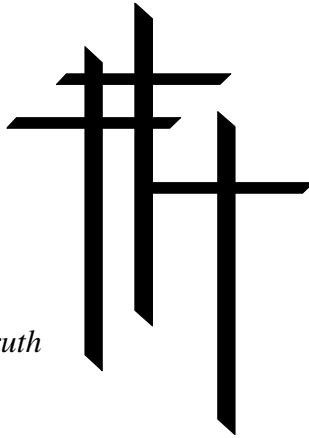


# Timely Messenger

*Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth  
Speaking the Truth in Love*



Volume 66 No. 1

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## GOING IN CIRCLES

by Charles Wages

In Proverbs 30:11-14, it is interesting and enlightening to observe that each verse begins with the expression “There is a generation.” The Hebrew word for *generation* refers, in one sense, to a “circle.” The old expression that, “history repeats itself,” is true in a large measure. It is especially seen when we note the styles and fashions from generation to generation. It is also seen in human behavior and attitudes. Let’s briefly look at some of these attitudes and patterns as recorded in the

above Scriptures, written some 700 years before Christ.

- **Ingratitude to parents:** “There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.” (verse 11)
- **Self righteousness:** “There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.” (verse 12)
- **Pride:** “There is a generation, O how lofty are

their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.” (verse 13)

- **Violence:** “There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.” (verse 14)

No doubt, God did not intend for the above vivid verses to fully describe every generation. They do, however, pretty well characterize the natural human inclinations and deeds. Sin and human nature remain the same from generation to generation; men just attempt to devise new methods of madness to express and act upon those desires. A person who is lost has a tendency to “go around in circles.”

It must be kept in mind that God doesn’t intend for people to live “according to the flesh” in every generation. His gracious salvation not only saves from eternal damnation but provides the way and means “to live godly in this present age” (Titus 2:12). Noah

and Enoch are good examples of persons who walked with and worked for the Lord in their generations. Genesis 6:9 has two different words used for “generations.” In the first usage it refers to Noah’s family associations. He was found righteous by God’s grace before members of his own family. In the second usage, it has reference to his contemporaries, that is his fellow associates. When this is compared with Genesis 7:1, we find that, “he was seen righteous before Me (God) in this generation.” The word for *generation* here is the same as the second usage above, that is, his fellow associates or contemporaries. Noah was in the world, but not of the world. A person who is saved also has a tendency to go around in circles, but in God’s circles.

In order for a believer to intelligently and spiritually live for the Lord, he or she must learn to distinguish the generations. Though there is a great deal of sameness in each generation, there are also great differences. God has

not always dealt with man’s attitudes and actions in the same manner. How thankful we should be that God has been merciful and gracious, from generation to generation, to show:

- **Salvation:** “... but my righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation.” (Isa. 51:8)
- **Truth:** “For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting: and His truth endureth forever.” (Psa. 100:5)
- **Faithfulness:** “Thy faithfulness is unto all generations.” (Psa. 119:90)

These wonderful blessings could go on and on because God moves in circles to show His love and mercy to His creation. Believers should study carefully 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; and 1 Timothy 4:1-5. We must note the characteristics of our generation, especially how the natural man is expressing his attitudes and actions in religious circles.

What is God’s evaluation of our present generation? The epistles of Paul must be carefully read and studied in order to know God’s plan for this age, also how we, as believers, should live for Him today.

As we “go around in circles” let us learn to distinguish the generations and learn how to live in this generation.

As the human race, in its natural Adamic form, continues from generation to generation, it never seems to learn. Mistakes are repeated, sins are repeated, and a process of deterioration and degradation is evident. It seems to be quickening in our present generation. On the other hand, how wonderful and comforting to know that those who have been saved by His grace are in an upward spiral, learning from their experiences. Each day of our lives brings us closer to the time we shall “see Him as He is.” Believers may be “going in circles,” but like a beautiful spiral staircase each turn takes us higher and higher.

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## ANOTHER YEAR FOR THE LORD

An Editorial

We have completed another year of publication of the *Timely Messenger*, a ministry that was begun by Pastor Ike T. Sidebottom August 13, 1940. He served as editor until the mid-1960's when his health kept him from continuing this work. Pastor R. B. Shiflet took over as editor for the next few years. When Pastor Charles Wages became pastor of College Avenue Church he took up the editor's job and continued in this role through the end of 2002 when he stepped down.

