



NON-PROFIT



TAX-EXEMPT

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” MARK 16:15

March 2019

## FROM US TO YOU

In this month's issue we would like to discuss some of the recent attacks made in the media toward Christians and Bible doctrine. Let's start with abortion. An unborn child is not just considered a fetus by God. It is a living baby that has been created by Him and is in the process of being developed into an infant that can live outside of the womb. King David said to God, "...You created my inmost being; **You knit me together in my mother's womb.** I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, **Your eyes saw my unformed body.** All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be" (Psalms 139:13-16 NIV).

In Old Testament times it was common practice among pagans to sacrifice humans to their demon "gods," including newborn infants. "They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons. They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was desecrated by their blood. They defiled themselves by what they did; by their deeds they prostituted themselves" (Psalms 106:37-39 NIV). They would lay the baby on hot coals and while the infant screamed in agony, the pagans would beat drums to drown out the baby's cries. How sophisticated we are today that we don't use hot coals to burn babies alive. In former Christian countries, like America, and parts of Europe, a baby's limbs can be pulled from his or her body. Then the head can be suction out of the womb. And modern technology has proven that the infant can feel extreme pain. No drums are needed. The baby isn't even able to cry. So the mother's and doctor's consciences aren't pricked.



Global warming is another subject that liberals promote regularly. They say that this planet will be unlivable for the next generation unless we make drastic changes, like getting rid of fossil fuel. Yet what does the Bible say? Yes, the planet will be destroyed, but not anytime soon. Before that can happen, Satan's kingdom on earth will soon come to an end. All the signs are there! The Jewish people finally have the homeland that was prophesied thousands of years ago (Ezekiel 39:25-28). And Israel was recognized as a nation on May 14, 1948. The European Union was established on November 1, 1993. Ten of its countries will form the last great kingdom on earth, according to Daniel 2:42. The Rapture of the church will also occur before the Lord returns to the earth. Those who love and serve the Lord, dead and alive, will be changed instantly and will meet Christ in the air (1 Corinthians 15:51-54, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Before the Lord returns, a land called Mystery Babylon will be destroyed (Revelation 18:1-24). However, there is no guarantee that the Rapture will take place first! Then the time of rule that God gave to Adam, and Satan finagled away from him, will expire. And Christ will return to the earth to destroy Satan's kingdom (Revelation 19:11-21). Once that is done, He and His redeemed church will reign with

Him on earth for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4). Then God will destroy the earth by fire. It will implode. "...The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness" (2 Peter 3:10-13 NIV).

In ancient times God was so angry at the sins of Israel that He allowed her to be trodden down by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians. Their sins were many, including human sacrifice. The Lord said, "**They sacrificed to demons, which are not God—gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear. You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.** The LORD saw this and rejected them because He was angered by His sons and daughters" (Deuteronomy 32:17-19 NIV).

America, a nation once greatly blessed by God, has also sinned against the Lord. When gangs like MS-13 and others are free to enter the United States and kill its citizens without even a proper wall to keep them out, evil wins. In ancient time God chose a man named Nehemiah to build a wall (Nehemiah 2:17-18). In modern times He has chosen a man named Donald J. Trump. No wonder the enemies of righteousness hate him so much!

Who are the enemies of righteousness? Those who want to kill the innocent and fight in favor of the guilty. They are the ones who oppose the Lord and promote appeasement to those who break His laws. Evil is increasing rapidly in this world, even in former Christian

nations. It is growing like a cancer that is infecting society at an accelerated pace. People used to be ashamed when they were caught doing evil. Now they promote it to others and brag that they do it themselves. "They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them" (Romans 1:29-32 NIV).

Yet there is still hope for those who love the Lord. When Israel sinned and was captured by Babylon, God protected His servants, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshah, and Abednego. They went through some difficult tests of faith, but in the end, they flourished, and gave glory to God. The Lord we serve is the same person they served! Christ said, "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" (Revelation 22:12-13 NIV). Amen.

In Christ's Love, we remain, *Eric and Anne Kaestner*

# A Lifetime Commitment to Christ

By Anne Kaestner

Recently I listened to an old 1970's sermon by a well-known Christian minister who died about a year ago. Frankly, I thought it was a good sermon. He spoke about the importance of accepting Christ as your personal Savior and Lord. I had listened to him many times over the decades. The problem is he would tell people that after they have been Born Again (John 3:3) they should go back to the church they have been attending and take their new relationship with Christ with them. Big mistake! If in all the years someone has been attending a church, they never felt the Holy Spirit lead them to repentance (see Matthew 4:17) and a personal commitment with Christ, He isn't there! New believers are called infants in Christ for a reason. They are as vulnerable as a newborn baby spiritually, and can be deceived easily (1 Peter 2:2-3, Matthew 18:3-6).

