

# Expository Files



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The Front Page

***“He Will Reign”***  
***By Jon W. Quinn***

The angel announced to Mary that a son would be born by her and that she was to call His name “Jesus.” The angel continued to explain, “And the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.” (Luke 1:32,33). Jesus was to fulfill the many Messianic prophecies of the previous centuries. With the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, the king entered the world and would return to heaven only when His mission was accomplished and the prophecies were all fulfilled.

John taught that the “kingdom of heaven is at hand” as he prepared the way for the Lord. As Jesus began His ministry He announced the same thing (Matt. 3:1,2; 4:17,23).

Jesus told His disciples that “some of those standing here shall not taste of death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.” (Mark 9:1). There can be no mistake about it - Jesus planned to begin His rule over His kingdom in the first century during the lifetimes of those that stood with Him. Jesus told Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world.” (John 18:36). His kingdom is spiritual and He reigns over it today. It is present, and it is eternal. The King will come again one day to take His people home.

The Holy Spirit affirms in the New Testament that the kingdom prophecies of the Old Testament have been fulfilled in Jesus (Acts 3:24). Jesus reigns

today over His spiritual kingdom. He has sat down at God's right hand and all authority has been given to Him in heaven and on earth.

Following the ascension of Jesus, the apostles and preachers of the gospel went about preaching and teaching "the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:12). The phrase "kingdom of God" refers to the authority and reign of Jesus in the hearts of faithful men and women today.

The Bible says, "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son." (Col. 1:13). With our citizenship in His kingdom come both privileges and responsibilities. It is "a kingdom which cannot be shaken" though many have tried (Heb. 12:28). The last book of the Bible says, "He has made us to be a kingdom" (Rev. 1:6) and that at the end of time Jesus will "deliver up the kingdom to the God and Father" after He has defeated the last enemy... death itself (1 Cor. 15:24-26). King Jesus is coming again and eternal victory belong to His people.

***"Simply That They May  
Not be Persecuted for the Cross of Christ"  
(Galatians 6:12)  
By Jon W. Quinn***

Sometimes, the desires and expectations of popular culture can have way too much effect on the teachings of religious leaders. Today, what is heard in many pulpits reflects more about what is politically correct than what the Bible teaches. As a church of Christ, we must exercise diligence to be on guard. Faith in the Lord Jesus requires that we teach it His way, as revealed in His New Covenant, delivered by the Spirit of God through His first century apostles and prophets.

But this is not an unique situation. Culture and popular belief sought to make inroads in the church of the first century as well. For example, the epistle to the Galatians deals with the influence Judaizing teachers were having on the churches in that region. This doctrine had become a formidable force among the churches in that region and the faith of many Christians was tried by their negative influence. Essentially, they were demanding that the Gentile Christians were obligated to keep the Law of

Moses to be justified. This false teaching had more impact in some geographical areas than others. It seems that at Rome and in Galatia it made some impact. Note the similarities of the message to each: "For by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified" (Galatians 2:16). "By the deed of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight" (Romans 3:20). Today, we must also be on guard against false teaching as well, though it may not come in the form of the same doctrines as it did in the first century. Today there is modernism, moral issues such as abortion and homosexuality, and other pressures from society in general. They often expect us to teach things contrary to Biblical doctrine. We must give the same answer to this pressure as the apostle Paul did.

## **Background**

Galatia is a region in central Asia Minor. The churches of Galatia most likely included the churches of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch Pisidia. These churches were established during Paul's first missionary journey.

The problem addressed in this letter was that Judaizing teachers had come in and were teaching that Gentile converts needed to be circumcised in keeping with the old Jewish Law. This was not just a bad idea. It was wrong. It could be ruinous to a person's salvation. But it was making inroads there, the pressure being to alter the gospel of Jesus so that they might be accepted by the culture out of which these teachings came.

## **Words of Concern**

Paul often expressed concern in this letter. He said, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon" (Galatians 1:6) and "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?" (Galatians 3:1) and "I am afraid for you" (Gal. 4:11). He asked, "Have I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16) and "You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?" (Galatians 5:7) and even "I have doubts about you" (Galatians 4:20). They were trying much too hard to please culture and not hard enough to please the Lord Jesus!

