

What Would They Say?

The Bible tells us about the intense persecution that was endured by early Christians. We know that many were imprisoned, and a large number were put to death (**Acts 26:9-11**). Uninspired historical accounts give us additional information about the terrible trials and sufferings of those first disciples. We are told that Christians in the city of Rome faced great danger when they assembled together for worship. Because of this they were often forced to hold their meetings in secret places. It is also said that at the height of this persecution members of a family would leave for worship at different times so that they would not generate suspicion. They even changed their meeting place and assembly time each week to avoid being discovered.

By Greg Gwin

react if they were able to comment about the practice of their modern day brothers and sisters? Do you not imagine that they would be shocked to learn about the things that keep some Christians from attending all the worship assemblies and Bible studies? What was it that kept you from the assemblies last week? Too tired? Too busy? A school function? A vacation trip? Relatives from out of town visiting? A fishing trip? A round of golf? A minor snuffle or headache? Too sick to worship (but not too sick to go to work)? Stop for a minute to think what those persecuted Christians of the first century would say if they heard YOUR excuses. Why did those people take such risks and suffer so much? The answer is obvious: they loved the Lord and were committed to His service. What about YOU?

Did you ever wonder how these early saints would



Classes This Week		
Sun 5:15 PM Kids Class at Building	Wednesday 12 Noon Ladies Class at the Rouse's	Thursday 7 PM Revelation Class at Caleb George's Apt.

Sick			
Fran Snyder (Mother of Carla Humphrey)	Lori Holloway	Chuck Wade	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Carrie Chavers (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	Bill Rhodes and James Hall (Toni Herd's Uncles)	Philip Locke (Jeremiah Johnson's Uncle)
Josie Keith (Friend of Heath Fowler)	Grandparents of Mary Ann Roberts	Easton Alexander (Phillip Box's cousin's baby)	Jerry Sandlin (Megan Lee's Grandfather)
Richard Call Seth Humphrey's Uncle	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Erlene Davis (Walker Davis' mother)	Mary Smith (Nathan Smith's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Dale Herd (William Herd's brother)	Larry Alexander (Friend of Phillip Box)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Stacey Harrell (Marcus Harrell's Dad)	Ann Robinson (Sharon Bailey's Mom)	Mike Reed (Friend of Long's)

August Birthdays

- 2 - Emma Miller
- 5 - Andrew Cagle
- 7 - Anna Leigh Peek
- 7 - David Golden
- 7 - Erin Dallas
- 9 - Elliot Weldon
- 10 - Sarah Tam
- 11 - Walker Davis
- 12 - Jon Coleman
- 18 - Lisa Armstrong
- 20 - Caleb Law
- 22 - David Crawford
- 27 - Stephen Ambrose
- 27 - Chip Freeman
- 28 - Larry Rouse
- 28 - Cole Johnson
- 29 - Blake Edwards

News and Notes

- Let us remember Matthew Johnson, David Golden and Tim Morton in our prayers as they are deployed overseas.
- Carter Hunt was baptized into Christ on Tuesday Night!
- Sophie Lynn Hall was born on Wednesday! Congratulations to Matt and Jana!
- Brother Rouse will be away in a meeting this week in Lincoln, Nebraska.
- We will have our monthly business meeting today at 3:30.
- Thanks to all who worked so hard to make our meeting a success.
- Let us keep away of our visitors and the new faces with us. Let each of us take time to greet and get to know one another.
- CD's of all sermons will be available immediately after services.

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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

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Thoughts to Ponder

Flattery is a kind of bad money, to which our vanity gives us currency.

Do You Have a Bible Question?
Call (334) 734-2133 or
E-mail:
LarryRouse@aubeacon.com

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

The Slippery Slope of Flattery

By David Halbrook

When buying a car we look for one that will provide a smooth ride, not one that jolts and jostles on every bump in the road. When buying a car a smooth ride is fine, but smoothness of speech is not well spoken of in Scripture. When the Bible refers to someone speaking smoothly, it doesn't refer to how many words and individual stumbles over, it refers to someone who chooses and uses their words in such a way that the hearer is taken on "a ride," deceived.

If you try to climb a steep hill, there must be enough footing in order to progress toward the top, but if the hillside is slick there is little hop of climbing that hill. In the faith, we can be grounded and stable (**Col 1:23**), but flattering words are slick. In **Psalm 73:18**, the Hebrew words that is often translated "flattery" is here translated "slippery places." The idea behind this word is that if we use or believe flattering words, we are in a slippery place. Beware of those things the Bible warns of as flattery.

When an audience, which is made of people headed on the path to hell, hear a message that does not awaken them to their compromise and sin, they are simply being flattered. Of this preacher and audience, Jeremiah says "my people love to have it so. But what will you do when the end comes?"

(**Jer 5:31b**).

"I will not show partiality to any man or use flattery toward any person. For I do not know how to flatter, else my Maker would soon take me away" (**Job 32:21-22**). God does not approve of flattering titles. By using them the hearer believes himself to be more important than he is. Each soul is important to God but flattering titles show partiality, against which Christians are warned because it is not in the character of God, whose character we are to follow (**Acts 10:34**).

The Pharisees loved to be flattered

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by titles, and Jesus addresses this foolishness (**Matt 23:5-10**). Today, titles which elevate men to places God did not place them around in the religious world. Why are there “pastors” who have no wife or children (**1 Tim 3:2, 4**) and men bowing the knee to a man they call “Holy Father” (**John 17:11**)? When men believe that they are a pastor, though biblically unqualified, or that they are a “Holy Father,” they have fallen into the snare of accepting flattering titles.

