

The Gospel Preceptor

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

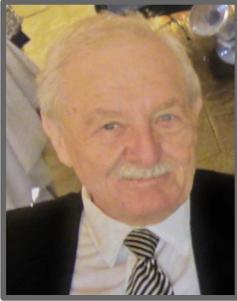
Volume 6, No. 3

Published Monthly At Elk City, Oklahoma

March, 2023

Modern Bible Versions

Jerry C. Brewer



The longer I live and observe the proliferation of so called “new versions” of the Bible, the more I despise and detest them. I abhor and abominate every one that has come from the presses in the last several decades. There has **never been a need** for them. Their purpose is, first and last, to make money for their publishers and those publishers are more than willing to print denominational error to make a wider appeal. At the Freed Hardeman Lectures in 1973, G.K. Wallace said, “If denominations cannot find their doctrines in the Bible, they will write them into it.” That is precisely what they have done.

In his book, published about the same time, *A Review of The New Versions*, Foy E. Wallace, Jr., wrote,

The apologists for the Revised Standard Version and the New English Bible, and other theological books that have been published under the pretext of modern speech translations and versions, have been wont to say that the dogmatic theology of the translators does not affect the integrity of the translations—but that is not true to the facts concerning the pseudo-versions and spurious translations now under review, for their theological interpretations pervade their versions and are evident on every page and in every verse of the alterations and changes, omissions and additions, throughout their translations. (Foy E. Wallace, Jr., *A Review of The New Versions*, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Publications, 1973, p. 261).

It was the King James Bible that planted the Lord’s church on this continent, was used for centuries to refute denominational error, and has been instrumental in saving the souls of untold millions. Yet, this grand old Bible is the first target of apologists for the new, so called, “Bible versions.” One of the criticisms leveled against the King James Bible is its use of the pronouns “thee” and “thou.” Those pronouns came to be regarded as proper references—or solemn language—when praying to, or addressing Deity, and they still are regarded as such by many of us. But so called “translators” of modern versions who deny the Deity of Jesus Christ have eliminated that form of address and made *you* (a common address to man) their preferred language. The Revised Standard Version of 1946 stated that they retained the solemn form of address to God, but rendered Peter’s confession in Matthew 16:16 is, “**You** are...the Son of God,” indicating their denial of Christ as Deity. Of that change, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. wrote,

The rejection of the Deity of Jesus in applying the common pronoun *you* in Simon Peter’s confession of Matthew 16:16 (and other passages) in reference to Christ. In view of the stated policy of the translators to use *Thee* and *Thou* in all references to Deity—their omission of *Thee* and *Thou*, and the use of the common pronoun *you*, in reference to Jesus, is therefore an open renunciation of the Deity of Jesus, a disclaimer that He is divine in the sense of the only begotten Son of God. (ibid, p. 329).

The above is but a small example of the mutilation of the Divine Text to satisfy the theology of those who cannot find their doctrines in the Bible. No “new” Bible was ever needed and none is needed now.

The King James Bible has stood the test of time. It was brought to these shores by English settlers and used by the men who restored the New Testament church in America. Its beauty and diction is unparalleled and its simplicity is such that a child can understand it, yet the ripest of scholars will never plumb its depths. My Great Grandfather preached the Gospel in Eastern Kentucky and West Virginia in the late 19th century, using the King James Bible and I have the one my Grandmother (his daughter) used a century ago. If he and his contemporaries, who had far less formal education than we possess today, could understand and obey its precepts, why is it that men today cannot understand it? They can!

As brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr. said, These new Bibles “are not new translations. They are no translations.” They are but the dogmas of the sectarian world dressed up as the word of God. They are perversions of the Gospel which will lead men to perdition (Gal. 1:6-9).

The Northeast church in Elk City, Okla. began in 1997 and one of the first policies that the men discussed and decided upon was that no version of the Bible except the King James Version or the American Standard Version would be allowed in our pulpit or classrooms.

So called “new Bible versions” ought to be shunned like the plague and tossed into the garbage, as I was instructed to do when I preached in Texas. The elders in that congregation understood the dangers of the Revised Standard Version which they used for pew Bibles and told me to take them to the garbage. I did, and that’s where all others of their kind belong.

Links to Bible Study Resources

The Scripture Cache

Precept Upon Precept You Tube

Spiritual Perspectives - Gary Summers

Yukon, Okla. church of Christ

Berea church of Christ, Rives, TN

South Seminole church of Christ

The Church, Denominations, and Preaching

Cled E. Wallace



I am in exactly the right humor to do some vigorous and honest chopping on some paragraphs I find on the editorial pages of some late issues of the *Baptist and Reflector*. We have neither the space nor the inclination to reproduce all that the versatile and prolific editor has to say. It is not necessary to do so, nor unfair not to do so. If anybody is interested in seeing all that he has to say, the fair things to do is to subscribe for his paper. In an editorial designed to magnify the importance of “the churches,” which according to the slant he has on things religious, are Baptist churches, he has this to say:

So also the churches are to be honored denominationally. The churches must be put in and kept in the saddle in any denominational work which proposes to glorify Christ. No program which does not do this can rightly claim to honor Christ.

He began the editorial with a text from Paul in which he spoke of “the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.” Out of that text, with the aid of some “so’s” and “therefores” he arrives at a paragraph like that! No wonder Jesus had somewhat to say about the blind guiding the blind into a depression with a deep bottom and steep sides. When Paul said; “unto him be glory in the church,” he was talking about the body of Christ which included all the followers of Christ and had not the remotest reference to the Baptist denomination, nor to any other denomination. The Bible does not say nor

teach that “the churches are to be honored **denominationally**.” The churches in the New Testament were **not** a denomination. They “proposed to glorify Christ” in the work they did, for all that they did they did in the name of Christ but Christ did not authorize them to get “in the saddle” and gallop around all over creation “in any denominational work.” **Christ is not the head of a denomination.** “He is the head of the body, the church” (Col. 1:18). Our contention is that any “program” which “proposes to glorify Christ” should buck high and wide and do a little kicking and biting, if need be, to keep some ambitious buckaroo from clamping a denominational saddle on it. This whole denominational business, whoever is in the saddle, is as basically unscriptural and anti-scriptural as the College of Cardinals. The ties that bound the churches of the New Testament together were not denominational. The **program** of each church can be simply and scripturally stated: “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). According to my lights, Christ was “in the saddle,” or the church was out of order. In telling about some of the things “Southern Baptists are committed to,” the *Baptist and Reflector* quotes at some length from “the Constitution of the Tennessee Baptist Convention” and “the Constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention.” Well, beloved, that’s the trouble. Denominations and “denominational work” call for conventions and constitutions and arguments over who “must be put in and kept in the saddle.” The New Testament knows nothing about such contrivances and if some religionists insist on riding that way, it really doesn’t concern me whether they are “kept in the saddle” or ride bare-back. They are headed the wrong way either way.

The editor of the *Baptist and Reflector* momentarily forgets sometimes that he is a Baptist and goes to the New Testament instead of some *Constitution* of some “Baptist Convention.” In these lucid moments he can say some very sensible and pertinent things. Now this is just about as good as I could have done myself.

Preaching the word means definitely setting forth the great teachings of the Word as they are presented in the Word.

It means reasoning with men “out of the scriptures” after the manner of Paul. It means presenting Bible doctrines and clinching it with a “Thus saith the Lord.” Both preachers and teachers are to do this.

Now, if “both preachers and teachers are to do this,” then they ought to stop talking about what “Southern Baptists are committed to,” and quit trying to keep them whipped into line “in any denominational work” by quoting “Art. II of the Constitution of the Tennessee Baptist Convention,” and “Art. II of the Constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention.” It looks to me like it would be better to present some Bible doctrine and clinch it with a “Thus saith the Lord.” Or it would be about as well to reason with them out of the scripture after the manner of Paul. It is my impression that Paul and the Lord are about as well informed about how things ought to be run, “in the saddle” or out, as the Tennessee Baptist Convention or the Southern Baptist Convention, or both. It is more than a little suspicious if neither Paul nor the Lord said anything about it and you have to resort to the constitution of some Baptist convention to find what you are looking for. That is why I think we ought to stick to Paul and the Lord and do our “reasoning with men out of the scriptures.” When the editor is talking about what “Southern Baptists are committed to,” he gets too little of his *material* from “what God says in His Word” and too much of it “from what some many says in His word.” I do not now recall reading anything from Paul or the Lord about the churches riding horseback “in any denominational work which proposes to glorify Christ.” Maybe the *Baptist and Reflector* can tell us where such a *program* is “presented in the Word.”

