

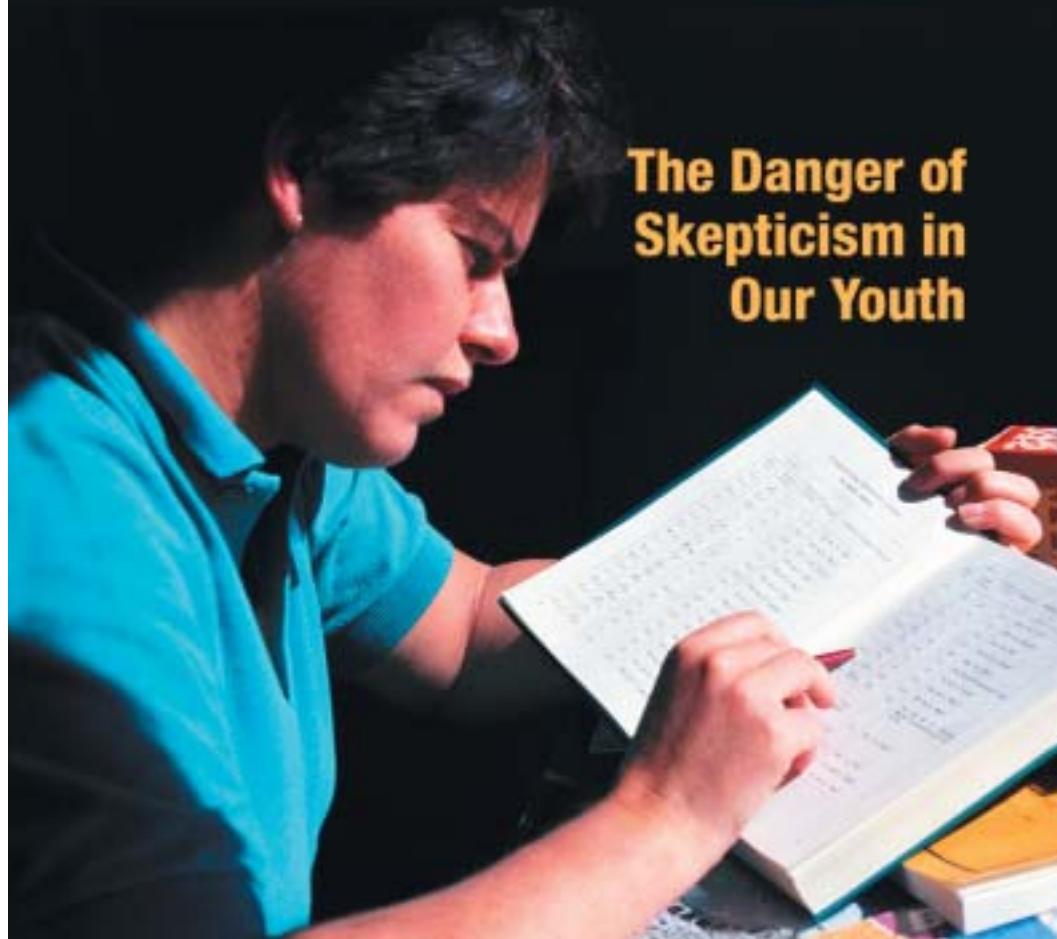


YOUTH Messenger®

JANUARY–MARCH 2002



**The Danger of
Skepticism in
Our Youth**



Only One Thing Needful

The 20th century—the “speed-century”—has passed by already more than a year ago. What will be the name of this current century? Will the hurried people of this old planet have enough time to find a name for it? The first year is now over and we would all agree that it was not a soft one. The inspired Scripture comes to mind, “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:6–8).

What will happen? Most importantly, where will we be found? Swimming in the same ocean of “urgent things to be done,” running day and night? Often we find ourselves pressed by the speedy times. Shall we have the maturity to ask Jesus for help? Or will we leave Him aside, trying our best on our own, as the disciples did on that stormy night on the sea? How sad it would be for God to look around and know that everybody—including His most beloved ones—are too busy to come to Him. We can almost hear Him saying to Himself, “Woe unto them! for they have fled from me” (Hosea 7:13). “And ye will not come to me, that ye might

have life” (John 5:40). Could this be possible with us? Being so close, yet so far from Him?

If we finally have the moral power to come to Him in sincerity with our troubles and concerns, one thing is sure: He will surprise us with His answer! He will tell us, “Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful (Luke 10:41, 42). Only one thing! “One thing thou lackest” (Mark 10:21).

Your one thing will be different from my one thing. The rich young man needed to sell his goods, while Nicodemus needed to “sell” his self-sufficiency. But all of us really need the same precious one thing. In this busy life, we need to receive the beloved Son of God Himself—and not only His gifts, His care, and His help. Shall we kneel down at His feet, as Mary, to receive something, “that good part, which shall not be taken away” from us?

I praise the Lord for the interest He is stirring among His beloved youth! This “one thing” looks as if it will be the very thing that has started to occupy our interest so far this year. May the Lord help us to echo the words of Paul, “This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13, 14). Amen!



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The Tongues of the BIBLE

by Lesley Johnson
Writing from North Carolina, U.S.A.

