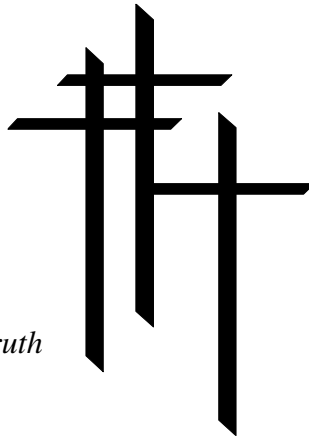


Timely Messenger

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



Volume 65 No. 11

November 2005

TURNING POINTS

by Charles W. Wages

Turning points occur in everyone's life. They can be natural or spiritual; immediate or gradual; big or little; for good or bad. Whatever their magnitude or importance, they play a large part in our lives and in our attitudes toward God and man.

Our thoughts about "turning points" will be mainly of a spiritual nature, however the spiritual largely determines our attitude and manner of living in our natural estate. The Scriptures, especially in the epistles of Paul, speak of

very dramatic and important "turning points." 1 Thessalonians 1:9 is an excellent example of a spiritual turning point.

"For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."

Many of these people had been pagan Gentiles who worshipped all kinds of idols. Through the Word preached by Paul and the

testimony of true believers they turned to God from their idols. This was a tremendous "turning point" that would affect their lives, and others, throughout their lifetime and into glory. The word "convert" means being turned around. Someone or something is going one direction in time and when converted they head in the opposite direction. They once faced Satan and self and now they face the Saviour.

One of the great passages of Scripture that clearly teaches a turning around is Ephesians, chapter 2. The first three verses tells us what we were by nature, how we walked and talked, and to whom we owed allegiance. What a dreary and degrading picture. Satan, "the prince of the power of the air," was our master. We were his children in disobedience. Our character was determined by his character. Our conduct was determined by his conduct or manner of living, our conversation or speech was fashioned after his, and our course or direction was determined by him. What a

miserable picture. What a miserable life.

But God

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).” (Eph. 2:4-5)

There can be no real turning point in one’s spiritual life apart from the power of God. God exercises that power when we give up our own efforts and trust Him. The little preposition “for” in Ephesians 2:4 shows us why God is so willing to help all who look to Him. His mercy is shown because of His great love for sinners.

In times past we were:

- dead in trespasses and sins
- walked according to the course of this world
- lived according to the lusts of the flesh
- fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind
- were by nature the children of wrath.

All of these, and more, because we were under the influence of the “prince of the power of the air.” This ruler is Satan.

But God enters the picture, and what a difference! This is also where the “turning point” takes place. The lost sinner becomes a saved saint. This does not come about by our own goodness or works (Eph. 2:8-9), but because of His mercy, grace, and love for sinners. God does the loving, giving, and the work needed for salvation. We, as sinners, do the receiving, and then begin to accomplish the “good works” He has appointed for His children. What does this accomplish in our “turned around” lives? We become “new creations in Christ Jesus” (2 Cor 5:17). This work of God allows the newly created individual to begin a new walk in a new direction.

Another great “turning point” is brought to our attention in Titus 3:3-7.

“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and

pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

Again, we must consider what we were before God, through Christ, came into our lives and turned us around:

- we were foolish instead of sensible
- we were disobedient instead of submissive
- we were deceived instead of self disciplined.
- we were serving lust and pleasures instead of being servants of God
- we were living in malice and envy instead of doing “good works”

- we were hating one another instead of showing the love of God.

But After

What a “turning point!” What caused this change of direction, this conversion? Titus 3:4 and 6 tells us,

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, ... which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.”

When you read Titus 3 verses 4 and 6 together, you get the full meaning of what causes the dramatic change in one’s life. The statement in verse 5 lets us know again that we had nothing to do with this change other than to accept it as a free gift of God. When we read the expression “But after,” we are forced to think of “but before.” It is not a pretty picture. Sin never is pretty. We don’t like to think of being foolish, disobedient, deceived, lustful, envious, malicious, and hateful. These, though, are the re-

sults of letting Satan rule our lives. These are the qualities of a life without God. We see them mirrored in our society in every form of evil imaginable. A complete change is needed to get out of this mess. That can only be accomplished by the power of God who can turn our lives around and let us look to the future. In Titus 3:7 we are informed,

“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

Once we looked toward “no hope” now we face the future with a “new hope.” That “hope” is “Christ in us, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

In Ephesians 2:11-13, we read of another great “turning point.”

