

# Americas Promise Ministries Newsletter



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January/February 2025

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# America's Promise Ministries Newsletter

January/February 2025

Previous Pastor: Dave Barley

Founder Pastor: Sheldon Emry



Pastor: Kevyn Reid

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## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK:



### Happy New Year!

Praise the Lord for His abundant goodness and faithfulness to His people! As we step into this New Year, we are reminded of His steadfast love and the countless blessings He has poured out upon us.

A heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you who have generously supported this ministry—whether financially, through prayer, or by spreading the word. Your contributions make it possible for us to continue the work God has called us to do. Truly, we could not do this without you! If our ministry has blessed you or strengthened your walk with the Lord, we humbly invite you to consider contributing. Every act of generosity furthers the mission of sharing God's truth and hope with the world.

I am also deeply grateful for the many ways you reach out—through phone calls, comments on our YouTube sermons, letters, and emails. Your encouragement, questions, and even constructive criticisms are invaluable to me. They not only help me grow but also sharpen the way I serve you and honor God in this work. Thank you for engaging with us and helping shape this ministry into something greater for His glory.

I thank God for His sovereign hand in guiding our nation during challenging times. I am grateful that He gave us President Trump as a leader in this season. While leadership is never perfect, I trust in God's ability to use him for His divine purposes. Let us pray fervently for our leaders and for our nation—that God would guide them in truth and righteousness

and use those mightily to fulfill His will.

May this year be one of growth, faith, and renewed commitment to walking in His ways. May we continually glorify Him in all we do, lifting one another up as we strive to build His kingdom here on Earth. Blessings to you and your families, and may 2025 be a year filled with God's presence and peace!

## **The "Beast of the Field" in Scripture:**

### *An Analysis of Biblical Language and Its Contemporary Understanding*

When addressing issues of Biblical literacy and combating the misuse of Scripture, we, as Christians, should have an approach that serves two purposes:

1. **Honor Scriptural Integrity:** Accurate exegesis rooted in context and original languages that ensures the Bible is neither weaponized for prejudice nor diluted by modern agendas.
2. **Equip Believers:** Theological education should empower Christians to discern sound doctrine from error. For instance, utilizing tools like **Strong's Concordance**, Bible commentaries, and other translations deepens the understanding of challenging passages.

The term **beast** appears frequently in Scripture and often assumes various forms, including **beast**, **beast of the field**, and **beast of the earth**. These phrases, rich in etymological and theological significance, have historically been subject to diverse interpretations, some of which are problematic or erroneous. For instance, claims that equate these **beasts** with particular human races lack grounding in Biblical texts and demand thorough Scriptural scrutiny.

### **Linguistic and Contextual Analysis**

The Biblical usage of **beast** is rooted in three distinct Hebrew words and one Greek word:

1. **Chay** (H2416): Translated as "alive" or "living creature," it signifies vitality and life in both literal and metaphorical senses. Examples include:
  - **Genesis 43:7:** *Is your father yet alive?*
  - **Genesis 3:20:** *Every living thing.*
  - **Daniel 12:7:** *He who lives forever.*
2. **Behema** (H929): Denotes cattle or quadrupeds, emphasizing animals' physical characteristics.
3. **Cheyva** (H2423): An emphatic form used to describe an animal or beast, particularly in prophetic visions (e.g., **Daniel 7:3**).
4. **Zoon** (G2226): Found in the New Testament, this term refers to *living beings* as seen in:
  - **Revelation 4:6-9:** Descriptions of the four living beings before God's throne.
  - **2 Peter 2:12** and **Jude 10:** *Natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed.*

A careful examination of these words and their contexts reveals no correlation between *beast* and any human race.

The claim that the *beast of the field* in the Bible refers to the Black race is unfounded and stems from misinterpretations of Scripture and historical misuse of the Bible. Here are ways to refute such a claim:

In Scripture, the term *beast of the field* consistently refers to animals, not humans. For example, in **Genesis 1:24-25**, God creates animals, including the *beast of the field* as distinct from humanity.

