

The Gospel Preceptor

Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Psa 119:104

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Are We to Judge?

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Every false teacher and every one whose behavior is sinful tries to hide behind Matthew 7:1-4, actually behind a partial quotation and a misapplication of these verses. When these verses are cited by these workers of evil, usually all that is stated is: "Judge not." In short, they say that any sort of criticism is contrary to God's Word because Christ here condemned all judging. The only thing wrong with this is that it is totally self-contradictory and totally false.

First, as with many false doctrines it is self-contradictory. Here stand the false teachers and the impenitent sinners stating that all criticism is sinful, and yet they seem not to realize that they are self-condemned by the very principle that they advocate. They criticize and condemn those who would criticize or condemn them. They violate the very principle that they advocate. This is not unusual. Those who violate God's Word try desperately to avoid the condemnation of that Word by seeing a different application and interpretation of that Word when it comes to themselves. Paraphrasing Peter in 2 Peter 3:16, these false teachers and sinful "wrest" this Scripture and others to their own destruction.

Second, neither the text before us, its context, or any other Scripture teaches what they want. The Lord does not condemn all judging either here or elsewhere in Scripture. It should be obvious from the text itself that Jesus here has a special kind of judgment under consideration which He condemns. Jesus describes this judgment as coming from someone who is in a worse condition than the one he condemns. Using the terminology found in the New King James Version, the one condemned has a "speck" in his eye while the one who is doing the condemning has a "plank" in his own eye. The Lord condemns the person who is unconcerned about his own sin while being more than eager to point out and condemn the sin in others. The Lord here condemns the judging done by the hypocrite and the double standard of hypocrisy. The self-righteous hypocrite is wrong because he magnifies the sin of others while ignoring the glaring sins of his own life.

Notice the verse which follows our text: "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Mat. 7:5). In this statement, Jesus makes it clear that He is not condemning all judging for in this verse He tells us what we must do regarding the sin we observe in the lives of those around us. Jesus says that we must first deal with our own sin, and then we will be able to see clearly enough to help others rid themselves of sin. The lesson before us is: sin must be dealt with in our own lives before we can help others deal with their sins. Do not ignore our own sins and then concentrate on the sin of others. The same standard, God's Word, applies to all.

In Romans 2:1, Paul calls attention to this same sin among the Jews which Jesus identified and condemned in Matthew 7. "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things."

Further, Paul admonishes the "spiritual" who see a brother overtaken and overcome in

sin to look to themselves when trying to bring the sinner back to faithfulness (Gal. 6:1). Sin in the lives of others should not be ignored. The presence of sin unrepented of brings death (Rom. 5:12). Recognizing sin and its consequence is necessary to obey the instructions of Galatians 6:1. In other words, judging is required to obey this passage. Yet again, those that obey this command are cautioned not to overlook their own sin and/or ignore it, “considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

Looking again at Matthew 7, notice that Jesus in this very context rather than condemning all judgment required judgment of those who would obey Him. For example, He commands, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (7:6). Jesus is not talking here about literal dogs and swine. The pearls to which He refers are not literal. He is teaching us that we need to discern (i.e., distinguish, or **judge**, between those who will recognize the worth of the Word of God and those who will reject it, abuse it, and try to destroy it). To obey this command we must be able to judge others so we can tell who are the “dogs” and “swine.”

Jesus also warns us about false prophets in this same chapter of Matthew. “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (7:15). We must, therefore, be able to discern who these false teachers are. Jesus tells us how to make this judgment when He said, “Ye shall know them by their fruits” (7:16). In this passage judgment is far from condemned; it is absolutely necessary!

As we expand our view of God’s Word to include the remote context of Matthew 7:1-4, we observe that judging is again required. Those who would have us believe that Jesus condemned all judgment would have Jesus contradicting Himself. In John 7:24 Jesus states, “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” Note that in the latter part of this statement Jesus said, “judge righteous judgment.” Righteous judgment is commanded. It is therefore not optional. If we obey Christ, we will judge righteous judgment. The judgment Jesus requires of us is not according to outward appearance; things are not always how they appear. The judgment Jesus requires is righteous; that is, according to God’s Holy Word, the Divine Standard of right and wrong. “All thy commandments are righteousness” (Psa. 119:172).

Jesus commended the Ephesian church for their ability to make judgments regarding who were and who were not apostles. He said of them, “thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars” (Rev. 2:2). Jesus would not have commended them for what He previously had condemned. When Peter sinned, Paul rebuked him to his face (Gal. 2:11-14). This behavior on the part of Paul was the right thing for him to do. Nevertheless for this to be done necessitated judgment, the ability to know that what Peter had done was wrong. Peter’s behavior was sinful, and Paul rightly condemned it. In his discussion with the Corinthian church regarding the fornicator in their midst, Paul poses the question: “Do not ye judge them that are within?” (1 Cor. 5:21). According to the way this question is stated the correct answer is: “Yes, we are to judge those that are within the church.” The inspired solution for the sin in the congregation at Corinth required judging. Judgment was necessary to discern the sin and the sinner so they could be dealt with appropriately.

The truth is that Jesus does not condemn all judging in Matthew 7, or elsewhere. What is condemned is hypocritical, self-righteous judging that overlooks sin in one’s own life and concentrates on the sin of others. When the Word of God is obeyed and taught, sin will be reprovved and rebuked and the way of righteousness will be commended. “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2). Righteous judgment is necessary to recognize and expose sin and to recognize and obey the Truth. Try as some might to protect their sinful practices and doctrines by twisting the meaning of God’s Word, one day we will all stand before God in judgment. All will be held accountable for their behavior according to the standard of God’s Word (John 12:48). It behooves us all to begin now making the right application of that Word to our lives. When sin occurs in our lives we need to deal with it in the way that God tells us in His Word. When others care enough about us that they condemn the sin that exists in our lives, we should be grateful and

apply the remedy demanded by God's Word so we might be saved. Rather than looking for a way to avoid what God has said, we need to be willing to turn from our sin and obey God to have the forgiveness that He offers. Condemning those who would help us identify sin in our lives so we might remove it is foolish indeed. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 The. 5:21). However, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, Even they both are abomination to the Lord" (Pro. 17:15). Someone has well written, "Refusing to warn a person about his sin is just as unloving as refusing to warn him about a serious disease he may have. A person who does not warn a friend about his sin cannot claim love as his motive."

"When one runs to Matthew 7:1-5 to protect the false teacher and impenitent sinner in the body of Christ, he either does not understand the passage or he deliberately perverts it" (Dub McClish, *The Edifier*, June 14, 1984).

How Should We View the Church Fathers?

Nana Yaw Aidoo

Recently, I came across an article entitled "On Christian Masculinity." To be fair to its writer, Michael Witcoff, he does make some very good points and honestly, even though Witcoff is of the so-called Orthodox "Christian" faith, this article is one I would recommend even if I don't fully agree with its contents. Witcoff observes that a real Christian man is one who appears like a man or is not effeminized, one who has learned the art of self-control and one who obeys or submits his will to God's will. These are pretty good points, which when heeded will do much good in this fallen world. However, as he elaborated on the public appearance of men, he took the position that one of the things that should be part of a man's appearance is a long beard. His source of authority for this position? The church fathers, for:

Since the Holy Spirit speaks through both the Bible and the Church, we should expect to find—and do find—this same sentiment passed down through the centuries. Specifically, we find Church Father after Church Father exhorting men to grow beards and not to shave their faces (Witcoff).

I come from a place where men with long beards are not seen in a good light and so I neither have a long beard nor do I intend to ever grow one. However, that is not the reason for this article. The main reason for this article is this: how should we view the church fathers? Were they as inspired as the apostles were in their teachings and writings like Witcoff implies? If they were, then I suggest we cannot in any way dispense with their teachings for that would be to dispense with the teachings of the Holy Spirit.

Herein lies the problem. The issue of how we view the church fathers—men who lived immediately or a few centuries after the apostolic age, who either met the apostles or met men who met the apostles—is an issue of what we consider our authority in religion. While the writings of the church fathers are valuable in the study of church history, we deny that they were inspired. To teach that the Holy Spirit inspired the writings of the church fathers is to teach that the Holy Spirit is the author of confusion (cf. 1 Cor. 14:33) because the church fathers contradicted one another most of the time. Concerning the church fathers, Shelly wrote that "...these men do not agree with one another on such issues as the nature of God, the humanity/deity of Christ, the organization of the church, divorce and remarriage, and many other subjects" (40). (Rubel Shelly has long since this article become one who loosens where God has bound in religion). That this is so, is seen in the many councils and creeds that surfaced over the years after the apostolic age.

As Christians, and in view of the foregoing, we ought to view the church fathers as men who wrote their opinions on various subjects and not as men who "...establish the New Testament position on any subject, for these men were no more inspired than present day students of the Scriptures" (Shelly 40). If we do not view them this way, then we are left with the only other option, which is that, the Holy Spirit inspired contradictory things.

Our authority on any matter of faith and practice has to be the New Testament alone,

which in the apostolic age was said to have been delivered once and for all time to the saints (Jude 3). Moreover, Jesus Christ assured the apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them into **all truth** (John 16:13). Now folks, if the Holy Spirit did not guide the apostles into all truth, but left some of the truth to be revealed through the church fathers, then our Lord Jesus Christ told a resounding lie. Who is willing to take this position? Furthermore, it is a fact that in the apostolic age, it was held as doctrine that the Scriptures give us **all things** that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3) and that they are sufficient in themselves to **completely** furnish the man of God unto **every** good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Since the Bible makes an exclusive claim of authority for itself in religion, it is a mistake to rest our faith and practice on any other “authority.” The one who rests his faith and practice not on the Bible alone but also on the writings of the church fathers, is like “...a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Matt. 7:26-27).

There is only one source of authority in religion for the child of God today—The Bible and specifically, the New Testament. Do you consider it alone your authority in religion?

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The “Pauline Exception” of First Corinthians 7

Jerry C. Brewer

It is postulated by some that when one who is in an adulterous union obeys the Gospel, he is forgiven of his sins and may remain in that union. This doctrine has led, and will continue to lead, souls to eternal loss. One who is in such a union and becomes a Christian **must leave that union**. To remain in it indicates he has not repented, for repentance demands a cessation of sin. Repentance is a change of the will (Matt. 21:28-29) which is prompted by godly sorrow (2 Cor. 5:7) and is manifested in a changed manner of living (Matt. 3:8). Repentance also involves restitution—making right the wrongs one has committed to the extent that one is able to do so. One cannot embezzle money from his employer, obey the Gospel, continue to embezzle and fail to pay back money previously stolen. One who so conducts himself has not repented, and neither has the man who is in an adulterous marriage and remains in it after being baptized.

The idea that one does not have to leave an adulterous union upon his obedience to the Gospel is based on what some have called “The Pauline Exception”, derived from a false construction of Paul’s teaching on marriage in First Corinthians, chapter seven. But those who claim Paul made an exception to Jesus’ teaching on divorce and remarriage are guilty of arraying Scripture against Scripture and Paul against Jesus. No such “exception” exists. In First Corinthians 7:1-7, Paul deals with the relationship of married persons to one another. He then goes on to deal with other marriage-related matters, including his advice for the unmarried (1 Cor. 7:8-9). He then directs his attention to those who are married and reiterates the Lord’s teaching concerning marriage (1 Cor. 7:10-11).

Then, Paul says in verse 12, “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord.” It is this statement from which many have conjured up the “Pauline Exception.” But Paul is not offering his own advice or opinion. He affirms that the things he writes in this epistle are “the commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37). Paul is not arraying himself against Christ, but is revealing something which Christ did not personally teach while He was on earth. That’s the exact import of Jesus’ statement to the apostles in John 14:26 and 16:13. He told them that when the Holy Spirit came, He would not only remind them of all things Christ had taught them, but would guide them “into all truth” which at that

time they were “not able to bear.” It is not possible that Jesus taught one thing about marriage and divorce and Paul taught another. Neither is it possible that the Holy Spirit would inspire Paul to contradict the teaching of Jesus. The further truth into which the apostles were guided would never contradict truth which Jesus taught while He was among them. That such a “Pauline Exception” does not exist is evident from the subsequent instructions Paul delineates for those in verses 12 through 16. The subject under consideration in these verses is one on which the Lord had not spoken while He was on earth—marriage between a believer and an unbeliever.

