

# **LESSONS FROM HISTORY**

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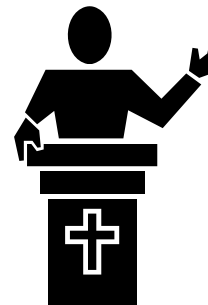
**A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT  
PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY**

***"These things happened as our examples."*** I Corinthians 10:6,11

**Peter  
Paul  
Masada Soldier  
Ignatius  
Constantine  
Augustine  
Francis of Assisi  
Christopher Columbus  
Martin Luther  
John Calvin  
William Bradford  
Roger Williams  
John Wesley & family  
George Whitefield  
Jonathan Edwards  
George Washington  
Benjamin Franklin  
Thomas Jefferson  
David Brainerd  
Francis Asbury**

**George Muller  
Charles Spurgeon  
William Carey  
Adoniram Judson  
Hudson Taylor  
Daniel Boone  
Davey Crockett  
John Chapman  
Jedediah Smith  
Rev. Jeremiah Jeter (Slavery)  
Abraham Lincoln  
Robert E. Lee  
Stonewall Jackson  
William Finney  
Dwight L. Moody  
Fanny Crosby  
Billy Sunday  
Peter Marshal  
Billy Graham**

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# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

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I Corinthians 10:6,11

A new series I have been working on is starting in this issue of our newsletter. It is called "Lessons from History." Each article will be about (actually BY) an important person in church history. I have researched these men to role-play in church and for our home schooling group (our monthly Friday Bible Study as well as at our retreat at Camp Sankanac).

I want our children to be exposed to godly, positive role models. I want them to see how church history is an integral part of world history with God controlling both. Actually, you must understand church history to really understand what is going on in the church (and false teachings that oppose the church) today. Seeing how God worked through men in times past is an encouragement and example as we are the ones who live for Him in this generation.

When you study church history you study real, struggling, searching people - just like us. At the same time you learn some theology. You gain wisdom and get a better perspective of where we are today. You learn from other's mistakes. You learn about God: Who and What He is, how He always has been and always will be in control of this world of His, and what He wants and expects of His people.

I want to introduce you to some of the key men in church history so you have a general understanding of them. Hopefully this will whet your appetite to study certain men or time periods more. From this you can find books to read, projects to research, history to learn, culture to understand, beliefs & philosophies to analyze, and art projects to develop. All this can really enrich your children's education. At the same time your children are learning important spiritual truths in a way that will always stay with them. Read these stories out loud to your children and see if there is anything they'd like to study further. I have video-tapes of each of these men as well as handouts about each one and the time he lived. Let me know if you are interested (Jerry Schmoyer 348-8086). Please let me know how you use these.

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***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## PETER

"Hello! My name is Peter, I'm sure you heard of me. You probably first heard of me as the loudmouth leader of the disciples as we traveled with Jesus. I seemed to be all talk and no show. Later you probably learned I was the leader of the Jerusalem church after Jesus went into heaven. I spoke fearlessly before kings. I preached and healed by God's power. What you may not know, however, is what changed me from the way I was with Jesus to how I was after him. I'd like to tell you about that now for there is a lot you can learn from my mistakes.

"Now I had no intention of changing, in fact I didn't realize I had anything that needed changing! I could talk my way out of anything, smooth over any difficulty with my personality, and always got what I set out for. That is, until April 2, 33 AD. That's the day that changed me.

"It was the day we celebrated the Passover. The day started off good with Jesus asking me to help get things ready for us, but it was all downhill from there. First, I put my foot in my mouth when Jesus wanted to wash my feet, then really got in trouble trying to convince Him I would never deny Him no matter what the other jokers in the room did! That was the root of my problem. I was (1) SELF-CONFIDENT, trusting in my own ability. I didn't see any need to heed His warning, so I slept when we got to Gethsemane after the celebration. Jesus especially warned me, but (2) PRAYERLESSNESS was my next step away from Jesus. Then when Jesus was arrested I acted in the (3) ENERGY OF THE FLESH by attacking Malchus with my butter knife. I was afraid, confused and not thinking. I guess if I had prayed and listened to Jesus that wouldn't have happened. That wasn't the end, though, for when they took Jesus away I followed but I (4) DRAGGED MY FEET and followed from a distance. I wasn't as close to Jesus as I should have been and by not following closely I set myself up for the rest. Then I (5) HUNG AROUND WITH JESUS' ENEMIES at the fire, compromising. That led to my (6) DENIAL of Jesus 3 times. The last time He saw me deny Him and I could tell that hurt Him more than anything anyone else had done.

"It was partly my failure to be able to run my life as I always had and partly the pain I caused Him that caused me to flee in tears. I don't even remember the next couple days. Something died in me that night, though. The old Simon died. I could no longer trust in myself. I was a total failure. I hit bottom. In fact, I started really being 'Peter the Rock' for the first time. I learned then I couldn't depend on myself, my personality or conviction. I could only follow Jesus in HIS strength. Self-confidence, prayerlessness, acting in the energy of the flesh, all led to my downfall. From then on I served in His strength and power for I was never able to trust my own again after that letdown. I don't know how it is with you, but if you have ups and down like I always did, the solution is to live by Jesus' power and not your own. Try it! You'll never want to go back to the old way!

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## PAUL

"Hello! My name is Paul. I know you've heard about me and how I used to kill Christians, then about my conversion on the road to Damascus, my missionary journeys, and the books in the New Testament I wrote. I won't go over all those facts with you again, but I do want to tell you what I learned from it all. No matter what you try, only Jesus satisfies!

"That's right. Before Jesus got a hold of me I had everything a person in the world could want but I was empty. I had a rich, important, loving family behind me 100%. I had the finest education possible in both Greek and Hebrew, and I was very gifted intellectually. I had two solid careers, one as a tent-maker and the other as a rabbi. Being on the Sanhedrin (the top 70 men who had absolute rule over Jews the world over) gave me power and prestige unheard of in a man as young as I was. Outwardly I was perfect in following my religious beliefs. I had everything going for me, but I wasn't satisfied. Something inside was missing. When Stephen and others had peace and joy I lacked I took my bitterness out on them, but that didn't help. My own religious life consisted of keeping laws and the harder I tried to find God in that the further I seemed to be from Him. Traditions just didn't satisfy, either. Only Jesus did!

"After meeting Jesus and giving Him my life I found what I had been looking for. God used me to do great things for Him: start churches, witness to people, train others, write letters and books, and start many churches. I was popular and well-known. I saw God use me to change many, many lives. As nice as that was, when I looked to it for satisfaction it, too, left me empty. I had to keep looking to Jesus for my satisfaction.

"I had lots of excitement. I traveled and saw the world. Life was full of adventure and challenge. I even spoke to kings and queens. Still, I could only find satisfaction in Jesus.

"Don't think life, or I myself, were perfect. I was a sinner just like everyone else. I battled with my pride and ego. I wrestled with thoughts of lust. I could easily be critical and cutting with my tongue, as with Mark and Barnabas. I was a perfectionist who expected too much of myself and others. Despite my failures I found satisfaction in Jesus.

"Many unglamorous things happened to me. The death of my wife and son, my father alienating and disowning me, the beatings and physical punishments I received, much time in prison, the large amount of unjust criticism about me, enemies who hated me and followed me everywhere to cause trouble, being deserted by several close friends, and my discouraging eye problem all were hard. No matter how bad things were coming against me, though, I could always turn to Jesus and He would make it all right inside me. I could always find satisfaction in Jesus.

"That's the message of my life: only Jesus satisfies. Whatever you are trying, if it isn't Jesus you won't find real, true, deep, lasting satisfaction in it. Try Jesus, He'll satisfy!"

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## An Unnamed Zealot

"Hello! I won't even tell you my name for you never heard of me, you probably haven't heard much about what I was involved in, either, but it affects your life today so I want to tell you about it. I was an underground Jewish patriot (at least we called ourselves that, even if others called us terrorists). We were zealots\*, like Simon, one of Jesus' disciples -- only he deserted us, he was a traitor! We were called "Sicarri," which literally means "dagger men" for we carried concealed daggers and assassinated Roman soldiers or citizens whenever we could get away with it. Even our own Jewish leaders feared us, and rightly so for if they didn't do what we wanted we weren't against burning their homes or killing them, too.

"Our hot-headedness forced war with Rome in 66 AD. Florus\* was the Roman governor but was unable to put down our uprising. His soldiers surrendered peaceably but we murdered them anyway. Gallus\*, a well-known Roman general came in the summer of 66 AD with 40,000 soldiers. The people would have welcomed them into the city but they fled in fear before they got close. Those cowardly, traitorous Christians left, too, saying their Jesus told them to take off when they saw these signs. They were forever looked on as rejects from Israel from then on.

"Anyway, Nero\* sent Vespasian\*, the greatest general in Rome, in the spring of 67. Slowly but surely he kept making progress, always trying to get us to make peace. We knew he was really afraid of us and these constant peace overtures were a sign of weakness so we ignored them. Besides, we were too busy fighting among ourselves. There were 3 leaders with followers fighting for control of Jerusalem and we almost destroyed each other along with just about all the food and weapons in Jerusalem. The people really wanted the Romans to come rescue them for they said we were worse than the Romans. They had to scrape the sewers to find things to eat to stay alive. All our guard duty was to keep Jews in, not Romans out. We murdered anyone we thought might even be thinking of escape. Still, many snuck out and each day the Romans crucified about 500 Jews outside Jerusalem.

"God sent many signs and even some prophets warning us but we were too full of hate to listen. We knew the Romans or the Jews would kill us if they could, so we couldn't change our course. Titus\* took over for his father Vespasian when he became the new emperor. Galilee fell quickly under the traitor Josephus\*. Finally Jerusalem fell on September 7, 70 AD. One million Jews died during those days. The whole city was leveled. Some fighting continued at Macherus and Herodium for a little time, and at Masada\* for 3 more years, but the revolt was over. For almost 2,000 years virtually no Jews lived there anymore.

"I don't know why God let us lose. I've heard Christians say He was done with the Old Testament sacrificial system since Jesus was the final sacrifice. They say God was judging His people for rejecting His Son. 'Judgment begins in the house of God,' they quote. Still, God didn't utterly destroy the Jews and is now regathering them back to Israel as He promised. He does judge sin, but He also keeps His promises to His children. I was on the judgment side for I wasn't one of His children. I hope you are, for that is the only winning side!"

\* = Look up these for more information.

By Jerry Schmoyer

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## IGNATIUS

"Hello! My name is Ignatius\*! That may sound like a strange name to you but it wasn't in my day. (Would you believe it if I said your name sounds strange to me?) I was a church leader right after the death of Peter and Paul. The church was young in those times, but it was growing and advancing. That's why it's pictured like a baby crawling upward. We were all growing in Christ and trying to discover what He wanted from us Christians.

"First, let me tell you a little about myself. I am from Syria, which is just above where Jesus lived. I was born in 50 AD. I came to know Jesus as my Saviour when I was quite young and developed a deep love for Him. I was known as a careful leader and devoted Christian. The disciple John taught me for many years and I wrote down much of what I learned. I was a close friend of the well-known leader Polycarp\*, too. I became the leader (bishop\*) of all the local house-churches in Antioch\*, Syria. That is where Paul's home church was, the one that supported him on his missionary journeys. That is where believers in Jesus were first called 'Christians,' too.

"Antioch became the center for the early church when Jerusalem rejected Christ and the Christians there got bogged down in legalism. The center later passed to Ephesus\* and then Rome.\* The "Church in Antioch" was actually composed of lots of groups from small on up who met in various homes around the city. There were men who led and taught each one. I oversaw all of them in that area, helping and encouraging where needed.

"When Jesus died there were about 120 believers. In less than 300 years there were 75 million (12% to 25% of the Roman Empire). Like a baby really grows fast when first born, so did the church. People were open and searching for something real to believe, and those who were believers were very faithful and committed in their witness. Despite times of persecution starting with Nero\*, we grew. It seems the persecution just fanned the flames of faith and made the Christians more committed.

"As real as the danger was from persecution from without, there was a greater danger to the early church from within. False teaching abounded in those early days when the New Testament was just being written (inspiration\*) and collected (canon\*). Until the basic truths of the faith were firmly developed it was touch-and-go for awhile. Judaizers\* and Ebionites\* (both legalists), Gnostics\* (elevated knowledge above all else), Neoplatonism\* (New-Age existentialism), Montanism\* (emotional & charismatic excesses), Manichaeism\*, as well as Monarchianism\* and Arianism\* (like Unitarianism\* today) abounded. Basically they all denied salvation by grace, the sin nature of man and the deity of Jesus.

"To counter these false teachings three groups of leaders arose. First were the church Fathers (96-150 AD) who taught the new Christians. Polycarp and myself were part of this group. Then were the Apologists (125-190 AD) who defended the faith against the excuses to bring persecution. Tertullian\* and Justin Martyr\* were apologists. The final group is known as the Polemics (190-150 AD) and they fought the false doctrines. Some of these men were Irenaeus\*, Clement\* and Origin\*.

"I opposed the Gnostic heresy myself. I also helped develop the hierarchy of church leadership, especially the office of bishop. It was exciting to serve Jesus in those days for we were truly living in the shadow of the cross. I was captured in Antioch and taken in chains to Rome to die. On the way many churches showed me fine hospitality. I wrote to them thanking them. You can still read those letters today. I asked Christians everywhere to allow me to die as a martyr for Jesus. I saw myself as God's wheat, ground by the teeth of wild beasts. I was killed and eaten by lions in the Coliseum\* in Rome during the reign of Trajan\*, 117 AD."

-By Jerry Schmoyer

\* These subjects are good to pursue for further study.  
You can look them up in a library, encyclopedia or reference book.

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## CONSTANTINE

"Hello! My name is Constantine\*. I am credited with taking Christianity from a persecuted minority and moving it far along the way to being the state church of Rome. But before I get ahead of my story let me go back and start at the beginning.

"I was born in what you would call Yugoslavia in 272 AD. My father, Constantinus I\*, was a Roman general and emperor of the western portion of the Roman Empire for several years. He was open to Christianity although he never publicly committed himself to Jesus. My mother, Helena\*, was a beautiful, humble Christian woman. My father divorced her to advance his political career but she always loved him.

"After a fine education I went into the military myself. I had a son named Crispus born about this time. I became a pawn between the top leaders of Rome as they jockeyed for position to become the next emperor. To save my own life I escaped to my father in Britain and worked with him until he died. His men proclaimed me emperor over that part of Rome in his place. After a series of wars over many years I became emperor over the whole Roman Empire\*, which had been my goal since I was young.

"A young lady shared that dream with me from my early years in the army. Fausta came from a very important family in Rome. Her father was a deadly enemy of mine, even trying to kill me. Despite it all we married. Her drive to succeed was as strong as mine if not stronger. We were each so caught up in our own lives and power we didn't get very close, in fact we became jealous enemies. In fact, I ended up killing her after she killed my son, Crispus, and tried to dethrone me with one of her lovers. As you can tell, my life sort of fell apart after I came to power.

"You see, all along I believed in God. When I learned about Jesus I added Him to my military gods and prayed to all of them, but then when He alone obviously and miraculously gave me the victory that made me emperor over all of Rome I knew He was the only true God. Privately I talked to Him, but strong superstitions were built into me and I never completely gave up my false gods. I knew it wouldn't be good for me politically to say I was a Christian so I never did, that is until right before I died. All along, though, I did favor the Christian church. I knew they were different and special, and I also knew that the best way I could unite the whole empire into one unit was by making this church the organizing factor. Thus I supported and did all I could to help the church. I gave much money, imprisoned their enemies, and took over leadership of the church. I signed the Edict of Milan\* in 313 and that was the turning point for the church, marking its change from childhood to adolescence, from minor and ridiculed to popular and powerful. Christians comprised about 10% of the empire but I made them the most powerful group in it. I even built the city of Constantinople to be the new center of the church. I set up many good laws to make the empire a much safer, nicer place to live.

"It wasn't until I was facing death that I was forced to face my great problem with anger and pride. Having a very choleric temperament, I knew I was using God for my own means more than letting Him use me for His. By the time I was broken I had lost all I spent my life getting, but I did finally find the peace I so desperately sought just before I died.

\* These subjects are good to pursue for further study.

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## AUGUSTINE

"Hello! My name is Augustine. I was born in 354 in North Africa, which was a very 'Christian' area at that time. My mother was a devout Christian who prayed for me and taught me the faith. My father, however, was very wicked and evil. It was he I tried to imitate as I grew up. I liked to do what was forbidden just because it was forbidden.

"My parents went into debt to send me to law school, but all I was interested in while there was drinking, chasing girls, playing sports, and even some stealing. I lived a very immoral life and had a son by a woman I lived with for 16 years without marrying her. In those days I was really in bondage to sex. No matter how bad I got, though, my mother followed me and prayed for me.

