

# The Gospel Preceptor

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

Volume 5, Number 6    Published Monthly At Elk City, Oklahoma    June, 2022

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## “Where in the Bible Does it Say...?”

**Jerry C. Brewer**

The authoritative God has spoken through His Son Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-2), Who has all authority in things spiritual (Matt. 28:18). Christ delegated authority to His apostles, and inspired prophets of the first century who wrote all truth in what we know as the New Testament. As Jesus cannot be separated from His written word, consider how we should regard the Bible:

### **As Divinely Inspired**

Every word of the Bible is inspired (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21). The supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit upon the writers of the Bible guaranteed the total trustworthiness and authority of their productions (John 14:26; 16:13). That inspiration is plenary and verbal—complete, and extending to every word they wrote (1 Cor. 2:13).

### **As God’s Final Revelation to Man**

God “hath spoken” (past tense) through Christ (Heb. 1:1-2), meaning that no revelation will be given to man again. The apostles of Christ remain His spokesmen and are forever the teachers of the world (Matt. 19:28). They were promised—and received—the baptism of the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth (John 16:13; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5; 2:1-4).

Paul told the Galatians that there is only one gospel, and men who preach “another” are cursed (Gal. 1:8-9). Jude wrote that “the faith” has been once and for all time “delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). The next time a Divine voice is heard from heaven will be at the judgment.

### **As the Instrument of Salvation**

The gospel is God’s power to save men from sin (Rom. 1:16-17). The Holy Spirit is not the Saviour, but the Revelator of the gospel plan of salvation and revealed that plan through the written word of God. Where that word does not go, salvation does not go. Salvation comes through obedience to doctrine (teaching) (Rom. 6:17-18), and it is by the word of God that man is begotten and born (Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23).

Let men regard the Bible rightfully, as the Divinely inspired, authoritative word of God that is heaven’s instrument to save. Let us have the attitude toward God’s word of the ancient worthies who said, “Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth” (1 Sam. 3:9), and “Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end” (Psa. 119:33). David said it is, “A lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105), and without the Bible man is hopelessly and irrevocably eternally lost.

Why then are people careless to what the Bible says? Every person who believes a doctrine should first ask, “Where in the Bible Does it Say?” Are you one of those people who is too lazy to study the Bible and merely passes on something that you presume that the Bible says? In this issue of *The Gospel Preceptor* our writers will deal with common errors because folks will not study the Bible. Paul wrote these words more than 2,000 years ago and they are **still** God’s words: “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).

# Where in the Bible Does it Say That One Church is as Good as Another?

Jess Whitlock

The reference you are looking for that states that “one church is as good as another” is found in Titus 5:19. What? You could not find it? There are 31,102 verses in the King James Version of the Bible. Not one of those 31,102 verses say that “one church is as good as another.” Please pardon my English, but it **ain’t there!**



Jesus Christ promised to build His church. In Matthew 16:16 Peter affirmed that Jesus was “...the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Then it happened. “And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock **I will build My church**; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18, emph. JW). Christ never promised to build one of the myriad man-made denominations.

Christ Jesus is the head of His church, which is His body. “...and He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be **head** over all things to the church, which is His **body**, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23, emph. JW). “And He is the **head** of the body, the **church**...” (Col. 1:18, emph. JW).

Let us realize that the precious church is the glorious bride of Christ, and that Christ has only one bride! John the Baptizer described himself as being the “...friend of the bridegroom...” (John 3:29-30). Paul writes to the church at Ephesus, “For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church...husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church...that He might present the church to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle...this mystery is great: but I speak in regards of Christ and of the church...” (Eph. 5:23, 25, 27, 32). Paul also wrote, “For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:2). In those days the father or near relatives arranged engagements (espousals) of their children to one another. The father or loved ones would be anxious that the couple be true to one another. Paul addressed the Corinthian correspondence to the “church of God which is at Corinth” (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1), writing “grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2). Paul had espoused those brethren to Christ. He is anxious that the church be faithful to the Bridegroom.

In Revelation 19:7 we learn, “...the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” Christians are “married to Christ.” Bear in mind this is a vision given to John. Paul had written to the church at Corinth saying, “...I espoused you to one husband...” (2 Cor. 11:2). Matthew tells us that “Mary was espoused to Joseph” (Matt. 1:18; the ASV reads betrothed), and then makes reference to “Joseph her husband...” (Matt. 1:19). When/if the bride has “made herself ready” (Rev. 19:7), it is time for the marriage of the Lamb!

John continues, “And I saw the **holy city**, new **Jerusalem** coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband...and there came one of the seven angels...saying. Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the **holy city Jerusalem** coming down out of heaven from God” (Rev. 21:2, 9-10, emph. JW). Paul, I believe, wrote, “ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the **heavenly Jerusalem**...” (Heb. 12:22, emph. JW). The angel invites John to behold a vision of the bride, the wife of the Lamb. The angel promised that John would see the bride (singular), the wife (singular), of the Lamb. In the next verse what does John see in this vision? The **holy city Jerusalem!** The bride is the church (Eph. 5:25-33). Paul wrote, “the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother” (Gal. 4:26).

Notice please, that John beheld “the **holy city Jerusalem**, coming down **out of**

**heaven from God**” (Rev. 21:10, emph. JW). The church was planned, prepared, and prophesied of God from His heavenly home. Paul reminds us, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ: even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world...” (Eph. 1:3-4).

In the book of Daniel, we read that King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. The dream troubled the king because he could not remember nor understand the dream. The dream is recorded in Daniel 2:31-35. Daniel is the only man who can tell and interpret the dream, as recorded in Daniel 2:36-45. The dream was an awesome image! “its head was of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, its legs of iron, its feet part of iron, and part of clay” (Dan. 2:32-33). Daniel’s interpretation sees four great empires that would come in preparation for the coming of the church!

**The Babylonian Empire** ~ “thou art the head of gold” (Dan. 2:38). King Nebuchadnezzar reigned as king in Babylon (606-561 B.C.). The Babylonian empire fell in 536 B.C.

**The Medo-Persian Empire** ~ “after thee shall arise another kingdom, inferior to thee...” (Dan. 2:39). The “breast and arms of silver” are King Darius of Media and King Cyrus of Persia. This empire (536 – 331 B.C.) ruled during the time of the completion of the writing of the Old Testament.

**The Grecian Empire** ~ “and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth” (Dan. 2:39). The “belly and thighs of brass” represent the rule of Greece (331 B.C.-63 B.C. All are familiar with the exploits of Alexander the Great (356 B.C.-323 B.C.), who was the outstanding leaders during those days of great conquests.

**The Roman Empire** ~ “the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron” (Dan. 2:40). The “legs of iron” and “feet of iron and part of clay” shows how Rome ruled the world (63 B.C. – c. B.C. 426). The Herods and Caesars ruled at the time of the coming of Christ the Messiah!

Daniel prophesied that “in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a **kingdom** which shall **never be destroyed...**” (Dan. 2:44, emph. JW). It was in the days of “those kings” that the kingdom, which is the church, would be established. Daniel concluded: “the dream is certain and the interpretation thereof sure” (Dan. 2:45). There is only one **kingdom** of God!

John announced the coming “kingdom” (Matt. 3:2). The apostle John preached the “kingdom” (Rev. 1:9). Jesus Christ also preached the “kingdom” (Matt. 4:17). The apostles of Christ declared the “kingdom” (Matt. 10:7). The seventy delivered the message of the “kingdom” (Luke 10:9). Philip taught about the “kingdom” (Acts 8:12). Paul presented the “kingdom” (Acts 19:8; 20:25; 28:23-31). James wrote of the “kingdom” (James 2:5). Peter, the powerful preacher of Pentecost, wrote of the “kingdom” (2 Pet. 1:11). Almost 90 preachers of the New Testament preached of **the** kingdom; and not one of them preached concerning the kingdomS (plural) of Christ. That **kingdom**, which is the **church** that Christ promised to build (Matt. 16:18), was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It was in the city of Jerusalem in the year c. A.D. 33. That **kingdom** shall **never be destroyed!** How does this “square” with the kingdoms of men? The kingdoms/churches of men number into the multiplied hundreds:

<u>Right Name</u>	<u>Right Time</u>	<u>Right Place</u>	<u>Right Founder</u>
Church of Christ	A.D. 33	Jerusalem	Jesus Christ
<u>Wrong Name</u>	<u>Wrong Time</u>	<u>Wrong Place</u>	<u>Wrong Founder</u>
Adventism	1831	Massachusetts	William Miller
Baptist Church	1607	Holland/England	John Smyth
Christian Church	1906	America	Various Ones ~
Christian Science	1879	Massachusetts	Mary Baker Eddy
Episcopal Church	1534	England	King Henry VIII
Greek Orthodox	1054	Greece	Various Ones ~

Jehovah Witness	1874	Pennsylvania	Charles T. Russell
Lutheran Church	1530	Germany	Martin Luther
Mennonites	1525	Europe	Menno Simmons
Methodist	1739	England	John Wesley
Mormonism	1830	New York	Joseph Smith
Nazarene Church	1895	California	Phineas F. Bresee
Pentecostals	1898	South Carolina	Howard Hoople
Quakers	1650	England	George Fox
Roman Catholic	606	Rome, Italy	Boniface III
Salvation Army	1865	England	William Booth
Scientology	1954	California	L. Ron Hubbard
7th Day Adventist	1846	Massachusetts	Ellen G. White

Frank S. Mead, in his book *Handbook of Denominations in the United States* (1995), listed many man-made religions with their varied divisions and even sub-divisions as follows: Adventist (13); Baptist (32); Brethren (11); The Christian Church (9); Church of God (24); Episcopal/Anglican (10); Friends (7); Judaism (4); Latter-Day Saints (5); Lutheran (11); Mennonite (13); Methodist (13); Moravian (6); Old Catholic (6); Orthodox (10); Pentecostal (11); Presbyterian (9); Reformed (23). That is over two hundred!

Ad infinitum...this listing is not a proverbial “drop in the bucket” of the multiplied hundreds of off-the-wall religions in America that would easily approach one-thousand! It is no wonder that so many are asking, “why?” Why so many churches?

Jesus stated that he would build **His** church and He built only **one church** (Matt. 16:18). Even when Jesus made that promise He knew that men by the hundreds and thousands would want to create their own churches, and so they have. Paul warned of a time when men would “fall away” (apostatize) from the truth of God’s Word (2 Thess. 2:3-12). The apostasy began in A.D. 606 with Pope Boniface III, the first actual Pope of Roman Catholicism. For centuries the so-called “head” of this departure insisted that men worship him (the Pope) and him alone! Long ago, the apostle warned, “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts, and will turn away their ears from the truth, and **turn aside unto fables**” (2 Tim. 4:3-4, emph. JW). Paul was on target with that truth!

How many churches did **Christ promise to build**? The majority of men answer, “many.” The Bible states in clarion tone that Christ died for and established **one church!** The church of Christ was prophesied (Dan. 2:44; Isa. 2:2-4). The church which belongs to Christ was purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:12). You can read about the establishment of the church that Christ built in Acts 2. The Lord will one day take the faithful of His church to a heavenly home (1 Cor. 15:24; Eph. 5:23).

