

HOUSE to HOUSE
HEART to HEART

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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 27 NUMBER 11



THE NINE LEPERS WHO

MISSED *Thanksgiving*

Allen Webster

Twenty percent of people did an unexpected thing last year: they missed Thanksgiving. Pandemic fear, sickness, travel restrictions, and limited funds contributed to missing a favorite holiday.

Some whom Jesus met also missed thanksgiving. They are known as the nine lepers (Luke 17:12-19).

Leprosy is a dreaded disease. It begins with specks on the eyelids and palms. It spreads to sores over the body. It bleaches the hair white. Skin turns pale and crusts with scales. The body becomes a mass of oozing sores. Body parts die and fall off. Lepers die a piece at the time.

In this account, Jesus is traveling to Jerusalem, perhaps going to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, which occurred in the seventh month of the Jewish year.

TEN BEGGING LEPERS (LUKE 17:12-14)

In the first picture, there are ten lepers. Indistinguishable from each other, they were likely different in age, race (one was

a Samaritan), education, training, background, and personality.

Under other circumstances, they would not have been together. They might have even shunned each other—especially the Jews who had no dealings with Samaritans (John 4:9). Shakespeare said, “One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.”¹

The lepers stood “afar off.” Levitical regulations said a leper’s outer garment had to be torn, his hair unkempt, and his face partially covered. He dressed as a mourner going to his own a funeral.

Lepers were shunned and socially ostracized. Forbidden to enter towns, they often gathered near city gates to beg travelers for handouts. To avoid infecting others (Leviticus 13:46; Numbers 5:2-3; cf. 2 Kings 5:5), they were required to call to all who passed, “Unclean! Unclean!” (*Tame’, Tame’*) and to remain six feet away. Children ran from them. Adults walked across the street.



There was no cure. Lepers lived in leper colonies where food might be lowered to the entrance of a cave.

Trembling with excitement, these lepers dared what they would never do with a scribe or Pharisee. They called out, begging for mercy (Luke 17:13). They did not ask for money (cf. Matthew 8:2–3), but for healing. Their request showed great faith.

This filled Jesus with compassion. His ears were always open to distress calls. His actions said, “I love you. I care. I am sorry. I understand. I want to help.”

They all received mercy (Luke 17:14). The blessing was more than a healthy body. It included restoration to society and re-admission to the sanctuary.

Since reentry into society required a certificate from a priest to declare them ceremonially clean (Leviticus 13:1–6; 14:1–3; Matthew 8:4; Luke 5:14), He told them to go to the priest. This tested their belief in His authority.

Never since Naaman was so great a cure worked in such a fashion. Jesus neither touched them nor prayed for them. As they went to the temple, sensation returned to their fingers and faces. They were healed when they obeyed, as sinners are spiritually (Hebrews 5:8–9).

ONE THANKFUL LEPER (LUKE 17:15–16)

One leper returned to Jesus, and fell upon his face to say, “Thanks.” His prayer turned to praise. He received more than the unthankful lepers (James 4:2).

Surprisingly, he was a Samaritan (Luke 17:16). *Stranger* (*allogenes*) here means foreigner. A stranger was not permitted in the Jewish area of the temple upon penalty of death. The word was found on a limestone block in the court of the Gen-

tiles outside the temple (“Let no foreigner enter”). Yet this foreigner found grace with the Lord of the temple.

A Samaritan was least expected to return. Virtue can be found where least expected (Luke 10:30–36; Matthew 8:5–10; 15:26–28). The hymn of praise rises more frequently from a peasant’s fireside than from palace halls—from hard circumstances than from easy ones.

“Thank” and “thanksgiving” are found 134 times in the Bible (in various forms). Jesus is recorded as giving thanks eleven times, counting all references (Matthew 11:25; 15:36; 26:27; Mark 8:6; 14:23; Luke 10:21; 22:17, 19; John 6:11, 23; 11:41). Those in heaven give God thanks (Revelation 4:9; 11:17). Paul wrote often of gratitude:

- “I . . . do not cease to give thanks for you” (Ephesians 1:15–16).
- “Giving thanks always for all things to God” (Ephesians 5:20).
- “Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father” (Colossians 3:17).
- “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).
- “We are bound to give thanks to God always” (2 Thessalonians 2:13).
- Giving thanks is a “first of all” command (1 Timothy 2:1).
- “Let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God . . . giving thanks to His name” (Hebrews 13:15).