"I made my living by teaching rhetoric, and was always looking for what was the truth about life. My search brought me into close contact and even membership in some false cults. Everything I found was empty, though. Then one day a friend died and that scared me for I had no hope of life after death. I became seriously ill and was attracted to Christianity although I just couldn't bring myself to believe there was a God. Some Christians started telling me about what Jesus did in their lives. That brought a first class uproar in the house of my inner self! I couldn't forget what they said, though.

"One day I went out into a garden by where I was living and fell to the ground under a fig tree and cried out. I seemed to hear a voice saying, 'Take up and read; take up and read.' I got a Bible and opened it. My eyes fell on Romans 13:13-14, *'Let us behave decently, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.'* All doubt passed away and the truths I was taught as a child returned. I left my current mistress and was baptized. I was 33 years old.

"Before long my mother died and I went into a monastery to try to serve God there. My heart was full of faith, love and humility. God gave me a good mind for theology. People say I was the most influential theologian from Paul to Martin Luther. I preached and wrote against the heresies of Manicheism, Donatism and Pelagianism. I taught, proved and made acceptable the Trinity -- that Jesus is equal to God and the Holy Spirit, not subordinate to them. That became a turning point in church history and the impact is still felt in your time.

My writings included "Confessions," and "City of God" (as I watched Rome fall I knew God would build a city that would never fall). I died at the age of 76 in the year 430, just as the Dark Ages were starting. Perhaps the sentence from my writings that best sums up my life and teaching is this: 'You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You.' I hope yours finds its rest in Him, that's the only way to find it!



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## FRANCIS OF ASSISI

"Hello! My name is Francis Bernadone but you probably know me better as Francis of Assisi. Assisi, in central Italy, was my hometown. I was born there in 1182 AD. My father named me after France. Growing up I was spoiled and only interested in pleasure. Until I was 25 I wasted my time chasing women, drinking, and going from one party to another. I was a natural leader and always had a group following me around. For most people life was miserable for living conditions were horrible and life was short, harsh and brutal. Even the church was a cesspool of corruption as priests lived with concubines and the higher officials were only concerned with wealth and power. I figured any fun I could get out of life was well worth it!

"During this time the Crusades\* were going on. They were an excuse to get out of miserable Europe and seek free riches stolen from others as well as promised forgiveness of all sin. They were a miserable failure. We didn't free the Holy Land. In fact the 'Christian' soldiers were often worse than the Moslems!

"All this focus on war did capture the hearts of us young men as we grew up, though, and we dreamed of winning glory and riches on the battlefield. I must admit, I was more taken with it than others my age. Thus when our town fought a neighboring town I quickly went to war. I was 20 and bragged about how great the experience would be. Instead it was awful -- killing, screaming and blood everywhere. I was captured and held in jail for a year. My cheerfulness despite prison lifted the spirits of those with me. When I returned home I was even more intent on living for any pleasure I could find than before. However God soon started working on my heart.

***"LORD, GIVE ME THE COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN CHANGE, THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CAN'T CHANGE AND WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE."***

-St. Francis of Assisi

"I became quite ill and lost all interest in friends, fun and war. I just wanted to help the poor. But before long war fever swept our area again and my friends talked me into joining them. My old enthusiasm and dreams returned even greater than before. I became more boastful and gay than ever, convinced I'd be a great prince. A couple days after leaving for war, though, I suddenly started feeling strangely weary and sick at heart. I lagged behind the others and soon developed a fever. Was I not completely over my recent sickness? I had to stay in the next town while the others went on. I didn't mind for a great horror of war came on me again. All my dreams of glory died for good. Instead of seeing glamorous victorious soldiers I saw homeless and fatherless children, ruined homes and desolation. It was at this time I turned my life over to Jesus.

"Gradually I made my way home where my godly mother rejoiced to see me. My father and friends, however, mocked me as a coward. I lost all desire for my old life and ways. When I wouldn't continue to work for my father and take over his business he became furious. He locked me in my room but I talked my mother into releasing me when he was away on business. Publicly I turned my back on all wealth and worldly things. I worked with lepers and poor and begged for money for myself and others. I had no means of support and had to daily depend on others to feed and house me. Men who were looking for something worth giving their lives to in this miserably dark time joined me, although most ridiculed us. We wouldn't gather in a monastery (Monasticism\*) but stayed with the poor people, helping where we could. We called ourselves "Friars Minor" ("Lesser Brothers"), but you call us Franciscans. Women developed their own group called "Poor Clares."

"This life was very hard on my physically, and I suffered many disappointments, I had severe bouts of depression and saw my followers turn from my strict path to take a somewhat easier way of life. I died on October 3, 1226, at the age of 44. God used my life to help many poor people and to set an example to others that living for the pleasures of this life doesn't satisfy. I hope you know that, too." (\*Words to look up for further study.)

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## Christopher Columbus

"Hello! My name is Christopher Columbus! I know you've heard of me!!! As you know, I was the first European to officially discover the North and South American continent area. However, there are things about me I bet you don't know. For instance, "Columbus" means "Christ-bearer," and my whole life I wanted to bear the name of Christ to those who had never heard of Him. I won't spend much time on the details of my life you already know about, but will fill you in my relationship to Jesus Christ.

"I grew up in Genoa, Italy, and from little on knew God loved me, died for me, and had a special plan for my life. I never in my life doubted God ruled His universe. My lifelong problem was doing things in my own strength. My strong, choleric temperament caused me to think I was self-sufficient and could run my own life. Of course, when I got in trouble I turned to God, and made all kinds of promises, but when the pressure was off I went back to running my own life. Thus I had some times of total commitment and living by faith. I also had times of real rebellion and awful, sinful living. God never forced me to submit to Him, but when I didn't I really suffered.

"As you probably know, when I first sighted what would later be called San Salvador (meaning "Holy Savior") I gave God the credit for getting us there. I knew it wasn't my skill but God's. He was the one who made the attempt possible, that's why I flew under a large red cross on our sails. On each island we explored that first trip I placed a large wooden cross. However, the lure of gold brought out the greed in me. The temptation of great riches turned my head from God. Did you know that on that first return trip I almost died several times and God was obviously trying to get my attention so I would live for Him, not for riches. My pride was too much, though. I justified my desire for riches saying I would use it to free the Holy Land from the Moslems. What that sounded Good, I never asked God if He wanted me to do that. I was again acting on my own.

"My skills as a leader weren't what they should have been for I was more concerned about my own prestige than doing the right thing and that caught up with me quickly. I lost all my prestige and power because of my greed and self-centeredness. I lost my family and friends, and all I had. Finally I turned back to God just before I died, though. But oh what a better life I would have had if I had lived for God my whole life instead of for myself. I can't do it over, but I hope you can learn from my mistakes! Always put God first in everything and you'll be greater than Christopher Columbus!"

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## MARTIN LUTHER

"Hello! My name is Martin Luther\*. Perhaps you have heard of me. People say I started the Reformation and I guess that is true, but it's not anything I planned or even wanted at the time. Let me explain to you how it all came about.

"I was born Nov. 10, 1483, in Eisleben, Germany to very poor peasant parents. I was the oldest of seven children. My parents were very strict. I was shy and sensitive. Sometimes I was warm and friendly, other times moody or depressed. I was considered a hard worker. I got a good sense of humor from my father and a love of music from my mother. My father forced me to study to be a lawyer, but when lightning killed my brother as we walked through a field I promised I'd be a monk if I lived. My father was furious but I became an Augustinian monk anyway.

"As a monk I really punished myself, thinking this was the way to find peace with God. I hardly ate, I slept without blankets in freezing weather, I felt so guilty and sinful I wouldn't even pray. In fact, I came to hate God. Once I traveled to Rome, thinking I'd find my answers there but all I found was corruption, superstition and ungodly priests. Following the teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church\* brought more misery than relief.

"When I was 29 I became a professor of theology at the University of Wittenburg, a position I held for the rest of my life. There I could study the Bible in its original languages. I came to trust the Bible above any human authority, even the pope. I became a well-known Bible lecturer, focusing on Psalms, Romans, Galatians and Hebrews. As I studied the Bible Romans 1:17 really stood out to me -- "The just shall live by faith." God was developing a new and revolutionary picture of Himself in me as I realized salvation comes by faith in the merits of Christ's sacrifice alone. All my life I was taught I had to work to earn salvation from the Church! Immediately upon realizing and accepting this truth I felt myself reborn and I seemed to have entered the broad gates of of paradise itself. From then on everything seemed different to my eyes. That truth became the main focus of my life and teachings. I wasn't planning on starting a new movement. Others before me had learned the same truth and nothing came of it. Men like Peter Waldo\*, John Wycliffe\*, John Huss\* and Girolamo Savanarola\* all discovered this same truth about salvation, but each of them ended up martyred. It was only God's grace that preserved me and His timing that chose to use me.

"You see, the Roman Catholic Church had gotten far from the New Testament church. Politically, spiritually and economically things were awful. The Inquisition\* was in full swing, killing 50 million people in 1200 years. Local nation-states were developing and challenging the Church's right to own and run everything. The Dark Ages were ending as men were becoming more enlightened. I had to do something when the archbishop in my area started selling Indulgences\* (buying good works from dead 'saints'). These guaranteed your loved ones would get out of purgatory sooner. The seller got 50% of the take and the archbishop the other 50%. That really bothered me so on October 31, 1517, I nailed 95 Bible truths showing indulgences weren't Scriptural on my church door. Without knowing it I struck the spark that started the Reformation. Word spread rapidly. When church authorities excommunicated and tried to kill me, local German leaders backed me so they wouldn't have to be under the church's power. That's how it all started, and I found myself carried along by it. God provided help. To take care of the theological side of things He provided Philip Melancton\* and to help me personally he provided a most unusual but very capable wife, Katherine Von Bora\*.

"The rest of my life was spent leading my Wittenburg church the best I could. I had many ups and downs. I died in bed after severe heart pains when I was 62. God blessed my life and ministry in a way I never dreamed possible, I give Him all the praise and glory for it!"

(\*Words for further study.)

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## JOHN CALVIN

Hello! My name is John Calvin. That name probably brings strong feelings to you one way or another. I have been described as "The most Christian man of his age," and "Next to Paul, he has done the most good to mankind." Charles Spurgeon said, "Calvin's theology is nearest to perfection." However others don't agree. A common saying in my day was "Better with Beza in hell than Calvin in heaven." Jimmy Swaggart said "Calvin has caused untold millions of souls to be damned." Freudian psychologists have said I was a compulsive-neurotic who transformed the God of love into a diabolical being. Maybe you agree with one side or another, or maybe you don't know what the big fuss is all about. Whatever the case may be, please read along as I tell you about myself. My life really has directly influenced yours in several ways today. I'll tell you how.

I was born July 10, 1509, in Noyon, Picardy, France, a small town 60 miles northeast of Paris. I wasn't part of the start of the Reformation. Others won the early battles. I became leader of the second generation of Reformers.

I was always gifted intellectually and in my early years studied law. I could write and speak quite well, it came naturally to me. I was skilled in logical argument and was a careful and disciplined thinker. These traits helped me later as I formulated by theological doctrines. I wanted to spend my life as a scholar of classics and ancient languages, but God had other plans for me.

Early in my life I committed myself to the Word of God as the supreme authority and sided with the Reformers. At age 24, however, I had a somewhat sudden encounter with God which completely transformed my life. From then on I was completely committed to a ministry of proclaiming the Word of God and purifying the life of the church. I gave up my career as a classical scholar and became part of the Protestant movement in France. In doing this I lost the financial support to study that the Roman Catholic church had been providing me.

Martin Luther was a man I had few contacts with but greatly admired. We were opposites in almost all ways: background, training, health, family, and spiritual focus, but we agreed on the main basics: salvation by grace as taught in God's inspired Word. He was a pastor, but I wanted to spend my life as a Christian scholar, again God had other plans for me.

One day in my travels studying I passed through Geneva, intending to move on the next day. It was a large (13,000), very wicked city. I was persuaded to stay and lead the church and city in the ways of God. The church ran the city government, there was no separation of church and state, although we did try to have a democracy of sorts. It set the pattern for future democracies. After initial success I was forced to flee, then invited back.

I spent most of my time studying, preaching, and leading the city as best I could. At 31 years of age I married Idelette deBure, the widow of an Anabaptist pastor, who had a daughter and son. Our only child together, a son, died in infancy. She suffered ill health and died nine years after we were married. Unlike Luther, my marriage did not bring joy to my life. I guess I was married more to my work than to my wife.

My work way my life. I worked 12 to 18 hours a day, slept little, ate sparingly, and fasted frequently. I was always small and thin, tending to sickness. To others I sometimes seemed cold and calculating, but to God I was warm, dynamic and alive. People either loved me or hated me.

I already told you about one impact I had on your lives -- starting democracy based on Christian principles. There is another influence just as great. It is the theology I developed which has been called Calvinism. That influenced the revolutions which spread across Europe in the centuries following my death for I undermined the view of absolute authority in a ruling class -- all are equal before Jesus Christ. Puritanism sprang from my writings. Reformed theology today is based directly on my theology. Presbyterianism, a system of church government still widely used, was developed by me. This is used today by Presbyterian churches as well as Reformed, Congregationalist and even many Baptist churches.

My theology was built around God's sovereignty as the final determining factor in everything. It is very similar to Augustine's theology that the church was build on for hundreds of years. This focus was opposed by a man named Jacob Arminus who felt man's free will was the final determining factor and therefore man can lose or give back his salvation.

People today explain my beliefs using the word **TULIP**. **T**otal depravity of man means that man, through Adam, inherited the guilt of Adam's sin and can do nothing for his own salvation for he is spiritually dead. Arminus said we inherited a weakness from Adam, but man was free to do spiritual good. **U**nconditional election means God chose those who would be saved by grace, irregardless of the person's worth or lack of it. Arminus said God just looked into the future to see who would believe on his own and then elected them. **L**imited atonement, that Jesus died only for the elect, is something that current Calvinists no longer believe. In this one area they agree with Arminus that Jesus died for the sins of everyone. **I**rresistible grace speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit inside those elect to show them their need of salvation, without which none would come to him on their own. Arminus disagreed, saying man doesn't need a special calling by the Holy Spirit in order to accept salvation. **P**erseverance of the saints by the grace of God guarantees that none saved will ever be lost. Arminus said keeping salvation was dependent on obedience, that a man can turn from grace and lose salvation. This determines our whole motive of why we life the Christian life: because we already **HAVE** salvation or to **GET/KEEP** salvation. Arminus' influence has continued to today in groups that still believe and practice this: Pentecostal, Mennonite, Amish, Methodist and other churches.

While Luther focused on justification by faith I focused on the sovereignty of God. We each had an overwhelming sense of the majesty of God: Luther in the miracle of forgiveness and I in the assurance of the impregnability of God's purpose.

When I was 54 years old I became seriously ill, worn out by my long and hard labors. I died May 27, 1564. God in His sovereignty saw fit to use me to spread the message of his sovereignty to people in my day and on to the present. May His holy name be praised!

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY.

*"These things happened as our examples." I Cor. 10:6,11*

## WILLIAM BRADFORD

"Hello! My name is William Bradford. I was among the first group of Pilgrims to come to America. I lived through some very fascinating times in history and would like to tell you about them. I was born in England in 1590. My parents died and I was passed from one home to another. Since I was often sick I got to read the Bible a lot and got very interested in spiritual things. I started visiting a group of separatists in Scrooby when I was 12. They met at William Brewster's\* house. I knew they were in danger for their lives for there was no religious freedom in England. Men like John Wycliffe\* and William Tyndale\* gave their lives to give us the Bible in our language, but the King was against religious freedom. The Puritans\* tried to bring reform by staying in the Church of England but others left. Some of these became the pilgrims. Baptists and Quakers had their start here during this struggle.

"When I was 16 I joined the Scrooby church and was kicked out of my home. Twice we tried to sail to Holland but the first time the ship's captain turned us in after taking our money and the second time soldiers caught us on the beach awaiting the ship. We lost all we had. Eventually, though, by ones and twos, we did make it to Holland and settled first in Amsterdam, then Leyden. I fell in love with another separatist there named Dorothy May. When I was 23 we got married. Our son, John, was born soon after that. "During my 12 years in Holland I learned to work with silk. Life was very hard with no time for family or church. We were losing our children. God put it in our hearts of some of us to go to America despite the fact that the only English colony there, Jamestown, was in terrible shape. Their greed for gold undermined any effort to make the settlement work. We weren't enough alone so we invited others to join us. Miles Standish\*, John Aldon\*, and Priscilla Mullins." were among them.

"At 30 years of age I sailed, after praying on the deck for God's guidance and will to be done. One of our ships, the Speedwell, couldn't make it. We lost much time and money returning twice to have it repaired. We had to crowd into the Mayflower. The trip over took 66 days. One died and 2 babies were born. We were crowded together in hot, smelly, dark, constantly moving quarters. Many sins came up and had to be confessed. God used this to make us into a solid unit so we could face the trials to come. "On November 21, 1620, we landed and signed the Mayflower Compact. I went ashore with some others to look for a place to build. . When we got back to the ship I found my homesick wife was dead, having fallen (or jumped) over the side of the ship. She couldn't stand being separated from our son John whom we left back in England until it was safe enough to bring him over. The whole thing really devastated me!

