

Questions about Salvation

1. "Was Saul of Tarsus saved on the road to Damascus? Was he saved in answer to prayer?"

A. The question, "When was Saul of Tarsus saved?" will too often be answered, "When Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus." Then others will answer, "He was saved in the city in answer to his three days of prayer."

B. Both are quite common ideas especially among those who claim visions today and those who believe that all one has to do to be saved is pray to God for salvation. It is true that Christ appeared to Saul as he neared Damascus, and that he spent three days in Damascus fasting and praying, but it can be conclusively shown from the book of Acts that Saul was not saved out there on the road nor in answer to his prayers in the city.

C. Open the Bible to the 9th chapter of Acts and read verses 1 through 12. All right, you have found in those verses the story of Jesus' appearance to him, Saul's question as to what he was to do, Christ's answer that in Damascus it would be told him, his blindness, his three days and nights in prayer without food or drink, and the call of Ananias to go to Saul at the end of the three days. Now if you will turn to Acts 22 and read verses 12 through 16, you will find Saul's own report of what happened when Ananias came to him. Having read these you have found that while Saul received his sight through Ananias's coming, yet the only thing Saul was told to do was to be baptized. Remember that out on the road Jesus said it would be told him what he was to do. He was not told to believe nor to repent. Why? Because he had already believed and was already sincerely penitent. But he had not been baptized. Therefore, he was told to do that. Now look at that 16th verse of Acts 22 again. Was Saul forgiven on the road? Was he forgiven in answer to his

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prayers? Or was he forgiven when he was baptized? It is obvious that he was yet in his sins when Ananias came, or he would not have said, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Therefore, he was not saved on the Damascus road, nor was he saved in answer to prayer.

2. "Did the baptism of the Holy Spirit revoke the sins of Cornelius and his household? Because they were baptized with the Holy Spirit before baptized in water, does that imply that we receive the Holy Spirit before baptism? Does Cornelius's baptism in the Holy Spirit argue that all converts are baptized in the Holy Spirit?"

A. You will find those who teach that baptism has nothing to do with salvation, for Cornelius and his household were baptized in the Holy Spirit before they were baptized in water. By such reasoning they imply that the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the household of Cornelius was to revoke their sins or was proof that their sins were already forgiven.

B. But the Bible doesn't uphold such conclusions. Cornelius and those with him were not baptized in the Holy Spirit in order to forgive their sins. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was given to these Gentiles as God's sign to the Jewish Christians that Gentile believers should be baptized and fellowshipped as His people. Open your Bible to Acts 10 and read verses 44 through 48. From your reading you have found that those Jewish brethren who came with Peter were greatly surprised that God had poured out His Spirit on Gentiles. You saw that when Peter asked them if they would forbid his baptizing the Gentiles, there was no objection from them. Now turn to Acts 11 and read verses 1 through 18. These verses tell you that Peter met with opposition from the Jews when he returned to Je-

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rusalem. These verses go on to tell us that Peter rehearsed the whole story of his going to the Gentiles, concluding with the fact of their receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Peter argued, "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" Peter understood, after all the preceding matters connected with the story, that this was the crowning proof that God wanted converted Gentiles to be admitted to the fellowship of the church also. Now when the ones at Jerusalem heard of their receiving Holy Spirit baptism, they too concluded that God was granting repentance unto life to the Gentiles also. Thus, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was not to forgive their sins but to open the way so they might be baptized even as the Jews and thereby procure salvation.

C. There are those who say that when people pray earnestly, God will give them the Holy Spirit, and that people should not be baptized in water until they are first baptized in the Holy Spirit. They point to Cornelius's case as proof that Holy Spirit baptism comes before water baptism. But since, as we have seen, that Cornelius's baptism in the Holy Spirit was a special event that does not attend the conversion of all sinners, the aforesaid reasoning is not valid. Open your Bible to Acts 2 and read verses 38 and 39. There Peter put repentance and baptism BEFORE receiving the Holy Spirit. "This promise," he said, "is unto you, and to your children (the Jews present on that day and their descendants), and to all that are afar off (the Gentiles--study Eph. 2:11-13), even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

D. The Bible shows that the gospel that is to be preached in all nations does not vary from nation to nation either in its facts, its commandments, or its promises.

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3. "Were the Philippian jailer and his household baptized in the house? If so, doesn't that prove that they were not immersed? Weren't there infants baptized then since the whole household was baptized? Isn't faith the only thing required for salvation?"