“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were with-

Timely Messenger

Published monthly by:

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out Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

These verses teach a great “dispensational truth” that the devil would just delight in covering up from God’s children. He has done a pretty good job so far. Many of God’s children know very little of God’s great plan for this age of grace. We are told in these verses that “in time past” the Gentiles had “no hope and were without God in the world.” It was through God’s chosen people, Israel, that the Christ (Messiah) was to come. The only way to truly worship God was through His plan and purpose for Israel (the circumcision). Gentiles were considered “aliens” and “strangers” from the commonwealth of Israel and the covenants and promises made to them. The Gentiles were “without hope” and “without Christ,” except in relation to Israel’s hope.

But Now

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” (Eph. 2:13)

Another great “turning point!” It is characterized by the expression “in Christ Jesus.” This makes the difference. All is changed and turned around when we see we are now “in Christ Jesus.” Not just in the world, but in Christ Jesus! This great turning point in God’s dealing with humankind came about by Christ’s death, not just His life. His beautiful, sinless life did not break down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, but the shedding of His blood at Calvary. This brought Jew and Gentile together in one joint body.

“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.” (Eph. 3:6)

Now, this joint body is known as the Church, the body of Christ. This was not only a great “turning point” in God’s plan and purpose for the ages, but can make a great change in our lives today. We, as believers, are “no more strangers and foreigners,

but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” What a position! What a future!

Yes, when we accepted Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, He completely “turned us around.” We once served Satan and self, now we serve the Saviour. Once, the many churches of man confused us, now we are secure in His Church, the body of Christ. What a change, what a hope, what a future!

“Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.” (Rom. 16:25-27)

A HEART TO HEART TALK WITH MOTHERS

by Mrs. Jane Roberts

The world today is caught up in a whirlwind of speed. It seems that everyone is so rushed that they hardly can find time to catch a breath and to analyze what is really happening to them and what values should be placed upon the many duties that they perform. We as Christian women are often faced with the necessity to account to ourselves and to the Lord for our time and whether we are doing with it what we should.

Our home should be our prime concern, because in Titus 2:4-5 God has admonished that we should be "sensible, chaste, good house-keepers, good-natured," willing to adapt ourselves to our husbands, "that the word of God may not be discredited." The quality of daily living in our household is dependent to a large extent upon us as mothers.

There is much concern

recently about the youth of today. Many of them are making unfavorable headlines, while many others are carrying on commendably in schools and communities, though the latter may not receive the publicity they deserve.

Modern psychology tells us that it is bad to be an orphan, terrible to be an only child, damaging to be the youngest, crushing to be in the middle and taxing to be the oldest. There seems no way out, except to be born an adult.

We can improve the lives of our youth by helping them in their spiritual development. In Ecclesiastes 12:1, God asks of the youth that they, "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." The Scriptures have much to say about the spiritual development of youth. The

apostle Paul wrote two letters to a young man, Timothy, whom he called his "son in the faith." In one of these he said, "I remember the sincere faith you have, the kind of faith your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice also had. I am sure that you have it also ... For the spirit that God has given us does not make us timid; instead his spirit fills us with power and love and self-control." Timothy was indeed fortunate to have a grandmother and mother who taught him spiritual truths from the time he was a child.

There was one mother who would quote to her small infant verses from the Bible while she was caressing him. A friend happened in and heard this mother saying, "For God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life", while she tenderly cared for him. The friend was skeptical and said, "You know that child cannot understand the words you are saying to him." The Mother answered, "No, but

neither can he understand when I say, 'Son, I love you'. But I do not intend to stop telling him that I love him." Oh, that there were more mothers who were so vitally interested in their children knowing about God and his love toward mankind!

Henry G. Bosch said, "While certain men have more wealth, talent and education than others, have you ever thought of the fact that we are all equal in regard to the amount of time allotted to us each year?" Consider how we will use this precious commodity in regard to our young people's lives.

Wayland Hoyt tells how he was rummaging along the shore gathering select shells from the sea when suddenly he saw on the beach a very desirable shell, more beautiful than any he had yet discovered. Searching in a dreamy, listless way, he supposed he could pick it up at his leisure. But as he hesitated, a higher wave swept up along the beach, recaptured that lovely treasure, and bore it back to the bosom of the ocean. While we

work with our children, many times the hours become long and hectic and perhaps we lose sight of the precious teachable moments we have. Before these "shells" of opportunity are swept back into the irretrievable past, we need to act with positive purpose. Time is both a gift and a responsibility. It has been said, "Time is so powerful, God gives it to us only in small doses."

