

*The Messenger of Mountain Bible Church*

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*Children's Programs are available at the same times.*

*Infant care (0-2 years) is available in the nursery*

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# The Messenger



## MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

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### LOVE: A New Look at the Birds & the Bees

We could learn a lot about love from paying closer attention to the "Birds and the Bees." As the song proclaims, "Love is a many splended thing! Nothing is more beautiful or compelling than watching a couple in love. The question is, "Why does the "splendor" wear off so quickly?

Science addresses love by observing the symbiotic relationships among God's creations. One example of this is the "Birds and the, (not Bees)," flowers. Science would point to this as a perfect relationship because it is mutually beneficial to both birds and flowers without damage to either. When a married couple commit themselves to being mutually beneficial to each other, a great marriage results.

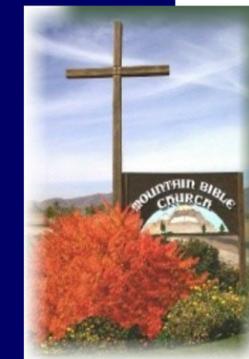
Young men and women would do themselves a great favor by paying close attention to this axiom before engagement

and marriage. Is your relationship symbiotic with each other? By symbiotic I mean, is your relationship synergetic, reciprocal, and mutually interdependent? Are you better as a team than the sum of two individuals? For example, bees make flowers better and flowers allow bees to survive!

Equating love to the birds and the bees isn't a compliment. The symbiotic relationship between the birds and bees is **mutually competitive** and often a life and death struggle. Some birds and bees are competing for the same food source and on occasion birds find their food source in bees! A bee sting can be fatal to a small bird such as a humming bird. Many couples "Fall out of love" because the relationship between them became so competitive they began to treat each other as enemies.

**When God addressed the issue of love** He approached it very differently than the song writer. Instead of the emotions surrounding the "splendor" of love, God drew our attention to the visuals and actions of love. God said we show love by being patient and kind. To love means to consider the feelings of others as more important than our own. We are to avoid rudeness and insensitivity one hundred percent of the time. Love means we are affirming them continually. Let's look at a more complete accounting of God's teachings about love from 1 Corinthians 13:

- 1. Love is not** related to intellectual superiority!  
"If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.
- 2. Love is not** excelling in spiritual or religious ex-



LOVE: cont.

periences!

(2) If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing.

3. Love is not about physical sacrifice

(3) If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.

4. Love IS about being patient and kind!

(4) Love is patient and kind.

5. Love affirms others rather than demanding its own way.

Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being

wronged. (6) It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.

6. Love endures through every circumstance.

(7) Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

(8) Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever!

7. Love is greater than prophecy or speaking many languages

(9) Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! (10) But when full understanding comes, these partial things will become useless.

8. Love is a maturity

we grow up to, and quitting childishness

(11) When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things.

9. Love is a mature expression of full understanding!

(12) Now we see things imperfectly as in a cloudy mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.

10. Love is greater than any intellectual, physical, religious, or spiritual expression or experience.

(13) Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians

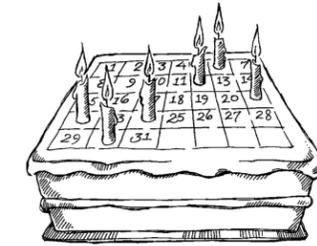
13:1-13 (NLT)

Interactions with people are the norm. In the natural world, no form of life exists in absolute isolation. It follows to reason that the better we become in this symbiotic relationship we have with each other the more pleasing we become to God and the greater our witness will be to the unreached in the world. Also, the happier we will be in all our relationships.

Have a great February,

Your Pastor, Marv

Birthdays in February



Birthdays & Anniversaries

“THE GLORY OF LIFE IS LOVE, NOT TO BE LOVED; TO GIVE, NOT TO GET; TO SERVE, NOT TO BE SERVED.”

LIKE THE FLASH-LIGHT, YOU WERE DESIGNED TO SHINE; BUT YOU CAN NEVER SHINE WITH YOUR OWN POWER. THE HOLY SPIRIT PROVIDES THE POWER TO PRODUCE THE LIGHT. AND ONCE YOU SHINE AS YOU WERE INTENDED TO SHINE, YOU WILL NEVER BE USELESS!

Anniversaries in Feb



Valentine Trivia:

110 million roses, the majority colour red, will be sold and delivered within a three-day time period. The red rose was the favourite flower of Venus, the Roman goddess of love. Red stands for strong feelings. California produces 60 percent of American roses, but the vast number sold on Valentine's Day in the United States are imported, mostly from South America. 15% of U.S. women send themselves flowers on Valentine's Day. 73% of people who buy flowers for Valentine's Day are men, while only 27 percent are women. More than 35 million heart-shaped boxes of chocolate will be sold for Valentine's Day. While 75% of chocolate purchases are made by women all year long, during the days and minutes before Valentine's Day, 75% of the chocolate purchases are made by men.

