

RELIGION

Blessed assurance comes from faith

Ephesians 3:1-13

Sometimes a new message is, simply, an old message taken at a personal level. When God called the man Abram to leave his homeland of "Ur of the Chaldees" (Genesis 11:31), this man was given a divine promise — "and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Genesis 12:3c.

This teaching became buried in the following generations. The words were, still, part of the national history. Yet, the application was not considered to be a vital part of the thought process. The exclusiveness of their worship of the heavenly father — the creator of the universe — became so sacred that the Hebrew name was not even pronounced for fear of blaspheming. The closest that we can now come to that pronunciation is our word, Jehovah.

As the history of the chosen nation (Deuteronomy 7:6-8) unfolded, this universal nature of God was pushed farther into the background. Throughout their history, a few of Gentiles — non-Jews — became

part of the nation. Joshua 6:25; Ruth 4:17b. However, this fact was the exception, rather than the rule. The universal nature of God was part of the message of the Old Testament prophets. Isaiah 9:2. However, during the approximately 400 years between the testaments, the message was either ignored or disclaimed by the religious leaders.

During the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, he ministered to those in need, regardless of their national or ethnic background. John 4:4-26, 39-42; Matthew 15:21-28. The Pharisees listened to the words of Jesus and wondered "how far he would go?" John 7:35. This thought brought horror to the minds of these self-appointed guardians of the law.

The "Great Commission" (Mark 16:15-18) included the Gentile world. Moments before our Lord ascended, his directive gave the scope of the spreading of the good news — "Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in

Sunday School Lesson

Rev. James Temples



Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8. The beginning of the fulfillment is seen after the death of the man Stephen. Acts 7:58-60. We are told, "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." Acts 8:4.

God called Saul of Tarsus — Paul the apostle — to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. Acts 9:15; 18:6c. The Ephesian believers — and we — fit this category. As a Roman prisoner, this man wrote a letter to this church. He wanted these readers to remember that this message was not a new message, but one that had been ignored. "For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to your ward..."

Ephesians 3:1, 2. Thus, he was reminding these readers of the fact that God had them in mind, as the plan of eternal salvation was designed in heaven. Revelation 13:8.

The unfolding of this divine plan was on God's timetable. These believers needed to understand "that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ..." Ephesians 3:3, 4.

These believers knew that the message of the gospel came first to the Jews. However, the Jewish spiritual blindness had plagued this nation for centuries. Paul wrote that the mystery "in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the gospel..." Ephesians 3:5, 6.

This ministry — and message — was the

heart and soul of all that the apostle did throughout his years as an ambassador in bonds. Ephesians 6:20; 2 Corinthians 5:20. He saw his divine call as being focused on only one direction — "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power." Ephesians 3:7. There was to be no question regarding the authority of the words that were taught by this faithful apostle.

This faithful one saw that his position was designed by one source, alone. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ..." Ephesians 3:8, 9

As the divine timetable developed, the eternal desire was revealed — "To the intent that now unto

the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord..." Ephesians 3:10, 11.

The Gentiles could not take part in the Old Testament worship. However, through Christ "we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." Ephesians 3:12. This assurance helps when trials and test come into each life. Ephesians 3:13. May we apply this principle in our lives.

Rev. James C. Temples' Sunday School Lesson has appeared in the Early County News each week since 1967. A native of Early County, Rev. Temples taught in public schools 32 years and 10 years at Southeastern College of Assemblies of God, in Lakeland, Florida. He also served as pastor and evangelist during those years. He can be contacted at P.O. Box 1569, Auburndale, Fla. 33823; 863-965-0157. Email: jctjet@aol.com.

OBITUARIES

Martin Powell Veteran

Martin Luther Powell, 64, of Tampa, Fla., died Saturday, May 2, 2009, at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta.

Mr. Powell was born May 17, 1944, to the late Fannie Webb Powell and Melvin Powell. He served in the U.S. military as a medic during the Vietnam Conflict and was a district manager for a national insurance company. He was a member of Tampa Mt. Calvary S.D.A. Church.

Survivors include his wife, Donnell Jackson Powell; one daughter, Sabrina Powell Patton and husband Reginald; two sons, M. Curtis Powell and wife Nicole and Edwin S. Powell and wife Nitaya; seven siblings, Melva Gallon and husband James, Irene Gallon, Calvin Powell and wife Helen, Katherlyn Hailey and husband William, Odessa Best and husband Jessie, Sylvester and wife Theora, and Delores Gatson and wife Keley; and five grandchildren, Sean Patton, Khaliah Patton, Andrew Patton, Braedon Powell and Corben Powell.

