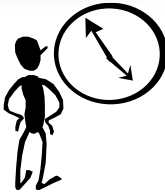


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Time of Assembly



Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m.
(Or every other week)

Bible Study 4:00 p.m.

Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

For Such a Time as This

By Tammy Martin

This has been heavy on my heart to share since last night, so I'm going to listen to that inner prompting and share it. At 17, I was raped and became pregnant. The amount of "Christians" who encouraged me to terminate, murder, or kill (no pretty way to say that) the little life growing inside me still boggles my mind to this day. Instead of loving support, there were a lot of "God doesn't expect you to raise this baby, it will be better off with Jesus anyway." And I'd be lying if I didn't admit those thoughts crossed my mind too.

Thankfully, my family and a few (very, very few) close friends were supportive of my decision to keep my child and raise him. Everyone else immediately began to question why I would choose to keep a baby conceived in violence and a huge portion of those people then made up and believed and spread the lie that I **must** be "covering something up" to be so willing to keep the baby, because who does that if they've truly been raped? Those people will answer to God for that.

Here he is 15 years later. Last night he spoke at church and as I watched him step up to the pulpit and pull out his Bible, I couldn't help but feel overwhelmed with thankfulness that God truly does indeed make beauty from ashes. That He can take something intended for evil and turn it into good. That I could have missed out on being a part of this precious life if I had listened to the crowd that justified aborting him or giving him up for adoption, at the very least.

I don't know what is in store for Dalton's future but I do know that from the moment I laid eyes on him, with his little old man face and eyes of an old soul, I knew he wasn't mine to keep. As I look around at the condition of our nation, our freedoms being stripped, censored, churches shut down, cities burning... so much turmoil and unrest, I'd be lying if I didn't admit it concerns me as a mom-to-be raising children

in such a state. And then looking at this baby of mine, because he'll always be that to me, the Lord keeps bringing that phrase from Esther 4:14 to my mind, "*For such a time as this.*" I can't really decide if it brings me comfort or scares me more. What I do know is the same God that gave me peace and strength and carried me through as a lost, scared, traumatized, and lonely, pregnant 17-year-old is the same God who holds the future, and nothing takes Him by surprise.

Thoughts on Abortion

By Jefferson David Tant

The United States and much of the world, are embroiled in a dispute over abortion -- the killing of an unborn child. Since the United States Supreme Court recently ruled that the U.S. Constitution does not guarantee the right to abortion, violence has broken out in many areas, with threats, assaults, property damage to church buildings and pro-life centers, and even the attempted murder of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh.

Statistics show that most abortions are performed on single, unmarried women. A recent report indicated some 626,000 abortions in a recent year's survey. One report stated that some 86% of abortions are for single women. And there is proposed legislation in California to legalize killing a baby up to 28 days after birth. That's insanity gone to seed!

Why is it that someone who kills a pregnant woman, so that both she and the baby die, is charged with two murders? But if an abortionist kills just the baby, that is OK. It doesn't make sense.

Consider some observations on this matter.

First, consider a simple solution for 538,000 yearly abortions for single women. These could be eliminated by giving heed to God's command to abstain from fornication — premarital sex. "*Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals*" (I Corinthians 6:9).

There are various passages that clearly show that premarital sex is a sin, and those who practice it bring judgment on themselves. Giving heed to God's teaching about premarital sex would not only prevent baby murder but would also serve to preserve life-long marriages. Studies show that divorce is more prevalent in couples that have engaged in fornication before marriage.

Another matter to consider is the fact that the baby in the womb is in truth a living person and not just a glob of cells. The gospel of Luke tells of the time that Mary came to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, who at that time was pregnant with the baby who became John the Baptist. "*Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill*

country, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:39-41).

Notice that what Elizabeth had in her womb must have been more than just a bunch of cells floating around. That "bunch of cells" responded to the sound of Mary's voice. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit, who inspired Luke to write those words, called those "cells" a "baby," which implies that it was a living being.

Consider what the Psalmist David wrote about what was in the womb in Psalms 139:13-16: "*For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.*" David's words seem to describe a living being in the womb rather than just a glob of cells.