"That winter was cold and miserable. We couldn't plant food and had no place to live except on the ship. We found ourselves in a life-and-death struggle not just with the elements, but with Satan himself who had this fine continent in darkness so long he would do anything to put out the spark of light we brought. By the time winter was over half of our number had died. A fire in the common house we just built destroyed most of our remaining clothes and food. It was awful! God saw us through, though. "I'm sure you know how God brought Samoset\* and later Squanto\*. He taught us to hunt and plant. He really saved our lives! John Carver, our governor, died from heatstroke and I was elected to replace him. I held that office most of the rest of my life. We worked hard all summer, fighting fear and discouragement (two of Satan's best weapons against us). By fall we had a harvest to just see us through the winter. I proclaimed a time of Thanksgiving and invited Massasoit\*, never dreaming he'd bring 90 braves with him! They surely ate a lot of our food! The arrival of 35 new pilgrims was nice for us, except they had no clothing or food with them. That reduced our rations to 5 kernels of corn per person for each day. God was faithful, and no one died that winter. We got greedy the next summer and planted too much food, putting our faith in it instead of God. A long drought showed us our error but God again took care of us. He continued to do so our whole lives, as I am know He does for all His people.

\*These subjects are good for further study

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## ROGER WILLIAMS

My story is not a happy one. In fact, if it were unique (one-of-a-kind) I wouldn't tell it. Unfortunately it is way too typical. I share it in the hopes that it may help you, or someone you know, avoid the pitfalls I fell into. My sin was perfectionism. I strove so hard to be perfect in everything, especially in my spiritual life, that I became focused entirely on sin and avoiding it. I lost all joy, became very judgmental of others, and was preoccupied with looking for the smallest errors in my life. I felt no grace, nor gave any to others. I always raised standards higher than could be met. I was driven, driven, driven. If only I could have accepted God's grace and forgiveness my life would have been different, but something in me kept me from doing that. I know now it was my pride. Still, God used me to establish the first colony in America that offered freedom of religion, and I started the first Baptist church in this country. Still, I fear I did more harm than good. You decide. Please learn from my life. Here is my story.

I was born Roger Williams in 1603 in London, England. I was trained to be a lawyer and God gave me great gifts of intelligence and persuasion. I grew up near Newgate prison, though, in a time when many were cruelly tortured and killed for their religious beliefs. I entered the ministry so I could help them, but this stand soon caused me to flee for my life. I had suddenly married house servant following the rejection of my proposal to marry the daughter of an important family (she loved me, but her family said I was beneath their station). Mary was a tremendous support and a very faithful life mate. I couldn't have had a better wife!

We fled to Holland for freedom, and the Puritans there invited me to Boston where preachers were sorely needed. Arriving there, I was well received because of the stand I had taken in England. My reputation as a fine speaker preceded me. I was 28, tall, handsome, intelligent, charming, sweet-tempered and loved by all. However my stubborn obsession with total purity soon reared its head. I refused to pastor there because their Congregational church hadn't officially separated from the Anglican. I said they must publicly recant every being Anglican before I pastored them, but they saw no need for it. From here it got worse. I found sin in everyone and everything, especially myself. Others continued to love me and try to help me. William Bradford, Edward Winslow, Thomas Hooker, John Cotton, and especially my lifelong closest friend John Winthrop, often spoke to me. I would listen to no one for I was super-independent. I felt we were all too sinful for God to have anything to do with. Eventually I separated myself from them.

I first went to Salem where I found others who accepted my ideas and I pastored them. I was only there 6 months, though. I soon moved to Plymouth and was assistant pastor there for 2 years. During this time I evangelized the Indians a lot. The Puritans said they couldn't be elected so evangelizing them was foolish, but I had a deep heart's desire to see them turn to the gospel and many did, including Massasoit. When I realized that the agents of the Plymouth colony over in England went to the Anglican church there I demanded the Plymouth colony repent and separate themselves from them. When they wouldn't I left, this time for Salem.

I never for once considered I could be wrong. I didn't realize my arrogance and self-righteousness were worse sins than those I accused others of committing. If I had humbled myself God could have used me in great ways. He gave me great gifts in intellect, personality

and leadership. I didn't use them for him, though, but to keep myself from admitting I could only live by grace. I saw every minor flaw in everyone else. Still I was kind and loving to them, and they to me. I never verbally mistreated anyone, I just expected way too much of myself and others. I became as cold as steel and would allow no one to get close to me.

In Salem my attacks on the king brought public censor to me. I thrived on opposition and strengthened my stand. Being a very influential personality and speaker, I caused the leaders quite a bit of trouble. Reluctantly they had to banish me, but I refused to leave. When I was told they were coming to get me I fled alone at night. There was a blizzard and it was very cold. I would have died if some of the Indians I had evangelized hadn't happened upon me. I stayed with them all winter. In the spring they gave me land and I used it to start my own colony.

This was the start of Rhode Island. My family and a few friends joined me. I wanted freedom of belief as our foundation. I discovered I soon attracted every crackpot, misfit and troublemaker in the colonies! Since my emphasis on personal freedom allowed them to believe and practice whatever they wanted I had no authority over them. Chaos reigned, and if I would have noticed I could have easily seen what I had been doing to others. My eyes weren't open to anything but my own guilt and trying to escape it by super-perfectionism.

I decided to organize my own church there, and patterned it like the Baptists I had met in England and Holland. I was convinced theirs was closest to the New Testament pattern. I called it "First Baptist Church of Providence." It continues on to this very day. The next year, however, I resigned from the church. Others continued the church, but I again doubted my salvation. I despaired of ever reaching the perfection I felt I had to find in order to feel worthy of God's love. In striving for that I separated myself from more and more people until my wife was the only one I felt I could partake of the Lord's Supper with. I then found her impure, too.

I spent the rest of my life trying to prove my positions and actions were right. Long after my generation passed on, and everyone forgot the issues I raised, I was still debating them with anyone who would listen and writing long, very detailed books proving myself right. I just couldn't let it go. I had no inner peace, just self-pity, self-hate and despair.

The only worthwhile thing I did was evangelize the Indians, and I continued that my whole life. I learned their language and wrote a brief dictionary. As a result Rhode Island was the only colony spared an Indian uprising.

Finally, at the end of my life, I did mellow. I then admitted true purity was unattainable. I reversed myself entirely and embraced everyone. I humbled myself and rested in the grace and forgiveness of God alone. I gave up trying to attain perfection and accepted mercy. Oh, that I would have been able to do this when young, how different my life would have been! I beg of you, if you see any of yourself in me please, please, please humble yourself and accept God's grace and forgiveness. That is the ONLY way to live! Believe me, I know.



# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## JOHN WESLEY

The name "Wesley" is probably a name you've heard, especially if you've ever been in a Methodist church. The impact of us Wesley's goes way beyond Methodism, however. I'm John and I want to tell you about my family.

**SAMUEL** (1662-1735), my father, came from a long and distinguished line of Anglican clergymen. He was an obscure parish minister for 40 years. I remember him as godly, faithful, but stern. He was a gifted musician, and always seemed to be behind financially. Our home was dominated, though, by my mother **SUSANNAH** (1669-1742). She was the 25th child of a pastor and had 19 children herself (11 survived past infancy). She was well-bred and well-educated. She ruled our home with diligence, system and piety. She was a good pastor's wife. I remember her shutting herself in her room one hour each day for prayer. I was much closer to my mother than my father. She home schooled us all. She had special rules to cover everything but showed us lots of love, too. She would have special time each week alone with each child.

I was born June 17, 1703 (died 1791), and named **JOHN BENJAMIN** (after two brothers of mine who had died). Even though I was the 15th child born, I always knew I was special to my mother. I almost died when our house caught fire when I was 5. God miraculously provided for my deliverance and my mother called me "a brand plucked from the burning." She said she felt God's hand on my life in a special way from then on. My mother dominated all of us by her strong personality and organization, and father usually let her have her way. Growing up in a family dominated by my mother and 7 older sisters had a strong impact on the rest of my life. I always was more comfortable around women, knowing just how to charm and win them. Unfortunately my love life and eventual marriage (at 47 years of age) were disasters. I suppose my family influence had a lot to do with that. It seemed most of my brothers and sisters had the same problem.

Five years after I was born **CHARLES** was born (1708-1788), he was the 18th child born. We both ended up at Oxford together in a club to help us organize our spiritual lives. George Whitefield was in our group, too. Because of my personality I was the natural leader. We drew up rules for prayer, reading, and all areas of life. Since we approached things so methodically we were called "Methodists."

Perhaps you've heard of our trip to Georgia with some Moravians to evangelize the Indians. It turned out fine for George Whitefield, but for Charles and I it was a disaster! We returned to England feeling miserable, empty failures. We had nothing spiritually to give.

When back in England we met a young Moravian preacher named Peter Bohler. He told me about the need of a new birth, about personal faith in Jesus. Charles went to their church first and accepted Jesus as his savior. I attended a few days later and the same thing happened. I felt my heart "strangely warmed" as God's Spirit worked within me. You see, I had been trying to work my way into heaven by what I was doing and didn't realize until then that it was God's grace, not my works, that removed my sins.

Following this Charles and I traveled and ministered together for 18 years. I was strong and able to carry quite a schedule. Charles had a fine marriage to Sally Gwunne. They had 8 children. He was very gifted musically and wrote 6,000 to 7,000 hymns. I edited and corrected his hymns (theologically) as well as writing some myself. They were quite innovative for their day. Almost everyone else just sang the words to the Psalms in the Bible to dull tunes. We followed Isaac Watt's lead and wrote our own lyrics and put them to memorable music. Many of our songs are still sung in churches today.

My ministry took a different turn. Soon after my conversion I was invited by George Whitefield to join him in preaching he was doing in England. The Great Awakening in America and England was just starting and God was using George to spread revival everywhere he went. I'll let him tell you about that.

I will say that it was very different preaching outside for I had always preached in churches before! Thousands were converted, though, and God's Spirit freely moved every time we preached.

Soon, however, several changes took place in my life. I parted with the Moravians because they seemed to me to focus too much on the man von Zinzendorf. I also parted with George Whitefield because he was Calvinistic (as were all the leaders of the Great Awakening) and I, as an Anglican, was Arminian. Calvinists focus on God's sovereignty as the final determining factor in all that happens and Arminians say it is man's free will that determines everything. John Calvin explained these two systems in more detail so you can read what he had to say about them. I did stay good friends with George, though.

As my beliefs developed I came to feel it was possible to live a holy, perfect (but not sinless, for we still sin in error but can arrive at the point where we no longer sin knowingly) life, although I never claimed to have reached that state myself. I believed a special work of the Holy Spirit was necessary for this to happen. Methodist churches all adopted these beliefs. Please understand, I never started the Methodist church for I and Charles were always part of the Anglican church in England. We did form societies within the Anglican church similar to your small group Bible studies. Eventually in England these became a church within a church. In America they organized independent of the Anglican church, although I was against it. Those Americans always were independent types! George Whitefield was more of an evangelist, not interested in organizing groups and overseeing their structure and maintenance.

Methodism from then on influenced many other groups that came from it. This includes the Salvation Army, Wesley or Methodist churches and denominations today, Charles Finney, R. A. Torrey, Andrew Murray, Watchman Nee, and the Keswick "Victorious Life" teachings. They all adopted my emphasis on free will, including the possibility of the loss of salvation. They also carried on my teachings that a perfect (but not sinless) life was possible with a special touch from the Holy Spirit. This set the groundwork for Holiness and Pentecostal churches of your day which also came from Methodism.

At my death there were over 70,000 Methodists in England and 40,000 in America. Wesley's influence continues today. The desire of my life was to see Him glorified and praised, and it is very satisfying to have so many of the hymns Charles wrote and I helped with still sung today. Next Sunday look at the names on the top of your hymn and perhaps you'll find yourself singing one of ours. Think of us if you do!

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** I Cor. 10:6,11

# GEORGE WHITEFIELD

"Hello! I'm G. W. and God used me in a great way to bring freedom to America in the 1700's - just like another "G.W." man - George Washington. God used me to set the groundwork for what he did, or America wouldn't have been unified to fight Britain. In the early 1700's Americans were not one, they were divided into various religious, cultural, social and racial groups, none of which got along with the others. It was salvation in Jesus that brought them together and showed them they were all one in Christ. It was salvation in Jesus that broke down the walls between the separate groups and colonies, so they could unite as one against the British army. God sent a revival in the mid 1700's that prepared this country for the Revolutionary War, and in His infinite wisdom He chose me to spread that revival.

"Actually I was born in England in 1714 in Gloucester. My mother raised me in the tavern she ran and I grew up quite a 'bad boy.' I spent years trying to earn God's forgiveness and approval, but it wasn't until I quit trying and just trusted Him that I found peace and joy. From then on I wanted to make sure everyone found this, too. I started preaching in England (outside for no pastors wanted me in their churches) and revival broke out wherever I preached. It seemed no matter when or where I preached, God's power fell in a great way and thousands were converted.

"I came to America when I was 24 and immediately had a burden for this country. I considered it my home from then on. I preached in the major cities up and down the seacoast. I went by horse and canoe into the back country and preached to pioneers and Indians. I was driven to tell others about Jesus! During my ministry I preached 18,000 sermons (average of 500 a year or 10 a week). I traveled in southeastern Penna. with William Tennent and his sons who fine were evangelists in that area.

"Jonathan Edwards became a great personal friend of mine. God used him to set the groundwork for the revival in America and God gave us each other to encourage and help each other. Benjamin Franklin was another friend who was amazed at my powerful voice (50,000 could easily hear me at one time) and teaching. He even printed my sermons and gave money to help me, but to my knowledge never did accept Jesus as his Savior.

"I died at 56 years of age, my health being ruined from my hard life of travel and preaching. I was glad, though, at what God had accomplished in uniting this country in one under Jesus. He brought the country back to Himself in time for their fight for freedom. God indeed does all things well!"

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** I Cor. 10:6,11

## Jonathan Edwards

Have you ever heard of me? I am credited with preaching the most famous sermon ever preached. God used me to start the most dramatic revival America ever had. Historians say I was the greatest thinker in colonial America. Still, many know very little about me. I'll tell you my story.

I was born in 1703, the same year John Wesley was born and 11 years before George Whitefield. My home town was East Windsor, Conn. I had ten sisters, all very tall girls. My father called them his "sixty feet of daughters." My father and grandfather were ministers.

As a young boy I loved nature and wrote an excellent story about spiders when I was 13. I was considered precocious. I learned Latin at 6 and knew Greek and Hebrew by the time I was 12. I always had a love for God. I remember building a clubhouse for prayer with my playmates in a swamp near where we lived. We'd meet there five times a day to pray. In addition, I had my own secret place in the woods where I'd go to pray alone.

One Sunday when I was 17 I was sick and didn't go to church with my family. I was bored and saw a Bible in my father's study. I picked it up and read "Now to the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever, Amen." I immediately felt an awakening in my soul as I realized for the first time the vastness and majesty of the sovereign God of the universe. The pain and guilt I felt for having resisted Him for so long was overwhelming. I felt deep remorse for my sin and committed myself completely to Him forever.

I didn't know what God wanted with my life, but I was willing to do whatever He wanted. That same year I graduated from Yale with Highest Honors. Two years later I had a ministerial degree and pastored my first church, a Congregational church in New York City. When I was 21 I joined the faculty of Yale.

Sarah Pierrepont became my wife when I was 23 (she was 16). She came from a long line of famous ministers. She had many suitors but waited for me to ask for her hand. She chose me because we were very close, sharing a strong love for nature, books, theology and God. I couldn't study when I first fell in love with her. In fact, I wrote an ode to her on the front page of my Greek grammar. She was an excellent help-meet my whole life. While I was moody, shy, a bit gawky, and socially inept she was very vibrant, outgoing, and graceful. I could be difficult, moody, lost in my own world, putting my work first. She brought joy to our home, was well-organized and responsible, and I give her the credit for making our marriage a success. We had 8 girls and 3 boys. In fact a baby was born every even-numbered year for 22 years! One of my daughters was engaged to marry David Brainerd, the missionary to Indians in Pennsylvania, when he died. In fact, he died at our home. Later I had 75 grandchildren.

When I was 24 I started co-pastoring the Congregational Church in Northampton, Mass. I shared the ministry with Solomon Stoddard, my grandfather, a very famous and very godly man, one of the last of the Puritans. It was there God started the Great Awakening in America.

I'll never forget it. God had given me a real burden for cold New England. One day when I was 32 (1734) I felt I should fast so for three days I had no food or sleep. I just prayed, "God, give me New England." I left the room I was in when it was time to preach and went straight to the pulpit. People later said it was like looking straight into the face of God and His Spirit poured out in a great way. Revival came! The whole town was turned upside down, people everywhere were being converted and coming for counsel. Emotional outbreaks were common. Lives were changed. When I would preach people sometimes would faint, shout, quiver or weep.