A young concert violinist was once asked the secret of her success. She replied, "Planned neglect." Then she explained that years ago she discovered that many things claimed her time. She found herself putting off her practice of the violin until all the other duties that claimed her were performed. Finally she realized that this was causing her to neglect her practicing. She decided to reverse the situation and to give the choice hours of the morning when her mind and body were refreshed for her practicing. The host of other things had to be neglected until the practicing was done. Too often we are too busy with our own

lives to find time to talk and listen to our youth. Perhaps we should practice a little 'planned neglect' of the multitude of things that claim our lives and our time in favor of a good visit with our youth—not just when they are in trouble or have some problem, but just for the sake of being together.

We need to provide first, a wholesome environment for our youth, second, wholesome spiritual nourishment, and third, an example of wholesome living. The things that we consider important are naturally transmitted to our youth as important. From year to year, I see children who are so well cared for in so far as physical, material things are concerned. These children are loved dearly by their parents and their parents sincerely desire to give them all the best things of life. They are given lessons of every description by private tutors. All of these are good, but one thing is lacking—there is no spiritual training. It is the consensus of many people today that they must have a "hands off" policy

in influencing their children spiritually. They feel no compunction about influencing them culturally or socially, but they suddenly become timid and aloof when it comes to influencing them spiritually. Are we to turn them loose in a world where thousands of religions and cults and sects are grasping to claim them with no training in the Scriptures or background faith from the home for any spiritual stability? They are likely to fall prey to many false teachings or to be so confused by the deluge of religions that they will become atheistic. I believe it is the responsibility of the home and church to guide children spiritually. The public school, being a state institution, must remain neutral in order to safeguard the basic tenet, freedom of religion. I believe it is unethical for a teacher to try to influence a student toward some particular religion in school. For the same reason, I also believe it is unethical for a teacher to use his influence to dissuade a student of the faith in God that he has been taught at

home and in church. If the Supreme Court can deny a prayer to be said in school, then this should also prohibit the agnostic teacher from stripping the impressionable minds of youth of their belief in God.

Spiritual nourishment for youth is very important. The news stands are full of suggestive literature and pornography directed to catch the youth's attention. Let us make wholesome literature available to them. May we carefully consider the literature we have coming into our homes. Paul said to Timothy, "But as for you, continue in the truths that you were taught and firmly believe. For you know who your teachers were, and you know that ever since you were a child you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ."

Providing a wholesome environment and wholesome nourishment are relatively easy to provide for our youth. Providing an example of wholesome living is yet another thing. We

are to be "an example of the believer in word, in conversation, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." The Bible says, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." If we as adults do not set some standards for ourselves, how can we expect our youth to have any qualms about what they do. Our Christian youth are bombarded at every turn by the world's allurements and the world's standards, and they are made to feel ridiculous when they adhere to Christian ethics. We as mothers must "take great care then how we live; not unwisely, but wisely, making the most of every opportunity, for these are evil days." (Eph. 5:15) It seems to me that the youth of the world are crying out to the adults of the world to set some stan-

dards, to give them an example to use as a guideline, yes, even to give them something to live for. H. G. Bosch said, "Without full consecration, your life will appear to others as an empty series of disconnected acts. With faith and holy dedication, it will be like the close-woven threads of a tapestry, full of beauty and design." Let us never forget: we teach a little by what we say, we teach most by what we are.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

MRS. JANE ROBERTS

Mrs. Jane Roberts went home to be with the Lord on Saturday, October 22, 2005 at the age of 74. She was the wife of James Roberts, pastor of Peace Church near Indianoma, Oklahoma. She was the youngest daughter of Pastor and Mrs. Ike T. Sidebottom, founding pastor of College Avenue Church in Fort Worth (now Grace Bible Church).

James and Janie were married July 28, 1949 (her birthday). They served the Lord in Fort Worth for the next five years during which they were blessed with three children: Jane Ann, Jim, and Judy. They moved to Lawton, Oklahoma in 1954 and later began a ministry at Peace Church in 1961, a ministry which continues today. She faithfully served the Lord throughout her life serving as church pianist and Sunday school teacher and teaching a special evening Bible class for children. She was a loving and gracious Christian woman who touched the lives of so many people over the years. She will be greatly missed, but we rejoice in knowing that she is now in the presence of her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Be in prayer for James and for their family.



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