Some years ago in a large city in Florida, there was great excitement over what was thought to be the face of Christ appearing nightly on the bathroom window of a local church. People came to see this phenomenon and some were positive that they had witnessed a miracle. But two questions arise: What purpose had the apparition served? And why would Christ have chosen of all places, a bathroom window? These questions remain unanswered. Perhaps it tells us something about the supposed “miracle.”

As a Christian believer continues to grow in grace, the realization comes that God has a purpose in everything He says and does. Raising a false excitement never accomplishes good, for there is nothing false about the Saviour, and “there is none good but one, that is, God” (Matthew 19:17).

In many popular churches today, much excitement is found over what is referred to as the gift of tongues. People work themselves into an uncontrolled frenzy and utter a fast, repetitive series of syllables. (It is noteworthy to real-

ize that some occult groups also have this practice. It is also significant that while the words usually uttered in charismatic churches may sound like meaningless jibberish, there have been cases reported whereby foreigners recognized distinct words as actually being the foulest curse words in a language with which they were familiar.)

Nevertheless, many sincere Christian believers have strong confidence in the gift of tongues for today. So, if it is indeed God’s will for this gift to be again manifested exactly as it was at Pentecost, what must we understand about it from the Bible record? Two questions arise that must and can be answered: 1. What purpose do the tongues of the Bible serve? 2. Would Christ choose for His people meaningless words by which to communicate life and death messages?

What is the purpose? There may be other reasons why tongues—languages—were given by God, but the obvious ones are:

1. That people could communicate with each other.

2. That people could be identified as a nation.

3. That God could send messages through His prophets.

We can know that speech is God-given, since He saw fit to create in us vocal cords which have no other function than to enable us to speak.

There are 35 books in the Bible that use the word “tongue” or “tongues.” Twenty-three of them are in the Old Testament; twelve are in the New Testament. Let us find out what this word can mean.

Before language was confounded by God at the building of the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:6–8), the whole earth spoke one language (Genesis 11:1), and God saw that if men could not understand one another’s speech, they would be restrained in their rebellion. So the Lord intervened. “In mercy He confounded their speech by putting a check on their purposes of rebellion” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 123).

Nations soon became known by their tongues (Genesis 10:5, 20, 31; Deuteronomy 28:49). Each distinct group of people was recognized by their unique language. It was organized speech, thus which they communicated with those of their own nation, different from that of any other nation. They could speak with other nations only through an interpreter, or by making a special effort to learn the foreign language.

The term “tongue” can also describe the ability to use one’s own language effectively, as when Moses pleaded with God that he had “a slow tongue” (Exodus 4:10). The tongue could be used to talk or to lap (Judges 7:5); it could cleave to the roof or the

mouth (Job 29:10); it could be touched (Mark 7:33). The Spirit of God used the prophets’ tongues to speak to the people (2 Samuel 23:2) in speech they could understand. There were false prophets who used their tongues for personal gain (Jeremiah 23:32). Sometimes the “tongues” of nations were named, such as Syrian (Ezra 4:7) or Hebrew (John 5:2). The tongue can speak truth or deceit, righteousness or filthy rags. It can build up or tear down, it can start a war or advocate peace, speak wisdom or foolishness; it can sing praises to God or to the devil. What a powerful tool has been entrusted to our control!

Throughout the Bible, a “tongue” always has had an aim, to relay information, good or bad. Although in the sense of being a specific language, a tongue was exclusive within a nation, it could be written, studied and learned (Ezra 4:7; Mark 5:41; 15:34) by anyone else who wished to do so. Nowhere in the

Old Testament is there even a hint that tongues were anything but known languages, or a useful part of the physical body.



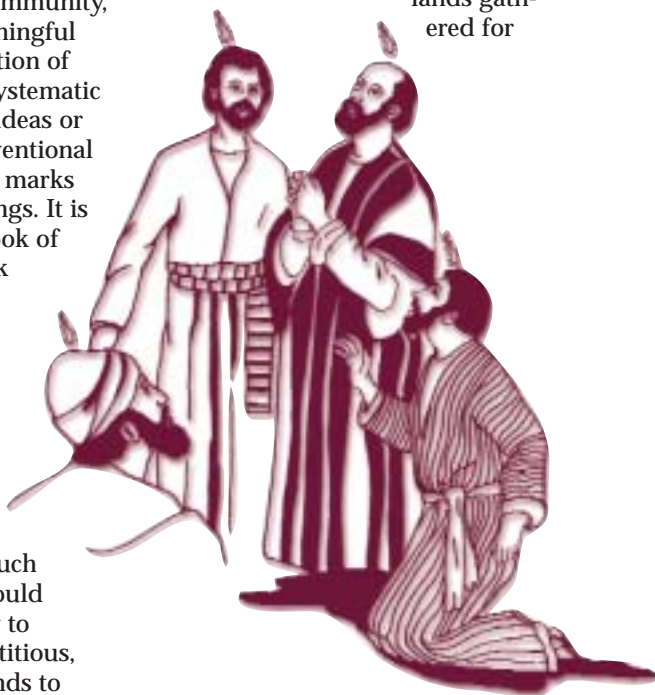
Have tongues changed?

