

Living to Win

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Personal from. . .

Ronald L. Dart

Condemned

I was taken aback by a letter I got yesterday. The letter was taking me to task for a statement I made, which actually came from the Apostle Paul. I had noted that, speaking of the Jews, Paul said that God had *shut them up* in unbelief that he might *have mercy* upon all. It reads like a contradiction in terms. He shuts them up in unbelief, what most Christian teachers would call a “lost” condition, so He can have mercy on them.

What this means to me, and I said so, is that God, *for a time*, closed the door on the Jews so He could have mercy on them at a later time. I thought that was rather gracious of God. The fellow who wrote the letter was telling me how wrong I was, and the major heading, in large letters and emphasized, was, “**All are condemned.**”

That set me back on my heels. While I can’t say for sure what he meant by that, there are people who believe that the whole wide world is condemned except for their own narrow segment of the faith. And the implication of this belief is that man is damned, that

he is headed for hell.

This fellow might have been of the school that believes that we are born into the world condemned by Adam’s sin. Born condemned. That doesn’t sound entirely fair, does it? Shouldn’t we all have a chance to live before we are judged and condemned?

Let me explain something here. The Bible is not one book, but a collection of books and letters. These books and letters include the testimony of men who had close encounters with God. They were inspired of God to write down their testimony, and their witness is authoritative. But there is a problem. They wrote in languages very different from our own, which places us at the mercy of translators. I think the translators have done their best, but if you look solely at one or two narrow

passages, you can come away with a wrong impression. This can happen even if the translators do a good job.

We misunderstand one another all the time, so it’s not hard to see how we could misunderstand Jesus or Paul or Peter. When we misunderstand one another, we can ask for clarification. In a sense, we can do the same thing with the Bible. We have to read contextually, and come to understand as we develop the big picture.

At one level, the Bible is really quite easy to understand, and the Gospel of Jesus is simple enough. What makes it difficult is the preconception a person brings to the book. If you listen to enough preachers, you can end up totally confused. I hope my fellow ministers will forgive me for saying that but, in their hearts, they know it is true.

I want to use this word “condemned” to explain what I am driving at, so bear with me. There

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Tax-favored Gifts

You don’t have to be wealthy to increase your contributions to CEM. You can make substantial tax-favored gifts without taking a hefty bite out of your current income or assets. All it takes is a little planning. As a part of your team, CEM stands ready to help you make charitable gifts that may provide these benefits and more. Contact Larry Watkins at 1-888-BIBLE 44 to find how these things can be done.

Making Feast 2005 Memories

By Linda Benton

We are excited about creating new memories at the CEM Festival 2005 in Fort Walton Beach. Would you like to make your Feast especially memorable this year? One terrific way to make this Feast very special for yourself and others is to share your Feast with our youth.

The CEM Festival offers memory-making opportunities each year with Youth Educational Adventures (YEA) classes. YEA classes for all age levels are designed specifically for the Feast. Class age levels are Beginners (ages 3-5), Primaries (ages 6-8), Juniors (ages 9-11), Intermediates (ages 12-15), and Senior Teens (ages 16-19).



All of these lessons are fun and are focused on living a Christ-based life. Every lesson uses interactive and active forms of learning. They are relevant, age-appropriate, and taught from full-color lesson books. Their success depends on having enough adult volunteers available to staff the many jobs involved.

CEM offers several opportunities for you to serve the church's next generation during the Feast. We need adult volunteers, men and women, for each of the YEA age groups.

Whether you are an experienced teacher or simply someone genuinely interested in making a difference in the lives of our young people, please join the YEA team. We need teachers and assistant teachers to staff at least seven YEA classrooms this year.

Let us know if you would like to serve by filling in and returning the enclosed questionnaire. Please return your questionnaire to CEM, Attention: Allie Dart, P.O. Box 560, Whitehouse, TX 75791. Also, you may contact Linda Benton, the YEA Feast Team Leader, by e-mail at lsbtexas@earthlink.net. *Please note that completing this form does not obligate you to serve.* We will contact you to let you know how you will be included in making Festival 2005 memorable. Thanks so much for your interest.

Feast 2005 Seminars

By Pam Dewey

A full program of seminars is planned once again for the CEM 2005 Feast of Tabernacles at the Emerald Coast Conference Center in Ft. Walton Beach, FL. As in previous years, seminars will be held for one hour in the morning, concurrent with the YEA classes, before the worship service. Seminars will be held all days except the weekly Sabbath and annual holy days. The experiment at the 2004 Feast in Eureka Springs, which had seminars replacing the afternoon service on the first day of the Feast and on the Sabbath was a rousing success. So plans are to do the same at the 2005 Feast. This part of the seminar schedule was particularly appreciated by YEA teachers and choir members, who are either teaching or practicing music during the time of the week day seminars.

No More Tears

Because of the profound impact that Brent Kern's lyrical baritone voice will have on you, a CD is now available through CEM for \$11.95 plus \$1.20 shipping charges. You will find his music comforting, reassuring, inspiring, and powerful! His style and interpretation of these songs bring life in a brand new way. You will be entranced as you hear him telling stories from Simon carrying Jesus' cross, to the little hills in Galilee where Jesus played, to the longing of Peter wishing Jesus, his beloved Friend and King, was still there with him. The following is a complete list of songs you'll appreciate listening to time and again: *O Holy Night, Bless This House, The New Jerusalem, I'll Walk With God, I Walked Today Where Jesus Walked, The Holy City, Were You There, God Shall Wipe Away All Tears, The Lord's Prayer, Thank You, To Where You Are, Watch The Lamb, I Will Be Here.*



Letter to the Editor:

"Just to let you know how very much I appreciate your program, which I listen to on KCBC, in Northern California. I first was attracted to your style, uncomplicated, straight forward, delivered in your inimitable, gentle, Texan accent. . . good stuff! I find myself now looking forward to your voice daily, a dose of sanity in an otherwise increasingly insane world! The Lord needs more of you!" - VLG

Condemned

continued from page 1 . . .

are two different Greek expressions translated “condemned” and they are both *combined forms*. That is to say, they are a combination of the verb “to judge” and the preposition for down or against; i.e., to render judgment against. This word implies that a decision has been made *against* the one judged.

