

# The Comforter

Isaiah 40:1---"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people....."

Volume 5, Issue 6

November-December 2019

## **A Burning Heart**

Elder Ricky Myers

Luke 24:32 "And they said to one another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"

Many people suffer from a malady called heartburn and treat it with Prilosec, Prevacid, Zantac or some other form of antacid. The heart burn in our text is one that we all should desire. It is a good case of the heartburn.

The account begins in verse 13. Two of the disciples of Jesus had been a witness of the events that had taken place in Jerusalem. They had seen Jesus taken, tried, beaten, crucified and buried. They had even heard the latest report of how the body of Jesus was missing from the borrowed tomb. They had left Jerusalem and was going to a village called Emmaus. On their journey, they were approached by a "stranger". This stranger, who we know to be Jesus, asks them why they are of such a sad countenance. They ask him, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" Jesus replied, "What things?"

The both replied, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him." They

trusted that he was the Messiah, the redeemer of Israel.

Luke 24:27 states that "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." What we must understand is that Jesus reasons and teaches them from the Old Testament, beginning in Genesis. I have heard my good friend, Elder David Guttery, say many times, "The Old Testament is Jesus Christ concealed, and the New Testament is Jesus Christ revealed!" What my able minister friend is saying is that if you want to better understand the Old Testament, then search for Jesus. He is there. I think you can start in the very first chapter of the book of Genesis, when God said, in verse 26, "Let us make man in our own image"! This attests that Jesus was with God in the beginning and was a part in creation. In Genesis 22, when Abraham is told by God to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, we see Jesus again. When Abraham and Isaac arrive at their destination, Isaac asks, "where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham answers his son with prophetic words, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering". My dear friends, God did provide himself a Lamb for a sacrifice. His son Jesus went to the cross of Calvary and bore our sins on the cross. He atoned for our sins and paid our debt in full. He atoned for every sin of every one of the elect family of God.

Let's consider Genesis 49:10. It reads, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." From the pronoun, "him", in the latter part of this verse we can simply deduce that Shiloh is a "him". Shiloh means peace. When Adam transgressed God's law in the garden of Eden, man was separated from God. Since man was the offender and God the offended, it was man that needed to be reconciled to God. Man had a problem, a major problem! He could not reconcile himself to God. Therefore, it had to come another way. It took one who was fully God and fully man. In other words, it took God manifest in the flesh. Romans 5:10 states, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." 2 Corinthians 5:18 emphatically states that God "hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ".

### **The Truth Is Important**

Elder Ronnie Loudermilk

1 Timothy 3:15, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

While growing up in North East Georgia, my mama and daddy always stressed the importance of telling the truth. I can remember them saying, "Even if it hurts you, just tell the truth." In my short experience on this earth I've learned it's easier to tell the truth than to hide a lie.

With the subject of truth in mind, we should consider the question asked by Pontius Pilate in John 18:38, "What is truth?" When we ponder upon this question, the first thing that should come to mind is, God is truth! Jesus said in

For the sake of brevity, I will not elaborate on other scriptures. I will end this article by saying or I should say by asking, has your heart ever burned when scripture was opened to you? As a lifetime old line primitive Baptist I've experienced many times the "burning heart"! When I can see my Jesus high and lifted up, my heart burns! When I can hear of what my Jesus has done for me, my heart burns! When I am permitted to sit in a congregation of like-minded brothers and sisters and worship in Spirit and truth, my heart burns! When I am in a congregation and the Spirit is singing with us the good old songs that bring my Savior into view, my heart burns! When a dear old saint of God is led by the Holy Spirit to utter a public prayer, my heart burns! When I see my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ weeping tears of joy, I know their heart burns! Amen!

John 14:6, "I am the way, the TRUTH, and the life" (emphasis mine). Another thing that should quickly come to mind is God's Word. According to Paul in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:..." Since God's Word is truth, it is always profitable to tell or teach us what's right, what's wrong, how to get right when we're wrong, and how to stay right when we are right. David said in Psalm 138:2, "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." Wow, that verse amazes me every time I read it.

