

# BULLETIN

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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Otis Q. Sellers, Founder

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## *Updates from Rusty Hancock*

The Word of Truth Ministry is comprised of so many people, with such diverse backgrounds and experiences. Although small in numbers, we cover the entire United States and various corners of the earth. The common bond of “rightly dividing the Word of Truth” is the thread that binds us all together.

I have the enjoyable task of corresponding with you through this Bulletin. But I also have some wonderful relationships via e-mail and the regular U.S. Postal mail. These are private conversations that are more personal and reach into the heart, mind, and soul of the true student and believer. I read tales of how the Ministry has impacted their lives and enlightened them on the future Kingdom of God.

One of my favorite “pen pals” was Isabel. She had been a student of the Word of Truth Ministry for several decades. We corresponded monthly through regular mail. (She did not own a computer.) Her devotion and love of the Word was unparalleled. Through the past few years I followed Isabel as age and health issues arose. I followed Isabel in her moves from her longtime home, to an assisted care facility, and finally to a convalescent home. But no matter what issues or obstacles were blocking her path, Isabel had the most positive attitude I had ever encountered. Her faith in God’s word and the coming Kingdom made every day a glorious day for her.

Isabel had a special place for those of us at the Ministry who publish Seed & Bread and the Bulletin. She had to be the most astute and principled student I knew. She would read every word of each article, and she would check facts! Isabel would look up and read every Biblical citation in our publications. This includes the original *Word of Truth* magazine (1930s) to the most recent issue of *More Seed & Bread*.

Although we go to extreme lengths to publish correct articles, some mistakes and typographical errors have slipped through. As each Bulletin goes to publication, we have a standing joke here that if a mistake is made, Isabel will find it and bring it to our attention.

A few months ago my cherished monthly letters from Isabel stopped. Sadly my fears were realized. I learned that Isabel had passed away. Her family does not embrace the

Ministry and did not inform us. I did, however, receive a letter from an attorney advising me that Isabel had died. He wanted me to know that she had remembered the Ministry in her will. With her generous endowment, Isabel will continue her love of the Word and spread the Truth. Because of her final donation, I felt financially comfortable to sign a year contract to expand and provide two additional radio stations to our line-up for *Knowing God in the Word*. We now have a large market in Pittsburgh, PA, that extends into four states as well as another station in the Mobile, Alabama, area. (See the enclosed flier with this Bulletin.) Thank you, Isabel!

Isabel’s story is just one of several folks I correspond with monthly, quarterly, or yearly. I appreciate the love and support from all of you, not just for the Ministry, but also your care and concern for me and my mother. I have had numerous inquiries asking if we were safe from the devastating fires that were ablaze in California recently. I also enjoy sharing family, baseball, vacations, and other aspects of everyday life with each of you. And of course, I cherish our discussions concerning God’s word.

Unfortunately, with the advent of PayPal and automated check issuance services, some of the personal touches of correspondence have been reduced. Our gratitude and appreciation have never waned.

I never personally met Isabel, but I cherish the day that we will be together in God’s Kingdom. May God speed the day that we will all be joined in the Kingdom.

*“God be gracious to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us--that Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations. Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for You will judge the peoples with uprightness and guide the nations on the earth. Let the peoples praise you O God; let all the peoples praise You. The earth has yielded its produce; God, our God, blesses us. God blesses us, that all the ends of the earth may fear Him.”*

*(Psalm 67, NASB)*

## God's Choice

By Andrew Brown

God makes choices, and too often men have the audacity to criticize them. Let us consider an often-misunderstood portion of Scripture that sets forth a sequence of God's perfectly just and merciful choices that ultimately bring Him great esteem when considered for what they are.

