

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

# THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32

“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”

April 30, 2023

## FREE AT LAST!

by Jefferson David Tant Jr.

The picture below is very touching, and I'm sure all my readers have had occasion to know those who had severe handicaps that were very limiting, and perhaps some had such individuals in their own families. But the father's pictorial message has another application, as well.

**A father had this tombstone made to depict his handicapped son being freed from his limitations.**



In addition to the physical handicaps and burdens that some have, we all face certain hardships and burdens in our lives, regardless of how blessed we may be with respect to health or abundance. That is a part of our living in this world that has been cursed by sin.

And why do we have suffering in this world? It is because mankind has sinned. Going back to creation, we remember what God said to Adam and Eve after they disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit. *“To the woman He said, ‘I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over*

*you.’ Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. ‘Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.’” (Genesis 3:16-19)*

There is not a single human being that has not suffered in some way, whether by mistreatment by others, sickness, abandonment, financial suffering, persecution or you name it. One may be thinking, “I’m OK. I’m living a good life.” Be patient, for bad things will come sooner or later. That’s a part of living in this world.

How do we deal with disappointments and sorrows and evil deeds? We need to look no further than to a well-known Bible character named Paul the Apostle. In making a defense concerning himself, he recounts the things that he suffered.

*“Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? --I speak as if insane--I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in*

*hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern? If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness."*

**(II Corinthians 11:22-30)**

It's hard to imagine one person having suffered so much. Why was he willing to endure all that? Because he knew there was something waiting in the future when he would be "Free at last." He expressed his desire in his letter to the church at Philippi. *"But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake."* **(Philippians 1:23-24)**

Would it have been easier for Paul to just live as the world did and not have to suffer the trials and pain of persecution? Obviously so. But he had something motivating him, the knowledge that one day he would be "free at last." And what difficulties that we have in this world can compare with the eternal fires of hell? Do you remember the story of the rich man who cried out to Abraham for help? *"In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.'*

**(Luke 16:23-24)**

Dear Reader, whatever pleasures that this world offers that keep you away from God, they are not worth it. The rich man in Luke found this out the hard way. And whatever burdens you may face in being a Christian and serving God will one day be worth it all. The time will come when the Christian, the child of God, will know it was all worthwhile, for he can say, **"Free at last!"**

## **Converted? Obeyed? Are We Sure?**

***Jim Stauffer***

The challenge or question before us is whether we have indeed become converted from the world to the Kingdom of His dear Son **(Col. 1:13,14)**.

Jesus makes the point of His mission clear in both His conduct and spoken word during His trial and ultimate

execution. One of the first incidents to give us a hint was when Peter struck the ear of Malchus with his sword and Jesus both reprimanded Peter and healed the wound. His reply was, *"Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"* **(Matthew 26:53)** We quickly realize if the Son of God needed defending, He had access to the greatest power in the Universe. Later when questioned by Pilate concerning His regal nature or plans, *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."* **(John 18:36)** While Pilate may remain confused or unsure of just what Jesus speaks, we have at our disposal the Will of God revealed by the Holy Spirit through men chosen by Jesus to eliminate any confusion on our part **(John 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:10-13)**.

Jesus did not leave the glories of heaven in order to have a kingdom like Alexander or the Caesars. Daniel prophesied such for us about both the Kingdom and the King that God would establish through His Son **(Dan. 2:44,45; 7:13,14)**. His Kingdom would not compete with those kingdoms, but rather would exceed them in both power and term. It would overpower those kingdoms and last forever.

That Kingdom was spoken of by other prophets as Ezekiel speaks of the hearts of men who will occupy that Kingdom, *"For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances."* **(Ezekiel 36:24-27)**

One chapter later he speaks of the kingdom in which these will become citizens, saying David will be the King over them **(Ezekiel 37:24-27)**

Jeremiah also speaks of this Kingdom as being one based on a new covenant that will be unlike the old one that was written in stone but rather within them and on their hearts **(Jeremiah 31:31-34)**.

We know this passage cannot refer literally to David since he has been dead for many years at this juncture.

