

Weekly Bible Study, Wednesdays 7: 30 PM, via Zoom, History of Church of God in the Middle Ages
Weekly Radio Program. Sundays, WKDW-FM 97.5 Northport, FL. 10-11 AM
Weekly webcast, Vero Beach, 2 PM

Pastor's Letter December 18, 2020

What would you do ???

Cut the Baby in Half !?



*“**T**his is unbelievable ... two prostitutes arguing over the same baby?....*

Are you kidding me?” said the local magistrate to his friend. “How is that possible? Two mothers, each with a newborn child,... and each woman screams that she alone is the legitimate mother of the live baby while vociferously asserting that a dead baby belongs to the other woman. The only thing I know for sure is that I will have to direct them to the appellate court and let somebody that I hope is more experienced and wiser than I am handle this matter.”

But the same thing happens at the appellate court. The judge asks the two women to explain their situations and one boldly claims the live baby is hers with the dead baby belonging to the other woman. Back and forth the bickering goes... back and forth and, after extensive accusation and argument, the judge finally exclaims, “ This case is beyond my ability to decisively settle. I don't see any clear

cut answer here. This is clearly above my pay grade to solve. Normally we could sweep this under the rug and forget it but now the whole community is talking about it and wondering who could possibly solve this baffling argument. As much as I hate to take up his time with these two obscure women, I am going to have to refer this up the line to our new king to deal with.”

We really don't know for sure how this case unfolded but normally the king would not get involved with the affairs of two prostitutes when other large-scale matters screamed for attention. Many a judge would run away from such a case because it could become endlessly time consuming with no closure.



An Unsolvable Argument That baby's MINE!

To quote from the NIV translation, "...some time later two prostitutes came to the king to have an argument settled. "Please my lord" one of them began: "This woman and I live in the same house, I gave birth to a baby while she was with me in the house. Three days later this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there were only two of us in the house.

"But her baby died during the night when she rolled over on it. Then she got up and took my son from beside me while I was asleep. She laid her dead child in my arms and took mine to sleep beside her. And in the morning when I tried to nurse my son, he was dead! But when I looked more closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn't my son at all"

Then the other woman interrupted, "It certainly was your son and the living child is mine!"

"No", said the first, "the living child is mine and the dead one is yours". And so they argued back and forth before the king. Then the king said, "Let's get the facts straight. Both of you claim that the living child is yours, and each of you says that the dead baby belongs to the other. All right, bring me a sword." So they

brought him a sword...and he said, “cut the living child in two, and give half to one, and half to the other!”

Truth Prevails – thanks to Wisdom

Then the woman who was the real mother of the living child, and who loved him very much, cried out, “No my lord, give her the child – please do not kill him!” but the other woman said, “All right, he will neither be yours nor mine; divide him between us!”

Then the king said, “Do not kill the child but give him to the woman that wants him to live, for she is his mother!” When all Israel heard the king’s decision, the people were in awe of the king. For they saw the wisdom God had given him for rendering justice.



Artist's Rendition of Solomon's Court

What Can We Do With More Wisdom?

The real beginning of this story began when God first appeared to young Solomon in a dream and offered to give Solomon anything that he wanted. Rather than ask for riches or long life or revenge on his enemies, Solomon asked for wisdom to deal with the daunting challenges that he would face as a young king. God was very impressed and granted the king his petition. So thereafter, Solomon settled this perplexing dispute between the two mothers and very likely settled many other disputes quite successfully as well.

Wisdom – A Special Asset

How about us ? Do we need more wisdom? Probably. Do we need to know how to manage our time well? No doubt. Could we utilize more insight in understanding other people? Sure. Could we better understand how to deal with our children or pets or business associates or friends or enemies (if we have any) or antagonistic family members? Of course.

In Proverbs 12:16 we read that life and death are in the power of the tongue. Wisdom can be one of our best friends, whereas the lack of wisdom can lead to total disaster. God encourages us to study the Psalms, Proverbs and rest of the Bible in order to grow in wisdom. Wisdom is a silent fruit of God's Holy Spirit and when we exercise wisdom in our decision making, we are acting on God's wavelength and beginning to react to various circumstances in the same way that God does.

Since we can never have enough of God's wisdom, we need to ask God for it. Such a request is a favorite request that God delights in answering, We don't need to look any further than Matthew 7:7-11 which states that we can ask and receive good things from God. As verse 11 reinforces *“if sinful parents know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more will our heavenly Father give good gifts (such as wisdom) to those who ask Him?”* We will always need to pray to God for more of His Holy Spirit. Like Solomon, we can ask for wisdom and reap the benefits of doing so.

Recent/Upcoming activities in the 4 congregations

Vero Beach Is preparing to host a Karaoke Night at our church hall on December 26, beginning after sunset. We will have a pot luck meal after services and all are invited. Now that we have worked out the kinks of cybercasting from VB, we went from our average of 2 connections to six for last week! Granted, that is microscopic, but it shows that additional people are learning that they can log on to our programming. This trend is essential to ultimately developing community outreach even as we do not know how long we have to do the work .

Bob Orosz will speak here this Sabbath.

Ft. Myers Will be having Jeff Lockhart and family visit again. Also we welcome back Mel & Darlene McQueary, snowbirds from Cincinnati, who will be with us for a while. Also we anticipate visits from Jim & Sue Kocher from Wheeling, W. Va. as well as John & Vicki White. Both men are elders and I will have them speak while they are in Florida.

Jeff Lockhart will give the sermon this Sabbath and Chuck Smith will give it next Sabbath.

Ocala We have a great chemistry here as well. It will be enhanced with John & Vicki White from Columbus, OH who will be wintering nearby in Leesberg. I will have him speak during the time he is here. This Sabbath we will have a pot luck meal together.

I will speak there this Sabbath.

Tallahassee We had a remarkable Sabbath last week with a record crowd of 26 people who filled up the Marriott conference room. Half of the attendees were brand new to the church. They stayed late and indicated that they will be back this Sabbath. Among those in attendance were a number of children. Also we are glad to officially welcome the Api brothers who have settled into the area as well as Nadine & Ashley. Additionally we have a couple from the Thomasville area that also express sincere interest in attending. While this all stems from answered prayer, we need not take anybody or any congregation for granted.

Lonnie Mooneyham will give the sermon there this Sabbath. Larry Taylor will speak next Sabbath and I will speak there the week after next.



Last week's activity after services - Tallahassee

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please remember Janie Mooneyham who was in a traffic accident on Monday when she was rear-ended. Although she was in the hospital for sore bruises, she is at home now.

Also in the Ft. Myers/Naples area, member Andy Hoffman, a surgeon, is actively looking for work at a hospital between Naples and Ft. Myers and would appreciate your prayers for him to get established in this area of the country.

And continue to pray for the work that is generated from the Home Office. Our Media department is excited to see that since Beyond Today television has switched from WGN to Newsmax, audience response has doubled! Equally exciting is that response is reflective of all the different age brackets.

Another solid trend is that church income has continued to steadily rise at a time when Covid 19 has forced a number of projects to be handled from home. As a result, the UCG has been considerably under budget even as we are seemingly doing more. However we simply cannot take these trends for granted either. We must recognize Psalm 127 which reminds us that *“unless the Lord builds the house; the weary toilers toil in vain”*.

Finally, the e news from the Home Office carries updates on ministerial credentialing, the Southwestern US pocket conference, and Robbin Weber as the new Regional pastor for that area replacing Jim Tuck who is retiring.

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