Of course, there was much opposition to such a revival. I don't know why, but after 6 months it stopped as quickly as it had started. Many went back to their old sins and there were very few good results of it - virtually no fruit. I was very discouraged and became ill. People turned against me and my salary suffered. We had severe financial problems. Sarah almost had a nervous breakdown. It all really tried our marriage, too.

It was at this bleak time that God brought George Whitefield into our lives. He was 26 and I 37. He came and stayed with us. A great, close friendship developed. I asked him to preach for me and when he did the revival broke out again (1740). I wasn't jealous, just glad to see God working. Sarah experienced a special touch from God and became herself again. George was so moved by our family and marriage that he determined to find a wife for himself and soon afterwards did. I was able to influence him in Calvinism, as my conversion experience was built on a strong awareness of the sovereignty of God. Thus the leaders of this Great Awakening were all Calvinists except the Wesleys, who broke from George over this before long.

I was full of new life, too. I went throughout New England preaching and every time power from God fell. The sermon that drew more attention than any other was "Sinners In The Hands of an Angry God." As I preached it people would sob, grab the pew to keep from falling into hell, and often plead with me to stop. I assure you it wasn't my delivery that caused this. I was nearsighted and read all my sermons, holding them a few inches from my nose. My voice was a dull monotone with no emotion, but God used it. Before each service Christians would pray all night for God's Spirit to move and He did. As a result revival spread through New England. George took this revival to other parts of America and England, but I stayed in New England. Many there were against it, especially the established church. We started Princeton Seminary to train revival preachers for the established seminaries wouldn't.

Despite this things went poorly for me in my own church. I made a very unpopular decision to limit membership to only those who were born again. In response the church stopped my salary. My health suffered and I became discouraged again. Soon I was fired! Since the church couldn't find a replacement I preached for them without bitterness until they could get someone. Sarah and the girls made lace and sold it to support the family.

After awhile (when I was 47) I was invited to pastor a small frontier church. Conditions were crude. In fact the French and Indian war came and people in the area fortified up in my home for protection. Several neighbors were killed. The congregation was very small and uneducated, mainly Indians. Strange as it seems, I really liked it there and thrived! I finally had time to do what I loved: study and write. My health returned. It was just what I needed! I was here 7 years. When my son-in-law, who was president of Princeton, died, they asked me to come and be president. However I died of smallpox two months after arriving. Sarah was devastated and died 6 months later.

I was far from perfect. Today you would call me a workaholic. I had a phobia about wasting even a minute. I was prone to moodiness and depression. I didn't work well with others and was not a leader. I know I wasn't easy to get along with. Sarah made our marriage, and me, successful. Still God used me. I have been called the outstanding figure of colonial America and one of the greatest minds America has ever produced. They say I was a religious genius, a brilliant philosopher, a masterful preacher and a devout Christian. All I know is that I gave my life to Jesus to use as He saw fit. If He in His sovereignty could use me as He did, He can use anyone who gives Him full control. If you haven't done that, do it now. I don't guarantee you'll become an evangelist, but you will be whatever the holy God of the universe has for you -- and what could you do that would be better than that?

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## George WASHINGTON

Greeting to all of you. I presume you have heard of me, so introductions are not necessary. You people have a phrase "being in the right place at the right time." Well, that aptly describes me. The "right place" was America as it was seeking independence. The "right time" was the 1700's. The Great Awakening had just swept through America and shown us that we were all equal before God. "No king but King Jesus" was the cry on many lips. We felt free and independent. That's what things were like when God put me on earth.

I was born in 1732 in Virginia, the oldest of 6 children. I won't go into any detail about things you already know about me but want to tell you about what many of the books don't say. I want to tell you about my faith in Jesus Christ. That is the most important thing in my life.

I grew up in the Church of England, which was the only church in Virginia. My great-great grandfather and great-grandfather were godly clergymen. The later wrote in his will: "I am heartily sorry from the bottom of my heart for my sins past, most humbly desiring forgiveness of the same from the Almighty God (my Savior) and redeemer, in whom and by the merits of Jesus Christ, I trust and believe assuredly to be saved, and to have full remission and forgiveness of all my sins." My grandfather and father were godly men, too. They taught me to humbly serve God and put Him first in everything I did.

Unfortunately my father died when I was 12. I continued to practice the spiritual graces he taught me, though. I developed a strong spiritual life when young. I saw my own sinfulness and need of mercy. I put my full faith in the blood of Jesus shed on the cross for my sins. I was always acutely aware that all I had and was came from God. I never swore, drank to excess or gambled.

I kept a prayer journal. This is one of my prayers. "O most glorious God...I acknowledge and confess my faults, in the weak and imperfect performance of the duties of this day. I have called on Thee for pardon and forgiveness of sins, but so coldly and carelessly that my prayers are become my sin and stand in need of pardon. I have heard Thy holy word, but with such deadness of spirit that I have been an unprofitable and forgetful hearer.... but, O God, who is rich in mercy and plenteous in redemption, mark not, I beseech Thee, what I have done amiss; remember that I am but dust, and remit my transgressions, negligences and ignorances, and cover them all with the absolute obedience of Thy dear Son, that those sacrifices (of sin, praise and thanksgiving) which I have offered may be accepted by Thee, in and for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ offered upon the Cross for me. ... Direct my thoughts, words and work, wash away my sins in the immaculate Blood of the Lamb, and purge my heart be Thy Holy Spirit .... daily frame me more and more into the likeness of Thy Son, Jesus Christ. ... Thou gavest Thy Son to die for me; and hast given me assurance of salvation, upon my repentance and sincerely endeavoring to conform my life to His holy precepts and example."

When I was 17 I moved to Mt. Vernon to live with my brother Lawrence. He died four years later and I took over Mt. Vernon. I was in the army at that time, during the French and Indian War. I was an officer at Ft. Necessity and led church services when the chaplain was absent. I spent much time on my knees in prayer, I can tell you! During Braddock's defeat I had

two horses shot out from under me and four bullet holes through my coat, yet God spared my life. The Indians later said they realized then that I could not die in battle because the Great Spirit was protecting me and would use me to found a mighty empire. There were several other times before this when I should have been killed in various accidents but something kept me miraculously alive. That was God's will for me.

Mrs. Martha Custis, a wealthy widow, became my wife when I was 27. We had a very nice marriage and relationship. She was very devout spiritually. Her whole life she spent the first hour after breakfast alone reading her Bible and praying. She was a godly companion and the Lord blessed our relationship richly.

When I was 31 I was made deacon over that whole part of Virginia, a position I held for the rest of my life. I attended church every Sunday unless the weather made travel impossible. Even when we had company, which was often, I went to church. I always invited them, but went no matter what they did. In church I always stood for prayers and Martha knelt, as was the practice then. At home I always said grace before and after each meal. It was such a habit with me I automatically prayed one time when a minister was present, a very bad departure from good manners. I was quite embarrassed, but at least he knew we were in the habit of praying at our meals. I had family prayers with the children each day, too.

Fasting was a common practice in my spiritual life. Our church had called fast days. I called for a fast on June 1, 1774, for the whole nation in response to the British boycott of Boston Harbor after the tea party.

When war broke out with Britain it was obvious God was on our side. It wasn't that we deserved it but was all His grace. Many of the leaders in America were deists. They felt man was getting better. This was the basis of Unitarianism, which developed directly into humanism and the New Age in your day. I could give you example after example of how God miraculously intervened to help our cause in the Revolutionary War.

When the Continental Congress chose me to be Commander-in-Chief I didn't want to do it. I knew they needed someone steady, mature, sober, and a good leader. I didn't feel I was right for it. Also, the army was an undisciplined, unorganized mess without much support from congress or the people. It was full of power-hungry generals competing with each other for power. Since the people wanted me to serve I agreed, but never took any pay for it. My popularity base was with the people, although most politicians disliked me and were jealous of me. I was quiet, humble, embarrassed by attention -- not a back-slapping kind of person. God gave me great supernatural wisdom.

I don't mind admitting I had to depend on God every step of the way. Actually its hard for me to talk about all this, for I don't want it to sound like I am bragging about myself. Really, I am not! Its just that so many books about me in your day leave this part out. I want to make sure God gets the credit for everything that happened, for I totally depended on Him each day.

I prayed often each day in private and had group devotions with the families I stayed with. Private prayer in those days was always done out loud so I'm afraid I was overheard quite often. I partook of the Lord's Supper when possible. I must admit that I did withdraw from communion for awhile during the Revolutionary War. I did the same for a short period later in my life, too. I have never told anyone the reason for that, it was always a private matter between myself and God. I never stopped church attendance, though. I always had private prayers on my knees each morning and evening, too.

In my conversations and letters I always tried to give Providence (the common title for God in my time) the credit for leading, directing, protecting, and providing.

Valley Forge was the worst time of the war. Out of 11,000 soldiers who marched in, only about 1 in 10 were properly equipped! When we entered we were marching into the dark night of our young nation's soul. Twenty five percent of the soldiers died from flu, smallpox, typhus or exposure. Black feet and legs were regularly cut off. We had few supplies, and almost no food. God was using this to make a nation of us. The Pilgrims had their starving winters, the Puritans faced the Indian uprisings, for us Valley Forge was the crucible of American freedom. God used it to build the carbon-steel core around which an army would be built. I encouraged the men to have faith in God. We held church each Sunday. Quite regularly I went out into the woods to kneel and pray. It seemed hopeless when we held a day of fasting and prayer on April 12, 1778. then, just as Squanto was sent to the Pilgrims when they most needed him, God sent us Baron von Steuben to drill the soldiers and France entered the war on our side to provide sea support.

From there on things turned around. There was one extraordinary event after another. Hundreds of "little things" worked out. Eventually the British wore down and quit, surrendering at Yorktown. I ordered a thanksgiving service to give God the credit. I said, "The hand of Providence has been so conspicuous in all that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more than wicked that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations."

I retired to Mt. Vernon and continued my practice of morning and evening prayers. That wasn't just something done in the heat of battle. Every Sunday morning I rode 10 miles to church and in the evening I read a sermon or the Bible to the entire household. Retirement didn't last long enough, though, for soon I was called on to help write the new constitution, and then to be the first president.

Six weeks after becoming President I got ill and almost died but was not afraid to die, death has never held any fear for me. While President I went to my study at 9 PM every night for devotions. I knelt by my open Bible to read and pray. I prayed for 1 or 2 hours every day. Sundays I allowed no visitors but Mr. Trumbal, a very godly man, and we had good Christian fellowship. I was reelected President for a second term but refused a third. Then I retired to Mt. Vernon for the last 2 years of my life. Even in old age I attended church regularly and had devotions in my study each morning and evening. At 5 AM I started my day on my knees in front of my open Bible, and ended it that way from 9 to 10 PM each evening.

My death came December 12, 1799, at 68 years of age. I knew I was dying but had no fear. My final words were "Father of mercies, take me to Thyself." And He did. He has always done right for me, and for America. He had a special purpose in my life and in this fine country. I know He has a special purpose in your life, too. Trust Him to bring it about.



# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

Is America a Christian nation? Was America ever a Christian nation? There is much talk and debate about this today. Did our forefathers want this to be a Christian nation? To answer this question we must define 'Christian.' If it refers to externally adhering to Biblical principles the answer is "yes." However if it refers to internally born-again believers the answer is "no." Outwardly the values and morality of the Bible were accepted, but inwardly most did not put their faith in Jesus for salvation. Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson are two examples.

## BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

The background and life of Benjamin Franklin is well known, but his spiritual state is often ignored. Benjamin was a friend and supporter of George Whitefield and the Great Awakening. He heard him speak often, printed his tracts, and contributed money to the cause. He was moved by Whitefield's preaching, despite himself. He said, "Whitefield used to pray for my conversion, but never had the satisfaction of believing that his prayers were heard. Ours was a mere civil friendship, sincere on both sides, and lasted to his death."

Benjamin Franklin was not a humanist or a secularist, but he was not born again as far as any record shows. He believed in God, the Bible, prayer, morality and eternal life. He wrote this epitaph for his gravestone before his death: "The body of Benjamin Franklin, Printer, like the cover of an old book, its contents torn out and stripped of its lettering and gilding, lies here. ... Yet the Work itself shall not be lost; for it will, as he believed, appear once more in a new and more beautiful edition, corrected and amended by the Author." Outwardly Benjamin followed Biblical values and beliefs, but inwardly left no trace of ever accepting Jesus as His Savior.

## THOMAS JEFFERSON

Called an atheist by ministers of his day, Thomas Jefferson was really a 'humanized Anglican' or 'closet Unitarian.' He was greatly influenced by the radical instigators of the French Revolution. He believed in the Bible -- as he compiled it. Congress once issued a special edition of his Bible. It is the same as ours but with all references to the supernatural eliminated. It ends with Jesus in the grave.

When the Continental Congress added "Providence" (the current way of referring to God) to the Declaration of Independence he was very angry. As a deist, he believed God was above and beyond His creation, but not involved in it. God created the world then left it to natural causes (no miracles or supernatural) as one winds up an alarm clock and leaves it. He believed man is basically good, Jesus was just a good man (not God come to die for our sins) and the Bible is not inspired. Outwardly Thomas Jefferson was a great man, productive patriot, and well-respected by all, but inwardly there seems to be no personal relationship with God.

What about you? Are you outwardly a fine, moral person? That's fine -- but that doesn't make you a Christian in the Biblical sense. As Jesus told that fine, moral religious leader Nicodemus (John 3) it is only by being born again that one can see the Kingdom of heaven. Are you just going through the motions or is Jesus real in your life and heart? Are you REALLY a Christian?

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## DAVID BRAINERD

Murder was in our hearts as we stalked the frail young paleface as he ventured farther into the wilderness. This territory, known as the "Forks of the Delaware" (present-day Easton) had a well-deserved reputation for danger and death. Whites were despised because of their dishonesty, land-stealing, greed and whiskey. The man approached an Indian village but instead of entering spent the night in the forest nearby. We went into the village and reported his presence. The chief and several warriors joined us to murder the white man.

Tomahawks in hand, we crept toward the strange tent. As we cautiously peered under the flap, our intention to kill was momentarily forgotten. There, in the center of the tent was a man on his knees. He was praying that God would save the Indians. We couldn't kill him while he prayed to his God so we waited.

Hours passed and he still prayed. Then a rattlesnake entered the tent. We thought it would do our work for us as it approached him. It crossed his feet and paused in position to strike. But the snake did not strike. For no apparent reason it lowered its head again and glided out of the tent. We knew this stranger was under God's special protection so we slipped away. Next day when he entered the village, one of the warriors told what happened and all realized the Great Spirit was with Him. We listened. He seemed surprised that we didn't try to kill him. It wasn't until much later that he found out why.

I accepted his message about Jesus and traveled with this man helping him and learning from him. I am a Leni Lenape Indian. My name is Walks-in-the-Dark. While named that because my mother found me walking outside the hut when young, it was true of my spiritual condition before David Brainerd entered my life. I would like to tell you about David. He is too modest to tell these things about himself, but the truth about him is very refreshing.

David was born April 20, 1718, in Connecticut. He was the third of five sons (four became preachers) and four daughters. From the age of seven on he was concerned about his lost condition. He was always a very sensitive perfectionist. Very introverted, he felt inferior to others and was often depressed. Physically his health was very poor. This was not a good beginning for a missionary!

To make matters worse, his father died when he was 9 and his mother when he was 14. Throughout his childhood and youth he tried to find security in living a righteous life, but his expectations of himself were so high he found little security in this. Finally, when he was 21, he realized his own works and goodness would not do it. He stopped striving and freely accepted God's love and mercy - his burden lifted! He still had periods of darkness and distress when he felt far from God, though. He fought these his whole life, but then so did Spurgeon, Moody, David Livingston and others.

David was no great orator or scholar. He was no natural leader. He was even kicked out of Yale Divinity School because favored the Great Awakening going on. He was a strong follower of George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards and became ordained in the Presbyterian church in New Jersey. Because he didn't feel worthy to pastor, he chose the hardest work he could think of - being a missionary to the Indians. He didn't even feel worthy for that. He was very quick to condemn himself when he considered himself less than perfect. He felt he had to be perfect to deserve love from God, others, or even himself. Because he was so hard on

himself he was hard on others, too. He was very critical of the churches of our day because they were cold.

David's work among the Indians centered around the Delaware, Lehigh and Susquehanna Rivers. He worked hard day and night, spent careless hours in prayer and fasting, and suffered greatly to spread God's Word to us Indians. His love for God and devotion to God was evident and spoke louder than his words. I traveled with him most of the time since I had no family of my own to care for.

Even though Indians were coming to Jesus because of David, he was often discouraged and felt he should resign. He thought taking mission support money, little that it was, was theft. Only his great commitment to God and love for Indians kept him from quitting. He said, "I care not where I live, or what hardships I go through, so that I can gain souls to Christ. While I am asleep, I dream of these things. As soon as I awake, the first thing I think of is this great work. All my desire is the conversion of sinners, and all my hope is in God."