The Hebrew term often translated as *beast* (*cheyva*) refers to wild animals or livestock. It never implies humanity, let alone a specific ethnic group. The idea that any ethnic group is subhuman or analogous to animals is contrary to Biblical teaching.

The claim originates from racist ideologies, not legitimate Biblical interpretation. This misuse reflects cultural bias rather than theological truth.

No credible Biblical scholar supports the interpretation of *beast of the field* as referring to a race of people. Such claims lack academic and theological grounding.

***Biblical Lexicons and Concordances:*** *Strong's Concordance*, *Young's Concordance*, *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*, and *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* provide definitions that exclusively refer to animals or living beings, not human groups.

### ***Key Examples of Beast in Scripture and Their Meaning***

1. ***Genesis 1:24-25:*** Describes God's creation of living creatures, categorically distinct from humanity.
2. ***Daniel 7:3:*** Symbolic beasts in Daniel's vision represent kingdoms, not races.
3. ***Revelation 4:6-9:*** The four living creatures symbolize aspects of God's character and the worship offered to Him.

The *beast of the field* and related terms reflect God's intricate creation and serve as metaphors for various theological truths. Misinterpreting these terms to target any human group contradicts the Bible's central message. By diligently studying Scripture with humility and academic rigor, Christians honor God. Thus, let us commit to *searching the Scriptures* (**John 5:39**) with integrity and applying their truths faithfully in our lives.

As a leader and fellow believer in the Kingdom Gospel, I urge you to exercise discernment and vigilance when engaging with books or teachings that claim to interpret Scripture but instead twist its meaning for personal agendas or false doctrines. Such works often take verses out of context, misrepresent God's Word, and lead many astray from the truth of the Gospel. Remember that the enemy seeks to sow

confusion and deception, even by using Scripture. Test every teaching against the whole counsel of God's Word, and pray for wisdom from the Holy Spirit to discern truth from error. Let us not be swayed by eloquent words or appealing arguments but remain steadfast in the faith, grounded in the unchanging truth of the Bible.

*Pastor Reid*



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# Our Schoolmaster to Bring Us to Christ

By Pastor Earl Linville, Christian Covenant Fellowship, OK

I have studied writings by others on why the feast days are not to be observed by Christians today and the following is my understanding and thoughts on this subject.

## **Galatians 3:24-25**

***<sup>24</sup> Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.***

***<sup>25</sup> But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.***

The Greek word for schoolmaster is *paidagogos*. It is Strong's number G3807. It means "a boy-leader, i.e. a servant whose office it was to take the children to school; (by implication, (figuratively) a tutor ("pædagogus")):—instructor, schoolmaster."

**Webster's Dictionary** defines a schoolmaster as one who disciplines and directs and it defines tutor as "A person charged with the instruction and guidance of another . . . to teach or guide, usually individually in a specific subject or for a particular purpose."

While the schoolmaster/Law of Moses/Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances was physical to our ancient Israelite forefathers, revolving around their harvest season, it also had a prophetic deeper spiritual meaning and purpose. It was to point toward the future, to Israel's Messiah, and what He would accomplish for them and us their descendants.

Animals were sacrificed under a Levitical Priesthood on set days at a set place. At first in the Tabernacle in the wilderness and then permanently at the Temple in Jerusalem. This pointed toward the day when Israel's Messiah and Redeemer would come and make the ultimate sacrifice to redeem His people and save them from their sins and from the penalty required for those sins. The blood of the sacrificed animals in the Old Covenant COULD NEVER "really" wash or take away

our sins.

### **Hebrews 10:4**

*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*

But the Ordinances pointed to who would take away our sins. In addition, many Old Testament prophecies clearly told of their Messiah sacrificing His life, shedding His blood for His Kinsmen. Please read **Psalm 22** and **Isaiah 53** to name a couple of these.

The Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances was **FULFILLED** by Jesus Christ/Yashua Messiah's death, burial, and resurrection. We are complete in Him because of His great Sacrifice!