Editor Taylor uses Paul’s famous charge to Timothy to “preach the word” to remind us of some things that “this does not mean.” I can pass it on to the readers of the *Bible Banner* with some degree of pleasure.

This does not mean telling a lot of funny jokes and, cutting monkey-shines and calling that preaching the word. To be sure, a reasonable amount of humor in the pulpit is permissible and valuable...Telling a lot of deathbed and graveyard stories and other

harrowing incidents and arousing the natural emotions of people to an extreme pitch is not what our scripture means by preaching the Word.

Baptist preachers throughout the South have been “Cutting monkey-shines” and “telling a lot of deathbed and graveyard stories” so long, it is not likely that they could quit it all of a sudden, even if the *Baptist and Reflector* told them to, and they wanted to. It has become such a confirmed habit that it can almost be said that “Southern Baptists are committed to the proposition.” Multitudes under the influence of such preaching have mistaken a nervous spasm for the direct operation of the Holy Spirit and been voted on for baptism, when they tried to describe how they felt. They are not as bad as they used to be along this line, but they are still bad enough. Any improvement is to be encouraged. Editor Taylor is hitting the right nail on the right end, when he suggests fewer graveyard yarns and more “clear-cut scripture teaching.” We have been telling Baptists this for lo, these many years, and some of them have not been inclined to pay much attention to us. I will not be considered too forward I hope if I suggest some “clear-cut scripture teaching” that could with some profit be sandwiched in between “a lot of deathbed and graveyard stories” that are often heard in Baptist pulpits. Here are a couple of direct quotations:

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned (Mark 16:15-16).

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:37-38).

Preachers sometimes thank God that we can “join the church of our choice,” and that there are so many different kinds of churches to choose from. Surely such preachers are unaware of the great evils of denominationalism. They do not realize that denominationalism is a system of religious division, and as such works against the desires of our Lord for unity. Denominationalism keeps people out of the church of Christ, causing them to be lost. Denominationalism divides families, hinders the progress of Christianity, and makes infidels by its contradictory teachings.

Did Jesus Contradict Himself?

David Ray



“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). There are few passages of Scripture easier to understand than this.

Unfortunately, there are few passages of Scripture more **misunderstood by men**. How many times have we tried to lovingly show to our friends the necessity of baptism in this verse (and many others), only to hear in reply, “but the verse doesn’t say ‘he that believeth not **and is baptized not** shall be damned’”? Therefore, baptism is not necessary?

My next question for those who respond in this manner is always, do you believe that the Bible contradicts itself? Inevitably they reply in the negative. This is important to understand and agree upon in **any** Bible study. The Bible does **not** contradict itself! Yet, according to the misunderstanding of this text, not only does the Bible contradict itself, but it was done by the Son of God Himself, and He did it within one sentence. The first part of His statement, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” states unequivocally that **baptism is necessary for salvation**. It would take a preacher to help us misunderstand this! So, if one concludes that the second part states that **baptism is unnecessary for salvation**, then he believes the two parts contradict each other. He cannot explain the alleged discrepancy between the two.

Again, the first part clearly states that baptism is necessary. So, does the second part really mean that baptism is unnecessary? First of all, if we believe that God does not contradict Himself, then we've just proven that it cannot mean this. However, we can delve a little deeper into the question. Logically, how can we conclude that this part of the verse teaches that baptism isn't necessary for salvation when it never even mentions baptism or salvation? Rather, it discusses disbelief and condemnation.

Did Jesus need to say "he that believeth not and is baptized not shall be damned"? Of course not! How many people are there who will refuse to believe in Jesus but **will** decide to submit to His command to be baptized? The next person to do this will be the first person to do this!

The main point is this: in the first part Jesus told us what we must do **to be saved**. In the second part He told us what we must do **to be damned**. Do you want to be saved or damned? If you want to be saved, then believe and be baptized. If you want to be damned, then don't believe! If you don't believe then you won't be baptized (actually, it would be completely irrelevant whether or not you were baptized). So, why would Jesus waste His words by saying "he that believeth not and is baptized not..."?

It is our earnest desire that everyone who reads this will choose to be saved and, therefore, will obey the first part rather than the second. If you haven't made this decision, then "why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

Denominationalism

Gordon Wilson

The average person outside the church of Christ has no idea that denominationalism is an evil system and a curse to mankind. To such people denominationalism is synonymous with Christianity, and to speak of destroying denominationalism is to speak of destroying the church. However, let me say that if every denomination on earth were destroyed, it would not "unchurch" a single Christian, nor would it mean an end to the church of Christ.

The church established by our Lord existed for a long time before denominationalism as we have it today began. The modern denominational system actually began with the efforts of several men to reform the Roman Catholic Church. After the church of Christ apostatized so far as to resolve itself into the Catholic Church, this Church became so corrupt that even many of her own clergy could not stomach the evil conditions, so these men set out to bring about a reformation within Catholicism. Of course, history shows that their attempts failed, for the Catholic Church refused to be reformed. The reformers, however, gathered about them many disciples, thus splitting the religious world into various denominations.

For example, the disciples of Martin Luther became Lutherans and formed the Lutheran Church. The disciples of John Calvin carried his teachings to Scotland and established the Presbyterian Church. King Henry VIII threw off the papal yoke and settled his own yoke on the necks of the people, forming the Church of England, with her younger American sister, the Protestant Episcopal Church. These examples could be multiplied to account for the existence of most major denominations which we have today. Suffice it to say that neither the Catholic Church nor any of the Protestant churches is the church as established by Christ. It remained for other men to restore the church of Christ through Bible preaching. We have the church today as a distinct people, separate and apart from denominationalism. We ask, is it better to be a member of the church of Christ, or of a human denomination unknown to the New Testament?

The idea held by many people is that all of the denominations are just branches of the church built by Jesus, and that one can be a member of the church in the denomination of his choice. This idea is so commonly held that it deserves examination.

First of all, it must be admitted that no two denominations teach the same thing. The Baptist Church insists on the immersion of adults, while the Methodist Church allows the sprinkling of infants. Now these two do not agree; in fact, they directly contradict one another. Yet it is held that both are just branches of the same church. Strange vine, indeed, that bears different fruit on every branch!

Jesus prayed for the unity of all those who believe on Him through the apostles' word. Only the rankest infidel would say that our Lord's prayer went unanswered. All true believers are one in His church. But the denominations are not united, therefore they do not make up Christ's church.

Someone may ask, did not Christ say, "I am the vine, ye are the branches?" Yes, but He did not say that denominations are the branches. Jesus, in John 15:5-8 is speaking to His disciples:

I am the vine, ye are the branches: **He** that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

It is obvious that Christ was here speaking of individual disciples as branches, and not churches.

Preachers sometimes thank God that we can "join the church of our choice," and that there are so many different kinds of churches to choose from. Surely such preachers are unaware of the great evils of denominationalism. They do not realize that denominationalism is a system of religious division, and as such works against the desires of our Lord for unity. Denominationalism keeps people out of the church of Christ, causing them to be lost. Denominationalism divides families, hinders the progress of Christianity, and makes infidels by its contradictory teachings.

Again we ask, is it better to be a member of the church of Christ, or of a human denomination unknown to the New Testament?

Editor's Traveling, Preaching, and Writing

We worshiped with the Pioneer and Bell church of Christ in Elk City, Okla. on Feb. 5. Patrick King is the preacher at Pioneer and Bell. His 18-year-old son, Joseph, was diagnosed with leukemia and is now taking treatment. I preached at Yukon, Okla. on Sunday morning, Feb. 12 and Feb. 26, and I preached at Pioneer and Bell on Feb. 19.

We had a sad task on Friday, Feb. 10, conducting a graveside ceremony for my last maternal cousin, Larry Davis. Larry and I were the same age and we entered the first grade together in 1947. Larry obeyed the Gospel in his teenage years. He was also a paternal cousin for Goebel Music.

We have exciting news concerning my book, "*The Thing That Hath Been...*". It will now be offered in a digital format, thanks to brother Michael Hatcher and the Bellview church of Christ in Pensacola, Fla. That means that people can **request a copy and receive a PDF** file of it immediately by email. We will continue to mail a paper back copy for people who do not have email. The book and the **POSTAGE** for paper back copy's will continue to be **FREE!**

Visit Our Website

www.thegospelpreceptor

Every Seed Brings Forth After Its Own Kind

Nana Yaw Aidoo



It is a fact of nature that like begets like. One who plants an apple seed would expect nothing to grow other than an apple tree. Also, no one would expect a man and a woman who “know each other” to bring forth anything other than a human being. This principle originates from God, who created the heavens and the earth. The Bible says; “And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so” (Gen. 1:11). This is one of the reasons why I cannot accept the theory of organic evolution. Anyone who believes that non-living matter gave rise to life can easily be sold the sun.