It has been my privilege to serve as editor for the last three years; to help continue a work that has been used of the Lord to reach many for Christ and to help others come to a better understanding of God's Word, "rightly divided." Besides these pastors who edited and contributed to this little Bible study paper, many other faithful servants, both men and women, have written, printed, prepared mailings, prayed, and given in support of this work. We thank the Lord for those who have labored together with us in this ministry. We would also like to thank you, our readers, for your faithful support. Many of you not only read the paper, but you pass it on to others, write letters of encouragement, provide financial support, and pray for our endeavors. May the Lord richly bless you! As we begin another year for the Lord, we would ask for your continued prayers that God would enable us to proclaim the gospel of God's grace and to speak the truth in love, all for His glory.

— Gregg Bing, *Editor*

*But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. —1 Thessalonians 2:4*

## TIMELY MESSENGER

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*Gregg Bing — Editor*

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*Thanks for your help!*

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## HOW GOD MAKES FOOLISH THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD

By Weldon Rightmer

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*“For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” (1 Corinthians 1:19-20).*

The expression “bring to nothing” means to “cast aside, to frustrate, to disannul.” (It would be very interesting to see this truth in reverse in Galatians 3:15). Now, we shall attempt to see just how “God makes foolish the wisdom of this world.”

First, we will look at the matter of salvation. Man’s worldly wisdom tells him that surely he can gain favor in the sight of God by his own good works. This seems to be the attitude of so many members of Adam’s fallen race. The wisdom from beneath

is “earthly, sensual, devilish” (James 3:15). One can hardly see how this wisdom can be depended on, as far as knowing God is concerned. “The world by wisdom knew not God” (1 Cor. 1:21). We would like to quote a verse that sums up everything we are trying to say. “Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise” (1 Cor. 3:18). “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord.” With these verses read Job 32:8 and 1 Corinthians 2:14.

“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching (of the thing preached) to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). It doesn’t seem logical to a worldly wise man that one could be saved by believing that “Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day.” This doesn’t seem

possible to even the so-called religious folks. Had Paul preached law works for salvation, he would not have had to suffer the offence of the cross. See Galatians 5:11. Those who preach the pure “gospel of God’s grace” still have to suffer. Such a message does not appeal to the natural man. However, those who are willing to become fools for Christ’s sake, are in a position to be saved by His wondrous grace.

Man’s wisdom simply cannot understand God’s plan of salvation. We must take Him at His word, by faith, believing everything God says. It is beyond my comprehension to fathom all that is mine in Christ Jesus. I can say with Paul “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” Words cannot express the value of this precious gift. All that God has for the sinner is wrapped up in this gift, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. “How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32). Truly, in this way, “God makes foolish the wisdom of this world.”

Next, “God makes fool-

ish the wisdom of this world” by giving His inspired Word in such a manner that it cannot be understood apart from the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. If I, through worldly wisdom, could gain a definite understanding of God’s holy Word, I would be forced to declare it the product of mortal man. “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” (1 Cor. 2:13). It is fine to be helped by God appointed teachers; but it is impossible to really understand what God has said without the office work of the Spirit. Again, we ask you to read Job 32:8.

A casual reading of the Bible might indicate serious contradictions. This is the belief of practically every worldly wise individual with whom this writer has conversed. First, one must know the Lord as personal Saviour. Then, he must apply 2 Timothy 2:15: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not

to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” When we think of these things, we can clearly see how “God makes foolish the wisdom of this world.”

Thirdly, there is the union of two natures in the God-man. We do not mean by this that Christ had the Adamic nature. We mean that the One who had been “in the form of God” took the “form of man.” He had a real body of flesh; but He was “God manifest in the flesh.” Read carefully 1 Timothy 3:16. This certainly is a “great mystery.” Worldly wise men do not believe that Jesus of Nazareth was actually “God manifest in the flesh.” Christians make no claim of understanding this great truth. “God made foolish our worldly wisdom.” Now, in simple faith, we believe in the eternal deity of our blessed Lord.

There is also the union of three in one in the Holy Trinity. This is a declared fact in the Bible; but it is not an explained fact. The following references will prove that this is a teaching in the sacred Scriptures. Many more could be added

to the list. Please read Genesis 1:26; Isaiah 6:8; Matthew 3:13-17; John 14:16-17; Colossians 1:1-8; and 1 Thessalonians 1:1-6. Natural man is frustrated completely when he tries to fathom this teaching.