Now consider what God's word has to say about abortion — the killing of an unborn child. "*If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she has a miscarriage, yet there is no further injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman's husband may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges decide. But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise. If a man strikes the eye of his male or female slave and destroys it, he shall let him go free on account of his eye. And if he knocks out a tooth of his male or female slave, he shall let him go free on account of his tooth. If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall surely be stoned and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall go unpunished. If, however, an ox was previously in the habit of goring and its owner has been warned, yet he does not confine it and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death"* (Exodus 21:22-29). Note the reference to an early birth with no further injury. We know that babies are sometimes born before the normal 9-month gestation period, and even those born a few months early can survive and be healthy. But if there is "*further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life ...*" That is a clear indication that the "further injury" would refer to the death of the baby, which would then call for the death of the one who caused the loss of life.

Some might question using the word "miscarriage" to describe a life, but early birth. The word is from the Hebrew "*yatsa*, a primitive root; to go (causatively, bring)." (Strong's Hebrew Dictionary) Among the word's several applications, I see no necessity that it refers to the death of the child. Thus my thought is that the word may refer to a premature birth whether it be stillborn or merely not full term. It was a "miscarriage" in

that the baby was not carried to full term, whether or not it died.

And of course, married women who choose to have an abortion simply because the baby will be “inconvenient” will have the same disapproval from God as the single woman. We understand that there may be medical reasons for terminating a pregnancy, but that doesn’t come under the definition of child murder.

Many times there is great regret after an abortion, and we are thankful for God’s mercy for those who confess and repent of their sin.

But how many world problems would be solved if we just paid attention to our Creator’s instruction for living in this world, as we prepare ourselves for the world to come.

The Mormons Are in Town

By Wayne S. Walker

Not too long ago when I was taking a walk in the large park which is across the street from our house and had sat down for a moment to rest on one of the benches, I was approached by two nice looking, clean cut young men in white shirts, ties, and dress pants. I immediately recognized them as Mormon missionaries. I had previously seen them walking the streets of Salem. They asked me if I would be willing to answer a couple of questions. I said yes. One of them asked me why I thought there were so many different churches. I pondered for a moment and then responded that it was probably because people wanted to go their own way rather than God’s way.

They replied, “We believe that the Bible is the word of God. Would you be interested in learning more about the restored gospel of Jesus Christ?”

I told them that I too believe in the Bible as God’s word, study it regularly, and am satisfied with that. They gave me a pamphlet entitled *The Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ* and said that if I wanted to know more I could contact them. The back page of the booklet was headed “What Should I Do?” The first two suggestions were to “Read the *Book of Mormon*” and to “Pray to know that Joseph Smith was a prophet and that the *Book of Mormon* is the word of God.”

This encounter reminded me of a study that I had with a couple of Mormon missionaries in Sandusky, OH, back in 1974 right after I had first begun regular preaching work. To prepare for that study, I did read through the *Book of Mormon*. I must agree with Mark Twain’s observation that the *Book of Mormon* is chloroform in print. Having read both the Bible and the *Book of Mormon*, there is just absolutely no way that I could ever be convinced that the *Book of Mormon* is God’s word on a par with the Bible.

The eighth article of faith in Mormonism states, “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly.” Aye, there’s the rub—“as far as it is translated correctly.” What do the Mormons really believe about the Bible?

Orson Pratt Sr. (September 19, 1811 – October 3, 1881), an original member of

the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ (Latter Day Saints), wrote in *The Seer*, p. 213: "...The Bible has been robbed of its plainness; many sacred books having been lost....what few we have left, were copied and re-copied so many times, that it is admitted **that almost every verse has been corrupted and mutilated** to that degree that scarcely any two of them read alike....all we have left are mutilated copies containing an incredible number of contradictory readings." [Emphasis mine, WSW.]

The *Book of Mormon* likewise alludes to this corruption of the Bible in 1 Nephi 13:26: "And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the formation of that great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away." Exactly what these "plain and precious truths" are we are never told.