A. Some say the jailer and his household were not immersed in the house. In our American way of living there have been numerous cases of immersion in people's own houses, some in large bathtubs and others in portable canvas tubs brought in. It is not likely, however, that the Philippian jailer had such equipment in his house. But this admission does not mean they were sprinkled or poured. Open your Bible to Acts 16 and read verses 25 through 34. In these verses you studied about the unusual experience in the jail at midnight, resulting in the jailer taking Paul and Silas to his home to learn of salvation. Notice especially verses 33 and 34: **after hearing their message** the jailer "took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." We are not told where he took them, where he washed their stripes, nor where they were baptized. But we are told in the next verse that after their baptism, he brought them INTO his house and set food before them. We know one thing for sure, they were not baptized in his house at all. Therefore, arguing that they could not have been immersed because of being baptized in his house is not to be considered.

B. Since his household was baptized, some have concluded that they have New Testament grounds for baptizing babies. They say, "Wouldn't there have been some babies in the household, and since the household was baptized wouldn't that give Scriptural grounds for infant baptism?" There could have been infants in that

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household, for many households include babies. But a household does not have to have infants. In fact there are many households that do not contain an infant. The question to be settled is, were there infants in the jailer's household? The Scripture shows there were no infants in his household. Open your Bible to Acts 16 and read verses 32 through 34. Did you notice in verse 32 that Paul and Silas taught the Word of God to all who were in the man's house? Did you notice in verse 34 that the man and all his house believed in God? These two statements show that everybody in this man's house was mature enough to be taught and to believe, so there were no infants in it.

C. "Faith-only" folks have long used the conversion of the jailer to substantiate their doctrine of salvation by faith-only. They say that faith is all that Paul said with reference to salvation. But such is not the whole truth. True, at the jail that was the only thing mentioned. But that is not where the story ended. Rather that is just where it began. Visualize the circumstances under which Paul spoke to this man about believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. This jailer lived in Europe where Paul had just arrived a few days earlier. He and Silas were the first gospel preachers to set foot in Philippi, as far as we know. Likely this jailer had never even heard of Jesus Christ. As a heathen he went to sleep hearing Paul and Silas singing and praying to their God. Being awakened by an earthquake in response to their prayers and being spared from taking his own life by the apostle Paul who might have fled the prison along with all the other prisoners, he asked what he must do to be saved. Paul told him salvation would come if he would believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Suppose as a typical American I have a car wreck that mashes and mangles my body beyond hope of recovery. My loved ones hold out no hope that I will make it. But two Mormon missionaries stop and pray for my recovery. And to the amazement of

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everybody, even the doctors and the hospital, I snap out of it and recover. My relatives are convinced that the Mormons and their prayers were the determining factors in my recovery. They send for the missionaries and ask them, "What must we do to be saved?" If they answered, "You must believe in the Mormon religion," we would have a parallel to the jailer's experience. Believing in the Mormon religion would involve embracing it, and believing in the Lord Jesus involves accepting Him in surrender and obedience. They went home with the man and taught him, for "faith cometh by hearing" (Rom. 10:17). And when they taught him, you can see they taught him to be baptized, and its importance is seen in that they attended to it that very night even though it was in the late hours of the night (past midnight). And did you notice that there is no indication of the man's rejoicing until after he was baptized, and that after he was baptized it says he believed in God with all his house?

QUESTIONS

1. Prove from the Bible that Saul of Tarsus was not saved on the road to Damascus.
2. Prove from the Bible that he was not saved in answer to his prayers in Damascus.
3. Why was Cornelius and those with him baptized in the Holy Spirit?
4. Show that their receiving the Holy Spirit before baptism in water does not set a precedent for us today to be baptized in the Holy Spirit before we are baptized in water.
5. Show from the Bible that the jailer was not baptized in his house.
6. Show that there were no infants in his household.
7. Show that he was not saved merely by faith only.

The Indwelling Spirit

1. "Should we really believe that God's Spirit indwells Christians?"

Yes, it is a promise of the gospel just the same as the remission of sins. The same verse that promises remission of sins to those convicted believers who repent and are baptized likewise promises the gift of the Holy Spirit to the same people (Acts 2:38). And the next verse (v. 39) shows that the promise was not limited to those who heard Peter on that day but that the promise extends even to us today.

2. "Some say that the 'gift of the Holy Spirit' does not mean that a person receives the Holy Spirit but some gift from the Spirit, specifically eternal life. Is this true?"

