

# The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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## **Homes Meeting the Social Needs of Our Youth**

This is a message that I have chosen to bring because I feel that it is an area of need. It has to do with our youth. We need to emphasize the importance of our youth choosing to serve the Lord at a young age. Our subject will bear on the thought of the homes so directing their youth that will help them to choose right and to find fulfillment and satisfaction in the right things. One of the areas that has been debated in

conservative circles over the years is how to meet the social needs of our youth, and what are appropriate ways to have those needs met and fulfilled. One ordained brother made this comment, "Some of the things that are knocking on our doors, I thought we understood at the beginning of our movement that was a part of apostasy. Yet, we keep finding this thing knocking at our doors."

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Therefore, we want to address the homes meeting the social needs of our youth in a way that will help to produce spiritual youth. I am afraid sometimes that some of our cows receive more attention than maybe the children when it comes to this area of need. The farmer may have the forage checked, the various things, rations balanced perfectly, and keeps fine tuning, yet sometimes the needs in this direction of our children are not

always met. I am sure we mean to, and I am sure it is our desire to, and I trust that this will be an inspiration for us to do that.

A lot of unrest that comes in the age of youth, or the period of life where youth experience some unrest, often has more to do with excessive social life outside of the home than not having enough of social life outside of the home. I think, that is something we will consider as we move through. Our homes

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should help our youth be content and have a sense of fulfillment in home life, and they should find their social needs met within the context of family life. I would turn to several verses where the home of Abraham comes into focus starting with Genesis 18:19. Then, we want to look at a few other chapters where Abraham's family comes into focus. We have a few windows into Abraham's home and his home life that help us to see how we should have homes. I would say this at the beginning that the older I get, the more I am aware of my own deficiencies and aware that the right things happen as a result of the grace of God, more than that we always have every "i" dotted and "t" crossed every minute of the day. I say that for our encouragement that we keep working at it rather than feel discouraged if we realize there are areas that need improvement.

God says in Genesis 18:19 of Abraham that he will become a great nation, and He says, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." Is this not something that apparent-

ly early in Abraham's home life, God says "I know the outcome of this home before it happens." That was based on more than simply His foreknowledge. It was based on attitudes and patterns of thought and relating that were established very early apparently in Abraham's experience.

In Genesis 22, we see another glimpse into Abraham's home. Abraham was a man of whom God was able to say, "The right things will happen in his family life." We want to look at a few things. In Genesis 22:6-13 they were on their way — God had told Abraham to offer his son Isaac on Mount Moriah. "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together." The story continues and we know how Abraham bound Isaac to the altar and was about to slay him, when God stopped it.

Let us turn to Genesis 24:1–6 for a few thoughts. “And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.” The Scripture continues by saying that Abraham said that the angel of the Lord would go before the servant.

I would like a few verses yet at the end of this chapter. In verse 63, the servant and Rebekah were returning and this was unknown to Isaac. “And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide.” I like that. Here was a young man who was not out with the community youth. He was

not out having a ball game but he was meditating. He was a young man satisfied in the things of the Lord. “And he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming.” Then, we have the exchange and Isaac was well satisfied with the Lord’s leading. He was very much at rest with how the Lord had led. Here was a young man who apparently found contentment in the home of a father who was in command, and he found contentment where the father directed his social life. He was at rest, and I like that. We will draw from these thoughts as we move through the message.

I would say this to our youth before going into the message directly, God has a plan for you. He has a place that he wants you to fill in life, each and every one of you, if you will give Him that opportunity. Secondly, time is short and I know you probably are grinning inside. I do not see any of you grinning visibly but time is short. You may think “It is a long time till I am sixteen, or eighteen or twenty-one.” Remember, time is short and what is happening in your life now has such a direct bearing on what will happen in your life in the years to come. Also, thirdly we need to understand that what we sow, we will reap. This is a

principle that I think repentance can cancel to some degree, yet while repentance can cancel the effects of some of the reaping, there is still reaping. There is simply no way to escape the reaping of whatever we sow. If we sow for the good, we can rejoice in the reaping. If we sow some of the negative, then we need to face that.