Funeral services were Sunday, May 10, 2009, at Community Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor M. Curtis Powell officiating. Interment followed at Greene Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Wayne Best, Jason Craig, Eugene Powell, Joey Powell, Lloyd Powell and Roderick Powell.

Alma Jean Booth Retired

Alma Jean Henderson Booth, 66, of Blakely died Sunday, May 3, 2009, in Blakely.

Mrs. Booth was born in Blakely Nov. 10, 1942, to the late John Henderson and Willie B. Henderson. She was a member of Wesley Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Walter O. Bryant.

Survivors include one

daughter, Angela Smith and husband Winfred of Fayetteville, Ga.; two brothers, Willie James Bailey and wife Helen of Detroit, Mich., and John Henderson of Blakely; four grandchildren, Winfred O. Smith II, Xavier D. Smith, D'Angelo Smith and Tangela Smith; and three great-grandchildren, Peyton X. Landry-Smith, London D. Smith and Nijahael L. Smith.

Funeral services were Saturday, March 9, 2009, at 11 a.m. at Wesley Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church with Rev. Kenneth Cody officiating. Interment followed at Evergreen Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Winfred O. Smith, Xavier D. Smith, D'Angelo T. Smith, Douglas W. Daniels, Brian Ceasar and Reginald Henderson.

Peoples Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

Annie Freeman Hospital Worker

Annie Pearl Thornton Freeman, 57, of Blakely died Tuesday, May 5, 2009, in Blakely.

Mrs. Freeman was born in Blakely Sept. 3, 1957, to Eddie Ray Thornton and the late Annie Mae Thornton. She was a member of St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church and worked at the hospital for a number of years.

She was preceded in death by one brother, Eddie Roy Thornton Jr.

Survivors, other than her father, include, her husband, Claude Edward Freeman; three daughters, Denita' Shay Thornton and husband Travis, Litoya Thornton and husband Albert and April Thornton, all of Blakely; one stepdaughter, Cosandra Freeman; one sister, Jane Thornton; four brothers, Eddie Roy Thomas and wife Sandra, Dorothy, Robert Thomas and wife Sandra, Jerome Thomas and Davis Thomas; and 10 grandchildren, Jovarious Thornton, Qubilah Hall, Tyrus Price, Jakerian Thornton, Carlos Watts Jr., Makayla Powell, Caziah

Thornton, Ryra Price, TaKaitlyn Thornton and Janiyah Kegler.

Funeral services were Saturday, May 9, 2009, at 3 p.m. at St. John Baptist Church with Rev. Johnny Kegler officiating. Interment followed at Liberty Hill Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Jeffery James, Jerome Thomas, Vincent Stovall, Bobby Reed, David Thomas and Eddie Ray Thomas.

Peoples Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

Frederick Montgomery Retired

Frederick Howard Montgomery Jr., 70, of Jakin died Wednesday, May 6, 2009, at his residence.

Mr. Montgomery was born in Milford, Conn., April 15, 1939, to the late Frederick Howard Montgomery Sr. and Leonna Bouchard Montgomery. He retired from Georgia Pacific Paper Company in finishing and shipping. He served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam Conflict.

He was preceded in death by a daughter, Artie Elizabeth Montgomery; two brothers, Gene Montgomery and Ronnie Montgomery; and two sisters, Marlene Stinford and Ramona Duetrich.

Survivors include his wife, Mary Lucille Fowler Montgomery; three daughters, Mary Blankenship and husband Ryan of Prattville, Ala., Becky Lawson and husband Frankie of Jakin and Tiffany Montgomery of Jakin; four sons, Frederick H. Montgomery III and wife Erin of Yardley, Penn., Michael Montgomery and wife Ronnette of Bainbridge, Matthew Montgomery and wife Angela of Jakin, and David Montgomery and wife Crystal of Missouri; four brothers, Leslie Montgomery and wife Nancy of McClenney, Fla., Bobby Montgomery and wife Rita of Lincoln, Minn., Billy Montgomery of Medway, Minn., and Dickie Montgomery

and wife Ester of Millinocket, Minn.; four sisters, Helen Blanchette and husband Paul of Millinocket, Minn., Beverly Pelky and husband Nelson of Lincoln, Minn., Carol Robinson and husband Roger of Andover, New Brunswick, and Rose Lankhorst of Bangor, Minn.; nine grandchildren, Frederick H. Montgomery IV and wife Mara, Daniel Ellis and wife Sara Ellis and Jacob Willis, all of Jakin, Michelle Blankenship and Andrew Blankenship of Prattville, Ala., Michael Montgomery Jr. and Eric Montgomery of Blakely, Kristen Montgomery and Lucas Montgomery of Missouri; two great-grandchildren, Bethany Montgomery and Freddy Montgomery, both of Jakin.