## **Condemnation of the False Teachers and their Doctrines**

Concerning those who were twisting the gospel to fit their approach Paul was very plain and his words were sharp. This great worker for the

Lord was willing to compromise in matters of personal opinion, but when it came to the doctrine of Jesus, there would be no compromise with those who sought to inject social and cultural preferences into its message. Of these Judaizing teachers Paul wrote that even if they were angels their different gospels should not be accepted (Galatians 1:7-9). He said, "He who troubles you will bear his judgment" (Gal. 5:10) and "I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off" (Galatians 5:12).

To alter the teachings and doctrines just to be accepted by our society and avoid persecution is disloyal to the cross of Jesus. Paul wrote, "Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ" (Galatians 6:12).

### **Rebuke and Encouragement to the Galatians**

They had once been enslaved to idols, now they were following teachers who would enslave them to religious rituals that God had not commanded of them. (Galatians 4:8,9). Putting their confidence in these things would interfere with their putting their confidence in Christ and cost them their salvation. In fact, those who had done so had already "fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4).

Paul encourages them to take a firm and loyal stand on the gospel they had once received. Concerning the false teachings of the world and its expectations of them, he tells them to stand fast and do not be entangled with a yoke of bondage (Galatians 5:1). We must not become slaves of popular opinion of cultural expectations. They were to, through love, serve one another (Galatians 5:13) as they walked by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 22-25). They were not to become conceited, provoking one another and envying one another (Galatians 5:26). Often such affinity for the world's acceptance leads to such. They were to seek to restore those who had fallen in a spirit of gentleness (Galatians 6:1). They were to bear one another's burdens as they fulfilled the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2). They were not to allow themselves to grow weary in doing good (Galatians 6:9) and do good to all (Galatians 6:10).

### **Principles**

The way to prevent our own apostasy is to stand fast in the gospel of Jesus Christ. (Galatians 5:1; cf. 1 Corinthians 15:1; 15:58; Ephesians 6:14-16; Philippians 1:27). It is possible to fall from grace, and Paul says some of

the Galatians had done so (Galatians 5:4; cf. 1 Corinthians 10:12; Hebrews 2:1; 3:12,13 10:38).

False teachers pervert, bewitch, court and persuade. There are various motives for this. One motive is to impress upon the world how much alike we are, or as Paul puts it, to make a good showing and to avoid persecution (Galatians 6:12). Other motives: material self enrichment (Philippians 3:19); popularity (2 Timothy 4:3,4); power (3 John 9-11). How do you tell if one is such a false teacher? It may not always be as easy as you think (2 Corinthians 12:13-15) but it is easy enough if you use the right tools (Matthew 7:15,16; Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1,2; 5,6). We are about pleasing the Lord, not man. “For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.” (Galatians 1:10). That is the reason we continue to teach Biblically sound doctrine even when most around us consider it foolish to do so. We are seeking the favor of God, and this is the only way to find it.

***Making The Application - Acts 10***  
***(Acts 10)***  
***By Zeke Flores***

Often in an assembly, a brother will pray for us to have the wisdom to apply the lesson we’re about to hear. Such prayers are good and should not cease but too often, the prayer is not answered. It’s not because God hasn’t made available the tools for its implementation, but sometimes the preacher fails to give a concrete example of how to make the application of the spiritual principles that he’s tried to impart. Or, perhaps the listener fails to recognize opportunity in his own life wherein he could direct the teaching.

In Acts 10, we have the familiar story of Peter and Cornelius. In this wonderful story of conversion by God’s providence is an excellent example to help us learn how to apply spiritual principles.

Understand God teaches in many ways. There are commands and these are easy enough to understand, but God also uses principles and concepts by which we can necessarily infer what He wants us to learn. Peter, praying on a housetop in Joppa, falls into a trance and sees a vision of unclean animals being lowered to earth. After being commanded to kill and eat these animals, he refuses and cites his dedication to the dietary

restrictions of the Mosaic law. The vision appeared three times and finally was taken up into the sky. God wanted Peter to understand a deeper thing than merely the fact that some food had been restricted in the Law and Peter is left “perplexed” and wondering what it was that he was to learn from this vision.

Spend time thinking about what you can get out of the teaching. Peter was “perplexed” (Acts 10:17, NASB). He “wondered within himself” (NKJV) what the meaning of the vision could be. Though he didn’t immediately get it, that didn’t stop him from thinking about it further. Verse 19 tells us he was “reflecting” or “thinking” or “pondering” on the vision. It means he was fixated wholly on trying to determine the meaning of what he had seen. He was turning the vision over and over, through and through, in his mind being deep in thought over what it might mean.