Paul also taught this principle when he wrote, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7). It is evident that we reap what we sow. Apple seeds do not give rise to mango trees and neither do watermelon seeds give rise to orange trees. Thus, an apple seed from 2000 years ago, would bring forth the exact same thing today, if that apple seed were planted today. Is this not true?

In explaining the parable of the soils, Jesus Christ made this statement; “...The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). In the first century, the disciples of Christ went about sowing this seed on all sorts of soils, which is the human heart. Luke wrote, “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). In spite of the persecution, the disciples went about sowing the seed of the kingdom, which is the word of God. As has already been noted, it is the case that every seed brings forth after its own kind. It is also the case that we reap what we sow. Thus, since the word of God is the seed of the kingdom and since it was sown in Bible times, we need to ask ourselves, “What did this seed bring forth?”

When Christ gave the great commission, He noted that through preaching disciples were to be made of all nations (Mark 16:15). Thus, all who obeyed the word preached became disciples of Christ. The Bible further says these disciples were called “Christians.” Listen to Luke; “...And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:26). Therefore, we see clearly that when the seed of the kingdom, which is the word of God, was sown 2000 years ago through preaching, it brought forth nothing but **Christians**. Notice that it did not bring forth Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Presbyterians, Catholics, Adventists, Mormons etc. The seed, which is the word of God, brought forth nothing but **Christians** only. Not a hyphenated Christian but a Christian and a Christian only.

Everyone (except the one who is willing to be wrong) agrees that an apple seed even from 2000 years ago would bring forth the exact same thing today, if the apple seed were planted today. Would this principle not apply to the seed, which is the word of God? If in Bible times, this seed when sown brought forth nothing but Christians only, then rest assured, if that same seed were sown today, it would bring forth the exact same thing it brought forth 2000 years ago, which is nothing but a Christian only. The argument that seeds cannot last that long is erroneous for gospel seed is incorruptible (1 Pet. 1:23).

Denominations claim they are sowing the exact same kind of seed and somehow this seed is not bringing forth the same thing it brought forth 2000 years ago. When those from the Catholic Church sow the seed, it brings forth Catholics. When those from the Seventh Day Adventist Church sow the seed, it brings forth Adventists. When those from the Baptist Church sow the seed, it brings forth Baptists. When those from the Methodist Church sow the seed, it brings forth Methodists and so on. How can this be, when the seed brought forth **Christians** only in the 1st century? Is it not then evident that either something has been added to the seed being sown or it is not the seed being sown at all?

The truth is that the Catholic Church is sowing the seed in addition to Catholic doctrine hence the reason why Catholics and not Christians are being brought forth.

Baptists are sowing the seed in addition to Baptist doctrine hence the reason why Baptists and not Christians are being brought forth. This applies to all the denominations. The disciples of old sowed the seed alone and so Christians only were brought forth. That cannot be said of the denominations who take pride in calling themselves Baptists, Catholics, Presbyterians, etc.

If anyone claims that all in denominations are Christians, then what were Peter and Paul? Were they Baptists? Or perhaps Episcopalians? No! They were Christians and nothing but. The burden of proof is on anyone to show where these denominational churches can be found on the pages of inspired writ.

The Bible further says the body of Christ is the church (Col. 1:18) and that there is only “one body” (Eph. 4:4). Thus, there is only one church. I do not believe “one” means “many.” Take note that there is only “one church/body” just as there is only “one God” (Eph. 4:4-6). Thus, to say that all churches make up the “one church” is like saying all the false gods like Allah and Krishna make up the “one God.”

We see then that when the seed of the kingdom, which is the word was sown in the first century, it brought forth nothing but Christians only, who were members of the Lord’s one true church, which He built (Matt. 16:18) and purchased with His precious blood (Acts 20:28). Thus, to be something other than a Christian only and to be part of a church other than the Lord’s church and yet claim to be saved is claiming to be saved apart from and outside the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7).

Finally, since every seed brings forth plant and the seed, which is the word when sown, brings forth nothing but Christians only who are in the Lord’s church, listen to the Master; “...Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. (Matt. 15:13).

The one question that no one who is a member of a denomination will be able to answer on the day of judgement is this: Is Christ divided? (1 Cor. 1:13). “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Luke 8:8).

The Gospel Preceptor

Published Monthly at Elk City, Oklahoma

Editor & Publisher.....Jerry C. Brewer

Staff Writers

Nana Yaw Aidoo – Accra, Ghana

Harrell Davidson – Obion, Tennessee

Mike Demory – Mexico, Missouri

Gene Hill – Hahira, Georgia

Lester Kamp – Aurora, Colorado

Dub McClish – Denton, Texas

Lee Moses – Union City, Tennessee

David Ray – Yukon, Oklahoma

Donald E. Smith – Taft, Texas

Jess Whitlock – Maysville, Oklahoma

Mike Demory Joins *The Gospel Preceptor* Staff



Editor, Jerry C. Brewer, has announced an addition to *The Gospel Preceptor's* writing staff. “Mike Demory is an excellent writer and a Bible student and will be a valuable asset to our publication,” he said. Mike was reconciled to God in 1983 and began preaching ten years later in 1993. A graduate of the Brown Trail School of Preaching in 1995, he has served congregations in Texas, Iowa, South Dakota and presently in Missouri. He planted the church in Dubuque, Iowa and Pierre, South Dakota and has authored over 60 tracts, and two books “*Jehovah’s Witnesses, So-Called*” and “*The Demory-Shiflett Debate on the existence of God.*” A speaker on gospel meetings, and Lectureships, produced TV and radio programs and has done campaign work in Jamaica. Mike is married to the former Teresa Griggs of Stamford Texas; they have a son, daughter, six grandchildren and one great grandson.

A Message From the Dead

(Luke 16:19-31)

W.R. Craig



There is a common idea in the world that man at death enters immediately into his eternal destiny. We want to study this in light of divine truth. Also we shall show that there is no such thing as spirits of the departed returning to warn others, and that there are no direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of men.

Why should this impressive record of facts be called a parable? What is there in the narrative to indicate that it is a parable? If the history of the Rich man and Lazarus be a parable, what does it teach? When one calls it a parable, he speaks not as the oracles of God.

Their Contrast

Here, there was a certain rich man, and there was a certain beggar. One clothed in purple and fine linen, and the other was laid at his gate full of sores. The first fared sumptuously, while the second desired crumbs from his table. The first was surrounded by the worldly great, while the second had only dogs as his companions. How truth to life! Shall we call a concrete example a parable?

Hereafter, the beggar died. The Rich man died and was buried. The Beggar was carried to Abraham's bosom. The Rich was tormented and the Beggar was comforted.

One Who Knows

God does not look on the outer man. He looks within at the heart of man. The fact that one is rich or poor does determine his eternal destiny. God sees beneath fine linen, as well as rags. How what a contrast! The Rich man cries for Lazarus to dip his finger in water and touch his tongue. He is tormented.

Character determines destiny. How dangerous to trust riches. It is just as fatal to think that poverty is a passport to heaven.

Where are They?

They are in Hades, the intermediate state of souls. They are in the spirit land where all the departed are and will remain until the resurrection. They have eyes, and can see. They have tongues, and can talk. There they have spiritual bodies.

It was hades where the Saviour went while His body was in the tomb. "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell (*hades*), neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:31), and went the thief on the cross, "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

The two men were comforted and tormented. How could Lazarus and the Rich Man both be in the same place, one tormented and the one comforted? Let us remember that it is what we **are**, not **where** we are that determines our happiness or misery. Misery and happiness come from within. Two men came in a beautiful garden, and one was happy and the other was miserable. Paul and Silas could sing praise to God in prison.

Memory lives. Abraham told the Rich Man, "Son, remember" (Luke 16:25), on earth you received good things, and Lazarus received the bad. Remember the mouths you did not feed, remember the naked whom you did not clothe, remember the orphans and widows you ignored? In our days, souls will be lost because we did not carry the Gospel to them. All were remember. No wonder that he was tormented. Oh, cruel memory! How different the memory of these: "I was hungry and ye fed me, naked and ye clothed..." Such memories will bring comfort in the spirit land.

