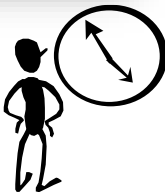


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Time of Assembly



Sunday:

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| Bible Study | 9:00 a.m. |
| Worship | 10:00 a.m. |
| Worship | 5:00 p.m. |
| (every other week) | |

Wednesday:

| | |
|-------------|------------|
| Bible Study | 6:30 p. m. |
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On What Was Jesus Crucified?

By Jefferson David Tant

According to the Jehovah's Witnesses doctrine, Christ was put to death on a pole, rather than a cross. Notice a quote from their literature.

"Jesus did not die on a cross. He died on a pole, or a stake. The Greek word translated 'cross' in many Bible verses meant just one piece of timber" [*What Does God Require of Us*, 1996, p. 230].

The Witnesses' contention is that the cross was a sign of pagan worship, and thus God would have had no part in any connection to pagan worship. But there are various things that do identify that Christ was actually nailed to a cross rather than just a stake or pole.

For one thing, consider the Greek word "*stauros*" for "cross," and its definition. "Stauros in the NT... was a pole sunk into the ground with a cross-bar fastened to it giving it a 'T' shape. Often the word 'cross' referred only to the cross-bar." [*The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 1, 1976, pp. 1037-1038].

To avoid this obvious definition of the word, the Jehovah's Witnesses New World Translation changes the definition to "stake" every time "*stauros*" appears in the New Testament. This is not the only time they have changed the original Greek text. Note Christ's conversation with the Jews in John 8:56-59: "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.*" So the Jews said to Him, "*You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?*" Jesus said to them, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.*" Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple."

Jesus was referring His eternity, as the Greek for "I am" is from "*eimi*," which is defined as "the first person sin-

gular present indicative; a prolonged form of a primary and defective verb; I exist" [Strong's Greek Dictionary]. This is a reference to Christ's eternal existence. But since the Witnesses claim that Christ is an angel, and not eternal, they change the wording to read, "Before Abraham was, I was." The same thing could be said concerning Christ and Noah. I have a concern about any denomination that has to have its own translation of the Bible.

But back to the crucifixion. Where did the soldiers place the inscription? Above his head, or above his hands? If his hands had been nailed to the post, the inscription would have been above his hands," but the text says it was "above his head."

"And above His head they put up the charge against Him which read, 'THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS'" (Matthew 27:37).

The next time the Jehovah's Witnesses come to your door, you might ask them about this.

A Word to Fathers

By Jefferson David Tant

Men have some very important roles to fulfill in family life. There are quite a few passages in the Bible, both Old and New Testaments that mention their responsibilities. This article is focused on the relationship with their children that God has given fathers.

One of the early passages on this subject deals with God choosing Abraham to be a leader, since *"Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed? For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him"* (Genesis 18:18-19). Obviously, God knew something about Abraham's character and what he would do as a father.

Then we have a familiar passage in Deuteronomy 6:6-7: *"These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."*

There are passages that deal with the subject in the New Testament, as well. Ephesians 6:4 is a well-known admonition: *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."* The phrase *"bring them up"* is from the Greek *"ektrepho,"* which is defined as "to rear up to maturity, i.e. (genitive case) to cherish or train:--bring up, nourish."

We need to be reminded of these exhortations, as we live in a busy world today. Fathers have jobs so they can earn money to provide for the family, and there is time

spent watching TV, reading newspapers and magazines, taking care of things around the house such as mowing the lawn and making repairs when needed, etc. And in their busy lives, sometimes neglect one of the most important things a father can do, which is to be the spiritual leader of his children.

This is not to negate the influence of mothers in this role, for that is also vitally important. We know that it was Timothy's mother and grandmother that had a great influence on his life. Paul wrote about this in II Timothy 1:5 and 3:15: *"For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well."* – *"and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."*

We know that Timothy's father was not a Christian, and obviously, his mother and grandmother fulfilled their responsibility in his spiritual education.

In today's society, I am afraid that too many times the chief teacher of spiritual values to children is the mother, and it is commendable that mothers fulfill their role in this. But that does not excuse fathers from their God-given responsibility.

In our society today in the United States, there are more and more attacks on faith in God. By some estimates, 70% of our children lose their faith by the time they graduate from college. There are professors who have stated that their aim is to destroy the faith of their students and make them citizens of the 21st Century.

Consider the following quote:

"Children have a right not to have their minds addled by nonsense. And we as a society have a duty to protect them from it. So, we should no more allow parents to teach their children to believe, for example, in the literal truth of the Bible...than we should allow parents to knock their children's teeth out or lock them in a dungeon." ("What Shall We Tell the Children?", *Amnesty Lecture*, Oxford, Feb. 21, 1997).

This is what we have to deal with in our nation in this day and time, as God and the Bible have been kicked out of our public schools.