Seeing as there is “no new thing under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9), one would expect the Old Testament to mention any unusual tongues, but it does not. Looking to the New Testament, Mark 16:17 speaks of new tongues. However, when investigating the meaning of this in *Strong’s Concordance* # 1100, the definition is “by implication—a language—one naturally unacquired.” That is, one acquired by having been born into it. “New” must therefore refer to the fact that the tongue would be new to the disciples, one which they personally could not speak before, but was nonetheless a known language. Webster’s dictionary defines “language” as 1) the words, their pronunciation and the methods of combining them, used and understood by a considerable community, 2) audible, articulate, meaningful sound produced by the action of the vocal cords, and 3) a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventional signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings. It is interesting also that the book of Daniel, parallel to the book of Revelation, mentions “people, nations, and languages” (Daniel 7:14; 3:4; 4:1; 5:19; 6:25), while Revelation uses the term “tongues” to convey the same idea (Revelation 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 17:15; 14:6).

God’s language is so much higher than ours that it would seem a form of blasphemy to attribute nonsensical, repetitious, and often inarticulate sounds to

being a way that He would communicate with anyone. God spoke audibly to His prophets and on some occasions to others such as Abraham and Moses in person; but again, these instances were in a known language and conveyed doctrine, reproof, correction, or instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).

Tongues at Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit appeared as tongues of fire and “sat” upon all who were assembled in the upper room, thus bestowing upon them the gift of tongues (Acts 2:4). This is the first mention of tongues as a special gift and what it consisted of is explained in verses 5–11. The disciples were speaking in known foreign languages, so that the many visitors from foreign lands gathered for



Pentecost could hear what God had to say to them in their native tongue. This was needed because people of so many different nationalities were present. “And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:5–11).

Later on, when newly converted Gentiles spoke in tongues magnifying God, others heard and understood them (Acts 10:45, 46). Still others spoke in tongues, prophesying. It would have been of no benefit had they prophesied in a language that no one could understand.

Tongues were not a sign of acceptance into the Christian faith, for not all were able to speak in tongues (1 Corinthians 12:30). This

was a gift given along with the gift of interpretation (1 Corinthians 12:10). Apparently this gift was misused, as Paul had to admonish the Corinthian church, but there is no evidence whatsoever that tongues were ever anything but real languages. 1 Corinthians 13:1 informs us that there are tongues that men speak and tongues that angels speak. But tongues shall cease when we are personally with Christ (verse 8). If tongues are the language of heaven, why should they

cease? It seems that it would then increase and all would speak it. Then we are told that “greater is he that prophesies” than those that speak in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:5); and in verse 19, Paul would rather speak five words with understanding than 10,000 in an unknown tongue. In order to have 10,000 words,

Paul must have been referring to a language as defined above by Webster. For what many refer to in our day as the gift of tongues falls far short of this number, consisting of mostly repetitious syllables.

Paul continues in 1 Corinthians 14:21, 22 to remind that “with men of other tongues . . . will I speak unto this people,” but they still won’t listen, so tongues are not a sign to them that believe, but to those who don’t believe. This is a reference to the prophecy of Isaiah 28:9–13. The Lord, speaking to Israel, showed them how to study His word and learn, but they

On the day of Pentecost, people of many different nationalities were present.

wouldn't hear—it was as though one was stammering in another nation's language. Can you see how difficult this would be to understand? The proper way was line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, there a little. Those who were unbelievers, those of many nations and languages would be convinced when they heard and understood the message in their native tongue. God's people refused to obey, even though He had instructed them all along in their own tongue. The Corinthians were fast following in the footsteps of ancient Israel.

Once the gift had been given, used and explained at Pentecost, would God change it to something different later? What would His purpose be? Remember, He has a purpose in everything that He does. Did He change the other gifts?—wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment? No, they have remained the same since they were first bestowed. The fact is, God made no changes.

There is another verse which needs to be studied:

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8:26). Turning to *Strong's Concordance* for a definition of “groanings,” #4726, #4727, we see “a sigh. To sigh, murmur, pray inaudibly.”

Which definition fits? Praying inaudibly, of course—sighs are very limited in conveying thoughts; God the Holy Spirit is not limited, and there is no record anywhere of Him “murmuring.”

So the answer to the second question is that Christ did not choose meaningless, powerless words to prepare a people for eternal life—words “spoken” by a few, and “interpreted” by a few. He gave the gospel to the whole world. We do not have to rely upon simple man for the life-saving truths from God. His word is of “any private interpretation” (2 Peter 1:20).

Summary. The gift of speech, language,

or tongues—however one might wish to describe it—is of divine origin. First, God gave man a physical body, including organs of speech; then He gave him language which was first used by Adam to identify all living creatures (Genesis 2:19, 20). When language was confounded by God at Babel, nations then became known by their tongues, each nation speaking a different tongue. The gift of tongues at Pentecost was to enable men of different nations to hear the plan of salvation and the wonderful news that the prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament had been fulfilled through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. It was not to be used as a form of boasting of having received the gift of tongues or as entertainment for

The gift of tongues at Pentecost was to enable men of different nations to hear the plan of salvation.


the congregation, as the Corinthians were prone to do. It was to be used to bring this message to men of “other lips,” even the whole world (Romans 10:18; 1 Corinthians 14:21). To claim that this precious gift was changed so that only a favored few could learn and interpret would leave the rest of us out of the picture. Plus, there would be no way to compare or be sure that the interpreter knows what he is talking about—no checks and balances. Paul warned Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:16 to “shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.” What spirit is it that would overcome a congregation with disorderliness and confusion?

