

“He Hit Me First!”

By Jim Ward

A howl comes from the yard. I investigate. "Why are you crying?" I ask. "He hit me," the howler replies, pointing to his brother. "He hit me first," charges the hitter. "He made a face at me," accuses the howler. "He wouldn't let me swing," retorts the hitting Pacemaker. "He wouldn't play catch with me," counters the howling swinghogger. "Enough," I shout, knowing I'll never unravel this. "The survivor will please clean up the blood," I scream wittily. The witty screamer then stalks away...

Retaliation seems almost as natural as breathing, doesn't it? Kids are masters at it, but, then, so are some of us grown-up kids. The desire to hurt people who hurt me is one of my major stumbling blocks.

It helps me, though, to think about King David. He had learned the lesson of **Proverbs 24:17**: "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles..." He knew that God forbids not only vengeance against an enemy but even gloating over misfortunes that you do not cause him.

For example, though Saul hounded David into outlawry and would have killed him, David would not raise his hand against his king. Once, just for humiliating Saul, David's heart smote him (**1 Sam. 24:5**). Finally, when Saul died, David mourned and composed a dirge for him and Jonathan his son (**2 Sam. 1:17-27**).

Again, David showed his great heart at the death of Abner, general under Ish-bosheth after Saul's death. For years David and Saul's house struggled for supremacy. Finally, Abner came to David to make peace, but Joab accused him of deceit, and, to avenge the death of his brother Asahel, slew Abner. Rather than rejoice, David denounced the perfidy of Joab. Then the king mourned Abner, saying, "Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel?" (**2 Sam. 4:35**).

Solomon, David's wise son, may have had the example of his father in mind when he wrote: "If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; For you will heap burning coals on his head, And the Lord will reward you" (**Prov. 25:21f**). Paul referred to this when he urged Christians in Romans 12: "Never pay back evil for evil to anyone ... If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (**vv. 17f, 21**).

Human vengeance is as punishable as the guilt of the enemy.

Thinking about David helps me cope with the spirit of revenge - to "turn the other cheek." I hope it helps you, too.



Sick			
Sam Cox (Friend of Anna Stallings)	Owen Mauldin (Seth and Summer Mauldin's Son)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Kate Miller (Daughter of Brandon and Erin Miller)
Emma Hettinger (William Herd's Mother)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Roger Whatley (Daphene Whatley's son)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Betty Bradford	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Sandra Qadeer (Rafia Qadeer's mother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Meredith NeSmith (Jessica Anderson's Cousin)	Emily Stallings (Anna's sister)	Madi Wise (Friend of the Robert's)
Marty Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkin's Dad)	Toni and William Herd	

July Birthdays
3 - Nathan Rouse
6 - Nathan Bradshaw
6 - Mac Searcy
11 - Kay White
11 - Hannah Alexander
11 - Clint Stagner
12 - Aurie Adams
14 - Laurel Jerkins
15 - Bradley Seymore
25 - Yvette Rouse
28 - Jacob Bradshaw

News and Notes
☒ - Laura Weldon received a great report that no additional cancer was found!
☒ - Tom Davis, Walker's uncle, had successful surgery and is recovering at home.
☒ - Joel Dembowski's grandfather, Lowell Blasingame, died of Friday and will be buried on Monday. He was a great preacher of the gospel for many years and influenced many.
☒ - Ryan Hasty will begin working with the University church on August 12.
☒ - We are expecting between 30-40 new students with us this fall.
☒ - We will have our monthly singing tonight!

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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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Are We All Right?

By Irven Lee



Thoughts to Ponder

Great works are performed not by strength but by perseverance. He that shall walk with vigor, three hours a day, will pass, in seven years, a space equal to the circumference of the globe.