1) I would like to look first at what this youth time of life is about — a bit of how it is, so that it will help us as parents, and those responsible for directing the social life of youth to understand a bit what we are facing. We often refer to youth as an age of mid teens through the upper teens even into the lower twenties. If you are twenty, twenty-one, maybe even to twenty-two, often writers who write about these subjects will include you in the age of youth as well. Youth is a wonderful time of life. It is a time of growing, learning, discovery, becoming aware of new powers, a rapid expanding of abilities, and it is a wonderful time of life. I would remind you as youth, to remember that every person you know in church life who is older than you and outside of the youth category were youth at one time. You are not different from when we were youth. Keep that in mind. It is important for

youth to remember that.

Youth have some tendencies that they need to reckon with. They have a tendency to be overconfident in their abilities, to enjoy fun and pleasure, to allow the appetites and the desires of their physical being to dominate life. They have a tendency to allow the urge to be accepted socially to override their better judgment and what they know to be right. I say a tendency. I am not saying that youth follow this. I rejoice that our youth, by and large, are living in Christian victory and these things are not dragging them down. However, the tendencies are still there. It is that, that we must reckon with.

Youth also experience some frustrations in the face of the changes. Youth is a time of transition, where they are moving from childhood into adulthood and they desire adult privileges but sometimes find it difficult to face adult responsibilities. They sometimes find a conflict between what is right and what the new urge is and what the expanding horizons are bringing to them. They sometimes sense some insecurities as they face the prospect of the future. Youth need firm understanding and direction and guidance during this period of time. Their perspective is narrow due to inexperience

rience.

Youth do not always understand themselves and they do not always understand the forces that are at work within them. There is a desire to reach beyond the home, but there is a certain shyness that sometimes draws them back. There is a readiness for the new, but there is an uncertain and fearfulness about the new and so sometimes there can even be a measure of conflict. They may not always detect readily the outcome of a given course. They may not always understand fully the need for restraint and restrictions. That is also a part of youth.

*Let us now look at some of the social needs of our youth as well.* The social needs of youth have at times been overplayed. I am satisfied with that. Sometimes the restlessness of our youth is a reflection on a parental attitude, where the parents really are the ones who are restless and they are overly concerned about their youth being accepted, being popular and getting married. Therefore, sometimes the restless of youth reflects the restlessness of the parents. However, there are social needs that do exist. As we stated earlier, there is a great transition period happening during youth. They have a new social consciousness. What oth-

ers think matters more to them now than when they were younger. While social life always exists, it is now being shaped and controlled by new instincts and new interests. They have an increasing desire to be with their peers, and an increasing desire to reach beyond the home. That is normal and right, but, it needs to be directed and that is the issue.

Youth become more preoccupied with choosing partners, vocations, friends and all of that, and that is part of the transition. They are more conscious and interested in the ones on the opposite side of the house. We know how the little boy is; he does not want anything to do with the girls, but by the time he comes to this age of life this takes on a little different twist and that is right and proper. There is also an increased desire to make a contribution beyond the family setting. There is a tendency to loosen home ties and to become somewhat more independent. A parent who is wide awake is aware of that and will give some independence as time moves on and as the young person is able to take it. It is obvious that there is an unhitching process going on. By the time the young person is ready for marriage, hopefully the parents have given them enough

independence as time moved on such that they have learned responsibility and they are able then to be on their own. However, it must be carefully guarded and guided, and that is the emphasis of this message.

There is an intense desire to share and discuss the issues of life. Answers are needed. There is an intense desire to communicate to those who understand. Often we will find them apt to discuss with their peers things that might be more appropriate to be discussing with their seniors. There is a tendency to become obsessed with social life. They have the tendency to do things that elders do not understand. I do not think we find that so much in our settings, but the tendency is still there. There is a tendency to loose perspective. We may hear young people say, "Everybody else does it," but when we look into it we find out that the percentage is very low of any who are doing it. This is the youth's perspective.