God made a significant judgment when he picked Abraham and promised to bless him and his new family. Paul makes a case that God's decision did not end with Abraham, *"nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants but: 'through Isaac your descendants will be named'"* (Rom. 9:7, NASB throughout). Ishmael and Abraham's other children through Keturah were not part of the promise. *"It is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants"* (Rom. 9:8). Paul draws the lines of God's decisions where the promise would be carried. Next, God made a judgment choosing Jacob over Esau. *"For though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls"* (Rom. 9:11). This decision was not based on any righteousness or wickedness; they had done nothing good or bad. Paul quotes Malachi 1:2-3 thousands of years after the death of these men, *"Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated"* (Rom. 9:13). God loved the nation of Israel and will bless the nation with promises that will be awarded in the future. However, the nation of Esau will not exist in the Kingdom. This does not mean that all from Israel are saved or all individuals from Esau cursed. God made another choice to distinguish the *path of the promise*, *"be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham"* (Gal. 3:7). In order to receive the promises of God to Abraham, one must be of Isaac and Jacob AND believe in Jesus. *"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion"* (Rom. 9:15). This promise did not result from a will, desire, or even a man working but on the decision of God's mercy.

God made many elective choices in the past in many situations, some not regarding blessing but punishment. *"For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate my power in you'"* (Rom. 9:17). God did display His power in Pharaoh. *"He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires"* (Rom. 9:18).

When considering God hardening *"whom He desires,"* Scripture contains no examples of God picking a random person with a God-fearing heart and hardening Him. The examples are of hardening one already against the Lord. Considering Pharaoh, God was incredibly merciful to the

wicked king, providing numerous opportunities to realign himself with God's command. Pharaoh deserved cursing for oppressing the nation of Israel according to God's decree, *"I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse"* (Gen. 12:3). When ordered to let the people go *"Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice? . . . I do not know the Lord, and besides, I will not let Israel go'"* (Exod. 5:2). God was merciful even in the face of mockery and rejection. When the plagues began, *"Pharaoh's heart was hardened"* (Exod. 7:13); the Lord perceived *"Pharaoh's heart is stubborn"* (Exod. 7:14). Pharaoh seems to have hardened his own heart after the first six plagues! See for yourself in Exodus 7:13, 7:22, 8:15, 8:19, 8:32, 9:7, 9:35. *"When Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart"* (Exod. 8:15). Only after continuing rejection, cursing, and hardening did God step in and strengthen Pharaoh's resolve. *"The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart"* (Exod. 9:12, 10:20, 10:27, 11:10, 14:8). God's intervention is made clear. Did God determine beforehand to harden an innocent vessel and then destine him to destruction? Nothing could be further from the truth.

Blame cannot be laid upon God's choices. He is characterized by mercy and compassion and sees the total picture. Who are we to question God's decisions? *"The thing molded will not say to the molder, 'Why did you make me like this, will it?'"* (Rom. 9:20). He knows more than us AND can be fully trusted. The potter can make any type of vessel he wants. He made some *"from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use"* (Rom. 9:21). A house has some honorable vessels such as plates and platters; it has some common use vessels as trash cans and toilets. Honorable vessels can be good or bad and so can common vessels. I have had some toilets that have not served their purpose as well as good ones. *"What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction"* (Rom. 9:22). God graciously endured Pharaoh (who personally chose wicked rebellion) to display His wrath and power on the wicked. Conversely, He made *"known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory"* (Rom. 9:23).

God gave strength to a wicked man who chose to use that strength to grow in wickedness. God made a choice to promise blessings to Israel (we have our own promises), but He also placed a stipulation that just being born an Israelite would not guarantee the individual free access to glory; the Israelite must have faith. God has the right to make choices and his insight and intent is far above ours. *"The judgements of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether"* (Psa. 19:9).

## Fruit In Old Age

By Nathan C. Johnson

In Volume V, Number 1 of "The Word of Truth" magazine (January-February 1941), Otis Q. Sellers wrote an article entitled *Fruit Out of Season*. In this article, he used an example from the life of King David. Although he had been anointed to be the future King over Israel by the prophet Samuel, King Saul was currently on the throne. Knowing that God had rejected him and was going to choose another king, Saul saw that God was with David and the people loved him and sensed that he must be God's choice for the next king. Though David was more than willing to serve and be loyal to Saul, Saul was intensely jealous of David and tried to assassinate him, forcing David into exile. You can read this story in I Samuel 16-21.