It is not true when considered from related passages that show it is the Holy Spirit Himself who comes into a new convert and who indwells his or her Christian life. Acts 5:32 says God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him. In fact God gives the Holy Spirit as a pledge (or "earnest" as it is called in the King James) ahead of time, assuring us that in due time He will fulfill His promise of everlasting life also (Eph. 1:13,14). Possibly the reasoning advanced by those who prefer thinking that it is a gift from the Holy Spirit that a convert receives is but man's attempt to deal with that which we do not fully understand. But we should not always deny what we cannot understand, or we, like the atheists, will even deny there is a God.

3. "How can a Christian person know he has the Holy Spirit?"

Let us compare the indwelling of the Holy Spirit

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within our lives and the presence of our own individual spirit within our body. How do we actually know that we possess our own spirit from God (compare Gen. 2:7; Eccl. 12:7)? Two ways: (1) God's Word informs us of that fact. Otherwise we wouldn't even know we are composed of both body and spirit. (2) The manifestation of our spirit's presence in the activities we perform. When a person is dead, he has all the faculties of his body, but he is dead because his spirit is gone (Jas. 2:26). In like manner do we know that we as Christians possess the indwelling Spirit of God: (1) We have God's Word for it (Acts 2:38,39; Acts 5:32; Rom. 8:9,11). (2) The spiritual manifestation of the indwelling Spirit in the spiritual activities performed. The love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, etc. that we see in a Christian person's life are actually the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22,23). Some people claim they can know they have the Spirit because they can feel it. Again let us make a helpful comparison. We cannot feel our own spirit's presence in our body. We believe we have a spirit because God teaches that we do, and we can see its manifestation in the fact that we are physically alive. And the same is true of the Holy Spirit. We can believe that we have the Spirit because God says we do, and we can see the manifestation of the Spirit in the fruit of our life. But you cannot locate either our human spirit or the Holy Spirit by feeling for such. The Bible nowhere says we feel the Holy Spirit within us. Now does it?

4. "How important is the indwelling Spirit?"

Very important. Both parts of the promise in Acts 2:38 are important (both remission of sins and the gift of the Spirit). We need the help of the Spirit after conversion to help us live the Christian life

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just as much as we need the remission of those sins committed before conversion. We need both the forgiveness of past sins and the help of the Holy Spirit for Christian living. There is nothing insignificant about the gospel, and one of the promises of the gospel is the indwelling gift of the Spirit!

5. "Please elaborate on the above point some more."

In Eph. 6:10 we are told to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." We are here instructed to be strong in our spiritual lives and in depending on the power of God to help us overcome the devil, for the following verse goes on to say, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Then in v. 12 Paul explains, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." If we wrestled only against flesh and blood, all we would need would be to be strong in our physical bodies, but since we are wrestling against strong evil forces of the spirit-world, we need to be more than flesh and blood--we need the special help of God to overcome these powerful forces. Rom. 8:13 shows that it is through the Spirit that we mortify (put to death) the wicked deeds of the body. I John 4:4 shows that we overcome the evil forces from without because "greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world". Who is in the Christian who is more powerful than the devil? The Holy Spirit of God!

In conclusion of this special study you will remember that Jesus said He is the vine and each follower a branch (John 15). When a branch is cut off from its vine, that branch dies because it is cut off from its life-giving sap. It is the sap within it that

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gives it life and makes it fruitful. In somewhat the same way the Holy Spirit within us gives us spiritual life and makes us fruitful.

Remember that if a person does not possess the Spirit, it is because he is not a child of God (Rom. 8:9).

QUESTIONS

1. What 2 blessings are promised in Acts 2:38?
2. What do some erroneously teach the gift of the Holy Spirit to be?
3. Cite a verse in which we are definitely promised the Holy Spirit Himself.
4. In what 2 ways do we know we have our own individual spirit in our bodies?
5. In what 2 similar ways do we know we have the Holy Spirit?
6. Can we feel either our own spirit or the Holy Spirit as proof that we have them?
7. How does Eph. 6 show that we need divine help in our lives?
8. The indwelling Holy Spirit is to the Christian's life like _____ is to a tree.

Verses about the Holy Spirit

1. "There are verses relating to the Holy Spirit that raise some questions. One is Acts 9:17 in which Ananias said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' We know he laid his hands on Saul even though Ananias was not an apostle. This is either a contradiction of what we have normally held (that the powers of the Holy Spirit were conferred only by the laying on of APOSTLES' hands), or it is an exceptional case. Which is it?"