Now coming to what applies to the home, and homes meeting the needs of our youth. I would lay this challenge as I think of the families of youth. Some of you are in the middle of directing the lives of youth. There are others of you who will be there so quickly. I realize that those par-

ents who are in the middle of it this may impress them more than some who are yet to face it. Yet, it is important that we start thinking about it before we face it so that we are in a position to know how to relate. When homes are what they should be, and youth are spiritual, the time of youth does not have to be a time of conflict. I know one father said, as he was passing through this time of life, "I do not understand this, that some homes talk about the conflict they have with their youth. And, you know, there are jokes in the world about this kind of thing. I do not understand that." I would say that can be the norm among us. We can raise our youth without a lot of conflict. That does not mean there is nothing to work through or that there are never times that there is conflict but the overall picture is not a conflict. I would say that if a father goes into this time of life with the idea that he never wants any conflict, he will not likely meet the needs of his youth, because there are times when we will likely need to say "no." And there will be times where we will need to give direction that maybe will make tears flow if we will bring this out right.

However, when parents take their place, there does not have to be a lot of conflict. When par-

ents take their place, it takes a lot of pressure away from youth. When father “hum haws” and does not quite know where he is at, then the children are left at sea. They are a little more apt to keep pressing and keep pressing and pressing. However, when they have a question or they need some direction and father knows where he stands and gives the word and the case is somewhat “closed,” that does not mean they cannot discuss it or maybe have some discussion over a period of time about it. The young person knows that the father has his best interests at heart and he will not push him around. That brings security and rest, and it takes the pressure off the young person. The young person does not need to be always deciding when he can push a little more and maybe father will give in. He does not need to decide that because he knows rather well where father stands and there is not a lot of commotion. In fact, in most homes the young people even know there are some questions where there is not even any use raising them because they about know father would say anyway.

When youth are spiritual, they still need the home, and the direction of home to protect and guide them. Sometimes fathers and mothers get the idea that now

they are church members and now they need to just back off and kind of let them on their own. That is a mistake. That will bring the wrong kinds of results. Even though they are church members now and are answering to the church in a new way it does not take the responsibility out of the hands of the home.

Sometimes two spiritual youth who are otherwise good, and moving in the right direction, can draw the worst out of each other. Fathers need to be aware of that and guard when that kind of thing happens. Sometimes youth are not quite understanding or perceiving. Sometimes they are not able to handle the freedom that they are or might be given. I have watched this happen too often, where in the mid teens because father and mother are a little restless and are afraid that somehow their youth will “miss the boat.” (You know what I mean by that term). They will start letting their youth run around too young and they will let them go to some distant points with others their age.

I believe that till a young person is eighteen, his moving around should primarily be in the context of his own parents or other homes. Sometimes a family will invite someone from another one to travel and go



somewhere, but primarily under eighteen it should be within the context of adults and supervision. That is the safe way. When parents have allowed too much freedom, too early, I have watched the influence shift from the home to peers. When that happens, father loses the steering wheel and then he cannot get it back. The influence is coming from another direction.

Sometimes youth face exposures that we did not face when we were their age. I would just remind every father of this: our youth have access to things today that I do not know where I would have found them if I would have even gone looking for them. Let us remember that. Some of our convenience stores and that kind of thing, we need to be well aware that they have at their fingertips things that I do not know where I would have found it if I went searching for it.

*Some principles.* 1) *We need to recognize that the home is the primary social unit.* Abraham understood that and gave direction to that. He knew that if Isaac would have direction it would need to come from him. He did not pass it off to someone else. The home is primarily where the social needs are met. It is true that church does give opportunity for social exchange. We have our

Bible schools and informative meetings. There is opportunity for social exchange and that is not all wrong. One brother made this observation that even as youth go to Bible school, the Bible school was started for the purpose of Bible study and that should be the primary motivation for our youth and young people going there. Sure there are some social by-products, or side effects, but the primary purpose is for Bible study.