Of all the world’s nations, Thanksgiving is a holiday only in the United States, Canada, Brazil, Grenada, Germany, Japan, Saint Lucia, and Liberia. It began as a day of giving thanks for the harvest and blessings of the preceding year.

From God comes “every good gift and every perfect gift” (James 1:17). Our bodies, with all their abilities, and our souls,

with all their capacities, come from Him. Salvation can only come from His grace.

NINE FORGETFUL LEPELERS (17:17–19)

Jesus was disappointed. He asked, “Where are the nine?”

Jews were trained to be grateful for blessings, but these were not. Gifts often received may become underappreciated.

Why did the nine not return? We can imagine that

- One was excited. He was so busy enjoying his blessings that he forgot to be thankful for them.
- A second was callous. Hardship and mistreatment had made his heart a stone.
- A thoughtless third valued the gift but did not think of the Giver. More like shifting sand than rock, he did not reflect, introspect, or recollect.
- A fourth was proud. Why should he be thankful for what he deserved?
- A fifth focused on duty. He was to make an offering, so off he went. He had the letter of the law but not the spirit.
- A sixth was a coward. He would have returned if others had, but he went with the crowd. Jesus was scorned and hated.
- A seventh was bitter. He has lost so much that he could not get back.
- An eighth was a procrastinator. He planned to say thanks later.
- A ninth was overwhelmed. He was in a hurry to get caught up.

Meanwhile Christ asked, “Where are the nine?” These were closer to Him in affliction than in health. They remembered God in distress but forgot Him in deliverance. All were ready to receive a blessing; only one was ready to be thankful for it.

There was enough faith for prayer but not enough for praise. They passed faith's test but failed love's test.

Silence is the voice of ingratitude. A thankless heart and a silent tongue are partners. A man rescued 17 people from drowning after a plane crash and was later asked about the event. He said, "What amazed me is no one said, 'thank you.'"

One man preached on "Thanksgiving's Empty Chair" about the prodigal son's elder brother (Luke 15:25-32). On the great day when the prodigal came home, every chair was filled except his.

The pilgrims at that first Thanksgiving were thankful in the midst of challenge. Few Americans are more underprivileged than that handful from the *Mayflower*. While they did have four great human assets—initiative, courage, industry, and faith—they had little else.

Half their number had died; those remaining had bleak prospects. They had no homes and no government agency to help. They had no transportation but their legs. Their food came from the sea and the forest, and they had to search for it. They had no money and no place to spend it anyway. They had no amusements except what they made up, no way to communicate with relatives in England, and no Social Security or Medicare. Nonetheless, they were thankful.

The same sense of gratitude led Abraham Lincoln to make Thanksgiving a holiday in the midst of the Civil War.

All of us have much for which to be thankful. A person visiting America was fascinated as he toured the land. Near the end he was asked, "What was the most amazing thing you have seen?" He said, "The size of your garbage cans."

Paul told those on Mars Hill that in God "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). We owe our lives to

God—the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat (James 1:17).

Cineas from Thessaly was an adviser of King Pyrrhus. He had a reputation for wisdom and was a pupil of Demosthenes the orator and was the only man who could be compared in skill with Demosthenes. Pyrrhus held him in high regard. Cineas was an Epicurean. Plutarch wrote that Pyrrhus sent Cineas to many cities in Greece as an ambassador and "used to say that more cities had been won for him by the eloquence of Cineas than by his own arms."

Cineas was disturbed at Pyrrhus's intent to fight the Romans. "Sir, when you have conquered them, what will you do next?" "Sicily is near at hand and easy to master." "When you have conquered Sicily?" "Then we will pass on to Africa and take Carthage." "When these are conquered, what will be next?" "Then we will fall upon Greece and Macedon and recover what we have lost there." "Well, when all are subdued, what fruit do you expect from all your victories?" "Ah, then we will sit down and enjoy ourselves."

"Sir, may we not do it now and forego all the preliminaries?"

Paul commanded Timothy: "Having food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (1 Timothy 6:8).

Ten lepers received healing and thus owed their lives to Jesus. Nine rushed to resume normal business; only one paused to express gratitude. Like Cineas, the thankful leper chose to appreciate what he had rather than to seek new victories.

Endnote

¹ William Shakespeare. *Troilus and Cressida*, Act III, Scene iii.