[**Editor's note:** The rest of the Law is still in full force and effect and is to be obeyed. Only the Ordinances were fulfilled. Jesus explained this.

### **Matthew 5:17-19**

***<sup>17</sup> Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*** (He fulfilled prophecies and the ordinances!)

***<sup>18</sup> For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the (Moral) law, till all be fulfilled.***

***<sup>19</sup> Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.]***

### **Ephesians 2:15**

***Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;***

### **Colossians 2:10; 14**

***<sup>10</sup> And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:***

***<sup>14</sup> Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was***



*against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;*

If we are complete, why would we need a schoolmaster/tutor or any part of one?

**Galatians 3:19** tells us both the reason for this ritual/ceremonial Law and the duration, i.e. when it would end.

*Wherefore then serveth the [sacrificial] law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.*

Why then the [sacrificial] Laws? They were added [at the time of Moses] because of transgressions, until the Seed [Christ] should come to those whom it had been promised, being ordained through angels in the mediator's hand. [The mediator here was Moses.]

**Galatians 3:24-25**

*<sup>24</sup> Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

*<sup>25</sup> But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

The schoolmaster was added to the Moral Law to make ancient Israel aware that they were sinners (transgressors of the Law (the Ten Commandments) therefore in NEED of a Messiah/Deliver/Savior to pay the penalty for those sins. Or to put it in New Testament terms:

**1 John 3:4**

*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*

**Romans 3:23**

*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

**Romans 6:23**

*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

So we see that the ritual/ceremonial Law, the schoolmaster/

tutor was ADDED because of sin and to point to the Messiah that would come to BE the sacrifice to pay the PENALTY FOR those sins, and that being done, we are COMPLETE in Him, and we have no need for the ritual ceremonial Law of Commandments contained in the Ordinances or any part of it. I say “any part” of it because there are those today who say, “*Well, to please God Christians still must keep the feast days.*” If you press them, some will imply that you are actually sinning if you do not keep the feast days.

I ask, “*Where do they get the authority to do only that one phase of the schoolmaster, i.e. keeping the feast days, but omitting the fact it must be done at the Temple in Jerusalem and requires the sacrificing of animals under a Levitical priesthood?* [Christ is our High Priest under the order of Melchizedek. The Levitical Priesthood ended with the death of Christ and the renting of the Curtain in the Temple.]

The Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances was a Law with built-in commands and instructions on how to keep it. It was not left up to the individual to decide on his own when, where, and how he would do it. He could not choose the ninth day of the fifth month and offer up a deer at Beersheba. He had to offer up particularly described animals, and grain as commanded in **Exodus 12; Leviticus 23, Number 18; Deuteronomy 16** and he had to do it at the Temple in Jerusalem under a Levitical Priesthood.

#### **Deuteronomy 12:10-11; 14; 18**

***10 But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the Lord your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety;***

***11 Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord:***

***14 But in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of***

*thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.*

*<sup>18</sup> But thou must eat them before the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto.*

### **1 Kings 11:36**

*And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.*

### **Number 1:48-50**

*<sup>48</sup> For the Lord had spoken unto Moses, saying,*

*<sup>49</sup> Only thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel:*

*<sup>50</sup> But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it: they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle.*

Now consider **2 Timothy 3:16**

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

Keeping in mind that all Scripture is inspired, look again at **Deuteronomy 12:32:**

***What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.***

**Everything in the Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances (animal sacrifices at the Temple in Jerusalem on set feast/holy days, under a Levitical Priesthood) stand or fall together.** They are strict commandments telling Israel HOW to observe the Ordinances. We cannot pick and choose to do part of it. If I chose to keep any part of the above my way, I would be in violation of the command in

## **Deuteronomy 12:32.**

In fact, that is exactly what I did when I was in the Worldwide Church of God many years ago. We kept the feast days in various places (Big Sandy, TX; Squaw Valley, CA; Jekyll Island, GA; etc.) under the priesthood of Herbert W. Armstrong, but we did not sacrifice animals since it was obvious Christ was the sacrificial Lamb that took away our sins.