However, when churches start to appoint youth leaders and they hold special activities apart from the elders, the church is sidestepping her calling and she is laying a ground work for apostasy. We need to come to grips with that. Primarily, the social needs of our youth are met within the context of homes, as your home visits my home, and my home visits your home. It is true that as we have teenagers in our homes, we will see to it that maybe we move around a little more so that the needs are met.

One father whose son was beginning to go a little the wrong way, finally stopped him and said, "Now son, some of the friends that you are allowing yourself to touch are not the right kind. You will need to shift this. You choose the right friends and we will see to it that you have

opportunity to be with them.” Then, he related, “As a result, we went to more informative meetings than we used to. We saw to it that we got to the churchwide meetings, and did more visiting,” so that those needs would be met and they would have the proper influence. That is right. We need to keep the parental influence dominant. Looseness often results in peers becoming the dominant force.

2) *Another principle is to not only to recognize that the home is the primary social unit, but to establish a spiritual focus in home life.* Obsession with social life outside of the home often indicates a restlessness that indicates a low level of spirituality. It is a truth that we ought to and need to face. Our youth need to understand that fulfilment of their needs is met primarily in Jesus Christ. Unless Jesus Christ is their answer, no amount of social life will fill the void. When Jesus Christ is the answer then social life keeps its proper balance and proper. Therefore, we need to be providing a social climate that will foster spiritual life.

A vital relationship with the Lord helps to control and direct the social desires and urges. If a young person is spiritual, they will recognize the providence of

God and simple faith in the Lord. This will help to moderate the concern about social acceptance and about getting partners. I would ask any restless parents, “Where is your faith in God? Do we trust that God will lead our young people like He led Isaac in this Old Testament account? Therefore, spiritual young people will not be restless and so overly concerned about social acceptance and finding partners because they recognize the providence of God in their life.

3) *Thirdly, we need to provide training in acceptable social behaviour.* The golden rule says, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Sometimes young people go to Bible school and it is obvious that they had not been given the proper training as it relates to the social graces. Then, it makes it a little harder for the social circle to include them and to give them a place where they can be comfortable and that can contribute to restlessness. We teach respect for others. See good in others and do not be one who is always critical or gossiping. Someone who always has something negative to say about someone else causes us to draw back because we know when they are behind our back they are likely doing the same to us. We also teach com-

mon courtesies. We do not talk out of turn, use the “please” and the “thank you,” the table manners, neatness, and cleanliness. All of those are providing proper training and social behaviour. There is also respect for authority in talk and response and giving the benefit of the doubt. There is a sense of property rights. They respect the rights of others and they are honest. There is respect for age. They have compassion, are helpful, and honourable. If we have not, as a parent, read the little booklet entitled, *Purity in the Christian Home* by Paul Landis from Rod and Staff Publishers, I would encourage you to get it wherever you have it kept. (I do not see it as the kind of book that is on the public shelf). Read it again. Some of those things apply to the subject that we are talking about.

4) *Fourthly, foster a wholesome companionship relationship within the home.* Notice in Genesis 22:6 and 8 it says twice, “they went both of them together.” Abraham was a father who knew where he stood. I am sure if Isaac would have come to Abraham and said, “Father, so and so over here is doing it.” I do not think that would have changed Abraham too much. He knew where he stood, and he commanded, gave direction,

insisted, he held the line, and he did not back up. That is all good and proper. However, that must, of necessity, also be coupled with what I call another prong in the fork and that is a building of a relationship, and “so they went both of them together.” I like the naturalness and freedom one senses here by which Isaac asked his father a question. Abraham said, “Here I am son, what do you have to say?” They were able to discuss the matter at hand. That must of necessity happen if the social needs of our youth will be met.