The church of the Bible wears the **right name**: “Salute one another with a holy kiss. All the **churches of Christ** salute you” (Rom. 16:16, emph. JW).

The church of the Bible was established at the **right time**: “And it shall come to pass in the **latter days**, that the mountain of Jehovah’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it” (Isa. 2:2, emph. JW).

The church of the Bible would have its beginning at the **right place**: “...for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from **Jerusalem**” (Mic. 4:2, emph. JW). Christ charged His disciples “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning from **Jerusalem**” (Luke 24:47, emph. JW).

The church of the Bible has the **right founder** (and foundation, too): “Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the **Christ** the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16, emph.

JW). The apostle Paul stated, “For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11). Christ said, “...**I will build My church...**” (Matt. 16:18, emph. JW).

Anyone who worships in any church anywhere on the face of the earth can ask himself whether he is a part of the church that Jesus built. Does it wear the **right name**? Was it begun at the **right time**? Did it begin in the **right place**? Does it have the **right founder**? If the answer to just one of those questions is, “no”; then it is time to “search the scriptures” (John 5:39; cf. Acts 17:11).

#### Addendum

The space did not allow me to add to the right Name, right Time, the right Place, the right Founder, one more thing: the **right Tomb**! Under the **right tomb**, we would record in bold letters: **Empty!** Now, search out the founder of any on the multiplied hundreds and hundreds of denominations. Under the name of the founder/founders, then in bold letters write **Occupied!**

By way of illustration, I cite, this true event: In a small village of India a missionary was preaching the message of Christ. As he closed the lesson, a Muslim man approached the missionary and said, “You have to admit that we have one thing which you do not, and it is better than what you have.” The missionary smiled and asked what that might be. The Muslim responded, “When we go to Mecca, we can at least find a coffin. But, when a Christian goes to Jerusalem, which is your Mecca, you find nothing but an empty grave.” The missionary smiled again and stated, “Yes, that is the difference! Mohammad is dead; Mohammad is in his coffin. All the false leaders of the false religion of the world are still in their coffins. Jesus Christ, who is the King of kings and Lord of lords, is **not there**; for **He is risen!** (Matt. 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:6). All power in heaven and on earth is given unto Him!”

That is our hope. We serve a living Christ, a living Lord, a living Savior. That is our hope... when one visits the supposed tomb of Jesus in the Bible lands, the traditional **tomb is empty!** Jesus Christ, our Lord is **not** dead, but is alive forevermore. Amen!

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## Where in the Bible Does it Say That any Denomination Was Built by Christ?

Ron Cosby

Six months before He died, Jesus promised to build His church.

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:16-18 ASV).



Since Jesus was **going** to build, it clearly shows that His church was in the future, not the past. The first mention of His church in existence was on the first Pentecost after His death, burial and resurrection (Acts 2:1-47). This Pentecost was about a year after John the Baptist had died.

The death of John, the promise of Jesus, and the beginning of the church of our Lord exhibit an important sequence. We study these principles with two religious entities in mind, though they apply to all denominations and religious cults.

Where in the Bible does it say that any denomination was built by Christ? It does not! Any reader who reads the 66 books of the Bible which contains over 783,000 words will not see one word concerning Jesus building a single denomination. The same reader will find a number of passages denouncing the religious division manifested in denominationalism (1 Cor. 1:10; Gal. 5:20). This division cannot be logically ascribed

to Jesus, though, to justify their actions, many try.

Where in the Bible does it say that any denomination was built by Christ? It does not! By their very name the Mormons acknowledge that Jesus did not build their church. Some do not want to be called “Mormons.” They prefer “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.” Whether you look at the matter from one name or the other, the conclusion is the same. They are **latter** day. They are **not produced** by first century revelation. By their own advertisements Mormons owe their beginning from the words and teaching of another book—a late book. The Book of Mormon is their authoritative source, **not** the Bible. There were no Mormons or “Latter Day Saints” until the **human author** of their book was born, which was around eighteen centuries too late. Obviously, the New Testament says nothing about them, else they would appeal to it for their name.

The denominations recognize the same problem, yet some of them refuse to acknowledge it. The Baptists have a few web sites and books that seek to trace their denomination back to the first century. However, they go too far. They trace the founding of their denomination past Jesus to John the Baptist. One site says, “Jesus built a Baptist Church.” The site then gives their reason for saying this, proclaiming, “God prepared a Baptist preacher, John the Baptist, to teach and baptize believers. Jesus endorsed the message and baptism of this first Baptist.” This declaration establishes two enormous problems for them. The first problem is, since, as they argue, John was the first Baptist, then he established the Baptist church and not Jesus. The second problem is, John died before the church of Christ had its beginning. Since Christ said, “I will build,” the building of His church did not happen in the days of John. The so-called “first Baptist” died months earlier. It is interesting and sad to see how far men will go to avoid plain truth.

Where in the Bible does it say that any denomination was built by Christ? Since they agree that the Bible does not give the answer to this question, then by what authority do they continue to exist? Their belief and actions are in opposition to the truth.

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## Where in the Bible Does it Say That it Doesn't Matter That a Person Believes as Long as he is Sincere?

Nana Yaw Aidoo

### Introduction

Let us suppose for a moment that you returned from a run and found poison in a water bottle in your kitchen. Since the poison was in a water bottle, you decided to drink some of it in order to quench your thirst. You sincerely believed that the content of the bottle was water. Would your sincerity turn the poison into water or would it protect you from the harmful effects of the poison?



Or what if you were sat on a plane moving from your country to Ghana when you intended all along to travel to England? If you sincerely believed that you were sat on a plane moving to England, would your sincerity make it so?

Anyone who thinks right about the a foregoing scenarios would certainly answer a great big **no** to both questions. Both scenarios serve to illustrate the insufficiency of sincerity. No one accepts, believes things or acts based on sincerity alone in profane matters. We do not choose our security personnel, our doctors or our baby sitters based on sincerity alone. Why is that? Because we know that such a decision could prove fatal. It is rather unfortunate that what most men do not do in profane matters they have no problems doing in spiritual matters. Men who do not make decisions that pertain to this life on the basis of sincerity alone, have no qualms making eternal decisions on the basis of sincerity alone. It seems that

such men are more interested in this life than in the afterlife.

But where in the Bible does it say it doesn't matter what a person believes as long as he is sincere? The answer is **nowhere**. Nowhere in the Bible is this doctrine taught. The following examples will prove this point.

### **Abimelech**

In Genesis 20, we have an account of Abraham and Sarah's sojourn in Gerar. Whiles there, Abraham left king Abimelech with the impression that all Sarah was to him was a sister. That was true but it was only half-true (Gen. 20:12). This half-truth was intended to deceive the king so that Abraham would save his life. Having been left with this impression, Abimelech decided to commit fornication with Sarah and he most probably would have but for the intervention of God. In a conversation with God concerning this issue, Abimelech said: "Said he not unto me, she is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the **integrity** of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this" (Gen. 20:5). The highlighted word *integrity* has the idea of sincerity and is so translated by the Modern King James Version. Abimelech was in effect saying, "I sincerely thought Sarah was Abraham's sister and nothing else." Even God Almighty in the very next verse affirmed Abimelech's sincerity. Yet, in spite of Abimelech's evident sincerity God told him that if he had gone ahead with his intention, He would have killed him (Gen. 20:3). Why would God have killed the king? Because regardless of sincerity, fornication is a sin against God (Gen. 20:6). Abimelech's sincerity would not have made the sin any less sinful or any more pleasing unto God.

### **Nadab and Abihu**

In Leviticus 10, we have an account of two priests, Nadab and Abihu, who were killed by God because they "...offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not" (Lev. 10:1). Notice that these brothers were the right people, in the right place at the right time who out of sincerity offered a sacrifice to the LORD. Yet, their apparent sincerity did not excuse their use of unauthorized fire.

### **King Saul**

In 1 Samuel 15, God commanded the extermination of everything Amalek, both humans and animals. Yet, Israel led by Saul, evidently out of sincerity, "spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God" (1 Sam. 15:15). God's view of the issue was that Saul had done evil in His sight (1 Sam. 15:19).

### **Uzzah**

In 2 Samuel 6, God killed Uzzah the son of Abinadab for putting forth his hand to the ark. This God did because He had already given the transportation and handling of the ark to the Levites (1 Chr. 15:2). Beyond reasonable doubt Uzzah acted the way he did because he wanted to stop the ark from hitting the floor. The sincerity of this man's actions shines through in the account. Yet because his actions were contrary to God's order (1 Chr. 15:13), his sincerity could not save him from death.

### **Some People Before the Judgment Seat of Christ**

Jesus Christ in the sermon on the mount said that some on the judgement day will say to Him: "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?" (Matt. 7:22). These will be those men who go about their religious affairs on the basis of their sincerity alone. Whiles on earth they thought that merely claiming allegiance to the Lord was enough to make heaven. They thought that merely being sincere in divine matters was enough. But our Lord will say to them: "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:23).

### **The Apostle Paul**

Paul prior to his conversion had lived as a blasphemer of the Way and a murderer (1 Tim. 1:12-15). Yet in his defense before the Sanhedrin, he said: "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1). You see, even when Paul opposed the church, he did it out of a good conscience. He was sincere in his opposition to Christ and His church but was he right?

## The Unbelieving Jews

In Romans 10 Paul speaks of some sincere Jews who were lost because their sincerity or zeal was not based on true knowledge (Rom. 10:1-3). Why is this so if sincerity is all that matters?

### What do the Foregoing Examples Teach us?

They teach us the following:

1. Sincerity is not a substitute for belief.
2. Sincerity is not substitute for obedience
3. Sincerity in and of itself is not a virtue. Depending on its focus or object, it could be a vice. For instance, the man who sincerely thinks poison is water will die if he drinks it. Sincerity in this case would not be a virtue. Again, while sincerity towards the things of Christ in religion is a virtue, sincerity towards the things of Caesar is not.

These lessons however do not mean sincerity isn't needed in religion. Passages like Joshua 24:14, 1 Corinthians 5:8 and Ephesians 6:24 clearly indicate the necessity of sincerity in religion. However, if there is anything we have learnt from the examples we have surveyed it is that in addition to sincerity God expects us to believe and practice the truth.

### Some Specific Religious Errors That People Sincerely Believe

Let us now consider some specific errors that people sincerely believe in religion that will unfortunately damn their souls.

**The all roads lead to heaven error.** Many sincere folks believe that all religions lead to God. Yet the Bible says there is only one way to heaven and it is Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

**The Jesus Christ isn't deity error.** Many sincere folks believe that Jesus Christ isn't God and that He was just a good man. Yet the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is God (John 10:30-33; Rom. 9:5). If Christ isn't God then He is a liar and liars aren't good men.

**The salvation by prayer error.** Many sincere folks are saying a prayer in order to be saved. Yet in order to be saved, the Bible teaches that one must be taught the gospel and must understand it (Rom. 10:14-17), believe the gospel (Heb. 11:6), repent of all sins (Luke 13:3), confess Christ as the Son of God (Matt. 10:32; Acts 8:37), and be baptized unto the remission of sins and in order to put on Christ (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27).