I know a woman who used to talk about sermons of other ministers that sounded similar to the one mentioned. She would tell me, "It was a nice salvation message." The problem with that is that most of the people listening to it considered themselves already saved. So they thought it was a nice message for the other guy and that they didn't need it. Then, self-satisfied, they shook hands with the pastor on the way out and thanked him for the nice message. Consequently, they went home no better off spiritually, then they were before they left. And I happen to know that the woman I mentioned was never Born Again (John 3:3) in the first place. She had just been told that she was due to a mistake in doctrine. I'll call her Peggy, but that is not her real name. And she's a relative of mine.

Many years ago, Peggy attended a Pentecostal church here on Long Island. She is a very gregarious person, so she easily adapted to the social life at the church. There was a young couple among the congregation who held a regular Bible study in their home once a week. I'll call them Carl and Donna. Peggy was invited to join. So she attended one of their meetings. I found out later that Donna had told Peggy's mother that Peggy had been

Born Again at one of their meetings, and received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit at the same time because she had spoken in tongues. I was Born Again (John 3:3) at another Pentecostal church and attended Pentecostal services for decades. I love to feel the Holy Spirit move in a Christian meeting. However, I disagree with some of the church doctrine.

I strongly believe that God gives spiritual gifts to those who have the second work of grace, which is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist mentioned it in his admonition to the Pharisees. He said, "***I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor, gathering His wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire***" (Matthew 3:11-12 NIV. Also, see Acts 1:5). This is called the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, or the second work of grace. For it is only available to those who have already repented of their sins and accepted Christ as their Savior and Lord regardless of whether they have been water baptized or not.

The worshipers in the Upper Room were already reborn when the Holy Spirit came upon them. If they had not been, the Spirit would have been too powerful for them. His fiery tongues (Acts 2:1-4) would have killed them the way the Old Testament priests would be killed in the Holy of Holies if their hearts were not pure before God (see

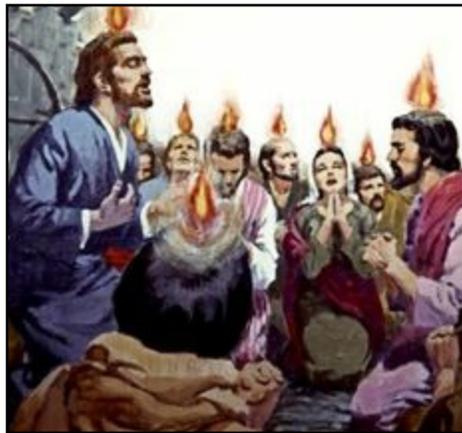
Leviticus 10:1-2). Jesus was speaking about this when "*He told them this parable: '...No one pours new wine into old wine skins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wine skins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wine skins'*" (Luke 5:37-38 NIV). The wine is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost, all who received this Baptism spoke in foreign languages they had never learned. It's one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, called tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10). It is the Spirit speaking through the person. And the person usually doesn't understand what the words mean.

The Apostle Paul told us the purpose of this gift. There are times when we want to pray. But we are so overcome with emotion that the right words don't seem to come to mind. When that happens, the Holy Spirit helps us by expressing our needs to God without words we understand (Romans 8:26-27). Worshiping Christ in tongues is a way of giving glory to God. "*Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?'*" (Acts 2:5-8 NIV).

*"Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy"* (Acts 2:13-18 KJV).

So the "new wine" of the Holy Spirit can only be poured into the hearts of those who have already repented of the sins and been cleansed by Christ. Therefore, Peggy could not have received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and been saved at the same time. Unfortunately, because she had been told that she had, Peggy had a false sense of security. You can hear nice sermons about salvation all day long. But unless you make your own personal commitment to Christ, you are not saved. Hearing the message does not give you rebirth. Repenting and accepting it does! Moreover, Peggy was never able to speak in tongues again after the meeting. So what had happened? Apparently, the Holy Spirit was so strong at that meeting that His Spirit fell upon Peggy even though she had never been Born Again.