One father said that when his boy was young he asked him many frivolous questions that he got annoyed and he stopped answering them. Then, he said, “The day came when I wished he would ask questions and he did not.” Therefore, if we will have them ask them when they are teenagers, we need to be answering their questions even sometimes when they are little, when it seems so frivolous. Abraham must have had a close relationship with Isaac because of the freedom that one senses here. There was a comfort level. Be together. Do things together. Talk together. Have a sense of togetherness and a sense of loyalty and belonging to the family. This is so necessary.

Some youth, by the time they are teens, are running around so much that I do not know how they can develop a togetherness. In one setting the father says, "There is something for the young people to do three nights out of the week. It is too much. It is overdone." Obviously it is overdone. We go to church together. We do things together and that is important, if the right things and the social needs will be met. It is not that we deliberately take our child and set him down in our living room and say, "Do you have any questions or anything on your mind?" Or, "Maybe it is time to talk here a few minutes." That is not the way it happens.

This relationship happens on the run. It happens better, not so much that we are always playing games. (It is right to play games with young children and that is where they learn good sportsmanship). We know how it is. We are playing a game, he loses and then gets all out of sorts, "I am not going to play any more." That is the time we help him to be a good loser. Thus, there is a place for games. However, when we come into the mid and late teens, the place for these kinds of relationships to develop is as one is going about the work, and as one is maybe travelling and so

forth — not the play activities so much.

One young man says that the cow stable was his Bible school. What did he mean? He meant it was there as they went about the work that the father and the son discussed the various things. I think if this is happening, then by the time a young man gets to be old enough to have his own car, he well knows what his father will allow long before he ever got to that point, because things have been "talked." These things need to be happening. It is important that kind of relationship are being built before the pressures come. We might say, "We do not have a cow stable." You very likely have a garden. I remember vividly discussing things with my mother while drying the dishes. I did not have any sisters my age and we would dry dishes. I remember and I can still reflect on some discussions we had as we did the dishes. As we work together is where that happens.

5) *Provide for adequate social exchange beyond the home.* Our Christian day schools provide some of these. But youth, as we often think of it, are out of school. Families visit together. They visit neighbouring churches. They participate in church-wide activities. They will host visitors from other areas at times.

They do more of that to help to meet the needs of the youth. Our homes choose, and determine to provide, in order to do that. (Even here we need to be careful of the influences that come to us). The homes that we exchange with, influence our home in the long run. If we find ourselves tending to mingle with homes that are weak and tend to populate other church groups, it should be no surprise to us then in time that is how our home is affected. Therefore, we need to be giving direction to that social part of our children's development.

6) *Give direction to social life and associations beyond the home.* I would like to enlarge on this. Abraham did this, did he not? Young brethren, how would you like it if your father says, "Over here is the girl you are going to marry." It is a little bit what Abraham did here, did he not? We do not take that approach. However, as fathers and mothers, we do give a lot of direction as to whom they marry. We determine that by whom we let them associate with. We determine that by the church group we choose. We determine that by how we enter into church life, and respond to the direction of the church. A lot of that determines whom they will choose as

a life companion. Thus, while we do not deliberately do as Abraham did, yet in the final analysis, we do have direct involvement. Let us be faithful in that.

Possibly the parents are on trial the most in this matter. One father said he always dreaded a little when his children became youth and would begin to move about a little more. They would bump into some influences that they would need to sort. However, he said, "I came to find out when I came to that time of life it was not the children who were on trial, it was me." They would come home and say, "Well, so and so does this." Then some fathers melt like a snowman in July. They do not know what to do with that. Let us be like Abraham. Let us know where we are before we face those tests, and let us simply stand firm. When a father does not quite know where he is at, and if children can start pushing around a little and get their way, and there is not the firmness, then children not only become insecure, but they do not develop spiritually and mature as rapidly as where there is firmness is gentle guidance.