**The baptism isn't necessary to be saved error.** Many sincere folks teach that baptism isn't necessary to be saved because it is a work. Yet the resurrected and victorious Savior says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Faith is a work (John 6:28-29). Yet these people don't think it isn't necessary to be saved.

**The join a "Bible believing church of your choice error."** Many sincere folks are joining churches of their choice and yet the Bible says when God saves us, He adds us to His church (Acts 2:47). He does not ask us to join the church of our choice. The Savior has only one church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:18).

**The no pattern in the worship and work of the church error.** Many sincere folks are doing things in the work and worship of the church, which God has not authorized such as mechanical instruments in the worship, utilizing singing groups in worship, forming organizations to do the work of the church among others. Yet we are told that our teaching and our practice must be authorized by God (Col. 3:17).

### Conclusion

The idea that it doesn't matter what a person believes as long as he is sincere is a mistake. It is a mistake in profane matters and it is a mistake in eternal matters. The road to hell is paved with good intentions or sincerity. The reason is this: **It is possible to be sincere and yet be sincerely wrong.**

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It is hard to find a Scriptural way to do an unscriptural thing. —R.L. Whiteside—

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# Where in the Bible Does it Say That Loved Ones Who Have Died Watch Over us From Heaven?

Jerry C. Brewer

When a loved one dies, there are a great many unscriptural statements and downright errors that are expressed which manifest Biblical ignorance. Although they are well meaning, such sentiments are but wishful thinking, and have no basis in God's word. There is absolutely nothing any person on earth can know about the hereafter, except as it is revealed in the Bible. One of the errors people say voice is that Mama, or Daddy, or Grandpa or Grandma are watching.

## “Grandpa is Watching Over Us From Heaven”



This statement is wishful thinking, at best, and downright error, at worst. “Grandpa” isn't in heaven. He's in *hades* awaiting the resurrection and final judgment. In the second place, have you considered what you are saying when you make that statement? What does it take for a being from heaven to be aware of all occurrences on earth? It takes **omniscience**. To say “Grandpa is looking down on us” ascribes omniscience to “Grandpa.” Only God is omniscient and “Grandpa” is **not God**.

The dead have no knowledge of what happens on earth. They are conscious, as were Lazarus and the rich man, but their knowledge of earthly things is gone. Solomon wrote,

For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is under the sun (Eccl. 9:5-6).

Notice the phrase, *under the sun*. What does “under the sun” mean? That phrase refers to the things of this life, those things done on the earth, and Solomon employs that phrase 27 times in the book of Ecclesiastes. His thesis in that book is the vanity, or emptiness, of all things of this life, and when he says, the dead have no “portion forever in anything that is under the sun,” he means the dead, though **still conscious** in *hades*, have no knowledge of earthly matters. They are as unaware of earthly activities as you are unaware of what takes place in your house when you go shopping.

## “Daddy is Deer Hunting in Heaven”

This is one of the more foolish statements that has no Bible basis. They who say such things obviously view heaven as some sort of glorified “resort.” Jesus clearly taught that *all* earthly relationships and activities will cease after death. Matthew records a question the Sadducees—who did not believe in the resurrection or spirits—asked Jesus, and His answer to them. They posed their question in a hypothetical story which they thought would create a dilemma for the Lord. They said a woman married a man who died, and his brother took her for his wife, as the Law of Moses commanded. In their story,

...the man had six brothers and they all died, leaving her to the next, until they had all died. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven” (Matt. 22:27-30).

Marital relationships, designed by God for earthly life, will end with earthly life. There will be no marriage in heaven, and all other earthly relationships will end as well. Heaven is not merely an extension of earthly life. “Daddy” could not hunt deer in heaven, because no animals will be in heaven. Animals are not living souls that were created in God's image, as was man. God breathed into man the breath of life and man became a living soul (Gen. 1:26; 2:7). He did not create animals in His image. The spirit

of man goes upward when his body returns to the ground and the live essence (the spirit) of animals goes downward. “Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?” (Eccl. 3:21).

Every earthly relationship on earth ceases at death, including all activities associated with those relationships. Neither Paradise nor Heaven will be a “Glorified Resort/Fishing-Hunting Lodge/Golf Course” or any other recreational activity in which we engage in this life “under the sun.”

Heaven is a place of glory that the mind of man cannot grasp. Even the description we have of it is figurative, using things known to man in this life, but those things are not literal—the street of pure gold (Rev. 21:21), the “pure river of the water of life” (Rev. 22:1-2). All of heaven's descriptions in the Bible are couched in terms the mind of man can grasp because, so long as we live in the flesh, we cannot fully understand the glories, the spiritual nature, and the eternal wonder of that home of the soul. We simply trust Him who cannot lie (Titus 1:2) to do what He has promised for the faithful.

When a loved one dies, let us not speculate about earthly things and say things that have no basis in the Bible. When ebon darkness washes over the soul at a loved one's death, let us simply humble ourselves before God, “casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7).

*“Does Jesus care when I've said goodbye  
To the dearest on earth to me?  
When my sad heart aches til it nearly breaks,  
Is it aught to Him, does He see?  
O, yes, He cares, I know He cares.  
His heart is touched with my grief.  
When the days are weary, the long nights dreary  
I know my Savior cares.”*

Search the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and you will not find a single syllable saying that loved ones who have died watch over us from heaven.

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It has never been proved that a monkey can make a man of himself, but we see it demonstrated every day that a man can make a monkey of himself.

— R.L. Whiteside —

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## Where in the Bible Does It Say that a Person Immediately Goes to Heaven When He Dies?

**Dub McClish**

The question in our title manifestly applies only to persons who are Scriptural “candidates” for Heaven. We could enlarge it thus: Will those who die, having been saved through their faith in Jesus the Christ, their obedience to His conditions of pardon, and their faithful service to Him thereafter, go directly to Heaven?



To ask this question implies that some hold and teach that the Bible sets forth this view of the abode of the righteous dead (and likely more than a few don't even believe that one must be righteous to ascend immediately to Heaven!). Evidence abounds that this view is rampant among members of the denominations and those influenced by denominational doctrines. It is not unusual for the obituary page of newspapers and the Online obituary reports by funeral homes to carry such announcements as the following: “Our dear, departed father has joined the angels in Heaven, where he waits to welcome us.”

Those who consciously and purposefully believe this doctrine allege that when the

Christ ascended to Heaven following His resurrection the righteous dead of all previous ages were transported to Heaven with Him. This doctrine further alleges that all the righteous dead since then go immediately to Heaven—implying the non-existence of Hades from that time forward (we could appropriately call it “The Anti-Hades” Doctrine).

A few brethren have subscribed to this view through the years. It’s first adherent of whom I am aware was the nineteenth-century preacher, F.G. Allen. However, his contemporaries, including such men as Alexander Campbell, J.W. McGarvey, and Moses E. Lard forcefully rejected and opposed Allen’s contentions, and for good reasons, as I hope to demonstrate. The only brother of prominence I know of in more recent years to embrace what we might also call “The Instant Heaven” doctrine (and surprisingly so) was the late and lamented Gus Nichols, although I’m not aware if he ever tried to “convert” others to it.

Some are just now discovering this view of the abode of the righteous dead. Only a few months ago a preaching brother wrote to me that he had just learned an approach to some passages that runs contrary to all that he had formerly believed and taught concerning the abode of the righteous dead. He said it had caused him to rethink the meaning of said passages (which indeed, one must do to embrace it!). He was firmly convinced of this “new” position. He sent me a copy of the sermon he was planning soon to deliver to the brethren where he lived. I responded to his contentions, demonstrating some their fallacies, but to no avail. When I saw my efforts were futile, I closed our discussion by cautioning him against making his new discovery a hobby, fearing that I may have been too late with my warning.

While some consciously hold this view to be true, I’ve discovered over the years that some brethren “unconsciously” or unintentionally evince this view, indicated by remarks they make in reference to loved ones who have died. Further, many brethren who deny believing in this doctrine nonetheless promote it in some of the songs they sing in their worship assemblies. Consider the following samples, only a few of which could be cited (emph. DM):

1. The fourth verse of Virgil P. Brock’s hymn, “Beyond the Sunset,” reads, “Beyond the sunset O glad reunion, **with our dear loved ones who’ve gone before**; in that fair homeland we’ll know no parting; beyond the sunset forevermore.”
2. Perhaps the best-known songwriter among us, the late Tillet S. Tedlie, in his song, “In Heaven They’re Singing,” devoted an entire song to the idea that the righteous dead are now in Heaven. The song’s title sounds this theme, and its first verse reads, “In heaven **they’re singing a wonderful song**, a theme that shall never grow old; and **glorified millions are singing it now, in that beautiful city of gold.**”
3. The second verse of “Sing to Me of Heaven” reads: “Sing to me of heaven, as I walk alone, dreaming of **the comrades that so long have gone; in a fairer region ‘mong the angel throng, they’re happy as they sing that old sweet song.**”
4. The Refrain of “An Empty Mansion” says, at the “**...end of life’s troublesome way, many friends and dear loved ones will welcome me there....**”
5. The third verse of “Where We’ll Never Grow Old” declares that when our lives here are finished “All our sorrow will end, and our voices will blend, with **the saved ones who’ve gone before.**”
6. “When the Sun Goes Down” is saturated with the concept that upon dying the righteous immediately enter their heavenly “mansion” where tears are wiped away and “**We shall join the blood-washed throng...**” who are there.

The samples above are from a brief survey of fewer than 200 of the 946 songs in the book used by the congregation of which I’m a member; doubtless many of the other 700+ songs contain similar phrases indicating that the redeemed are already in Heaven. It’s quite possible that at least some of these song writers did not realize the implications of some of their words (perhaps they were simply “carried away” with the godly intent of glorifying our final heavenly estate?). I confess that I have sung some of these songs over the years without noting these implications, but I no longer do so.

This concept, however, has never gained a significant following, and for several good reasons, as I propose to demonstrate. The fallacy of this view of the abode of the righteous dead is clear from at least the following considerations:

The “general rule” (with an admitted few exceptions) is that “it is appointed unto men once to die...” (Heb. 9:27), excepting those who are alive at the Lord’s return.

The New Testament defines *death* for humankind as the separation of one’s immortal, God-infused spirit from his physical body. James stated it plainly: “...the body apart from the spirit is dead...” (2:26). The physical body of all who die will decompose, but one’s spirit lives on in a realm God prepared for departed spirits. Solomon summarized this truth; in reference to a lifeless body, he stated, “...the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it” (Ecc. 12:7).

The New Testament identifies the depository of all departed spirits, both of the righteous and the unrighteous, as “Hades.” It is generally accepted that *Hades* is the transliterated/anglicized compound Greek word, *eido*, meaning to see, which, combined with the negative particle *a* at its beginning, means “not to see” or “the unseen” (*Vine’s* advances the view that *Hades* derives from the Greek word, *ado*, meaning “all-receiving,” that is, Hades is the destination of the spirits of good and evil men alike).