Peggy's attitude did change after that. Unfortunately it went the wrong way. Peggy received a spirit of churchianity. Her social life revolved around the church. That's where her friends were. And she developed an attitude of condescension toward anyone with a Holy Spirit anointing. She loved the social atmosphere at the church. But she didn't want to have anything to do with God's Spirit (Mark 7:6-8). The more His anointing fell upon a sermon the more agitated and disinterested she became. She took on a proud, elitist manner and would find ways of distracting anyone who wanted to hear the message and feel God's Presence. The experience Peggy had at Carl and Donna's house was not uncommon. It will never occur in a formal, structured



church meeting, where the pastor has control of the meeting. But when the Holy Spirit is given free reign, amazing things can happen!

My husband, Eric, and I were at a Pentecostal church one day in the early years of our marriage. Eric was already Born Again (John 3:3) at that time, but had not received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. However, the Spirit was so strong on that occasion, that Eric began speaking in tongues near the altar. Even so, he did not receive the Holy Spirit's Baptism at that time. When he got home he was unable to speak in tongues any more. It was just a momentary anointing he had received at the church. He remained in that state until he and I attended a Christian crusade in 1987. For Eric received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit that day and has been able to pray in tongues ever since.

Although many people speak in tongues when they receive the Spirit's Baptism, it doesn't always have to work that way. I received this Baptism when I was at a Christian summer camp when I was twelve. But I didn't speak in tongues until about a week later, when I prayed for the gift. God chooses what gifts He will give. There is no automatic formula. *"All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines"* (1 Corinthians 12:11 NIV). If the Holy Spirit falls upon you in a Christian meeting He may cause you to speak in tongues briefly. But that is not the same thing as the Baptism in the Holy Spirit!

The Bible speaks about a Jew named Apollos. *"...He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately"* (Acts 18:24-26 NIV). Apollos was like many people today. He had been Born Again and vigorously promoted the Gospel. He even taught about Christ. However, he had never been taught about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Then Apollos, with a group of other men like him, met the Apostle Paul. Paul told them, *"...John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus. On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied"* (Acts 19:4-6 NIV). Everyone who sincerely repents of their sins and accepts Christ as their Savior receives a measure of the Holy Spirit right away. But it's not the same thing as the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was water baptized He was completely submerged under the water (see Matthew 3:16). It is a symbolic gesture, a metaphor for death to the old self and new life for the Lord. When you are baptized with the Holy Fire of God, the Holy Spirit, you are drenched in His Spirit, not just sprinkled as a baby would be with water in a dedication ceremony.

Let me make this clear. If you are sincere when you come to the Lord in repentance, and ask for His salvation, it's as if your name is penciled in the book of life (Revelation 13:8). If you die right away, you will go to Heaven. However, most people do not get killed on the way home. The devil and his demons are still in this world. And they want to make you backslide away from Christ. Therefore, they will try everything in their power to make you slack off in your relationship with the Lord. Then, when they have sufficiently weakened you enough, the strong temptations occur. Perhaps something painful will happen to you physically, financially, or socially. The idea is for you to blame God, even though the devil is orchestrating it. The Lord allows it for your testing. He doesn't want any fair weather or lukewarm believers (Revelation 3:16). It may be that someone you

love could be attacked in some way, or turn against you. Again, the devil will tell you that it's because you're a Christian, and that it's all God's fault. You will be brought to a proverbial fork in the road. You will either turn away from Christ and end up dying in your sin. Or you will grow closer to Him, and progress in your walk with Christ. God loved you enough to allow His own beloved Son to suffer a horrible death for you (John 3:16). Do you love Him enough to put Him before your friends and family? Or your wealth or social position? (See Luke 9:62).

Jesus said, *"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn 'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.' 'Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me'"* (Matthew 10:34-38 NIV).

I know you may have heard that you cannot lose your salvation no matter what. But that's not what Jesus said. He said *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned"* (John 15:1-6 NIV). That's because, without Christ, *"All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away"* (Isaiah 64:6 NIV). You must remain in the Vine!