Language was a real problem for David. He just was no good at learning other languages and had to depend on translators. Because of his infirmities he often spent days at prayer, asking for God's power to help him. Once when he preached his interpreter was so intoxicated he could hardly stand up, yet scores were converted. It was God's power that did it.

While whites were experiencing the Great Awakening throughout the colonies, God used David Brainerd to spread it among the Indians. Revival came to us, too. Whites who came to mock ended up on their knees, too.

Because of his poor health and the great strain of traveling and preaching so much, he was only to work for God for four years. By the time he was 29 he was homebound, in the home of Jonathan Edwards. He was engaged to his daughter but they never married. He couldn't even climb the stairs and felt helpless. All he could do was pray -- and he did much of that! His brother John took over his work among us.

David died October 9, 1847 from tuberculosis, but his influence still goes on. Not only did his Indians carry on his work among themselves, but many whites have been moved by his story through the years. His journal and biography (by Jonathan Edwards) are still in print. William Carey was influenced to become the first modern foreign missionary by reading them. American foreign mission efforts were motivated by him, also. Charles Wesley said of him: "Find preachers of David Brainerd's spirit and nothing can stand before them. Let us be followers of him, as he was of Christ, in absolute self-devotion, in total deadness to the world, and in fervent love to God and man."

Truly God used him in a great way. My only regret is that David didn't experience the peace and joy of God to the extent he could have. I have since met others like him: those who expect too much of themselves and don't accept God's forgiveness. What can they do:

1. ACCEPT your strengths as well as weakness' as God-given.
2. AFFIRM your worth in God and find security in His love, not in meeting certain standards.
3. ADAPT your expectations to fit life's realities and your own limits.
4. ADVANCE, even in the face of discouragement (Philippians 3:10-14).
5. ADORE Christ, in Whom you find full acceptance. Focus your thoughts on Him, not self.

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## FRANCIS ASBURY

Hello! My name is Francis Asbury. I was born in 1745 in England. I was very tall for my time and rail thin. At 13 I accepted Jesus as my Savior and when older became a itinerant Methodist preacher under John Wesley. In 1771 when he called for volunteers to go to America to preach I was the first of "Christ's Calvarymen" to volunteer. We rode and preached anywhere we could: inns, jails, towns, etc. When the American Revolution began all Methodist preachers were recalled to England, but I stayed in America. I knew that was where God wanted me to serve Him.

It was quite a large parish God assigned me to, though -- a parish the size of Europe! I traveled 6,000 miles a year on horse, often 200 miles a week! Before long I found myself being the leader of the Methodist church in America. Despite being so active I made sure I had time for God. I always got up at 4 AM in order to have 2 uninterrupted hours of prayer and meditation with the Lord before the day began.

I read whenever I rode. It would take about 4 months of horse-back riding to read the Bible through. I virtually knew the New Testament by heart. Although I couldn't do it on horseback, I personally answered each of the thousand letters I received each year. Why did I do it? Because I really cared about people as individuals. I loved to work closely and personally with people.

I was always on the go. As a result of my travels and involvement with people, I was the most well-known and easily-recognized person in America, more so even than President Madison.

This traveling was no relaxing excursion, however. Let me quote from my journal (which I meticulously kept): "I was unwell: the clouds were lowering. We had ridden but a mile when the rain began. ... Hard necessity made us move forward. The western branch of the Toe River that comes down from the Yellow Mountain, was rapidly filling, and was rocky, rolling and roaring like the sea, and we were compelled to cross it several times. Then when we came to ascend the mountain, we had a skirmish of rain, thunder and lightning." Another entry said: "We have had rain for 18 days successively, and I have ridden about 200 miles in 8 or 9 days -- a most trying time indeed." Again: "At night we were poorly provided against the weather; the house was unfinished; and to make matters worse, a horse kicked the door open and a I had a cold and bad tooth ache, with a high fever." Every time crossed a river boots filled with water!

I developed inflammatory rheumatism, fevers, boil, bronchitis, asthma, neuralgia, galloping consumption, and other things. Still, I never quit. I wrote: "I am willing to travel and preach as long as I live, and I hope that I shall not live long after I am unable to travel."

My consuming desire was to love and serve God. I recorded: "O Lord, help me to watch and pray! I am afraid of losing the sweetness that I feel: for months I have felt as if in the possession of perfect love; not a moment's desire of anything but God." and "My body is weak, but this does not concern me like the want of more grace. My heart is too cool towards God; I want to feel it like a holy flame."

When commended by some friends I wrote: "Satan, ready for every advantage, seized the opportunity and assaulted me with self-pleasing, self-exalting ideas. But the Lord enabled me to discover the danger, and the snare was broken. May He ever keep me humble, and little, and mean, in my own eyes."

I never married. That was what caused the greatest loss to the ranks of us circuit-riding preachers. I traveled, preached, and encouraged people and pastors to serve God. I ordained 4,000 preachers during my lifetime, and tried my best to set a good example for them. I hope you are setting a good example of love and service for those God puts into your life. You only get one life to live for God - make it count the best it can!

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## GEORGE MUELLER

Do you believe in prayer? No, I mean do you REALLY believe in prayer? When everything is gone and no where to return do you believe God will provide? I know He will. My whole life is a testimony to the fact that God answers prayer. Let me share it with you.

My name is George Mueller. I was born in 1805 in Kroppenstadt, Germany. My father was a harsh, materialistic, self-centered tax-collector. My mother was very nice but died when I was 14. I found growing up that I was always very popular. People naturally gravitated to me and followed me. Unfortunately I led them wrong. I was into gross wickedness. I was often drunk. In fact, I was even jailed once for 16 days because I didn't pay a drinking bill I ran up.

My father was no help: he beat me and that made me more rebellious. In order to have a steady job and nice income my father made me study for the Lutheran ministry. My life style didn't change during my training, though. That is, until God intervened. I saw a big change in an old friend named Beta. He had a peace I was searching for. I went to a prayer meeting with him and saw a different kind of church service than I was used to. The Moravians there humbly knelt to pray. I was convicted of my sin and gave my heart to the Lord. In that day I died, died to George Mueller, his opinions, preferences, tastes and will -- died to the world, its approval or censure -- died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends -- and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God. God really changed my life!

I felt strongly called to missions. Hudson Taylor's life had a strong impact on mine. I fell in love with a fine Christian girl, Ermegarde, and deeply wanted to marry her but she said she wouldn't go to the mission field. She wouldn't give up a fine home, carriage, and furniture. I really struggled for some time, then submitted to God's will and peace came. My father greatly opposed my being a missionary, he wanted my comfortable Lutheran pastor's home to live in and pay to live on although he was rich.

God started teaching me how he would provide by miraculously providing four Americans who wanted to learn German. The money I was paid just exactly covered my school expenses. Praying for money sure beat gambling for it! For two years I studied Hebrew 12 hours a day so I could be a missionary to the Jews in London. Finally I got so sick of studying when I wanted to be ministering that I quit. God provided a small Plymouth Brethren church in Devon for me to pastor. While there I met Mary Groves. I was 24 and she was 32. She was a housekeeper, and her brother was a missionary to Persia who lived by faith, trusting God to provide for his needs. I had heard of him and admired him greatly. Mary was just right for me, serious and not flighty. She wasn't pretty but had great inner beauty. We had a nice marriage and a close love all our lives.

In my church in Devon I stopped the pew rental system for it wasn't fair to the poor who couldn't come to church because they couldn't afford a pew. I put a free-will contribution box in the back of the church. No money came in, but God provided by strangers giving us food, money being dropped into Mary's purse, and the like. A friend in Bristol invited us there to help pastor Gideon Chapel in the slums. While there I got the opportunity to go to Baghdad as a missionary but the burden to help the needy poor in Bristol was so strong I knew God didn't want me to leave.

God provided miraculously for us while there. I felt a real need to give out Bible but had neither Bibles nor money to buy them. I prayed and asked for 20 pounds and got a gift for exactly that amount designated for Bibles! I never made my needs known to others, just to God.

My burden was great for the children there. I started a day school for them but many had to leave when parents died for they had no place to live. They were taken to almshouses and locked in with lunatics and criminals. The idea of orphanages was very new and radical, only 3 being in England at

that time. I read of some in Germany run by faith and wanted to try it. Mary and I quietly prayed for money and provision for a home for 30 children. The very first day after we prayed someone gave 10 shillings. Another woman offered her sewing services free. A Christian couple wrote offering to come with their furniture. A dimpling-maker offered food. A stranger brought 28 dinner plates and things. That was all the first day -- and we hadn't told a soul! As the days passed a businessman gave 50 pounds (we had lived on less our whole first year of marriage). Twenty-nine yards of sturdy material were donated, and we received 100 pounds from a man who I thought was very irritated at me. A month after starting to pray an old monstrosity of a house became available and we opened the doors for children after fixing it up. Something very strange happened then, though, for although we made our intentions known no children came! Why wasn't God providing children? Wasn't He behind this after all -- of course He was! Then we realized that we hadn't prayed for children. We had prayed for everything else, but not children. We prayed and they came, a total of 42 in all.

Six months later we opened the second orphanage and 9 months after that the third, all on the same street. We had 96 orphans, all provided for to the very pound! Then things got very bad financially and it seemed like we'd have to close. We prayed and prayed, as did our workers. For five days we lived hour to hour, meal to meal. Then we got enough money for a whole week's provisions. We realized God was doing it this way so we'd praise Him more when it came and we certainly did! The next 6 years this same pattern continued. We would pray one final time before bankruptcy proceedings and a letter with just the amount needed would be delivered while we prayed. Once at 8:30 PM the children still hadn't had supper and were about to go to bed hungry when money came in. The stores were open until 9 so all ate. Another time we set a closing date because of bankruptcy. At 8 AM that very day a business man unaware of our problem gave us enough money to keep going.

God miraculously provided a fourth orphanage on the same street, for a total of 150 children. My daughter, Lydia, challenged us to pray about building one new building to house everyone. These old buildings needed much maintenance. Five years later God had provided very miraculously land, an architect, finances, and 320 children to go into it. A second building followed in another 5 years for a total of 700 children. The third building added 450 more after another five years later. We were stuck, though, for no more land to grow was available. Then God miraculously changed hearts in a very moving story. He provided land across the road from us. The tenant wouldn't give up the lease, the owner wanted a ridiculous price for it, and the city was claiming it for water works. We prayed often and long, and it became ours! Eight years after building 3, we built two more for a total of 2,050 orphans. Graduates from our homes were serving God in many places. Forty were preaching throughout the world at this time.

Then everything in my life changed. Mary got very sick with a cough and died a month later. I really missed my faithful, supportive, spiritual wife. My daughter Lydia married my assistant manager 1 1/2 years later and they took over the burden of work for the orphanages. I surprised everyone by marrying Susannah Sanger, a 25 year member of the church I was still co-pastering. She was about 25 years younger and brought new life to me. She encouraged me to go to the mission field as I always desired. When I was 71 I went, visiting 42 countries, traveling 200,000 miles and speaking to 3 million listeners.

I died at age 83 at Ashley Down. I had been handling orphanage correspondence the day before. In my lifetime I had cared for over 1,000 orphans. Lydia and Jim Wright took over the work. Fifty years later they stopped using the homes I built and put the children in small cottages like family units. Today the work still goes on, and today the same policy is still followed of not asking for money but only bringing needs before God. And, like then, God still provides for us. He is a faithful God and will provide for all our needs as promised. We need only to pray in faith and patiently trust Him. Try it, He never fails!

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## CHARLES H. SPURGEON

Do any of you know who I am? I've been called the greatest English-speaking preacher ever. I preached a dozen sermons a week, to crowds of up to 10,000 (with no PA system), and at 22 was the most popular preacher of my day. At 27 my church built a new building which could hold 6,000 people and it was filled for every service (Sunday morning, evening, and during the week) we had for the next 30 years. Mine was the first mega-church, the largest in the world then. Tens of thousands were saved listening to me. I have more books in circulation than any English writer, even Shakespeare (300 million copies of 130 books in 22 languages). Sixty-three volumes of my sermons are published. I established hundreds of others churches. I started a seminary and orphanage which are still in operation today. Yet really I am no different than anyone else. God chose to use me and I give Him all the glory. Let me tell you how He did all this through me.

I was born June 19, 1834, in a cottage 75 miles northeast of London. It was 10 days after William Carey had died in India. My mother was a godly woman. My father was a weekend-preacher. From youth on I wanted to be like Paul. I always wanted to do great things for God, but pride was always something I battled. I was an odd mixture of shyness and self-assurance. I said outlandish things, then I was hurt when they were misunderstood.

I was the oldest child in my family, but because of so many children (17, but 9 died in infancy) my grandfather raised up until I was 6. This godly minister had a tremendous impact on my life for God. I started reading Pilgrim's Progress as soon as I could read and loved it. I read it over 100 times in my life. My grandmother paid me 1/2 penny to memorize hymns and I quickly learned hundreds, so many that the offer had to be withdrawn.

I had a great mind for math and did well at my schooling. I soon became an assistant teacher. In fact, I worked so hard at it that I neglected to get exercise. Later in life I would suffer from gout, and eventually die from it. I later felt it was because I didn't get enough exercise when young.

Because of my strong will I resisted God. My mother prayed long and hard for me. As a teenager I lived two lives. Outwardly I was a natural, normal, inquisitive boy. Inside, however, I was fearful, doubting and morbid. I was convicted of sin by my strong conscience but wouldn't yield to God. I had a terrible fear of hell and suffered constantly from guilt and hopelessness. I didn't blame God, who I knew was just and right, but myself for I knew I deserved hell. I read the Bible through but saw judgment in large letters and grace in small letters. I would try to do anything at all to earn salvation, but there was nothing to do. My mind was demonically tormented with evil, blasphemous thoughts. It seemed ten thousand evil spirits were holding carnival in my brain.

Finally one snowy Sunday when I was 15 I went to a small church nearby. Deep snow kept me from going to my regular church. The text was "Look unto me and be saved, all the ends of the earth." The speaker, an unlearned layman filling in that morning, did a poor job technically, but God used it to reach my heart. He looked right at me and pointed to me, so obvious was my spiritual misery. He said all I had to do was "Look" and be saved. "Look to Jesus" he said. Suddenly it was as if scales fell from my eyes and I saw it all so clearly. I had

been waiting to do fifty things, but it was just a matter of looking to Jesus. I looked! I could have risen that instant and sung with the most enthusiastic of them of the precious blood of Jesus and the simple faith that looks alone to Him. I thought I could dance all the way home. I could understand what John Bunyan meant when he declared he wanted to tell the crows on the plowed land all about his conversion. I was too full to hold it all in.

I was baptized. I began studying and preaching when I was 16. God used my words to bring others to Him. I wasn't much to look at: stout, fat, pudgy, no muscle, shorter than average, with a massive head and very thick hair. My skin was pale and my ears stuck out. Still, God put a fire in me and used it to reach others. By the time I was 20 I was pastoring a large church in London. I was greatly criticized by the established London clergy because of my youth and because I did things differently than they. It hurt, but I kept doing what I felt was right. Others greatly praised me, but I didn't think I deserved that, either. I never drank or went to the theater, but I did enjoy a good cigar quite regularly. It helped me relax.

I worked hard - 18 hours a day. I was a rapid reader and educated myself, never having gone to seminary or college. I believed in the value of prayer and spent much time at it. Any success my ministry had I attributed to the prayers of my people for me. God used my prayers in church as He used my sermons. Often tears would fall as I prayed, and God's Spirit would fall, too.

I would have failed many times over if it weren't for my wife, Susie. A very private, behind-the-scenes person, she deserves most of the credit for what God did through me. She was refined and educated, I was rough and crude. She lovingly molded me into the person God wanted me to be, teaching me manners, proper dress, and patience for people. We had twin sons, Charles and Thomas. She gave them their spiritual training, and they later entered the ministry, too. Her health was poor her whole life, and that greatly limited her travels with me. We had a wonderful, loving relationship. Our love grew and we cherished every moment we could spend together.

My life knew much hardship and sorrow, too. That's what God used, along with the constant criticism I received, to make me humble and keep down my pride. It was much the same with me as with Paul. People said I did more for the church than anyone since Paul, but I saw my similarity with Paul in a different way. God had to keep pain in our lives to keep us humble and submitted to Him. I didn't always handle my trials well, though. Sometimes I went into very long, very deep bouts of dark depression.

I died at 57 years old, prematurely aged from my heavy work load and responsibilities and the strain of the constant controversies about me. Why was I so successful? It wasn't me, it was God. But why me? I don't know. He chooses whatever vessel He will use, and often a faulty one so He gets the glory. I have no other explanation for it. I do know I was 100% committed and available to be used by Him however He chose. Make sure you are, too, and then let Him choose what ministry He will have for you.



# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## WILLIAM CAREY

"Hello! My name is William Carey. I was born August 17, 1761, to poor but godly parents in Paulersbury, England. I grew up in the Anglican church. Most boys went into farm work in those days. I was built for it: short, heavy and strong. However I had a bad skin allergy so I couldn't be out in the sun. That changed the whole direction of my life.