There are other places where the simple verb “to judge” is rendered “condemn” and that is misleading. That happens in a familiar scripture:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:16-18 KJV).

When you read the Greek, you find that the unbeliever is not condemned, but judged. He that believeth not is *judged* already. But what does that mean, in practical terms?

Well, every person who becomes a Christian, had a time when he did not believe. He was an unbeliever before and was *judged to be such*. But when he comes to believe, he isn’t judged that way any longer. The word “condemned” has such a terrible finality to it, and a synonym for it is “damned.” But whatever judgment the unbeliever has on his head right

now need not be final.

Now, I don’t know what the fellow who wrote to me meant when he said all are condemned, but I didn’t like the sound of it. Nevertheless, in the broadest possible application of the English word, there is a sense in which all men are condemned who don’t believe. They are condemned to walk in darkness. They are condemned to live their lives away from God.

Ever since Adam and Eve disobeyed and got themselves evicted from the Garden of Eden, we have all been “condemned” to live outside of paradise. It isn’t so much that God is condemning us to hell because of what Adam did. But Adam permanently lost the title to the family farm, and we can’t get it back.

So, in that sense, we are born condemned to live outside of paradise. We are born “lost.” Christian teachers, in captivity to their own jargon, confuse a lot of people. Some people are left to believe that a newborn baby is born into the world destined for hell. No one wants to believe that, so there are a lot of mental gymnastics employed to work around it.

But you can best understand what this means if you consider the plight of a child born in the Sudan today. The poor little ragamuffin is condemned to live in disease and poverty, possibly slavery if he lives at all. And he is condemned to that, not for anything he has done, *but because of where he was born*.

And this is the plight of all mankind. We were not born in the

Garden of Eden. We were born outside, in the cold, cruel world, and like that poor little fellow in the Sudan, we don’t have a chance unless someone comes to save us. Adam and Eve didn’t experience a change in human nature. They experienced a change in environment. It is like an American who is run out of the country and forced to live in the Sudan, to leave paradise and live in hell.

And this is not a bit far-fetched, because in the earlier days of our country, there were Americans snatched off merchant vessels and sold in the slave markets of North Africa. They were lost unless or until someone ransomed them, redeemed them, bought them back, saved them.

And it is only in this sense that all are condemned or lost. But there is another element to this that I cannot explain here. Please use the enclosed card to order my presentation titled, “Condemned.” I think it will clarify some things that most people simply don’t get.

Keeping the light on for the lost,

Ronald L. Dart

P.S. That cassette tape is *FREE*, but we could surely use your help. If you can’t give, order it anyway. Someone else is giving so you can have it.

In Memory

Christian Educational Ministries gratefully acknowledges the generous donations made in loving memory of Jerry Danahy. Our deepest sympathies and prayers go out to this family during their loss and grief.

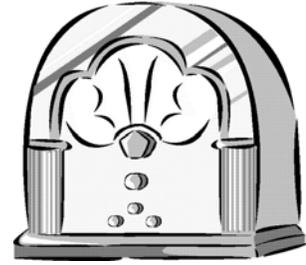
Hymnal Announcement



The song on page 127 in the large print hymnal only has two verses, but there are three verses in the hardback songbook. Replacement for pages 127 and 128 are available if you will write or e-mail CEM to let us know you want the new pages.

Radio Update

KTOK
Tulsa, OK
1000 AM
7:30 a.m. Sunday



Calendar of Events

Destin, Florida - You are invited to attend the Spring Mini-Feast during the spring holy days, April 22-24, 2005 at the Seascape Resort Conference Center in Destin. Ronald L. Dart is scheduled to speak as follows: April 22, 7:00 p.m. – Passover Service; April 23, 2:00 p.m. – Sabbath Service; April 23, 7:00 p.m. – Night to be Much Observed; and April 24, 2:00 p.m. – First Day of Unleavened Bread. The highlights of this Feast will be inspiration, edification, and great fellowship. For more information, call Gary or Shirley George at (850) 837-0485.

Family Bible Retreat, Memorial Day Weekend - An exciting menu of seminars, workshops, sermons, youth classes from 3 to 20, and delightful activities awaits all who would like to attend. This retreat is nestled in the Ozark Mountains, in Bull Shoals, AR. Join us Friday, May 27th at 7:00 p.m. for food and fellowship. After attending seminars and a Sabbath worship service, come hear Brent Kern in concert Saturday evening, followed by a pie and ice cream social with games. There are more seminars on Sunday and an adventuresome afternoon canoe float trip down the beautiful Buffalo River for young and old. CEM will provide hamburgers and all the fixings for Sunday evening's meal. More great YEA classes and seminars will cap off this event Monday morning. For reservations call 866-235-2726 or Larry Watkins at 1-888-BIBLE 44.



CEM Summer Camp - June 26 through July 3, 2005 at Camp Wewoka Woods, in Wewoka, Oklahoma for young people who are already 13 and have not had their 19th birthday. Contact Larry Watkins at 1-888-BIBLE 44 for more information.

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That the man of God may be proficient and equipped for every good work.