“Everyone utters lies to his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak” (**Psalms 12:2**). The Psalmist warns of those who speak with a double heart. Here a person speaks useless, idle words to gain some advantage—maybe to gain a trust to steal from them or to commit adultery with their mate. Perhaps a preacher will lie regarding his convictions to receive support—this is using flattering words, false words which gain the confidence of others for the sake of personal gain. Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he never did such a things among them (**1 Thess 2:5**)

Spouses can be guilty of using flattering speech in order to gain something which they want. No Christian should use flattering words for personal gain, but should show wisdom and understanding in our speech (**Jas 2:13**).

“May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that makes great boasts, those who say, ‘With our tongue we will prevail, our lips are with us; who is master over us?’” (**Ps 12:3-4**). The smooth speaker is often the proud speaker. In this case they are flattering themselves. Those who announce their own strength forget God. Solomon said that these kind of people are headed for a fall (**Prov 16:18**). To remain faithful to the Lord, we must be careful to remember that we must follow His way if we will be successful in get-

ting to heaven. When we begin to believe that we can get to heaven without faithfully attending the “assembling of ourselves,” we have a proud mind (**Heb 10:24-26**).

“And now, go, write it before them on a tablet and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come as a witness forever. For they are a rebellious people, lying children, children unwilling to hear the instruction of the Lord; who say to the seers, ‘Do not see,’ and to the prophets, ‘Do not prophesy to us what is right; speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions’” (**Is 30:8-10**). Isaiah warns the people who are asking the prophets to prophesy smooth things. In so doing, the people desire to avoid the bumpy road of hearing a message that will jolt their conscience because of their sin and demand repentance. They prefer the smooth road of a smooth message that will be positive, non-condemning, and non-controversial. Paul warns Timothy of the audience who wants their ears tickled. They will seek men who are willing to comply with that kind of preaching (**2 Tim 4:3**). This preacher will talk often of heaven yet rarely of hell and who God said will be there. When an audience, which is made of people headed on the path to hell, hear a message that does not awaken them to their compromise and sin, they are simply being flattered. Of this preacher and audience, Jeremiah says “my people love to have it so. But what will you do when the end comes?” (**Jer 5:31b**). By failing to warn and properly discipline Christians who are guilty of sin, men follow the wide and broad path to hell (**Matt 7:13**).

The Bible warns of those who are willing to speak flattering speech, but it also warns of those who are willing to hear it. All flattering speakers, along with those whom they deceive, will be separated from God. Therefore, let us not be deceived (**1 Cor 6:9; Gal 6:7**).



“How Long?”

By Stephen Rouse

“Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you, and therefore He exalts Himself to show mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him.” (Is. 30:18)

In Isaiah’s day, the people of God were constantly being oppressed and threatened by the nations around them. When suffering seems to be unjust or unnecessarily prolonged, it is not uncommon for the righteous to cry out, “How long, O LORD?” (**Ps. 13:1-2**)

In times of trouble, Israel would have felt the urge to question God as to why their oppression was so lengthy. Had God forgotten them? Did He hear them? Would He ever answer their cries for relief? However, there is another factor in oppression that we all must consider before questioning the Commander of all things. Did the people themselves have anything to do with incurring the oppression?

The LORD had been urging Israel over and over again to accept His deliverance, but “[they] were unwilling” (**Is. 30:15**). They had stubbornly resisted every offer for mercy and deliverance because they desired to walk by sight and take matters into their own hands by making sinful military alliances with the nations around them. So the reason for God’s seeming disinterest was not God at all but the unyielding pride of the people themselves.

Does this pattern sound familiar? We all have the tendency to act just like Israel and turn to our own power and our own petty methods. We trust in what we can see, rather than walk by faith. Instead of receiving God’s persistent opportunities to repent, we take the deceptive bait of Satan and reject the salvation God offers. Often our predicaments are nothing more than the just result of our own failures to turn to the right Savior.

Where do you find yourself in this picture? Are you righteously waiting for God’s deliverance, listening to His voice and walking by faith? Or are you stubbornly asserting your own will and crying to God for deliverance when God is really waiting on you to clean up your life?

However, there is wonderful news even if our track record is dismal. In **Is. 30:18**, the Lord reveals Himself to be a patient God. His earnest desire is like that of a father wishing to give good gifts to his children. God wants to forgive us!

Our sinful practices keep us from being the recipients of His good favor. As long as we continue in our selfish will, God will not extend His mercy to us, for to do so would be contrary to His justice. So the one waiting turns out to be God, not us.

At the time when we are most inclined to shout to the heavens “How long, O LORD,” in reality God is looking down on us, asking, “How long, stubborn child?”

The following verses (**Is. 30:19-33**) vividly describe the blessings God has in store for those who repent and turn to Him: God will hear their cry (**vs. 19**), reveal Himself (**vs. 20**), give them guidance (**vs. 21**) and help them clean out their lives (**vs. 22**). The voice of the LORD is alluded to numerous times in His deliverance of His people from their oppression (**vss. 27, 28, 30, 31 and 33**).

What a moving picture of God’s answer to His people when they choose Him over their self-willed substitutes! Where do you find yourself in this picture? Are you righteously waiting for God’s deliverance, listening to His voice and walking by faith? Or are you stubbornly asserting your own will and crying to God for deliverance when God is really waiting on you to clean up your life?

Praise God for His patience! But also know that He will not wait forever to see you return. Make things right while it is still today, and God will graciously grant you His mercy and guidance. How long, stubborn child, how long?