Jesus pulled back the curtain of this invisible realm in his account of the rich man and Lazarus, a beggar (Luke 16:19–31). Both men died. The spirit of Lazarus was born by angels to “Abraham’s bosom,” a Hebraism connoting comfort and rest (vv. 22–23). The spirit of the nameless rich man did not fare as well, “being in torments” that involved fiery anguish (vv. 23–24). Jesus said that the rich man was in Hades (v. 23), from which we must deduce that (a) Lazarus and Abraham were also in Hades, and that (b) two vastly different areas of the Hadean realm exist, one of which is inhabited by the spirits of the righteous and the other (called “tartarus” in the Greek NT of 2 Pet. 2:4), by the spirits of the unrighteous. Moreover, an impassible chasm exists between them (v. 26). We may also fairly deduce that the spirits of all who have died occupy either “Abraham’s bosom” or “tartarus.”

In his Pentecost sermon, Peter referenced the destiny of both the Lord’s spirit and His lifeless body by quoting and applying David’s remarkable Messianic prophecy: “Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades, Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption” (Acts 2:27, 31; Psa. 16:10). Note the following: (a) the soul/spirit of the Lord entered Hades upon His death, otherwise He could not leave it upon His resurrection, and (b) His body did not remain in its sacred tomb sufficiently long to putrefy before God raised Him from it “on the third day” after His entombment (Luke 24:7).

Jesus referred to the Hadean realm of comfort and rest into which His spirit was about to enter when he promised the penitent thief on the cross next to His, “...Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43), which connotes a place of pleasure and blessing. Since the Bible provides no hint that more than one sphere exists in Hades either for righteous spirits or for unrighteous spirits, we therefore deduce that *Abraham’s bosom* and *Paradise* describe the same Hadean sphere. (Paul’s calling “the third heaven” [i.e., Heaven itself] “Paradise” [2 Cor. 12:2–4] has led those of the *instant Heaven* persuasion to infer that since Paul thus uses *Paradise* in reference to Heaven, the saved inhabitants of Hades had all been transported to Heaven upon Jesus’ ascension—and that all the righteous dead since then have made their way there instantly. Such an inference fails to allow that *paradise* may be used to describe any “place” of great blessing, pleasure, and peace, depending upon contextual considerations. While *paradise* fittingly describes Biblical pictures of Heaven, it doesn’t follow that every “place” called “paradise” is Heaven. “Abraham’s bosom” also well fits the meaning of *paradise*, the Hadean realm into which Lazarus and the Lord entered).

With but few exceptions (the Lord Jesus principal among them), the Bible teaches that the departed spirits of all the dead, beginning with Adam, both righteous and unrighteous, have remained and will remain in Hades until His return. We discern this fact from the following statements:

1. In an extended discourse, Jesus announced that He will return at a time which no one can predict (Matt. 24:36–25:30).

2. At His coming, “...the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God...” (John 5:25, 28; cf. 1 Thes. 4:17). *The dead* will include “...all that are in the tombs...,” both “they that have done good...and they that have done evil...” (v. 29; cf. 1 Cor. 15:22–23; 1 Thes. 4:16). (Note: There will be only one universal resurrection, never mind the contentions of the “rapture” advocates.)
3. Our mortal, fleshly bodies will then be resurrected, which in the same instant will be made “incorruptible” and—reunited with our immortal spirits—be fitted for the heavenly kingdom (1 Cor. 15:42–44). Those still living will instantly be changed and given bodies meet for eternity (vv. 52–53). Since those sentenced to “eternal punishment” (Matt. 25:46) must likewise be capable of immortality, the conclusion is irresistible: like the righteous dead, they will be raised with immortal bodies and those alive at His coming will immediately be changed and given immortal bodies (utterly refuting the egregious annihilationist heresy).
4. The declaration of eternal sentences for all mankind—both good and evil—will then follow the Resurrection (John 5:28–29; cf. Matt. 25:31–32, 46). None will be able to avoid appearing before the “judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:10).
5. Following the Judgment, all the saints, whether resurrected or alive at His coming, will be “caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thes. 4:17).
6. Having abolished all competing claims of authority and power, the last of which is death, the “King of kings and Lord of lords” will deliver the immortal saints of His glorified kingdom to His Father (1 Cor. 15:24–26).

To aver that (a) “Abraham’s bosom”/paradise” was emptied at Jesus’ ascension and its residents ascended with Him to Heaven and/or (2) that all the righteous who have since died have immediately entered Heaven therefore implies the **denial** of at least the following doctrines, all of which Scripture explicitly or implicitly teaches, as I have summarized above:

1. **The existence of Hades** since the Lord’s resurrection and ascension (if it still exists, it has had no occupants since a few weeks after the Pentecost of Acts 2!).
2. **The universal resurrection** of all the dead at the Lord’s coming (there will be none to be resurrected!).
3. **The instant infusion of immortality** by the Lord to the bodies of those raised and to those alive at His return (those resurrected and in Heaven will already be so equipped, or they couldn’t inhabit Heaven!).
4. **The universal final Judgment**, at which all must appear (the only ones not already “judged” will be those living when the Lord returns, or perhaps the Lord will bring out those already in Heaven to attend the Judgment!).
5. **The ascension of the resurrected and immortalized saints**, all of whom will meet the Lord in the air (superfluous relative to those already in Heaven; only those living when the Lord returns will be available to thus ascend!).

This doctrine meddles with some of the clearest revelations of the Holy Spirit relative to “final events” and our Heavenly hope. Let us take care not even to unconsciously subscribe to it or sympathize with it. [Note: For a fuller discussion of this subject, I highly recommend the article by the late Guy N. Woods, “Do the Spirits of the Righteous go Immediately to Heaven at Death?” in *Questions and Answers*, Freed-Hardestman College: Henderson, TN, 1976, pp. 340–345.]

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## Anvil Sparks

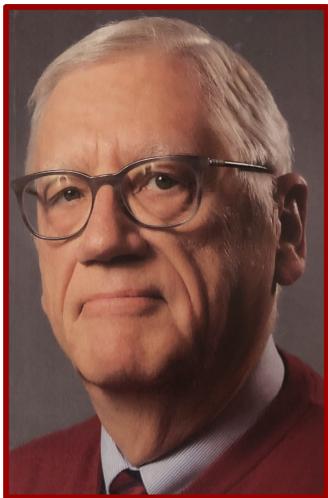
People are already drunk on something when they imagine that liquor will bring prosperity. Imagine how things would be, if everybody in this country would get drunk at the same. —**R.L. Whiteside**—

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# Where in the Bible Does it Say That God's Silence is Permissive?

Lester Kamp

It is amazing how people recognize a truth and practice it in every area of their lives except when it comes to religion. For example, people generally recognize that silence does not authorize when the instructions are specific. For example, I recognized



this even when I was a young child. My parents would occasionally send me to the corner grocery store with a list of specific items they wanted me to purchase. I would purchase only the items on the list. I understood not to purchase items that the list was **silent** about. If candy was not on the list, I knew that the absence (**silence**) of candy on the list did not authorize me to buy candy. I knew that my parents did not have to list all of the items “thou shalt not purchase”; they only had to list the specific items they wanted me to purchase. Simply stated: **silence is not permissive!**

Most recognize that when a doctor writes a prescription, he does not have to list all the medications he does not want used. He simply indicates the correct, specific medication and that

automatically rules out all other medications. The doctor’s silence does **not authorize**; the doctor’s silence prohibits the use of all medications not mentioned. When specific requirements are stated, **silence is not permissive.**

A recipe, if followed, to make a particular dish requires acceptance of the fact that specifics in that recipe eliminate the use of other ingredients and the specific measurements eliminate other measurements. The recipe does not have to list ingredients that are not to be used; the recipe does not have to state that other measurements of these ingredients are not to be used. The specifics are given and those specifics forbid variations and deviations. When specific requirements are stated, **silence is not permissive.**

We recognize this principle in everyday life. This is the way we function. But, does this principle apply to matters in religion? Does God in His Word use this principle and expect us to understand the significance of silence when commands are specific?

## Is This Principle Used by God in His Word?

Consider the command of God to Noah, “Make thee an ark of gopher wood” (Gen. 6:14). God specified “gopher wood” as the material out of which the ark was to be constructed. Suppose Noah reasoned like some do today and decided that because God had not commanded him NOT to make the ark out of oak, spruce, or hickory that he was permitted to use these materials in that structure. If he had done so, he would not have obeyed God. Noah knew when God specified “gopher wood” this eliminated the use of all other woods. When God specified “gopher wood” this was **not** permissive, but restrictive. God said, “thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he” (Gen. 6:22). This principle is sometimes called the law of inclusion/exclusion. The command included “gopher wood” and thereby excluded all other kinds of wood.

When God specified that the people of Israel were to use a lamb in observing the Passover, this did **not** permit them to use another kind of animal (Exo. 12-3-6). Moses found out that when God told him to speak (a specific act) to the rock that this did not permit him to strike the rock (Num. 20:8-13). He disobeyed God and was punished for his disobedience.

Through Elisha the prophet, God told Naaman to dip seven times in the Jordan river to cleanse his leprosy. God specified the water in which Naaman was to dip for cleansing. God did not list the waters that he was not to use for this purpose. When He specified the Jordan river, the waters of Abana and Pharpar in Syria and all other waters were NOT permitted. It should be noted that sometimes God gives a generic command. Had God said to Naaman dip seven times in water, that would permit the use of any water for that purpose. But, God specified the Jordan; His silence regarding other waters did

NOT permit other waters being used, but rather prohibited the use of other waters.

This important principle is set forth by the writer of Hebrews. Showing that the law of Moses had ended, he focuses on the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Christ. “For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood” (Heb. 7:14). The law said “nothing concerning the priesthood.” That means the law was silent regarding priests coming from any tribe other than the tribe of Levi. In other words, the law of Moses specified that the priests should come from the tribe of Levi and was silent about all other tribes. God’s silence did not permit priests coming from other tribes. The Hebrews writer states that, because of the prohibitive nature of God’s silence, the only way that Jesus can be a priest is for the law of Moses to have ended.

It is obvious that in God’s Word, God uses the principle that we are considering. When God specifies in His commands, man disobeys God when he deviates from those specifics. When God specifies, **God's silence is not permissive**; His silence in these circumstances is prohibitive.

Most recognize this principle even in most religious matters. Most recognize that the Bible nowhere says “thou shalt not” use hamburger and buttermilk in the Lord’s Supper, but this is not generally practiced because God has specified what is to be used. Most recognize that nowhere do we find in the Bible that it is stated “thou shalt not” pray to Mary or the apostles, but this is not generally practiced because God has specified to whom we are to pray. Most recognize that it is not stated in the Bible “thou shalt not” baptize infants, but this is not to be practiced because God has specified that only penitent believers are to be baptized.

Notice the impact of the following Scriptures on this principle of **silence**. “Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other” (1 Cor. 4:6, ASV). “Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9, ASV). “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18).