Things work together that might help us apply the teaching. While Peter was seeing and thinking over the vision, Cornelius an “unclean” Gentile some 25 miles away in Caesarea was sending men to bring Peter there and teach them God’s way. “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (Rom 8:28) We should recognize the “all things” in Romans 8 is limited by the context of that passage, but we should also recognize the many “helps” that God allows in life to strengthen our walk in Him. How many times have we prayed for patience and then the next day be confronted with a situation that severely tests it?

Recognize opportunity to apply the teaching. There came a time in our text that Peter “saw the light” and knew what God meant for him to know by the strange vision. Peter, a Jew, entered the home of Cornelius, a Gentile and said, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me (emphasis mine - zf) that I should not call any man unholy or unclean. I most certainly understand NOW (emphasis mine - zf) that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.” (Acts 10:28, 34-35)

All his life Peter had been taught that Gentiles were inferior to Jews and had no access to the God of Israel. The vision that came to him from God showed him differently and Peter was not only quick to recognize and apply that principle, but he did so in spite of years of conditioning and

practice. By doing so, Peter was able to preach God's will to a houseful of people who wanted to obey Him. What an awesome example for those of us who believe that old dogs can't learn new tricks! Changing one's mind and ingrained habits are difficult, to be sure, but that in itself doesn't make change impossible.

The results for Peter meant the first of many Gentile converts. In fact, he got the opportunity to relay the story of the conversion of Cornelius' household to the other apostles and brethren in Jerusalem. "When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God saying, 'Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.'" (Acts 11:18) But it may not have happened that way if Peter hadn't kept an open mind, reflected on God's teaching, and recognized the opportunity to implement it.

Just because the preacher doesn't always point out a specific example of how one might apply Biblical concepts doesn't nullify our responsibility to bear fruit from it. Let each one of us think on the things presented, whether by hearing or by reading, and resolve to "apply it to myself." Think about Peter and his success. Who knows what the results might be from you making the application!

### ***Training From Israelite History*** ***1 Cor. 10:1-13***

*{Before reading this, please read 1 Cor. 10:1-13}*

When Paul says something like this: "Brethren, I do not want you to be unaware," he is introducing something they need to know. It is not optional. It is not merely academic. It is essential knowledge. "For I do not want you to be ignorant," (NIV). That should raise an alert for us that this is something we need to know.

This is a matter of Old Testament history and the Jews in Corinth would be especially familiar with this.

"All our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock, and that Rock was Christ."

This is historical; you can read about this in the Old Testament. It concerns the early members of the Jewish nation and God's care over them.

This is expressed in vivid, dramatic terminology:

1. They were "under the cloud." *This is a reference to Ex. 13:21,22, and that has to do with the guidance God gave them, out of Egypt and through the wilderness.*

2. They "passed through the sea." *On that historic occasion recorded in Ex. 14:21,22 God gave them safe passage away from the fleeing Egyptian army.*

3. They "were baptized into Moses." Figuratively speaking, under this cloud and through the sea, they were brought under the leadership of Moses. When we are baptized into Christ, we are brought under His authority and leadership; thus it was, for those ancient Israelites, they were baptized into Moses, so to speak.

4. They "drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them." This is all about God taking care of the nation. They had what they needed to eat and drink. Manna and water from the Rock provided by God. Paul affirms – these provisions came from heaven; God and Christ were the source.

These phrases were crafted by Paul, under supervision of the Holy Spirit, to remind the Jewish Corinthians of the early members of their nation and God's care over them. You can read about all of this in the Old Testament. Whether you read from the Old Testament or in this passage it is clear God took good care of His people.

He supplied what they needed. In fact, we can say: Those early Israelites, in Moses' time, were a highly privileged people. All of them.

Do you see, all of these people were recipients of these rich blessings from God and Christ?

This cannot be intended to be understood literally, for it was not literally true. The rock from which the water flowed was evidently an ordinary rock, a part of Mount Horeb; and all that this can mean is, that that rock, with the stream of water thus gushing from it, was a representation of the Messiah.