This is a perversion of the original gift and unacceptable to those who are dedicating their life to God. We have a Bible, the more “sure word of prophecy.” God is Lord also of harmony.

To everything under the sun there is a time and purpose (Eccle-

siastes 3:1). There is a time and purpose for tongues. Today, much of the world is bilingual, English being the predominant second language. Today, there are computer programs available which at the click of a key can interpret a language instantly. Today, tongues as a special gift are rarely needed. Pentecost in 31 A.D. was the time.

The purpose is always clear, then and now—to understand one another and to have a relationship with God. And that takes more than tongues. In fact, most would agree that today there is too much talk and not enough action. “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am

become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal”—a lot of hollow noise (1 Corinthians 13:1). Life is much richer when it has meaning and substance to it. Let us look to the Fountain of life, for the answers to it come only through Him. 

Most would agree that today there is too much talk and not enough action.



Answer Him Softly

*Answer him softly. You cannot know,
In the depths below,
How sharp was the struggle, the fight he made,
Ere the price he paid,
And yielded his soul to the tempter's power
In a hasty hour.*

*Answer him softly, let you be tried
On your weaker side,
And fail, as before you so many have done,
Who in thought had won—
Failed, too, ere temptation had spent its force
In its subtle course.*

*Answer him softly; for none can tell
When the storm clouds swell,
Whose bark shall weather the tempest, or whose
Shall the venture lose.
Speak gently: the weakest may stand the gale,
And the strong may fail.*

—Selected

COMING EVENTS

DATES	EVENTS	ADDRESS	CONTACT
March 29– April 1	Victorian/ Tasmanian Field Conference	Rutherford Park Country Retreat, 290 Kangaroo Hill Road, Blampied, Victoria, Australia	(61) 3-9331-6432 or benthiel@ ozemail.com.au or stelios@ezweb.com. au
May 25	Alcovy Bible Institute Graduation Ceremony	Tennessee, USA	(770) 266-0072 alcovybibleinst@aol. com
May 31– June 2	New Zealand Field Spiritual Conference	Camp Morley, South Auckland, New Zealand	Geoff McCutcheon (64) 9-833-8027 or info@sdarm.org.au
June 10–20	Alcovy Bible Institute General Seminar	USA	(770) 266-0072 alcovybibleinst@ aol.com
June 27– July 6	Youth Convention	Manam Island, Papua New Guinea	(61) 2-9627-7553 or info@sdarm.org.au
July 7–25	Youth Building Project	Haiti	dzic@sdarm.org
July 26–28	International Youth Congress	Haiti	dzic@sdarm.org
July 29– August 4	Southeast US Field Youth Convention	Tennessee, USA	sdarmseusf@aol.com
September 26–29	Medical Missionary Seminar	Pickett State Park, Tennessee, USA	(540) 362-5944, sdarmseusf@aol.com
December 6–15	Week of Prayer	Worldwide	gc@sdarm.org

Quick Bible Studies

PART V

Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15). Here is a quick Bible study that you can give to anyone, if the chance should arise unexpectedly. Remember, if you pray for opportunities, the Lord will provide them!

GOD'S PROTECTION

Isaiah 4:5	There is no reason to fear in these troubled times.
Psalms 74:2; 125:1	Who is represented by Mount Zion? Can you figure it out?
Psalms 46:1	God's promise for the time of trouble.
Ephesians 6:10-17	His protection is real, tangible.
2 Thessalonians 1:4, 5	Suffering is part of our training.
1 John 5:4	This is the victory that overcomes the world.
Hebrews 11:6	Without faith, it is impossible to please God.
Psalms 17:7	Remember what He has said!
Zechariah 2:8	You are special to Him.
Song of Solomon 2:4	As you feast upon His word, a unique banner waves over you.
Psalms 91:15	He will be with you always, under all circumstances.



All to the Glory of God

by Melanie Torpey
Writing from California, USA

There are many verses in the Bible which instruct us on how we should live our life in order to have peace and the Lord's blessing. While reading the Bible, I came across the verse that states, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). Each time I read this verse, it impresses my heart greatly; especially the part that states, "whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Often, while going through my day, this verse will be on my mind. Mostly, it is when I am doing something that I need to do, but lack the enthusiasm for the task. Those are the moments when I have to step back and remind myself that the job should be done "to the glory of God."

Other times, this verse enters into my mind when some "Christians," at the local Community College I attend, invite me to their gatherings. Often there will be "Christian rock" music and dancing. To most, it will seem rather harmless to attend, especially since it is in the name of Christian fellowship. However, I ask myself, "would this bring glory to God?" More often than not, the answer is no.

This scripture leaves no room for part-time Christians. We are to do everything for the Lord. Sometimes we might feel that something we do is of little importance, but this is not the case. There is no task too small for Him. Our life need to be consecrated to the Lord. Christ did all to the Father's glory, and we are called to live a Christ-like life. To be a Christian is all or nothing.

We need to continually ask ourselves, Are we doing all unto the glory of God? Are the activities we choose appropriate for a servant of God? Is our attitude what it should be? As we go through our daily life, do people see God in us? These are just some of the questions we, as Christians, should be asking ourselves.

What impresses me most about this verse is the need for my thoughts to always be directed heavenward. For, how are we to know what would bring glory to God, if we do not have our minds centered on Him? This scripture is very important for all of us to hide in our hearts. I pray that we will all keep our minds focused on the Lord and "whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."