Actually neither. Everything involved can be shown to be in harmony with what we have believed and preached about the Holy Spirit. Let us look at Ananias's coming to Saul.

A. Ananias stated the two purposes for which he came: (1) that Saul might receive his sight (which he had been without for three days); and (2) that Saul might receive the Holy Spirit. Now what two things did Ananias do to Saul to bring him these two blessings? (1) He laid his hands on Saul--this restored him his sight (Acts 9:12). (2) He baptized Saul--by this he received the indwelling Holy Spirit, the way and the time that converts receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, 39).

B. There are various ways Ananias could have stated his second purpose in coming. He could have said, "I am come that you might receive the forgiveness of your sins;" or, "That you might become a child of God;" or, "That you might be saved;" or, "That your name might be written in heaven;" or as Ananias did state it, "That you might receive the Holy Spirit." When one is baptized, all these things take place.

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Thus, all of them are important, and each of them might be used by a preacher in his remarks to those he is about to baptize.

To summarize, when Ananias laid his hands on Saul he received his sight, and when he baptized him Saul received the Holy Spirit, thus fulfilling the two-fold purpose of his coming to Saul and at the same time tying in the two blessings Saul received with the two things Ananias did to him.

2. "We have always taught that people receive the Holy Spirit when baptized and not by praying for that gift. But what do we say when Pentecostals and Charismatics cite Luke 11:13 ('If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?')?"

There are two ways Jesus' statement might be taken both of which are harmonious with what we teach about the Holy Spirit.

A. Even though the apostles and those with whom they were assembling in Acts 4 were possessors of the Holy Spirit, verse 31 still says, "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit from baptism, but they were still urged to be "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). This stirring up of the Spirit within them like one would stir up a fire that is already burning is connected with prayer. This could be one fulfillment of Luke 11:13.

B. Another possibility is equally an application of Luke 11:13--maybe even more so. Have you noticed to whom Jesus was speaking in Luke 11:13? In verse 1 the apostles requested that He teach them to pray. This is what called forth this particular teaching on prayer that closed with this special promise. If you will

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read both Matt. 7:7-11 and Luke 11:9-13, you will see that in both instances He taught that prayers will be answered, and He used the same illustrations in both passages. But the final verses (Matt. 7:11 and Luke 11:13) were different. To the multitude (His audience in Matt. 7:11) He said, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" while to the apostles in Luke 11:13 He said, "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Later in His ministry Jesus spoke more and more to His apostles about the Holy Spirit's coming upon them. Following His departure from them they were to tarry in Jerusalem to await the Holy Spirit's coming (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). What did they do in those days of waiting? "When they were come in, they went up into an upper room...These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1:13,14). In this viewpoint the praying in Acts 1:13,14 and the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them in Acts 2 combine for a fulfillment of Luke 11:13.

We are sure that Luke 11:13 is not meant to deny the means of receiving the Holy Spirit as set forth in Acts 2:38,39. Furthermore we see no apostle teaching an alien sinner to get down on his knees and pray that he might receive the Holy Spirit.

3. "Another verse that most of us could use some light on is Mark 16:17, where Jesus said, 'These signs shall follow them that believe.' Wouldn't them that believe include more than the apostles?"

A. Let us notice again that only the apostles were present when this promise was made. It was to them that Jesus said, "These signs shall follow them

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that believe." Had any of them ever failed to perform a miracle because of a lack of faith? Yes (see Matt. 17:14-20). So in giving them their final orders before His ascension Jesus reminded them that such power would follow only the labors of those who believed.

B. The need for Jesus to **emphasize** this to them at this particular time is seen in the earlier verses of this very chapter (Mark 16). Verse 11 shows that when Mary Magdalene reported to the apostles that Jesus was resurrected, they did not believe, and in verses 12 and 13 when the two Emmaus men reported to them that they had seen Jesus the apostles didn't believe them either. So when Jesus first appeared to the apostles, verse 14 says He "upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart". Now can't you see why Jesus made particular mention of the fact that if they were going to perform miracles they must believe?

C. This promise in Mark 16:17 either means that every believer is to work miracles, or the promise is confined to those present (given to tell them on what condition they would be allowed to perform miracles). The first cannot be true (according to I Cor. 12:29, 30) while the latter position is (according to what we have just considered).

QUESTIONS

1. For what 2 purposes did Ananias go to Saul?
2. What 2 things did Ananias do to Saul to fulfill those 2 purposes?
3. What are the 2 possible understandings of Luke 11:13?
4. Why doesn't Mark 16:17 mean that every believer is to work miracles?
5. Why did the apostles need Jesus to emphasize the faith-aspect of working miracles?