Fourthly, “God makes foolish the wisdom of this world” by declaring in His Word, His sovereignty and man’s responsibility. We will probably never be able to thoroughly reconcile these two things this side of glory. I firmly believe that the Bible teaches both. Man’s responsibility comes under the sovereignty of God. “O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:33). Compare with this, Deuteronomy 29:29. I do not understand all of God’s ways, but I know that “He doeth all things well.”

That God is all sovereign is evidenced by the following Scriptures. Note, Isaiah 46:9-10 and Ephesians 1:11. We can be thankful that our Father is sovereign in all things.

It is also taught in the

Word that man is self-willed, and is at enmity against God. Read Romans 8:7, Colossians 1:21, Titus 1:7, and 2 Peter 2:10. Man is also held responsible for accepting or rejecting Christ. See John 3:16-18. Much more could be given on this subject, but that is not the purpose of this article.

Finally, “God makes foolish the wisdom of this world” by giving us the truth concerning “the Body of Christ,” the church He is now building. Read prayerfully Ephesians 1:22-23, 2:14-22, 3:1-9, and Colossians 1:24-26. God’s church for today is a spiritual organism. The church is a body of Holy Spirit baptized believers. See 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Ephesians 4:5. This is the baptism that makes all believers of the present dispensation one in Christ (Gal. 3:26-28). It is performed by the operation of God (Col. 2:12). This same body is composed of those who have been circumcised with the “circumcision made without hands.”

Worldly wise men want something that can be seen.

It is hard for them to believe that one could have been circumcised and baptized without having had it accomplished by natural man. It is also difficult for them to see that God’s house is actually the “Body of Christ.” When worldly wisdom comes to naught, these truths can easily be grasped. It is often hard to give up what one has always been taught. So many are steeped in tradition. Who, this day, is willing to become a fool for Christ’s sake?

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Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

— Colossians 2:8



**Family Bible Camp**  
*July 3-7, 2006*

The dates for our Family Bible Camp have been set for July 3-7, 2006. While the dates are about the same as last year, the location this year will be different. We will be going back to a campground we used many years ago, Camp Arrowhead near Glenrose, Texas.

Camp Arrowhead is a beautiful campground right on the Brazos River. It has added many new facilities since we were there and made some nice improvements. They have a nice motel for our adults to stay in and plenty of dorm space for our children and young people.

We are excited about this change, as we will be able to have the entire campground to ourselves.

## THE TREASURE TROVE

By Robert E. Hanna

None but a fool can deny there's a God,  
Who created the sea and sky and sod.  
Naught will befall him but sorrow and grief,  
For death is the price of his disbelief!

Proofs of God's glory abound far and wide—,  
The great wonders He wrought, nothing can hide.  
So one who believes in Satan's great ruse  
Is guilty of sin and has no excuse.

The life which the Father deigned to bestow  
Is for believers to have and to know.  
But those who refuse the gift of rebirth  
Are bound to the prince of darkness on earth!

Truth notwithstanding, man courts his own fall,  
Rejecting faith in the Savior of all  
Who accept the redemptive work He has done  
As the Son of God and as God the Son.

The world has no wealth worthy of mention;  
Man owns none that deserves God's attention.  
There's no real treasure this side of Glory;  
Hope lies only in salvation's story.

But God shed His grace, His mercy and peace;  
His Son paid the price for darkness to cease,  
That the light of deliverance might shine through  
To all that believe His gospel is true!

(From the book — *The Hope of Glory*)

## PRAYER REQUEST

This poem, "The Treasure Trove," was written by Pastor Robert E. Hanna. It is taken from his wonderful book of poems entitled, *The Hope of Glory*. Pastor Hanna is a faithful servant who has labored for His Lord and Savior for many years. I can remember him being in camp with us in Glenrose, Texas when I was just a young person. He has preached, taught, and communicated the truths of God's Word in writing. He is a regular contributor to the devotional booklet *Amazing Grace* which is published by Grace Gospel Publishers out of Denver, Colorado.

Pastor Hanna has a form of leukemia and has been told he has only a few months to live. Be in prayer for him and for his family. I'm sure he would love to hear from many of you with a word of encouragement. His address and phone number is:

5801 Sun Lakes Blvd. No. 12C  
Banning, CA 92220  
Phone: (951) 845-5352

## **BIBLE STUDY BOOKS**

The following Bible study materials are available free of charge for your personal use or for use in teaching a Bible class.

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- Past Pentecost to Paul
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### **by Ike T. Sidebottom**

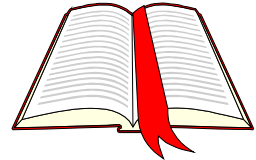
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