Abraham told the Rich Man that, "...beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence" (Luke 16:26). Not a gulf measured by feet, yards, or miles, but a **moral** separation. It was too late to cross the gulf. The die was cast, and the balance was made out. It is a delusion to think of another chance after

death.

The Rich Man decided to become a “missionary.” He realized that his brethren were not following God. “For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment” (Luke 16:28). Here, misery does not love company. Abraham's reply: “They have Moses and the prophets” (Luke 16:29). They were living under the Law of Moses. Let them heed it. God will not change for the whims of men, rich or poor.

Finally, the Rich Man pleaded for a direct spiritual operation. The answer: “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead” (Luke 16:31). How appropriate by the words of Hebrews 2:2-3:

For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*.

The Gospel is God's only power to save man. Once rejected, God has no power to call men to Him (Rom 1:16).

Why Persist in Calling the Church “The Church of Christ”?

Lee Moses



In this day and age, some might wonder why it is important to continue calling the church “the church of Christ.” The proliferation of manmade denominational designations is both a product of and contributing factor to commonly-held views that what one calls a church is either a matter of personal preference or irrelevant altogether. In recent years, there have been a few instances of former “churches of Christ” choosing to become known by another designation. There are some who insist that there is nothing wrong with changing the name, saying it is judgmental to insinuate otherwise. However, there are very valid and compelling reasons to persist in calling the church “the church of Christ.”

Not any name will do. When a married couple is expecting a child, they often struggle with what name to give him. Although they have yet to see that child face to face, they want to give him a name that will be appropriate, and one that he will be proud to wear. Parents at such a time would assure each of us the importance of a name.

Really, anybody who is honest will admit that names are important. Businesses try to develop a name that will be conducive to business. A restaurant called “Juicy Burger” will probably get more business than one called “Disgusting Burger.” Yet for some reason, many in the religious world downplay the importance of a name.

A preacher one time, in a revival, clapped his hands and shouted, “Thank God, there is nothing in a name! nothing in a name!” When an old woman in that audience, who had been Scripturally taught, jumped to her feet, clapped her hands and shouted, “Glory to Beelzebub, the prince of devils,” the preacher and the congregation were shocked, and he immediately rebuked her for giving glory to Beelzebub. But she said, “You say there is nothing in a name. Glory to Beelzebub, the prince of devils.” The preacher’s mouth was closed.¹

We certainly do not condone giving glory to Beelzebub, but this story illustrates that names have meaning. Names are important to us, and that importance should not only be maintained in the religious realm, it should be heightened.

Names are likewise important to God. He changed Abram’s name to Abraham (Gen. 17:5), Sarai’s name to Sarah (verse 15), and Jacob’s name to Israel (32:28). Each of

these given names signified the favor of God.

God specified the names to be given to Jesus (Matt. 1:21) and to John, the forerunner of Christ (Luke 1:13). Both Jesus' and John's parents understood that they were to name their sons as God had named them, not after their own will. John's extended family thought the God-given name unreasonable, but John's parents insisted (Luke 1:59-63). This is because not any name will do, and especially is this true when a God-given name is in question.

The name “church of Christ” is a Scriptural name. If God has provided names for the church, those names must be preferred over any manmade names. God condemns the spirit of division; particularly the spirit of division as manifested through manmade designations:

For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? (1 Cor. 3:3-4; compare with 1:10-13).

Since “to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6); we must ensure that we are not calling ourselves “of Paul,” “of Apollos,” or “of Martin Luther.” We must concur with the words of Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon: “I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone. I hope the Baptist name will soon perish; but let Christ's name last forever.”² We must call ourselves after a spiritual, God-given name.

The Holy Spirit uses a few different names to refer to the church: simply “the church” (Matt. 18:17; Acts 2:47; Eph. 3:21), “the church of God” (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; 15:9); “churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16), and “church of the firstborn” (Heb. 12:23). Other words used for the church are “the body” (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23), “the kingdom” (Heb. 12:28; Matt. 16:19), “God's husbandry” (“God's field,” New King James Version, 1 Cor. 3:9), “God's building” (1 Cor. 3:9) and “the flock” (1 Pet. 5:3).

At this point we merely wish to note that “church of Christ” is among the several designations given by the Holy Spirit for the church. One might object, “Wait, I don't read anything about a ‘church of Christ’! In Romans 16:16, I only read about ‘**churches** of Christ,’ in the plural.” But it takes singulars to make a plural—there cannot be **churches** of Christ without each of their being a church of Christ. If all of them are collectively called “the churches of Christ,” any one of them would have to be a “church of Christ.”

God loves and blesses the church (Rom. 8:28 -39; Eph. 5:25; Rev. 3:9; et al.). As a church accurately identifies itself by a God-given designation, it signifies the favor of God; just as Abraham, Sarah, and Israel's new God-given names signified the favor of God.

The name “church of Christ” most clearly expresses the Biblical nature of the church. While there are numerous designations for the church in the New Testament, the principle of its being the church of Christ rings throughout. Looking to its impending establishment, Christ called it “**my church**” (Matt. 16:18, emph. LM). Although the words “church of Christ” are not explicitly stated in this passage, for us to refer to the church as did Christ we cannot call it “my church.” Changing the first person “my” to the third person, as we must from our perspective, “my church” becomes “Christ's church” or “the church of Christ.” The body, which is the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18, 24), the Holy Spirit calls “the body **of Christ**” (1 Cor. 12:27; emphasis mine, LM).

While Scripture sometimes calls the church “the church of God,” it implies at the same time that it is the church of Christ:

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed **the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood**” (Acts 20:28; emphasis mine, LM).

While it is called the church of God, obviously it was not God the Father Who pur-

chased it with His own blood. It was specifically Christ Who **purchased the church with His own blood** (Eph. 5:25; Rev. 1:5); thus, here “the church of God” means not “the church of the Father,” but “the church of Christ.”

“Church of the firstborn” or “church of the firstborn ones” alludes to the relationship those in the church have with Christ (Heb. 12:23). He is truly the Firstborn with all the attendant blessings thereof (1:6; Psa. 89:27); however,

...it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing **many sons** unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them **brethren**” (Heb. 2:10-11, emphases mine, LM).

All these children of God and brethren of Christ, those who compose the church, receive the blessings of the firstborn: “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17). This reference to “the church of the firstborn” underscores the church’s relationship to Christ, the true Firstborn.

To the church at Colossae, Paul wrote that they were,

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son (Col. 1:12-13).

Although Paul was previously discussing God the Father, he distinctly states that the church is “the kingdom of his dear Son,” Jesus Christ. He elsewhere avers that “[Christ] must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (1 Cor. 15:25-26). So until death is finally vanquished at the Great Resurrection, Christ is to reign over His kingdom, the church (verse 24).

In whatever figure is used for the church; whether kingdom, body, flock, or bride; Christ is portrayed as having the preeminent position: “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18). If in **all things** Christ is to have the preeminence in His church, why would His name not be included in the name of the church?

As the New Testament refers to the church, it continually reinforces that it is the church of Christ. “Church of Jesus” or “church of Jesus Christ” might just as clearly express the Biblical nature of the church, but because “church of Christ” is found in the Bible, should it not be preferred?

In this day and age, some might wonder why it is important to continue calling the church “the church of Christ.” The proliferation of manmade denominational designations is both a product of and contributing factor to commonly-held views that what one calls a church is either a matter of personal preference or irrelevant altogether. In recent years, there have been a few instances of former “churches of Christ” choosing to become known by another designation. There are some who insist that there is nothing wrong with changing the name, saying it is judgmental to insinuate otherwise. However, there are very valid and compelling reasons to persist in calling the church “the church of Christ.”

Not any name will do. When a married couple is expecting a child, they often struggle with what name to give him. Although they have yet to see that child face to face, they want to give him a name that will be appropriate, and one that he will be proud to wear. Parents at such a time would assure each of us the importance of a name.

Really, anybody who is honest will admit that names are important. Businesses try to develop a name that will be conducive to business. A restaurant called “Juicy Burger” will probably get more business than one called “Disgusting Burger.” Yet for some reason, many in the religious world downplay the importance of a name.