Then in verses 17-24, Paul applies the general principles he has just set forth concerning marriage to other relationships, saying, “as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk,” and ends that section saying, “Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.” These two statements are also used by those who believe they see a “Pauline Exception” to Jesus’ law of marriage in Matthew 19. But the key to understanding these statements is found in the phrase, “therein abide with God.” **None** of the conditions which Paul treats in this section **are sinful or unlawful**. He says if one is called being a Gentile, he does not have to be circumcised, nor does one who is called as a Jew have to become a Gentile (v. 18). He applies that same principle to bond-servants and free men in verses 21 through 23, saying in verse 20, “Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.” Note carefully, that **none** of these relationships—servant, free, Jew or Gentile—are in themselves unlawful or sinful. But **adultery is sinful** and unlawful (Matt. 19:9; cf. Matt. 14:4) and Paul, who exploded the false doctrine that one may “continue in sin that grace may abound” (Rom. 6:1-2), would certainly not urge Christians to continue living in adultery. He simply applied the inspired principles he had given to Christians who are married to unbelievers to those in **other** civil relations. There is no such thing as a “Pauline Exception” to the words of Jesus Christ in Matthew 19:9.

The Crisis in Religious Authority

Dub McClish

The challenges of recent years to authority in home, school, marketplace, and military were bound to have their parallels in religion. The very foundations of pontifical authority in Roman Catholicism have been jarred in recent years with unprecedented open debate between priests and pope over such matters as contraception and a celibate priesthood. A few years ago Italian legislators ignored the pope’s objections to a national divorce law and passed such a law. Among other results, many sources indicate that previously unheard of numbers of priests and nuns are deserting their orders. Some predict that within twenty years or less Catholicism will not be distinguishable from Protestantism. All of this is happening because, one by one, the legs are being knocked from under the pontifical chair, the seat of authority.

Protestantism has felt the effects of this challenge, too. Until two or three decades ago most Protestant churches claimed to believe in the Bible and its authority, but in the intervening years the seminaries have all but destroyed that faith by producing a constant stream of unbelieving pulpites. Many Protestants have quit in disgust, but many others have gladly embraced the non-authoritative approach. (The age-old Protestant slogans claiming that “one church is as good as another” and that “it makes no difference what you believe as long as you’re sincere” did a good job of preparing the soil for this liberalism.) Many Protestants seem to be bewilderedly hanging on to the only vestige of religion they know, sickened at what they see and hear on Sunday, but knowing of nothing better.

The crumbling and discarding of their traditional authorities has gone on long enough to produce an offsetting reaction among both segments of Christendom. Especially can this be seen in Protestantism. While the anything-goes liberals have occupied the headlines with their attempts at out blaspheming each other, there has been a quiet, but steady interest generated in conservative, Biblical study and teaching. This is visible in both pulpit and pew. Unfortunately, “fundamentalist” independent and holiness groups have profited most from this fallout. Widespread religious liberalism has

served to accent the folly of a non-authoritative approach to religion! (This phenomenon is well documented in Dean M. Kelly's book, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing*.)

In the church of the Lord, the source of religious authority has never been in question on any large scale; it has been the Bible, particularly the New Testament. There have been some in every age since Pentecost who would not endure the sound doctrine and have turned away from the truth (2 Tim. 4:3-4), but upon exposure they have either been restored or have left the church entirely. In recent years the anti-authority approach has seriously invaded the Lord's church. It now appears that the question of religious authority is an open issue, perhaps even a divisive issue, among us. Such statements as: "Not one of us can give chapter and verse for everything we do in our worship, nor do we need to," and "The right spirit is more important than the right practice," and "There is no one right way" are frightful indications. The attack that has been mounted against the authority of elders in the local church is also symptomatic. It is a sad fact that some brethren have decided they have outgrown the need for biblical authority. What a tragic irony that at the very time when many sincere religious people are taking a turn toward conservatism, many influential brethren have moved toward liberalism.

A Christian is distinguished from all other religionists and is constituted a Christian by virtue of his submission to the authority of Christ through the Scriptures. There is no such thing as a Christian without the Scriptures. Since a church is simply a body of Christians, it is evident that the church, by scriptural definition, cannot exist in the absence of scriptural authority. The seed of the kingdom is still the Word of God (Luke 8:11).

In the face of this incontrovertible principle, it becomes even more lamentable that there are those in the church (including teachers, preachers, and elders) who have lost their respect for the authority of God's Word. Sadder yet is the fact that they feel comfortable, are tolerated, and repeatedly given a platform in many quarters. Some have fallen into the old error of conceiving of the church as merely a denomination. Some no longer have a conscience about instrumental music in worship or the observance of the Lord's Supper every Lord's day and only on the Lord's day. This same loose attitude toward Scripture has set some up for embracing, or at least being tolerant toward, neo-Pentecostalism. An increasing number of our pulpits no longer ring with a distinctive, Scripture-filled, authoritative message. Some have a difficult time deciding what to tell people to do who want to become Christians. Many are moving the church into the entertainment field. More and more the local church is being pressured to assume the responsibilities of parents and home. Probably none of these people would openly attack the Scriptures, but the result of their efforts is the same. The disguised wolf is always more dangerous than the unmasked one (Mat. 7:15).

The church has weathered many stormy issues through the centuries. Some of the great issues of the first century involved Judaism (Acts 15), the coming of the Lord (2 Pet. 3) and incipient Gnosticism (1 Tim. 6:20-21; 1 John). These were all met with an appeal to authoritative preaching by inspired men. When their voices ceased to be heard, apostasy resulted and the church of Christ disappeared from history books for several centuries. In the last century and this one, all issues from the missionary society and the instrument to communion cups and orphan homes have been faced with an open Bible. Its authority has been appealed to in countless sermons, debates, articles, and books. Most brethren on both sides of these issues agreed on one point: the only court of appeal was the Word of God. Because of this appeal to God's authority, the truth on these matters has shone forth to the majority of God's people and one by one these issues have been decided and left behind.

The issue before us now is not so simple or singular as those before. It revolves around a certain type of "worldly wisdom." It thrives upon what it considers to be intellectualism. Its proponents are loud on spirituality, as they define it, and are correspondingly soft on strict adherence to God's Word, as though these were incompatible!

All saints should weep that the time has come in the kingdom when there are those

who almost boastfully disregard the finality of Scriptural authority. It is now being preached that one cannot take a definite stand on any Scripture truth because what we “think” is truth may only be our “subjective interpretation.” If that be true, then that which by scriptural definition has been termed *error* may only be mere “subjective interpretation” and may in reality be truth! (Are those who are preaching this **absolutely sure** that their view is not merely **their own** “subjective interpretation?”) If this line be followed, there is no way to discern truth from error. Therefore, doctrine becomes altogether inconsequential. In such case, lines of fellowship cannot be drawn over whether one is Scripturally baptized, whether one is dedicated to the Lord’s teaching on worship or the divine pattern for the church, or any number of other issues. To these *free* brethren (as they picture themselves) such matters are “legalistic” and “traditional.” To contend for such things makes one “judgmental,” “intolerant,” and “Pharisaical.” To stand firmly upon God’s definition of a Christian and upon the terms by which the Lord adds one to His church is to “play God” or to be derisively called a “five-stepper” by those loose-thinkers.

If contending earnestly for “the faith once for all delivered” makes me a legalist, that is what the Lord wants me to be, for He gave that directive (Jude 3). If insisting that only those immersed for remission of sins following faith, repentance, and confession are in the Lord’s church means that one is an intolerant judge, then one is such with Heaven’s approval. Standing for the terms of spiritual fellowship demanded by the Scriptures is not *playing* God, it is **obeying** God (1 John 1:7). Like Paul in Ephesus (Acts 20:31), those who love the truth and the church it produces dare not “cease to admonish” or “warn” (KJV). The time seems to be fast approaching when those who desire their children to be a part of the simple church of Christ that they have known are going to have to by-pass brethren who are steadily working against this purpose. If the cancer of liberalism will not respond to the treatment of scriptural admonition, radical surgery is the only recourse. Otherwise, the cancer will devour the whole body. The issue we are fighting now embraces all other issues. Simply put, it is this: is the Bible our religious authority or can we teach and practice what we please?

Can the World Hate You?

Lee Moses

“The world cannot hate you” (John 7:7).

These were the words of rebuke spoken by Jesus Christ to His unbelieving brothers. It is difficult to conceive that Jesus’ own flesh and blood, brought up under the same roof as He, did not believe He was the Messiah (7:5). Yet, the Lord’s manner of rebuking them is similarly remarkable. One has to wonder exactly how much offense was taken at this simple statement. Consider how insulted the most popular girl in school would be if she were told, “There is nobody who does not like you.”

Yet, the context indicates that this was indeed a rebuke, given by the Lord to address error in the lives of His brothers. As such, any living today whom the world cannot hate likewise stands in need of correction.

Should One Desire the World’s Hatred?

It is perfectly natural for each human being to desire the friendship and approval of other human beings. As our Creator said Himself, “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Gen. 2:18). As such, it would be very unnatural, against the goodness of God’s creation (1:31), for a human being to **desire** to be hated by other human beings.

The Lord commands His people to be a positive influence upon the world (Mat. 5:13-16). Paul stated that one of the reasons the Thessalonians were to keep his commandments was “That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing” (1 The. 4:12). Prerequisite to one’s becoming an elder in the Lord’s church is that “he must have a good report of them which are without” (1 Tim. 3:7). While one can positively influence another who dislikes or even hates him, the effectiveness of that influence will be greatly lessened. People are more generally motivated to emulate and enjoy the company of those whom they love than those whom

they hate. In this sense, being hated by the world even hinders one from serving the Lord's purpose—to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). Such things should cause one to avoid being hated by the world— when possible (notice also Rom. 12:18).

God Himself never **desired** the enmity of the world—if He did, would He express disappointment and disgust at the world's sin (Gen. 3:13ff; Isa. 1:4; Mat. 7:23)? Would He have had a desire for reconciliation (Isa. 1:18; 1 Tim. 2:4)? Would He have given His own Son to obtain a reconciliation that most would reject (John 3:16; Acts 13:46; Rom. 5:8)? When Jesus spoke of being hated by the world, He was not speaking of a **desire** that one must have, but of a **capacity** that must exist.

Whom Does the World Hate?

The world could not hate Jesus' brothers—"But me it hateth" were the words the Lord immediately added (John 7:7). Why would the world hate Jesus, the compassionate Son of God, the Savior of all humanity, and the fulfillment of the great promise of God to bruise the head of Satan? Jesus knew the answer: "because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil."

People generally do not enjoy being told or shown that they are wrong, even when it is for their benefit. Yet, this is what Jesus did. Jesus was the light of the world (8:12; 9:5): And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God (3:19-21).

Seeing that "the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19), "the whole world" was rebuked by Jesus. Jesus did this through preaching the truth. And as Christians are to be "the light of the world" (Mat. 5:14; see also Eph. 5:8; Phi. 2:15-16), they are to preach the truth and rebuke sin: "But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light" (Eph. 5:13).

The world hated Jesus for preaching the truth and thus rebuking their sin. Certainly the world climate has changed since the first century, but is it that much—more favorable to true Christianity? We live in an age in which peace has been struck between atheists, Jews, and professed "Christians"; a peace based upon the premise, "We can agree to disagree, just don't tell me I'm wrong." However, because sin is ever present, Christians are compelled to bear with unrelenting zeal the sword that Jesus sends into the earth (Mat. 10:34). Christians are compelled to be distinct from a world of sin, yet, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19). Do you strive to please your Lord in your conduct? Do you stand up for truth? Do you oppose wrong? If so, "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John 3:13).

Where Do Your Affections Lie?