**BUT**, we disobeyed **Deuteronomy 12:32!**

***What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.***

Two sons of Aaron were killed by the LORD for burning strange fire other than the type commanded. (**Leviticus 10:1-2**) Uzzah was killed for touching the Ark while trying to keep it from falling off a cart. (**2 Samuel 6:1-8**) and it happened because the Ark was not supposed to be carried on a cart, but it was supposed to be carried by the Levites with poles through the rings fastened to the Ark, sort of like pallbearers carrying a casket. A non-Levite was not supposed to touch the Ark. King Uzziah of Judah was made a leper for the rest of his life by God for taking it upon himself to burn incense in the Temple of the LORD. This was something only the sons of Aaron were commanded and permitted to do. (**2 Chronicles 26:18-23**) Our God did not allow His people to pick and choose how to keep the Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances.

Yes, those people were under the letter of the Law, while we are under grace, but Christ is recorded as saying even in the New Testament

**Matthew 4:7**

***Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.***

It is also written in **Malachi 3:6**

***For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.***

I believe today that Christians are not under the Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances or any part of it BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN FULFILLED BY CHRIST and abolished in His Flesh!

**Galatians 3:24-25**

***24 Wherefore the (sacrificial) law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.***

***25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.***

**Colossians 2:10**

***And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:***

So as Christians we need to be careful and heed the following:

**1 Corinthians 7:23**

Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

**Galatians 5:1**

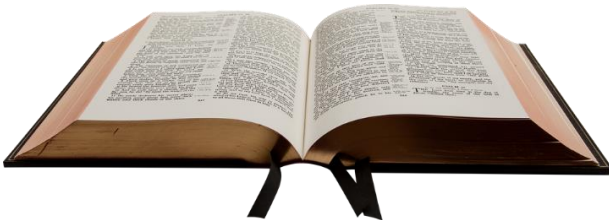
***Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.***

God destroyed the Temple through the Roman Armies in 70 AD to show His people they were no longer under a schoolmaster. He destroyed it so no one could observe this Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances.

But we have those today who still want to observe a “part” of the old schoolmaster that was to bring Israel to Christ.

We must remember **Deuteronomy 12:32**.

***What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.***



# Neuroses of the Mind

By Margaret Reid



I am a very cerebral person. And by that, I mean I live loudly, inside my head. Frequently, it is quite frantic as well. I am recently post-partum, and if you recall, I am on a synthroid to manage Hashimoto's. The demand for TSH is much less when an individual is not pregnant, so my medication needs adjusted, but they only check it every two months after adjusting. It is a slow process. So the Loud and Frantic things in my brain are louder and much more frantic lately. Which is unfortunate, because it can create quite the anxious environment to live in, inside my head

I spent most of my life battling anxiety, which is irrational fears over seemingly innocuous things. At least by my definition. I can sometimes be a bit neurotic, a bit high strung, easily excitable. There is a near constant din inside my head. Think, like the sound of a small motor or the hum of a fan. The thoughts move about the speed you would imagine for either of those things. Sometimes it is loud and fast, sometimes it is soft and slow. More often than not it is obnoxiously repetitive. Things like "Lord, please help me" x 1000, "Nope!" x1000, "How am I going to survive this?" x 1000, "I cannot do this" "He's/she's going to die" x 1000 and my very favorite, "Oh Lord!" I do not know if anyone else's head is this loud or repetitive, but mine sure is! Then, I wonder why God tells us to ***"Take captive every thought to the obedience of Christ."*** It is difficult to have a productive life without doing that.

As you can see, it is very easy to fall into a pattern of anxiety. Anxiety can also be considered forcing yourself into control when you have none. It does not often work well. An excellent example of this was, the other day, after a long day in town, loaded down with all the things I went into town to get, including 6-5 gallon water jugs, I started to drive up the dirt road that leads to my house. It is steep and icy, so I had it in 4-high. As I got to the second and most steep turn, I started to slide backwards. I did not slide far, and managed to stop,

but I was slightly panicked, as I know, for a fact, vehicles could go down over the side and end up in the escarpment. I then put it in 4-low and continued to slide toward the cliff. I finally managed to stop and sit there a moment. Then, I actually out loud said these words to myself “Let me back up while I am still in control.” And I proceeded to back up and get stuck in the ditch on the other side. I was not in control. I was never in control. And I never will be.