Lessons from the Past (IV)

The Decline of Ancient Egypt

by David Zic
Writing from Virginia, USA

Nations with great privileges have great responsibilities, and when they neglect these responsibilities, they perish. Such was the case with ancient Egypt. Having expelled their foreign rulers, the Hyksos (see previous two YM's), the native Egyptians now proceeded to reach the height of their glory as a people, but by the end of this period they will be a conquered people.

“Let My People Go.” A great problem existed for the newly restored Egyptian empire. While the Egyptians had eliminated their foreign rulers, they had also enslaved a large population of Hebrews who happened to live on some of the best land in the Delta. These slaves were the descendants of great patriarchs originally from Mesopotamia—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Semitic by race, they were used to do manual labor in construction as well as

many other duties the Egyptians did not want to do themselves. Pharaohs Sethos I and Ramses II had undertaken great building campaigns, and these projects needed a large and economic laborforce. This set the background for the building of Pithom and Ra'amses mentioned in Exodus 1:8–11.

Due to the providence of God, one of these Hebrew children was taken into the household of Egypt. This child, Moses, was given the benefit of having been brought up by his biological mother in the ways of his people and then raised by his Egyptian step-mother in the ways of Egypt. He grew to be a great prince, and knowing that his duty was to set the slaves free, he attempted to do this by force. But this is not God's way, to trust in the arm of man, and so Moses was forced to flee for his life.

From greatness he was brought into the wilderness where he

worked as a shepherd and slowly, over many years, learned to trust in the Lord. [This is just a brief outline of the life of Moses. You should take the time to read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 241–272 for a full history of his life.] He was now ready to accomplish the task set before him. He returned to Egypt, and with the aid of his brother, Aaron, he informed Pharaoh that God required him to let the Hebrew people go free. But even after seeing signs of God's power Pharaoh refused. Now begins the decline of the Egyptian empire.

Plagues began to fall on Egypt, and the whole time the request was made, “let my people go.” The great Nile River was turned to blood; frogs multiplied in abundance and overran everything; lice got on everyone; swarms of flies; the cattle of Egypt died; great hail fell mixed with fire; locusts ate everything the previous plagues had not destroyed; darkness covered the land; and the firstborn perished. After this great destruction, the wealth of Egypt was brought to its knees. And after the final plague, the people were finally set free.

The Hebrews took with them goods from the Egyptians to represent the wages they should have received for their labor. “The people took also with them ‘flocks, and herds, even very much cattle.’ These were the property of the Israelites, who had never sold their possessions to the king, as had the Egyptians. Jacob and his sons had brought their flocks and herds with them to Egypt, where they had greatly increased. Before leaving Egypt, the people, by the direction

of Moses, claimed a recompense for their unpaid labor; and the Egyptians were too eager to be freed from their presence to refuse them. The bondmen went forth laden with the spoil of their oppressors” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 281).

Corruption. Following the Israelite withdrawal from Egypt, the country was faced with great economic and military troubles. Great movements of people in Asia Minor displaced the traditional Hittite Empire, and Egypt was beset by enemies from Libya and Palestine. Ramses III, son of Setnakht, managed in three desperate campaigns to stop the invasions, but at a great loss to his people. Unfortunately, the succeeding kings were not as talented.

Ramses IV–XI tended to be ineffective leaders. The state machinery became increasingly inefficient and battles between state administration



and priestly-religious administration often clashed. The rulers became corrupt, even to the point where the royal tombs at Thebes were robbed of their treasures. This terrible situation was made worse by rampant inflation, which caused terrible hardships for the common people.

Division. Ramses XI was such an incompetent ruler that the actual power in the land was held in two individuals hands: Upper Egypt was ruled by the General and High Priest, Herihor, and Lower Egypt was ruled by the prince Nesubanebded (Smendes). Around 1069 B.C. Ramses XI died and Smendes became Pharaoh at Tanis by permission of the heirs of Herihor, who became the hereditary High Priests. In other words, Lower Egypt ruled all of Egypt, but only by permission of Upper Egypt. As the Bible described, Egypt had truly become a “bruised reed” (2 Kings 18:21).

This confusing system led to the end of Egyptian power outside of their own borders. They only intervened in surrounding countries when their own borders were threatened.



When King David conquered the land of Edom, the young prince Hadad fled to the Egyptian court (1 Kings 11:18–21) where he was welcomed, and eventually received a royal Egyptian bride. After Solomon took the throne at the death of King David, he built an extensive empire and made treaties with Egypt through a marriage alliance (1 Kings 9:16, 24; 11:1). But while Solomon was yet ruling in Israel, a powerful Libyan chief took the Egyptian throne, it seems peacefully. He ruled as Pharaoh Sheshonq I (biblical Shishak) and he did not want to be an ally of Solomon. He desired to destroy his powerful northern neighbor. When Jeroboam had to flee, he went to Egypt and was harbored there by Sheshonq until Solomon died. Upon his return Israel was divided into two kingdoms and Sheshonq had achieved his goal. Five years later he invaded Israel, not to occupy it, but to show that he was stronger than they were and that they should give him no trouble.

Sheshonq’s successor, Osorkon I, wanted to emulate his father’s victory in Israel, but he was too lazy to go, so he sent his general Zerah the Ethiopian. Unfortunately for him, Zerah was defeated by Asa, king of Judah. 2 Chronicles 14:9–15 describe this historic battle, and 2 Chronicles 16:8 would indicate that this occurred during the Libyan domination of Egypt.