Focus on Improving

Warren Buffett reads all day to build the knowledge necessary for his investments. Stephen King writes 1000 words a day, 365 days a year. Athlete Eliud Kipchoge makes notes after each training session to establish areas that can be improved.

Habits, repeated hundreds of times over years, are powerful. The benefits of these non-negotiable actions compound and lead to extraordinary achievements.

Read your Bible daily. Do something positive daily. Pray consistently. Teach someone the gospel each week.

"Redeeming the time."

EPHESIANS 5:16

Do Not Believe Him

Satan promises the best, but he pays with the worst.

He promises honor and pays with disgrace;

He promises pleasure and pays with pain;

He promises profit and pays with loss;

He promises life and pays with death.

—Thomas Brooks

"Your adversary the devil . . ."

1 PETER 5:8

God's Plan for Saving Man

Divine Love: John 3:16

God's Grace: Ephesians 2:8

Christ's Blood: Romans 5:9

Holy Spirit's Word: Romans 1:16

Sinner's Faith: Acts 16:31

Sinner's Repentance: Luke 13:3

Sinner's Confession: Romans 10:10

Sinner's Baptism: Acts 22:16

Christian's Love: Matthew 22:37

Christian's Work: James 2:24

Christian's Hope: Romans 8:24

Christian's Endurance: Revelation 2:10



Watch HTH articles
on Youtube:



What Have They Seen in Your House? (2 Kings 20:15)

1. Authority? There must be authority in every business or institution.
2. A recognition of the true status of each person in the family? (1) Husband, head of wife (Ephesians 5:23). (2) Wife, keeper at home (Titus 2:5). (3) Children should obey parents (Colossians 3:20). (4) Parents should train children in Lord's nurture and admonition (Ephesians 6:4).
3. Bible study and prayer? (Acts 2:42).
4. Good influence? Influence lives on after we are dead (Revelation 14:13).
5. Hospitality? (Romans 12:13).
6. Good literature? As a person "thinks in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). As one reads, he thinks.
7. Wholesome amusement? (1 Thessalonians 5:22).
8. Good associates? (1 Corinthians 15:33).



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See You Sunday?

Not all our attenders are members,
And not all our members are attenders,
But if all our attenders were members,
And all our members were attenders

THEN . . .

We would have more trouble menders,
More gospel defenders,
And more true soul-winners!

BUT . . .

We would have fewer people offenders,
Fewer spiritual hinderers,
And fewer religious pretenders!

SO . . .

Let us all render a more tender surrender
To the Commander of a love full of splendor!
As we meander on this earth full of sinners,
Let us engender a life with the Lord at the center. —Neal Pollard

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering."

HEBREWS 10:23

Just for Fun Proverbs 31, The Virtuous Wife

H J N W O R T H X X W L F W
 Z U P R O V I D E S I S C C
 R U B I E S U Q Q Z F J Z P
 D G B L E S S E D M E T Z B
 I L J O W I S D O M M W E L
 V N H U S B A N D B Q G F H
 I R S A A H H O N O R X V S
 R E S T R E N G T H H S J F
 T J T P R A I S E Z G O O D
 U O P R L R R V E U G K Z W
 O I U N U T O S J X N D R O
 U C W C F S N C Q C C B W R
 S E C H Q Y T V H B R E I K
 V K I N D N E S S B V S L S

Virtuous
 Praise
 Works
 Excel
 Husband
 Heart
 Blessed
 Wisdom
 Trusts
 Strength
 Provides
 Worth
 Rejoice
 Kindness
 Honor
 Good
 Rubies
 Wife

Worship That Makes You Say, "Wow!"

Worship services are not on the list of things that make most people shout, "Wow!"

In *Playing Marbles with Diamonds* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI 1985; p.49), Vance Havner commented on the low quality of much "worship" in modern America:

God forgive us for gathering in His name, not expecting much to happen, praying for rain but not carrying our umbrellas. We pay church staff to do church work and then gather on Sunday to watch them do it. It is a performance, not an experience.

When the preacher stands up to preach, the attitude is, "Alright, preacher, let us see what you have got." When he finishes, we say in effect, "I move we accept this as information and be dismissed." No wonder we meet at eleven o'clock sharp and end at twelve o'clock dull.

The New Testament directs every worshiper to worship God in spirit and

in truth (John 4:24). We who worship are, in the final analysis, in charge of the quality of our worship. If we are dull, worship will be dull. If we are sharp, worship will be sharp, too!