A preacher one time, in a revival, clapped his hands and shouted, “Thank God, there is nothing in a name! nothing in a name!” When an old woman in that audience, who had been Scripturally taught, jumped to her feet, clapped

her hands and shouted, “Glory to Beelzebub, the prince of devils,” the preacher and the congregation were shocked, and he immediately rebuked her for giving glory to Beelzebub. But she said, “You say there is nothing in a name. Glory to Beelzebub, the prince of devils.” The preacher’s mouth was closed.¹

We certainly do not condone giving glory to Beelzebub, but this story illustrates that names have meaning. Names are important to us, and that importance should not only be maintained in the religious realm, it should be heightened.

Names are likewise important to God. He changed Abram’s name to Abraham (Gen. 17:5), Sarai’s name to Sarah (verse 15), and Jacob’s name to Israel (32:28). Each of these given names signified the favor of God.

God specified the names to be given to Jesus (Matt. 1:21) and to John, the forerunner of Christ (Luke 1:13). Both Jesus’ and John’s parents understood that they were to name their sons as God had named them, not after their own will. John’s extended family thought the God-given name unreasonable, but John’s parents insisted (Luke 1:59-63). This is because not any name will do, and especially is this true when a God-given name is in question.

The name “church of Christ” is a Scriptural name. If God has provided names for the church, those names must be preferred over any manmade names. God condemns the spirit of division; particularly the spirit of division as manifested through man-made designations:

For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? (1 Cor. 3:3-4; compare with 1:10-13).

Since “to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6); we must ensure that we are not calling ourselves “of Paul,” “of Apollos,” or “of Martin Luther.” We must concur with the words of Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon: “I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone. I hope the Baptist name will soon perish; but let Christ’s name last forever.”² We must call ourselves after a spiritual, God-given name.

The Holy Spirit uses a few different names to refer to the church: simply “the church” (Matt. 18:17; Acts 2:47; Eph. 3:21), “the church of God” (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; 15:9); “churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16), and “church of the firstborn” (Heb. 12:23). Other words used for the church are “the body” (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23), “the kingdom” (Heb. 12:28; Matt. 16:19), “God’s husbandry” (“God’s field,” *New King James Version*, 1 Cor. 3:9), “God’s building” (1 Cor. 3:9) and “the flock” (1 Pet. 5:3).

At this point we merely wish to note that “church of Christ” is among the several designations given by the Holy Spirit for the church. One might object, “Wait, I don’t read anything about a ‘church of Christ’! In Romans 16:16, I only read about ‘**churches** of Christ,’ in the plural.” But it takes singulars to make a plural—there cannot be **churches** of Christ without each of their being a church of Christ. If all of them are collectively called “the churches of Christ,” any one of them would have to be a “church of Christ.”

God loves and blesses the church (Rom. 8:28 -39; Eph. 5:25; Rev. 3:9; et al.). As a church accurately identifies itself by a God-given designation, it signifies the favor of God; just as Abraham, Sarah, and Israel’s new God-given names signified the favor of God.

The name “church of Christ” most clearly expresses the Biblical nature of the church. While there are numerous designations for the church in the New Testament, the principle of its being the church of Christ rings throughout. Looking to its impending establishment, Christ called it “my church” (Matt. 16:18). Although the words “church of Christ” are not explicitly stated in this passage, for us to refer to the church as did Christ we cannot call it “my church.” Changing the first person “my” to the third person, as we must from our perspective, “my church” becomes “Christ’s

church” or “the church of Christ.” The body, which is the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18, 24), the Holy Spirit calls “the body of Christ” (1 Cor. 12:27; emphasis mine, LM).

While Scripture sometimes calls the church “the church of God,” it implies at the same time that it is the church of Christ:

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed **the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood**” (Acts 20:28; emphasis mine, LM).

While it is called the church of God, obviously it was not God the Father Who purchased it with His own blood. It was specifically Christ Who purchased the church with His own blood (Eph. 5:25; Rev. 1:5); thus, here “the church of God” means not “the church of the Father,” but “the church of Christ.”

“Church of the firstborn” or “church of the firstborn ones” alludes to the relationship those in the church have with Christ (Heb. 12:23). He is truly the Firstborn with all the attendant blessings thereof (1:6; Psa. 89:27); however,

it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing **many sons** unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them **brethren**” (Heb. 2:10-11, emphases mine, LM).

All these children of God and brethren of Christ, those who compose the church, receive the blessings of the firstborn: “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17). This reference to “the church of the firstborn” underscores the church’s relationship to Christ, the true Firstborn.

To the church at Colossae, Paul wrote that they were “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col. 1:12-13). Although Paul was previously discussing God the Father, he distinctly states that the church is “the kingdom of his dear Son,” Jesus Christ. He elsewhere avers that “[Christ] must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (1 Cor. 15:25-26). So until death is finally vanquished at the Great Resurrection, Christ is to reign over His kingdom, the church (verse 24).

In whatever figure is used for the church; whether kingdom, body, flock, or bride; Christ is portrayed as having the preeminent position: “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18). If in **all things** Christ is to have the preeminence in His church, why would His name not be included in the name of the church?

As the New Testament refers to the church, it continually reinforces that it is the church of Christ. “Church of Jesus” or “church of Jesus Christ” might just as clearly express the Biblical nature of the church, but because “church of Christ” is found in the Bible, should it not be preferred?

How Many Churches Did Jesus Establish?

Most people believe that Jesus established the denomination that they joined. The New Testament teaches that He established only **one church** (Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 4:4) and if you cannot find the one in the New Testament in which you are a member, then you are in one of the devil's churches. There is **not a single denomination** that can be **found within the pages of The New Testament**—Baptist Church, Community Church, Cowboy Church, Methodist Church, The Roman Catholic Church, Episcopalian Church, Presbyterian Church, The Assembly of God, The Pentecostal Church, The Greek Orthodox Church, The Way, The Link, The Nazarene Church, The Lutheran Church, The Christian Church, etc., etc. The church of Christ is the **ONLY** church in the world which was built **AFTER** its builder died and was raised from the dead, and is the **only** church spoken of in **The New Testament**. The New Testament church is the April theme of *The Gospel Preceptor* and will be an eye-opener for people who think Christ built **their denominations**.

“What Saith The Scriptures?”

Harrell Davidson



The staff writers of *The Gospel Preceptor* are thankful for those having Bible questions to submit them for consideration. Every Bible question is vital and deserves a proper Bible answer. We now have several questions, in fact, enough for a few months looking forward.

The questions now in my que are followed by a lovely request. The person who sent these questions asked, “Kindly, answer my questions using scripture. Thank you.” And I will try my best to comply with my answers. With that said, the first question is: **“Who gathered all 66**

books into One Book and what principles they used in doing so?”

For a little time I thought about the approach to this question and thought about ignoring it since there is not one passage of Scripture that tells us “who gathered all 66 books” together. However, the gentleman that submitted all these six or so questions is very serious in all that he has asked for and some of them pry deeply into the Word of God.

Remember, that I wrote that I will try my best to answer with Scripture, but here Scripture is lacking. Therefore, I will use my best judgment in writing some of the principles of how I put the Bible together. One might think it strange that I mention putting the Bible together. But that is what one or probably dozens of individuals decided to do over years of time. Each person may do this differently however, and that is fine as long as one studies the Sacred Volume for years upon years in order to accomplish this feat. Is the writer qualified to do this?

This writer has over a 44 year period of time studying this very matter as thoroughly as he could and has written *Davidson’s Notes* on the Old Testament—every book—and several from the New Testament before retiring from writing for the most part. Does this qualify me exclusively. No! It is the still the way that I put the Book together. The writer has not done this to sell such books. It has been done, well over two thousand pages, to leave for his children and grandchildren and he teaches from these in current Bible classes ongoing such as Deuteronomy and Revelation. Where then should one begin is this vast journey?

Genesis is the Book of beginnings. What would one know about God and creation if he started say in Joshua? Who is Joshua one would question. What part did he play and who were the people that he became the leader of and where did they come from and why are they what they are and where are they and why. These could be asked an infinitum. There would be mass confusion and there would not be concrete answers to such queries.

Genesis is the introduction of God into our world. Genesis is the beginning of origins of every good thing that we see and things which we daily use such as food water and all procreation. Then let us note the writer’s introduction to this marvelous Book.

“Genesis is the background of creation and the origin of all living things. Without the book of Genesis, we would not have the proper knowledge of God. Gen. 1:1 gives us the introduction of God. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” This shows the simplicity and depth of the scriptures. A child can read this verse and believe, understand, and accept it. Yet it covers all the intricate difficulties that men have in the creation of the world. When philosophy has had all it has to say it is covered in Gen. 1:1. It is evident that the Bible is the inspired Revelation of God. Man could not have conceived in such a simple way the things about creation and the breadth that leaves nothing out. God says that in one verse.