I sent our oldest son, Ethan, up to the house to get help, and eventually got out of the ditch and up to the house not too long after. There was a brief moment, when I did, indeed, think I was going to go down the other side and I just hollered “Lord please do not let me go down!” about fifteen times before stopping with my driver side tire right on the edge. A very real moment of God letting me know he is unequivocally and indefinitely in control of the things in my life. Yours too.

You see, I had been spending a great deal of my time and energy worrying about things outside of my control. Sometimes, even worrying about things completely within my realm of authority. I was less productive as a result, and definitely was not able to do the things I am called to do. Like steward my children, or even keep my own heart in check. I certainly was not taking any thought captive, let alone every! I certainly was not spending time in the Word for my own personal study.

There is a silver lining to this though, I am in control of one thing and that is me. I can control myself. How upset I get at something, whether or not I get to work or stay on task, how I react when something does not go my way, or when I made plans based on future data that has yet to be revealed and I was wrong. The fruits of the Spirit are these “Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” You see there, self-control.

God intends for us to be responsible for ourselves as a light of our Christian walk. If we cannot maintain self-control, we cannot be good stewards of the things He gives us. It takes

self-discipline, a derivative of self-control, to steward things. Your garden, your pantry inventory, your home, your children and yes, even your bank account. That money is not ours to do as we please, it is God's to serve the Kingdom, and yes, fulfill some wants and desires of ours as blessings for faithfulness. When we forget the fruit of self-control and leave it lacking, all manner of trouble comes creeping into the cracks of our lives. Worry and stress are just some of them. Especially when we try to take the reins we have no strength or wisdom to wield.

As we look ahead to 2025, a new year, full of immense possibilities and too, some frightening forecasts, we must maintain that fruit of self-control. And all the other fruits are sure to follow, and who does not want that joy and peace? I certainly do! We are all going to need that self-control to stick to our budgets, our meal plans, our decluttering schedule and our other personal commitments to be a better us this year. Pray for me on my journey and I'll pray for you on yours, God Bless!



### **Peanut Butter Balls**

**This recipe is one I made up to give my kids a healthy snack. Healthier than I could buy at the store for sure!**

**1.5 Cups Peanut Butter Powder (I use Naked PB, I buy online)**

**1 Cup Maple Syrup**

**1 Cup Natural Peanut Butter**

**Mix all in a stand mixer or with a hand held mixer. It should have a playdoh like consistency, roll into 1" balls, and that's it!**

**You could easily swap protein powder for some or all of the peanut butter powder to enjoy different flavors. I've tried chocolate and vanilla with great success.**



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# Jonah's Heart

By Thomas C. Rolland

Former Pastor, First Covenant Church, Dallas, TX

Recently at First Covenant Church, we explored an old Bible favorite from when we were all children, the **Book of Jonah**. Jonah is numbered as one of the minor prophets of the Old Testament period. Of course, this designation is based solely upon the amount of writing that the prophet would leave behind. At four chapters this is one of the shorter books in the Bible.

Although Jonah's name means dove, (which most of us would equate to peace or love), when Jonah receives his commission to go to Nineveh he is cantankerous and rebellious. He then leaves the shores of Israel at the coastal port city of Joppa, and travels in the opposite direction from Nineveh to the city of Tarshish. I believe that this city is not to be confused with the city St. Paul was from named Tarsus. Tarsus was located on the southern shore of modern day Turkey and would be on the way to Nineveh, so this does not seem to be a logical choice. A better choice would be the ancient port of Tartesso, which was located on the Atlantic coast of western Spain, then known as Iberia or the Iberian Peninsula.