Following the death of Osorkon I,

his successors Takeloth I and Osorkon II continued to ruin the country until it broke apart into many independent provinces with multiple kings and other kings claiming to rule all of Egypt. It was in this period that the foolish Hoshea, king of Israel (the northern kingdom), tried to free himself from Assyrian domination by allying with So of Egypt (2 Kings 17:4). No help came and Hoshea was led away captive by Shalmaneser of Assyria. Three years later the ten tribes of the north were dispersed throughout the Assyrian empire. Curiously, the identity of the So mentioned in the Bible has been often debated. It is most likely that it is a reference to Osorkon IV, the last of his dynasty. Osorkon IV was so powerless in his divided Egypt that he had to give a gift of twelve horses to King Sargon in order that the Assyrian King wouldn’t invade his beleaguered realm.

Ethiopian power. While Osorkon IV continued to mislead his people, another power began to develop in the south of the country. Ethiopian princes who worshiped Egyptian gods and practiced Egyptian customs, began to take control of the country, until one of their own number eventually became Pharaoh. At first these kings used commerce to unify the country. They built vast merchant marines and made great efforts to attract business interests from Greece. But this soon led to dif-



iculties with their powerful neighbors, especially Assyria. They fought a number of times against both Assyria and its successor, Babylon, always to their loss (2 Kings 19:9; Isaiah 37:9; 2 Kings 23:29; 24:1; Ezekiel 17:11–21).

The end of Egypt. The end of Egypt’s independent power came when Medo-Persia destroyed the Babylonian Empire. The Persians were not satisfied with making treaties with Egypt. They quickly and decisively conquered the country and placed their own governors in the leadership of Egypt’s provinces. Starting with Darius I, the Persian kings became the ultimate rulers of Egypt. It was during this time that Egypt developed its strongest ties with Greece, which was also an enemy of Persia. But this friendship proved to be Egypt’s great loss.

When Alexander the Great swept the world to build his empire, he entered Egypt as its “liberator.” This happened in 332 B.C., and Greek rule would last until the coming of the Romans. The city of Alexandria still bears the name of the young Macedonian conqueror.


After Alexander's death, his general, Ptolemy, became ruler of Egypt and his successors are collectively known as the Ptolemies. They worked in a system similar to that of Egypt after the death of Ramses XI, mentioned earlier. The Ptolemies ruled the government of Egypt as kings, but the native Egyptian priests controlled the religion, and most importantly, the treasury. So to be Pharaoh, and not just king, a Ptolemy had to be crowned by the priests, who controlled the wealth of the land. This system of balance was removed when the Romans conquered Egypt and it was governed by proper Roman governors.

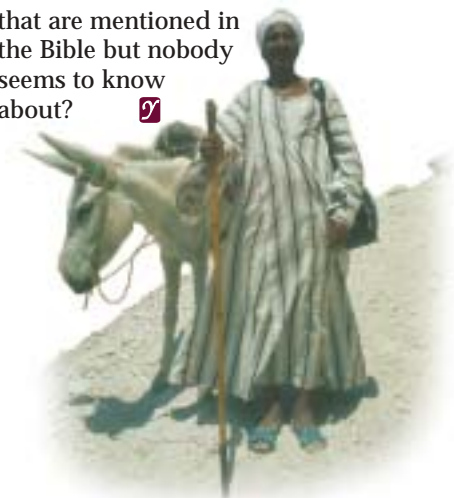
The most interesting point of the Ptolemaic rule of Egypt was its army. The military was based on a core of mercenaries, or paid foreign sol-

diers, most of whom were Jewish. In essence, Egypt's military power was based on the descendants of people who had been slaves in Egypt many centuries before. What a major turn-around!

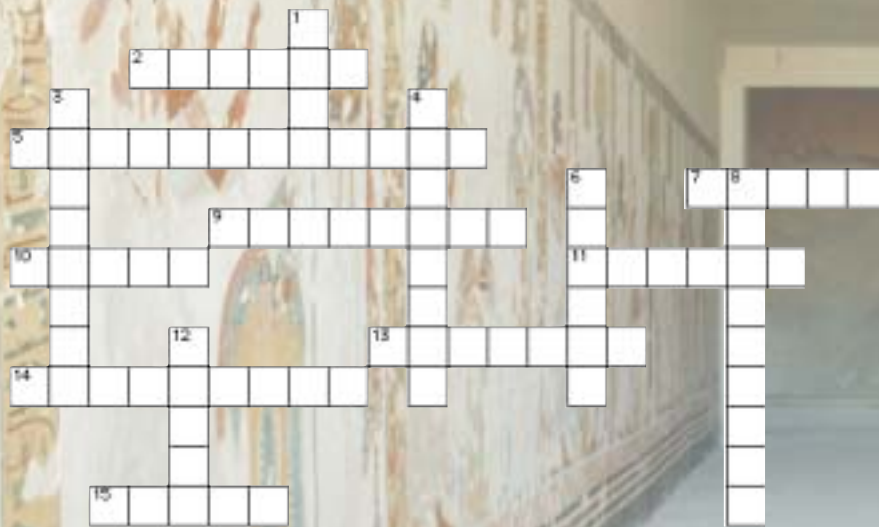
Egypt would continue to play a role in history even after it was conquered. Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt with the baby Jesus when Herod sought His death. The library of Alexandria would be a marvel of education for centuries. In fact, Alexandria would become one of the centers of the early Christian church. Eventually the Christians in Egypt would refuse to bow to the Roman Catholic dominance, and they formed what is still today the Coptic Church. In A.D. 641 the Islamic conquest of Egypt would bring Egypt under its current religious order.

