

Whispers

by Bobby Stone

No mere man has ever seen, heard or even imagined what wonderful things God has ready for those who love the Lord. But we know about these things because has sent his Spirit to tell us, and his Spirit searches out and shows us all of God's deepest secrets. No one can really know what anyone else is thinking, or what he is really like, except that person himself. And no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit. And God has actually given us his Spirit (not the world's spirit) to tell us about the wonderful free gifts of grace and blessing that God has given to us.

1 Cor. 2:9-12 (LIV BIB)

First of all, before one can begin to comprehend the amazing truth of this passage, some background truth must be laid. Mainly, that God has made man a 3-fold being. He is comprised of a body (blood, bone, and flesh), a soul (intellect, emotion and will), and a spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). Contrary to popular belief, the soul and spirit are two separate units of our being. The soul of man is the unit we exercise in living and planning our daily lives but the spirit is our being's life-giving force. It is that "breath of God" which he breathed into us which makes us unique creatures in this earth. The spirit is also the agent through which God desires to fellowship and speak with his children. Romans 8:7 tells us that the mind does not subject itself to God. In other words, our mind has no capability to relate to God. Our finite minds are not able to comprehend a God that is everthing and everywhere at the same time and who has no beginning or end. This is the reason religion is just an exercise in futility--it teaches and trains the mind to relate to God which is an impossibility. If we could comprehend the greatness of God within our minds then we would be able to describe or give

a definition of a limitless God in limited human terminology. We are only able to list some of God's characteristics. But God has provided man with a spirit which is able to comprehend his greatness. The spirit is commonly referred to as "the heart" which we know to be God's dwelling place within his children.

Through the course of time, Christians have lost the vision of why God created them....for fellowship. He wishes to walk and talk with us everyday as he did with Adam. He wishes to share his deepest secrets personally with you if you will only listen. When God speaks to a man, it is rarely in a loud, booming voice, but in a quiet, firm whisper. This small voice is heard from within and not by the natural ear. God can and does speak to his people through the utterance of gifts of the spirit, but to have God share his secrets with you personally is of a much higher value and worth.

"How do you hear the voice of God?" You learn to hear it by cleaning up your spirit. Your spirit is like a well of water. It has been contaminated and polluted by the elementary things of this world and has to be purified by God's love. This is accomplished by reading the Word and meditating in it, praying in the spirit, and making the Lord your only delight. The more quality time you spend edifying your spirit the clearer and clearer the voice of the Lord will become to you. Soon, it will be easy to discern the voice of the Lord within your heart. God delights in communicating with his children personally and he will not overlook your desire to communicate with him. Make a quality decision to start an anti-pollution drive within your spirit and then listen expectantly for his whispers of love.

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

John 14:18

Folklore

The Ballad of Tom Dula and Laura Foster

by Marlene Berry

It was Thursday evening, January 24, 1866 when Laura Foster left her father's farm to go off and secretly marry Thomas Dula. Laura, who was a beautiful girl with chestnut curls and blue eyes, was seen on Friday riding to meet Tom but no one ever saw her alive after that.

Laura reached the place called Bates Place in Wilkes County where she was to meet her husband-to-be. Unknowing to poor Laura, her cousin Ann Melton, was waiting there secretly with Tom. Tom lulled Laura into a feeling of security and then with the help of Ann, stabbed Laura in the heart. They then stuffed her body into a small, roughly dug grave and this was where Laura was found some six weeks later.

Tom was arrested for the murder and Ann was arrested as an accessory. They were arraigned together but were given separate trials. Tom was found guilty but an appeal was put through by his lawyers. He was again found guilty and was hung on May 1, 1868. Before he went to the gallows, Tom Dula confessed to the murder but said he had no accomplice.

Ann was held in jail until late 1868. It was then that she was finally tried and cleared of the charge against her. With her release this tragedy had supposedly

ended.

Tom never implicated Ann in Laura's murder. Some say he loved her too much and died for her to keep her safe. Ann remained free of blame until right before her death when, on her death-bed, she confessed that she helped kill Laura. The story goes that during the last minutes of her life, Ann's bed was surrounded by blue flames and that she screamed in agony that a black man with a pitchfork was coming after her. This was the real end to this tragedy.

There have many ballads written about Tom Dula and the murder of Laura Foster. It has been passed down through generations as a legend of a beautiful heroine who had been betrayed by the man she loved. The Ballad of Tom Dooley is also this same ballad except that Tom's name has been changed along through the years.

Here is the most popular version of the ballad of Tom and Laura:

Hang down your head Tom Dula,
Hang down your head and cry,
You killed poor Laura Foster,
And now you're bound to die.