It does not enter into any kind of discussion about God, but assumes that God is and states a fact. When men reject Genesis, they reject any kind of information relative to God that is based upon revelation. One could not have this apart from revelation. When men reject Genesis there is no explanation of the universe. This is precisely why

Genesis begins where it does, “In the beginning God.” Without God there is chaos. There is no understanding. No wonder when men reject the origin of things given in Genesis they are confused at the very best. If you do not believe this just read the newspaper and see the attempts that men make in making some claim how the universe came into being. Evolutionists are beginning to argue among themselves. The reason being, that when you reject the origin of things as set forth in Genesis, one has no clue.

Genesis sets forth the origin of man, and when this is rejected, man is left with no understanding of himself. He is nothing more than an animal. Ponder what we are and what we are all about. Blot out Genesis and God and let me ask who are you? You cannot know whom you are except from the origin of man in Genesis.

Genesis has the foundation of the truth of the home and marriage as the basis of society. This is what Genesis teaches. When we reject that—the world is chaotic. Marriage is basic to society. In fact, in Genesis 6 when immorality broke down the home it led to the downfall of mankind with the exception of Noah and his family. The same was true of Sodom and Gomorrah. When the home breaks down there are implications throughout the world.

Genesis sets forth the fundamental truth of the value of work. Without this book we could not understand the nature of work. There is the growing need for people finding something to do. Genesis shows that there is a value in work to society. It also shows that when people try to live as parasites they are rejected by mankind in general and specifically the community in which they live.

Genesis helps us understand the entrance of evil in the world. I do not believe that Genesis sets forth the origin of evil. It sets forth its entrance in the world among men. It does not tell us where evil came from. It simply says that it is in Gen. 3:1. It is futile to go backward and learn the origin of evil. We need to learn what constitutes sin and its consequences.

Genesis gives us the origin of the races. We could not know except for Genesis. It also contains the origin of languages. A linguist said that the only reasonable account for language is the account that we have in Gen. 11. Therefore, we are dependent upon the Bible for that.

Genesis introduces us to the subject of redemption. The seeds of redemption are set forth in this book. God created the earth to be inhabited. In Isaiah 45:18 Isaiah said: “For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.”

Then every book that follows Genesis is tied to it some to some degree. Every book of the Bible is connected in some way if we will search for it. The Bible is a book about sin and redemption. Sin entered the picture in Genesis 3 and God’s answer through the seed of woman was Christ to be born of a virgin many years later. At that very time the devil started his fight against the promised seed of Abraham to kill or defeat the promised Son of God (Gen 12).

Thus, every book of the Bible, with two exceptions, those being Genesis and Revelation, depend upon what was written before and after each book. It is the case that some books of the Bible are not in chronological order of which there are many demonstrable to prove this assertion. For instance, the Book of Haggai belongs in the Book of Ezra in about chapters 4-5 of that marvelous book where the rebuilding of Jerusalem is mentioned after the Babylonian captivity. And there are several such like indications and that is why this author calls it putting the Bible together.

Remember where we started with this reasoning: It was “If” the Bible began at the Book of Joshua. But let me do the same with the New Testament if I may.

Suppose the Bible began at John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Start with the same inquiries. Who or what is the Word mentioned? How did this happen? Why did it happen? Why is this in the Bible and why is this important to us today? Suppose that this was not only the beginning of the Bible but the beginning of the New Testament? We would be as lost as a

goose, not understanding that facts regarding promises and prophecies that preceded John 1.

As I mentioned earlier about Haggai in the Old Testament, let me introduce this thought. It is my studied judgment that the first books of the New Testament ever written were 1 and 2 Thessalonians in about A.D. 53-54. But do they belong at the beginning of the New Testament? Again, what would we know about the birth of Christ, His genealogy, etc.? Matthew seems to have been written in about A.D. 56 and written to the Jews mostly, but is the introduction of Christ into the world. So, obviously Matthew, Mark, written to the Jews in Rome, Luke, the only Gentile writer in the New Testament, and John all belong before the rest of the New Testament.

Please note the writer's introduction to the Book of Matthew and its significance below:

“There is about 400 years between Malachi and Matthew. All we have is profane history and that is not inspired. We know that the Roman Empire had come into existence and that the Pharisees and Sadducees had come into being. Matthew is to the New Testament what Genesis is to the Old Testament. Genesis was the beginning of all we would study in the Old Testament and Matthew is the same for the rest of the New Testament. Matthew makes the transition from the Old Testament to Acts chapter 2 and the Day of Pentecost. It is a bridge from Malachi to Acts 2. The purpose of Matthew is to show to the Jews that Christ was the fulfillment of the Old Testament, and their misconceptions of the nature of the kingdom. The keynote of Matthew is found in the first verse: Matt. 1:1 “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” This underscores the importance of studying the Old Testament. David and Abraham are used to summarize the Old Testament.

In Genesis 12, God made the promise to Abraham that through his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed. In 2 Sam. 12, a promise was made to David about a kingdom and his seed would sit on his throne. The promise made to Abraham was a promise of redemption. The promise that God made to David was the beginning of the everlasting kingdom. This is important for a couple of reasons.

1. Matthew was written to the Jews.
2. The Jews had misunderstood the purpose of the Old Testament and the nature of the promise of God. They did not understand that when Christ came into the world this marked the beginning of the end of the Jewish age. They to this day still do not understand this and this is why we have the problem in the Middle East presently. This is precisely why they fight over in Palestine. The premillennialist that teaches the 1000-year reign misunderstand the nature of the kingdom just like the Jews did and do. They do not believe that Christ is sitting on David's throne today. Matthew 1 refutes this notion.

The Old Testament pointed to Pentecost. Matthew shows the spiritual nature of the kingdom. The Jews were looking for a physical kingdom with an earthly king. Matthew presents Christ as a king and the kingdom He came to set up—a spiritual king reigning over a spiritual kingdom. The word “king” is found 9 times in Matthew. They are:

1. Matt. 1:6 “And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias.”
2. Matt 2:3 “When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.”
3. Matt 5:35 “Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.”
4. Matt 21:5 “Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.”
5. Matt 25:24 “Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed.”
6. Matt 25:40 “And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you,

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

7. Matt 27:29 “And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!”
8. Matt 27:37 “And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”
9. Matt 27:42 “He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.”

I am not surprised that the king is mentioned this many times. The redeemer of the world is the King. The word *kingdom* is used 54 times in Matthew if I have counted correctly. The terminology is different from that in both Mark and Luke. They both talk about the kingdom of God while Matthew talks about the kingdom of heaven. What better terminology could be used to show that the kingdom was spiritual? Note what this suggests:

1. It shows its divine origin. It has its origin in God.
2. It is spiritual in nature and the term heaven is used to denote spiritual things. What better word could be used? Suppose I talk about heaven! Do you think I am talking about a physical kingdom?
3. It is a universal kingdom. It is not national—not just for Palestine, but for the entire world. What better word could Matthew use to turn attention to things above?
4. The Kingdom is not racial or fleshly, but spiritual. It is for everyone. It will be based on faith. The king that Matthew will set forth is a king that is from God—a king that is from God to man for God.

I sincerely hope and pray that this has been beneficial to the querist though volumes more could be written.

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

Baptism

Jess Whitlock



In Ephesians 4:5 we read, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” Almost the entire religious world will agree that there is one **Lord**. It is amazingly amazing that the vast denominational world disagrees with Paul’s writing that there is “one faith” and “one baptism.” That “one baptism” of which Paul wrote in AD 62 is the baptism of the great commission of Jesus Christ.

Why should one be baptized into Christ? Baptism cleanses one of sin by the washing in water (Eph. 5:26). We are baptized into the name of the Godhead (Matt. 28:19). Baptism is **for** the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

In my first public debate I signed to affirm this proposition: “The Scriptures teach that water baptism to the penitent believer is for (in order to obtain) the remission of sins.” One of my charts used demonstrated that in New Testament baptism we are baptized **into Christ**. That chart emphasized two Scriptures: Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27. My opponent, Mr. Ballard, contended that I had only used two Scriptures to make my point. He proceeded to push the point that I used those two passages, because I did not have any others to use, only those two! He was absolutely right! In my rebuttal speech I asked Mr. Ballard this question: “How many times does God have to make a statement to make that statement true?” Then we had a brief discussion about the term “gopher wood” that is found only **one time** in the entire Bible! Then I continued, “Mr. Ballard, we are still waiting for just **one Scripture** from you to show that the **one baptism** of the New Testament is **not** for the remission of sins.” He remained as

silent as the proverbial tomb on that point.

