

Ministers:  
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley  
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Sunday:  
8:00 AM: WGCY  
9:00 AM: Worship

Wednesday:  
7:00 PM: Bible Study

[gibsoncitychurchof  
Christ.com](http://gibsoncitychurchofchrist.com)

**This Past Week:**  
Worship—30  
Wednesday—11  
Contribution—\$

**For meditation:**  
Proverbs 30.24–28  
How do ants  
demonstrate wis-  
dom? Rabbits?  
Locusts? Spiders  
(or lizards)?

**Radio program:**  
WGCY FM, 106.3  
Sundays at 8 AM

## *A Theology of Suffering, 2*

Because of Genesis 3, all suffering is a result of sin (as are all weeds, sweat, etc.). But we can never assume that a particular individual's suffering is due to a sin they committed, any more than we can assume that a snake you come across crawls on its belly because it has been a bad snake. As G. K. Chesterton reminds us in his *Introduction to the Book of Job*, Job wasn't "tormented not because he was the worst of men, but because he was the best."

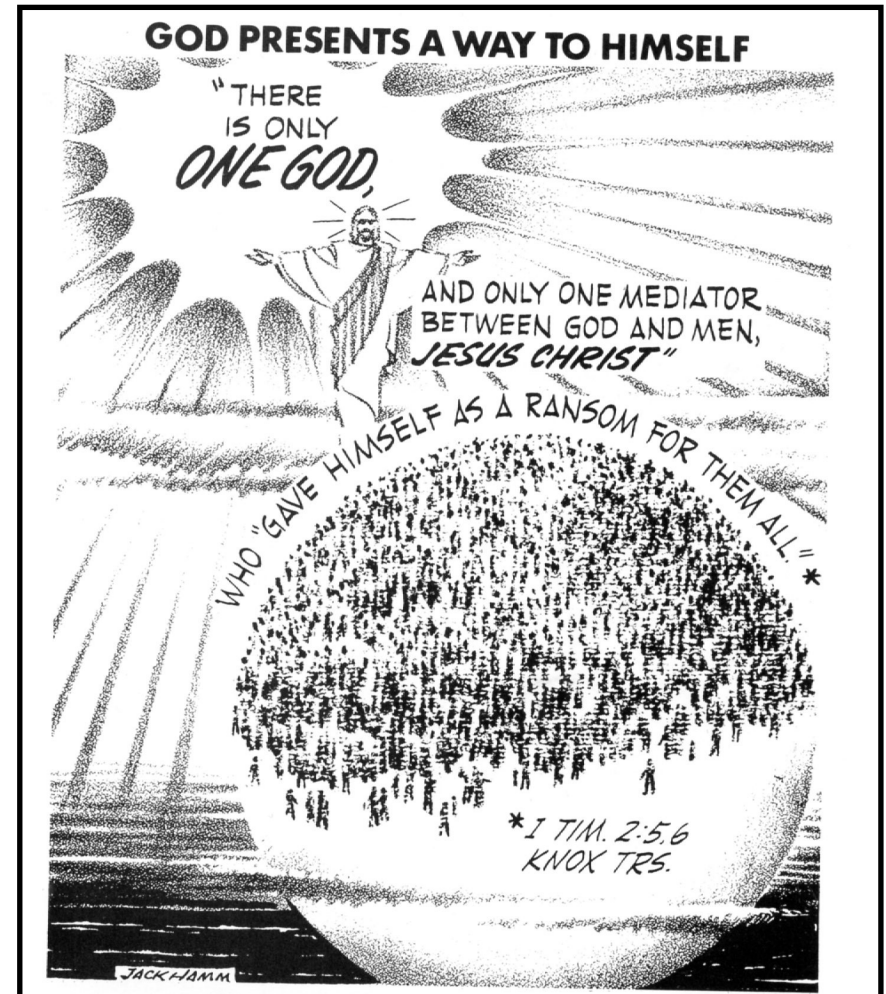
In John 9, we have the only case in the Gospels of Jesus healing a congenital problem: a man born blind. Because Christ's disciples apparently believed in a cause/effect relationship between sin and suffering, they ask Christ, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" I doubt the Twelve could have explained how a person could sin before they are born. That they suggest it as a possible explanation illustrates, I think, the kind of stupid thinking that goes on when we begin with a faulty premise.