This destination would make a lot of sense since Jonah describes himself to the sailors aboard this merchant vessel as a Hebrew, not an Israelite. Plus, one must travel out of the Mediterranean Sea and through the Pillars of Hercules and northward to this ancient port. It has its origins as part of the Phoenician Empire's colonial and naval efforts, this also would be convenient since Lebanon/Phoenicia was the northern neighbor to Israel, and they shared a similar language. From Tartesso, Jonah could literally catch a vessel going anywhere, even to Britain, or beyond.

We know from Scripture that Jonah's journey was cut short due to the tempest the LORD sent. So we cannot tell how far he actually got when he was thrown overboard by the terrified

sailors. What we can tell is that the Lord is sovereign, since he knew in advance this day would come and it may have taken many years or decades to prepare this great fish. Although the Ferrar Fenton version of the Bible has a footnote which states this was actually a ship called either “whale’ or “great fish,” I find this absurd. The Holy Bible is filled with examples of miracles and supernatural occurrences which denote the power of the Creator over the creation. So in my view this is no different from the dead being raised or water turned to wine.

In Hebrew, there is no word for ‘whale’ thus the idea of a great fish or monster is used. Many of us like to think it was a whale, since like us, the whale is a mammal and breathes air for their oxygen exchange. Although we have heard many stories over the years which imply a person was rescued from the belly of a whale, most cannot be verified. Therefore, I am loathe to use them as proof. It seems likely it would have been a whale, especially if we assume he stayed alive during this whole episode. Many Bible scholars believe he actually died during this time and was resurrected for his mission. Since Christ refers to Jonah regarding his own death at the cross, and a reference is made by Jonah to hell (translated from sheol), this may indeed have been the case.

But how did Jonah arrive at Nineveh? There is the possibility that this great Fish swam to the most north-eastern shore of the Mediterranean and vomited him up there, but there is no mention of a journey on foot. Another explanation might be that this creature swam all the way around the continent of Africa and up into the Persian Gulf right into the Tigris River itself. Nineveh lies on the Tigris River and it has a larger water volume than the Euphrates does.

If this were the case, imagine the surprise of all those people who worked on or lived near the Tigris when a great fish noisily splashed its way up to dry land. Especially when the Ninevehites worshipped, as part of their polytheistic paganism, Dagon, the ancient Fish God. I think that if you

lived in a culture where the population for the most part worshipped a fish god, when a great fish vomits up a living man, it would get your attention.

I can just imagine in my mind's eye, a very irate yet humbled Jonah marching up towards the walled city of Nineveh, trying to look composed and important while pulling the seaweed out of his hair. Regardless of what he looked like, he was effective. Previous to this, we know that God prepared Nineveh for his message with an eclipse of the sun in 763 BC and two great plagues very close together in 759 BC and 756 BC. Although this does not sound like much to us now, back then this was very serious stuff. Whatever the case may be, Jonah was the most successful evangelist I think you will find in the Bible. Everyone in this great capital city was led to repent from the King on down to the lowest servant.

We would think that Jonah would be happy, or at the very least satisfied with the successfulness of his mission, but not Jonah. He would have preferred for all of the Ninevites to be punished and destroyed, and when this does not happen he wants to die. This may be, in my estimation, the whole point to the Book of Jonah. Do you have a Jonah's heart?

I am always surprised by fellow Christians' reactions to this good news or Gospel message. Yet it does occur. This theme of a bitter Jonah's heart is also alluded to in the Parable of the Prodigal son, and again in the parable of the Vineyard Workers hired at different times during the day. We all need to examine our own hearts and determine if we too have a Jonah's heart.

**Jonah 4:11** opens another interesting door into the mind of God. He describes the vast population of Nineveh as not being able to discern between their right hand and their left. In the Scriptures the right hand is equated with mercy and the left hand with judgment.

That is why Jesus is described always as on the right hand of the Father's throne in Heaven. Also, when Christ was seized

by the Jewish Guard in the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter, in defending his Savior cut off the right ear of the high priest's servant. As a veteran of the Army I can tell you he was aiming for this man's neck, and he ducked. Quick, but not quick enough! Jesus performed another miracle by mending this ear so that that individual could then hear of Jesus' mercy. Were these Assyrians, who were known for the cruelty in battle throughout history, in need of a little tempering with Mercy? I think so.