Revelation 4 reveals worship that will make you say, "Wow!" What is taking place is worship of the Almighty God—pure, unadulterated, high-octane worship. Revelation 4:8–11 describes the scene of four living creatures who do not rest day or night, saying:

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You cre-

ated all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."

Worship in heaven is not dull. And it is not about me, and it is not about you. No one there is saying they do not get anything out of the worship. No one is bored or calling for "worship renewal." No one is in a hurry to get out, and no one is leaving during the closing song. No one is whispering or sleeping or clipping their fingernails or any of the many distracting things some people do during worship here on earth.

In heaven, the congregation is not worshipping praise or praising worship. They are worshipping and praising and thanking and adoring God for who He is. They are having worship that would make any genuine Christian say, "Wow!" because their focus is on the almighty, eternal, creator God who should make us say, "Wow!"

When was the last worship that made you say, "Wow!"? If everyone worshiped the way you do, would worship be dull or dynamic? —Dan Gulley

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

Bible Quiz

VOLUME 27:11

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark. We will grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "[Coming Soon]" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State: _____
Phone: _____

Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 27:9 Starts with the Letter T: 1. 1. Tobijah, Tobadonijah (2 Chronicles 17:8); 2. Tabernacle (Exodus 25:9); 3. Thomas (John 11:16); 4. Talent (Matthew 18:24); 5. Theophilus (Luke 1:1–3; Acts 1:1); 6. Tarshish (Jonah 1:3); 7. Tabitha (Acts 9:36); 8. Tarsus (Acts 9:11); 9. Timothy (2 Timothy 1:6–7); 10. Titus (Titus 1:4); 11. Taste (Psalm 34:8); 12. Tryphena, Tryphosa (Romans 16:12); 13. Teeth (Matthew 8:12); 14. Tekel (Daniel 5:25); 15. Tertius (Romans 16:22); 16. Tekoa (Amos 1:1); 17. Temptation (Matthew 6:13); 18. Tamar (Genesis 38:11–26); 19. Tentmaker (Acts 18:3); 20. Troas (Acts 16:8–9); 21. Troas (Acts 20:6–10); 22. Tishbite (1 Kings 17:1); 23. Thyratira (Revelation 1:11); 24. Thorns (Matthew 27:29); 25. Thanks (Psalm 107:21).

V. 27:10 Starts With the Letter "P": 1. Pardon (Psalm 25:11); 2. Parents (Romans 1:30); 3. Perseverance (2 Peter 1:6); 4. Peace (Galatians 5:22); 5. Persecution (2 Timothy 3:12); 6. Pharisees (Matthew 16:6); 7. Philistines (1 Samuel 17:4); 8. Phoebe (Romans 16:1–2); 9. Phylacteries (Matthew 23:5); 10. Physician (Colossians 4:14); 11. Pilate (Matthew 27:24); 12. Pillar (Genesis 19:26); 13. Pitch (Genesis 6:14); 14. Pithom (Exodus 1:11); 15. Pomegranates (Numbers 13:17–23); 16. Poor (Matthew 5:3); 17. Praise (Psalm 9:2); 18. Pray (1 Thessalonians 5:17); 19. Preach (2 Timothy 4:2); 20. Prepare (Amos 4:12); 21. Pride (Proverbs 16:18); 22. Pontus (Acts 18:1–3); 23. Priscilla (Acts 18:1–3); 24. Profit (Mark 8:36); 25. Purple (Acts 16:14).

Starts with the Letter "H"

Directions: Find answers in the following passages: Genesis 3:15; 9:22; 16:15; Exodus 9:22; 20:12; 1 Samuel 1:20; 4:11; 13:14; Esther 2:7; Isaiah 6:3; 38:5; Matthew 2:16–18; 3:4; 5:22; 19:14; Mark 6:19–28; John 4:18; Titus 2:13; James 1:22; 4:10; 1 John 4:20; Revelation 6:1–8. Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

