

Noteworthy

Prayer Requests: Jo Anderson (*recovering from an infection*), Margaret Blackburn (*pancreas and hip*), Joe Brown (*cancer*), Mildred Church (*in poor health*), Vernita Goodall (*sickness*), Margie Iserhardt (*still struggling with pain from fall she had in April*), Linda James (*ongoing medical*), Bennie Jones (*diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis; her niece passed away last week, also*), Paul Lloyd (*extended stay at LRMC*), Neil Miller (*doing better, still has breathing issues*), Butch Morgan (*ongoing medical*), Dottie Reynolds (*pain in her back*) and Suzette Stevens (*not been well, lately*).

Family and friends: Geraldean Day (*Bucky Day's mother*), Nell Goodall (*Charles Goodall's aunt*), Ned Hicks (*ongoing medical*), Brian James (*cancer*), John Marschall (*Bob Marschall's father; now in rehab*), Lindy McReedy (*Cindy Hicks' aunt, cancer*), Wayne Ryland (*ongoing medical*) and Ardis Tucker (*ongoing medical*). Remember and encourage others who are struggling.

Out of Town: Ken & Diana Jordan, Stef Marschall, Audrey Davis, Ed Lawson, Paula Sullivan and Jerry Williams.

Group Meeting: Group 2 will meet tonight after the evening worship service.

Ladies Bible Class: Will resume in the fall!

Men's Training Class: 4th Sunday of each month at 5 pm (*Today*).

Fourth Sunday: Sherman Johnson will preach during the PM assembly tonight, Lord willing.

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 5/30/18

Song Leader: Colby Sadler
 Opening Prayer: Bucky Day
 Invitation: Jordan Lawson
 Announcements: Larry Hicks
 Closing Prayer: David Williams
 Recordings: Trent Stevens
 Usher: Larry Hicks

Sunday Evening: 6/3/18

Song Leader: Colby Sadler
 Opening Prayer: Sherman Johnson
 Lord's Table: Bucky Day
 Announcements: Leon Miller
 Closing Prayer: Earl Branham
 Recordings: Bob Marschall
 Usher: Gus Johnson

Sunday Morning: 6/3/18

Lord's Table: Bucky Day (B)
 Timothy Payne (C)
 Serving: Jerry Williams
 David Williams
 Song Leader: Larry Wisdom

Opening Prayer: Larry Hicks
 Announcements: Leon Miller
 Closing Prayer: Keith Marschall
 Recordings: Bob Marschall
 Usher: Gus Johnson



**Lakeland Hills
 Leader**

LAKELAND HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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ELDERS

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SERVICES

Sunday
 Bible Study 9:00 A.M.
 Morning Services 9:50 A.M.
 Evening Services 6:00 P.M.
 Wednesday
 Bible Study 7:30 P.M.

DEACONS:

Robert Marschall
 Michael Sadler
 Moses Stevens
 David Williams

EVANGELIST:

Ian Rice (863) 213-9795

“Confusion and Transgression”

Have you ever heard anyone say, as an explanation for some sinful action, "I have become so confused I don't know what is right anymore"? As a rule, the person who says such a thing is one who has had clear convictions but has acted, or is about to act, contrary to them.

This must be what the Holy Spirit was saying about Eve in **1 Timothy 2:14**. "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. "

To say that she was deceived is not to say that she was ignorant. She quoted perfectly what God had said: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat of it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die' (**Genesis 3:2-3**). She was deceived when she thought there could be any valid reason for disobeying God.

We cannot know how long Adam and Eve avoided the forbidden tree. With so many other trees from which to eat, there was no need to eat of it. There is no evidence of confusion regarding the right and wrong of eating or the wisdom of abstaining. They were happy ignoring it.

But along came Satan to draw Eve's attention to the tree she had been avoiding. He drew her attention to the beauty of the fruit and somehow convinced her, perhaps by eating of it himself, that it was good for food. If he did eat of it, the fact that he did not die surely gave support to his contention that she would not die. One can see the confusion mounting. The arguments she had considered con-

clusive against eating were rapidly being matched by arguments for doing so. Which arguments were valid? Both seemed to be.

Had Adam been nearby, or had God spoken again, she might have been reminded once more of the strong reasons for rejecting the fruit. But as it was, the voice of God grew weaker in her memory as the desirability of the fruit was magnified by Satan's glib lies. All that was needed to tip the balance was the final suggestion of an apparent virtue in eating—the thought that she would become like God. Never mind the legalistic prohibition; surely one could not be blamed for wanting to be like God.

