

Pleasant Valley  
Church of Christ

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## Schedule of Services

### Sunday

Classes . . . . . 9:30 am  
Worship . . . . . 10:30 am  
Evening . . . . . 6:00 pm

### Wednesday

Classes . . . . . 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

# Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

April 4, 2010

## If

by David King

No, this is not a commentary on Rudyard Kipling's famous poem about a boy becoming a man. Rather, it's a lesson on how a little word can reveal a great truth about man's relationship to God.

The English word "if" is a conjunction meaning "in case that; granting or supposing that; on condition that." In other words, it joins two phrases, conditioning one upon the other. In Kipling's poem, for example, a boy can become a man **if** he learns some important lessons about how to deal with life.

The English word is used in the Bible to translate the Hebrew word **im** (Old Testament) and the Greek word **ean** (New Testament). Both of these ancient words carry the same meaning as the English equivalent: one phrase is true or promised, conditioned on the veracity or fulfillment of a second phrase.

With that brief lesson in semantics behind us, let's look at a few examples of how "if" is used in the Scriptures.

**"If** you do well, will you not be accepted? And **if** you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it" (Gen. 4:7). God laid out two paths before Cain, with two entirely different outcomes. Which outcome Cain experienced depended entirely upon which "if" he chose.

**"If** you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians" (Ex. 15:26). God's promise of protection over

the Israelites was conditioned on their faithfulness to Him. The rest of the Old Testament is the story of their victories and failures in meeting that condition.

"Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, **if** you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off" (Rom. 11:22). Is God kind and good, or is He severe and vengeful? It depends . . . on whether or not we continue in His goodness.

"To present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—**if** indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard" (Col. 1:22-23). We can look forward to heaven, but only if we stay loyal to the One who died to make it happen.

We could go on with similar passages: **"If** you love Me, keep My commandments" (Jn. 14:15); **"If** we endure, we shall also reign with Him. **If** we deny Him, He also will deny us" (2 Tim. 2:12). Theological sophistry about the sovereignty of God and the impossibility of apostasy become irrelevant when reading simple conditional statements such as these. Clearly, our relationship with God is predicated on how we hold up our end of the relationship. This does not minimize God's grace, nor does it argue for salvation by meritorious perfection. Rather, it highlights the importance of giving our whole heart to God in everything we do, trusting His mercy to make up the difference.

A boy can become a man—and I can be saved—but only **IF** conditions are met.