The word was is thus often used to denote similarity or representation, and is not to be taken literally. Thus, in the institution of the Lord's Supper, the Saviour says of the bread, "This is my body," that is, it represents my body. Thus also of the cup, "This cup is the new testament in my blood," that is, it represents my blood, 1Co 11:24,25. Thus the gushing fountain of water might be regarded as a representation of the Messiah, and of the blessings which result from him. *Albert Barnes*

**BUT (verse 5 says): "...with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness."** There is a contrast here, and it needs to be noted. Going through the first four verses, note and emphasize the word "all." All of them enjoyed these blessings; the early members of the Israelite nation had these benefits and Christ was involved then.

The word "all" is repeated throughout the first four verses. Every one of them – all of them had the privileges that came from heaven. "But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness."

God was offended by their ingratitude. He was disappointed in their rebellion. Their bodies being "scattered in the wilderness" was a direct result of their unbelief and disobedience. *Of Moses in the cloud and in the sea, how many entered the promised land of Canaan?*

Only two entered, Joshua and Caleb. The rest of them perished in the wilderness. Being baptized unto Moses and following God's guidance for a while was not enough to guarantee their reward. **They failed to persevere; they didn't exercise self-discipline to continue what they started.**

Here is a case where people who started a journey didn't complete it. The lesson for us is obvious. Being baptized and taking the Lord's Supper and Reading the Bible is not enough. There must be perseverance in faithful discipleship. There must be self-discipline, in the use of all God provides for us. "Therefore He lifted up His hand in an oath against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness," (Psa. 106:26).

**In Vss. 6-13**, based on this history, here is what Paul wants the Corinthians to learn. Likewise, this is what we need to learn:

<sup>6</sup>Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.<sup>7</sup> And do not become idolaters as *were* some of them. As it is written, “*The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.*”<sup>8</sup> Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell;<sup>9</sup> nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents;<sup>10</sup> nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.<sup>11</sup> Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.<sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.

Several things stand out in this paragraph to help us appreciate the self-discipline of faithfulness. There are about five things I want to highlight:

1. ***“We should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.”*** To “lust” in this sense is to accept and nurture strong desires for things you shouldn’t have. This was involved in the apostasy of these early Israelites. Desiring what is forbidden by God. We should avoid such lust and we can, by the activity of faith in Christ.

2. ***We should avoid any form of idolatry.*** Down in verse 14 Paul will say, “Flee from idolatry.” When we give to anyone or anything, the honor and reverence God deserves, that is idolatry. It was and is sin. “Whatever a man seeks, honors, or exalts more than God, is idolatry,” *WILLIAM BERNARD ULLANTHORNE (1806–1889)*

3. ***We cannot allow indulgence and entertainment to consume us.*** “The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry.” They committed sexual immorality and in one day, 23,000 fell. *That’s half the population of the city I occupy!* One day – and you can read of this in Ex. 32 and Num. 25 – this happened. Think about it: if God responded today, as he did then, **the population of this country would be drastically reduced.** This is sex and drinking – indulgence in self-centered pleasure, showing an absence of self-discipline – a lack of devotion to God, that offends Him. We ought to learn the lessons from this history.

4. **We Must Not Tempt Christ.** To tempt means, *to make trial of*; to provoke to anger; to disrespect; to try and get away with something. Teenagers who rebel against their parents will deceive, manipulate, antagonize and otherwise intimidate their parents. We should never act that way toward the Lord. It shows our heart it not where it ought to be.

5. *We should refrain from murmuring.* To fall into the habit of constantly complaining about your lot in life; to bury yourself in negative, defeated language and broadcast your troubles to others all the time, eventually expressing bitterness to God was the sin of those people and warns us today. It shows lack of self-discipline, along with these other behaviors.

<sup>11</sup>*Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*

<sup>12</sup>*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

The things happened to them – to the early Israelites, long ago. But, those things were documented: “written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.” So – to those who are puffed up; overly confidence and boastful: **Take heed lest you fall!**

### **Verse 13 needs our attention:**

*“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”*

When I am tempted to sin in some way (thought, word, deed) **I should never think that doesn’t happen to anybody else!** No temptation is unique to me. Being tempted to sin is common to man. I believe it can be argued: *every free moral agent is subjected to temptation.* The devil doesn’t leave anybody out. “No temptation has overtaken you, except such as is common to man.”