Obviously, Jesus of Nazareth is David's Lord in other passages where He, that is Jesus is prophesied to rule on the Throne of David (the Throne of God). Gabriel told Mary before Jesus was born he would reign over the house of Jacob on the throne of David forever (**Luke 1:31-33**). Both Peter and Paul tell us Jesus assumed this position as King when he ascended to heaven following His resurrection (**Acts 2:33-36; Ephesians 1:20-23**). This King and His subjects then will don spiritual armor (**Ephesians 6:10-17**) and enter a battle for the hearts and minds of men in warfare, *against rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places*. Paul describes the enemy of Christ's Kingdom and His battle against them here, *for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)*

Paul makes it very clear to us Jesus intends to rule in the hearts of men, changing them from living for and according to the whims of the flesh but rather living for and being guided by the spirit within them as the Spirit of God by way of His word dwells in them (**Romans 8:9-11**). Further evidence of our having joined this spiritual Kingdom of Christ is when we are led by the Spirit and not the flesh (**Gal. 5:16,17**). We are transformed by a renewed mind instead of being conformed to this world (**Romans 12:1,2**). And when we are converted from the world to Christ we are said to put off the old man of sin and put on the new man which is a new creation in the likeness of God. This new creation is said to be one of holiness and righteousness (**Ephesians 4:22-24**).

Those who have been converted to Christ have then become His disciples following in His steps, and yes, led by our spirit which has yielded to His by receiving His will through His word. We then are spoken of as those for whom He becomes the author of salvation (**Hebrews 5:8,9**).

We must look within ourselves to see whether we are truly converted. Are we what He describes His disciples, citizens of His Kingdom to be?

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*Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst." (Luke 17:20-21)*

## Two Rich Churches

**Mike Noble**

Things were not going well for the church in Smyrna -- from a worldly perspective, that is. In the letter addressed to them in **Revelation 2**, mention is made of their tribulation and how they had suffered at the hands of some Jews. Things weren't to get any better soon, either. Some of them were about to be thrown into prison because of their faith -- perhaps, even executed. They were an impoverished people, financially speaking. (It doesn't appear that they had heard of the 'health and wealth gospel' we hear preached so often today, does it?)

Yet the Lord looked at His people in Smyrna and said, *"But you are rich" (2:8ff )*. Hmmmm....

About 100 miles away the church at Laodicea was doing great -- or so they thought. They were rich and had everything they needed -- so they said. Yet the Lord looked at them and told them they were *"wretched, miserable, poor..." (3:14ff )*.

*"How can this be?" someone asks.*

*Obviously the Lord doesn't look at riches the way we do. We can have all this world's goods we desire, live in luxury -- even meet with 'saints' in a beautiful building -- yet if we are "lukewarm" in the Lord's service (as was Laodicea), we are spiritually poor and without Jesus' approval.*

On the other hand, we can be *"rich,"* even while living in squalor or rotting in a dungeon. If we have the Lord's approval and, consequently, look forward to a *"crown of life,"* we are rich indeed!

In our materialistic culture, we need to continually reevaluate our thinking about riches. Material wealth is fine, though it comes with many weighty responsibilities (**1 Timothy 6:17-19**). What truly matters is whether or not we are spiritually rich.

*~via Central Shelby church of Christ;  
Shelbyville, Kentucky; Taken from Market Street  
Messenger*

*"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)*

**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

## HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study  
Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship  
Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship  
Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

**Visitors welcome**

**We conduct in home Bible Studies**

**We offer Correspondence Courses**

**Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer**

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### Elders:

Ron Peck  
Jim Stauffer

### Deacons:

Bill Miller  
Troy Armstrong

## NEWS AND NOTES:

### THOSE IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

ALMA BAUMGARTNER, DENESE GORING, BROOKLYN BOYER, TRACY RICHARDSON, MATT BASSFORD, WAYNE MOODY, DAVID AND JOANNE BECKLEY, MARK WALKER, PAT MFCLOUD, JAN PATRICK IS AT NOTTINGHAM IN OLATHE. JORDAN SHOUSE, CAROL MILLER.

Bible Classes: Sunday Morning  
**Prayer - Ron Peck**

Wednesday Evening - **Minor Prophets** - Jim Stauffer

Sunday Sermon: **IN HIS NAME**



## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10