Why We Suffer

1. "When a person gets sick, some people say it was just to be; others say he has done something wrong; still others say sin had nothing to do with it. How about it?"

This is a big question, a question that many people are considering today. There are different reasons why people may be suffering.

- A. Sometimes it may be due to sin.
- B. Other times it is not.

2. "What would be some examples of a person suffering because of sin?"

- A. Drinking can bring on many natural afflictions.
- B. So can the use of tobacco.
- C. Venereal and similar diseases often come upon those who have not behaved themselves morally.
- D. One who gets into a fist fight may end up with his nose broken.
- E. Another way to suffer because of one's sins is when God sees fit to chasten in a physical way.

3. "Well why would a person suffer when he or she has committed no sin to bring it on?"

A. He might suffer as a result of a mistake he made (hitting his finger with a hammer, stepping out in front of a car unwittingly, drinking poison by accident, etc.). All these would be mistakes but not sins.

B. He might suffer because of the mistakes of others (being struck by a reckless driver, having a doctor give him the wrong medicine, a child's health affected because his mother did not take care of herself while carrying him before birth, etc.).

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C. He might suffer as a result of the sins of others (an innocent man being stabbed by a wicked person, a drunken father beating his wife or children, etc.).

4. "Isn't it wrong that we are called on to suffer because of the sins and mistakes of others?"

A. When God put life on the earth, He could have put every person on an island by himself so that every person would have a sort of Robinson Crusoe existence. Instead He set up life on the earth in which people live together.

B. It is true that this living together brings a few misfortunes to us, but those misfortunes caused by others are far outweighed by the blessings we derive from living among others. You sit down to eat your breakfast, but the orange juice you drink was raised, processed, and transported to you--by others. The cereal you eat, you didn't grow the wheat for it. You didn't grow the sugar that you put on it. You didn't produce the milk on it. You didn't make the bowl you eat out of nor the table you eat from nor the chair you are sitting on while eating. It is true you had to buy these things, but if others didn't live and produce and manufacture these products, you couldn't buy them.

C. Yes, we suffer sometimes because of others, but we benefit so much more because of others. Wouldn't you rather live among people and occasionally have to suffer some because of them than to be shipped off to some remote island to live by yourself where you would never suffer because of others? Wouldn't you?

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5. "Isn't some suffering more or less natural? Isn't some sickness just a part of life and in no special way traceable to anything or anybody?"

There are at least three ways in which general suffering may not indicate any sin on our part or on the part of anybody else:

A. The human race is not as strong nor as long-lived as it once was. We are all mortal in our bodies, and anything subject to death is surely subject to suffering before death. No doubt we suffer at times just because we are human.

B. Then there are those catastrophes that hit and leave much general suffering behind such as floods, fires, tornadoes, and epidemics.

C. Finally there is suffering that comes because of the invariableness of nature. For instance, there is the law of gravity. What a blessing it is, yet every injury from falling is a result of that invariable law of nature. We cannot turn the law of gravity off and on just to suit whatever will be best for us at the time. It works all the time, and we must cooperate with it. Otherwise we will suffer. Again, water seeks its own level. What a blessing that it does! Otherwise after a rain a farmer would not get into his field in the springtime to put in his crop. Every bit of water that fell would lie right where it fell until it all evaporated. Because water seeks its own level consistently is why we have floods that can cause such damage and suffering. Then God has created the sense of pain in our physical bodies, and because of this we know what suffering is. On all these things let us realize that blessings come to us because of the invariableness of nature. If God would suspend the law of gravity, the food we are about to eat would fly off our table. If water didn't seek its own level, our power plants on the rivers would not give us our con-

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stant flow of electricity. If God hadn't given us a sense of pain, it wouldn't be long until the human family would be extinguished. For instance, one would have his hand on a stove that is hot, and it could burn off before he knew it if he had no sense of pain to tell him to remove his hand immediately. He gets tired and feels his need of sleep and rest. If he were not so constituted, he would keep going and going and going without any warning that he was in need of re-fueling his strength and energies through rest that he would kill himself off.

As we stated at the outset, this is indeed a big subject. The above material does not answer everything about it, but it does shed some rays of light upon it.

