

The Not Rabbit Coat



by Dawn Reed
E. Ky. Columnist

Family Life

In 1981, we had only been married a year. Money was really tight. We were living on love (and chicken pot pies). One day, just before Christmas, my new beloved brought in a big present that was just for me. He put it under the tree right away with instructions not to touch it.

I was so excited. I acted like touching it was the furthest thing from my mind.

The next day, the gift caught my eye. I tiptoed over to it and touched it just a little. In my entire life I had never, ever sneaked and opened a present early. But just this once...

I held it in my lap, for a moment. It was so soft and puffy.

I un-taped the edge to take a little peek and saw fur. I nearly squealed with delight. I knew exactly what it was! I was about to burst with love and excitement! My beloved would never know that I knew!

It was the era when rabbit fur coats were really popular. Oh, I loved those coats and was sure that I'd never have one until NOW...THIS year! I was really getting a rabbit coat! It was a dream come true! How on earth had he been able to afford it?! Oh, my new husband was a treasure!

I wrapped up the package and went about my business trying NOT to picture myself in the awesome rabbit fur coat that would be ALL MINE!

I giggled from time to time when my new hubby was around. He was the VERY BEST!

And then...Christmas morning came. I couldn't wait! I can't remember what I got him; all I remember was being excited about MY COAT! We opened other gifts from family and then...finally...after years of waiting to be cool in a rabbit fur coat, it was time to open my perfect present!

My new beloved said, "I bet you don't know what your present is..."

I smiled as if I didn't have a clue...and believe me I didn't.

I pulled off the edge of the tape, acting like I was saving all the paper. I opened the

other end very carefully. And suddenly, there it was...a BIG TEDDY BEAR!

A TEDDY BEAR! Imagine my surprise!

It really was the perfect gift for me anyway. Sometimes we want things that really don't make sense. I never ever got a rabbit coat but kept that Teddy bear for a very long time. (I've never peaked at a Christmas present since!)

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, He didn't come at all as expected. Wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger, was the gift of all gifts...the promised Messiah. "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift," **2 Corinthians 9:15.**

Seeds of Hope



We are all familiar with the Beatitudes of Jesus in the fifth chapter of Matthew. But Psalm 84 contains three beatitudes.

The first talks about our relationship with God - about being with Him and worshipping Him and praising Him. "Blessed," said the psalmist, "are those who dwell in Your House; they are ever praising You." Indeed, we are truly blest that His invitation to us is "Come, now is the day of salvation" - an invitation to be with Him today and every day throughout eternity. To dwell in His presence forever.

The second beatitude we find is "Blessed are those whose strength is in You, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage." Throughout this life we are not on our own to struggle

with the difficulties of life. His strength is always available to us when we are weak, weary and worn out. He knew pilgrimage would be long and difficult, so He made Himself available to us whenever we call on Him.

And, perhaps the last beatitude actually sums up the other two: "O Lord Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in You."

A young college student was dying from cancer at home. He had been heavily sedated for days. Every now and then his Mother would sit by his bedside and ask, "Dennis, are you here?" He would answer her, "Yes, Mom, I'm still here." On the day of his death, however, he responded to her question, "No, Mother I'm going home."

Above his bed in an empty room are the words: "I hear you, Christian, happy, unafraid, For you hear a song from the other side of death."

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Preaching in Samaria

by BOB CASEY, preacher
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Before we begin to elaborate on our topic, I want to take this time to say to all our readers, 'We hope that you had a happy holiday season with your families' and to add, 'We wish for all a very happy, health and prosperous new year.' But mostly, we hope that this coming new year will be a prosperous one for you in the spiritual sense.

Also, I wish to express from my heart the utmost of thanksgiving to the folks who produce this great newspaper; their effort in presenting this column has had far-reaching results far beyond the pulpit. So, Tracy Patrick and Delores Rowland, I wish for a great year of God's blessing upon you both.

For the past two weeks I have tried to teach about the wonderful words of life (John 6:68-69) spoken by our Lord. How God sent him from his home in Heaven to bring the message of salvation to this world heavily steeped in sin. And, how after he had given us the message of hope beyond the grave, he went to his cross on Calvary and sealed the deal by shedding his own blood for our sins. At this time of the year, many minds are transfixed upon his birth. This was an all-important happening, but, let me add as strongly as I can, by saying that the world's most important event was not his birth, but his resurrection from the dead. So, we take one day to recognize his birth, but all Christianity can celebrate his resurrection from the grave 52 times a year as the church still does today. So, we hope that you are continuing to undergird your faith by doing so.

Then, after the first article, we pointed out that after our Lord's resurrection and his ascension back to the Father in Heaven, he left them with the promise, I will not leave you alone but will send the Holy Spirit in my name. He would serve them as a Spirit of Comfort and a spirit of aid.