1. "_____ your father and your mother," that you may live long. _____ blessed _____"—the appearing of Jesus Christ.
2. Queen Esther's original name: _____.
3. Noah's son who saw his father's nakedness: _____.
4. Jesus said the woman at the well had previously had five _____.
5. John the Baptist preferred to eat locusts and wild _____.
6. Had 15 years added to his life: _____.
7. James wrote that we should be "doers of the word, and not _____ only."
8. "_____ yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."
9. Son of Eli, killed in battle when the Philistines captured the Ark of God: _____.
10. Conniving woman who had John the Baptist beheaded: _____.
11. King _____ decreed that children of Bethlehem should die.
12. While we wait, "looking for the _____"
13. Jesus said those who say, 'You fool!' are in danger of _____ fire.
14. A man who says he loves God but _____ his brother is a liar.
15. David was a man after God's own _____.
16. Egyptian handmaid of Sarah who bore a son for Abraham: _____.
17. "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of _____."
18. The seventh of the ten plagues: _____.
19. John sees a vision of four _____ when the first four seals are opened in Revelation.
20. Which part of the seed of woman would the serpent bruise? _____.
21. Samuel's mother: _____.
22. "_____, _____, _____ is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory!"

Opening the Bible Can Be a Real Eye-Opener

The Bible is not a self-help book designed to make readers healthy, wealthy, happy, or successful (though its principles can contribute to these matters).

It is not a book of “codes” and “prophecies” as to world events or when the second coming of Christ will occur and the world will end. Neither is the Bible a disjointed book of disconnected and unrelated documents.

It is a book that gradually and systematically, from beginning to end, sets forth God’s grand scheme of human redemption from the time of its conception in the mind of God before the foundation of the world (Titus 1:1–3; 2 Timothy 1:8–11; Romans 16:25–27), through its being made known by Christ, the gospel, the church, and the New Testament (Ephesians 3:1–12; 1 Corinthians 2:1–13), to its ultimate fruition of the redeemed in heaven—“receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:9). —Hugh Fulford

The church no more created the canon than Newton created the law of gravity; recognition is not creation. —J. I. Packer

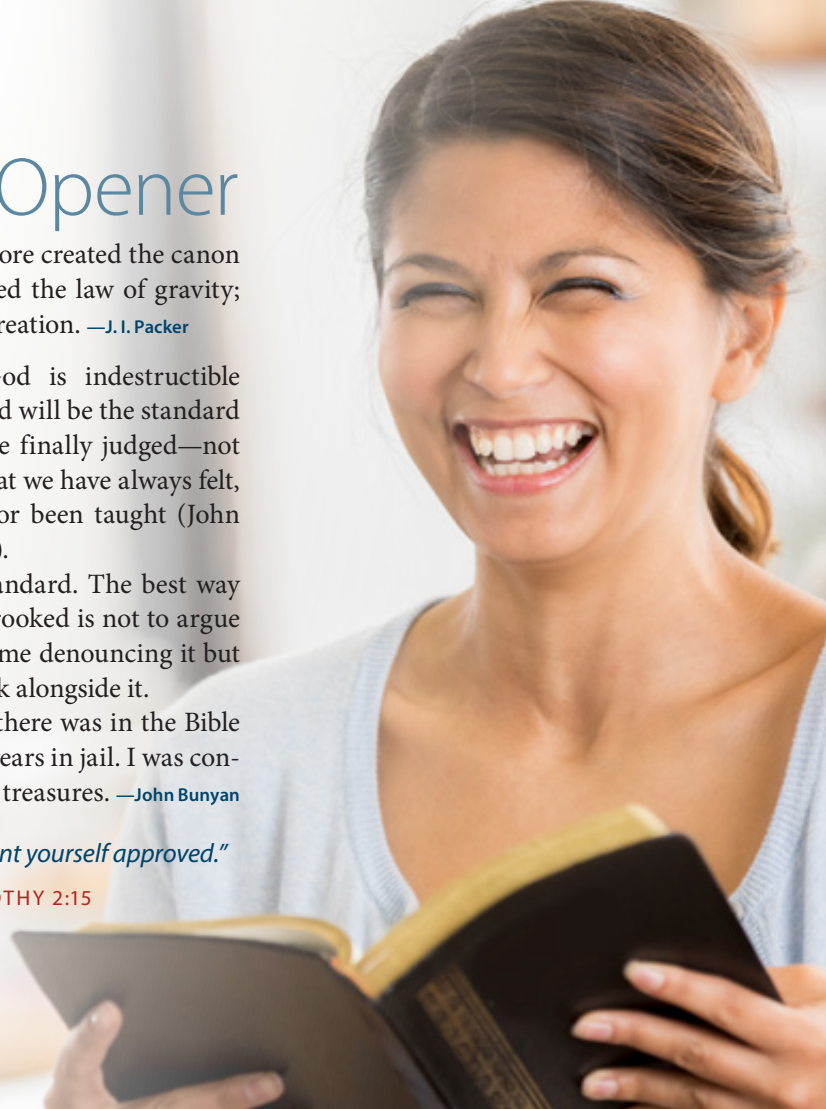
The word of God is indestructible (Matthew 24:35) and will be the standard by which all will be finally judged—not our opinions or what we have always felt, thought, believed, or been taught (John 12:48; Romans 2:16).