One is not saved until after that one has been baptized **into Christ for the remission of sins!** One-hundred forty-nine of the ripest scholars this world has ever known (translators of *King James and American Standard Versions*) affirm this truth in Acts 2:38. In Matthew 26:28 we note again that Jesus Christ shed His blood “**for** the remission of sins...” Some will argue, as did my opponent in the aforementioned debate, that the English word *for* can mean: “because of, or on account of, or in order to declare...” I responded that if it means that in Acts 2:38 it would have to mean that also in Matthew 26:28; and if not, then why not? Remember that proverbial tomb?

On the first night of that debate I placed the words of 1 Peter 3:21 on my blackboard. I did make one notable change in this manner: “*the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us...*” At the word *now* I put it in parenthesis in this fashion: (**NOW/NOT**). I then challenged my opponent that one of those words did not belong and asked him to erase that word. He ignored the blackboard as long as he could. I pressed him in each speech to erase the word that was in error. In his final speech on the last night, he finally went to the blackboard and erased the word *not*. He threw the eraser down and walked away muttering “I don’t see what all the big deal was about that!” As he walked away those words: “**Baptism Doth Also Now Save Us...**” glared at his back. In my final speech I read the proposition he had signed to defend: “The Scriptures teach that water baptism to the penitent believer is not for (in order to obtain) the remission of sins.” I explained to my opponent and the audience that when Mr. Ballard erased the word *not* he had given up his proposition, and indeed he had!

Yet, many in the religious world of our day are still trying to re-write the apostle Peter in his words recorded in 1 Peter 3:21. Many still try to have him say that “baptism doth also **not** save us...”? Have you been baptized into Christ **for** the remission of sins? If not, why not now? “And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

A Primer on the Meaning of Faith

Dub McClish

Introduction

There is hardly a more important subject for mankind to contemplate—and understand—than that of faith. It is a subject (and word) that men widely abuse and misuse. This misunderstanding is especially evident in faith’s relationship to obedience, salvation, and knowledge. The subject of faith is so basic that if one goes astray on it, he will do so to his own eternal condemnation.

The Place of Faith in the Christian System



Faith is fundamental and basic to the religion of Christ—the beginning point of man’s approach to Deity: “And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him” (Heb. 11:6). Jesus said: “Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:34). Faith is therefore the beginning point of man’s response to God’s message: “He that believeth [i.e., the Gospel, v. 15] and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned” (Mark 16:16).

Faith and *belief* are so much the basic response God requires that one or the other is often used as a synecdoche (i.e., a part representing the whole) for all that one must do to be reconciled to God. *Repentance* (Acts 17:30), *confession* (of one’s faith) (Rom. 10:9–10), and *baptism* (1 Pet. 3:21) are all used in the same way.

Advocates of salvation by “faith only” notoriously misapply John 3:16 in an effort to advance their heresy. If this statement includes only intellectual acceptance of the Christ, it excludes all else (e.g., repentance and confession, and a life of faithfulness, as well as baptism— which “faith only” adherents so despise).

Many passages teach salvation by faith, but none by faith **alone**. *Believeth* in John 3:16 simply stands for all that man must do to be saved eternally, for all such conditions are expressions of faith, even as rejection of any of them is a demonstration of unbelief. The report of Paul and Barnabas at the conclusion of their first preaching trip (Acts 14:27) provides an additional illustration of this use of *faith*.

Further, when the jailer in Philippi asked Paul and Silas what he should do to be saved, they first told him, “Believe on the Lord Jesus” (Acts 16:31). A bit more reading reveals that they 2 (1) taught the jailer and his family the Gospel (v. 32), upon which he (2) manifested his repentance by washing their stripes (v. 33a), and was immediately baptized, though it was past midnight (vv. 25, 33b). Only then does Luke describe them as “having believed in God” (v. 34).

Numerous other passages use *faith* and/or *belief* to refer to what men had done to be saved and added to the church, all of which conditions are subsumed under one or the other of these words (e.g., Acts 10:45; 13:12; 15:5; 17:12; et al.).

After Pentecost inspired men consistently use *believer* and *them that believe* in reference to those who had **obeyed** the Gospel, had been added to the church, and thereby had become disciples, Christians, brethren, saints, children of God (e.g., Acts 5:14; 1 Cor. 14:22; 1 The. 1:7; 2:10, 13; 1 Tim. 4:12; 6:2; et al.).

All such usages of *faith* and *belief* are examples of “subjective” faith—that which comes from within men as they react to the Father, to Christ, and, to the Holy Spirit through the Gospel. The New Testament often refers to the Gospel as “the faith” in an objective sense. When so used, the faith refers to that whole body of doctrine in which men must invest their faith. Note the following illustrations of this meaning (emph. DM):

- “And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were **obedient to the faith**” (Acts 6:7).
- “Confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in **the faith**, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom” of God (14:22).
- “Watch ye, stand fast in **the faith**, quit you like men, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13).
- “Till we all attain unto the **unity of the faith**, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).
- “I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for **the faith** which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

One’s personal faith in **the faith** is the basis of a life that pleases God after Gospel obedience: “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). The following principle is age-lasting: “But the righteous shall live by faith” (Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17). The foundation of the “Christian graces” is faith (2 Pet. 1:15).

Faith is so basic that Paul wrote that Moses’ law was a “law of works,” and the Gospel is a “law of faith” (Rom. 3:27). (Note that Paul depicts the Gospel as “law,” doubtless much to the chagrin of the “all grace-no law” voices among those who have departed from us.)

What Faith Is Not

Faith, like many other good words, has been misdefined.

1. Some equate faith with wishful thinking—“pie in the sky by and by.” In this misconception, “faith” has no reality upon which to rest. The existence of God, Christ, the Bible, and Heaven are all things one **wishes** to be real and **wants** to believe in so badly that one convinces himself that they exist.
2. Some completely sunder faith from knowledge. To them “faith” goes beyond knowledge, taking up where knowledge ceases. To these misdefiners, “faith” is the proverbial “leap in the dark.”
3. Many conceive of saving “faith” as merely intellectual acceptance of certain Biblical facts (e.g., the existence of God, the Deity of Christ). Although such acknowledgement of Bible teaching is the **beginning** point of saving faith, it is far

from its **end** (as earlier noted).

4. Some view faith as believing in things that may **possibly** exist. Accordingly, some allege that, while we cannot prove God's existence empirically, yet His existence is more probable than improbable. This misapprehension of faith constitutes agnosticism.
5. Others conceive of believers as those who ignore evidence with which they disagree. Skeptics often thus view Biblical faith. However, the better demonstration of this aberration of faith is the evolutionist, who defies, denies, and denigrates the huge body of evidence that validates the Bible and combats his irrational hypotheses.

While not exhaustive, the foregoing list is representative of the major misunderstandings of faith.

What Faith Is

Biblical faith has to do with the elements of belief, trust, confidence, assurance, and conviction. Hebrews 11:1 helps us see the true nature and meaning of faith: "Now faith is assurance [the substance, KJV] of things hoped for, a conviction [the evidence, KJV] of things not seen." *Assurance, substance, conviction, and evidence* are strong terms of certainty. An assurance or certainty undergirds the reality of the things for which we hope, although we cannot now physically see them. This certainty and assurance imply evidence sufficient to convict one that the things for which we hope are fact rather than fantasy.

The source of adequate evidence of the reasonableness of our spiritual hopes is the Bible: "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). How did the message of the apostles and other New Testament prophets engender faith in first-century unbelievers? They presented compelling, undeniable evidence that confirmed their message. The "great salvation" they preached,

...which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will (Heb. 2:3-4).

This principle is evident in the statement of Nicodemus: "We know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2).

Since the age of such signs, wonders, and miracles has ceased, how do men develop faith now? The **written** record of the Biblical miracles provides the very same evidence of the authenticity of the message that the **actual** miracles did. The message has not changed, so the miracles that confirmed it until its completion will effectively confirm it from now on. The words of John are instructive just here:

"Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not **written** in this book: but these are **written**, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that **believing** ye may have life in his name" (John 20:30-31, emph. DM).

Apparently, John was writing for the benefit of those who had not seen any of Jesus' signs. He therefore **wrote** a record of some of those signs so that they might **believe** in the Christ and be saved. If the written record had confirmatory power before the end of the first century, it has the same power indefinitely.