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM
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Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

One of the most popular doctrines taught in the name of religion in America today is that we are all right. One faith is as good as another, we are told. It is admitted that there are some differences, but the idea is that we differ only on trivials that do not matter. In fact, according to the popular concept, doctrine or teaching does not matter. Many say that they do not like "doctrinal sermons." Is this the same as saying that they do not like sermons that teach? Doctrine and teaching are synonyms. Then teachers should not teach.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (**Isa. 55:8,9**). The Lord revealed His will to man because doctrine and religious practice do make a difference (**Rom. 10: 1-3; Gal. 1: 6-10; Rev. 22:18, 19**). The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but this does not make it right

before God. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (**Prov. 16:25**). "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (**1 Pet. 4:11**). There are many verses that deal with the sin of teaching the wrong doctrine, and no hint that whatever we teach pleases God (**Gal. 1:6-10**).

We should search the scriptures to see what is right (**Acts 17: 11**). Danger is present so we should try the spirits and beware of false prophets. (**See Matt. 7:15; 1 John 4: 1; 2 John 9-11; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; Acts 20:29-31; Col. 2:8; Heb. 2: 1; Rom. 16:17; Matt. 15:9, 13, 14; Rom. 10: 1-3**). Please do not teach men to be careless, and to take their own salvation for granted. Please do not be unconcerned about finding the narrow way of truth and holiness in your own case. Few there be that find it, but the Lord has pointed out the way of truth with clear marks of identity. It takes the hunger and thirst after righteousness to cause one to seek the right way of the Lord. Ignorance is dangerous and inex-

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cusable (**Hosea 4:6**).

Some teach that we are saved by faith only, and some teach that salvation is not by faith only. Are both right? Is it all right to teach a man the wrong side of this issue? (Read James 2: 14-26.) The Bible emphasizes obedience just as it emphasizes faith (Matt. 7:21; 2 Thess. 1:7,8; 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 5:9; Mark 16:15,16). The Bible does not teach both sides of this issue. There ought to be more concern and more searching for the truth on the matter. Many things other than lack of faith are mentioned as keeping one from inheriting life. (**Read Rom. 13:1,2; James 1:26; 1 Cor. 6:9,10; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8.**)

Some teach that baptism has nothing to do with our salvation. Others say we are baptized for the remission of sins. These two ideas cannot both be right. We want to know God's will in the matter, do we not? We need to know the truth for it is truth that can make us free. Search and see. (**Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:1-18; 1 Peter 3:21.**) We should, as it were, leave no stone unturned in making our calling and election sure (**2 Pet. 1:10**). Does one have more freedom to say that baptism, which is evidently a clearly stated command of God, is not necessary than to say that honesty is not necessary? The teaching on both is from heaven from the One with all authority.

Some teach that one cannot fall after having saving faith. Others say that we need to take heed lest we fall. Both cannot be right. We either can or we cannot fall. It is high time to search and see. (**2 Peter 1: 10; 2: 18-22; Luke 8:13; Phil. 2:12; 1 Cor. 10: 12; Heb. 3:6, 11; 4: 11.**) We should walk circumspectly because all roads do not lead to heaven. If a man can fall, and is in great danger of falling, is it an innocent thing to tell him that he cannot fall?

Religious people differ in name, in the type music offered to the Lord, and forms of church government. Some partake of the Lord's Supper every first day of the week while others leave it off for months at a time. Do these things matter? These are called little things, and men say that they do not matter. Bricks are small building blocks, but there are large buildings that could be taken down one brick at a time. Every detail of instruction given by the Lord and His apostles concerning His church has been changed by some denomination or another. Why did He give the instruction if these things do not matter? We, as was Moses concerning the tabernacle, are given a pattern which we should follow (**Heb. 8:5**). The Bible gives us 'all things that pertain to life and godliness (**2 Peter 1:3**).

To mock at baptism, which is a picture of His burial and resurrection, and to deny its significance is no little thing. Is sprinkling the same as the burial and planting mentioned in the scripture? (**Rom. 6:4,5; Col. 2:12.**) It is not minor if commanded by the Lord. None of His commandments is to be treated lightly (**1 John 2:3,4; 5:3; John 14:15,21,23**). Christ purchased His church with His blood, and built it according to God's eternal purpose. His testament describes in detail its terms of membership, its work, its form of worship and of government, and its standards of conduct for its members. Who has the authority to change a single detail? The facts are there for those who would follow the pattern and walk by faith. Seek and find. - **Truth Magazine, March 29, 1973**



Righteous but Ruined

By Joe Fitch

Lot is remembered with the infamous city of Sodom. Yet Lot was not evil; the Bible names him "*righteous Lot*" --- God "...turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes,... delivered righteous Lot " (**2 Pet.2: 6**). Details of "*righteous Lot*" are impressive. He kept himself from the evil of Sodom. Lot did not buy into "*when in Rome, do as the Romans.*" He did right while everyone else was doing wrong. Good for Lot!