Since the world hates those who reprove the world's evil works, all must make a choice: Do we desire the world's affection or God's favor? One cannot seek both: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will ["desires to...planning accordingly" (*boulomai*)] be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (Jam. 4:4). Not only can one not seek both, one cannot **have** both. As Paul said, "if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). Whether we desire the world's affection or God's favor hinges upon where our own affections lie.

There is no doubt as to where Jesus' affections lay. While He had compassion on the multitudes of lost humanity and always sought their good (Mat. 9:36), His loyalty was to the Father and to the truth (John 8:28-29). The Pharisees and Herodians were trying to deceive Christ through flattery, but certainly spoke truth when they said, "neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men" (Mat. 22:16).

Yet in the religious world, and even in the Lord's church, there is an increasing regard for the persons of men over the will of God. Churches' efforts are directed toward

erecting large gymnasiums and providing social functions to attract people, rather than toward pricking sin-laden hearts with the truth. Churches poll their neighborhoods as to what they would like in a church, and give them what they want, regardless of whether it is according to truth. Contrast this approach with that of our Lord (Who apparently never read Rick Warren's *Purpose Driven Church* or other such drivel, intended to bend the church of the Lord to the will of the world).

If our affections lie with the Lord, pleasing men cannot be our primary goal. As Jesus told the highly esteemed Pharisees: "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). If we are seeking to please men, it will compromise our purity and truthfulness (1 The. 2:3-6). As Jesus warned, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26). Are we "strangers and pilgrims" in the world (Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 2:11)? Those who are not at home in the true church will be at home in the world, but those who are not at home in the world will be at home in the true church—and in heaven. Do we savor the things of God or of men (Mat. 16:23)? That is, do we insist upon the hard truth, or do we rather choose the easy way, avoiding persecution and the reproach of men (compare with 4:8-9)? To His apostles Jesus gave this warning and assurance which should resound for us today: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (10:22).

Conclusion

Jesus gave His brothers a memorable rebuke when He told them, "The world cannot hate you." However, this was directly related to His brothers' lack of faith in Him. After His resurrection we know at least some of them believed in Him (Acts 1:14; Jam. 1:1; Jude 1). Was the world later able to hate Jesus' brothers? Read the book of Jude! Its firm stand against sin and false doctrine could never be palatable to the world, and, according to Josephus, Jesus' brother James was stoned to death. The world could not hate them when they lacked faith, but that certainly changed once they gained faith. If the world cannot hate you, it could be related to your lack of faith.

The hatred of the world is not a goal for which one should ever seek. Neither God the Father nor Jesus ever desired to be hated by the world, but by reproving its sin, the world's hatred was assured. If your affections lie with the Lord in a life of obedience to Him, the world's hatred is nothing to fear, as the Lord's favor is assured. As He said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18).

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God's Great Power

Jess Whitlock

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights (Gen. 7:11-12).

The account of the worldwide floodwaters of Noah's day is one of the earliest Bible stories that I can recall. I still marvel at the majesty of God's power. In one day, the fountains of the great deep (oceans and seas) were broken up by God. The windows of heaven opened up with non-stop rain for forty days and nights!

In the past few years we have beheld the incredible power of volcanoes. The lava from erupting volcanoes can move slowly. However, the pyroclastic flow travels rapidly. The temperature can easily exceed 800 degrees! That flow can destroy everything in its path. The volcanic eruption of Mount Saint Helen's affected the weather of our planet for an entire year.

Geologists who believe the Bible to be inspired are convinced that the flood was a com-

bination of volcanoes erupting in the great deep and volcanoes erupting on land. Erupting volcanoes can produce or destroy mountain ranges. The rains coming from the heavens, the destructive damage done by volcanoes, and God's power coming over the earth resulted in a worldwide cataclysm. The power of God was made known to a corrupt people (6:5-6).

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise...the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up...by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (2 Pet. 3:9-10, 12).

The first time God destroyed the entire earth was with water. The final time that He destroys the earth it will be done with fire and will include the entire universe! Should we not fear and respect such an awesome God? Should we not prepare for such a time? God will once again show forth His majesty and His power! Noah obeyed God (Gen. 6:22). We must do the same today (Heb. 5:8-9).

Editor's Travels and Preaching

We preached at Yukon, Okla. on Jan. 9. On Jan. 14-17, we made a trip with Dub and Diane McClish, to attend the wedding of Don Smith and Miranda Fawcett at Portland, Texas. Portland is a sound church. Larry DeLong is their preacher and their elders are Howard Fawcett, Gary Torno, and Johnny Morris. We also enjoyed seeing preachers, Jerry Moffitt, and H.D. Simmons, who live in Portland and brother Simmons officiated at the wedding.

“What Saith The Scriptures?”

Harrell Davidson

One never knows in receiving questions, the depth of Bible knowledge others may have on a given subject, and that would be a great help in the discussion of this question that we now take up.

Number 1 Question: “Why Prayer, Singing, Bible Study, Breaking Bread and Giving are considered to be activities of Worship?”

We assume that the petitioner understands that we are referencing worship in the New Testament and it alone. There are three distinct dispensations pointed to in the Holy Scriptures and God accepted worship during those/these times, but we are only going to study the last dispensation, the New Covenant that came into effect after the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the covenant that began in Acts chapter 2, after Christ had arisen from the dead, and had returned to His home in heaven, before the day Pentecost was fulfilled.

With the above thoughts or the guidelines for this question, we gladly now consider it carefully. “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). “God is Spirit” is the very best rendering in our opinion like God is Light and Love (cf. 1 John 1:5; 1 John 4:8). But the question is not about God but about the worship He desires, accepts and commands.

The word itself simply means to bow down before, to pay homage to something or someone. One may do this to any kind of character or anything, but Christians are to worship—bow down or pay homage—to God the Father. Moreover, the activities of, or items of worship, are clearly defined in the Holy Scriptures as to what is accepted so that man may know he has the approval of the One worshiped.

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17) This passage teaches us that we are to have authority for what we do “in word or deed.” “Word” is what we say and “deed” is what we do. Thus, it should be noticed that we must have authority for either or else it would have vain worship. An example of vain worship follows:

“Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of

men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do” (Mark 7:7-8; Matt. 15:9). Many people attempt ways of worship, even vain, that God does not accept. In fact, all worship that is **not authorized** by God is vain. Why? Because not all is commanded—no authority for all the ways that men imagine in their minds.

Furthermore, we must realize that the Word of God only authorizes—gives authority through only direct statements (commands), examples or implication (an act implied) by the Scriptures. As we search the Scriptures for acts (I rather called them the *avenues of worship*), we find that two are reserved for the Lord’s Day. Notice the command in 1 Cor. 16:1,2 as Paul, an apostle thus having apostolic authority, commanded by inspiration, “On the first day of the week” thus giving, or our contributions, are to be limited to that day. Be it understood that the giving is to be done on the “first day” of the week but does not limit the use of those funds—money—to that day so it may be used wisely as elders see fit in the support of the gospel and the necessary expenses a congregation may oversee.

Second, and likened to it; “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread...” (Acts 20:7). One must not partake or attempt to partake of the Lord’s supper any other day than the first day of the week. Scriptures limit it to the “first day” of the week, and since every week has a “first day” then every “first day” of the week we are to partake of the supper and give of our means. The elements of the supper or the currency, kind or character, is not in the question so we will omit that in this particular discussion.

Worship through singing may be done on any occasion, by that we mean, any day of the week. Consider the reading of either Eph 5:19 or Col. 3:16 and notice, “singing and making melody in your heart “has limitations and includes all that the Lord will accept. First, “making melody” comes from a word that means to pluck and the passage, second, limits this to the “heart” the inner or spiritual man. Notice that it is the heart that is to make the melody not some mechanical instrument. Thus, any mechanical instrument is not authorized by God in New Testament worship. Again, more could be said here but that is not in the question so we omit that also.

Paul, the apostle, commanded the church in Thessalonica to “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). Our Lord went out into a solitary place and prayed to His Father in Heaven (see Mark 1:35). He taught His disciples how to pray in the great sermon on the mount. That God accepts such fervent prayers is referenced on almost every page of His Holy Word.

Preaching was/is an important part of the worship of the Lord’s church. In fact, it was founded upon preaching in Acts 2. Paul preached till midnight in Acts 20. Philip went to Samaria in Acts 8 and preached to the Samaritans. Paul went to Philippi in Acts 16 preaching as well as to the Gentiles in Antioch. Notice then our Lord’s command in Mark 16:15-16 and Matt 28:19-20 in both cases to go preach.

Technically there is a difference in teaching and preaching that we will not get into at this time. One is more formal than the other while both are important preaching is a part of our worship to God. All preaching should be instructive—teaching—but not all teaching is preaching.

Thanks for your insightful question.

No. 2 second question: “What coming is Christ referring to in Matthew 10:23?”

Our Lord said, “But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come” (Matt. 10:23). There is no doubt that a “coming” is stated by our Lord, but the question is which coming. Is this His final appearance and if so, why only Israel? What does that mean and why?

Let us member that the Lord came in judgment against the people of Noah’s day with a flood but that was not final judgment, was it? God also came in judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah but that was not the final appearance or end of time of which God set the hands of time in motion in Genesis chapter one and He will stop the hands

of time in the end as we know it. Time means nothing to God per se. God came in judgment against both Israel and Judah but not the end of time. So, what was Christ referring to in Matthew 10?

A note regarding comings is in order, nowhere in the New Testament do we find the words “second coming.” Is it unscriptural to use that term? Probably not in the proper setting and but not the way the religious world uses the phrase generally. It is much better to use Bible words to describe this is it not? Paul called it an appearing in Titus 2:13. He also said that Christ will appear (cf. Heb. 9:24) where Christ this day sits of the right hand of God for us. His first “appearance” is stated in Heb. 9:26 and said to be an “appearance” and this is what He did for us. This actually would be His first appearing while verse 24 would be the appearing presently. Then verse 28 gets the closest we can get to the phrase “second coming” when Paul wrote that Christ would “appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” But still this is called an appearance. See also Col. 3:4, 1 Pet. 5:4, 1 John 2:28, and 1 John 3:2.

Where then was the first appearance? It was not His virgin birth for that is nowhere called an appearance, or appear et. al. He appeared in the fashion mentioned by the Hebrews writer after His resurrection to certain women and then to the twelve apostles, “...(H)e was seen of above five hundred brethren at once” (1 Cor. 15:6). We reiterate that it is not unscriptural perhaps to call it a “second coming” but we decline to call it that. But the coming of Matt 10 cannot be the final coming for it is selective for “Israel” and that would eliminate His or coming at the end of time. That coming will be universal when all the earth will be no more and final judgment will begin

In view of all the facts gleaned from God’s Divine Will for mankind, and with the broader view of all the Scriptures mentioned as well as many not mentioned though considered, we must conclude that this is talking about the coming in judgement against Jerusalem in destroying temple worship and the skeletal remains of the Law of Moses that the Jews were determined to hold on too past Calvary when that law had been fulfilled, nailed to the cross (cf. Col. 2:14). Wherein our Lord used the civil government of Rome to destroy the temple and worship as He promised in Matt. 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. There is not a scintilla of biblical words or biblical evidence that Christ will ever set His foot on the earth again, however.

Thanks for this intriguing question.

Brother Davidson answers readers' questions in this column each month. If you have Bible questions, you may email them to him at: wd4lar@gmail.com

\$1,000.00 Reward Offered

We will pay \$1,000.00 to anyone who can produce a New Testament passage telling one to “Pray The Sinner's Prayer” in answer to the question, “What must I do to be saved?”

How to Have a Happy New Year

David Ray

We’ve recently begun a new year, again. On Jan. 1 of each year, usually beginning at midnight, people like to wish one another a happy new year. And I’ve been told that there are unwritten rules about how many days after January 1 it’s acceptable to continue saying “Happy New Year” (three, four, fifteen?). But how often do we discuss **how** to have a happy new year? Let’s see what the psalmist said in Psalm 1.