Remember that within a generation these same people would be used by the Lord to judge the northern ten tribes of Israel, our forefathers. The purpose would not be to destroy them utterly, but for the Assyrians to defeat them, and then remove them off the land and from their inheritance. I am positive that when those Assyrian soldiers conquered the Israelites, they would realize that possibly they themselves, or their parents, had also had a relationship with Yahweh, God of Israel. I believe that their treatment of those defeated people would allow them to be safely transported with minimal violence into their future dwelling places in the Caucasus Mountains.

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## **Abigail: Heroine or Disobedient Wife?**

By Martha Barley

**1 Samuel 25:3-42** tells the story of Nabal, Abigail, and King David. When reading the story in the Bible, the details are not told in chronological order. The first event that happened is that King David and his army protected the shepherds of Nabal and during that time none of King David's army requisitioned any of Nabal's possessions for their use.

### **1 Samuel 25:15-16 NASB**

***15 Yet the men (King David's) were very good to us, and we were not harmed, nor did anything go missing as long as we went with them, while we were in the fields.***

***16 They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the time we were with them tending the sheep.***

For those of you who have studied history, you know that it was not uncommon during wartime for soldiers to come into an area and take all the food supply, horses, wagons, etc., and even press the men into the service of the army. King David did not do that. Instead he and his men protected Nabal's men, sheep and possessions and at some later date he requests provisions from Nabal to feed his troops. It must also be noted that Nabal was a very wealthy man and fellow Israelite, but was NOT an obedient servant of the Lord.

***2 And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.***

***3 Now the name of the man was Nabal; ... but the man was churlish (harsh) and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.***

So King David is asking from someone who has extra to give. In essence, King David is requesting payment for services rendered.

***5 And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name:***

***6 And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast.***

***7 And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel.***

***8 Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David.***

Adam Clarke in his commentary explains that the phrase ***whatsoever cometh to thine hand*** means:

As thou art making a great feast for thy servants, and I and my men, as having essentially served thee, would naturally come in for a share were we present; send a portion by my ten young men, for me and my men that we also may rejoice with you. Certainly this was a very reasonable and a very modest request.

The truth of this is shown by that fact that Abigail does have a large amount of food that she can send. It seems obvious that they were preparing for a feast and she did send a large amount for King David's six hundred men (**vs. 13**).

***18 Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses.***

But we are getting ahead of the story. When King David's men came and requested the provisions, Nabal refused.

***9 And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.***

***10 And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master.***

***11 Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?***

***12 So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings.***

Notice that Nabal does not just refuse, he insults King David and his men. He is stating that as far as he knows these are just disobedient men who have rebelled against their master King Saul. Also notice that he did not object to King David protecting his men previously. As you can imagine, Nabal has

infuriated the King, not just by refusing the food, but by insulting them personally and bearing false witness against them.

***12 So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings.***

***13 And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff.***

Nabal's men recognized the injustice of Nabal's actions and realized that he and the whole household of Nabal are in danger of being killed and that they will be called upon to fight against the very men who protected them! They know that Nabal will not change his mind so they go to Abigail for help.

***14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them.***

***15 But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields:***

***16 They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.***

***17 Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him.***

Abigail not only sends the food, but seeks to have her husband's iniquity put on her. She is willing to suffer to save her husband and their household. She asks for forgiveness for her boldness and she admonishes the King for his bloodlust. She also prophesies of King David's future reign over all Israel.

***23 And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and***



*lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,*

*<sup>24</sup> And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid.*

*<sup>25</sup> Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.*

*<sup>26</sup> Now therefore, my lord, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.*

*<sup>27</sup> And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.*

*<sup>28</sup> I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.*

*<sup>29</sup> Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling.*

*<sup>30</sup> And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel;*

*<sup>31</sup> That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.*

Because of her words, King David repents of the evil he was going to do and thanks Abigail for saving him from himself.