### **The Real Focus and Application**

The principle of silence being permissive is applied primarily by many to justify the use of mechanical instrumental music in the worship of the church. They say, “God has never said thou shalt not use mechanical instruments of music in the worship of the church.” To them, the silence of God regarding instruments of music permits the use of them. (This is admission, by the way, that God has not said anything about the use of these instruments in worship.) But, God has specified the kind of music that is to be used in the worship of the church. In every case, God has specified **singing** as the kind of music that is to be used. Consider two passages: ‘Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord’ (Eph. 5:19). “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

When God specifies singing that prohibits every other kind of music in the worship of the church. It is clear: **The silence of God is not permissive; The Silence of God is prohibitive**. When mechanical instruments are used in the worship of the church, people are disobeying God—they are sinning! “The Lord not only authorizes music in the church, but tells us the kind of music we should have. The Lord has not left it with us to select the kind of music we should have. The Bible is not silent on this question as some people think.” (E.M. Borden, *ACC Lectures 1926-1927*, page 210).

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Can you find any church in the New Testament that spoke of its “ministries” in the plural? Did know that the church in the New Testament had only **one ministry**? **It was preaching the Gospel.**

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# Where in the Bible Does it Say That All People Are Born Sinners?

David Ray

This common view amongst religious people is generally known as *Original Sin*, inherited sin, or total hereditary depravity, meaning that every human somehow inherits the first sin committed, Adam's sin, causing each of us to have a totally depraved, sinful human nature. We are incapable of doing any good, only evil. You'll be relieved to know that, in the Bible, this doctrine can be found in "The Book of Opinions,"—it **isn't** there!



It is truly amazing that so many professing Christians subscribe to this belief. It's amazing for three reasons. First, because Scripture is devoid of any such teaching; second, because Scripture teaches a completely different view on the topic of the fall of mankind; and third, because Original Sin contradicts and blasphemes the very nature of our loving God. Let us examine these three points.

## Scripture Does not Teach Original Sin

Because Original Sin is not taught in the Bible, in order to answer the question in the article's title, we must consult a source other than the Bible (which is never a good idea if we simply want the truth). Consider Wikipedia's introductory paragraph on the topic:

**Original sin** is the Christian doctrine that holds that humans, through the fact of birth, inherit a tainted nature in need of regeneration and a proclivity to sinful conduct. The biblical bases for the belief are generally found in Genesis 3 (the story of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden), in a line in psalm 51:5 ("I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me"), and in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, 5:12-21 ("Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned") [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Original\\_sin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Original_sin).

Contrary to Wikipedia's assertion, this is **not** a "Christian doctrine." Christian doctrine is found in the New Testament and, as already stated, original sin is not. Yet, it is generally believed that, since the time of the first man, Adam, every human has been born a sinner, having inherited a "sinful nature" from his father, who inherited it from his father, etc., all the way back to Adam. Because of this, we are totally depraved, completely unable to do anything good.

A study of the history of this doctrine would point us to men like John Calvin, Martin Luther, and Augustine of Hippo. It is not my intent to go into details on these men and their teaching, but to stress that the doctrine has its origins in men, not the Bible. It is, however, important to recognize the extent to which Calvin took this error.

Calvin's doctrine is summarized in five main points, known by the acronym TULIP (Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints, or Once Saved, Always Saved). It is not within the scope of this article to discuss each of these; we will only be looking at the first one, Total Hereditary Depravity. Let's consider some quotes from Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion

(<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.iv.ii.html>)[all bold mine – DR].

Regarding Adam's sin, Calvin said that he

...involved his posterity also, and plunged them in the same wretchedness. This is the hereditary corruption to which early Christian writers gave the name of **Original Sin**, meaning by the term the depravation of a nature formerly good and pure.

we...bring an innate corruption **from the very womb**.

In reference to Psalm 51:5 he said,

Surely there is no ambiguity in David's confession, 'I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.' ...there was no peculiarity in David's case, it follows that it is only an instance of the common lot of the whole human race. All of us, therefore, descending from an impure seed, come into the world tainted with the contagion of sin. Nay, before we behold the light of the sun we are in God's sight defiled and polluted. We thus see that **the impurity of parents is transmitted to their children**, so that all, **without exception**, are originally depraved. The commencement of this depravity will not be found until we ascend to the first parent of all as the fountain head. We must, therefore, hold it for certain, that, in regard to human nature, **Adam** was not merely a progenitor, but, as it were, a root, and that, accordingly, by his corruption, the whole human race was deservedly vitiated (298).

He drew this conclusion from a misunderstanding of Romans 5:12-19:

This is plain from the contrast which the Apostle draws between Adam and Christ, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned; even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Let's address these claims, as well as the statement in the Wikipedia article that there are three main passages used to support this error, Genesis 3, Psalm 51:5, and Romans 5:12ff.

Genesis three records the first sin of mankind, the eating of the forbidden fruit by Adam and Eve. In it we learn of the temptation to sin, the sin itself, and the consequences for the sin. Adam was punished for **his** sin in eating the fruit and Eve was punished for **her** sin in eating the fruit. Nothing in this passage teaches that their sin (or the guilt of it) would be passed on to their children.

Psalm 51:5 has often been used by Calvinists to teach original, hereditary sin; but there are two reasons why this is a false conclusion, one involving translation, the other interpretation. First, while it does speak of some type of sin involved in and around the birth of David, the sin was not David's, nor does it say that the sin (or the guilt thereof) was transferred to David. It says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Who sinned, David or his parents? The NIV, in what seems to have been an attempt to support Original Sin, mistranslated this as, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." Notice the glaring difference regarding **who** committed the sin! The NIV translators would have us to believe David was claiming that he himself was the sinner, even from the time he was conceived! Recalling the definition of sin in 1 John 3:4 ("transgression of law") we must ask, what law did David transgress? What law could any baby in the womb violate? **None!** Young's Literal Translation reads, "Lo, in iniquity I have been brought forth, And in sin doth my mother conceive me." No, David did **not** believe that he had sinned in the womb, and the proper translation of the text shows clearly that the "sin" belonged to his parents, not to him!

The second reason the Calvinistic view of Psalm 51:5 is incorrect has to do with interpretation. While the verse clearly states that the sin belonged to his mother, not David, ultimately a proper understanding of the purpose and emotion of the psalm shows that **neither** sinned at his conception. David was using **figurative language**. The context of the psalm is David's godly sorrow for his sin with Bathsheba. In his great sadness, disappointment, anger, and disgust at himself for his actions, he used strong hyperbole (exaggeration) to make his point (as he did in verse 4 when he said "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned"). He was not saying that he **or** his parents were sinful at his conception. Surely we all can understand and relate to David's emotion here.

Consider a similar favorite passage of the Calvinist, Psalm 58:3: "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." The Calvinist takes this literally, ignoring the obvious **figurative** language. Can a newborn baby speak lies? Even if he could, notice that these go astray **as soon as they are**

**born.** But Calvin said they were sinful from conception (“before we behold the light of the sun we are in God’s sight defiled and polluted”). If we take Psalm 58:3 literally, his statement is contradictory. If we take it figuratively (as we should), his statement is utterly ridiculous.

The third alleged proof text passage to consider is Romans 5:12, which states, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” This verse presents a logical progression with regard to sin, its origin, and its result. But nowhere does it say that “humans, through the fact of birth, inherit a tainted nature.” It says **1)** “as by one man sin entered into the world” (i.e., Adam sinned), **2)** “and death by sin” (death was the result/punishment – cf. Rom. 6:23), and **3)** “and so death passed upon all men.” But how? How did death pass upon all men? Because Adam sinned? Because we inherited his “sinful nature”? No! The next five words answer the question unambiguously, “**for that all have sinned!**”

Another verse that has confused people on this topic is 1 Corinthians 15:22 – “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Of this verse, Calvin said, “Therefore, the only explanation which can be given of the expression, ‘in Adam all died,’ is, that he by sinning not only brought disaster and ruin upon himself, but also plunged our nature into like destruction...”

To be consistent in this verse, if “in Adam all die” means that we **all** (no exceptions/limitations) are born sinful and lost, then “even so in Christ shall all be made alive” means that we **all** (no exceptions/limitations) will be saved. Not only is this “universalism” view false biblically, but it would disprove “Limited Atonement” (the third tenet of Calvinism), which teaches that Christ died **only** for the elect, another false teaching (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:2)!

In Adam all die **if** we follow his example and commit sin. In Christ all shall be made alive **if** we follow His example and obey God. Both of these come down to the decision that each human makes to either be obedient or disobedient.

Mankind is definitely sinful. As Paul said in Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” But every point the Bible makes regarding the sinfulness of mankind is **because mankind chooses to commit sin**, not because mankind inherited sin.

### **Scriptural Teaching on the Fall of Mankind**

Contrary to the belief that man is inherently sinful and corrupt in nature to the point that he has no choice but to be sinful, let’s consider some points and passages on the topic of sin and each human’s own personal ability and responsibility to choose the right over the wrong.

Man is **not** responsible for or affected by Adam’s sin (or anyone else’s). Each person is responsible for his own sin.

- 1.** Exodus 32:33 – “And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.”
- 2.** Deuteronomy 24:16 – “The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.”
- 3.** Isaiah 7:16 – “For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.” The child will have a decision to refuse evil and choose good. And this decision-making ability will come a certain time after he is born.
- 4.** Isaiah 59:2 – “Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.” Each person is separated from God by his own sins.
- 5.** Ezekiel 18:20 – “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”

6. Ezekiel 28:15 – “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.”
7. Ecclesiastes 7:29 – “Behold this alone I found: God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.”
8. John 8:24 – “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.” You shall die in **your** sins (not Adam’s; not your parents’)!
9. John 8:34 – “Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” “Commits” is present tense (continuous action). Whoever continues to commit sin is a slave to sin. This is about your decision to either continue sinning or to stop. It has nothing to do with the sins of Adam, our parents, or anyone else.
10. Colossians 2:13– “And you, being dead in **your** sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”

Are children born sinners?

1. Matthew 18:6 – “Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” How could Christ say this about sinful children?
2. Matthew 19:14-15 – “Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”
3. Romans 9:11 (speaking of Jacob and Esau–v.14) – “For the children being not yet born, **neither having done any good or evil**, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth...”
4. Deuteronomy 1:39 (regarding the punishment of the Israelites in the wilderness) – “Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day **had no knowledge between good and evil**, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.” If they had no knowledge between good and evil, how could they have been sinful? Does God condemn anyone, let alone children, for disobeying a law He has not given to them or that they are not yet capable of understanding? And if these children were sinful, why the distinction between their sinlessness and the parents’ sinfulness? Why did these “sinful” children get to inherit the promised land, while their sinful parents died? They were **not** sinful because they “had no knowledge between good and evil!” Remember, 1 John 3:4 says sin is the transgression of God’s law. If one still says that this baby is sinful (is held responsible for his parents’ sins, etc.), then how can he be forgiven?

Babies cannot meet God’s requirements for salvation.

1. Man must do something to save himself (Acts 2:40, Phil. 2:12, John 8:24, Luke 13:3, Matt. 10:32-33, Acts 2:38), and babies cannot follow these commands to save themselves.
2. Therefore, babies cannot be saved (if they’re sinful). This makes God a liar; He does **not** want all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).
3. What about all the babies who have died before they reached the age where they were able to react properly to the message of the gospel? Are they in torment right now (cf. Luke 16:23)? The Calvinist may not want to answer this, but we can. The answer is, absolutely not! Babies are not sinners or God would have made a way for them to be saved. Notice how the plan of salvation is in total opposition to inherited sin and infant baptism.