"She took of the fruit and ate" (**Genesis 3:6**). Tragic words! Tragic consequences! Consequences reaching down through countless generations even to us!

The great mistake of Eve was in allowing herself even to begin thinking about disobedience. This was the mistake of Achan when he first saw the Babylonian garment (**Judges 7:21**), of David when he first saw his beautiful neighbor bathing (**2 Samuel 11:2**) and of Judas when he first thought of betraying Jesus. It is the same mistake each of us makes—men and women alike—whenever we sin.

The Bible says as much: "Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (**James 1:14-15**).

There is ample defense available. If we are wise enough to meditate on God's laws in such circumstances (**Psalms 119:11**), and to ask Him for deliverance (**Matthew 6:13**), He will, with the temptation, "also make the way of escape" (**1 Corinthians 10:13**).

But all too often, in the name of open-mindedness and objectivity, we feel we are obligated to look at the other side, to consider the "arguments in favor of" sin. We may even be so foolish as to parrot the existential line: "I must get away to myself and sort things out." If this means getting away for Bible study, meditation and prayer, fine! But this is seldom what it means. As a rule, what it means is: "I want to be left alone to rationalize my way through the sin that entices me without having to reason with those who would logically or scripturally expose my folly."

Such conflict between conscience and passion, between logic and emotion, between authority and anarchy, between flesh and spirit will indeed produce confusion—confusion bordering on insanity. But it is a confusion for which we are responsible. It is the peculiar malady of "those who perish because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved" and who "did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (**2 Thessalonians 2:10,12**). It is never surprising when such a person, "being deceived," falls into transgression.

In Jesus' day, "there was a division among the people because of Him" (**John 7:43**). They were confused by the contradictions between His claims and the accusations of their rulers. Jesus stated clearly who would not be confused: "If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak of My own authority" (**John 7:17**).

Wanting to do God's will, will save us from the confusion, deception and transgression into which our mother fell.

- by Sewell Hall

"The Providence of God in the Life of Ezra"

For an Israelite who lived under the law of Moses, no finer words could be said of a man than were said of this man: "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel" (Ezra 7:10).

In the 7th year of King Artaxerxes (ca. 458 B.C.), Ezra led a group of Jews on a four month journey from Babylon to Jerusalem (Ezra 7:6-9). About 1700 men took this trip, along with their families (Ezra 8:1-20). That God helped them on this journey is indicated by the repeated use of the phrase, "the hand of the LORD," and other slight variations (7:6, 9, 28; 8:18, 22, 31). Here are three specific ways God helped Ezra and his fellow-Israelites.

God helped provide them servants for the house of God (Ezra 8:15-20). Ezra noticed that among the group set to return there were no sons of Levi, and so he commanded certain men "that they should bring us servants for the house of our God" (Ezra 8:17). Servants were brought, and while human effort was certainly involved, Ezra attributes this provision to "the good hand of our God upon us" (Ezra 8:18).

God guided them on their journey to Jerusalem and protected them from harm. Traveling without an armed escort, they prayed to God for help and protection, and He answered their prayer (8:21-23). "And the hand of our God was upon us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambush along the road" (8:31).

We don't know all the means He used, but in some way God influenced King Artaxerxes to provide the Israelites all the assistance they needed for this

journey—and then some (7:6, 11-26). Ezra petitioned the king, and "the king granted him all his request, according to the good hand of the Lord upon him" (7:6). Here are some highlights of the king's decree, issued in response to Ezra's request. Any Israelite who wants to go with Ezra, you're free to go (7:13). For all you need to make sacrifices at the temple—here's a "blank check" (7:14-22). Whatever God commands to be done for His house, let it be done (7:23). No tax will be imposed on those who work at the house of God (7:24). Appoint magistrates and judges who know the law of God to rule over you, and for those who don't know the law of God, make sure you teach them (7:25). Punish severely those who do not observe the law of God or the law of the king (7:26). And what was Ezra's reaction to these amazing concessions from the king? "Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, who has put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem, and has extended mercy to me before the king and his counselors, and before all the king's mighty princes.' So I was encouraged, as the hand of the LORD my God was upon me; and I gathered leading men of Israel to go up with me" (7:27-28).

When I read the Book of Ezra, especially chapters 7-10, I'm impressed with Ezra, but I'm even more impressed with God. I want the "good hand of our God" to be upon me, too, but for that to happen, I need to become more like Ezra—I need to prepare my heart to learn the will of God, obey the will of God, teach the will of God, and pray fervently to God.

- by Bryan Gibson