In 2 John verse 2 we read about something that caused John to rejoice greatly, "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the

Father." John's "greatly rejoicing" in this verse was about the Church, the children of God who were meeting together to worship, preaching, praying, singing and living in the truth. You may ask, "Why was the truth so important to John?" That answer would take more time than we have in this effort, but one thing should be noted, John loved his Lord Who taught him the truth. John understood the truth because he had spent time with Jesus and when he witnessed others laboring "walking in the truth", it caused his heart to be filled with happiness.

In our efforts to please God, we should examine ourselves daily (2 Corinthians 13:5). The Lord has given us a standard to use to make this examination or judgement. It's the plumb line that has come down from heaven, His Word (see Amos 7:7-8 for an example of a plumb line). When we use God's Word as the standard, do we align with what it

## Light

Elder Joe Holder

*Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 5:13-16 KJV 1900)*

Every point Jesus makes regarding light in this lesson cries out for

says? Does our worship service have a "Thus sayeth the Lord" in everything that we do? Do the everyday activities of our lives contradict what God has called us to be? Brothers and sisters, I realize we are not perfect, and we live in a sinful world, yet with a continual looking into God's Word we are able to overcome much of the deception and untruth in this world. And without question we should work diligently to learn the truth and live our lives according to the truth. God has equipped us. God has promised to help us. Will we be found as many who walk according to the rules of the world, or will we be like Joshua, "but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15)? Amen!

one point. His followers should not attempt to hide their faith in Him, regardless the occasion or setting. They are a "...city that is set on a hill," not a city in a valley. They are a candle "...on a candlestick." Then He wraps the lesson up with a summary conclusion, "**Let your light so shine....**"

In the basic analogy of light and darkness, consider one major point. Light is a form of natural energy. Darkness is the absence of that energy. How important is this light-darkness contrast to believers. In any culture, from one private family to a whole nation, darkness will prevail unless those who have access to and ability to use the light source actively turn on that light energy. Christians in our country, for example, cannot complain that our country has drifted into increasing darkness. The only source of light available to our culture resides in the Christian community. Sadly,

however loudly they complain about the darkness, many professing Christians in our present culture abandon their faith when they go to the polls and cast their votes for people who openly advocate ideas that shout the moral darkness of wickedness in blatant contradiction of Jesus and His teachings. For example, in the last Gleanings, I referenced an unnamed political leader in our country who openly ridiculed professing Christians who honestly go to the Bible for their faith and lifestyle. In past times, such an idea would have brought the vocal resistance of the Christian community to the headlines against this man and his ideas. And that same Christian community would have spoken loudly and decisively at the polls the next time this man ran for office. They'd have voted him out of office. What happened on this occasion? He was praised for his open mindedness. And Christians spoke not a word against the man or his idea. For too many professing Christians today, a life of Christianity means saying you believe in Jesus, but then doing whatever you wish or think to be right with little to no appeal to or respect for anything written in Scripture regarding your lifestyle.

We should take grave warning. One whole book in the Old Testament was written to document what happens to a people who embrace this attitude, and it is not an uplifting book at all.

*In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.* (Judges 21:25; emphasis added)

If you care to learn what our own culture faces with its praise of this mindset, read the whole Book of Judges. It

records a culture in flux, disarray, confusion, and no stability whatever. One day the people repent and anemically turn to the Lord, but shortly personal convenience interferes, and they go right back to their sinful "Right in my own eyes" ways which bring the Lord's righteous judgment upon them. How sadly this scenario fits our present culture. Let a national tragedy occur, such as 9/11, and people, including political leaders, openly talk about God and prayer. But within a very short time, they will pass another law that forbids Christian ideas and prayer in any public place, claiming their personal enlightenment to be so open minded and considerate of all ideas, religions, and philosophies. When Sandra and I visited the 9/11 memorial a few years ago, we were saddened and angered that a whole room at the end of the walk-through was devoted to the men and ideas that prompted the high-jacking of airplanes and the senseless killing of some three thousand people.

Years ago I discovered the life and writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Christian who lived during the horrible era of Adolph Hitler. He eventually died for his faith. Despite Germany's history of Christian faith, the home and bastion of Martin Luther as an example, during this dark era in Germany's history, German Christians hid their faith and quietly tried to ignore the horrors that daily confronted every principle of Biblical Christianity which their ancestors in the faith had taught. Here we see a shocking reminder in contemporary history of what actually happens to a culture when Christians go quiet and fail to shine their light against the darkness that invades a culture when the lights refuse

to shine. Consider these words from Bonhoeffer.