### **Original Sin Contradicts and Blasphemes the Very Nature of Our Loving God**

It is impossible to inherit a sin. God defines sin as a violation of His law (1 John 3:4 – “sin is the transgression of the law”). How can I inherit the sin of my father, or his father, or Adam? Can I eat the fruit Adam ate? If my father was a murderer, does that

make me one?

The real question is, can I inherit the **guilt** of the sin committed by my father, grandfather, or Adam? Earlier the question was presented, What law could any baby in the womb violate? Obviously none. But can that baby somehow be considered **guilty**, held responsible in some way for the sins of his father, or Adam? While common sense says no, Original Sin says yes! Yet, while only God can forgive someone's sins, only God can assign the blame of sin to someone. The false doctrine of inherited sin accuses God of assigning the blame for one person's sin to another person, even an **innocent baby in the womb!** What kind of "god" would do such a thing?

How does the Bible answer the question, "Can I inherit the guilt of someone else's sin?" As clear as Deity can make it, Ezekiel 18:20 says,

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

Not that this verse could be made any clearer than it already is, but please read the entire chapter as well. In doing so, you will find God, in essence, defending Himself against the views of His people on this topic. He says (v. 29), "Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?" The ways of the Original Sin adherent are just as unequal. How can a loving God, who did everything in His power to provide a way for each individual person to be forgiven of his own sins and to go to Heaven, hold us guilty and condemn us **for the sins of someone else?**

For Bible believers, the question is forever settled: He does not! You are not, cannot, and will not be held responsible for another's sins. You did **not** inherit the sin (or guilt of sin) of another human being – not your father, Adam, or anyone else. You were **not** a sinner as soon as you were conceived or born. You were in no way tainted by the sin of your parents. Nor did you inherit a sinful nature, something you can blame for the sins you now commit as an adult. When you became old enough to know right from wrong (Deut. 1:39; Isa. 7:16), you then made your own choices whether to obey God's word or not, and this you still do. Certainly you were and are influenced by others (parents, friends, etc.); but sin is always **your choice**. And you are guilty for **your own sin**, and **only** your own sin.

Calvinism not only misses the mark on the source of sin, but also on the solution for sin. While Calvinism says that salvation is all God's doing, and you either are or are not saved (depending on the whether or not God chose to "elect" you, based in no way on your actions, good or bad), the Bible says otherwise. Acts 10:34-35 says "God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." Every human being has the choice to obey the gospel by believing in Jesus Christ (John 3:16), repenting of his sins (Acts 17:30), confessing Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9-10), being baptized for the purpose of having his sins forgiven and washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16), and being raised from that watery grave to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4), committed to Him and His Word unto death (Rev. 2:10). We implore every reader to humbly obey this gospel plan of salvation.

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## Does People Visit Jesus' Grave?

Jess Whitlock

The deity of Christ Jesus is proved by His resurrection from the dead the third day (Acts 2:27, 31; 17:30-31; Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:4). The first Pope, Boniface III, of the Catholic Church remains in his grave; the founder of Mormonism remains in his grave; the founder of the Lutheran church remains in his grave; the founder of the Methodist church remains in his grave; the founder of Pentecostalism remains in his grave; the founder of the Baptist church remains in his grave. But, the tomb of Jesus Christ remains unoccupied until this very day. Jesus promised to build His church (Matt. 16:16-ff), and did so (Acts 2). He was raised from the dead the third day and remains alive for evermore. **The Bible Is Right!**

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# Where in the Bible Does it Say That Inspired Men Ever Commanded Sinners to Pray for Salvation?

Harrell Davidson

It is obvious in the question that there are primarily two things that we wish to touch on. Salvation and prayer.



The Bible is the text book regarding the problem of sin and redemption. Adam and Eve brought into the world through sin every tear, heartache, sorry, pain sickness and dying and is thus, in many ways, the saddest chapter in the Bible. It is in Genesis 3 that we first read the word “cursed” (vs. 14, 17). Satan was cursed as was the earth—the ground in which man would plant and reap his food.

Adam started running away from God. He and Eve were barred from the beautiful Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24). Man, that God had created in His own image had now transgressed His law. God said “Thou shalt not” but man said I’ll do as I please. From this, God started running toward Pentecost when

the Gospel would be preached in its fullness and souls would, and could, be saved.

In Genesis 4 Abel offered a firstling of the flock for he had faith in the atoning blood (Heb. 11:4). Those animals that were sacrificed had to be pure without spot or blemish (cf. Lev. 1). Have you ever wondered why the ram—male lamb—had to be pure without spot or blemish?

In Genesis 22 Abraham was told to go and offer thy son thine only son which he proceeded to do. With all he needed to make the sacrifice, he was about to take his son’s life when an angel of the Lord stayed his hand and there was a ram caught in the brush which Abraham used as a sacrifice.

In Exodus 12 we read of the Passover where the children of Israel of Israel would come out of Egyptian bondage with the blood of a lamb without spot or blemish whose blood was on the door posts of the houses to show that the blood was applied (Ex. 12:23) that house was spared. If the blood was not applied the first born perished.

Isaiah wrote, “...Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14). This child will be born of a virgin and His name will be Immanuel.

Please read Isaiah 53 and underline or look at all the pronouns like “He”. A ram or lamb animal was never called him or her or “he”. Christ would be a *He*. God is promising that someday, somewhere and somehow, He will provide His own Lamb. Of course, God was speaking through the prophet to indicate His only begotten Son.

The Old Testament closes with that thought in the background of that Lamb being offered in the future. This gives us a very brief history of sin and God’s plan for lost man.

In Matthew chapter 1 we have the birth of Jesus Christ and, “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost” (vs. 18). The word Immanuel is even interpreted for us. Please notice, “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Vs. 23). This is precisely what Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 7:14.

This Child—this Immanuel, John would introduce to the world in the first century by saying “...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Later in verse 31 he would say “And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.” Reckon why John was told to baptize with water? Why did he not tell sinners to pray to be saved? There is a simple answer to that question. Verse 33 “And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water....” The One that sent John told him to use water to baptize people and he did that where there was much water (John 3:23). There was no **praying commanded from this inspired preacher** who was preparing the way of the Lord.

John said, “And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God” (John 1:34) and “And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God” (John 1: 36). Paul wrote “...For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5:7). Christ shed the atoning blood that started with righteous Abel’s lamb’s blood.

After His crucifixion on the cruel old rugged cross and raised from the tomb (cf. 1 Cor 15:1-5) Christ was given all authority both in heaven and on earth.

Read His own words with me. “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt 28:18-19). The American Standard Version of 1901 in verse 18 of Matthew 28 reads “All authority.” Thus, the power or authority to command His apostles and us even to this day resides in His Word which is able to save (Rom. 1:16) called the “gospel.”

When the first Gospel sermon was preached in Acts 2 and those were pricked in their heart (meaning disturbed) why disturbed you ask, they were found guilty of crucifying Christ God’s only begotten Son. They wanted to know what to do to be saved. They were told to “...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Acts 2:37-38). **No one was told to pray to be saved.**

In Acts 8 there was an inspired man, Philip, who preached to the Samaritans and the results of his preaching was, “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (vs. 12). On and on we could go through all the conversions—those saved in the book of Acts as well as any other New Testament books and **not one of them was told to pray for salvation or to be saved.**

Men, uninspired men, have made up the idea of praying through or for salvation. The mourners bench religion is one of many. It is called “altar call.” I hear it frequently from those outside of Christ. Others advertise praying as part of one’s obedience into Christ but it’s all talk—false teachers’ false teaching. When all the mourners are through praying and more praying the Great Commission still reads “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16).

Philip the evangelist in Acts 8 taught the eunuch about Christ and the eunuch said “... See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized” (Acts 8:36)? There’s not one passage in the Bible that even hints at praying for salvation.

Please note that the Lamb of God, Who lived a perfect life and was without spot or blemish, commanded individuals to be baptized to be saved and that is by His divine authority (cf. Acts 22:16; Col. 3:17). Why argue with the Lord over soul salvation? If we will obey Him, we will be saved. If not, we have made the choice to be lost eternally. Have you applied the atoning blood of Christ to your soul?

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## *The Gospel Preceptor Covers the World*

I thank you for the copy of **The Gospel Preceptor**. I enjoyed reading it and have learned a lot from it. In fact, I used some of the articles in my Bible Studies.

—**Samuel A. Bagsangi, Gospel Preacher, Philippines**—

These men would like to be added to the email list for **The Gospel Preceptor** each month. I started printing them off starting with the December edition (I also printed the November edition) and they thought they were great, which I agree. The “ad for \$1000” in the December edition was a good studying point between a student and I on baptism which we have been working on.

—**Patrick King, Gospel Preacher, Oklahoma**—

I am reading your good book and I am already amazed at the idea of apostasy in the world. I didn't know much about Dave Miller but I know that he works with Apologetics Press. Thanks for always keeping me educated and taught in the Word. Always a pleasure to read a good article from sound brethren like you.

—**Hiram Njiru, Gospel Preacher, Thika, Kenya**—

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# Where in the Bible Does it Say That Every Person Who Dies Goes to Heaven?

**Lee Moses**



The reader has almost certainly been present at a funeral where the deceased was “preached into heaven.” Everyone in attendance knows that the deceased lived a life of sin to the end and rarely set foot inside a church building. Everyone knows he never even referred to himself as a Christian. Yet every word the officiant speaks gives the impression that the soul of the deceased will rest in heaven throughout eternity. And if the common modern practice is in play of allowing anyone present to speak, things will get even worse: “That hand that was always holding a beer is going to have to get used to holding a harp,” or “She’s going to show heaven how to party.”

Evidently, the common belief is that everyone—or, at least, **almost** everyone—has heaven as his soul’s destination after death. This is expressed in different ways, as in the hypothetical funeral service previously noted, or as in the common refrain, “We’re all going to the same place, we’re just taking different roads.”

A Barna poll found that 40 percent of Americans agree with the following two statements: “All people will experience the same outcome after death, regardless of their religious beliefs,” and “All people are eventually saved or accepted by God, no matter what they do, because he loves all people he has created.”

Certain religious groups have formed around the concept of *universalism*, the notion that every human being will at some point be saved and make heaven his final home. This notion also persists among those who belong to no such sect. From whence did this idea arise? Does the Bible teach this concept?

## What is Hell?

The Bible clearly teaches that there is a place called hell. God’s word describes it in the most terrifying terms—it is a “furnace of fire” where “there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:42). Among its population will be found the dregs of human history, as well as Satan himself (Rev. 20:10; 21:8). Those who dwell there will dwell in anguish, sorrow, and regret, and they will do so throughout all eternity: “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:44, 46, 48). This is clearly a place no one will ever wish to be—but this is also clearly a place in which some **will** be.

Jesus spoke of a future Judgment Day in which He will judge all nations (Matt. 25:31-46). While He will grant some entrance into heaven, others will be denied: “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41). While this terrifying place may be prepared for the devil and his angels, let the reader observe that not only the devil and his angels will be cast into this everlasting fire. Some among the “all nations”—that is, human beings—will be sent there.