***32 And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me:***

***33 And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.***

***34 For in very deed, as the Lord God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.***

Now it must be noted that Abigail knew that her husband had said no to King David's request and that she circumvented his order that nothing be given to the King.

***19 And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal.***

She could have simply followed her husband's instruction and told the men to obey Nabal. However, she knew by doing so her husband would be killed and probably the whole household. I believe she understood the necessity for disobeying her husband to save the situation and she was willing to suffer whatever punishment that was required by the King and her husband to do so including the loss of her own life.

Her actions not only saved her husband and their household, but also saved King David from committing evil. King David blessed her for her actions and God put Nabal to death for his actions. Abigail had no way of knowing how this situation would turn out and she certainly did not know that by doing what she was doing she would become the wife of King David.

So you decide. ***Heroine or disobedient wife?***

# How a Deflated Small Town in Arkansas Turned Profitable and Reduced Crime

by Nick Johnson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQyN4zwM1Vk&t=16s>

Blytheville is a success story that is not normally seen in America; the community works together and has conservative and sensible values. Blytheville was called one of the worst places to live in Arkansas for a long time. The town lost jobs and had 14% unemployment that led to high rates of poverty and crime.

But the city is using a novel concept by paying companies to operate in Blytheville, and paying residents to move there. Homes cost an average of \$267,000, which is far below the national average. Today, Blytheville is growing. Mom and pops are springing up downtown. Sidewalks are clean and crime is going down. And Blytheville is the biggest region in the country for good hard-working blue collar jobs. The local community college teaches trade skills and there is a program to have the costs paid.



CDC calls itself the nation's "leading science-based, data-driven, service organization." So, one might assume that the statements on its website are

carefully vetted by at least one of its 1,700 scientists. Unfortunately, CDC is unable to provide ICAN (Informed Consent Action Network headed by Del Bigtree) with any records relied upon to support its statements on its COVID-19 vaccine "Myths and Facts" webpage.

The CDC.gov website is supposed to be one of the most authoritative public health websites in the world. Perplexed by many of the statements made on its (ironically-titled) webpage "Bust Myths and Learn the Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines," ICAN's legal team submitted numerous FOIA requests asking CDC for the evidence it relied upon to make those statements.

We'll discuss each of these "facts" in our new series: No Records Found. In this first segment, we'll tackle perhaps the most surprising of all the statements on the page:

**"Nearly all the ingredients in COVID-19 vaccines are also ingredients in many foods - fats, sugars, and salts."** This was certainly news to us, especially since ICAN has closely studied the ingredients listed in each COVID-19 vaccine insert. In order to get to the bottom of this, ICAN's attorneys sent multiple FOIA requests, phrased in different ways, asking for all records showing:

The foods that contain the same ingredients as those found in the COVID-19 vaccines. The foods that contain recombinant spike protein from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The foods that contain nucleoside-modified messenger RNA. The foods that contain extracts from the soapbark tree. The foods that contain baculovirus and cellular DNA, lentil lectin, methyl- $\alpha$ -D-mannopyranoside, simethicone, pluronic F-68, Triton X-100 and/or Tergitol and that eating an ingredient found in food has the same effect on the body as injecting that same ingredient into the body.

A rational person would assume that these requests would be answered with records, studies, or at least emails between CDC scientists that support CDC's claimed "fact." In fact, CDC is required to have this support pursuant to the Information Quality Act, which requires that the agency be able to "substantiate the quality of the information it has disseminated." It will come as no shock to ICAN supporters to learn that CDC was not able to find ANY records whatsoever in response to any of our requests about this claim. **Not a single study, white paper, or even an email from the "leading" public health agency on the planet to support a statement it calls "fact" on a page about "busting myths."**

Truly incredible, ironic, and disturbing.

<https://icandecide.org/press-release/no-records-found-segment-1-cdc-busted-for-having-no-data-to-support-its-claim-that-most-covid-19-vaccine-ingredients-can-be-found-in-food/>