Psalm 1 has a basic, fundamental message that has applied to every human that has ever lived, regardless of dispensation of time. It presents the two options that every human has: to be godly or ungodly (there is no middle ground). It also reminds us that our decisions have consequences; and, yes, if we follow its teachings we will have a happy new year, month, week, day, etc.

The format of this psalm is very simple: it discusses the godly man (vv. 1-3), the

ungodly man (vv. 4-5), and then gives a conclusion (v. 6).

The Godly Man (vv. 1-3)

The inspired psalmist begins by letting the reader know that he is offering a blessing...with conditions. “Blessed is the man that....” The word *blessed* means *happy* or *happiness*. So, the reader is being offered a way or ways to be happy.

There are many speakers and writers who have plenty of suggestions (many are good; some are not) on how to improve one’s life and thereby experience a newfound happiness. We receive numerous emails, texts, and social media posts on this very topic. Some we look at and some we probably delete without reading. But when **Deity** tells us how to be blessed, we really should listen, remembering that He isn’t offering mere earthly happiness, but spiritual blessing (i.e., eternal life)!

The Blessed Man Turns Away From Sinners (v. 1)

In verse one, we read that the blessed man is one who rejects the influence of sinners. The inspired author uses Hebrew progressive parallelism, in which he says the same thing using progressive imagery (walks, stands, sits).

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly.” Don’t listen to the advice of the ungodly! Everyone wants to give advice. Many of them are good hearted, well-meaning people with good intentions, yet who give bad advice. Coworkers suggest calling in sick whether you are or not. People suggest lying about your income in order to avoid (evade?) tax liability (“there’s no way the IRS could find out”). When someone has harmed you in some way, friends who believe they’re seeking your best interest may suggest things that God wouldn’t exactly call forbearance, forgiveness, or turning the other cheek. If the counsel is not based in God’s word, don’t “walk” in it!

“...nor standeth in the way (path, road) of sinners.” The image is of one who has stopped walking and is now standing in the sinners’ road. He is now more open to their ways. Don’t stand where sinners travel! Don’t keep one foot in the world. Don’t frequent places where you’ll be influenced more than you influence.

“...nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful (boasters, mockers, arrogant).” Now our hypothetical man has progressed from walking, to stopping and standing, and now he is sitting. This displays comfort. He walks, he stands, he sits.

An apostate brother doesn’t fall away overnight. Initially he may know sinners in his life (family, coworkers, etc.), but as a faithful Christian, he doesn’t live like they do and therefore doesn’t fit in with them, doesn’t participate in their sinful ways. However, after a while he begins “walking” with them, listening to them, allowing them to have his ear and influence him. Then he gets comfortable enough to stop and “stand” with them, taking part in their evil deeds occasionally. Eventually he’s one of them, “sitting” with them, completely comfortable living in their filth. Those who are sinking deep in sin usually waded in first!

How comfortable are we when we are among the lost? Do we listen to their counsel? Do we laugh at their crude jokes? Do we watch all the same TV shows, regardless of how indecent and immoral? Do we use the same language? Do we look **any** different to them? Do they know who we are, **whose** we are, our commitment to God’s Word and His church? Remember, “evil companionships corrupt good morals” (1 Cor. 15:33)! Consider also,

2 Cor. 6:17 – “Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing....”

Eph 5:11 – “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”

God calls Christians to a new life. We aren’t given the option of a partial change. God is serious. God is exclusive. God is a jealous God (cf. Exod. 34:14; Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29). He expects purity! Consider a few examples of such purity in His committed followers:

Gen. 14:22-24 – Abraham wouldn’t take any spoil from Sodom.

Heb. 11:24-25 – Moses “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”

Dan 1:8 – “Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat....”

A man or woman who wants to be blessed will recognize the need to turn away from the influence of the ungodly in his or her life.

The Blessed Man Turns to God (v. 2)

“But his delight (pleasure, purpose, desire) is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” So, in contrast to spending his time with wicked people, he pursues a deeper knowledge of God and His Word.

Notice the psalmist didn’t talk about prayer, or edification of/from brethren, or evangelism; he simply said that this man delights in God’s law. This is the foundation; all these other things are found there.

We should recognize that it’s not enough to simply avoid the bad; you have to pursue the good (cf. the man with the evil spirit in Matt. 12:43-45). The “blessed” man doesn’t just refuse to participate in the ways of the wicked or to take advice from the ungodly; but he longs to know and obey God’s word; he “delights” in it! Do we? Of all the things we desire, does obeying God’s word top the list?

James 1:25 says, “Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.” And here: “Blessed is the man that...meditates in his law day and night!” This shows a very high priority.

So, the blessed man **1)** avoids the ungodly and **2)** pursues God’s word.

The Blessed Man Receives God’s Blessings (v. 3)

“He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.” Aerial photos of rivers and creeks always show trees and growth alongside the water, even in the midst of an otherwise barren land. This is because they abide where there’s a constant water supply, a constant source of life. This “blessed” man is like this tree:

1. “...that bringeth forth his fruit in his season.” This is the expectation we have of this tree – fruit in its season (cf. Luke 13:6-9)! God doesn’t expect miraculous things of us, but He does expect fruit based on what He commands and what we’re capable of. Matt. 7:19–“Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.” Jesus didn’t limit His statement to “every tree that bringeth forth **bad** fruit is hewn down...,” but made it clear that **good fruit** is expected. If you planted two trees desiring fruit from them, and one produced rotten fruit while the other never produced any, would you not cut down both? Many brethren seem content to sum up their Christian lives by saying “I don’t murder” or “I don’t steal”; “I don’t do this and I don’t do that!” It’s always solely about what they **don’t** do. **But what do they do?** They are in just as much danger of being cut down and cast into the fire as the really bad people to whom they compare themselves in order to make themselves feel better!
2. “His leaf also shall not wither and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper,” because of the water supply. This is true of the godly man because he stays close to God’s word (v.2), the source of spiritual life! This is **not** a guarantee of success in business, riches, wealth, etc. The tree’s success is only in relation to what is expected of the tree. And, with the godly man, his success should be understood in the context of one who focuses continuously on God’s word. His success is spiritual – in his godly works (personal spiritual growth, edification of brethren, evangelizing the lost, etc.). He **will** prosper in God’s eyes.

The Ungodly Man (vv. 4-5)

In contrast, “the ungodly are not **so**....” They’re not like the godly; they are not interested in God’s word, or in separating themselves from unrighteous people and situations. They’re “like the chaff which the wind driveth away.” This is somewhat of an insult! The chaff is useless to the farmer. He doesn’t concern himself with the

“quality” of the chaff; he just gets rid of it! It has no value, no place among the wheat (the godly)!

“Therefore (understanding the point about the chaff), the ungodly shall not stand (endure, survive) in the judgment (i.e., amongst those who are approved).” When God judges (final or any other), the ungodly will not survive! “...nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous” (synonymous parallelism). The ungodly have no place among the righteous, in Heaven or on earth. In the church, there's no place for sinners. This doesn't mean Christians are perfect, but obedient and forgiven. The sinner in this context is the ungodly person who refuses to repent and submit to God. The church is not to tolerate this attitude (cf. 1 Cor 5; 1 Thess. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:18). And certainly in the life to come (Heaven) there is no place for sinners; there is no more opportunity to repent and obey.

The Conclusion (v. 6)

“For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous...” He sees and knows all things (cf. Psalm 139). God knows His own law which He has given to us and, contrary to the presumed feelings of so many, He knows those who keep it. Do you? We can fool some of the people some of the time, but never God! If you're just going through the motions, this is **not** *righteousness*. And if you aren't righteous, then you're wicked (there's no middle ground, as we see in this verse).

“But the way of the ungodly shall perish.” This is antithetic parallelism (saying the same thing, but with the opposite results), and it's a final and deafening statement: this person will die! Spiritual death (eternal separation from God) awaits all who refuse to submit to Him and His law in total obedience (cf. Heb. 5:9). But this is not what God wants.

God wants all to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). As we begin another year and make our new year's resolutions, have we included Bible reading/study, a deeper pursuit of righteousness, godliness, application of God's word to our lives? Will we make it our goal to be well-pleasing to Him in all we say and do (2 Cor. 5:9)? If we want to be happy (blessed), if we want a truly better, more peaceful life on earth and to spend eternity in the glory of Heaven, we should!

What a Baptist Preacher Would not, and Could not do

H.L. Bruce

Several days ago one of the brethren called me to arrange a contact with his grandson to discuss his spiritual condition. I found his grandson to be honest, and one would discuss without prejudice, wanting to do only what was right. This brother who called me gave this information: A few nights before, his grandson had applied for baptism at the local Baptist Church. He wanted (to the extent of his knowledge) to do exactly what was done in the first century. He did not want to join the Baptist Church. He did not want the church to vote on him. He simply wanted to be baptized as men were in the first century. The Baptist preacher refused. He could not be consistent with Baptist doctrine and do only what the Bible said. Such practice did not harmonize with Baptist doctrine and thus could not be tolerated.

An appointment was arranged. We read: Acts 2:47, “...and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” The question was “What did the Lord do with such as should be saved?” The answer was obvious, We had our Bibles open. The Lord added them to the church. They did not join anything. We next read 1 Peter 3:21, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ...” To this verse we asked: What is accomplished in baptism? Answer no 1. “An answer of a good conscience toward God.” No. 2. “Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh.” No. 3. “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.” These answers were scriptural; no one can successfully deny them. After giving

like treatment to several other passages on the same subject we pointed out from the scripture that before one is saved it is necessary to: hear, believe, repent, confess Christ, and then be baptized. In doing this, one is saved and the Lord adds him to the church. Man can do this without joining any denomination or being voted into anything.

After a reading of the conversion of the eunuch in Acts 8, and discussing more extensively the New Testament plea, I told this sincere investigator that if he so desired, we could baptize him without further delay. When we came to the water I asked him "Do you believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son?" When he confessed, we went down into the water, and I baptized him. We did not have to seek authority from anyone. We simply did what was practiced in the first century. We are sure that God is pleased. I have often wondered how a Baptist preacher feels, not being able to assist an honest sinner wanting to do only that which is written in the Word of God.

The local Baptist preacher is tied. He cannot do what God says and be consistent with Baptist doctrine. Furthermore he cannot tell the honest sinner to only do what God says and be consistent with Baptist doctrine. He is tied to a creed and cannot assist any honest and sincere investigator who may come to him and request the Bible only. This example proves that without a shadow of a doubt.

This sincere man was wanting to do exactly what God said, no more no less; but the Baptist preacher was absolutely no help at all. If you are wanting to do what the Bible advises, if you want to use your New Testament for your only concern, a Baptist preacher is without value to you.

I would be afraid to face God in the Judgment if I could not advise and assist people in doing what God says. I believe that I would give up any doctrine that I could not practice without human authority. Is God pleased with such? The Baptist preacher refused, and still refuses.

The Gospel Preceptor

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Enemies Because of Truth

J.A. McNutt

The truth of God is man's most precious possession. Rob any man of the truth and you have removed the light which illuminates the pathway of life and have destroyed his hope of heaven. The wise man said, "Buy the truth and sell it not," and we can see the reason for his exhortation when we consider the power and value of divine truth. Here are some things which only the truth which is in Christ Jesus, can do for humanity:

- The truth sanctifies (John 17:17).
- The truth purifies (1 Pet. 1:22).
- The truth frees (John 8:32).
- No man can come to God without the truth (John 14:6).

Are You Anxious to Learn

It certainly seems that the whole world should be anxious to learn the truth. Only truth can break the shackles of sin and spiritual ignorance. Only truth can purify the souls of the obedient and free the slaves of sin from the bondage of corruption. Yet, in spite of

the great value of saving truth, some people become offended at anyone who has the courage to tell them the truth in religion.

It was Paul who said to the Galatians, “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” (Gal. 4:16). Paul lifted his voice against their violations of the law of Christ and these faithless brethren became his enemies. It is impossible to preach the truth and retain the friendship of some people. Christ preached the truth to the religious leaders of His day and they led Him away to Calvary. Someone has well said that the Gospel preacher cannot hope to hold the friendship of those who place coin above character and sinful pleasure higher than duty to God. If the bootleggers and crooks in the community sing a man’s praise, there must be something wrong with his preaching. A Gospel preacher may retain the respect of sinners, but he is not likely to be the object of their affections.