The Bible speaks frequently of *salvation*. Man needs salvation (Mark 16:15-16; Luke 19:10). Jesus died to purchase salvation (Matt. 26:28; Col. 1:14; Rev. 1:6). But what is this salvation **from**? It is salvation from sin and from its most significant consequence, an eternity in hell. To deny that lost human beings will go to hell is to deny, or at least minimize, man’s dire need of salvation.

The reality of hell refutes the notion that all mankind is destined for heaven.

## Can a Loving God Condemn People to Hell?

The sticking point for many universalists is reconciling the love of God with a God who would condemn men—men who are made in His own image (Gen. 1:26-27), even said to be His “offspring” (Acts 17:28-29)—to eternity in hell. God is certainly a loving God.

Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Godhead, clearly demonstrated His love: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). Not only did Christ lay down His life, but He willingly died a most agonizing death (Psa. 22:14-17; Matt. 26:39; John 12:31-32). And not only did He suffer this for those who were already His **friends**: “When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son” (Rom. 5:10).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:16-17).

But again, why did God do this? He did so in order that human beings might escape the eternity in hell that they would otherwise receive. And, make no mistake about it, those who fail to be saved will still be cast into hell on the Judgment Day.

God is love, but love does not exclude justice. As surely as God is a loving God, God is a just God. Abraham asked of the Lord, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. 18:25). The question was rhetorical—**of course** God, the Judge of all the earth will do right. “Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?” (Job 8:3). No, He will not—He will do what is right. And what is right is to punish iniquity.

Human beings fail to appreciate the awfulness of sin. But every sin is a repudiation of the One in whose image the offender was created. Sin against God is an eternal offense and demands an eternal penalty.

Scripture urges mankind, “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God” (Rom. 11:22). God is perfectly good in every way, even personifying love (1 John 4:8). But as a good, just Judge, He will judge severe offenses with severity.

### **Jesus Answers the Question Plainly**

The question under discussion was asked of Jesus Himself:

Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able (Luke 13:23-24).

When the Jewish querist asked whether few would be saved, he was approaching it with a Jewish perspective. The Jews had somehow generally come to believe that their national heritage essentially guaranteed God’s acceptance of them (cf. Matt. 3:9; John 8:33). Jesus often addressed this misconception. He told Nicodemus, who was **the** teacher *par excellence* of the Jews, that he and all others needed to be “born of water and of the Spirit”; that is, baptized in accordance with the Gospel, in order to enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5, cf. John 3:10; Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5). Even this would not guarantee final salvation: “For ye have need of patience [better ‘endurance’], that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise” (Heb. 10:36).

Jesus’ answer to his Jewish querist resounds in perfect harmony with the rest of New Testament teaching—salvation’s point of entry is a “strait gate”; that is, a narrow, confined gate difficult enough to enter that it will cause many to seek another place to enter or to abandon their efforts altogether. This is why Jesus urged His hearers to “**strive**”—Greek *agonizomai*, from which we get “**agonize**”—to enter into salvation’s strait gate. Jesus placed the “many” as attempting to enter but failing, and only few as succeeding. This is not even to mention those who make no effort whatsoever to enter. But Jesus insists that only those who strive to enter will be saved.

True, Jesus may not have answered the question directly with a simple “yes” or “no.” But He answered the question far more **emphatically** than He could have done with a simple “yes” or “no.” Yes, only few people will be saved. No, not every person will go to heaven.

### **What Is Universal**

Some come under the false impression that salvation is universal because much of what is said about salvation is expressed in universal terms. This is seen in the aforementioned John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,

that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” But neither this nor any other passage affirms that salvation will be universally received. What, then, **is** universal?

First of all, God’s love is universal. “God loved the world”—this excludes no one. There is no one outside the scope of His love. God loathes sin itself, and sinners simply cannot abide in the presence of a holy God (Hab. 1:13; Rev. 21:27). But God loves mankind, and wants all to be spared from their self-inflicted destruction of sin.

The power of Christ’s blood is universal. Contrary to the Calvinistic doctrine of “limited atonement,” Jesus Christ “tasted death for every man” (Heb. 2:9). No sin is too grievous, and no sinner has totaled too tall a tally of transgressions, that Christ’s blood cannot cleanse the soul defiled thereby (Heb. 9:13-14).

The invitation to obey the Gospel is universal. Toward the close of each of the Gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), one finds what is sometimes called the “Great Commission.” Jesus charged His apostles, and ultimately His church, to “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). All are to be urged to believe and be baptized, and those who do will be saved. “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17).

God “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). But only those who come to the knowledge of the truth—and the **obedience** of the truth (Rom. 6:17-18; 1 Pet. 1:22)—will be saved.

### Conclusion

The Bible nowhere teaches that every person who dies goes to heaven. This concept arose from somewhere else. For some, it may be their own inability to reconcile the “goodness and severity of God.” God’s love and goodness should not lead us to deny the reality of hell or the fact that many will be lost. Rather, the love and goodness of God should lead us to faith in His Son, repentance from sin, and lives of obedience to His Gospel (Rom. 2:4).

### Work Cited

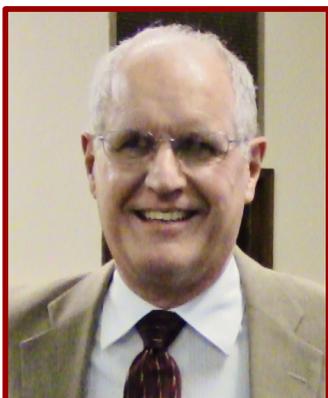
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## Where in the Bible Does it Say Sunday was Ever Called “the Christian Sabbath”?

### Gene Hill

The word Sabbath, and its plural Sabbaths, is found 148 times in scripture. Fifty-six of those occurrences appear in the New Testament. In the New Testament, in not one of those fifty-six occurrences is Sabbath ever used in reference to Christian worship of God.



The first recorded use of the word Sabbath appears in Exo. 16:23 “To morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the LORD:”, with very little instruction given regarding Sabbath observance other than how to collect the manna (Exo. 16:16-26). Moses tells us in Gen. 2:3 “And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made”, but does not provide any information from which we can draw the conclusion that any one anywhere knew about the Sabbath much less how to keep it until Exo. 16:23.

It is important to know what the Bible actually says about the Sabbath regarding to whom it was given and at least some of the details about Sabbath day observances. We

can confidently state that it was strictly a Hebrew institution and that there was necessarily a time limit during which it was to be observed after which said observances would necessarily cease. Note the word **perpetual** - Exo. 29:9; 31:8; 31:16; Lev. 3:17; 6:20; 24:9; 25:34; Num. 19:21. The word *perpetual* had a divine time limit as indicated by Paul using the word **till** - Gal. 3:19: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, **till the seed should come to whom the promise was made**; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal. 3:19ff).

Moses is unequivocal as to whom the Law of God applies Deu. 5:1:

And Moses called all **Israel**, and said unto **them**, **Hear, O Israel**, the statutes and judgments which I speak in **your** ears this day, that **ye** may learn them, and keep, and do them. 2 The LORD **our** God made a covenant with **us** in Horeb. 3 The LORD made not this covenant with **our fathers**, **but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day** (Emp. added. GH).

To whom did the Law of Moses apply? Only the nation of Israel. According to Moses' reference in verse two to Mt Horeb, we would need to turn back to Exo. 20 to read the second reference to the Sabbath, the first reference being chapter 16 as noted above, for a more authoritative revelation and additional details as seen in Exo. 20:8-11. To further insure the correctness of this application to Israel alone, note in Exo. 14:21-31 God leading the nation of Israel out of Egypt and across the Red Sea. One might also note the reference made in Deu. 5:15 to this same event. It is plain the Sabbath was given through Moses to the Hebrews only.

How did the Israelites keep Sabbath? What did the Law command? It was to be kept from "even to even" (Lev. 23:32). There was to be no fire in their habitations (Exo. 35:3). (Think electric lights, gas stoves as a modern day application, one might even include the use of an internal combustion engine.) They could neither bake nor boil (Exo 16:23). Those who broke the Sabbath were to be stoned (Exo. 31:15). Do those that believe the Hebrew Sabbath to be binding on Christians practice such things? If not, then we must ask why not, insisting on an answer that contains book, chapter and verse from the Bible.

Does the Bible make a distinction between Moral Law and Ceremonial Law? Is there some part of the Old Testament that is known as the law of the Lord and another designated as the law of Moses? Which part if any has been done away with leaving the rest still valid and binding on Christians today, if any?

Consider what we are told in Luke 2:21-24: "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her **purification according to the law of Moses** were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (**As it is written in the law of the Lord**, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer **a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord**, A pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons." (Emp. mine, GH). I have reread Exo 20 and Deu. 5 and am unable to quite lay my finger on the passage that discusses ceremonial activities such as was done in this passage. Yet, these events were accomplished according to the law of Moses and the law of the Lord. The two phrases are interchangeable. The passages to which Luke refers are Exo. 13:2,12 and Lev. 12:8,11.

Does the scripture make a differentiation between the two phrases—law of Moses and law of the Lord—or are they treated as an organic whole? Upon the return of some of the captive Jews from Babylonian captivity to the city of Jerusalem they gathered together to hear a reading from Neh. 8:8: "So they read in **the book in the law of God** distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." (Emp. added, GH). In 2 Kings 14:6 the king executed those who murdered his father but refrained from killing the murderers children in order to comply with what was written in **book of the law of Moses** as recorded in Deu. 24:16. In 2 Chr. 35:12 we find the people treating burnt offerings in accord to what was written in the **book of the Law of Moses** which refers to Lev 3:3 for direction. In Ezra 6:18 the priests were set in

their divisions and the Levites in their courses to obey Numbers 3:6—as the **book of Moses**. In Mark 12:26 Jesus quotes a passage from Exo. 3:6 saying it is found in the **book of Moses**. In regulating certain church gatherings Paul says women are to be under obedience citing **the law** contained in Genesis 3:16. These phrases—the book of the law of God, the book of the law of Moses, book of Moses, the law—all refer to what is contained in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. We would know nothing of the Ten Commandments in detail if we did not have those books to study.

We have demonstrated that the law or covenant by which God ruled the nation of Israel was an exclusive system only for the Hebrew nation. It has also been made clear that the law of God, the law of Moses, the book of the law of Moses and the book of Moses all refer to the same thing and that all that the Israelites were to do morally, spiritually and ceremonial are all part and parcel of the whole system. James says it quite clearly: Jas. 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. What does the Old Testament have to say about its ending?

It is the case the covenant given to Moses informs us it would end and even providing clues to help us identify when that would be. Hosea says: “I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts” (Hos. 2:11). Paul follows up with,

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days (Col. 2:14,16).

There is even more such information. Consider the prophet Jeremiah:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD” (Jer. 31:31-32).

Because Israel continually broke the covenant He made with Israel after leading them out of bondage, He would institute a replacement. But when?

Amos gives specific signs:

Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small,...The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works. Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? and it shall rise up wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned, as by the flood of Egypt. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will **cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day** (Amos 8:4-9).