Here's the good news: **"...God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."** It helps me a lot to just dwell on this simple statement of truth about God: **He "is faithful."** His word is good; His promises are trustworthy; the help He says He will give we can count on. This is my source of security; this is why I am motivated to obey God and keep His commandments. This is why I love Him – **He is faithful.**

Now, there is a particular application of that truth about God that is the subject of this verse (1 Cor. 10:13). God "will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." This is something we can count on - and you can count on this every day.

Whatever the circumstances, the causes, the agents, the emotions, the pressure, the overwhelming assault of the devil, **there is "the way of escape."** You don't have to sin. That can never be our claim, *that we had to sin!* God, through the mystery of His providence, so controls things – He limits temptation, so that with every temptation, there is a way of escape!

**Where would we be without this confidence?** Hopeless. In bondage to fear. But we have God's Word that no temptation will ever be so overwhelming that we are forced into sin!

*"...You can trust God. He will not let you be tempted more than you can bear. But when you are tempted, God will also give you a way to escape that temptation. Then, you will be able to endure it." (New Century Version)*

***He's Holding out for Us, Joel 2:12-13***  
***Matt Allen***

*"Yet even now," declares the LORD, "return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments." Now return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and relenting of evil. Joel 2:12-13*

The message of Joel is intriguing. Chapter one tells the reader that the nation of Judah had just been ravaged by a phenomenal locust plague. The infestation was unusually severe, one so bad that no one living at the time could remember anything worse, 1:3. Conditions were so bad that the destruction affected all facets of society. The country was truly suffering. Joel enters the scene warning the people that a day of greater judgment and punishment was coming if they failed to repent. The implication is that the locust plague mentioned in chapter one was sent by God in an effort to wake up the people from spiritual slumber. They had grown apart from God and forgotten their dependence on Him. And, it was at their lowest, most vulnerable moment that God stood by with His hand outstretched, hoping for their repentance. The words of 2:12-13 are touching and reveal important things concerning genuine repentance and the nature of God. For example...

Verse twelve teaches us that those who truly repent move with a sense of urgency. "Yet even now," declares the Lord... When we realize the reality of the punishment that will come with a failure to act and the possibility that God could deal out retribution at any moment, there will be little delay in moving toward God. A person who truly repents will realize that time is precious and one moment spent outside a relationship with God is just one moment too long.

Verse twelve teaches us that true repentance involves a desire to return to God. God said, "Return to me with all your heart..." Generations before, the children of Israel entered into a covenant relationship with God. Through the worship of idols, trust in human alliances, and turning their back on God, they had not lived up to their side of the agreement. God is calling them to return. Like the children of Israel, Christians have made a covenant with God. We can violate that covenant thus destroying the connection with God because of our sinful behavior. But yet, God always calls us back so that the relationship can be fully restored to its former quality. If you have rejected the covenant you once made with God, won't you come back? God is holding out for your repentance. See Luke 15:11-32.

Verse twelve teaches us that true repentance comes from the heart. Rend your heart and not your garments. True repentance goes farther than fear of punishment and the confession of sin. God wants our heart. True repentance involves a complete and total change in one's life. It is an inward

change of the heart and while it begins in our mind, it is seen outwardly in our actions. Going along with this...

Verse twelve teaches us that true repentance will be seen in our actions. Fasting, weeping, and mourning are all evidence of true, genuine repentance. However, these things do not profit the person who has not changed his will. In Joel 2:15, Judah was called upon to change their will and demonstrate a national assembly where each person called on the name of the Lord. This involved people from the oldest to the youngest in society. Each person needed to refocus their mind on their extreme dependence upon God. So must we. We need to communicate to God that we are sorrowful for our own sin and realize our dependence upon Him. Fruits of repentance will be seen when our motives are genuine and true. See Matthew 3:8.

Verse thirteen tells us how great and awesome the God is that we serve. When we consider His graciousness, compassion, how He is slow to anger, how He abounds in lovingkindness, and will relent of evil, it should move us to humbly serve Him. Praise God that He is not a vengeful, unloving God who looks forward to dealing out retribution! He holds out for us, desiring a personal, caring relationship with each one of us. We are truly special to Him. Oh how He loves us, just as a father does his child. We are His children! How close is your relationship with God? Do you need to return to Him? He is holding out for you to come back!