The Bible is a standard. The best way to show a stick is crooked is not to argue about it or spend time denouncing it but to lay a straight stick alongside it.

I never knew all there was in the Bible until I spent those years in jail. I was constantly finding new treasures. —John Bunyan

“Be diligent to present yourself approved.”

2 TIMOTHY 2:15



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Recommended Resource



The Gospel Broadcasting Network is unique in the world of religious TV—commercial free, and they never ask for money! Sponsored by the churches of Christ, GBN is available on many cable systems, as well as through their smartphone apps, the Roku device, and at gbntv.org.

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If you knew for sure that the religious path you are on would not get you to heaven, would you change? If there was the possibility of a doubt, would you investigate? Why not request a personal Bible study today?

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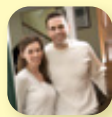
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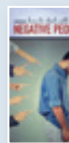
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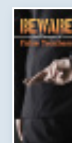
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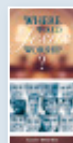
What does God Expect from me, anyway?



Beware the Dangers of False Teachers



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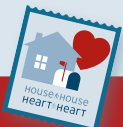


Where Would Jesus Worship?



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Coming soon



Resurrection Evidence

The biblical evidence could be described with seven words:

- Exegetical. Scripture describes visions differently from the narratives of Jesus' appearances (cf. Acts 10).
- Psychological. Hallucinations do not explain the sudden and thorough change in the disciples' frame of mind. With their Master gone, their connection to each other removed, and their hopes crushed, why did they not say, "We have made a mistake; let us go back to fishing and forget all this"?
- Ordinal. The fact that so many saw Him at one time makes it difficult to reject their testimony.
- Chronological. Appearances starting "the third day" leave no space for the gradual development of visions.
- Topographical. Unbelievers cannot explain the translocation of the appearances from Jerusalem to Galilee.
- Historical. Christianity with a dead Christ—a church gathered at an occupied grave—was destined to die. The immovable belief of the disciples' preaching, full of joy and courage, has basis in reality, not imagination.
- Moral. The greatest system of ethics the world has seen could not be founded upon a deliberate lie. Regeneration followed the teaching of the apostles. —Allen Webster

Many an error has been accepted in ignorance, maintained in obstinacy, and defended in arrogance.



You Have Killed Yourself

Reuben Dooly (1773–1822) was a gospel preacher.

His health was poor, and his race was almost run, and “the time of [his] departure [was] at hand” (2 Timothy 4:6). With the assistance of David Purviance, he held a protracted meeting in his own neighborhood, at Point meeting-house.

The word of God was “quick and powerful” at this meeting and much good was done in the name of the “holy child, Jesus” (Hebrews 4:12; Acts 4:27).

Dooly spoke but little during the meeting, until the last day when he spoke on the resurrection. He appeared carried away with his subject. Seeming to entirely forget his weakness, his soul was overwhelmed with the glorious prospect of eternal life. His bodily strength was somewhat exhausted when he closed. The congregation was in tears as the meeting closed.

As soon as he left the house, his wife said to him, “Reuben, I am afraid you have killed yourself.”

He said, “If I had been sure that I would have been carried out of the house a corpse, I would have said just what I did say.”

This proved to be his last sermon. He was confined to his room until April 22, 1822, when he left his toils, labors, and afflictions for immortality and eternal life. He bore his last affliction with Christian fortitude, and died without a murmur.

What subject should excite us so as the resurrection? What better way to use one’s life than to promote it? What better way to die than in sight of it?

—*The Biography of Elder David Purviance*, p. 213

“In hope of eternal life”

TITUS 1:2



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What does it mean to be an authentic Christian? Join Aaron, Scott, and Tucker as they sit down together to discuss the everyday struggles of trying to be an authentic Christian, culturally relevant topics, and the biblical principles that should guide their response. Season 3 newly released!

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