Funeral services were Friday, May 8, 2009, at 6 p.m. at Jakin Free Will Baptist Church with Rev. Wayne Sheffield officiating. Interment followed in the Jakin Free Will Baptist Church Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Daniel Ellis, John Baker, Frankie Lawson, Frederick Montgomery IV, Luke Lawson and Scott Lawson.

Manry-Jordan-Hodges Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

James Mitchell Electrician

James Howard Mitchell, 74, of Blakely died Thursday, May 7, 2009, at his residence.

Mr. Mitchell was born in Altha, Fla., Oct. 8, 1934, to James Bruce Mitchell and Mittie Sewell Mitchell. He was a member of the Blakely Church of God and a senior electrician of the power house at Georgia Pacific Paper Company.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Annie Pearl Hathcock Mitchell.

Survivors include one daughter, Melissa Duke of Blakely; two sons, Jeff Mitchell and wife Robin of Blakely and Mike Mitchell of Cedar Springs; one sister, Betty McCordle of Port

St. Joe, Fla.; and six grandchildren.

Funeral services were Saturday, May 9, 2009, at 2 p.m. at Blakely Church of God with Rev. Ronald Leggett officiating. Interment followed at Blakely Cemetery.

Pallbearers Jeff Chandler, Herbert Swords, Preston Holt, Chester White, Johnny Avirett, Marty O'Hearn and Robert Temples.

Manry-Jordan-Hodges Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

Hilda Jones Red Cross Staff

Hilda Strickland Jones, 93, of Rome, Ga., died Friday, May 8, 2009, at her residence.

Mrs. Jones was born in Blakely Sept. 6, 1915, to the late John Winfield and Irene Stuckey Strickland. She was educated at Andrew College and the Florida State College for Women. She joined the Red Cross in 1943 and became a member of the Red Cross staff stationed at Rome's Battey Hospital. She was a member of the First United Methodist Church of Rome, the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Coosa Country Club and the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

She was preceded in death by her husband, James Paul Jones.

Survivors include two sons, James Pickney Jones III and wife Latrelle, of Rome, and Robert Strickland Jones of Atlanta; one sister, Lois Cannon of Blakely; five grandsons, James P. Jones IV, Robert S. Jones Jr., Justus H. Jones, Henry Alexander Jones and Stephen Lang Jones, all of Atlanta, one granddaughter, Kathryn Jones Gallman of Rome; and four great-grandchildren, William Harrison Jones of Atlanta, Emily Elizabeth Gallman and Walker Jones, both of Rome, and Andrew Strickland Jones of Atlanta.

Funeral services were Monday, May 11, 2009, at 2 p.m. at Cave Spring

Chapel Funeral Home with Rev. Jane N. Brooks officiating. Interment followed at Myrtle Hill Cemetery.

Pallbearers were James P. Jones IV, Robert S. Jones Jr., Justus H. Jones, Nathan Patterson, Leon Hulsey and Phillip Moore.

John House Cave Spring Chapel Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

Daniel Rode Contractor

Daniel Rode, 86, of Blakely died Saturday, May 9, 2009, at his residence.

Mr. Rode was born in Broward County, Fla., Aug. 10, 1922, to the late Michael Rode and Helena Richter Rode. He was a member of Ft. Lauderdale Baptist Church and attended Hilton Methodist Church. He was a retired sheet metal contractor and a veteran of WWII. He was awarded the Purple Heart.

Survivors include his wife, Mavis Chandler Rode; one daughter, Sharon Nelson and husband Mike of Long Creek, S.C.; and three special children, Daniel Thomas Rode, Stevie Nicole Rode and Payton Ann Rode, all of Blakely; four grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were Tuesday, May 12, 2009, at 11 a.m. at the chapel of Manry-Jordan-Hodges Funeral Home with Rev. Jay Reppert officiating. Interment followed at Pine Lawn Garden.

Manry-Jordan-Hodges Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

THANKS

We would like to express our thanks for all the acts of love shown to us in the loss of our dear one.

May God richly bless each of you that shared an uplifting word. As we all know, God takes care of his own. Continue to keep us in your prayers.

In Christ,
The Family of
James F. Brooks