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***Render Unto Caesar***  
***(Special Topic)***  
***By Jon W. Quinn***

The name “Caesar” was originally the name of a powerful Roman family and eventually became an imperial title. Perhaps the most renowned member of this family was Gaius Julius Caesar. After the dynasty ended with the death of Nero in 68 AD, the name Caesar was retained to designate future Roman imperial rulers. Much later, leaders of Germany and Russia were called respectively “Kaiser” and “czar” even at the beginning of the twentieth century, both of these titles are derived from the word “Caesar”.

### **Augustus 27 B.C. - 14 A.D.**

“Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.” (Luke 2:1). Augustus was the adopted son of Julius Caesar. His name was Gaius Octavius, and he assumed the name Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus in accordance with Roman custom. It was later that he added the title “Augustus” which in Latin (the Language of the Romans) means "majestic". In Augustus' reign we have the birth of Jesus, in which Augustus unknowingly plays a part in the fulfillment of ancient prophecy.

The decree mentioned in Luke 2:1 compelled Joseph and Mary to return to their ancestral hometown to register in the Roman census. So, despite Mary's condition of late term pregnancy, the couple traveled from Nazareth of Galilee to Bethlehem of Judea where the baby was born. The Son of God was thus born in Bethlehem just as the prophet Micah had said about seven centuries before (Luke 2:1-11; Micah 5:2).

### **Tiberius 14-37 A.D.**

“Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene...” (Luke 3:1) The emperor Tiberius, who succeeded his stepfather Augustus, ruled for about twenty-three years. He was a capable administrator but also the object of general dislike. He relied on military power and in Rome had his Praetorian Guard, the only organized troops allowed legally in Rome to keep his rule secure. It was Tiberius Caesar who was reigning during the ministries of both John and Jesus and also when the church had its beginning. The church also spread from Jerusalem due to a great persecution that rose against it. One of the persecutors, a “young man named Saul”, after having zealously persecuted the church would become a convert to Christ due to an appearance to him by the resurrected Jesus. Saul would become an apostle and change his name to Paul during the time of Tiberius.

### **Caligula 37-41 A.D.**

There is no mention of Caligula in the Bible. He was a cruel, insane and tyrannical leader who ruled for four years. During his time, the church continued to spread through Palestine; though some Christians who had fled from Jerusalem during the persecution returned.

### **Claudius 41-54 A.D.**

Claudius, whose rule of thirteen years was distinguished by the conquest of Britain, and who continued the public works and administrative reforms instituted under Augustus, was the emperor during the three missionary journeys of Paul (although the third journey had not yet been completed when Claudius died). The prophet Agabus had prophesied that a great famine would take place over the world, and Luke informs us that it came to pass during the time of Claudius (Acts 11:28). When the famine hit Judea particularly hard, churches from other places sent funds to relieve the needy saints in Jerusalem and Judea. Claudius didn't know it, but he was responsible for Paul meeting Aquila and Priscilla when he did. "And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them..." (Acts 18:2). Historical sources outside the Bible confirm that this did occur. Roman historians speak of this expulsion of Jews from Rome. Evidently, there was some turmoil and unrest over a man called "Christos" (Christ-J.Q.). Though the account does not elaborate, we remember well how the Scriptures of God relate that often there was discord, mob action and even riots associated with the early persecution of the Christians by the Jews. Among those forced to leave were Paul's soon-to-be friends and co-workers, Aquila and Priscilla, who moved to Corinth where they first met Paul.

### **Nero 54- 68 A.D.**

Nero's rule at first was moderate, as a result of the wise counsel of advisors. But, he also faltered becoming paranoid (though the threats were sometimes real, often they were not) about all those around him, including his own mother (whom he had killed). It was during Nero's reign that Rome began persecuting the church, Nero blamed them for a fire that had swept through Rome. His overthrow, which was caused by his later excesses, and his subsequent suicide marked the end of the line of Julio-Claudian emperors, though future emperors retained the name "Caesar".

Ironically, Nero was the Caesar to whom Paul appealed for justice(!) (Acts 25:11). After Paul was delivered to Rome, Nero placed Paul under house arrest (Acts 28:19). Paul writes of teaching the gospel to the some of the Praetorian Guard and that some members of Nero's own household were Christians during his imprisonments (Philippians 1:13; 4:22). Paul was eventually released, but then later rearrested and executed. He writes of his



coming execution in 2 Timothy 4, a chapter showing his great faith and confidence.

