

Martin Zender's Clanging Gong News

"If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have no love,
I am a clanging gong" --1 Cor. 13:1-2



Two out of three isn't bad.

Worldly desire

FRIENDSHIP WITH THE
WORLD CAN LOOK PRETTY
DARN RIGHTEOUS

When we think of worldly desire, we think of sex, drugs, rock and roll. Think subtler. Here are the sex, drugs, and rock and roll of good, upstanding citizens:

- 1) Assuming many obligations and worldly cares
- 2) Attempting to please everyone
- 3) Thinking more highly of oneself than one ought



The world rewards those who work like crazy, amass stuff, give 'til it hurts, and then congratulate themselves for being exhausted. What does God expect of us? **"We should be living sanely, justly, and devoutly in the current eon" (Titus 2:12).** ■

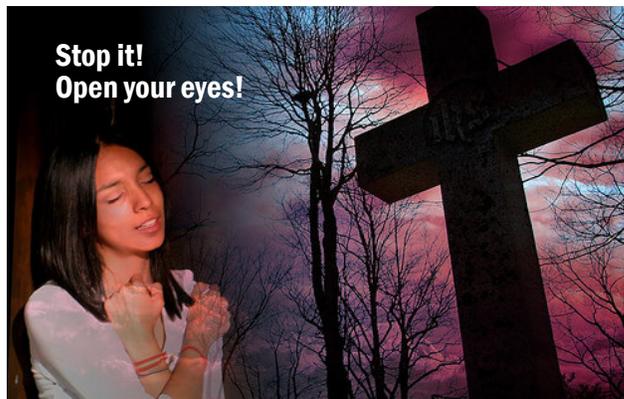
Fact!

Paul was the first member of the body of Christ. It is impossible for anyone who lived before Paul to be a member of that body. **Rom. 8:30**— "Now whom He designates, these He calls."

Be wary of "full surrender"

Few phrases sound so religious and right as the phrase "full surrender." Everyone wants to walk in accord with the will of God, but the way to do that is not to let go of your mind and "become one" with the divine spirit. This is dangerous, demonic, New Age talk.

We acquaint ourselves with God's will through the study of Scripture. This makes us intelligent. Don't fear intelligence! Scriptural intelligence is the safeguard against demonic influence. Becoming intelligent allows one to act upon God's revealed exhortations. Only the spirit of God can cause a person to do this. Do not surrender your mind! Do not, "invite God in." You are not a vacuum.



Stop it!
Open your eyes!

God already lives in you. A neutral, Word-vacated mind is Satan's red carpet. The remedy to this?

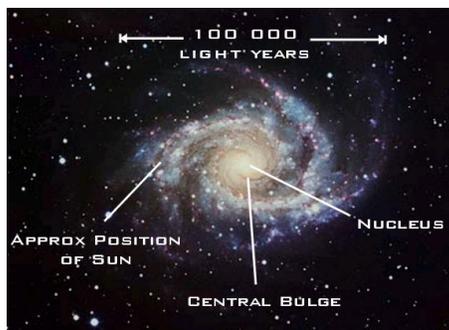
"Let the Word of God dwell in you richly!" (Col. 3:16). ■

We're the Nazareth of the Milky Way

Take a look at the position of our sun in the Milky Way Galaxy. We are not in the "power house" of the galaxy. We're not even in the suburbs. Folks, these are the slums. It looks from this photo like we barely made the grade, and we're one celestial burp from

getting slung into nothingness.

And yet this is the place (the *only* place) where Christ came to die. This is the only place where the future rulers of the universe (that's us) endure boot camp. Ladies and gentlemen, our little planet—which clings like a hangnail to the galaxy—is the moral and political center of the universe.



Nathanael said of Jesus: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

The celestials now ask: "Can anything good come out of the Milky Way?"

Wait and see! ■

Jesus Christ has a God

There are many ways to disprove the dangerous doctrine of the Trinity. Perhaps no way is simpler than quoting the apostle Paul. One of his favorite phrases is:

"Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 1:3).

If our Lord *has* a God and Father, He cannot be the God and Father. His greatest delight is to do His Father's will. How can He do that if He is the Father? Don't rob Him of His delight! ■

Did Paul’s humility work against his boldness?