I remember trying that stunt on my father one time. I thought I had a case because the preacher's

son was doing it. He simply answered me this way, "Well, we appreciate that brother. Our convictions are very similar to his, and we respect what our minister stands for, but he is a man too, and in this area we feel like maybe he could have a little encouragement and help and here is where we stand. This is the position we will take." Then, the case was closed. I did not need to decide how I would approach him next. I did not have the agony of going through that. I understood. He explained it and we moved on. That is giving direction. However, some melt like a snowman in July when children say, "Well, others do it," or "So and so," or "They do it over here." Not everyone does.

There is a variation of standards within our own conservative circles. I said that to a father recently and his mouth kind of dropped open, and he thought I was clear out in left field somewhere. I went on to explain. "Within every church group all generations as I know it, we have different types of families. There are families that are dead centre. They are right there. Their shoulder is to the wheel." I thank the Lord that is the majority of our people. However, we always have some that are coming in who do not fully understand our

positions or why. And, we always have some that are moving the other way who if they continue their course will be on the outside eventually. Those influences are always present. As fathers, we need to help our youth to sort that and we need to be giving direction to the influences that are touching their life.

7) *Social life beyond the home for mid teenagers, should be within the context of family or other responsible adults.* You may say, "you said that before." Well, it is a very important point in my mind. Freedom too soon, shifts the centre of gravity from parents to peers and the young person cannot handle freedom or peer pressure. After eighteen, some more privileges, of course, are allowed if they are showing the maturity. The question could come, "What is the kind of maturity that we look for?" Whenever they are able to make decisions on the basis of spirituality and right and wrong, rather than making the decision on the basis of peer pressure, then they are mature enough to begin to handle some freedom. I think that is how we decide it. Our youth should put the balls and bats away and get out tracts and spiritual books and show interest in the extension of the kingdom. There is a place for youth to play

with younger brothers and sisters or to play with the younger children when there are several families visiting together. However, having play activities on a group level, will shift the interests from sober Christian living and activities to a less sober outlook and a desire for fun and excitement, and the mentality that somehow life is fun, does not go with the requirements for spiritual growth.

I remember some years ago being in a congregation preaching on a Sunday evening. I saw that I did not have the attention of the young people. I did not know why. For some reason, their interests were somewhere else. I discovered later that after the service they went off to play tennis. No wonder I could not hold their attention. Play — the fun mentality and interest in spiritual things do not go together. I know sometimes young people will get together and have some Bible reading and some singing, then they will have play and somehow that is to sanctify it. It simply does not produce the right thing in the long run. Spiritual interests and orientation do not mix with an intense social pleasure and fun orientation. A conservative group cannot pursue a play mentality and maintain a spiritual mentality. We have a more

noble calling. Our youth should sense that call.

8) *Give opportunity to contribute to the larger cause beyond the home.* Youth do have a need to identify with a cause. We should make that cause the cause of Christ and His kingdom. *Living Waters*, tract distribution, street meetings, cottage meetings, projects within the congregation are good. Churchwide meetings give them opportunity to make a contribution to the church in the context of their elders, that is, both of them together. I like that, “They went both of them together.” It is a principle.

I would raise this question in conclusion. “Is it too much to expect this kind of thing from our youth?” Not at all. Not if we will produce a generation that will be the leaders of the Church for tomorrow and those whom we can lean on. One brother said, “We have made this observation as a Numidia Bible School board over the years, that the terms and the times when there is a set of youth there where there are a lot of snacks in the dorm are often the times when they have trouble getting the young people into the study hall.” There is something in that, is there not? The times where they sense that the young people came to see each other and for the social

exchange are also the times that they have difficulty getting them into the study hall and getting youth to study and to take real interest in the Scriptures. They sense that there is not always the appreciation for spiritual things. There tends to be more a gathering of young people who live a little more to the edge. The same

result is in focus. This whole matter does have a bearing on what we will produce and what we will be. Let us remember what the brother said, "I thought this play mentality and this intense social life went along with apostasy." He is right. It does. May we be faithful to live above it.