Reread Hos. 2:11 once again just here. When did the ‘sun go down at noon’? “Now from the **sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour**” (Matt. 27:45). “And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst” (Luke 23:44-45). Paul said that all of these observances would be taken out of the way and nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). And so they were taken away completely (Heb. 7:18; 8:13; 9:9; 10:8-9).

The Old Law has been done away with having been replaced by a New Covenant as prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 31:31-34). The Hebrew writer quotes Jeremiah in Heb. 8:6-13. We have new ordinances to keep (Acts 2:42).

Jesus told the gathered apostles the night of his arrest that they would receive another Comforter, and that He, “... shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” John 14:26. He, “...guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he

“speak: and he will shew you things to come.” John 16:13. Paul informs us that they would receive revelation as well as the Holy Spirit inspiring them exactly how to express what God wanted revealed (1 Cor. 2:13-16). The importance of this is understood when we do not find the first reference to Christians gathering to worship God on any other day than the first day of the week.

Paul arrives in Troas and tarries to meet with the brethren upon the first day of the week. “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight” (Acts 20:7). He instructed the Corinthian church to contribute upon the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Paul was consistent in all of his teaching in every congregation (1 Cor 4:17; 7:17). Since he was inspired by the same Spirit as the other apostles it is safe to assume that all faithful congregations followed the same pattern of worship on Sunday being led by the same Spirit (Rom. 8:14).

To sum this up, there is no book, chapter or verse, much less a series of books, chapters and verses in the Bible, when taken in total context teaches or otherwise commands anything known as a Christian Sabbath for which a Christian is liable to observe in obedience to Christ.

**Note:** In writing this article I relied heavily on the argumentation provided in a booklet entitled: "Is The Sabbath Binding on Christians and The Lord's Day" by T.H. Etheridge, published by Firm Foundation Publishing House, undated.

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## When the Floodgate was Opened

**Jerry C. Brewer**

The flood of error in which mainstream churches of Christ are awash had its inception in a single heretical concept as old as Cain's, Nadab's, and Abihu's offerings. That concept says that whatever God does not forbid in religion is permitted to man's discretion as an **expedient**. After all, “God didn't tell Cain **not** to offer the fruit of the ground, or Nadab and Abihu **not** to offer strange fire.”

Resurrected by W.K. Pendleton 150 years ago, that concept, intoned by mainstream churches today, opened the floodgate of error. It found expression in the American Christian Missionary Society in 1849, but not until 1866 was it articulated and adopted as the official position of the new sect emerging from the church. That was the year Pendleton saddled up and rode out on his horse called *Expediency*.

From 1849 to 1866, the Missionary Society had its opponents but was, in a large measure, successful in supplanting the work of the church across the world. That began to change in December, 1866 when one of its chief advocates, the *American Christian Review's* Editor Ben Franklin, finally recognized that it could not be defended by God's Word and began opposing it on that basis. Reaction to Franklin's change was vitriolic from the society's defenders. To that, he replied:

At all events, we have come to the time to rest the question whether *love and devotion* to the creation of a few individuals, in the form of an outside society, with laws and names unknown to the law of God, is sufficient to sink a man with more than thirty years' labor and devotion to the spread of the gospel, *solely because he will not go for the Society* [All emph. his, JCB] (West, 2:49).

West said Franklin's new opposition “found the American Christian Missionary Society in 1866 badly in need of repairs and rapidly losing in popularity” (2:49). To repair the Society and counter its loss of popularity, it turned to the man whom West called, “its great apologist W.K. Pendleton to defend it.” Pendleton's apologia at the Society's convention in 1866 was a watershed event, opening the floodgate of errors that have inundated the church from then until now.

His argument was based on Thomas Campbell's motto, first enunciated in 1809: “Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent.” Pendleton focused on the last phrase—“where the Bible is silent, we are silent”—and Moses Lard

printed his full speech in the *Millennial Harbinger's* Nov., 1866 issue, in which Pendleton said, in part:

You say, 'your Missionary Society is not scriptural'—and you mean by this, that there is no special express precept in the Scriptures demanding it. We concede this without a moment's hesitation. There is none; but what do you make of it? Is everything which is not scriptural therefore wrong?...Does he say that it is not *positively and expressly* commanded; then we demand by what canon of interpretation does he make mere *silence* prohibitory? [All Emph his, JCB] (501).

Pendleton used Scriptural **silence** to justify the Society and his interpretation of "Where the Bible is silent, we are silent" became the mantra of every innovator in the church from that time forward. Upon Pendleton's interpretation is based every unscriptural innovation adopted by mainstream churches. The floodgate was opened and human opinions in the guise of expedients became **another** source of authority in disreputable mainstream churches.

To try to sweep back the avalanche by calling for divine authority was like trying to dry up the the ocean with a sponge. Pendleton's interpretation was picked up by Isaac Errett and the *Christian Standard* and then by J. H. Garrison and B. W. Johnson in the *Christian Evangelist* to resound down through the ages to the present. Nevertheless, an element remained to whom the call for divine authority still meant something (West, 2:54).

Pendleton's words still "resound down through the ages" as authority for the endless array of Social Gospel ministries in mainstream churches of Christ. Asked for divine authority for their "ministries," they reply, "They are **expedients**. The Bible **doesn't** say we **can't** create them." There are probably few people in mainstream churches who ever heard of W.K. Pendleton but they are still riding his same old, tired, worn out, swaybacked nag called *Expediency*.

Typical of Pendleton's progeny is Lynn McMillon. In a meeting with a large group of Gospel preachers at the 8th and Lee church building in Lawton, Okla., Nov. 17, 2003, McMillon, who was at that time President and CEO of *The Christian Chronicle* and an elder in the mainstream Memorial Road church of Christ in Edmond, Okla., represented Oklahoma Christian University (OCU). The meeting was requested by Oklahoma preachers to voice objections to rank liberals who were included on OCU's lectureship. Among those liberals were Mark Henderson of the apostate Quail Springs church in Oklahoma City and Randy Harris, co-author of *The Second Incarnation* with Rubel Shelly. Both Henderson and Harris consider the church a denomination and freely fellowship denominations.

It was pointed out to McMillon that Quail Springs uses mechanical instruments of music in its worship and the meeting's moderator, Rick Popejoy, asked him—not once, but **three times**—"Is the silence of the Scriptures permissive or prohibitive?" **He refused** to answer the question. Had he truthfully answered, it would have ruined his defense of Quail Springs and Henderson.

Those of us to whom the call of divine authority still means something **know** that Scriptural silence is **not** permissive and **we** can answer that question from God's word. Nadab and Abihu are prime examples in the Old Testament:

And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace (Lev. 10:1-3).

As priests under the Law of Moses, their responsibility was to offer incense by taking fire, putting it into their censers, and offering it "before the Lord." But the Scripture says they "offered **strange** fire." What was strange about it? It was fire that "God com-

manded them **not**.” The significance of this passage is that God had commanded them to take fire from the source which **He** chose, but they chose one about which He was **silent**. In essence, they argued that, “God did **not** say we couldn’t.”

If that is not sufficient to explain the **prohibitive** nature of God’s silence, the writer of Hebrews affirmed the superiority of Christ’s priesthood over Aaron’s, proving by God’s **silence** that Christ could **not** have been a priest under the Law of Moses:

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood (Heb. 7:11-14).

Jesus Christ could not have been a priest while He was on earth—**not** because God said He **could not**, but because God commanded priests under the Law of Moses to be from the tribe of Levi. Christ was **prohibited** from being a priest on earth because, “...our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake **nothing** concerning priesthood.”

God’s **silence** concerning Judah and the priesthood did **not** permit a member of that tribe to be a priest. God’s silence was **prohibitive** in the case of anyone other than a Levite serving as priest under the Law.

Directly related to Pendleton’s “permissive silence” doctrine, is that **anything** churches devise falls under the classification of expediency and is, therefore, permitted. The Bible authorizes us to act in one of three ways—direct statement (command), approved divine example, and implication.

**Direct statement** (“Repent and be baptized...for the remission of sins”) is obvious. **Approved divine example** is illustrated in Acts 20:7 when Paul tarried at Troas to assemble with the church and observe the Lord’s Supper. That is an approved apostolic example of assembling on the first day of each week to observe the Lord’s Supper. **Implication** means that when Scripture implies an approved action it is accepted as approved by God.

That is seen in Philip’s preaching to the Samaritans and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. In neither instance is it explicitly stated that he preached baptism to anyone. But it is **implied** when the Samaritans “believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12), and when the eunuch said, “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (Acts 8:36).

Opposition to unauthorized programs, like so-called “ministries” in the work of the church, is often met with a stock reply: “The Bible does not authorize things like church buildings, pews, and song books, either.” From whence comes this sophistry? From W.K. Pendleton who asked, “Is everything which is not scriptural therefore wrong?...by what canon of interpretation does he make mere **silence** prohibitory?” They ignore the fact that buildings, pews, and song books are **not added elements** to the work or worship of the church, but are **implied** expedients in the commands to assemble in one place (1 Cor. 11:18, 33; Heb. 10:25), and to sing (Eph. 5:19). As such, they are **authorized** expedients. For a thing to be expedient, it must **first** be lawful (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23) under one of those three sources of Bible authority.

Expediency plays an important role in the place where God designed for it to be. However, to say that the realm of human judgment (expediency) is *not* a *source* of New Testament authority is *not* within itself a denial of the importance and proper role of expediency. Having said that, it may be said emphatically that **expediency is not a fourth source of authority** (Grizzell).

Commenting on brother Grizzell’s article, Kent Bailey and Charles Pogue wrote:

The logical consequence of the authority by expedience doctrine is enough to falsify it. Basically all one has to do is engage in any activity that he desires and then justify it by claiming that such is an expedient to evangelism, edification, or benevolence. The sad reality in the denominational world at large is their whole religious existence is based on expediency which is another way of saying I am my own authority.

This is a post-modern world. This is where the idea of expediency as a source of authority will lead the church if those who hold it never admit to its implication and do not give the idea up (Ibid).

Neither the silence of Scripture, nor expediency is Biblically authoritative. To claim expediency as a **source of authority**, is a false doctrine and as brother Grizzell wrote, “Any doctrine which implies a false doctrine is false within itself.” To say that **anything** man adds to the work and/or worship of the church is “an expedient” if it is not expressly forbidden is absolutely false and incurs the anathema of God (Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:18-19).

*Expediency* as a source of authority for whatever mainstream churches may concoct and call *ministries*, is their hallmark and **that** identifies them as an apostate component of the newly emerging denomination.

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## **A Bible Question For You...**

Where can you find the following in your Bible: **A Community Church, The Nazarene Church, A Cowboy Church, The Baptist Church, The Methodist Church, The Pentecostal Church, The Lutheran Church, The Roman Catholic Church, The Christian Church, The Assembly of God, The Mormon Church, The Episcopal Church, The Seventh-Day Adventist Church, or The Presbyterian Church.**

If you cannot find them in the Bible, why are you remaining in a church that God will root up? **“But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Matt. 15:13) Every single church listed above will be consigned to hell on The Judgment Day.** Those churches are abominations, founded by men—not God. “Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain” (Psa. 127:1).

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