Teaching the Truth

Paul believed that the preacher of the Gospel should, “reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2) and this is not the path to popularity. Poor (?) Paul had not read Dale Carnegie’s *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, so he violated one of the rules for making friends by condemning the conduct of wicked men.

Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:8-10).

Such preaching lost the friendship of some people, but it also saved many souls from death. A man is known by his enemies as well as by his friends. They regarded Paul as their enemy, but he was the greatest friend they ever had because he was not ashamed or afraid to tell them the truth.

Examples of Opposition Aroused

Human nature is about the same in all generations and the teacher who condemns unrighteousness and opposes the errors of his day is likely to be hated and persecuted.

Noah tried to befriend his generation by proclaiming the coming flood and urging a reformation of life (Heb. 11:7; 2 Pet. 2:5), but he was despised and ignored.

The prophet Elijah was an enemy of idolatry and a friend to God and His people, but Ahab the King of Israel looked upon him and said, “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” (1 Kin. 21:20).

John the baptizer preached the truth to Herod on the marriage and divorce question, but it cost him his head as soon as Herodias could contrive to have him slain (Mat. 14:1-12).

Jesus condemned sin and religious hypocrisy and taught the only system of perfect truth the world had ever heard, but they crucified Him.

Stephen did not tell the Jews anything except the truth which exposed their sinfulness and cut them to the heart, but they stoned him to death (Acts 7).

Attitude of Many Today

Thousands of people have no knowledge of simple New Testament Christianity in the present day. Their intentions are good and they are sincere, but they are simply uninformed as to the Gospel plan of salvation and have not been taught how to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). There are others whom Paul accurately described in the long ago as those who perish “because they received not the **love of the truth**, that they might be saved” (2 The. 2:10).

My friend, and I hope that you will regard me as your friend, do you love the truth? Are you willing to accept the truth of God’s Word when it contradicts some cherished religious opinion or idea? Do “I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” Will you carefully consider these statements and test them in the light of New Testament teaching:

1. The church of Christ, which was purchased by His blood (Acts 20:28) and is spo-

ken of as the body of Christ over which He reigns as head (Col. 1:18), is “One Body” (Eph. 4:4). This “One Body” is not a denomination, nor is it composed of all the denominational churches of earth, because it existed in the days of the New Testament as a perfect working organization, hundreds of years before the oldest existing denomination was born. The Lord’s church is truly independent of any and all denominations and stands separate and apart from all sectarian alliances and invites you to be a Christian only (Acts 11:26; 1 Pet. 4:16).

2. You are invited to become a Christian through humble submission to the New Testament law of pardon: (1) Believe in Christ (Acts 16:30; Heb. 11:6), (2) Repent of past sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30), (3) Confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37), and (4) Be baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Mat. 28:19), for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16).

Obedience to these simple conditions will make you a member of the Lord’s church (Acts 2:47), free from any denominational entanglements or man-made creeds, and subject only to the will of Christ as it is declared in the New Testament Scriptures. Am I your friend or your enemy when I tell you these things?

The real friend of humanity is the Gospel preacher who preaches the whole truth. Think on these things.

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“Death, Be Not Proud”

Lavonne McClish

February 12, 1938 - January 5, 2013

In 1949, John Gunther wrote a very emotional novel entitled *Death, Be Not Proud* chronicling the illness (a brain tumor) and death of his young son. I like to hope that death will not conquer me, as this quotation suggests, but it is unwise to boast of what I will do when I have not yet been tried (as Ahab said to Benhadad, “Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off” [1 Kin. 20:11]). Peter learned this lesson the hard way (Mat. 26:33–35, 69–75), and I hope I have learned and continue to learn from him.

I also remember a preacher who, during my childhood and teen years, was much in demand for Gospel meetings. He had a talent for arousing people’s emotions and always had many responses. He constantly preached that we should never fear death, that death is a release from the troubles of this world, that death for the faithful means entry into Heaven—not the end, but the beginning. He admonished others, even gently rebuking them for their fear; but then when he was diagnosed with terminal cancer, he was absolutely terrified. I felt sorry for him for more than one reason. First, the fact that his life was cut short and that he had to suffer was sad. Second, such unconcealed fear must have been most humiliating after he had so boldly preached to others.

Having said that, we know that pain, sorrow, discouragement, and death are part of this life. These are not a punishment for our sins, but they happen because we are human beings (Rom. 5:12). As God allowed Job to be tried and tested, he will allow us to be tried, tested, and proved also (Job 5:6–7; 13:15; 14:1). Since this is without a doubt true, let us study some ways to deal with this pain and sorrow and with the knowledge that death is not far away.

In July of 2004 I was diagnosed with Mantle Cell Lymphoma, a very rare and very aggressive form of non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. From one viewpoint, it was almost a relief, because I had felt so bad for so long and no cause could be found. My relief, however, was short-lived when I began to research this disease. Because it was so newly isolated (from the other Lymphomas) and so rare, little research had been done on it and, con-

sequently, few treatments were available. The survival rate was two to four years, according to the Internet information I found. I began to experience that sinking feeling!

I was sent to Baylor Hospital, Sammons Cancer Center, in Dallas, TX. The oncologist/blood/bone marrow transplant specialist assigned to me outlined the basics of the disease with my husband, Dub and me and then the proposed treatment, step by step. He said that, without treatment, I would be dead in six months; with treatment, maybe I would live two to four years. He felt very confident that we could beat the odds. He has always said “Don’t say **if** it comes back, say **when**. It **will** come back.” When I asked what we would do when it comes back, he replied, “We’ll hit it again!”

So I am truly thankful for Sammons Cancer Center, the staff, and my oncologist. The care—of every kind—that they have given me cannot be bought with money, and I know it has made all the difference in my attitude. They have inspired confidence.

There is some advantage in knowing that my death is likely to come sooner rather than later. It forces me to think about my life, changes I need to make, things I need to say and do, people whose forgiveness I may need to seek. We should be conscious at all times that death is certain: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27), but there is nothing like a terminal illness to make one face the fact that death is not somewhere out there in the nebulous, distant future, but is before me in the here and now. Compared with a lifetime, it is imminent.

I have been blessed to have the prayers of Christians literally all over the world. I have been mentioned in countless church bulletins and oral announcements; some still include me regularly, after all this time. I have lost count of the cards, e-mails, letters, and phone calls I have received and still receive. Whenever I start feeling sorry for myself, I try to remember those who care about me. I also know there are many who are much worse off than I am. I keep a list, and I try to send cards, e-mails, and notes often to encourage others who are sick, suffering, or in despair. When my mind is on other people, it is more difficult to think about myself (Rom. 12:10; 1 Cor. 13:4–5; Jam. 2:8).

I have also been blessed with a husband who loves me and who has cared for me faithfully and uncomplainingly throughout this ordeal. I realize many are not so blessed. We have so much for which to be thankful in that he is in excellent health. When I was undergoing chemotherapy, he would take his laptop computer and work while my treatments were going on. He does the same when I have my semi-annual PET scans. He has had to take over more of the chores than he was accustomed to doing, since my strength will not stretch to cover very much. Our children’s love and care have been a source of strength, as well. I include Paige, our granddaughter who lived with us for many years, who was here to help me in so many ways, and was unfailingly kind, generous, and patient.

One of the most valuable lessons I have learned from my illness is the necessity of determining what is important and what is less so. I try to use my strength and my time to do things that will matter for my family and others, both now and for eternity. I remind myself not to worry about things that are insignificant (some would say I carry that policy to extremes when it comes to housekeeping!). I am very conscious of the example I am setting, and continually monitor my speech accordingly.

God has promised that He would be with me in all aspects of my life (Psa. 23:4). He did **not** promise that I would not have to suffer or that I would not die prematurely. I have been surprised at the people who have assured me that God will answer my prayers, meaning He will spare me if I pray fervently. “Prayer works,” they tell me. Yes, God will answer my prayers; I do not doubt that God is **able** to deliver me, but why should I expect special treatment? If God could allow His own Son to suffer a horrible death and not intervene, even when that Son cried and begged for deliverance (Mat. 26:39; Heb. 5:7), why should I think I am better than Jesus Christ? God told Paul, when he asked that his “thorn” be removed, “My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Cor. 12:7–9). I think of the three young Hebrews who told the king, “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us...but if not...we will not serve thy gods” (Dan. 3:16–18).

Two verses of a beautiful folk song, “Wayfaring Stranger,” express our longing for a better place and our hope of the comfort it will provide (I quote from memory):

*I am a poor wayfaring stranger, while trav'ling through this world of woe.
Yet there's no sickness, toil, nor danger in that bright land to which I go.
I know dark clouds will gather o'er me, I know my way is rough and steep.
Yet beauteous fields lie just before me, Where God's redeemed their vigils
keep.*

As Abraham looked, so I am looking for a city whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10). “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4). What a beautiful description of what awaits the faithful! These things help me to be confident and unafraid, and encourage me when I am weak.

I hope these thoughts will be of help to others who are, like me, struggling with fear and discouragement.

Note: This article was written on June 27, 2007.

Is The Bible Catholic?

R.D. Simmons

Our Catholic friends call us *Protestant* because we protest against much of their teaching—just as they protest against our teaching. In fact, a recent series of Catholic advertisements have appeared in the newspaper. Such publicity for their views and ours is entirely in accordance with our American freedom of the press. It is wonderful to live in a country where friends and neighbors of differing faiths may consider their differences with mutual respect. This article is presented with the conviction that there are sincere, honest, people in all churches. But just as Paul was completely sincere while he was completely in error and persecuting Christians, so today good, honest people may be in religious error. We trust that each reader will examine the scriptures to see whether these things are so. The Bible is right! Now? **Is the Bible Catholic?** The Bible teaches that:

1. Christ is the **only** head of the true church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).
2. Peter is never described in the Bible as being the head of the church. The “keys of the kingdom” were given to him and the power of binding and loosing was given to him and to **all** the apostles (Matt. 16:18-19; 17:18). This power was never delegated to any so-called “successors” of the apostles. The foundation of the church is Christ, not Peter (1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:19-20).
3. Peter does not fit the Papal pattern, because,
 - (a) He was a married man (Matt. 8:14).
 - (b) He would not allow others to bow down before him. (Acts 10:25-26)
 - (c) He was not infallible, and when he was found in error, he was reprovved before the whole assembly by Paul (Gal. 2:11-16).
 - (d) There is no Biblical evidence that he was ever in Rome.
4. Leaders in the true church are called elders or bishops, who are required to be **married** men with believing children.(Titus 1:5-9). These men had the oversight of only one congregation (Phil. 1:1). Each church was independent. There is no mention in the New Testament of the church ever being governed by popes, cardinals, and priests, unmarried men.
5. The New Testament is a complete and perfect guide in all spiritual matters (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21). We are told not to go beyond this perfect guide (John 9). The church and its leaders have never been given authority to make religious rules, articles of faith, or creeds. Hence, there would be no need for church councils, synods, conferences, or centralized church government.

6. Christian worship is described in the New Testament as being simple and heartfelt (Acts 2:42; Col. 3:16-17). We are warned against various religious seasons and festivals (Gal. 4:10-11). Such things as incense, robes, holy water, infant baptism, sprinkling, candles, instrumental music, prayer beads, and bowing before images have not been authorized by God for Christian worship. These practices have been introduced by men without God's authority. Jesus said the teaching of men's doctrines makes the worship vain (Matt. 15:9).

7. Paul said he would rather speak five words that could be understood, than to speak 10,000 words in a tongue that was not understood. Would he have conducted a service in Latin before a congregation that spoke English? (1 Cor 14:19).

8. Jesus loved his mother Mary, but he taught plainly that every obedient disciple was as dear to him as his own mother (Matt. 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21). Mary was not set forth as one to be worshiped, nor are we taught by the Bible to pray to her, or to bow down before her or her image. We are to worship **God**.