QUESTIONS

1. What different views are held with reference to why people suffer?
2. Cite examples of suffering resulting from sinning.
3. Cite examples of suffering because of one's own mistakes.
4. Cite examples of suffering because of the mistakes of others.
5. Why should we suffer some because of the mistakes of others?
6. Show that some suffering is just natural.

Older People

1. "Is it a tragedy to get old?"

A. This is the view of the world, and we can see why. The unsaved are walking by sight and not by faith, and from all appearances there is very little left for them. All they can say is, "The evil days have come, and I have no pleasure in them" (compare Eccl. 12:1). And they have no hope for eternity.

B. But old age is not a tragedy to the Christian, for he looks at everything differently, walking by faith and not by sight (II Cor. 5:7). Paul did not fear death but realized that to die was to depart and be with the Lord which he knew to be far better than remaining in this life (see Phil. 1:21,23). Especially in view of this, "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18).

2. "Does old age have any compensations?"

A. The compensation of honor and respect. Prov. 16:31 says, "The hoary head (white hair) is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." Old age is not something to fear unless one is not right with God. Older age brings a certain community-respect because of having dwelt honorably in it for so long. Good people seem to get better with the advancement of age. It is a great honor to be a righteous older person. On the other hand there is nothing more disgusting than a wicked older person: hard-hearted, foul language, tobacco-chewer, etc. Nobody has respect for such a person, and but few tears are shed when he dies.

B. The compensation of grandchildren and great grandchildren. Prov. 17:6 says, "Children's children (grandchildren) are the crown of old men." Jacob, so aged in Egypt, rejoiced that God had permitted him to

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live to see Joseph's children (Gen. 48:11). Children dearly love to go to their grandparents, and grandparents are usually as fond of them unless they are too undisciplined, noisy, and destructive.

C. The compensation of recollection. Their memory can reach clear back to childhood, and they enjoy talking of olden times. Younger people need to be more patient with the reminiscing of older people. Youth will do well to listen to the experiences and advice of older people. You will remember that older men gave Rehoboam sound advice that he did not accept, and the kingdom divided immediately (I Kings 12:6-8).

3. "Is it hard to win older people to Christ?"

It is a proven fact that very few older people ever accept the Lord. You would think the nearer a person draws to eternity the easier it would be to touch him for Christ. But such is not usually the case. People become set in their ways and bound to their ideas. People get tired mentally and emotionally as well as physically. This often accounts for the difficulty in reaching them. How we should rejoice when we see an older person turn to the Lord, and occasionally some do.

4. "What advice is there for dealing with an older person?"

I. Tim. 5:1 says, "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father." A study of the first two verses of this chapter will show that it is talking about an older man and not the office of elder. It says not to deal with an elderly man in a rebuking way but in an entreating way. Experience has proven the rightness of this divine psychology, which it is. One will seldom get very far with an older person administering an

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outright rebuke, but to sit down and entreat him will often go very far toward the desired results. Married children keeping an elderly father in the home need to keep this in mind. And preachers and other personal workers need to keep this in mind also.

5. "What about the all-too-common tendency of children to neglect the needs of their aged parents?"

Nothing too stern can be said about it. It is a practice contrary to the teachings of Christianity. Often there comes that time in life when the older must look to the younger generation for care. When aged parents need financial assistance, one is actually a denier of the faith who will not provide for his own. This is the very setting of I Tim. 5:8. Children are to "requite" (pay back) their parents and thereby show "piety" (religion) at home (I Tim. 5:4). Children ought to do everything in their power to make their parents' last years easy and happy. Children will borrow money to buy a new car or to go on a vacation but may not borrow the money to add an extra room on to their house to make room for an aged mother or father. This is not right. The Pharisees fell under a severe condemnation of Jesus because they would not take care of their parents (Matt. 15:4-7). If parents prefer going to a rest home or a nursing home for their last years, that is all right, but some of them prefer making their home with their children when they can no longer take care of themselves, and there are too many cases where children just don't want to be bothered with older people, so they ship them off against their wishes. But even before parents get to such an age, children often neglect them by not writing to them regularly and by not going to see them. They go other places, but they do not go see their aged parents. They keep books on their business, but they don't

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write a letter home. Such is heartless and inconsiderate, and we can but say that the time may come when they too will be old and will be treated the same way by their own children. Then they will realize what an injustice their thoughtlessness did to their own parents years before.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the attitude of the world about getting old?
2. What makes a Christian's viewpoint of old age different?
3. What are some compensations for getting older?
4. Why is it harder to win older people to Christ?
5. How are we to deal with an older person?
6. What does the Bible say about neglecting aged parents?