## Scripture References for Volume 2

Genesis	Exodus	Deuteronomy			
1:1	28	3:13	25	4:9	221
1:3	28	3:12-14	26	5:29	219
2:4	28	6:2	27	6:7	221
3:7	223	6:12	219	7	254
6:8	251	12	243	12:29-32	14
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## **From the Previous Issue:**

### **The Remnant Concept In the Scriptures**

From a message by James J. Martin

Sunday, December 07, 1997

New England Valley Mennonite Church

### **The Misleading Label (The So-called Invisible Church)**

From a message by Merle Ruth

Sunday, July 31, 2005

Dohner Mennonite Church

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### Quotes:

“Not all history is of equal importance. Biblical history is of first importance; from it we learn some of the most valuable lessons and truths. Church history is also important; we need to know not just what happened

many years ago, but why it happened. The faithful in the past had a vision that we can learn and profit from.”

Why do we record Mennonite Church History? A people who do not have the appreciation and

interest to record their history will not long have the virtue that makes their history worth recording or teaching. A people who are indifferent to their past need

hope to make their future greater. If we lose our history, we will lose our identity as a people of God.”

## **Book Reprint (Continued)** **One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study**

### **LESSON 35.** **Noted Heathen Rulers.**

#### I. Sennacherib.

1. King of Assyria. — 2 Kings 18:13.

NOTE. — Son of Sargon, and one of the mightiest rulers of the kingdom.

2. Invasion of Palestine.

- a. Capture of fortified cities. — 2 Kings 18:13.
- b. Hezekiah's tribute. — 2 Kings 18:14–16.
- c. Sennacherib sends emissaries to Hezekiah. — 2 Kings 18:17–37; 2 Chronicles 32: 9–16; Isaiah 36:4–21.
- d. Sennacherib turns aside to meet Tirhakah, king of Egypt. — 2 Kings 19: 8, 9.
- e. Sends a blasphemous letter to Hezekiah. — 2 Kings 19:10–13; 2 Chronicles 32:17; Isaiah 37:8–13.
- f. Hezekiah lays the letter before the Lord. — 2 Kings 19:14–19; Isaiah 37:14–20.
- g. Isaiah's prophecy. — 2 Kings 19:20–34; Isaiah 37:21–35.
- h. The destroying angel visits the Assyrian camp. — 2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chronicles 32:21; Isaiah 37:36.

NOTE. — Sennacherib had found it an easy matter to triumph over the king of Israel; but when he challenged the God of Israel he found a Foe which no power can vanquish. One word or touch from Him can wipe out of existence the mightiest conqueror on the globe.

3. Death of Sennacherib. — 2 Kings 19:37; Isaiah 37:38.

#### II. Nebuchadnezzar.

1. King of Babylon. — Jeremiah 21; 25; 27; 28; 32; 34.

NOTE. — He was the son of Napobolassar, founder of the empire.

2. Victory over Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt. — Jeremiah 46:2.
3. Capture of Jerusalem.
  - a. Captivity of Jehoiakim. — 2 Kings 24:1; 2 Chronicles 36:6; Daniel 1:1.
  - b. Captivity of Jehoiachin. — 2 Kings 24:8–16; 2 Chronicles 36:9, 10.
  - c. Captivity of Zedekiah. — 2 Kings 25; 2 Chronicles 36:13–21.
4. His name an object of terror to surrounding nations. — Ezekiel 26:7; 29:18–20; Jeremiah 46:13.
5. His dreams and their interpretation. — Daniel 2:4.
6. A strange form of madness. — Daniel 4:28–33.