9. The scriptures foretell that some shall “depart from the faith—forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats.” Today, we are seeing a fulfillment of this departure in churches that forbid their leaders to marry, and command the abstaining from meat on Friday (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

10. In regard to religious titles. Jesus said “Call no man father” (Matt. 23:9). He also forbade his disciples to be called Rabbi or Master (Matt. 23:8-12). The use of religious titles is contrary to the plain teachings of the Bible. The great apostle Paul was referred to simply as “brother Paul” (2 Pet. 3:15).

Congregations of Christians are referred to as “churches of Christ” in Romans 16:16. They exist today, scriptural in name, organization, work and worship. If we can persuade others to forsake religious error and return to Bible ways, God will be pleased. In the language of Paul, “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell the truth?” (Gal. 4:16). We stand ready to study the scriptures with anyone who requests it.

The Gospel Preceptor May Go Where a Man May Not Go

These are a few countries whose residents visited the www.thegospelpreceptor.com in **January, 2022**: Thailand, Singapore, Russian Federation, China, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Egypt, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Jordan, Sudan, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Morocco, Uzbekistan. You will note that most are Moslem countries. In many Moslem countries, a man entering to preach Christ would be killed. **We are preaching the Gospel around the world on the Internet where a man may not go.**

Links to Bible Study Resources

The Scripture Cache

Northpoint church of Christ

Precept Upon Precept You Tube

Spiritual Perspectives - Gary Summers

False Doctrines of Man

Yukon, Okla. church of Christ

Berea church of Christ, Rives, TN

South Seminole church of Christ

A Rendezvous with Death

Guy N. Woods

Pilate's contemptuous question, "Shall I crucify your king?" aroused the senseless fury of the raging mob which sought the Saviour's death to its highest pitch and in a mighty chorus of hate sealed its doom by affirming its loyalty to Caesar and its rejection of Jesus and thus appointed for themselves a rendezvous with death nationally, spiritually and eventually, physically!

Here again, as is so often seen in the affairs of men, is a striking example of people being led, through their own folly, into the repudiation of that which they formerly held most dear. Their most cherished dream and that in which they gloried most had been the messianic expectation which involved the coming of a Deliverer out of Jacob who would liberate them from the yoke of Roman bondage and restore to them their freedom and sovereignty among the nations, and now publicly to proclaim their allegiance to the Roman emperor Caesar and their denial of the messianic hope—both of which allegations were sheer hypocrisy—evidence how far these desperate people went in their effort to destroy Jesus—the real Messiah.

There was far more truth in their wild and reckless affirmations than they intended; they did indeed by this denial of Jesus shut themselves off from His kingdom; by asserting loyalty to Caesar and by renouncing its rightful King the Jewish system committed suicide on that fateful morning in Jerusalem. The Lord earlier warned the Jews of their eventual destruction by Caesar (Luke 19:41-44; 23:27-31), the fulfillment of which, minutely detailed by Jesus, reached its climax in the terrible siege and eventual fall of Jerusalem and the consequent end of the Jewish civil and religious state.

The malignancy and spiteful hate in their deliberate and calculated efforts to destroy the Saviour are without parallel in human history, and the retribution they suffered in consequence has seldom been equaled. All who had a hand in that historic miscarriage of justice have suffered the retribution usually reserved for the most wicked of earth. The infamous Judas died in shame, a suicide. Pilate, whose political fortunes he valued far more than simple justice stood helplessly by and watched his prestige fail, ultimately dying in banishment and in disgrace. Caiaphas was expelled from the high priesthood, Herod perished in shame and in exile, the house of Annas suffered destruction at the hands of a mob, and his son was dragged through the streets of the city. The siege of Jerusalem, with its unspeakable horrors, became the tragic lot of the race as tens of thousands of her people suffered and died, the direct descendants of those who had derisively shouted, "Let his blood be upon us and our children." If ever a rebellious people deserved its fate, they did; and yet, the blood they shed, in the limitless and unfathomable depths of God's great love and wonderful mercy, was poured out even for them and among the last words their innocent victim uttered was a plea for mercy in their behalf. Love at last had conquered and the Lord had achieved His purpose in coming into the world.

**"The Thing That Hath Been...": The Cycle of Apostasy, Volume 2
The Book and Postage are Both Free. Order From:**

**Jerry C. Brewer
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Baptism in the Acts of the Apostles

Foy E. Wallace Jr.

The commission according to Luke commanded the apostles to preach remission of sins in the name of Christ to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Under this deputation four things were to be done: 1. Remission of sins should be preached; 2. It should be preached in the name of Christ; 3. It should begin at Jerusalem; 4. The same things should be preached to all nations. The disciples appointed to the task were ordered "not to depart from Jerusalem" until plenary power as divine delegates had been re-

ceived. The Lord said: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” (Acts 1:8) and Pentecost came. The twelve were together in one place waiting. With startling suddenness in the eventful moment the room resounded with the divine presence and overwhelmed the apostles and filled them. Bearing the credentials of heaven, the inspired commissioners were ready in obedience to the divine fiat to begin preaching remission of sins in the name of Jesus Christ.

How did the remission of sins begin to be preached at Jerusalem? Upon this question hangs the entire new Testament story; for the apostles either preached the same thing everywhere they went or they disobeyed the commission. The second chapter of Acts is the answer. The keynote gospel address on Pentecost, by the man authorized by Christ and qualified by the Holy Spirit to announce and bind the terms of remission commands sinners to “repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” This being the design of baptism and the terms of remission as defined by inspiration, the same design and terms must be understood in all other places where they are not specifically mentioned being informed in one place of the design of the Lord's Supper, everywhere it is mentioned afterward it carries the same design—if not expressed, that design must be understood. So when remission of sins and the design of baptism were defined in the beginning, when and wherever thereafter the people received remission we know the terms upon which it was received; and when people were baptized we know why they were baptized.

Philip in Samaria (Acts 8)

“And Philip went down unto the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ...but when they believed Philip preaching the good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ “they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 1:5, 12). The case of Philip and the Samaritans shows plainly that wherever Christ was preached, baptism was preached. Since the commission commanded that remission of sins should be preached in the name of Christ, “beginning at Jerusalem,” when Philip preached the name of Christ, and salvation through it, he either preached the same thing in Samaria that was preached in Jerusalem or he disobeyed the commission. Hence the people of Samaria were baptized for the same purpose, and received remission of sins on the same terms, as on the day of Pentecost. The proposition stands that the design of baptism being defined on Pentecost (Acts 2:38), its design must be understood in all other places where baptism occurs though the design be not specifically mentioned.

Immediately following the great Gospel meetings in Samaria, an angel of the Lord directed Philip southward into the desert region between Jerusalem and Gaza. Here is recorded the most simple narrative of conversion in all the chronicles of conversion. An honest sinner and an inspired preacher meet. The result is a Gospel sermon and prompt obedience to it. The gist of the sermon was put in one sentence: “and he preached unto him Jesus.” The scope of the sermon was indicated by the question of the hearer: “Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to—be baptized?” Why this asked for baptism as they approached the place where there was water, seeing that Philip had preached nothing but Jesus? Simply because preaching Jesus included all that the apostles were commanded to preach “in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” The proposition stands, that wherever Christ was preached, baptism was preached; and wherever baptism is stated without the design expressed the design must be understood, having been defined at Jerusalem in the beginning. So when “they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptized him,” the eunuch's baptism was the same as defined in Acts 2:38 on Pentecost. It is a significant statement that after they came up out of the water (not before they went down into it) the eunuch rejoiced. He had no experience of grace to relate before baptism; he had no confession of pardon received before baptism: remission was beyond baptism, and that is why, after baptism, he went on his way rejoicing.

Cornelius (Acts 10, 11)

Sectarians cling tenaciously to the case of Cornelius as an example of salvation before baptism. They assert that Cornelius received the Holy Spirit before baptism and must

therefore have been saved before he was baptized. That proves too much. According to Peter's account of the case in 11, the Holy Spirit fell on house of Cornelius before he believed. It should be observed that there are two records of the events connected with this conversion—the record of Luke in Acts 10 and the record of Peter himself in Acts 11. Luke does not claim that his account was given in the order of events but he does say that Peter “expounded the matter unto them in order” (Acts 11:4). Hence, Peter's own account of the happenings “to those of the circumcision” at Jerusalem represents the order of occurrence. In the order of occurrence Peter said that the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius before he believed. Does that prove that he was saved before he believed? No denominationalist will allow that it does; hence, their argument is lost. The fact is that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the house of Cornelius did not effect his salvation nor affect the issues involved in it.

The elements entering the conversion of Cornelius are set forth in three passages in the record. First, the angel said to Cornelius: “Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, Whose surname is Peter; who shall speak unto thee words whereby thou shalt be saved” (Acts 11:14). Second, Peter said to Cornelius: “To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:45). Third, Peter “commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:48). The casual reader cannot fail to observe that remission of sins was promised to Cornelius in the name of Christ; and that he was commanded to be baptized in the name of Christ, and that remission of sins in the name of Christ began at Jerusalem as defined in Acts 2:38; and that the same thing that began at Jerusalem should be preached to all the nations—all of which means, because it must mean, that Cornelius received the same remission in the same name, and on the same terms as stated in Acts 2:38 on Pentecost. Since baptism in the name of Christ is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and Cornelius was commanded to be baptized in the name of Christ (Acts 10:48) it follows that Cornelius was baptized for the remission of sins. Indeed, remission of sins in the name of Christ, and baptism in the name of Christ for remission of sins, represent one process.

The Philipian Jailor (Acts 16)

The question “What must I do to be saved?” asked by the jailor, and the answer “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved,” given by Paul and Silas, has been the chief stock in trade of sectarian revivalists—from the frothing holiness and shouting Methodists on up the scale through the unconventional Billy Sunday type of evangelists to the frocked and formal dignitary—who fervidly exhorts supplicants for salvation to “only believe.” They aver that Acts 16:31 is the answer—the one and only answer to the question what to do to be saved. True, they have not explained why Peter, Ananias, and others equally inspired gave other answers, but they cannot be bothered with troublesome explanations. “Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved”—that, and that alone, we are told, is all that is necessary to the sinners salvation. When reminded that this answer does not mention repentance, with a slight hitch we are assured that repentance must be included. Believing on the Lord Jesus can be stretched to include repentance, which is not named in the connection, but its elasticity gives out before it gets to baptism, which is named in the immediate connection!

When Paul and Silas told the jailor to “believe on the Lord Jesus,” without even a break in the story the narrator states that “they preached unto him the word of the Lord.” He evidently had not believed upon merely being told to; He must be told what to believe—or, in what believing on the Lord Jesus consisted. Having heard the word preached, the jailor washed their stripes (repentance, change of attitude), was baptized the same hour, and rejoiced with his house, “having believed in God.” When had he believed in God? When he had done all that the Gospel narrative tells, including his baptism, then he had “believed in God.” So baptism in the case of the jailor has the same.

Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9, 22)

The 16th verse of the 22nd chapter of Acts is Paul's own statement of his baptism in Damascus. And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on his name.” This was Ananias' answer to Saul's question, “What shall I do, Lord?” and to which the Lord replied: “Arise, and go into the city and it shall be told

thee what thou must do” (Acts 9). But with some people the word *must* appears to have degrees in meaning. The word in Heb. 11:6, “must believe;” means that faith is essential. But in Acts 22:16. when Ananias tells Saul what he “must do” commands him to be baptized—the word loses most of its must, and deprived of its absoluteness it degrades into a meaningless, empty, vacant nonessential.

When was Saul saved? If he was saved before Ananias came to him, he was a miserable saved man—blind, fasting, shut-up, praying—a miserable saved man, indeed! If he was saved when Ananias laid hands on him, he was saved before he was told what to do to be saved. If he was saved before he was baptized, he was saved before his sins were washed away, for he was commanded to “arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins.” In short, if he was saved in the flash of the light on the road, as the sectarian preachers dogmatize, then he was saved when he did not know it, for he asked what to do; and he was saved when Ananias did not know it. Who came to tell him what to do; and he was saved when the Lord did not know, for the Lord sent him unto Damascus to be told what to do; and if he was saved then, he was saved contrary to all the so called experiences of grace required by these preachers themselves, before peace came to his soul, and while yet in his misery. What a strange conversion and a peculiar salvation the preachers make of it!