"Flight into the invisible is a denial of the call. A community of Jesus which seeks to hide itself has ceased to follow him." (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

When Jesus spoke the words, "*Let your light so shine*," He in no remote way indicated a passive or inactive auto-pilot mindset. The verb is active voice. In first century Greek or twenty first century English, active voice means that the subject of the sentence completes the action of the sentence. He/she does something. The verb tense in first century Greek is Aorist. There is no exact parallel in our English, but it is, to some extent, comparable to our perfect tense. It describes an action that started in the past and continues in the present. Jesus' point is clear and convicting. This shining of our light is not to be a flickering, on-again-off-again whimsical kind of thing. We are to actively, consciously, and consistently engage our focus to keep that light shining at all times. And the verb mood is imperative, meaning in either language that the subject is commanded to take a certain defined or specified action. No one else will do this for you. You are directed by Jesus to take the necessary action to ensure that your light shines in the manner that Jesus directed it to shine..

Sometimes misguided believers advocate what they term "Passive Christian obedience." Friends, if we believe Jesus throughout the gospels, strongly stated in this lesson, we will know that "Passive obedience" for a believing Christian is a contradiction in terms. Jesus' words command His

followers to take conscious, deliberate, and active direction to ensure that their light, their Christian faith, shines as He commands in this lesson. Yes, wind and waves "Obeyed" Jesus, but wind and waves have no mind or moral conviction. As a born again believer, you have both, in addition to your Lord's command to be active in your faith walk.

Think of the basic difference between light and darkness. Darkness is the natural state when the active energy of light is not present and active. The same principle holds when professing Christians in a culture, a church, or a family, neglect their faith. Absent that light, darkness invades and takes over, the major lesson Jesus taught here.

While every truth, every behavior that Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount is good and healthy for a family, a church, or a wider culture, He primarily spoke the entire Sermon to individual believers. Consider His final lesson in the Sermon.

*Therefore **whosoever** heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. (Matthew 7:24; emphasis added)*

*And **every one** that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. (Matthew 7:26; emphasis added)*

I am not a big fan of public "Demonstrations." The most superficial Christian can become emotionally charged for the moment, paint a sign, and march with his sign for a day. What Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount requires individual believers to

transform their life in the trenches where they live every moment of every day. I've mentioned the impact of light on families, churches, and the broader culture. If we follow Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, all of these influences are secondary to the personal individual conduct of each believer. The Sermon on the Mount must begin with each of us as individual believers if it is to have any impact on anyone around us. ***Our feet are His best evangelists.*** We find this personal, individual, and active Christian directive on every page of Scripture. Paul affirmed Jesus' words when he wrote of his personal Christian strategy.

*But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.* (1 Corinthians 9:27)

Notice how closely Paul's words reflect Jesus' teaching in our study lesson.

1. "*I keep under.*" When Jesus said, "*Let your light so shine,*" He used the Aorist tense in first century Greek. This action requires constant action. Paul didn't write that he occasionally got under his body. He ***kept***—actively and constantly—under it.

2. "*...bring it into subjection.*" Paul didn't write that he passively coasted so that God would bring his body into subjection. The believer who chooses to "Coast" passively with his body will become enslaved to

the appetites and sinful urges of his/her body, and his/her Christian light will smother out.

3. "*...I have preached to others.*" Paul understood the "Imperative," the active command, of Jesus to shine his faith-light so that others would see that light.

4. "*...lest...I myself should be a castaway.*" Paul sought to influence others to learn of Jesus and to glorify Him. (1 Corinthians 6:20) The specific manner of Paul's life, and of ours when we follow Jesus' words and Paul's example, never glorifies our selves. It always glorifies our Lord and Savior.

I once heard of a preacher who also worked in a secular career. After working for many years, when the man died, no one in his workplace knew that he was a minister. Do you think he was shining his light? We can hope he shined his moral-ethical light nicely, but Jesus' Sermon on the Mount requires more of us. How brightly—and consistently—is our light shining?

**The Comforter** is published six times annually. The cost is \$10 per year for the hard copy mailed to your preferred address. **The Comforter** is also available in an email version at no cost. May God richly bless you in the New Year!