The "fruit" is not about social programs and good works. It's not what **you** decide to do for God. It's what **God** is able to do **through you!** The evidence of good spiritual fruit is *"...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control..."* (Galatians 5:22-23 NIV). The evidence of bad fruit is *"...sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God"* (Galatians 5:19-21 NIV). So don't make the mistake of thinking that because you once repented of your sins and accepted Christ, that you can sin all you want and still get to Heaven. That's **not** what the Bible says! Christ didn't die so that you can sin with impunity (John 8:10-12). He died to give you a way to live for Him, *"...and sin no more"* (John 8:11 KJV)! The Baptism in the Holy Spirit will help you do that. But you can still backslide away from Christ if you stop living for Him and take a different direction. There is a lot of bad doctrine, even in the church (Acts 20:30-31), that can lead you to the wrong path (see Matthew 7:13-14). It's not what feels good to you. It's the Holy Spirit that needs to show you the way (John 14:16, 26 and 15:26). *"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'"* (John 14:6 NIV). So cleave to the Vine, Jesus Christ, as a drowning man would cling to a life preserver.

Christ will never leave you

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(Hebrews 13:5). But you can leave Him, by branching off in your own direction, away from the Vine. Because, *“there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”* (Proverbs 14:12 KJV). And although your name may be penciled in the Book of Life, it can still be erased. Remember what Jesus said to the church in Sardis, *“He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before My Father and His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”* (Revelation 3:5-6 NIV). The Apostle Peter emphasized the importance of staying true to Christ. He worried about those who take their salvation for granted and head off in the wrong direction. They have been led astray through bad doctrine by “wolves in sheep’s clothing” (see Matthew 7:15). *“They have left the straight way and wandered off...”* (2 Peter 2:15 NIV). *“These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them”* (2 Peter 2:17 NIV).

*“For they mouth empty, boastful words and... they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: ‘A dog returns to its vomit,’ and, ‘A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud’”* (2 Peter 2:18-22 NIV. Also, see Hebrews 6:4-6).

Now let’s look at the parable of the Sower. *“...A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear”* (Matthew 13:3-9 NIV). Jesus spoke in parables so that only those with the Holy Spirit would understand the meaning (Matthew 7:6). The sower is the person giving a message through the anointing of the Spirit. Jesus explained what the parable meant.

*“When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one [devil or his demons] comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. [This is usually through false doctrine or erroneous teachings.] The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. [That’s when he believes the devil’s lies and blames God for the problems the devil causes.] The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. [He is most likely more concerned with his money, family, or social life than with Christ.] But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is*

*the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown”* (Matthew 13:19-23 NIV). The “good soil” is the heart of the person that is soft and fertile enough for God’s seed of faith to grow good fruit. The lifestyle and faith of such a person touches the hearts of others and brings them closer to Christ through their example.

When the Hebrews were freed from slavery by God (Deuteronomy 5:6), it was symbolic of Christ freeing us from the slavery of sin (John 8:34). The Promised Land was symbolic of Heaven. First they had to spend forty years traveling through the desert, which can be compared to this sinful world. Many were the temptations along the way. And many were the miracles. *“Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered His people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe”* (Jude 1:5 NIV). They were freed from slavery but most did not have the faith to pass the tests given to them in the desert. And they never made it to the Promised Land. *“The Israelites had moved about in the desert forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died, since they had not obeyed the LORD. For the LORD had sworn to them that they would not see the land that he had solemnly promised their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey”* (Joshua 5:6 NIV).

On one occasion, Jesus and His disciples had breakfast together.

*“When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love Me more than these?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ he said, ‘You know that I love You.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed My lambs’”* (John 21:15 NIV). Peter said he loved Jesus, but stopped there. Jesus had asked him if Peter loved Him more than the other disciples. *“Again Jesus said, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love Me?’ He answered, ‘Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.’ Jesus said, ‘Take care of My sheep.’ The third time He said to him, ‘Simon son of John, do you love Me?’ Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ He said, ‘Lord, you know all things; you know that I love You.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed My sheep’”* (John 21:16-17 NIV).

Jesus asked Peter three times because He wanted to emphasize the importance of feeding

His sheep. The idea is to produce good fruit in them so that they will go on to reach others for Christ. *“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming”* (Ephesians 4:14 NIV). And, in speaking of these last days, Paul said, *“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons”* (1 Timothy 4:1 NIV. Also, see 2 Timothy 4:3-4).

Even Paul, the Apostle, knew that if he backslid away from Christ, he too would be doomed. He compared the process of salvation to a race like the Olympics. He knew that only the ones who finish the race will be eligible for the prize. *“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize”* (1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NIV). Therefore, *“how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?...”* (Hebrews 2:3 ASV).