In the precept of Ananias three commands are, joined together by the copulative *and* “Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins.” No matter in what sense the word *wash* is used, the fact stands out that baptism stands squarely between the sinner and the washing away of sins. The question of efficacy does not change it. If it be urged that water cannot literally wash away sins, neither can blood literally wash away sins. Whatever washing away of sins may be, or wherever it takes place, the passage plainly puts baptism before the washing away of sins.

In a final effort to escape the plain statement of the passage some objections are resorted to. It is said that Ananias addressed Saul as a brother—“Brother Saul” hence, he must have been saved when so addressed. But Peter addressed the murderers of Christ in Acts 3:19 as “brethren” when he told them to repent. Were they saved at the time they were so addressed? Saul, like those whom Peter addressed, was a brother Jew, according to the flesh—that is all. Again it is urged that Saul received the Spirit before he was baptized. But the text does not say it—it does not mention the time of the Spirit's reception at all—but merely states that he would receive it. Whether before or after baptism the passage does not state. Granting the miracle of the Spirit's reception, however, still would not change or alter, the command. It would only make the miraculous part of it special, having no bearing on the thing commanded. Still further, it is claimed that “the scales fell from his eyes” before he was baptized as evidence that he received salvation before baptism. But the scales fell from his eyes—not his heart. That affected only his blindness—not his salvation. '

When was Saul saved? There is only one answer, “Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on his name.” When did a sectarian preacher, under any circumstance, give this answer to any candidate for salvation? Yet it is written down in the eternal record of conversion.

Don't Let This Happen to You

Nathan Brewer

It would be a tragedy to spend 20, 40, even 60 years thinking you're serving Jesus and going to heaven, only to learn on Judgment Day that you'll spend eternity in torment.

Toward the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said it's going to happen.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matt. 7:21-23).

First, Jesus implied that it's not enough merely to believe in Him as Lord and Savior, because the people He depicted as being turned away from heaven believe those facts.

Second, Jesus implied that it's possible to believe in Him as both Christ and the Son of God, yet not actually do the Father's will. These believers will be refused entrance into heaven for failing to obey.

Third, Jesus implied that it's not enough to sincerely strive to serve Him. These believers who'll be turned away from heaven will have attempted to serve Christ in this life through activities like teaching and doing "many wonderful works." Yet they're lost.

Fourth, Jesus implied that these believers who've sincerely tried to serve Him were, in fact, never Christians—they were never saved: "I never knew you."

Fifth, Jesus implied that those who never obey the Gospel—though they spend their lives in religious pursuits, thinking they're serving Christ—are workers of "iniquity."

This doesn't sound like what preachers teach today about being saved and going to heaven. Then again, Jesus crossed the religious leaders of His own day with the truth.

So why will people think they're saved and on their way to heaven when they're not? Most likely because they've been taught error.

A lot of sincere people fail to ever become Christians because they're told to "ask Jesus to come into their hearts," or "pray the sinners' prayer." Doing these things won't result in salvation, but they will result in people **thinking** they're saved.

Don't let this happen to you. Do what sinners who heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ did in the first century, as recorded in the book of Acts. Believe the Good News, repent of your sins, confess your belief in Christ, then be baptized in water so you can contact Christ's saving blood. When you come up out of the water you'll be a new creature, walking in new life, forgiven.

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The Judgment—A Dividing Line

P.C. Key

The day of judgment is the dividing line between time and eternity. On this side, things are temporal. On the other side, they will be eternal. The fact for serious consideration here is the finality of the judgment and the everlasting nature of things beyond. Things of earth change, and the earth itself must pass away. The souls of men now change in character, so that their destiny is uncertain. But uncertainty will disappear after the judgment as eternity closes upon all mankind.

The Finality Of The Judgment

Questions and doubts now arise, and even in the judgment many deceived and lost persons will say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Matt. 7:22). Without a judgment, some questions might go on into eternity, but the judgment will settle all questions with such a finality that every lost person will thereafter be as the man without a wedding garment—speechless (Matt. 22:12).

Not only will everyone know what his eternal destiny is, but why it is so, and God's eternal justice will be manifested. The various choices of this life, then, should be made, not thoughtlessly, but with the clear understanding that when the judgment passes, the momentous consequences of these choices will become final and eternal.

Possibility Of Change

Though God's nature and purpose are unchangeable, in times past His unchangeable purpose or plan brought various changes in His laws, institutions, and people because the plan was designed to improve humankind.

After the judgment, God's purpose will undoubtedly remain the same as always, but important changes in people may still continue. For instance, the souls of infants may

change or mature. Though we can never know in this life just what changes may occur in eternity, we can know that whatever occurs will be right and just.

Consequences For The Saved

Regardless of any changes after judgment, we can be quite sure there will be no reversions. The saved will stay saved, and none will revert to a lost state. Though we can imagine various things which might be possible, God knows that all changes will be improvements, for if there were backslidings, regret and sorrow would be inevitable. Since there is to be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, we must be equally sure that there will be no backsliding and that, for the righteous, the consequences of the judgment will be eternal blessedness.

This fact is basic, certain, and consoling: Salvation after judgment is to be eternal. Paul says “the saints will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:17). We cannot be lost and still be with the Lord forever.

Again, we are taught that in the better world, God will dwell with His saints, they shall see His face, and they shall reign forever and ever (Rev. 22:3-5). In all this, there is a clear tone of finality. In the picture presented by John, we see none of the shifting uncertainties such as we know on earth. Instead, we see the steady certainty of saints in their eternal state, where time is not measured by years. Moreover, this state begins immediately after the judgment, for both the righteous and the wicked shall go away—from the judgment—into their eternal habitations (Matt. 25:46).

The Christian's preparation for judgment is complete when death comes (Matt. 25:10-13), but one does not go into his eternal abode until after the judgment. Members of Christ's kingdom must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Rom. 14:10). Thus, it seems self-evident that a person is not in his eternal abode as long as he is not there eternally, but is subject to being called back for judgment.

That saints are held in reservation between judgment and death is evident from Revelation 2:9-11. The saints here pictured are clearly between death and the judgment. They are rational, knowing they are justified, yet they are waiting for the final reckoning. The judgment is necessary to settle all questions about justice and to prepare the way for entrance into everlasting abodes.

Consequences for the Lost

The consequences for the lost are just as eternal as the consequences for the saved. There is a great gulf between the saved and the lost (Luke 16:26), so there is no passing from one side to another.

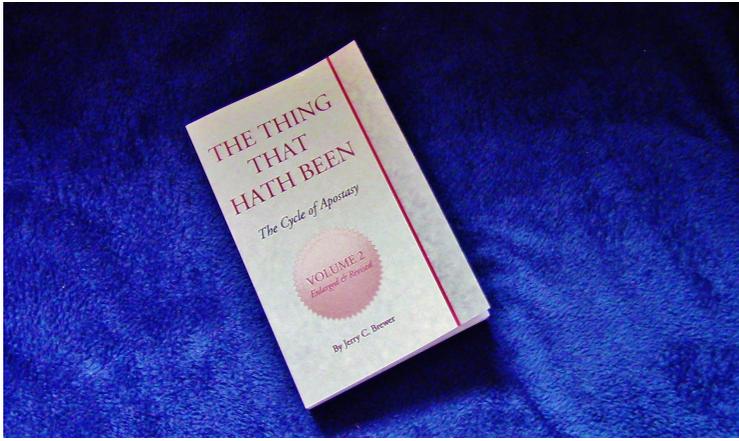
That the consequences of sin are eternal is also taught in Matthew 25:46, where Christ says, “these shall go away into everlasting punishment.” In Mark 9:44, it is said of the wicked that, their “worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched,” and in Matthew 25:41, we are told that the wicked are to go “into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” The punishment of the wicked will be severe, but after the judgment the justice of all this will be fully known.

Since the consequences of the judgment are eternal for all, and since the life we live in this world determines how we shall stand in the judgment, no one can be too careful. Truth alone can guide a person properly. But no one can live according to the truth without knowing it, (John 8:32), and no one can know it except from the Bible—our only source of divine revelation (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Seeing that eternity is never-ending, and that the consequences of the judgment are so great, each of us is obligated in justice to prepare himself against that day. Judgment is coming. Have you obeyed the Lord? Prepare now by obeying the Gospel. Believe that Jesus is the Son of the living God, (Acts 8:37), repent of your sins (Luke 13:3), confess your faith in Christ before men (Matt. 10:32) and be baptized in Christ for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38).

It has been said that it is useless to quote the Bible to one who disbelieves it. But Jesus quoted it to the devil. There is power in an appropriate passage of Scripture that even a disbelieve cannot evade. —R.L. Whiteside—

“The Thing That Hath Been...”



The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is that* which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun. Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us (Eccl. 1:9-10).

Apostasy is the bane of God's people as Israel in the shadow of Sinai.

And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together

unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which *are* in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring *them* unto me...And he received *them* at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt...To morrow *is* a feast to the LORD. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play (Exo. 32:1-6).

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Are Children Born Sinners?

Nana Yaw Aidoo

Calvinists answer “yes” to the above question and so do some Gospel preachers that we are acquainted with. However, please consider this syllogism:

Premise 1: The Bible teaches; “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas. 4:17).

Premise 2: The Bible teaches that infants have no knowledge of right and wrong. They are not born with it (Isa. 7:15-16).

Conclusion: Therefore, infants or children are not born sinners or cannot be charged with sin.

This argument is not only sound but also valid and there is simply no escape from the conclusion. The so-called Protestants not influenced by the Bible but John Calvin’s “Institutes of the Christian Religion” are wrong on this issue. We who have pledged to speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11), ought to be faithful to our charge (1 Cor. 4:2) and not teach doctrines that reflect on the very nature of God.

“Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions” (Eccl. 7:29).

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Life Begins at Conception—So Abortion is Murder

Dub McClish

January 22 marks the forty-ninth anniversary of the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision. In that span, as of January 20, 2022, 63,400,000 totally innocent, helpless human beings have been slain in the womb in the birth process, or after birth—by abortion. This figure equals the current combined populations of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Georgia, Tennessee, and Indiana. Pharaoh of Moses' era, King Herod, Josef Stalin, Chairman Mao, and Hitler—all mass-murderers—were small-time operators compared to this legalized slaughter in the “civilized” USA.

Is abortion “infanticide,” or is it merely the removal of “expendable tissue”? For abortion to be murder, the unborn baby must be a living person, distinct from its mother. To the pro-death abortion advocates, the content of the womb is little more than a wart, an appendix, or even a tumor—thus disposable. Some are now likening abortion to the expulsion of human excrement. The crucial question then is, **when does life and human personhood begin?**

Abortion apologists answer, “At birth, or several weeks after conception at the earliest.” God answers, “At conception.” He said to Jeremiah, “**Before** I formed you in the belly I knew you; and **before** you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you...” (Jer. 1:5, emph. DM). Thus, before he had skeletal or muscular form in the womb (i.e., at conception), God recognized Jeremiah as a person. The Bible consistently teaches so (see Job 3:16; 10:11; Psa. 51:5; 139:13–16; Isa. 44:24; 49:5; et al.).

On April 23–24, 1981, various stellar scientists and physicians testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee regarding this issue. These included the “Father of Modern Genetics,” Dr. Jerome Lejeune (U. of Descartes, Paris), Dr. McCarthy de Mere, medical doctor and law professor (U. of Tennessee), and Theodosius Dobzhansky, world-renowned geneticist. The testimony of Dobzhansky, though an atheist, represented the conclusions they all stated: “A **human being begins his existence** when a spermatozoon fertilizes an egg cell” (emph. DM).

