession of insects occurring on a dead body can, in principle, be exploited as *a measure of time since death.*”

Let’s ask some questions. If all is in a race for the fittest, why don’t all of these flies, beetles, and insects rush to a new body at the same time? What is holding them back? What makes them go only in their allotted turn? And await their turn with such

regularity and patience? So regular and so consistent are they that man can devote a whole science to the study of them and the conclusions that can be drawn from their very consistency!

Could it be that a Master Planner/programmer was responsible? Could it have been a Master Planner/programmer who put together the arrangement of body temperature, odors, and the like and then programmed and matched those signals to the particular insect needed for each part of the job?

This writer has mentioned before the advantage our generation has over previous ones. Because we use computers, we should be able to “see” something a Creator God has “made” by recognizing *programming* when it has been done in nature. Programming is something previous generations without computers could not even begin to imagine.

How Important Is All of This?

How important to us anyway *is* an earth that has constant waste disposal?

In the book “Alien Empire”(2), this conclusion is made, “Without insects, we would be inundated with dead plant and animal material.”

Another statement is this one, “They (insects) process *more flesh* than all the large carnivores - crocodiles and alligators, lions, tigers, and wolves - put together.”

In the book “The Secret Life of Germs”(6), the

author says that without germs (and insects) “Before thousands of years had passed there wouldn’t be an inch of ground left for plants to grow on or for other organisms to live on. *The very oceans would be thick with corpses.*”

“Without germs (and insects), all of the Earth would soon be one great garbage dump and graveyard spinning *lifelessly* in space.”

It seems as if constant waste disposal is vitally important.

In Summary


We have looked at the disposal of masses of elephant dung, the helpful scattering of that dung, learned the work of dung beetles is so important they had to be imported into Australia, learned in detail how small corpses, like mice, are disposed of, learned about “undertaker” bees, considered waste disposal at a wound site in our own bodies, considered the various insects that operate on an exact time schedule to aid the breakdown of a human corpse, and been told waste disposal is vital to continued life on our planet.

We have just scratched the surface on this subject. It is hoped sufficient examples have been presented so readers can agree there *are* in fact quiet and highly efficient waste disposal systems in place all around us. So efficient and so smoothly operating we take little notice of them. But if they would cease to operate for just a few days, we would soon notice it very much indeed!

So now we come to the question: Are all of these waste disposal systems the result of Evolution which admittedly is:

Mindless,
 Purposeless,
 Accidental chance?
 Or, are they more logically the result of:
 Planning,
 Design,
 Master programming,
 An intelligent, purposeful Creator?
 Which alternative makes more sense to you?

Endnotes:

- (1) Dandy Designs, Vol. I 1984 and Vol. II 1991, published by John N. Clayton, S. Bend, IN, now Niles, MI 49120.
- (2) Authors Rod and Ken Preston-Mafham, published 1996 by Crowood Press, Ramsbury, England.
- (3) Chris O’Toole, author, published 1995 by BBC Books, London, England.
- (4) “A World Waiting to be Born” published 1993 by Bantam Books.
- (5) Published 2000 by St. Martin’s Press, New York, NY 10010
- (6) Philip M. Tierno, Jr., Ph.D. author, published 2001 by Pocketbooks, New York, N.Y. 10020. 

Share Your Shelter

Our Savior never argued or tried to force someone to believe in Him. We should not do that either. But if *Shelter in the Word* has helped you, you can share it with others who might be interested in it or helped by it. One of these methods might work for you.

1. Talk to them about what you have learned and encourage them to study the Bible themselves.
2. Copy your *Shelter* and give it to them (almost any office or copy store will do this for \$1 to \$2).
3. Give them your *Shelter* (we will send you a replacement issue if you write or call).
4. Copy just this page or write down the address or phone so they can contact us.

To Receive *Shelter in the Word* or other literature:

Church Bible Teaching Ministry
PO Box 107; Perry Michigan, 48872-0107
Tel: 517-625-7480; Fax: 517-625-7481
e-mail: info@ShelterInTheWord.com