### **Galba, Otho, and Vitellius (68-69)**

#### **Brief reigns.**

### **Vespasian (69-79 A.D.)**

Vespasian and his sons, the emperors Titus and Domitian, are known as the Flavians. Vespasian fulfilled Jesus' prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem (with his son, Titus, being the commander in the field) (Matthew 24:1,2).

### **Titus (79-81 A.D.)**

The famous eruption of Vesuvius that destroyed the towns of Herculaneum and Pompeii happened during the rule of Titus.

### **Domitian (81-96 A.D.)**

Domitian became a cruel tyrant in the later years of his rule, and the period of terror associated with his name ended with his murder. John was exiled to island of Patmos and wrote the Book of Revelation from there concerning a great persecution against the churches in Asia Minor. Emperor worship was commanded of the people, and Christians would not oblige (Revelation 16:2, et.al.). But the message from John assures them of complete and final victory if they would be faithful even unto death (Revelation 2:10). The message speaks of the fall and defeat of Rome, the defeat of Satan, and victory of Jesus and His faithful ones.

### **Plan of Salvation**

#### **The Plan of Salvation**

**By Jon W. Quinn**

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#### *Plan #1*

Announced by the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to new believers in Christ who asked what they must do:

"Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."  
(ACTS 2:38)

## *Plan #2*

On the back page of a tract, sinners were urged to pray this prayer to be saved. This prayer is not found in the Bible; nor were alien sinners commanded to pray for their forgiveness.

### **The Sinner's Prayer:**

"O' Lord, I accept that I am a sinner and that Jesus died for my sins. I now accept Him into my heart as Lord and Savior asking for your mercy and forgiveness in His name. Amen."

The editors of Expository Files are happy with plan #1 and thankful to the God of all grace for it. We cannot recommend Plan #2 at all, but will change our minds when this prayer can be shown to us in the Bible.

### *The Final Page*

*Warren E. Berkley*

### *Understanding The Significant Past*

*{Reflections on my trip to Pearl Harbor}*

*Warren E. Berkley, July 2006*

I've just returned from a four day trip to Hawaii and the most important event during my stay was the visit to the Pearl Harbor Memorial and the USS Arizona Monument located in the bay. I was there all day and it was a powerful and valuable personal experience.

A little after 8 am, on the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, a direct attack was carried out against the United States. Many incredible stories of courage and tragedy are combined and properly represented in this beautiful memorial. And the USS Arizona part of the site is the final resting place for many of the ship's 1,177 crewmen who lost their lives on that day.



The day I was there, people stood in line for hours and then waited under the sun to view the video presentation and be shuttled out to the undersea ruins of the USS Arizona. I saw and met people from all over the world. There were parents with their children and a few families

there to grieve the loss of a loved one over sixty years after the day. The sober reflection of the visitors was obvious and my own emotions found their release.

One thought I have is, **one of our top priorities should be to understand the significant past.** Not everything in history holds the same significance. In our history as a nation there should be both knowledge of Pearl Harbor and recognition of what it meant. Honoring the dead and learning the many lessons that flow from the whole context of that history should be fundamental to good citizenship.

“Knowledge of history cannot be ... practically applied, and is therefore worthless except to those who have made it, in greater or less degree, a personal possession. The value of history is, indeed, not scientific but moral: by liberalizing the mind, by deepening the sympathies, by fortifying the will, it enables us to control not society, but ourselves—a much more important thing.” – Carl Becker, *The Dial*, 1915.

**Understanding the significant past finds a place also in our knowledge and conduct as Christians.** In fact, our existence as Christians is because of the historical facts of the cross (1 Cor. 15:1-4). New Testament writers call upon us to know, remember and learn from the past (1 Cor. 10:1-11; Rom. 15:4; 2 Pet. 3:1-2). What was said and written in the past is vital for us to learn and respond to today. What happened to others could happen to us. From Biblical history we discover the value of obedience and the ruin of sin. History given by the Holy Spirit’s instruments (writers) enlightens us, informs us, motivates us and warns us.

History (secular and biblical) is not just a matter of handing out time lines with people, places and events. History imposes upon us the challenge to learn from the victories and mistakes of men; to take our heritage seriously and use that knowledge to form our present maturity.

Take the time to inquire and answer these questions: *What is the history of my faith? What is the history of my family and nation? What can I learn from the significant past?*