You have to appreciate the paradox of the apostle Paul, that the very boldness he would apparently need to preach the evangel got constantly whacked from his hands by a God intent on humbling him. On the one hand, Paul asks his friends to pray for him that he be granted boldness. On the other hand, however, he writes:

“And I came to be with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling, and my word and my heralding were not with the persuasive words of human

wisdom, but with demonstration of spirit and of power, that your faith may not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:3-5).

To keep from going crazy, Paul surely must have learned the following:

True boldness comes, not from a human ability to succeed, but from a divine inability to fail. ■



Too harsh?

Judas could not have betrayed Christ without Satan possessing him. —Jn. 13:2

Faith of itself is meritless

This sounds so shockingly wrong that I will quickly explain it in light of Romans 4:16. God’s promise of salvation to us is “...of faith, that it may accord with grace.”

Can faith take our sins away? No. Give us peace? No. Beware! This is not the message of James, where faith must have works added to it. I speak of that which comes *before* faith, not after, namely: God’s grace. Righteousness and peace are gifts; faith is the God-chosen channel acquainting us *with* these gifts. Grace is the horse, faith the cart. Faith *accords* with grace, that is, it agrees with it. ■

Unfairly criticized? Take T. Roosevelt

If you’re trying to do something in this world, you’re setting yourself up for criticism. Some people will even criticize you for *trying* to do something. When the naysayers get you down, read these words from your friend and mine, Theodore Roosevelt:

“It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred

by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again—because there is no effort without error or shortcoming; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and who spends himself for a worthy cause; who, at best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.” ■

WHAT A REVELATION!

GREAT HUMAN “PROGRESS” MAKES NO PROGRESS IN GOD

Our world has a popular saying: **God helps those who help themselves.** God works the opposite way, naturally. **Romans 5:6** tells us that He helps the helpless. Nevertheless, the world keeps trying to make itself happy: music, booze, religion, education, government—anything to soothe the rattled nerves. *We invented sex—didn’t we?* We need only look to ancient Rome to see that every human pleasure has been tried and, well—Rome still crumbled. Instead of researching ancient Rome, read the book of Ecclesiastes; seeking lasting pleasure in this world is like striving to catch the wind.

What man cannot do for us, Christ has already done:

“Yet now, in Christ Jesus, you, who once are far off, are become near by the blood of Christ. For He is our Peace!” (Eph. 2:13-14)



Q&A

God has shown me great favor by choosing me to be a member of His body. Don’t I now owe Him something? —J.R.

Dear J.R., This is pure human reasoning, that we would owe something to someone who has done us much good. I can’t blame you for thinking this, but it’s the thinking of the old humanity. The new humanity thinks: “If God did so much good for me while I was still a sinner (Romans 5:6), then just think how much good He will do for me now that I’m justified!” (Rom. 5:9)

Sound selfish? It’s not! It’s the ultimate compliment to Christ. ■

Rants & Stuff

The Apostle Paul says we should not murmur (Philippians 2:14). Therefore, I shall rant.



Fruitless search for the constant experience



Everybody wants a steady walk, including yours truly. **Pop Quiz:** What amusement park feature most describes our lives today? If you answered: A ROLLERCOASTER RIDE, then you win the stuffed jackass. Where did this idea of a constant experience come from? From misappropriated scripture, naturally.

1 John 3:9 says, **“Everyone who is begotten of God is not doing sin.”** Really? Then I must not be begotten of God. Are you? *What gives here?*

“Begotten of God” refers to Israel in the thousand-years; this is the national “born again” experience. If you apply this to yourself, now, you’re going to think that either God has somehow failed you, or that you have failed God. If you wake up in the morning trying

to be Israel in the Millennium instead of Bob in Milwaukee—you’re doomed. You’re going to be good one day, bad another day, and frustrated every day. Do you want some truth that applies to your life now? Then listen to the apostle Paul, who describes our *present* experience:

“A wretched man am I! What will rescue me out of this body of death? Grace!” (Rom. 7:24). *I feel better.* ■

AND FINALLY

“Having the world’s best idea will do you no good unless you act on it. People who want milk shouldn’t sit on a stool in the middle of a field in hopes that a cow will back up to them.” —Curtis Grant



JUST BELIEVE THE OPPOSITE

by M. Zender