And so, upon the Day of Pentecost, he came with the "sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind" and in addition to this "there appeared unto

them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon the heads of the twelve apostles. And then the Holy Spirit came upon them and filled them with the ability to speak in all the languages of about 17 different tongues that they had never known, studied or spake before. So, this was how that the Holy Spirit aided them, by speaking clearly with plain understanding of the message from Acts 2, to point out as clearly and compassionate as I can, upon many who evidently do not read the scriptures. This was not some type of chicken garble, called unknown tongues when Paul wrote very clearly as well in **1 Corinthians 14:10**, saying, "There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification (or understanding)." So, stop fooling yourselves, obey the gospel that truly saves or said you will speak clearly so none will be confused by your assimilations!

And so, the apostles spoke clearly (Acts 2:38) and in doing so, preached the message of God unto them and with the aid of the Holy Spirit, had the correct answer when they heard it. Crying out to the preachers, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter gave them the clear message, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Did the Holy Spirit lie? Some say he did!

So, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles continued their preaching and on the same day about three thousand responded and were baptized. Then in Acts 4:4, five thousand, then a multitude (Acts 4:32); then again in Acts 5:14, believers in multitudes were added to the Lord. So as it says in Acts 4:33, "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."

So, we see that the Holy Spirit works in truth when it is used only alongside the word of God. So, Romans 8:9 clearly says, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Remember, Acts 2:38 says baptism in water is necessary for the remission of sins and the redemption of the Holy Spirit.

For questions or discussions, we are always available, Call (859) 369-4165 in Waco. **Sincerely, Bob Casey**

THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

Then they will cry to the Lord,
But He will not hear them;
He will even hide His face
from them at that time,
because they have been evil
in their deeds.

MICAH 3:4



1st-century AD, Roman helmet face mask

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BIBLE WORD SEARCH

by Elie's Spiritual Treasures

ISAIAH 35:3-4

Strengthen the **feeble hands**, **steady** the **knees** that give **way**; say to **those** with **fearful hearts**, "Be **strong**, do not **fear**; your **God** will **come**, he will come **with vengeance**; with **divine** retribution he **will** come to **save you**."

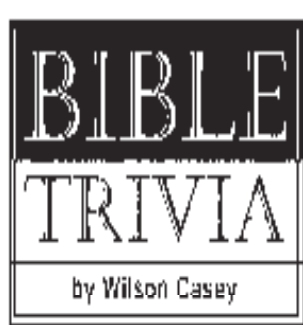
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Find the **bolded/underlined** words in the diagram. They run in all directions — forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

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Figs, Pearls

4. From Acts 13, where were Paul and Barnabas deserted by Mark? Jericho, Perga, Athens, Damascus

5. What were Gihon, Pison, Tigris and Euphrates as connected with the Garden of Eden? Cities, Kings, Rivers, Caves

6. From 1 Kings, who is given credit for writing 1,005 songs? Jacob, Solomon, Philip, David

Answers on bottom of Page 12

Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson's Casey's latest book, "Test Your Bible Knowledge," available in stores and online.

1) Is the Book of Cornelius in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. From Revelation 2, what city was said by John to have "Satan's seat"? Pergamos, Miletus, Patara, Sodom

3. In Matthew 7, what did Jesus warn against throwing to pigs? Bones, Stones,

Sammie's Furniture

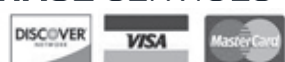
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Gift of Children

Children are a gift from God. That statement is found in the Scriptures. The ability to have children is one of the greatest miracles that we can experience on earth. Every Christmas we celebrate the birth of the most special child that the world has ever known. The parents of Jesus had the golden opportunity of helping him grow into an adult that would give incredible gifts to others -- including the resurrection of a child that was dead. And, like Mary and Joseph, we can help our children become very special people called Christians that can follow and imitate the ways of Jesus. This in turn leads to many other people getting wonderful and eternal gifts from the Lord. This is like a perfect example of a gift that never stops giving. Which is a way of describing Jesus. The Apostle Paul refers to Him as God's indescribable gift. By accepting that gift into our lives, we open the door for an universe full of incredible and eternal gifts. Part of which is to be called Children of God and his heirs. To think that we can be joint heir with Christ almost overwhelms my imagination. To watch our children on Earth grow up and display various mental and physical talents is a wonderful enhancement of the wonderful gift of their birth. And the icing on the cake would be the display of Christian virtues by our children as they grow into adults. Bringing a child into life on earth is an incredible form of creation in which parents get to participate. Thank you Jesus for this gift.

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