Christ's answer, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned" (v 3) tells us that not all suffering is moral payback and that there is more to reality than just science. Science is the study of cause/effect, but according to our Lord, there are some effects for which there is no direct cause (cf. Jn. 15.25, Rom. 3.24). How was it, then, that this man was born blind? He was blind, said Christ, to illustrate the power of God (v 3)! Like Job, he was chosen by God to be oppressed by the devil (Acts 10.38) in order that God's glory might be illustrated. It's very possible that a person's suffering, far from proving they've committed some wickedness, proves they are a chosen servant of God (Acts 9.16). More on this next week.

kenny

# Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL



Sermon: Philippians 1.21

## The philosophy of Christian living

7 July 2024

## *The psychology of meeting a resurrected person*

**[In the 1915 book, *The Resurrection and Modern Thought*, the author, W. J. Sparrow-Simpson, offers some thoughts on how God helped people overcome the shock of meeting the resurrected Lord.]**

“In the first place, it is quite open to question whether ordinary human beings could bear with impunity the sudden apparition of one risen from the dead. In spite of Tennyson's assertion that if he re-encountered his dead friend in the familiar haunts, he would not think it strange, a real indisputable appearance of the dead would be a tremendous strain on the nerves of ordinary people. To be suddenly confronted, without adequate warning, with one as alive whom we knew to have been a buried corpse, would be likely to cause so serious a shock as perhaps to inflict a permanent injury to the mental and moral balance of the recipient. It would surely produce at least such a state of bewilderment as would render instruction or dispassionate judgment almost impossible. When we consider the emotional nature of S. Mary Magdalene there seem very obvious reasons why an appearance from the other world should not be made to her without due precautions and preparations. It is not surely without a meaning that she was first allowed to see the empty grave, and then to see a figure which she takes for the gardener, and should then be led to realise the truth through the utterance of her own name. All this at any rate falls in with the supposition here suggested. Then again, the prompt suppression of rapture and sentiment; the extremely practical duty imposed, of communicating what she knows rather than merely dwelling upon it; the effort to enable others to believe; the excessively cooling and sobering experience of other people's incredulity; seem a very significant continuance of the same discipline and watchful exercise of caution. Thus, messages are sent through one who has been, for a moment, and for a moment only, enabled to see, to prepare and warn others who have not seen yet. And so the manifestations widen” (86–87).

kenny

## *A trip to Mt. Sinai, 1*

In the autumn of 1938, the famed English journalist and travelogue, H. V. Morton (he broke the story of finding King Tut's tomb to the world in 1922), published an account of a trip he undertook from Egypt to Mt. Sinai. I enjoyed reading it so much that I thought I'd give a condensed description of it.

In 1938, the Greek monks who lived in the fortress monastery at Mt. Sinai would not receive a traveler unless he brought with him a letter of introduction from the archbishop of Sinai, who lived in Cairo, Egypt. Morton paid the archbishop a visit, received his letter, and made arrangements for the trip. Not long before, travel from Egypt to Mt. Sinai involved an eight-day trip on the back of a camel, but by 1938, cars had become available to carry pilgrims to the site.

During the monastic era of the third and fourth centuries, Greek hermits were drawn to Mt. Sinai. Traces of Byzantine (Greek) sites are still scattered across the Sinai peninsula leading to Sinai. The first Greek hermits settled on Mt. Serbal, thought by many to be the true “Mountain of the Law.” About twenty-five miles from Serbal was a desolate gorge, which tradition held to be the location of the burning bush. When Arabs began raiding the Greek settlers, Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, built a church and a tower of refuge for the hermits at the alleged site of the burning bush. In the sixth century, life had become so precarious for the Greeks that the Emperor Justinian built a massive fortress wall around the church and tower built by Helena. For safety, the Greek hermits in the area eventually moved to the fortress in the gorge of the burning bush.

The stout Byzantine walls withstood the Arabs, and the monastery/church, due to its antiquity, became venerated all over Europe. Crusaders carved their names there. Napoleon repaired the walls. It was to this place that many Greek monastics moved to live a solitary, monastic life, which Procopius (a sixth-century Gr. historian from Caesarea) called, “a careful study of death.”

kenny

## *News about us*

- Kellee is still struggling. Continue constant in prayer for her. Dave has good days and bad days when he has little energy; pray that the Lord increases his number of good days.