You met her on the hill-top,
And God Almighty knows,
You met her on the hill-top
And there you hid her clothes.

You met her on the hill-top,
You said she'd be your wife,
You met her on the hill-top
And there you took her life.

The Answer

by Bobby Stone

Religion has been accused of being a vehement repressor of creativity and the supreme stifler of all curiosity. This assertion is certainly valid when the history of the "organized church" is traced through the centuries. But such an attitude is in direct contradiction to Jesus' claim "I came that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly." The honest truth is that religion is only a veil that hides and hinders the seeing of the true light of the gospel presented by Jesus - Christianity. In fact, religion and Christianity are contrary in many aspects: Religion is man's search for God, Christianity is God's search for man; religion is dependent upon laws of conduct, Christianity is dependent upon God's unmerited favor; religion seeks, Christianity has found.

In infinite wisdom, Jesus was 100 percent man and 100 percent divine. He came to destroy the thief (Satan) who seeks only to steal, kill and destroy. Jesus through his 100 percent sacrifice on the cross redeemed us 100 percent from the power of Satan's bondage and oppression. The reason God requires men to accept his son's redemption is not for selfish satisfaction on His part, but he knows the best thing in the world for a person is to have a loving, righteous and holy God living within him. He wants to make man into the best that he can possibly be. He is not unjust - he does not seek to limit man's abilities. He wants to increase and accentuate them to the point of perfection. Unlike many leaders, God is not afraid of your potential and therefore does not seek to limit it. Contrary to popular belief, Christianity is not a standard of "cannots" but rather a standard of "candos." The opportunities vastly outnumber the limitations. All of this is possible because Jesus has defeated Satan and has become the "head of all principality and power." Before Jesus left, he gave us the same authority that he now enjoys.

Satan now only has as much power as Christians allow him to have. Jesus stripped Satan of all power 2,000 years ago. Satan does not retain one victory he

can claim as his own.

The truth inevitably brings up the question of tests and trials. The Bible says Satan can only tempt man with what is common or understood by him. 1 Peter 1:16 says we are only in trials "if need be." God is not a tantalizer or a teaser. The only reason a man needs to go through a trial is to give God the opportunity to teach him a new "answer" in him that he had failed to realize prior to the test. He longs to reveal a new facet of his character that would never have been comprehended any other way. Therefore, "the answer is not of the need, but the need is of the answer." SELAH.

To understand this we must look to the cross of Jesus. Everything written in the Old Testament points forward to the sacrifice of God's only son. All the offerings were only symbolic of the death of Jesus which brought the real redemption of man. Man had a need - Jesus came to meet that need. But he only needed to die once to provide the answer. For that reason, today we look back to the cross because that is the place where our answer was provided. "In this way God took away Satan's power to accuse you of sin, and God openly displayed to the whole world Christ's triumph at the cross where your sins were taken away." Col. 2:15. Christ provided every answer we would ever need, so today whenever a problem arises we just have to look to Jesus for the answer he has already provided.

What does this mean? . . . Satan doesn't have a chance! Everything he pulls on us already has an answer provided - the need is of the answer. There was once a time when the answer came because of the need. That was when Christ died to redeem man from the bondage and limitations of sin - but never again. Since the death of Christ, and throughout eternity the need will always arise because the answer has already been provided that the answer (Jesus) might have the preeminence.

And he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Cherokee Legend Creation of the Earth

by Marlene Berry

At one time, the earth was covered with water and therefore void of life. All the living things lived in a vault in the sky. Gradually, this sky vault became very crowded and the inhabitants began to fear that they might fall off. Out of this fear grew the desire to know what was below the waters that were under their vault. A little water bug volunteered to go down and see what he could find, so, he flew out of the sky vault and dived into the water. He brought up mud from the bottom and it grew to form an island which they called earth. After this, the earth, which was flat, was fastened by four giant ropes to the sky.

Once the earth had been formed, the inhabitants of the sky vault were anxious to live on this land but it was still too wet and soft. Birds were sent to see if the land was dry enough to live on. When the buzzard was sent down, he flew too close to the earth and his wings hit the wet soil forming the mountains found in Cherokee country.

Finally, the earth was dry enough for the inhabitants to come down, but when

they arrived, they found the earth in darkness. They went out and found a sun. It was placed in an east-west path across the sky. They placed the sun too close to the earth and it nearly burned up the living creatures of the earth. This close exposure to the sun produced a reddish complexion on some of the life on earth.

The conjure men moved the sun to a position that was seven breadths above the earth. Because this height caused the sun to arch in its path around the earth, night and day were created.