For Help and Answers

Call the church office—822-7541
Crisis Prayer requests—Call Carol, 822-5479
Change address or phone—822-7541
Doctrinal questions—822-7541
Wedding questions—822-7541

Hospital visits—822-7541
Counseling Information—822-7541
Child dedication Service—822-7541
Student Ministries (Junior High to College)—822-7541
Membership/Baptism—822-7541

MBC Got Talent
Friday Night, February 10th
5:30 - 7:30 pm
Come and share your talent
And enjoy a fun night of fellowship.



## A CALL TO PRAYER FOR AMERICA

Throughout the history of the United States, its citizens and inhabitants have drawn strength, hope, and guidance from prayer. From the very first Continental Congress, through every form of adversity and blessing. Americans have fallen to their knees and implored God Almighty to protect their families and to heal their land. The freedom upon which America is founded affords the right to any individual to decline to pray if he or she so desires. However, that same freedom allows those

who believe in the power of prayer to utilize that great opportunity to ask God to bless and sustain our nation. That freedom is not diminished merely because one is elected to public office. Quite the contrary, the cloak of authority placed upon the shoulders of a public servant should be an inspiration for those who believe in the power of prayer: to use that great power to ask God to bless and sustain the nation they love and serve.

The Bible records in 1 Chronicles 7: 14 that God told King Solomon: *"If my people who are called by My Name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land."* On the 7th Day of March, 2015 members of Congress and State Legislators from all across America gathered for the purpose of calling the nation back to prayer. They realized the need

for America to turn back to God and prayer, not for a single day or a single month, but to pray "without ceasing." Accordingly, this day we respectfully and humbly issue this "Call To Prayer For America" and invite you to join us in this call by adding your name, and further join us by praying for God's continued blessing on this country. May God Bless you and may He continue to bless and sustain the United States of America.

See Insert in Messenger

## Just a Pilgrim by Brooke Boyd

Humans have been bothering me lately, which probably means I'm the one with the problem not the other 7.5 billion people on the earth. It feels like a lot of the conversations I have had about Jesus lately leave me feeling heavy and I really like feeling free and light much more. I think we try so hard to figure out life and if we can get other people to think the same way then maybe we are right and we can have some security in that. I've been frustrated with people trying to ask my opinion on topics that I don't think should even be asked because they're not relevant in my opinion of Jesus and Christianity 2.

They really don't want my opinion anyways 3. Well I just need a third point. I know I don't know much, in fact most things about Jesus I won't ever be able to fathom, and as I was reading the psalms this morning and kept coming across that theme I found peace for this frustration inside me. *I am just a pilgrim passing through, and He makes me brave, He is high above the earth and right in the midst at the same time.*

For me knowing that God is too great for my sinful small little mind to comprehend has been enough for me to have peace that I don't need to know

everything. I can go confidently searching and seeking because He is everywhere and He is the unending adventure my soul seeks, there will always be more. I don't have life figured out because that isn't my job, I honestly don't believe I have that privilege, or capacity. I know where life comes from however and I accept that I am a pilgrim. In this I can be ready to move and say yes and be uncomfortable, needing all the more the nearness of Jesus. We all ask questions, for some it may be *How could you have created the earth in 7 days* God for others it may be *why God have*

*you let this be in my life or maybe it what's next God?* I think as long as you're talking to Him you're probably in a pretty good place. He can use whatever gets you to communicate with Him to pull you near. As a pilgrim I like the adventure of the uncertainty of where tomorrow may lead me to but the absolute certainty of who will be going there with me. That's what keeps me in communication with God and what reassures me of His presence.

## My New Year's Resolution by Michael Hurrell

Since I stopped working in late 2013 I've told everyone that, (starting in 2014) "This year is going to be the greatest year ever," and they really have been. Each subsequent year getting better, I expect 2017 to be the greatest yet. Okay, folks. Once again it's that time of the year. Resolutions to be made, I'm not really the resolution type, too much of a letdown when I don't follow through. There is always my fall back long standing resolution (i.e. every day) of trying to be a better person. This year I thought I'd make it an official New Year resolution, hopefully with an excellent follow through. Of course, to be a better person, I always look to scripture, I checked my NKJV concordance, and there was no reference to any resolution. Then I checked the Bible concordance app on my phone, and there was only one. I always consider God's direction, unfortunately it was Luke 16. The parable of the unjust steward that I have battled with since the first