"I was apprenticed to a shoemaker where I taught myself Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French and Dutch by the time I was 16. I always had a gift for languages. The most important thing that happened while I was with the shoemaker, though, was coming to Christ. A fellow apprentice, who went to a Congregational Church. Only the Anglican church was approved by the state and going to another church was dangerous. At 17 years of age, though, I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior. Finally I had the peace and purpose in life I was always looking for!

"When I was 20 I married Dorothy Plackett. I went against the advice of everyone who knew me in doing this. She was 5 years older than me, illiterate, and totally uninterested in the things I was interested in. Our life together started off sad with Ann, our first child, dying of a fever. We were married for 25 years, until Dorothy died. I must admit it wasn't a good marriage, though, and often made it much harder for me to follow God in my life.

"Life was hard those early years. I got the same fever Ann had and it almost killed me, too. It did leave me bald! We had very serious financial and business problems as I tried to work as a shoemaker. God was drawing my heart from England to the mission field. I read about David Brainerd, the missionary to Indians in Pennsylvania. I also read about Captain Cook's voyages. My Bible, too, was leading me to the mission field.

"When I was 22 I was immersed and joined the local Baptist church. I earned my living teaching children for pay. About 4 years later I started pastoring a small church while still teaching children and selling shoes, then when I was 27 I became pastor of a large church in Leicester but that didn't work out too well. Instead of coming closer to God, the people responded to my challenges by leaving the church. There soon weren't enough to pay my salary!

"I really started pushing missions whenever I'd get together with other ministers. Almost no one was for it! One man stood and shouted at me, 'Young man, sit down, sit down. When God pleases to convert the heathen He'll do it without consulting you or me!' I didn't quit, though. I wrote 31 pamphlets showing our responsibility to spread the Gospel to other lands. Finally, on October 2, 1792 the first Protestant missionary organization to the heathen was established. It was the birth of the modern missionary movement which is still going on in your day. At that meeting I challenged the people to 'expect great things from God, attempt great things for God.'

"I continued to face much opposition, though. My father said I lost my mind. My wife refused to go to the mission field with me. I didn't have any money for passage and when I

finally got some money together the government made it difficult. Ships wouldn't take me. It took until I was 32 to finally reach Calcutta, India. My wife and children came with me. The cost of living was very high so we were destitute. The next year I moved to Bengal (Malda) where I was manager of an Indigo Factory so I made good money for awhile there.

"Problems continued to plague us. Malaria was everywhere. My 5 year old son died of it. My wife had constant dysentery and her mind became unbalanced. I felt so alone among all the idolatry, Islam and Hindu worship. Still, God was with me and I persevered. I mastered Bengali, Sanskrit, and Hindustani. I translated much of the Bible into Bengali. I didn't have one convert until I was 38, and he was another foreigner in the country for business.

"When I was 39 we moved to Serampore, near Calcutta. Other missionaries joined us and eventually we had some converts. Three years later we had a group of 40 baptized believers. Unlike other mission groups then, we didn't see ourselves as superior to the natives. Also, we felt our mission should be self-sustaining and not dependent on money from England. To earn our own money we ran a boarding house and printing press. Again things didn't work out well. Problems among us missionaries caused most of them to leave.

"During all this I kept on translating the Bible into other languages, writing grammars and dictionaries, and printing Bibles to give away. I traveled through local villages and worked hard spreading the gospel.

"The next year my wife died. Two years later I married a missionary widow, Charolette Rumohr. Four years later, when I was 51, fire destroyed our print office but we kept on working in Burma and Ceylon. I watched 3 of my sons ordained into the ministry and started a college to train Indian pastors. I started and ran a public school educational program.

"Still, life was hard. My closest missionary friends died and Charolette was an invalid the last 13 years of her life. My son and fellow missionary Felix died a year after my wife died. I almost died of a fever after a hip injury. Financial problems from overextending our mission became great when the bank failed.

"By the time I was 71 I had printed 212 volumes in 40 languages -- I had translated 35 of them. I died on a Monday afternoon, June 9, 1843 in Serampore. I wasn't perfect, but God used me to begin the modern missionary movement. I give Him all the honor and glory for it!"

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## ADONIRAM JUDSON

"Hello! My name is Adoniram Judson. I was an early missionary to China, although I was an unlikely candidate. But before I get ahead of myself I'd better go back and start at the beginning.

"I was born in 1788 at Malden, Mass. My father was a Congregational minister and I followed in his steps, going to seminary. Then I fell into unbelief and sin, but the death of a close infidel friend shocked me back to reality.

"William Carey greatly influenced me to become a missionary. I heard about how God was using him and committed my life to missions. I was the first American to commit to the mission field. By the time I left a few others had joined and we went as a group. I married my fiancée, Nancy, just before leaving so she could come with us. Luther Rice, a very close friend, also was going to the field with us. His fiancée, however, wouldn't go with him so he had to decide between following God and marrying her. He broke off the engagement.

"On the long trip over I took to reading my Greek New Testament and became convinced of the correctness of believer's baptism by immersion. Finally I told Nancy, 'The Baptists may be right!' I knew if I was baptized by immersion my Congregational ministerial standing would be taken away, as well as the financial support that enabled us to be missionaries. Still, when I arrived in Calcutta I was baptized by immersion. Luther Rice arrived a bit later, on another ship. He had come to the same conclusion on the trip over and was baptized, too! God's hand was obviously in it all. We left the Congregational church and struck out on our own.

"Times were hard. Luther became very sick and sailed back to America to recover his health and try to raise support for us on the mission field. Soon after Nancy and I took a boat to Burma. Our first baby was born on that trip but it didn't live.

"I knew things would be awful there, but the spiritual darkness and evil I saw was beyond my wildest imaginations. Burma in those days was said to be the most spiritually depraved and dark country anywhere. Felix Carey was living there and helped get us settled. We lived by a garbage dump and suffered much persecution from the people. Work went slow. It was 6 years before we baptized our first convert. I had a son that was born during this time but he died of a fever at 8 months old. It was slow, hard, discouraging work.

"Meanwhile, back in America, Luther Rice was meeting with the Philadelphia Baptist Association, the oldest one in the country, and in 1814 they took on our support! Luther never did make it back to the mission field despite his strong desire to rejoin us. He spent 23 years going throughout America raising money for other missionaries by speaking and selling Bibles. He never married. I don't think he ever got over his first love. Ironic, isn't it, that he lost her to go to the mission field and was hardly on the mission field at all.

"Meanwhile, back in Burma there was war with England so all of us foreigners were arrested. I spent 17 months in a filthy, slimy, rat-infested prison. God miraculously saved all my translation work in a pillow case, however! While I was in prison my dear wife gave birth to a baby girl. Before I got out of prison, though, she died of Cholera. My daughter Maria, who was 2, died, too.

"Eight years later God brought a missionary widow into my life and we married. We had two children together. I continued my translation work as well as writing dictionaries and other books in the native languages. My life was long, hard and often lonely, but God used me to influence many in America to give money or go to the mission field themselves. Praise His holy name!"

# HUDSON TAYLOR

Born in England in 1832, Hudson Taylor accepted Jesus as his Savior at age 17. His father was always interested in missions and talked often of the need in China. Despite his poor health, Hudson wanted to go there as a missionary. He lived a simple life, denying himself many things so he could learn to trust God better. In China he lived among the Chinese and dressed as they did. Other missionaries resented him for this affront to European 'dignity' but Hudson knew it was the only way to really reach them. He wanted to move into the interior of China, a place where no missionary had ever been. Life was hard. He was lonely, discouraged, and suffered depression and self-pity. God brought a missionaries daughter, Maria Dyer, into his life. She provided the companion and the balance he needed to be used by God in a special way. When he overworked himself trying to run a hospital even though he hadn't completed his medical training his health broke. He went to England to rest and recruit more missionaries. He finished his medical training, then returned and finally was able to work his way inland. All this was hard on Maria, too, and she became weak and ill. Their daughter Gracie died when she was 8, a real hard blow on the family. Three years later Gracie died. Hudson continued to serve God in his humble, faithful way the rest of his life. He is a testimony to what God's grace can do in the life of a man submitted to Him. He can use your life that way, too."

# DAVID LIVINGSTON

"Doctor Livingston, I presume?" Who hasn't heard that line. Yet there is a great story of God's work in the life of another man humbly dedicated to God that goes with it. David Livingston was born in 1813 to a poor family in Scotland. He was self-taught. As a child he worked in a cotton factory during the day and taught himself Latin at night. Eventually he was able to go to the University of Glasgow to study theology. His lifelong goal was to be a missionary to China. God had other plans. His first sermon was such a failure he almost quit, and some suggested he do so. Instead he also studied medicine, feeling he could be a medical missionary if nothing else worked out for him. Because of the opium wars China was closed and David ended up in Africa. When he saw the great need there his heart broke for the people of Africa. Constantly on the go, he said "the smoke of a thousand villages that have never heard the gospel pulls me on and on." Once he was attacked and maimed by a lion. He never quit. He married a missionary's daughter, Mary Moffat and together they moved into the interior of Africa. They saw more of Africa than any white man and opened Africa to missions and civilization. He zealously fought the slave trade going on in those days. Of course, his life was in much danger and often he was threatened. Mary died at 49. It was 9 years later that Henry Stanley finally tracked him down. Stanley writes: "I went to Africa as prejudiced as the biggest atheist in London. But there came for me a long time of reflection. I saw this solitary old man there and asked myself, 'How on earth does he stop here - is he cracked, or what? What is it that inspires him?' For months after we met I found myself wondering at the old man carrying out all that was said in the Bible - 'Leave all things and follow Me.' But little by little his sympathy for others became contagious; my sympathy was aroused; seeing his piety, his gentleness, his zeal, his earnestness, and how he went about his business, I was converted by him, although he had not tried to do it." David refused all Stanley's attempts to get him to return to England. Two days later he wrote in his diary: "March 19, my birthday. My Jesus, my King, my Life, my all. I again dedicate my whole self to Thee. Accept me, and grant, O gracious Father, that ere the year is gone I may finish my work." One year later, at 60 years of age, his native helpers found him on his knees in posture of prayer. His soul, however, was in heaven with Jesus. David Livingston sets a quiet example of faithfulness and love. The church needs more David Livingstons today.

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** I Cor. 10:6,11

## DAVEY CROCKETT

Born in Tennessee in 1786, Davey Crockett became a legend while still alive. He was a poor farmer but a skillful hunter. He had a family and many children but was seldom at home. Moving and exploring were more for him. He was even in the Tennessee legislature for 8 years. As to his spiritual life, not much is know. He did hear the gospel preached and shared often. He understood he needed to accept Jesus as his Savior to have his sins forgiven and to go to heaven, but there is no record of any spiritual interest or acceptance of it. He was a very nice man, but there is no historical evidence he ever committed his life to Jesus before he died in the Alamo in 1836.

## DANIEL BOONE

Daniel Boone was born in 1734 near Reading, Pa. He grew up in a Quaker family. Daniel's father, Squire, was a prominent man in their local Meeting, as Quaker assemblies were called. He was an "overseer," and also a trustee of their little burial ground. The Quaker Meeting turned against the Boones when Daniel's older sister married someone who wasn't a Quaker (and later was found to be pregnant before the marriage). Then things got worse when his older brother, Israel, also married outside the church. Squire insisted on his son's right to marry whomever he wanted. He was "disowned" - a kind of Quaker excommunication because of the 'sins' of his children. The rest of the family were still members in good standing, but the local Quakers could, and did, make life very difficult for the Boones. Daniel was a very impressionable 13 years old at this time. It was soon after this that they sold all they had and moved to better farmland where there were less people in the Shenandoah Valley. John Lincoln, the great-grandfather of Abraham, also left this area for the Shenandoah Valley about the same time. Squire took his 13 children (the 3 married ones brought their families) and moved first to the Shenandoah Valley, then to North Carolina.

When he was 22 Daniel got married. Since he was living in Missouri the ceremony was Roman Catholic. In order to have land there he had to prove his orthodox faith by stating he believed in God Almighty, the Trinity, Jesus Christ as Savior, and such things as these. Daniel stayed Protestant and never joined the Roman Catholic Church. There were many Methodists and Baptists in the area, too. Many of his family became Baptists. He went to Baptist preaching himself sometimes. One of his future biographers, Rev. John M. Peck, preached to him often. Sometimes this missionary parson talked with him about his soul and making a "profession of faith," but the Baptist theology never impressed Daniel Boone very much.

"He never made a profession of religion," said one of them, "but still was what the world calls a very moral man. I asked him if he thought he loved God? He replied, 'I hope so.' I aksed again, 'Do you remember the time when you experienced a change in your feelings towards the Savior? He replied, 'No, Sir, I always loved God ever since I could recollect.' He listened to preaching with apparent interest, but never make a public commitment. Had he

accepted Jesus as his Savior when very young in his Quaker church? Had that poor experience with the Quakers turned him against organized religion from then on (he never joined another church)? Or was he just outwardly religious without any personal relationship with Jesus?

Toward the end of his life, when he had little enforced leisure as his hunting and trapping grew less arduous, he read a great deal in his Bible. He had an interest in life after death and once agreed with a friend that the one who died first should try to communicate from beyond the grave. Nothing came of it. Squire made his sons promise to wait at the mouth of the limestone cave he had chosen for him tomb the night after they buried him. The sons waited, but nothing happened.

Daniel once wrote out a few of his thoughts on matters theological for the benefit of a sister-in-law: "Relating to our family and how we Live in this World and what Chance we Shall have in the next we know Not for my part I am as ignurant as a Child all the Relegan I have to Love and feer god beleve in Jeses Christ Dow all the good to my Nighbour and my Self that I Can and Do as Little harm as I Can help and trust in gods marcy for the Rest and I beleve god neve made a man of my prisepel to be Lost and I flater my Self Deer Sister that you are wll on your way in Christianaty."

The life of Daniel Boone on earth is well known and there are many sources where you can fill in all the earthly details. As to his life in heaven or hell, there is no way of knowing. I won't be surprised if I see him there, though. We'll just have to wait and see.

# JOHN CHAPMAN

John Chapman, better known as Johnny Appleseed, was born in Mass. His father was a minuteman at Lexington and Bunker Hill, but was kicked out of the Revolutionary Army in 1780 for misusing military money and supplies. The family then moved to Pa. John found church life in New England dead and dull so he turned elsewhere for spiritual truth. Of course he is known as a Bible-carrying, pot-wearing, apple-seed planter. He knew much Scripture by memory and told stories wherever he went. Unfortunately, he believed in Swedenborgianism (Church of the New Jerusalem). They rejected the need of salvation as well as the work of Jesus in providing salvation. They believed God was in nature (pantheism), salvation by works, communication with the dead, and other demonic and occult practices. Universalism (and now New Age) find their roots in this. He was a strong witness for this new cult and one of its first adherents in this country. Most people paid little attention to his preaching, though, for the doctrines were strange and he himself was a ragged old man that people didn't take seriously. He had much contact with Baptists, Methodists and other believers, but bitterly opposed their beliefs. Unfortunately the one man in American folklore and history who is pictured as a Christian wasn't! Perhaps that is why Satan allows him alone (not Washington, Lincoln, Lee, Jed Smith, etc.) to be pictured as a Bible-believer.

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY =

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

# JEDEDIAH SMITH

You probably don't know me. I ended up doing more to open the American west than any other one man. However, Disney never made a movie about me and I never got the publicity others got, so my name isn't well known. Still, I did it all for Jesus and my real reward is in heaven with Him. I'll tell you my story, though, to help you know that God had His people in all places and at all times in American history.

I was born in 1798 in a pioneering family in New York state. When I was 12 we moved to western Pennsylvania. I learned wilderness skills from my father and spent all my spare time in the woods hunting or fishing. At 16 I was given a copy of Lewis & Clark's journals and was so impressed by it that I carried it along with my Bible with me the rest of my life. At 19 we moved to Ohio, then when I was 23 I left my family and moved west on my own down the Mississippi River to St. Louis.

From the very start I was aware that I was different from other frontiersmen who were a very wild, rowdy lot. I was a quiet person, preferring to sit alone and read my Bible. I was well respected as a fine, resourceful woodsman. I was in many Indian fights. More than once I stayed behind to hold up the Indians while the rest of our party got away. I explored lands no white man had ever seen. I supported myself by trapping and selling furs, especially beaver.

Life was dangerous. Once I was attacked by a giant grizzly in the Black Hills of South Dakota. He mauled me, even having my head in his mouth at one point. I had several broken ribs, was missing an eyebrow, an ear was torn most of the way off, and I had massive wounds in my scalp. Still I lived. A friend stitched me up and in 10 days I was on the go again. There was also danger from Indians, cold (sometimes I had to stay awake all night to keep from freezing to death), days without water on deserts, and desert heat (we'd bury ourselves in the sand during the day to stay alive).