Greatness. Many people look back fondly on ancient lands, especially Egypt. And so we should, for there is a great lesson for us to learn. Egypt gloried in its own power and beauty. But these things fade with time. Read the whole chapter of Isaiah 19—which is all about Egypt—and see the summary of how God humbles the proud and boastful. God's word tells the real truth as it is, and if you and I follow in the footsteps of Egypt, looking to our own selves, we too will fade into the dust of history. If we want to glory, let us glory not in ourselves, or in works that we have done, but in the wonderful love of our Lord and Saviour. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

Having completed the history of the world's first great ancient empire, in the next issue we will answer the question many of you have been asking: We know Egypt, but what are all those little Old Testament countries that are mentioned in the Bible but nobody seems to know about? 



PUZZLE Lessons From the Past (Part V)



Across

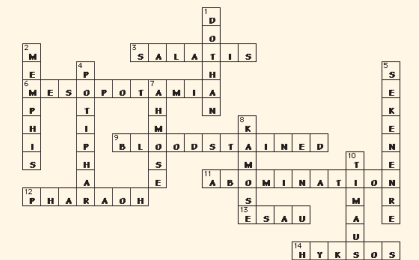
2. Egyptian Christian church.
5. Smendes.
7. Brother of Moses.
9. Libyan Pharaoh.
10. Conquered Edom.
11. Place where tombs were robbed.
13. Succeeded Assyria as world power.
14. Greek rulers of Egypt.
15. Edomite prince.

Down

1. Mixed with hail.
3. Father of Ramses III.

4. Fled to Sheshonq I.
6. City mentioned in Exodus 1.
8. The "great".
12. Sought the death of baby Jesus.

Answers to last issue's puzzle entitled, "Lessons From the Past"(Part IV).



The Danger of Skepticism in Our Youth

by E. G. White

The Signs of the Times, April 21, 1890

The words of Jesus addressed to this generation may well be regarded with sorrow and awe. He asks, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Christ looked down the ages, and with prophetic eye marked the conflict between the antagonistic principles of truth and error. He saw how real Christianity would become almost extinct in the world, so that at His second advent He would find a state of society similar to that which existed before the Flood. The world would be engaged in festivity and amusement, in theatrical shows, in the indulgence of base passions.

Intemperance of every grade would exist, and even the churches would be demoralized, and the Bible would be neglected and desecrated. He saw that the desperate revelries of the last days would only be interrupted by the judgments of God.

Society is now in a state of demoralization, and this will ripen until the nations become as lawless, as corrupt, as were the inhabitants

of the world before the Flood. The degradation that is found in the world today is largely due to the fact that the Bible no longer exerts a controlling influence upon the minds of men. It has become fashionable to doubt. The law of God has been made void to those in sacred office, and what can be expected of those who have listened to their sophistry and error? What can be expected of the youth who have come under the influence of those who have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel? It is no wonder that the Bible has come to be lightly regarded.

Infidelity is increasing in our land. Our youth are sent to college, and are brought into association with those who hold skeptical views; for even well-educated young men now boast of their unbelief in the word of God. Who is chargeable for this state of affairs? Is it not chargeable to those who from the sacred desk have belittled

the claims of the law of God? Is it not chargeable to those who lead men away from the path of truth by terming the law of God a yoke of bondage, and who thereby picture transgression as a state of liberty? Oh, if those who make light of the requirements of God's law, did but know what they are doing, if they did but realize that they were undermining the faith of our youth in the Bible, sending them adrift without anchor or compass on a shoreless sea, they would recoil with horror from their fearful work!

I feel the most intense anguish for our youth. I warn you, as one who knows the danger, not to be entrapped by Satan through the little knowledge of science which you may have acquired. It is better to have a pure and humble heart than all the knowledge you can possibly gain without the fear of the Lord. The youth of today will be likely to meet skeptics and infidels wherever they may go, and how necessary that they be equipped, so that they may be able to give a reason of their hope with meekness and fear. Thomas Paine has passed into his grave, but his works live to curse the world, and those who doubt the truth of God's word, will place these infidel productions in the hands of the young and inexperienced, to fill their hearts with the poisonous atmosphere of doubt. The spirit of Satan works through wicked men to carry on his schemes for the ruin of souls.

We are living in an age of licentiousness, and men and youth are bold in sin. Unless our youth are sacredly guarded, unless they are fortified with firm principles, unless greater care is manifested in choos-

ing their associates and the literature which feeds the mind, they will be exposed to a society whose morals are as corrupt as were the morals of the inhabitants of Sodom. The appearance of the people of the world may be very attractive, but if they are continually throwing out suggestions against the Bible, they are dangerous companions; for they will ever seek to undermine the foundations of your faith, to corrupt the conscientiousness of old-fashioned, gospel religion.