While David was hiding in the cave of Adullam as an exile, four hundred men went out and joined themselves to David in the day of his rejection. Of these four hundred men, Sellers wrote:

*"The time came when David was crowned as King. No longer was he rejected. Shouts of praise for David were upon the lips of every man. None of these shouts could ever have meant as much to him as the whispered words of loyalty the four hundred men spoke to him as they joined him in the cave of Adullam. They went out with him in the day of his rejection, and they reigned with him in the day of his exaltation."*

The lesson Mr. Sellers brought out of this example is that these men bore fruit for David's kingdom out of season, while David was still rejected and on the run and long before he reached the height of his popularity and the crown. Our God expects us to do the same, bearing fruit in our day long before the Kingdom of God comes and fruit bearing is the popular and common thing to do. Yet I think a second lesson can be gleaned from the lives of these four hundred men if we follow their careers after the coronation of David to the time of the rejection of David and his flight from his rebellious son Absalom.

Absalom was David's son by a princess of Geshur, a small non-Canaanite nation north of Israel. Through a sad series of circumstances he became embittered against his father and allied with David's treacherous counselor Ahithophel in a conspiracy to kill his father and put himself on the throne. The fickle hearts of the Israelites turned after Absalom, and David was forced to flee from Jerusalem. You can read this story in II Samuel 13-15.

As David fled from Absalom, he stopped at the outskirts of Jerusalem and reviewed all his people who were going into exile with him. In II Samuel 15:18, we read, *"Then all his servants passed before him; and all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men who had followed him from Gath, passed before the king"* (NKJV used throughout).

Who were these six hundred Cherethites, Pelethites, and Gittites who had followed David from Gath? An in-

habitant of Gath, a city of the Philistines, was called a "Gittite." Yet it would seem very unlikely that six hundred Philistines born and raised in Gath would have become some of the most loyal followers of David. An examination of the facts should convince us that these six hundred men were actually Israelites, and will tie them almost certainly to the original four hundred men of David.

First of all, the number of David's loyal men grew during the time he was dwelling in the cave. In the later part of his exile they had expanded from four hundred to six hundred, as we read in I Samuel 23:13 at his flight from Keilah, "So David and his men, about six hundred . . ." Later, these six hundred followed David when he decided to flee from the land of Israel and seek refuge with the Philistines at Gath, as I Samuel 27:2 records, *"Then David arose and went over with the six hundred men who were with him to Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath."* So the six hundred loyal men of David followed him when he fled to Gath, became "Gittites" along with David, and then followed him from Gath, as II Samuel 15:18 says. Thus we can positively identify these six hundred "Cherethites, Pelethites, and Gittites" as David's six hundred loyal men from the time of his exile due to the murderous intentions of Saul.

At the time of the flight from Absalom, close to thirty years had passed since the days when David and these loyal followers had previously been in exile. David had been in his twenties, but now he and his loyal men would almost all be in their fifties. These men who had pledged their loyalty to David out of season had no doubt been promoted in David's government to high positions of service. They were among David's officials, and they had probably enjoyed the benefits of that. No doubt they each had large and prosperous households. They probably had not only children but grandchildren. Instead of a life of deprivation in exile, they had been enjoying a life of ease and luxury.

Yet now the call goes out. David is going into exile once again. How much harder it must have been for older men, prosperous and important, to drop everything and head back into exile, something they knew well, at this more advanced age! They would have had to leave their homes and comforts behind, taking their children and grandchildren into a situation of hardship and danger. How easy it would have been for them to decide to sit this one out, to remain behind, perhaps to quietly switch their loyalties to Absalom, or at least to pretend to in order to keep their comfortable positions. And yet we see not a one of them did this. They were not only loyal to David when they were young and had nothing anyway. They were loyal to David and produced fruit in old age.

Not all Bible characters were willing to do this. For example, Eli the priest, after serving as judge faithfully for decades, in his old age chose his wicked sons over his God. When God chided him for it, he more or less shrugged his shoulders. Loyalty to God for him was secondary to loyalty to his worthless children.

(Continued on Page 4)

## Who Is the Out-called One?

By Joanne L.H. Johnson

Some words in our Protestant Bibles could have been translated better. For example, men associated with the “church” have mistranslated Scripture to back up their religious organizations for many hundreds of years.