NOTE. — God had used Nebuchadnezzar as an instrument to chastise His people (Jeremiah 25:9; 2 Chronicles 36:17; Daniel 2:33). Nebuchadnezzar took the credit of his greatness to himself (Daniel 4:30), and this disease was his punishment (Daniel 4:31). While God permitted His disobedient children to be chastised by heathen rulers, He nevertheless manifested His superior power over these heathen conquerors at various times.

7. His golden image, and the fiery furnace. — Daniel 3.

### III. Cyrus.

1. King of Persia. — 2 Chronicles 36:22, 23.

NOTE. — He was the first king of the combined kingdom of Media and Persia. Under him Persia began her rapid strides upward, which made her, for a time, the most powerful nation on the globe.

2. His work foretold by Isaiah. — Isaiah 44:28; 45:1.

NOTE. — This was over a century before Cyrus was born.

3. His proclamation liberating the Jews. — 2 Chronicles 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1–4.

4. His decree found by Darius. — Ezra 6:1–12.

NOTE. — Cyrus stands out among the heathen rulers as the one king who never missed an opportunity to further the interests of God's people.

1. What was the nature of Sennacherib's letter to Hezekiah?
2. What lessons are taught from Nebuchadnezzar's confession of God's kingdom?

3. Wherein did the policy of Cyrus differ from that of Nebuchadnezzar?
4. Whom did Nebuchadnezzar's image represent?
5. Describe Nebuchadnezzar's exile.

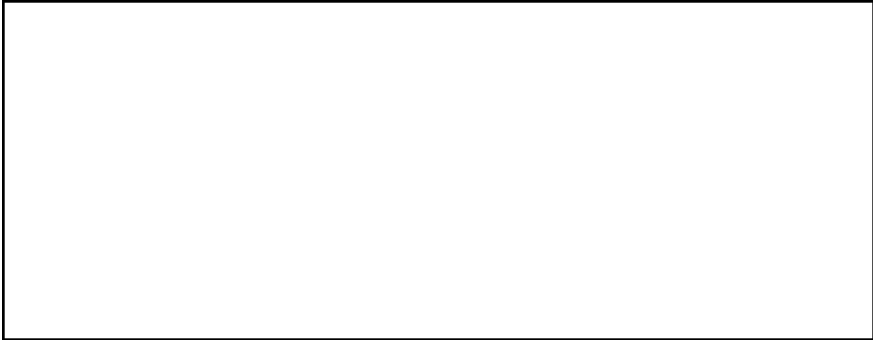
## **FIFTY FUNDAMENTAL FACTS**

### **6. The Gospel of Christ is our rule of life for the present Dispensation.**

With the Law of Moses nailed "to the cross" (Colossians 2:14), being fulfilled in Christ, we have a new Law, the Gospel of Christ, to direct us in our journey of life — as Paul writes to the Hebrews: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Hebrews 1:1, 2). The last thing that our Saviour said to His disciples before He took His triumphant flight to glory was that they should "teach all nations . . . to observe all things whatsoever" He had commanded them. Furthermore, there is a fearful punishment decreed for those who "obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9). We thank God for the Gospel "It is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16). Beware of the man who comes with "another gospel" (Galatians 1:8, 9)

### **7. There is a personal devil.**

There are two things which all men of faith believe: (1) There is a personal God, the Author of all our blessings. (2) There is a personal devil, the arch deceiver of mankind, the adversary of souls. Let no one deceive himself with the idea that "every man is his own devil." It did not work that way in the garden of Eden; it does not work that way now. As "an angel of light," (2 Corinthians 11:14) he has deceived many and caused them to make shipwreck of faith. As "a roaring lion," (1 Peter 5:8) he is still carrying on his deadly work of wreck and ruin. As "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4) he is blinding the minds of those who will not yield themselves to God, and he is further leading them into paths of wickedness and destruction. You don't need to open your Bibles or listen to any orthodox preacher to be convinced of the fact that there is a personal devil. Just take a good, square look at this dark and sinful world, and you have proof sufficient to convince any man who is not blinded by this arch deceiver of souls.



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