Many historians consider me the greatest mountain man ever, even greater than others who lived when I did such as John Colter, Edward Rose, Jim Bridger, Hugh Glass and George Drouillard. What made me different was that I was a natural leader of men. Many times God used my leadership skills to save the lives of those I was with. I discovered the South Pass across the Rocky Mountains, allowing future wagon trains to go to Oregon. It was the best way through the Rockies. I am the first known white man to see the Great Salt Lake. At the time we thought it was part of the Pacific Ocean because it was so salty. I also happened to stumble upon the best way through the Rockies to California. I was the first to cross the highest mountains and largest deserts in the American west.

At 32 years of age I was shot in the back by a Comanche arrow and killed. Perhaps if I'd have lived longer I would have been better known in American history. No matter. I did what God had for me. Each time you look at a map of the American west remember that I am the one man most instrumental for it. Especially remember that my main purpose in life was to discover more about God and how best to serve Him. I was known by all as a man of God, and used every opportunity I could to tell others about Jesus. Many did come to salvation through my words. God used me as a missionary among the early frontiersmen. God has His people everywhere to spread His message to those they meet, and that is how God used me. Always remember He has you right where you are to be His missionary to people you meet, too.

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## REV. JEREMIAH JETER, Slaveholder

Hold up!! Now wait a minute! Just hold on before you judge me! Let me tell you my story first. I'm not in any way defending slavery. Its just I found myself in a situation that wasn't as black-and-white as you folks in the 20th Century seem to think. Let me explain....

I was born and raised in western Virginia in the 1700's. Masters treated their slaves very harshly there and I was determined to never own a slave. I moved to eastern Virginia where slaves were treated more leniently. I fell in love with and married a girl who had inherited slaves from her parents. She knew I was terrible opposed to slavery and said I could do what I thought best. I found I could not just set them free, for the laws of the state forbid that. Even if I could, they had no way of supporting themselves, and chances are some white would come along and sell them back into slavery for some quick, easy money. I could send them back to Africa, but most weren't in a condition to go, and none wanted to leave family (most had husbands, wives or children on neighboring plantations) and friends for a strange land. The same would have been true had I sent them north, and then they would have had to depend on finding some charitable hands to support them. Finally, after much prayer and deliberation, I was determined to sell them or give them away. However they begged me to keep them. Moving away from family and friends, and from a kind master, was more than they could think of. I felt I had a duty to care for them in the best Christian manner I could. This responsibility was especially strong since many of my slaves were also Christians. This made the whole slavery issue even more complicated. If it would have been stopped in the beginning it would have been much more simple.

The first slaves came to this country when Jamestown bought 20 from a trading ship in 1619. By 1830 there were 2 million here. In the south there were 2 blacks for every white. Slaves were used to raise tobacco, and very hard crop to raise. The cotton gin made it a lucrative business, and manpower was needed to grow it. The founding fathers debated outlawing slavery in the Constitution, but the south so objected that it was dropped to keep much-needed unity at that critical time in our nation's birth. I think the real reason slavery flourished and stayed, though, is because of the sinfulness and depravity of the human heart. What other explanation is there for one person owning another!

There were more anti-slavery organizations in the south than the north, but they didn't have much impact. Those in the south who found salvation in Jesus had to leave their cold, dead main-line churches for teaching and fellowship. The new, growing Baptist and Methodist churches they joined were looked upon by the powers that be as outsiders and rejects, so they carried no weight in the south.

While many slave-owners were Christians, most were nominal church-goers who didn't want their slaves to become Christians. They didn't want they hearing about love and equality. They were afraid the slaves would feel proud and equal with the masters. Some wanted to be the only 'god' the slaves served. When a slave was a Christian and lived like Jesus masters



often focused their hate and violence on him (or her). I guess they were convicted of their own ungodly life and, like always, found someone to blame. Many slaves, though, did turn to Jesus to meet their needs during their terrible years of slavery. They brought no real religion with them from Africa and saw enough true Christianity among the whites to turn to Jesus. They kept the basic truths, of course, but changed all the cultural trimmings from white to black.

Several nights a week blacks from neighboring plantations would slip out to meet in the woods to sing, pray, and listen to preaching. The emphasis was on encouragement to each other and trusting in God for their present needs and future deliverance. Those gifted among them became preachers.

One of the most gifted was a man named John Jasper. He was born a slave on July 4, 1812, on Peachy Plantation, Virginia. At 22 he married a girl on a neighboring plantation, and returned the next day. Accused of trying to run away, he was separated from his wife and never saw her again. He became very bitter and hard, turning to any in he could find. When he was 27 God's Spirit began convicting him greatly, so much so that he finally broke under the Lord's hand and turned to Jesus crying "Oh, Jesus, have mercy on me." Immediately a light broke in his heart, the burden was gone, and he began telling others about Jesus.

Jasper had a very godly, understanding master who had been praying for his salvation. He gave Jasper freedom to preach and tell about Jesus. He was such an animated, emotional, exceptional speaker that he started doing all the black funerals he could travel to. Even whites came to hear him preach, saying he was the only black man God ever called to preach. Women would faint, men would shout, and sometimes even hours after the sermon a few would still be lying about as if they were dead. Jasper preached with such eloquence that the hearers were ready to crown Christ "Lord of All" right then and there. Even white pastors came to hear him because his special way of lifting Jesus up encouraged all who heard him. After the Civil War he pastored a black church in Richmond, but many whites came, too. He died in 1901.

Negro spirituals developed early. Singing was a way of encouraging each other and keeping their focus on Jesus. It made the work easier and the time pass more quickly. Focusing on God's deliverance as seen in Jesus, Moses, Daniel and others, Negro spirituals developed into an important part of their life. Even today we can be ministered to by songs such as: Every Time I Feel The Spirit, Go Tell It On The mountain, I Know The Lord Has Laid His Hands on Me, I'm a Rolling Through An Unfriendly World, I've Got To Walk My Lonesome Valley, Joshua Fought The Battle of Jericho, Lord I Want to Be a Christian In-a My Heart, Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen, Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child, We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder and Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?

Yes, slavery was awful, and unacceptable. I make no excuses for it or us for not doing more sooner to remove it. Before you judge us too harshly, though, ask yourself how future generations will look at your allowing abortion to continue. Are you any better than us?

Still, God used slavery to bring many poor slaves into His kingdom forever. They are now enjoying eternity with the One who helped make their lives livable. Trials always bring God's people closer to Him, and with the hardship the slaves faced their developed a real closeness with their true Master, the One who really loved them and would provide the only real freedom they would ever find. Is He your Master? If not, you are more of a slave than those poor blacks ever were. No southern slave owner was ever a more cruel master than sin, and without Jesus sin is your master. How much better to find freedom in Jesus!

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## Abraham Lincoln

Hello! My name is Abraham Lincoln. I'm known for many things: freeing the slaves, winning the Civil War, and keeping our country united. However the thing I did that mattered most was accepting Jesus Christ as my Savior. The scary part is that I almost didn't do it. I tried to work my way into heaven until 1 1/2 years before I died when I came to a knowledge of the truth. But all this is getting ahead of my story. Let me go back to the beginning.

My ancestors were Quakers from Berks County, Pa., who moved to Virginia, then Kentucky. I was born February 12, 1809, in a crude log cabin near Hodgenville, Kentucky. I had one sister, Sarah. My father, Tom Lincoln, was an uneducated farmer. When he was a young man he went to a camp meeting led by Peter Cartwright and, in response to the Gospel being presented, stood, raised his hands, and started dancing around. He grabbed the hand of Nancy Hawks, who had also just accepted Jesus as her Savior. A week later they were married.

My mother read the Bible to me often as I sat on her lap. That is one of my earliest memories and left a strong, life-long impression of me. Years later when asked why I was so honest ("Honest Abe" they called me) I gave the credit to those times on her lap hearing the Bible. My mother's last words to me were "Keep God's commandments."

A couple years before my mother died my father moved us to Indiana. When I was in my teens there I helped him build a church and I became its first janitor. My education was home-spun. I was home-schooled by my mother, and mainly by myself as I borrowed all I could find to read. I read the Bible until I knew much of it by heart and could quote chapter after chapter. I also read Aesop's Fables, Robinson Crusoe, Pilgrim's Progress, and the lives of Washington, Clay and Franklin.

I entered law and developed a strong hatred for slavery. When I was 33 I married Mary Todd. It was not the marriage I would have liked it to be. She was into occult practices and influenced me in that area sometimes.

Two of our four sons died early in life. The death of little Willie hit me hard . I prayed for his healing but it never came. I was almost destroyed by grief. A Christian nurse who was with Willie tried to point me to God and gave me the plan of salvation, but I couldn't see it then. You see, I believed in God but was trying to get to heaven by living a good life. I believed all the right things in my mind, and know the Bible well, but I



had never submitted by proud spirit to Him. I knew the Bible was His book, the most important ever. I often went to it for comfort, especially during the dark days of the Civil War. I knew the Bible, but not its Author.

I prayed regularly, for myself and for others. I saw God answer prayers for me, my family, and my law clients in very miraculous ways. I always gave Him the credit. I can see now it was one of the ways He was trying to bring me closer to him.

I attended church each Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, but I never joined a church. Once I lightly said that if I ever found a church good enough to join, I'd join it. I must admit there was some truth in that statement, though. I never did affiliate with any church, something I should have done. Toward the end of my life I seriously considered it, but never did do it.

During the Civil War there were several large revivals in the Northern Army. I heard about them, but didn't think I had a need. That is, I didn't see my need until Gettysburg. That bloody battle brought home in a very real way the death and suffering that the war brought on us all. Can you imagine -- 50 million died in that war! As I walked around Gettysburg and saw the graves and destruction, with death everywhere in the air, I was crushed. I later wrote to a friend, "When I left Springfield and went to Washington I was not a Christian. When I left Washington to go to Gettysburg I was not a Christian. But at Gettysburg I consecrated my heart to Christ." In that place of death, God gave me new life. I realized I could not trust in my own efforts to keep His commandments to remove my sins, but only in what He did for me on the cross. I told a friend, "My heart was changed. I loved the Savior." From then on I told people of my faith in Christ as God and Savior. I wanted to make a public confession and join a church but never did.

My final conversation with Mary in the theater where I died was of my Savior. I was talking to her about a trip to Palestine. "We can see Bethlehem where He was born. We can go to Bethany. We could go up to Jeru\_\_\_\_\_." Then came the shot that ended my life and sent me immediately to the presence of my Savior. My thoughts were on Him when I died, and the next thing I knew I was in His glorious presence.

My message to you would be to make sure that you don't put her faith in knowing the Bible and living a godly life. That will never do it. Only as you submit your will to His, as you humbly receive His free gift of salvation, will you ever have a salvation. That will begin a personal relationship with Him that is greater than anything this earth has to offer. Trust Him, life for Him, tell others about Him, and serve Him with all your heart. I'll see you when you get to heaven!

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## Robert E. Lee

My name is Robert Edward Lee. I come from an old, distinguished family. In fact, Abraham Lincoln's great-great-grandfather was a "Lee" from Virginia. Not only that, my wife was a great granddaughter of George Washington. My father was Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee of Revolutionary War fame. My mother, Ann Carter, was a godly woman.

I accepted Jesus as my Savior when quite young and did my best to live a godly Christian life as long as I lived. I grew up in the Episcopal church and remained a member of it my whole life. People always remarked about what a fine, moral, upright person I was. I never cursed, got drunk, or hurt people in anger. I seldom lost my temper. The only time I remember losing it was when I saw a soldier in my army abusing his horse. I was always popular and well-liked by all.

At 18 I went to the US Military Academy and graduated 2nd in my class. I distinguished myself with the engineers in the Mexican war, then was superintendent at West Point, served in the calvary in Texas, and suppressed John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. I was always strongly against slavery and freed all my own slaves long before the war. In fact, I would have willingly freed all slaves in the south if I could and have financially reimbursed their owners.

When the war started I was very much against the succession of Virginia, but since I was a loyal Virginian I resigned the US Army and joined the Confederate army as a general. I was the military advisor to Confederate President Jefferson Davis, who was an upstanding Christian gentleman and a fine example to us all.

One day when I was with President Davis he asked my opinion of a certain officer and I gave the man high praise. Another officer, greatly astonished, said "General, do you know that the man of whom you speak so highly is one of your bitterest enemies and misses no opportunity to malign you?" "Yes," I answered, "but the President asked my opinion of him, he did not ask his opinion of me."

Each day I read my Bible in my tent and prayed. Often I fasted, too. I went to church whenever possible, and most of my letters attest to my faith in God. I gave Him the credit for everything. My favorite book was the Bible and my favorite hymn was "How Firm A Foundation." I had a reputation in the north and south as a refined, mature Christian gentleman. History credits me with skillful strategy and masterful commanding of men to have the southern army do as well as it did, but I give all the credit for that to God.

There were several great revivals in the army when I commanded it and I did all I could to promote them. I thought of each man in my army as a soul to be saved and encouraged the work of evangelism in any way I could. Even in the midst of urgent duty I was known to stop and take part in a camp prayer meeting or listen to the exhortations of some ragged veteran and he preached to the men. My eyes would kindly and my face glow as I heard those eternal truths repeated. They said not a chaplain in the army excelled me in personal piety or devoutness. One man wrote, "One almost feels as if he cared more for winning souls than battles, and for supplying his army with Bibles than with bullets." I did try my best to run my army on godly,

Biblical principles. I am very pleased to say there were thousands of genuine conversions among the men in my army.

Frequently I would attend preaching at Stonewall Jackson's headquarters. We would kneel in prayer, and hundreds of officers as well as thousands of enlisted men would bow with us. We would worship the God and Savior in whom we all trusted.

For the rest of my life I trusted in and loved God as well as my fellow men. I believed in Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord and tried to manifest a Christian spirit toward enemies as well as friends.

# Stonewall Jackson

I was born Thomas Jonathan Jackson, in Clarksburg, Virginia (now it is West Virginia). I, too, graduated from West Point and was distinguished in the Mexican War. During that war I became troubled by thoughts of what would happen to me after I died. I was encouraged by Col. Frank Taylor, one of my officers, to give my life to Jesus. I remembered the Christian witness of the Robinsons, my uncle's slaves. I thought of my mother's final words: "The secret of living right is to stay close to the Lord. You must learn to pray. Pray when you go to bed. Pray when you get up. Pray during the day. And have faith. You must believe in the One who made you." I could only think of one sin I committed (lying to my men about the danger they faced in order to get them to make a hard charge). However I observed Sunday and went to church whenever possible and I figured that would make up for the lie. Still, I was troubled by Romans 10:10: "With the heart man believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." I had never made a confession or faith or been baptized.

After the Mexican war I was reassigned to Long Island, still under conviction to make a public confession of faith. I read a book about the life and death of Francis Marion and his confidence in facing death because of his faith in Jesus. I was deeply moved and surrendered my life to God. I was baptized in a nearby Episcopal church, but didn't become an Episcopalian. I favored the Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists because of the influence those pastors have had on me during my youth.

I continued to grow in my faith. A couple years later I got married but the following year my wife and new baby both died. Later I married again and had a daughter. I started a Sunday School for slaves and had strong convictions against slavery but joined the Confederacy out of loyalty to the south. During the first great Union assault of the war at the 1st Battle of Bull Run someone said, "There stands Jackson like a stone wall!" The name stuck. I had a reputation for being very courageous and pulling over miraculous attacks against vastly superior forces. I stymied many seemingly-sure Union victories. I was accidentally shot by a Confederate sentry May 2, 1863, after the battle of Chancellorsville and died May 10. I was mourned and missed perhaps more than any other Confederate casualty. I'm so glad I accepted Jesus before I died, though.

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## Charles G. Finney

I, a young lawyer, was sitting in a village law office in the state of New York. I had just come into the old squire's office. It was very early in the day, and I was all alone when the Lord began to deal with me.

"Finney, what are you going to do when you finish your course?"

"Put out a shingle and practice law."

"Then what?" "Get rich."

"Then what?" "Retire."

"Then what?" "Die."

"Then what?" And the words came tremblingly, "The judgment."

I ran for the woods a half mile away. All day I prayed, and vowed that I would never leave until I had made my peace with God. I saw himself at the judgment bar of God. For four years I had studied law, and now the vanity of a selfish life, lived for the enjoyment of the things of this world, was made clear to me.

I came out of the woods that evening, after a long struggle, with the high purpose of living henceforth to the glory of God and of enjoying Him forever. From that moment blessings untold filled my life, and God used me in a mighty way, not as a lawyer but as a preacher, to bring thousands to conversion over a useful period of fifty years.

Hello! My name is Charles Grandison Finney. I was born in Connecticut in 1792, but we soon moved to New York. I became a lawyer, totally ignorant of the Bible and Jesus. I became curious about it when I saw so many laws quote the Bible so I bought one and started reading it. That's when God got ahold of me.

Immediately I gave up law and started preaching. I became an evangelist. I preached in the eastern part of America and made two tours of Europe. I pastored and taught theology. In 1852 I became president of Oberlin College.