time I read it. It appears to go against common Christian values. I could never justify it. God often makes what I think should be simple more difficult so that I put more effort into the task. Of course since this discovery I have found over 500 passages in scripture for the word resolve. I should have started in Matthew Henry's or pulpit commentary. I had already spent over an hour trying to understand Luke 16:1-2, and wasn't going to waste time spent, also, it clearly was God's choice. We see that in verses 1-3 that a wealthy master's steward has handled his affairs in a poor manner, and is about to lose the stewardship. Just as we handle our master's affairs poorly and soon will lose our lives. So now the steward seems to rely on trickery to right his mishandling of affairs, verses 4-7. Then, in verse 8 he is commended for his "shrewdness". Furthermore I'm told that people of the world are more shrewd than we are in the kingdom. I've always felt be-

ing shrewd was a positive characteristic, it was hard for me to accept the trickery as a positive. (Webster's defines it as having the ability to make good judgements.) So I learn that the reference is not to the cheating or his master, nor the dishonesty. More to the circumspect nature of worldly men, and how men, such as us, should be a little more careful in how we deal with our Father's blessings, now it just gets confusing. In verse 9 I'm instructed to make friends with worldly riches? Then I'm lost in verse 10 and verse 11 wasn't helping. Oh, why could it not have been Matthew 13 the parable of the sower that my Lord so graciously explains in verses 18-23, the unrighteous mammon, (the riches of the world) are to be used to help others, not so much myself, that is faithful behavior in what is "least," worldly riches, and faithful behavior in what is "best," God's blessings. That was easy, I don't know why it gave me so much grief in the past.

Never did have a problem with verse 12. So, this makes my resolution this year one of the hardest things. To have the attitude of giving everything all the time is a virtue that seems unobtainable, but that's the trick, go "all in", as they say in Vegas. If I take the posture of giving everything I will always be left with having to give more. Since they're the least of things it should be easy to give more. I appeal to my Mountain Bible Church family to resolve this year to give more. I do not mean money, I mean anything helpful to the world, more kind words, more kind gestures, more support to those of less on opportunity. As good Christians we do all these things, I know, we just need to do it more, always, God bless you in 2017. More is better.



Join us on Sunday, Feb 5th after service for a delicious meal prepared by the Domingos. Suggested cost is \$4 for adults and \$2 for children.

## Books of the Bible by Jerry Henry

The question of the authenticity of the Bible will always be asked by the skeptic world, especially around Christmas or Easter. The question will come about why doesn't the Bible contain the Gospel of Judas or the Gospel of Mary, as if, by magic they were just discovered. According to skeptics, there has never been a true "original" Bible. For example, Dan Brown's fictional book *The Da Vinci Code* has his storyline 'expert' say the following about the Bible: "The Bible did not arrive by fax from heaven. . . . The Bible is the product of man, my dear. Not of God. The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds. Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book." Brown's charge does indeed belong in a **work of fiction because the assertion is simply not true.**

It is correct that the Bible was written over a long period of time. Written by 40 authors over a period of some 1,500 years, the Scriptures are made up of 66 books—39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New. The Old Testament is oftentimes divided into four sections: (1) The Pentateuch, which is sometimes referred to as "The Law" and includes the first five books of the Bible; (2) The Prophets, which includes all the major and minor prophetic writings; (3) The Writings, which includes Psalms, Proverbs, and a num-

ber of other books. And (4) historical of the Old Testament.

The New Testament is also divided into three segments: (1) The Gospels; (2) Church History, which basically includes just the book of Acts; (3) The Apostolic Writings, which includes everything else.

### Compilation of the Original Old Testament (General)

How was the original Bible as described above compiled? Its assemblage can be traced through Scripture in a fairly accurate manner. After Moses wrote the Pentateuch, it was placed in the Ark of the Covenant and preserved (Deuteronomy 31:24). Over time, other inspired texts were added to the first five books of the Bible. During the time of David and Solomon, the books compiled until that time were taken and placed in the temple treasury (1 Kings 8:6) and cared for by the priests who served in the temple (2 Kings 22:8). More books were also added during the reign of King Hezekiah—David's hymns, Solomon's proverbs, and prophetic books such as Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah (Proverbs 25:1). In general, as the prophets of God spoke and their words were written down, they were included in what today is the Old Testament.

During the Israeli exile in the sixth century BC, the books were scattered, but not lost.

Around 539 B.C. and after the return of Israel from the Babylonian captivity, Ezra the priest later re-collected all of them back together and added other works to the compilation. They were then stored in the Ark that was constructed for the second temple and were meticulously copied to protect the inspired writings. This collection of Old Testament books, written in the He-



brew language, is what Judaism calls the "Hebrew Bible."

In the third century B.C., the Old Testament books were translated into Greek by a team of 70 Jewish scholars, with the finished work being called the LXX (which stands for "70"), or the Septuagint (a Latin word derived from phrase "the translation of the seventy interpreters"). The Septuagint was certainly used and quoted by the Apostles, including Paul, in their writings. The oldest manuscripts of the LXX include some 1st and 2nd century B.C. fragments.