The youth often come in contact with those of skeptical tendencies, and their parents are in ignorance of the fact, until the terrible work of evil is consummated, and the youth are ruined. The young should be instructed diligently, that they may not be deceived in regard to the true character of these persons, and not form friendships with this class, or listen to their words of sarcasm and sophistry. Unless our young people have moral courage to sever their connection with these persons when they discover their unbelief, they will be ensnared, and will think and talk as do their associates, speaking lightly of religion and the faith of the Bible.

Could the eyes of deluded youth be opened, they would see



the exultant leer of Satan at his success in ruining souls. In every conceivable way he seeks to adapt his temptations to the various dispositions and circumstances of those whom he wishes to entangle. He will try every device, and if the subjects of these temptations do not seek God, they will be blinded to his deceptions, and will be self-confident, self-sufficient, and in ignorance of their condition and danger. They will soon come to despise the faith once delivered to the saints. I speak to the youth as one who knows, as one to whom the Lord has opened the perils that attend their pathway. Self-confidence will lead you into the snare of the enemy. The youth do not ask counsel of God, and make Him their refuge and strength. They enter society with all assurance, confident that they are fully able to choose the right and to comprehend divine mysteries, because of their powers of reason, as though they could discover truth for themselves. We fear more for those who are self-confident than for any others, for they will surely be entangled in the net that has been set by the great adversary of God and man. Some associate who has been chosen as a familiar friend, who has been tainted with the corruption of doubt, will instill his leaven of unbelief into the minds of this class. By fulsome flattery of their talent, their intellectual superiority, by inciting in them an ambition for high position, their

*We fear more
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are self-confident
than for any
others.*

attention will be gained, and moral blight will fall upon them. Those who are exalted in their own opinions will despise the blood of the Atoning Sacrifice, and will do despite to the Spirit of grace.

The children of Sabbathkeeping parents, who have had great light, who have been the objects of the tenderest solicitude, may be the ones who will leave a heritage of shame, who will sow to the wind and reap the whirlwind. In the judgment the names of those who have sinned against great light, will be written with those who are condemned to be separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. They will be lost, lost, and will be numbered with the scorers of the grace of Christ. I would rather see my children laid in the grave, than see them taking the path that leads to death. The terrible fact that I had nurtured children to fight against the God of heaven, to swell the ranks of apostates in the last days, to march under the black banner of Satan, would indeed be a thought of horror to me.

Our youth will meet temptations on every hand, and they must be so educated that they will depend upon higher power, higher teaching, than can be given by mortals. There are despisers of our Lord everywhere, who habitually throw contempt upon Christianity. They call it the plaything of children, invented to impose on the credulity of the ignorant. Those who have


not moral power cannot stand in defense of the truth; they have not courage to say: "Unless such conversation ceases, I cannot remain in your presence. Jesus, the world's Redeemer, is my Saviour; in Him is centered my hope of eternal life." But this is the very way in which to silence them. If you argue with them, they will have arguments with which to meet you, and nothing you may say will touch them; but if you live for Christ, if you are firm in your allegiance to the God of heaven, you may do for them that which argument will fail to do, and convince them of the fallacy of their doctrines, by the power of godliness.

There is no sadder spectacle than that of those who have been purchased by the blood of Christ, who have been intrusted with talents where-with they may glorify God, turning to jest the messages graciously sent to them in the gospel, denying the divinity of Christ, and trusting to their own finite reasoning, and to arguments that have no foundation. When tested with affliction, when brought face to face with death, all these fallacies they have cherished will be melted away like frost before the sun. How terrible it is to stand by the coffin of one who has rejected the appeals of divine mercy! How terrible to say: Here is a life lost! Here is one who might have reached the highest standard, and gained immortal life, but he surrendered his life to Satan,

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became ensnared by the vain philosophies of men, and was a plaything of the evil one!

The Christian's hope is as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast, and entereth into that which is within the veil, whither Christ the forerunner is for us entered. We have an individual work to do to prepare for the great events that are before us. The youth should seek God more earnestly. The tempest is coming, and we must get ready for its fury, by having repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord will arise to shake terribly the earth. We shall see troubles on all sides. Thousands of ships will be hurled into the depths of the sea. Navies will go down, and human lives will be sacrificed by millions. Fires will break

out unexpectedly, and no human effort will be able to quench them. The palaces of earth will be swept away in the fury of the flames. Disasters by rail will become more and more frequent; confusion, collision, and death without a moment's warning will occur on the great lines of travel. The end is near, probation is closing. Oh, let us seek God while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near! The prophet says: "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger" (Zephaniah 2:3). 



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A Birthday Prayer

*D*ear Father, through this coming year
I know not what shall be;
But I will trust without a fear
My future all to thee.

*I know not if I'll see the end
Of this fair opening year;
But I will on thy love depend,
And trust thy constant care.*

*I know not if the friends I love
By death will severed be;
But in thy happy home above
We shall each other see.*

*I know not if the coming days
Will bring me grief or joy,
Or if my lips shall sing thy praise
Or death my life destroy.*

*I know not if the world will give
To me its smile or frown;
But this I know, I will receive
At last a golden crown.*

*I know not whether grief or ill
For me may be in store;
But help me bow to thy sweet will
And I would ask no more.*

*Now, Lord, I pray that I may be
Resigned, submissive, meek;
And, whate'er changes come to me,
Thy face help me to seek.*

— Sara W. Young

MOVING?

Please let us know.