Pro-abortionists recognize life and “animalhood” in the unborn of lower animals. Those who will rally by the thousands to champion the “right” to slay their own kind in the womb will stage a hunger strike to protect the life of the unborn eaglet (yes, they know that it possesses life and “eaglehood” while it is still in the egg). Ironically, some vigorously oppose the state's right to end the murderer's life, but vigorously champion the “right” of women to slay their own innocent and defenseless offspring. If life, humanness, and personhood do not begin at conception, when do they begin—one day, one week, one month, or three months after the sperm fertilizes the egg? Upon what basis will moral relativists answer this all-important question, except ideology and/or fickle subjectivism? However, if life and personhood begin at conception (as certainly they do), abortion just as certainly constitutes murder—legalized, but murder, no less—on the grandest scale ever known. Hands that “shed innocent blood” are still an abomination to the Giver of life (Pro. 6:16–17).

Two lawsuits are now before the US Supreme Court, brought by Mississippi and Texas, respectively, that have the potential to reverse *Roe v. Wade* as federal law. Let us pray earnestly that the court will rule to effectively kill this murderous almost half-century-old ruling.

An Answer To Jehovah's Witness Error

Dudley Ross Spears

In the past several weeks many members of the church have come to me with questions about the doctrine of the **Jehovah's Witnesses Sect**. I feel it advisable to provide some material that will be useful in refuting their false and erroneous claims. Their errors are:

1. Error in founder and foundation. They are founded on the speculations of their father and founder, Charles Taze Russell. This is why they are nicknamed “Russellites.”

Among the many errors of Russell was his assertion that Jesus was merely a created man with earthly limitations, etc. He, therefore, denied the Deity and Divinity of Jesus. But the Deity or Divinity of Christ is the foundation of the church of Christ, “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). In response to Peter's great confession of the Deity of Jesus as “the Christ, the Son of the Living God,” our Lord said: “Upon this rock (Christ's deity) I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18). Likewise, Paul said: “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11). Since the deity of Christ is the foundation that men are to build on, and since the founder of the Jehovah's Witness sect denied this very thing (we shall prove this later) they are wrong in founder and foundation.

2. Error in predicting the time of Christ's second advent. Russell wrote: “On the strength of this inspired statement alone, we have clear evidence of the fact that our Lord's second advent was due...in October A.D. 1874” (*Studies in the Scriptures, Series 2*, p. 188). “Let us draw them to a focus, and note how these rays of testimony unitedly and harmoniously blend, clearly revealing the blessed fact, not that the Lord is coming, nor that he will soon come, but that he has come” (ibid, Series 3, p. 124). “And now he has come!” (ibid, p. 133). Thus, they teach that Christ has already come to earth and that future expectation of his second advent is vain.

But the Scriptures speak to the contrary: “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come” (Matt. 24:42). “Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh” (Matt. 24:44). These passages teach us not to set a date for the Lord's return. Take a positive approach to Matt. 24:44 and it reads like this: “for in such an hour as ye think (the Lord will come), the Son of Man cometh (not).” But Russell violated this very thing in setting a date for Christ to return. But you may wonder how they explain the fact that He was not seen and is not now seen. They simply say his return was invisible. Now, then, notice how that attitude violates this scripture: “Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him” (Rev. 1:7). The second coming of Christ is a future thing that all will be able to see. Jehovah's Witnesses don't like to discuss Russell's blunder.

3. Error of denying the Deity and Divinity of Christ. On this matter, Russell wrote: “Neither was Jesus a combination of two natures, human and spiritual” (ibid, series 1, p. 179). “These thoughts may help us to understand also how the Son, when changed from spiritual to human conditions—to human nature and earthly limitations—was a man; and though it was the same being in both cases, under the first conditions he was spiritual and under the second conditions he was human” (ibid, pp. 202-203).

But contrary to Russell's opinion that Christ was not a combination of humanity and Divinity, and was merely “a man,” and merely “human,” the word of God says: “for in him (Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9). “Who (Christ) being the brightness of his (God's) glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3). During His earthly ministry, He said of Himself: “If ye had known me, ye should have known my father also: and henceforth ye know him and have seen him” (John 14:7). John says of Him, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18). His very name refutes this Divinity denying doctrine. “And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matt. 1:23). Truly, Jesus was God and man combined and was the only begotten Son of God while on this earth.

4. Error in denying the bodily resurrection of Jesus. On this question, Russell again wrote: “Thus far we have found spirit beings truly glorious; yet, except by the opening of men's eyes to see them, or by their appearing in flesh as men, they are invisible to men” (ibid, p. 183). Since Russell thought that Christ was raised from the dead in spirit form, he denounced the fact that our Lord was visible. It is stated in these words in another Jehovah's Witness book: “So King Christ Jesus was put to death in the flesh and was resurrected an invisible spirit creature” (*Let God Be True*, p. 138).

Now, will the reader read very carefully 1 Cor. 15:4- 8? In this passage you will find the following evidence that Jesus was visible in bodily form after His resurrection; i.e. was seen of:

1. "Cephas (Peter) and then of the twelve."
2. After—"he was seen of about five hundred brethren."
3. Of James and "all the apostles."
4. Finally by Paul himself.

Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Christ was raised invisible and the Bible teaches that he was raised in visible bodily form. A final Bible proof of this false claim is found in the experience of Thomas the doubter. He doubted that what he saw was Jesus whom he knew to be dead. He touched the Lord's raised body and believed (John 20:25, 28). What did he touch? The body of Christ or His invisible spirit? The answer is evident.

5. Error in denying eternal punishment of the wicked. Listen again to Russell: "The proper recognition of the meaning of the terms mortal and immortal, and of their use in the Scripture, destroys the very foundation of the doctrine of eternal torment...But God's Word assures us that He has provided against such a perpetuation of sin and sinners: that man is mortal, and that the full penalty of willful sin against full light and knowledge will not be a life in torment, but a second death" (op. cit. p. 187).

Russell teaches here that the "full penalty" of willful sinners is "not a life in torment." But what of Bible teaching?

When the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power (2 Thess. 1:7-10).

In this passage, the word *everlasting* is from the Greek, *aionos*. It is elsewhere translated, *eternal*, *everlasting*, and *forever*. We find it in the following passages: "And these shall go away into everlasting (*aionios*) punishment: but the righteous into life eternal (*aionios*)" (Matt. 26:46). "And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:42). "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting (*aionios*) fire" (Matt. 24:41).

1. Eternal or everlasting life and punishment are of the same duration, ie. never ending.
2. Punishment and torment is evident in the wailing and the gnashing of teeth.
3. It is compared to torment in fire.
4. The fire is everlasting or eternal.

It is summed up in the words of John: "And they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev. 20:10).

6. Error in denying that man has an immortal soul. In the words of Russell, man is "wholly mortal." They conclude that if man is wholly mortal that he will die and never exist beyond the grave. Here are their own words again: "So we see that the claim of religionists that man has an immortal soul and therefore differs from the beast is not scriptural" (*Let God be True*, p. 68).

Jesus replied to this materialistic concept of man in answering the Sadducees in the following words:

Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him (Luke 20:37-39).

But how can God be the God of the living and also be God of dead men, viz. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who were dead at the time Moses said this? By the fact that men do exist beyond the grave and the dead are raised. God has given man an immortal soul.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were alive for they had immortal souls as do all God's human creation. In this man differs from the beast.

If the reader will carefully study Luke 16:19-21, he will find the story of the rich man and beggar Lazarus. In the story are the following facts:

1. Both died (vs. 22).
2. The rich man existed in hell and Lazarus in Abraham's bosom (vs. 24).
3. The rich man was tormented (vs. 24).
4. The emotions of the rich man were strained for his five brethren, still alive, who might be sent where he was (vs. 28).

Hence, here we find the very opposite of Jehovah's Witness doctrine. But many times they say that is not a reality but a parable. However, although I deny that it is a parable, let's for a moment grant that it is a parable. A parable is a comparison of some experience of life familiar to people that teaches some vital truth. Now, what was Christ comparing the incident to? Absolutely nothing! He was teaching the existence of life beyond the grave both in bliss and torment.

I hope and pray that this bit of material will aid those of you who have to meet the representatives of the Jehovah's Witness Sect. Therefore, it is sent forth with a prayer for the exaltation of Bible truth and the glory of the kingdom of God.

Salvation Is in the Church

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

The idea that one is first saved by some mystical or mystified, unintelligible or intangible process, and afterwards "joins some church" is a common religious delusion. Yet, there is no truth more plainly emphasized in the Bible than the fact that the process of being saved is the process of entering the church (Acts 2:47).

1. It is affirmed in Acts 4:12 that salvation is in Christ. Then, to have salvation, one must get into Christ. But Paul, by analogy, in Ephesians 5:30, teaches that as husband and wife are one, so Christ and the church are one. "I speak concerning Christ and the church," he said. Christ and the church being one, how can one be in Christ and out of the church?

2. Paul makes the fact that Christ is "the saviour of the body" (5:23) the ground of his exhortation to the Ephesians concerning the church as the bride of Christ (5:25). He saved it, purchased it with His blood and redeemed it, reconciles us to God in it, and adds all the saved to it. Therefore, out of the church there is no cleansing, no blood, no redemption, no reconciliation to God, no salvation.

3. The relation between Christ and the church is the same as that which exists between God and Christ. Christ is the "fullness" of God (Col. 1:19), and the church is the "fullness" of Christ (Eph. 1:22). Therefore, no man can come to Christ and ignore the church for the same reason that no man can come to God and ignore Christ. We exhort the unsaved to come to Christ, "gladly receive the word," be "baptized into Christ," and the Lord will add you to His church.

That "Difficult" King James Version

Bill Jackson

Those in love with the modern speech translations (and some of them do not even come near being translated) very often speak of the King James Version, and how so very difficult it is to comprehend. It's really too bad that Great Grandpa and Great Grandma, who had very little formal education, didn't know that the volume couldn't be understood. They did the best they could in obeying God's will, living the Christian life, bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, worshiping according to the New Testament pattern, and teaching and baptizing their neighbors into Christ. And it's too bad that the pioneer preachers didn't know the King James (all

they had) couldn't be understood. With their "lack of knowledge," all they did was live by truth, preach the truth, and convert people from sectarianism as they took the King James and put the denominational doctrines to flight in debate!

Many in our time have turned their children away from the truth in urging upon them some wild version because they "can't understand that old King James." Yes, those very youngsters who can understand chemistry, biology, zoology, calculus, geometry and physics. It must really "blow their minds" to run into a word like "charity" and then have to see that "love" is the modern day word. And look at some of the preachers! All they have is a high school education, and perhaps four years of college, or two years of preacher training, including a study of Greek, and then they cannot comprehend The King James Version. Brethren, let's face it. It is the "love of the new and different, even if it's harmful" that is behind the craving of these new and wild productions. One need not be very bright to see that!

The Good Confession

Jess Whitlock

In 1 Timothy 6:12 the Record reads: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." The Greek word rendered confess, is found 23 times in the New Testament. Two times it is rendered with the English word profess. The ASV (1901) in 1 Timothy 6:12 reads: "didst confess the good confession."

One time the word is translated profess in the Authorized Version is Titus 1:16: "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." What does it mean to profess to know God? It is a wonderful thing to know God and to know that we know Him. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 1:12: "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Again, 1 John 2:3 states: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." We know Him if we keep His commands. If one professes to know God, and does not keep God's commands, then that individual does not really know God!

The other time we find profess in the King James Version is Matthew 7:23: "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." These sad, sorrowful, sullen words are spoken to those who would not confess Christ as Lord in full obedience to His will. Romans 10:10 teaches: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." One must believe (Mark 16:16), one must repent (2 Pet. 3:9), one must confess Christ (Acts 8:7), one must be baptized into Christ for (unto) the remission of sin (Acts 2:38), and one must live faithful until the end of life's journey (1 Cor. 15:58). Do you not get it? If one fails to confess faith in Christ as God's Son, or if one fails to continue to "walk in the light as He is in the light," that one has ceased to advance toward eternal salvation!

We must do more than merely profess to know God? Remember, what you go after here will determine where you go in the hereafter. Let us not forget Christ's own admonition: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 10:32-33). Let us never be ashamed nor afraid to teach the necessity and loveliness of the good confession.

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