Fathers, you have a vital role to fill with respect to your children, not only with your teaching but with your example. And that role begins when they are young. The word "childhood" in II Timothy 3:15 is from the Greek "*brephos*" and is defined as "an infant (properly, unborn) literally or figuratively:--babe, (young) child, infant."

In our home when our children were growing up, the breakfast table was the place for our morning devotional before our children left to go to school. Their neighborhood friends were invited, and some did come, and in time were baptized into Christ.

Fathers, you have various roles to fill in your lives, but there is no more im-

portant role than for you to fulfill the role given to you as a father, as cited earlier in Ephesians 6:4: *“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”*

The Wisdom of Abigail

By Matthew W. Bassford

The spiritual wisdom of the Bible is usually easy to understand but hard to put into practice. There are few better examples of this than Proverbs 15:1. There are no big words in this verse. The concepts are so simple that a child can understand them. However, even those who have been disciples for decades still struggle to respond to anger with a gentle answer. Can any of us claim that we do this consistently?

Against the dark backdrop of our own difficulties, the wise behavior of Abigail in I Samuel 25 shines forth all the more brightly. We don't know whether Abigail ever heard the proverb that Solomon later recorded, but her actions certainly exemplify it!

The situation in which Abigail finds herself in I Samuel 25:12-17 is truly desperate. Nabal, her jerk of a husband, has offended David, the most famous war leader in all of Israel. Even now, he is coming with 400 men to take bloody vengeance on Nabal's household. Worse still, Nabal himself cannot be trusted to make amends.

In these dire circumstances, it would have been easy for Abigail to dither and panic. However, she takes intelligent action to avert disaster. Her wisdom provides us with a template that we can follow when someone is angry at us.

First, she is **honest about the problem**. She doesn't try to tell David that he's overreacting. Instead, she frankly acknowledges her husband's bad behavior.

By contrast, we too often get defensive when someone angrily confronts us. That only makes the situation worse. Rather, we need to step outside ourselves, see things from the other's point of view, and candidly acknowledge our own failings.

Second, Abigail comes to David with **a plan and a solution**. She brings him the provisions that her husband had arrogantly denied him. So too, when we have wronged someone, the onus for making things right is on us. We shouldn't demand that they come up with a solution or, worse still, reject the solutions that they offer. It's up to us to build the bridge of reconciliation to our friend or loved one.

Finally, Abigail shows David how doing what she wants him to do is in his own **best interest**. She points out that if he sheds blood without cause and avenges himself, he will forfeit the protection of God. Consequently, David accepts her peace proposal not grudgingly, but enthusiastically.

Likewise, we must show those who are angry with us how reconciliation will benefit them. Frequently, we take the opposite tack. We tell them they should make peace for our sakes, even though our good is frequently the last thing on their minds!

That doesn't work. What does work is looking at things from their perspective and showing them how giving up their grievance will make them better off.

Blessed are the peacemakers, but peacemaking isn't easy. It requires humility, foresight, and understanding. The worldly are terrible at this, which is why we are surrounded by conflict. As the people of God, however, we can draw upon His strength and wisdom to bring about reconciliation and peace.

The Small Things We Can Do

By Al Diestlekamp

A gospel song that recently has become a favorite of mine is "Room in God's Kingdom," the lyrics of which acknowledge the value of "the small things that you can do." While we need citizens in God's kingdom who are able to tackle the "big" things, there's a place for those who will do the lesser things.

The parable of the talents (Matthew 23:14-30) confirms the truth that God recognizes the potential as well as the limitations of individuals. The Master doesn't expect a one-talent man to live up to the abilities of the five-talent or two-talent servants, but He does expect something from him. The apostle Paul quoted from Psalms 68:18 to make the point that Christ "*gave gifts to men*" with abilities in various measures. "*for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*" (Ephesians 4:7-16).

Of course, this cannot rightly be used as an excuse to be satisfied with doing the least you can get away with or not seeking to do the most you can do; but just as in physical life, a child is not expected to do everything an adult can do, the same is true of new Christians. Just as we don't expect the aged to be able to do all they once did, this is sometimes true of "old soldiers" in the Kingdom.

As I write this, I am just a few days away from another one of those pesky annual reminders of the reason I am no longer able to do as much as I used to do. I am disappointed that I have lost some of my abilities, but I am not ashamed to admit it. For this reason, I'm pleased to report that the church in Sycamore, Illinois, where I have worked for 35 years, has asked Jackson Sneed to take on the full-time work here beginning May 21. Jackson was born and raised in northern Alabama and has since been living in Florida. We commend him for being willing to step out of his comfort zone to work in the North. He is married to Cassie (formerly Miller) who was raised in central Illinois.

Of course, I will continue to do what I can, supporting the truth from my front-row seat. I am reminded of brother Robert's lyrics of another song we sing.

"Our elders, long in battle years,
Alas, begin to fade;
But from the ranks, young men appear,
And lead their first crusade"