The “church” concept started with the Catholic Church about 1,900 years ago. Men preached that “the church” was the place for all believers in Christ to worship God. However, when the Apostle Paul went on his journeys, he frequently spoke at a “synagogue” and not a “church” (Acts 13:5, 14, 42; 14:1; 15:21; 17:1, 10).

In the Greek the word “church” is *ekklesia* and in *Young’s Analytical Concordance* it is rendered as “that which is called out [for service to God].” In the Hebrew, the word *qahal*, again found in Young’s concordance, means “called gathering” and in some places is translated “assembly” in the Old Testament (O.T.), noted in the concordance by various verses: Exod. 12:8, Num. 14:6, 20:6, Duet. 5:22, 9:10, 10:4, 18:16 (see also **Seed & Bread** No. 125, *The Divine Interchange Principle*, by Otis Q. Sellers). When translating the word *ekklesia* or “church,” Otis Q. Sellers used two words to form his resultant translation, which is “out-called [ones or assembly].” (For further study on the term “out-called ones” read Sellers’ **Seed & Bread**, No. 87, *What Does “Kaleo” Mean?* and **Seed & Bread** No. 97, *What Does “Ekklesia” Mean?*)

Sellers called most occurrences of “church” the “out-called [ones or assembly],” referring to an individual or a group of individuals. However, he ran into two occurrences of “church” that did not quite fit this same meaning.

Consider the occurrences of the word “church” in Ephesians 3:10 and 3:21. As Sellers suggested, it would be better translated “out-called.” Yet here he believed that it does not refer to just “the out-called ones,” (plural), but is singular and refers to the “out-called One.”

If Sellers is right, then this leads to an important question. Who is the “Out-called One?” What does Ephesians reveal about this important character? Might it refer to the One God, even our Savior Jesus Christ? Let’s look at these two verses.

The first verse found in the *KJV* of Ephesians 3:10 expounds: “*To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.*” Compare this to Sellers’ **Seed & Bread** No. 60, *Ephesians—Chapter Three, The Resultant Version*, which says, “*That now to the sovereignties and the authorities among the most elevated may be made known, through the out-called One, the manifold wisdom of God.*”

In this **Seed & Bread** the Greek word *ekklesia* is translated by breaking it down into two parts: *ek*, which means

“out” and *kaleo*, which means “to position, to designate, or to name” (“to invite” is a secondary meaning). Sellers says, “Bring them together in *ekklesia* and we have the ‘out-positioned,’ that is, those who have a position out of another, Jesus Christ, whose position or name is out of God, *is the preeminent out-called One. He is the One spoken of here.*”

The second occurrence seen in Ephesians 3:21 of the *KJV* says, “*Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*” Another comparison shows Sellers’ resultant translation of this verse (**Seed & Bread** No. 60): “*To Him be glory in the out-called One, even in Christ Jesus, for all the generations of the eon of the eons. Amen.*”

Sellers explains in the same **Seed & Bread** that, “If *ekklesia* means ‘church,’ or if it means ‘all believers,’ then Paul has placed these ahead of Christ. It is my conviction that ‘the out-called’ here is ‘the out-called One.’ The word *kai* belongs in the text here and should be translated ‘even,’ as I have done.”

Few studies have been written about the occurrences of *ekklesia* in these verses. It is important to be clear about who the subject is in these verses. Christ is called here by yet another name (the Out-called One) among so many other glorious names He is called in Scripture, such as those found in Isaiah 9:6: “*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*”

May we give honor to our God and Father, even the Lord Jesus Christ, by using this particularly not well-known title (the Out-called One) when we pray and when we openly revere, pay tribute to, and study about our great God above.

(Continued from Page 3)

### Fruit In Old Age

The psalmist wrote in Psalm 71:9: “*Do not cast me off in the time of old age; Do not forsake me when my strength fails.*” Of course God will never do this, but the opposite might be true of his people. It might be much easier to drop everything to serve the Lord when one is young and has very little. It is another thing entirely for an older person with a family, years of accumulated wealth, and a position in the community to do so. Yet bearing fruit for God is not a requirement for the young only. We should never cast off or reduce our loyalty to our God as we advance in years. Older folks might have more encumbrances, but still should be no less faithful than the young. Fruit bearing is important for all seasons of life. Let us all bear fruit in old age.