Yet, at the same time, the *Book of Mormon* contains extensive quotes from the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. It explicitly quotes the prophet Isaiah, containing 19 chapters of the KJV of Isaiah in their entirety, along with parts of a few other chapters. In total, approximately 30 percent of the Book of Isaiah is quoted in the *Book of Mormon* (one source counts 478 verses in the *Book of Mormon* which are quoted from Isaiah). It also quotes from the KJV of other books. On the plagiarisms from the King James Bible, cult expert Walter Martin writes: "A careful examination of *The Book of Mormon* reveals that it contains thousands of words from the King James Bible. In fact, verbatim quotations, some of considerable length [can be found there]."

Now, if it is true that almost every verse in the Bible has been corrupted and mutilated, as Mormon apostle Orson Pratte said, why would such large portions of it be copied almost verbatim in the *Book of Mormon*? It just doesn't make sense.

In my 1974 study with the Mormon missionaries in Sandusky, which lasted a few weeks, they made their arguments and I answered them, then I made my arguments and they responded to them, but after a while I could see that it wasn't going anywhere. Their reply to about everything that I said was to pray about it and God would reveal it. So I did! Sometime before the next scheduled meeting, I vocally asked God in prayer to show me if Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, the Book of Mormon was the word of God, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was the church of God.

When the Mormons came for the study, I told them that I had prayed about it and that God had revealed to me that Joseph Smith was NOT a prophet of God, the Book of Mormon was NOT the word of God, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was NOT the church of God. That was the end of the study! Of course, at that time I didn't go into detail as to how God revealed it to me, which is through the inspired Scriptures. They didn't give me a chance—they just left and never came back.

Dead Flies

By Matthew W. Bassford

Ecclesiastes was my father's favorite book of the Old Testament, and his favorite verse in Ecclesiastes was 10:1. At least, I think it was his favorite verse. It certainly was the one that he quoted most to my teenage self. To this day, I have no trouble summoning up, "*Dead flies make a perfumer's oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor,*" from memory.

Now that I have a ten-year-old son, I also have no trouble understanding why he wanted to imprint that one on my brain. He worried that with my great cleverness and scant sense, I would get into some kind of mess that would blight the rest of my life.

Sadly, it isn't only teenage boys who are given to dead-fly moments. According to Genesis 9:21-22, you can be 600 years old and still be foolish. There, we see Noah, patriarch, preacher of righteousness, and Hebrews 11 hero of faith, planting a vineyard, getting drunk, and exposing himself. Thousands of years later, the descendants of Noah do the same kind of dumb stuff when they get drunk.

Sometimes, we manage disastrous foolishness when we are stone-cold sober. David did upon seeing one woman bathing. Samson spoiled his perfume because of several different women. Judas blew it over 30 pieces of silver.

Nor should we today think that we are immune simply because we're churchgoing Christians. The devil loves to sow all of our paths with consequential temptations, and he loves, even more, to fool us into thinking that the sin won't be consequential if we commit it. David didn't think he was signing up for anything more than a one-night stand. Judas thought he could make everything better by giving the money back to the chief priests and telling them that Jesus was innocent.

Neither was correct. Today, the two facts that Christians are most likely to repeat about David are that he was a man after God's own heart and that he committed a great sin with Bathsheba. In the case of Judas, we don't even think about him proclaiming the gospel, casting out demons, working miracles, and doing all the other things that the apostles did. We only remember his impulsive treachery.

So too, our dead-fly moments often are what stick in people's minds about us. What of the devoted husband and father who cheats that one time and gets caught? What of the gifted preacher who couldn't get along with the elders? What of the woman of God who couldn't control her temper with her sister or her sister in Christ? Decades later, the isolated foolishness is remembered more than the wisdom and honor.

When a little foolishness can be so powerful, the only solution for us is to avoid all foolishness. Any of us can spoil the testimony of a godly life with only one ill-chosen act. When we are tempted, then, we must remember the stakes. The devil would love to number us with Noah and all the rest. However, if we stick to the paths of wisdom, he will never get the chance.