In 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in the area of Qumran in Israel. Modern dating techniques state the age of the scrolls to be (depending on the individual

scroll) anywhere from the 5th century B.C. to the 1st century A.D. Historians believe the Jewish scribes maintained the site to preserve God's Word and most certainly to protect the writings from the destruction of Jerusalem that occurred in A.D. 70. The Dead Sea Scrolls represent nearly every book of the Old Testament and comparisons with modern copies that exist today show them to be virtually identical, with the main deviations being the spellings of some individuals' names and various numbers quoted in Scripture.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are a testimony to the accuracy and preservation of the Old Testament and provide confidence that the Old Testament existing today is the same Old Testament as that which was used by Jesus. In fact, Luke records a statement made by Jesus regarding the assemblage of the Old Testament: "For this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who

was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation'" (Luke 11:49-51, emphasis added). Jesus confirmed the 39 books of the Old Testament in these verses. Abel's death is found in Genesis and Zechariah's in 2 Chronicles 24:20-21, which, from an ordering perspective, is the last book in the Hebrew Bible.

### Compilation of the Original New Testament (General)

Dan Burstein, in his book *Secrets of the Code* (a book similar to Dan Brown's book), says this about the New Testament: "Eventually, four Gospels and twenty-three other texts were canonized (A biblical canon, or canon of scripture, is a list of books considered to be authoritative scripture by a particular religious community. The word "canon" comes from the Greek, meaning "rule" or "measuring stick".) into a Bible. This did not occur, however, until the sixth century." Is this assertion true? **Actually, it is 100% false.**

The truth is the composition of the New Testament was officially settled at the Council of Carthage in A. D. 397. However, the majority of the New Testament was accepted as authoritative much earlier. The first collection of New Testament books was proposed by a man named Marcion in A.D. 140. Marcion was a docetist (docetism is a system of belief that says all spirit is good and all material mat-

ter is bad), and so Marcion excluded any book that spoke of Jesus being both divine and human, and he also edited Paul's letters to match his own philosophy.

The next proposed collection of New Testament books on record was the Muratorian Canon, dated A.D. 170. It included all four gospels, Acts, 13 of Paul's letters, 1, 2, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation. The final New Testament Canon was first identified by the church father Athanasius in A. D. 367 and ratified by the Council of Carthage in A. D. 397.

But history shows that the actual New Testament read today in modern Bibles was recognized much earlier and that it is an exact reflection of what the originals or "autographs" contained. First, Scripture itself shows that the writings of the New Testament were considered inspired and on a par with the Old Testament. For example, Paul writes, "For the Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,' and 'The laborer is worthy of his wages'" (1 Timothy 5:18, emphasis added). The latter quotation is from Luke 10:7, which shows Paul considered Luke's Gospel on par with Scripture as a whole. Within the New Testament, there are many examples from Apostolic authors that quote each other as well as quoting the Old Testament.

Second, quotations exist from the early church fathers that allow the near reconstruction of the entire New Testament

as it is found today. For example, Clement (c. A.D. 95) quotes from 11 New Testament books, Ignatius (c. A.D. 107) quotes from nearly every New Testament book, and Polycarp (a disciple of John, c. A.D. 110) quotes from 17 New Testament books. Working with early church fathers' quotes, the entire New Testament can be pieced together with the exception of some 20-27 verses, most of them from 3 John. Such evidence provides witness to the fact that the New Testament was recognized far before the Council of Carthage in A. D. 397 and that the New Testament reflects today what was written 2,000 years ago.

Third, there is no literary rival in the ancient world to the number of manuscript copies and the early dating of the New Testament. There are 5,300 Greek, 10,000 Latin, and 9,000 miscellaneous copies of the New Testament that exist today and more continue to be unearthed via archaeology. The combination of early dating and the enormous number of New Testament copies causes historical experts to say,

*"The interval, then, between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and*

*the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established."*

Now let us go into a more detailed description of the development of the Bible into the Christian biblical canon that we know today.

### Development of the Christian biblical canon

The Christian biblical canons are the books Christians regard as divinely inspired and constituting a Christian Bible. Books included in the Christian biblical canons of both the Old and New Testament were decided by the 5th century for the ancient undivided Church (which includes both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions) and was reaffirmed by the Catholic Church in the wake of the Protestant Reformation at the Council of Trent (1546). The canons of the Church of England and English Calvinists were decided definitively by the Thirty-Nine Articles (1563) and the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), respectively. The Synod of Jerusalem (1672) established additional canons that are widely accepted throughout the Orthodox Church. The Old and New Testament canons did not develop independently of each other and most primary sources for the canon specify both Old and New Testament books.