My preaching was said to be forceful, direct, personal and dramatic. Wherever I went it seemed revival prevailed. I initiated the "anxious bench," seats in the front of the church for those under conviction to come sit and pray. I focused on the importance of an immediate decision for Christ, not putting it off. I emphasized showing that by standing. I condoned and even encouraged outbreaks of enthusiasm during meetings. Women were encouraged to pray out loud. These novel practices, and some of my theology (which wasn't as Calvinistic as others thought it should be) brought trouble from church leaders. Miraculous conversions took place. Also things took place that surely cause you living today to wonder what was going on. What was God and what was me in my youthful exuberance I don't know. If I went to one extreme, the dead orthodox church went to the other. But God used me anyway. Over one half million people were converted through my ministry. God used me as He had used George Whitefield a century before to start a fire in the cold, dead northeastern USA. If you are going dead spiritually, ask Him to start a fire in you too!

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## DWIGHT L. MOODY

Hello! Hello! Hello! I'm D. L. Moody. Despite barely being able to read and write God used me to address more than 100 million people and personally speak with 750,000 individuals about their soul's salvation. Before the days of rapid transportation I traveled more than 1 million miles. My name is still carried on by a church, Bible college and magazine in Chicago. All this is tribute to how God can use someone, anyone who allows Him! I'd like to tell you how He used me!

I was born February 5, 1837 in East Northfield, Mass. My father died when I was four and my family lived in poverty. Because of that we couldn't get an education. I could barely read or write my whole life.

When I was 17 I moved to Boston to work as a shoe clerk for my uncle. He invited me to church and there my Sunday School teacher, Edward Kimball, a 30 year old drygoods salesman, took an interest in me and led me to Jesus. Two years later I moved to Chicago to work as a shoe salesman and was very successful at it. Sales came naturally for me.

During this time I was growing spiritually. I had a great heart for the salvation of children. I loved being around children, playing games with them. They always regarded me as the biggest and jolliest child of all. Even though I was almost six feet tall and over 250 pounds (in a time when people were smaller than your day), I was never happier than when I was in the midst of children, romping and playing with them. This love for them led me to start a Sunday School they could attend in their poor part of town. I rented North Market Hall. I had to spend most of Sunday morning cleaning up the beer and tobacco from the Saturday night dances there. I recruited and trained my own Sunday School teachers. Before long we had 1500 children coming! I spent all my time and money on the children.

Before long I left shoe selling to minister full time, even though I had no education, training or ordination. My salary went from \$ 7,500 to \$ 300 a year. Through my Sunday School I met Emma Charlotte Revell. We were married when I was 25. We had a very close love and respect between us. I enjoyed my family and worked hard to be a good father and husband. While I was spontaneous, outspoken and lacking in energy, she was conservative, retiring, a teacher with polished manners. She was my 'balance wheel,' supporting, helping, encouraging, teaching, picking up details, organizing the family, giving advice, and smoothing off my many rough edges. I would have never been what I was without Emma. The love of a good woman is about God's greatest gift to a man on this earth! Every day of my life I thanked God for two things. One was that He used me despite my handicaps. The other was the miracle of having won the love of a woman so completely my superior in every way.

Our home life was lots of fun: laughter, practical jokes, and Bible studies. Emma taught our children at home, and I was like one of the children!

When I was 26 I built a church to go with our Sunday School. It was the forerunner of what is now Moody Memorial Church and Moody Bible Institute. At 28 I became head of the YMCA in Chicago. It was a Christian institution then, and I injected new life and purpose into it. As I spoke to large groups at the YMCA or in my Sunday School my ability to communicate the gospel increased and was recognized by others. I was invited to speak in other places, and

these became revival campaigns. My message focused on the love and grace of God, which amazed me my whole life. I asked a professional musician, Ira D. Sankey, to join me and lead the music portions of my crusades when I was 33. We went through much together, including the great Chicago fire which was devastating to us. We rebuilt, though, and traveled through America and Europe preaching. Charles H. Spurgeon was a close friend and good support for us in England.

As is to be expected, some opposed my meetings because I was so uneducated and because of the deep emotional feelings that often came with my preaching. I didn't choose to be uneducated, and considered it a liability my whole life. As for the emotional charge, I never played on people's emotions. I just preached the gospel the only way I knew: with force and simplicity. It was God's Holy Spirit who took it and used it to touch lives and hearts. I never answered my critics harshly, instead I tried to understand their point and see what I could do to correct my mistakes.

One of my favorite memories is of the meetings I held in my hometown when I was 38. My mother and many friends and relatives were converted. Huge sums of money from all over the world poured in to help my ministry, but I put it all into a trust. I had no interest in money.

During the Civil War I made frequent excursions to battlefields and camps. I was on the field ministering after the battles of Pittsburgh Landing, Shiloh and Murfreesboro. I was one of the first to enter Richmond after its destruction and ministered to friend and foe alike. I was criticized by Prohibitionists for giving brandy to dying soldiers so as to revive them and tell them about Jesus, but salvation was what they needed at that time!

After the Civil War the country faced many serious moral and financial problems. I didn't get drawn into them but continued to preach the straight gospel of Jesus Christ. I died December 22, 1899 at home in Northfield among family and friends. I spent my last hours praising my wife, comforting my family, joking with my doctor, and sharing my impressions of death. Just before dying I said, "Earth receded. Heaven opens before me. If this is death, it is sweet! There is no valley here. God is calling me and I must go." My son who was with me said I was dreaming. "No, I am not dreaming," I said. "I have been within the gates, I have seen the children's faces." A short time later I twitched a bit, lay still, and said, "This is my triumph; this is my coronation day! It is glorious!" My passing on took the spark out of Emma. She lasted awhile longer. She lost the use of her right hand so learned to write with her left. How like Emma it was to face problems that way. Soon she, too, came to glory.

I now spend all eternity marveling at the love and grace of our great God. How He could take an uneducated, over-grown child like me and use me for His honor and glory is still beyond me! My only part was to give him all of me. Why not give him all of you and see what he can do with you, too!



# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

# ***BILLY SUNDAY***

Hello! I'm Billy -- Billy Sunday! Does that sound like a strange name for an Evangelist? It worked great for me! I got a lot of good publicity from it, in fact I knew how to get good publicity from most anything. I've often been accused of using flashy, fleshy means to attain spiritual ends. I figured anything that worked to get people to come hear me preach was fine. That included standing on the pulpit, doing flips on stage, using words others considered rude and vulgar -- anything to get a bigger crowd. Some see me as a great evangelist like Moody and Graham. Others say I'm the one who gave the world the stereo-type con-artist that evangelists are still pictured as in your day. Decide for yourself.

I was born William Ashley Sunday in a log cabin in Ames, Iowa on November 18, 1862. My father, a soldier in the Union army, was killed one month before I was born. I grew up in army orphanages.

I always had a very outgoing, strong personality. I liked attention. My mother says from when I was little I always like to play games where I could show off my strength. I was very independent and unconventional my whole life.

Athletics came naturally to me and dominated my interests, especially baseball. I was so good I played professional ball for Chicago, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. I loved it, was quite successful, and was at the top of the world. Then God got a hold of my life and everything changed! One afternoon when I was 24 some other players and I were coming out of a salon in Chicago when we saw a group of people playing instruments, singing gospel hymns and testifying of Christ's power to save from sin. Memories of a log cabin in Iowa, an old church, and a godly mother raced through my mind. Tears came to my eyes. "Boys, I'm through! I'm going to turn to Jesus Christ. We've come to the parting of the ways." I went into the Pacific Garden Mission and gave my life to Jesus. Inside I called upon god's mercy. I staggered out of my sins into the outstretched arms of the Savior. I became instantly a new creature in Him. (You can still hear testimonies about others saved there on the radio program "Unshackled.")

My whole life changed! I gave up drinking, swearing, gambling, going to the theater and even playing baseball on Sundays. I started preaching as a lay preacher. Soon I resigned my \$5,000 a year baseball position to work for the YMCA for \$83 a month). I got involved organizing evangelistic crusades for J. Wilbur Chapman and others, then when I was 33 I went into full-time evangelism myself. At first I was low-key and subdued, like other evangelists of the times. When that only brought moderate success I let my naturally flamboyant acrobatic nature take over. I became very dictatorial. I used flashy publicity. I built a professional staff and developed smooth techniques. By 1918 I was a national figure, preaching in the largest cities in the country. I quoted Moody and Finney often, leaving the impression I was their successor. In reality I was quite different from them. I had public calls for decisions instead of an inquiry room,

feeling my preaching made the gospel clear enough. I didn't have altar calls the first few days of a crusade but let the excitement build. We got better coverage from the newspapers that way.

I was perhaps the first of the "Fighting Fundy's" for I took on anything and everything. My messages stressed morality and called men to a pure life. In doing this I spent most of my message attacking the social evils of my day: drinking, dancing, gambling, card-playing, theater-going, etc. I encouraged all to attack these things and believed revivalistic religion was the only solution to them. I attacked the church and clergy for most were lethargic. I attacked liberalism and evolution, two philosophies just starting in this country. When I say attacked that is what I mean. I was regularly accused of rude tactics, vulgar name-calling, harsh judgment of any who disagreed with me, and shameless bragging and boasting. I wasn't concerned with what others thought of me, just in getting my message out. I lived in a very rowdy, emotional age when people were frustrated with life and were looking for simple answers. I gave them to the people, and the common people responded well.

Some said my campaigns did no lasting good, in fact did more harm than good. They said my emotional arousals didn't last and change lives. I saw many lives changed, though. How people lived after I left with between them and God. Some said I was too commercial, for I soon became a millionaire.

After 1920 my impact waned. At my peak crowds were enormous. Some said as many as 300,000 were converted during my campaigns. I know I encouraged millions to be bold in attacking social ills. I, more than any other one person, was responsible for the 18th Amendment (Prohibition).

I died at age 73, November 6, 1935. The New York Times called me "the greatest high pressure and mass conversion Christian evangelist that America or the world has known." Many back-county evangelists copied me: bombastic machine-gun style of delivery, acrobatic gyrations and anti-intellectualism. If this has given all evangelists a bad stereo-type that's not my fault. I did what I found would work and it did work! You can't argue with results, can you? I know some say "the end does not justify the means." In my time the means I used as well as the end I attained were both criticized. Before you get too critical of me in my day you'd better take a close look at yourself in your day. I bet you use flash and flesh to attain your ends. I bet there's more of the world's way of doing things in your church growth programs than you'd like to admit. I bet you, too, are concerned about numbers, size, appearance, and equate bigness with success! If its OK for you, it was OK for me, too!

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## PETER MARSHAL

"Dr. Marshall was a rugged Christian with dynamic faith ... and eloquent and relentless crusader for righteousness in the lives of men and nations. He always spoke with courage, with deepest human understanding, and with stimulating hope. To know him was to love him."  
Senator Arthur Vandenberg (Michigan).

Peter Marshall was born in 1902 in Coatbridge, Scotland. At age 25 he moved to America and when he was 34 married Catherine Wood, better known as the author of "Christy." After pastoring Presbyterian churches in Georgia and Washington, Peter became chaplain of the US Senate in 1947. He had an excellent, godly ministry there. He was accepted by both parties and became well-known everywhere for his godly life as well as unique preaching style. His sermons are as fresh to read today as they were when people crowded in to hear them preached years ago. His sermons are my favorite to read, and if you get a chance I'm sure they will speak to you, too. Below is the end to "Under Sealed Orders."

"It is just at this point that many of us are in the grip of a terrible conflict:

We want to hear God speaking to us... but we are afraid of what we might hear.

We want to be made clean ... but there is still a hunger for the husks the swine eat.

We would follow Christ ... but we don't want our friends to think us strange.

We want God's way ... but we also want our own way.

There is an answer to our dilemma...

Tell Christ honestly about our divided will... our divided self.

Ask Him to take over and make it whole. And He will!

If may be that His plan for you will not be revealed for someeime. You will have to keep close to Him, keep listening for His signals. His plan for you may be a gradula development.

There are a thousand ways in which he may use you.

You may have to make some changes in your life,

break with some of your present companions,

change some of your habits...

I cannot tell you that -- but He can.

He will send His power surging into you,

to give you power to defeat temptations,

to chase away your fears,

to give you a quiet heart,

to make you joyous and free.

He knows the shoals and the sandbanks, the rocks and the reefs.

He will steer you safely into that celestial harbor where your anchor will be cast for eternity.

Let His mighty nail-pierced hands hold the wheel, and you will be sage.

Now is a splendid time to entrust your life to Him. Give Him your life. He will treasure it, even as you.

Then, though you may not know what will be your harbor, you will know your Pilot ... And all will be well.

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

A STUDY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY\_

***"These things happened as our examples."*** 1 Cor. 10:6,11

## BILLY GRAHAM

Hello! I'm Billy Graham, and although I'm still alive I'm considered as part of Church History. I guess I'm older than I thought! In order to make this series on people from church history complete I'll tell you about my life. God has used me to bless millions, and I give Him all the credit and glory for it.

I was born William Franklin Graham on November 7, 1918, in Charolette, North Carolina. My father was a prosperous dairy farmer who had a fine reputation among the neighbors as a devout Christian. My mother was a godly Presbyterian who prayed God would use members of her family in God's service.

In school I was not an exceptional student but was more interested in girls and baseball. In fact, I wanted to be a professional baseball player.

When I was a senior in high school I attended a tent revival in Charolette with some friends, including Grady Wilson. Mordecai Ham, an old style hell-fire-and-damnation preacher, was conducting a 3 month revival. For days I struggled with growing conviction, and finally one night I went forward. I committed myself totally to Jesus, a decision I have never ever regretted.

After one semester at Bob Jones College I transferred to Florida Bible Institute in Tampa. Here I started growing spiritually and as a preacher. I fell in love with Emily Cavanaugh but she wouldn't marry me because she didn't think I'd amount to anything. I was very heartbroken. During my time there, however, I did feel God calling me to preach. I practiced out in the swamps, trying to gain confidence. Soon I was preaching regularly in surrounding churches. My first honorarium was \$2.25. I didn't feel right, but one of my professors told me that a workman is worthy of his hire so I reluctantly accepted.

When I was 20 I was baptized by immersion and became a Baptist. The next year was ordained as a Southern Baptist minister. I have been a long-time member of First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas.

After graduating from Florida Bible Institute I went to Wheaton College. I studied anthropology and continued to preach. There I met and married Ruth Bell, the daughter of Presbyterian missionaries in China. Our marriage was good and close. She carried an extra load in raising our five children with me gone so much. She said she'd rather have me, part time, than anybody else in all the world full time.

I never went to seminary after college because I was too anxious to get into a ministry, a decision I later regretted. I pastored a small Baptist church in Western Springs, Illinois for a short while. During my time there I met George Beverly Shea. I realized I wasn't meant for the pastoral ministry so signed up to be an Army chaplain. Before leaving for the army, though, Youth For Christ offered me a position as a traveling evangelist and so I resigned my commission. For the first time I spoke to large crowds, both here and in England.

When I was 29 I was invited to be president of Northwestern Schools in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I agreed on the condition I would still travel doing revivals. However I soon resigned the school. Being a teacher was no more "me" than being a pastor!

The change from being one of hundreds of small-time evangelists to being nationally known came in 1949 at the Los Angeles Crusade. I was 31 at the time. The first few weeks of the crusade were typical, then Stuart Hamblen (the entertainer) and Jim Vaus (an underworld wire-tapper) accepted Jesus as their Savior and the tone and tempo of the meetings changed. The size of the crowds increased rapidly. William Randolph Hearst told his papers to "Puff Graham" and I gained national publicity. From there the rest is history.

During my time as an evangelist I have called upon 100 million people to accept Jesus as their Savior. Three million have come forward in crusades for salvation. Many others are affected by our books, movies, TV broadcasts of crusades, Decision magazine, radio and TV programs, etc. Why did God choose to use me? I don't know. Its just His grace.

I do know some things that are important to me that I'd like to share in closing. I believe in PRAYER and have always tried to have a solid devotional life of my own as well as seeking the prayers of thousands of supporters. I believe in the BIBLE as the true, inspired word of God. I believe in the CHURCH and work closely with local churches to hold my crusades. I try to channel converts back into local churches. I believe in FINANCIAL INTEGRITY and live on a strict salary. I get no money from nor give money to the local crusades. They are financially independent of the Billy Graham Association. I believe in GOD'S POWER to change lives, and know a spiritual battle is going on for the souls of men today. There are times I've come down from the platform absolutely exhausted. I feel like I've been wrestling with the devil, who has been doing everything in his power to keep the people from getting a clear message of the Gospel. When giving the invitation some sort of physical energy goes out of me and I feel terribly weak and depleted.

What does the future hold? I don't know. As I approach 80 my Parkinson's disease is slowing me down more and more. Soon I won't be able to preach at all. I don't know who God will raise up next, or how long he will wait to do it. I'm glad to have served him as I have. I see our world in desperate need for God's people to take a stand for God in every area of their lives. This world will be reached one by one, not by one mass-media evangelist. Each one of God's children must do his part. Are you doing yours?