More, Lot's attitude was right toward evil. He "...was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked " (**v.7**). He never got comfortable with abominations. "*(for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)*" (**v.8**). His resistance rose from "*his righteous soul*" -- good character He was a flower in a briar patch. Good for Lot!

Lot stood up for right -- even when the entire city opposed him. "...the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house.they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door " (**Gen.19: 4,9**). He did not back down -- not even if it cost him dearly -- not even when he was protecting strangers. He had courage; he did the right thing. Good for Lot!

God accepted Lot -- pronounced him "*righteous*" and "*godly*" (**2 Pet.2: 9**). *Righteous* says he did right; *godly* says he respected God. Good marks for Lot -- inspired, no less.

That sounds great. It is! "*Righteous Lot*" got all those important -- vitally important things exactly right. But then, there is the rest of the story -- his ruin. He got some very important things terribly wrong -- not sinful, but bad -- not evil, but foolish. His ruin was the result. "*Does the Bible say I will go to hell if I do that?*" Maybe not. Bad decisions are not necessarily sinful, yet they may surely ruin your life -- even without sending you to hell.

Lot chose Sodom's fertile plains -- and in the bargain acquired Sodom's problems and enemies. Soon he was a captive. Chedorlaomer conquered Sodom, and "*They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed*" (**Gen.14:12**). He lost everything -- even his freedom by being in Sodom. Moving to Sodom was not a sin, but it surely meant ruin. Only Abram's rescue spared "*righteous Lot*" from a total disaster. "*So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well*

as the women and the people" (**Gen.14:16**).

Lot chose green grass and water without considering the evil environment. Was that choice a sin? No! Was it a good place to live? No! Was it hazardous to Lot and his family? Oh, yes! It was a good place for sheep; it was a terrible place for people -- especially children. "*Righteous Lot*" surely learned the high cost of living there.

He entered Sodom as "*rich Lot.*" I doubt he left rich. There was hardly time to move his livestock before the brimstone rained down. Where do you next find Lot? "...he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave " (**Gen.19: 30**). I think Sodom spelled financial ruin for "*righteous Lot*" --still righteous but ruined by a foolish, materialistic choice.

Though Lot vacated Sodom, his ruin was far from over. His family remained in smoldering Sodom. Before Lot was clear of the plains, he also lost his wife. Her heart and eyes "*looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt*" (**19:26**) -- a lingering payment for living in Sodom. The next scene shows Lot drunk (**19:33**). Sad scene! --- conduct unbecoming "*righteous Lot.*" Bad decisions are not necessarily sinful, but they often lead eventually to sin and spiritual ruin. "*Righteous Lot*" is a case in point. The downward spiral continued; his ruin worse. He became a fornicator with his own daughters. "*But it was their plan. Their fault.*" Right! Yet that removed none of his shame -- changed the incest not at all. Sodom's toll! Lot's stay in Sodom was paid in the currency of defiled integrity. Doubtless "*righteous Lot*" would have fared much better in the desert with Abram!

Don't travel with "*righteous Lot*" seeing only the alluring money without considering the cost to your marriage, children, or spirituality. Don't settle down with "*righteous Lot*" seeing the beautiful country without noticing the absence of spiritual support -- no strong church. Don't join "*righteous Lot*" and tally all your prosperity without calculating all that you are losing. Don't end up with "*righteous Lot*" --righteous but all alone -- righteous but broken hearted. Don't share a fool's choice with "*righteous Lot*" -- along with the broken heart and bitter tears -- and at the last, maybe lose your soul in the bargain.