Faith is not **beyond** knowledge or **antagonistic** to it but is actually another **form** of knowledge or means of attaining it. The account of the people in Samaria demonstrates this fact. At first the Samaritans "believed on him [Jesus] because of the word of the woman" (John 4:39). Later, Jesus entered Samaria and taught the people, upon which they said, "Now we believe, not because of thy speaking: for we have heard for ourselves and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world" (John 4:42). Evidence created faith and knowledge.

On Pentecost Peter reminded the crowd of Jesus' "mighty works and wonders and

signs” (Acts 2:22), proclaimed His resurrection (v. 32), and then caused them to reflect on the powerful signs that accompanied the apostles’ baptism in the Holy Spirit (v. 33). Peter also appropriately applied various prophecies (vv. 17–21; 25–28; 34–35). He then challenged them to believe, based on solid evidence: “Let all the house of Israel therefore **know assuredly**, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified” (v. 36, emph. DM). Some had witnessed some of Jesus’ signs, but those from far-flung nations (vv. 9–11) could not have done so. Perhaps most of these had seen some of the miracles on Pentecost. However, **none** of 5 them had witnessed the resurrection, ascension, of coronation of Christ, but Peter said that they could **know** all of these things **assuredly**. The murderous infidels became penitent believe.

Verse 37 is an implied confession of their **faith**: “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter described their newfound **faith** as something they now “**know** assuredly.” God has never asked men to believe in anything or anyone apart from adequate evidence.

Conclusion

We must never cease to emphasize to a world of confused “believers” that saving faith is always obedient faith (emph. below, DM):

“But when they **believed** Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were **baptized**, both men and women” (Acts 8:12).

“And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, **believed** in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing **believed**, and were **baptized**” (Acts 18:8).

The only sort of faith that accomplishes anything is one based on Biblical evidence and is a “faith which worketh by love” (Gal. 5:6).

The Bible Only Makes Christians Only and the Only Christians

Thomas B. Warren



That there is **one and only one God** can be proved. That **the Bible** is the Word of God can be prod. That **the Bible** teaches that there is one and only one **God, one Lord, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, one body**, and one **hope** is made clear beyond doubt (Eph. 4:4-6).

In spite of the above noted facts, some people adamantly affirm that there are many churches and that any one of these churches is as good as any other church. In fact, many claim that one can be a Christian without being in any church at all. Sadly, even some in the Lord’s church do this.

In contradiction to the immediately preceding, the Bible plainly teaches that there is **one—and only one—church** which is approved by God and that **salvation is in that one church**; that is, no can be saved by the blood of Christ without being in that one church!

No one has a God-given right to declare to others, “There are many churches and any one of them is as good as any other.” Jesus died and bought the one **church** (His church) with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

I affirm, without equivocation, that the **Bible only** makes **Christians only** and the **only Christians!** I claim to **know** that this affirmation is **true** (cf., John 8:32).

Because I am so strongly convinced of the truth of the first three paragraphs of this article, I have written a book (217 pages) entitled, *The Bible Only Makes Christians Only and the Only Christians*. This is a book which explains this matter in much greater detail than can be done in this brief article.

Some people, including some who are members of the Lord's church, claim that while members of the church of Christ are Christians only, members of the church of Christ are **not the only** Christians. When people affirm such a doctrine, they are clearly implying that there are Christians living in the world today who are not members of the church which Jesus bought with His own blood (Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:12-14; 1 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 5:9). The Bible teaches otherwise. The Bible teaches that there is **not one person** who has been saved in any way other than by the **blood of Christ** (Heb. 9:22; cf., Lev. 17:11). And Jesus bought nothing with His blood other than **the church** (Acts 20:28).

The claim is made here that—by knowing what the Bible teaches about the matter—one can know that the **Bible Only** makes **Christians Only** and the **Only** Christians.

How can this be the case? Because people **can know**, not merely **guess**: (1) that God **does** exist, (2) that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, (3) that the Bible can be understood (it **can be correctly interpreted**, John 8:32), (4) that men **must obey** what the Bible teaches them to obey, (5) that the Bible only makes Christians only, and, (6) the **Bible only** makes **Christians only** and the **only Christians** (this means that no one is a Christian who has **not both learned and obeyed** what the Bible teaches people **must do** in order to be saved by the **blood of Christ**, Heb. 5:8-9; cf., Phi. 2:8). It must be repeated: there is not even one person who is a **Christian** who is not a member of **the church** which Jesus bought with His blood (Acts 20:28; cf., Gal. 1:4; 2:20).

Contrary to the views of many people, it is neither self-righteous nor arrogant to point out and defend the truth that members of the church for which Jesus died—and **only** those members—are **Christians**. I repeat: the Bible teaches that no one else is a Christian!

This is the case because the Bible plainly teaches such (involving both **explicit** teaching and **implicit** teaching). May it be carefully noted that salvation is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10). This passage makes absolutely clear that one **must be in Christ** to be saved; i.e., to be a **Christian**. To be in Christ is to be in the spiritual body of Christ which is the one and **only** body which He has purchased with His own blood (cf., Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23; Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:22; Rom. 5:8-9).

God gains no children (saved people, Christians) except by means of His seed (the same basic way any man gains children). His seed is the Word of God (Luke 8:11). No one becomes a child of God (one saved from his sins by the blood of Christ) by believing and obeying any other message ("seed"—1 Pet. 1:23).

When the seed which is the Word of God falls into the **heart of a dishonest** person (one who is not willing both to accept and to obey that Word), the result is rejection of God—the **dishonest** person rejects God's Word, and God rejects the persons who reject His great message of salvation (the gospel—Rom. 1:15-16; John 8:32; Gal. 1:6-9).

However, when God's seed falls into the heart of an honest person, that seed is both accepted and **nurtured**. It grows into a full-blown plant (a child of God, one saved by the blood of Christ—Luke 8:4-15; Acts 2:1-42; 8:26-40; et al.). When one obeys **the truth** (the gospel, the power of God unto salvation—Rom. 1:15-17), being baptized into the one body (1 Cor. 12:13), all of—his sins are washed away by the blood of Christ. Then, insofar as he walks in the light, the blood of Christ keeps on cleansing him from the "isolated sins" which he may commit (1 John 1:7-9). This will not be the case for children of God who **forsake the pathway** of faithfulness.

It bears repeating: there are no Christians who are not members of the **one-and-only church** which Jesus Christ purchased with His own blood (Eph. 2:13-18). Thus, it is clear that the Bible only makes Christians only and the only Christians.

How sad it is today to hear men who formerly were great proclaimers and defenders of the truth (the gospel of Christ) now cry out, "We are Christians only but not the only Christians!" If this assertion were true, then it would follow that there is at least one other way (i.e., in addition to obeying what the Bible teaches) by which the sinner (the non-Christian) can be saved without obeying what the Bible teaches about the matter!

I deny that contention with all of my being, and I urge everyone (in order to see that it is false) to study carefully in the Bible the following passages: 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Romans 1:15-17; Matthew 7:13-27; Hebrews 5:8-9 and many others.

I lovingly urge, in the light of: (1) the eternity which faces each and every one of us (Mat. 25:46; 2 The. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:10-15; et al.), (2) the glory of heaven (eternal life), and, (3) the horror of hell (eternal punishment) that all of us learn and submit to the true teaching of the Bible.

I have written in genuine concern for the eternal destinies both of other people and of myself. May we all love and obey God. May we all be deeply and abidingly faithful to God because of His love in giving His Son for us and to Jesus Christ for giving His own life on the cross of Calvary for us (by the grace of God, Jesus “tasted of death for every man”—Heb. 2:9).

The contemporary cry (even among some members of the Lord’s church) that we should accept the view that “unity-indiversity” is in harmony with what the Bible teaches even when such pertains to obligatory matters should be rejected by all.

The Completeness And Perfection Of New Testament Forgiveness

Kent Bailey



The concept of forgiveness is a crucial component of God's scheme of Redemption. When we consider such we find that in the minds of many individuals there is great difficulty in comprehension of this subject. Some individuals refuse to extend such to others whereas others find that it is very difficult to accept. Divine forgiveness is extended as a conditional blessing of New Testament Christianity.

The Nature of Forgiveness

The term forgiveness (*aphesis*) denotes a dismissal, release, sending away, or that of taking leave. It is a medical term that is often used with reference to a release of the consequences of a diseased body. Spiritually speaking it is identified with reference to that of sin. There are both affirmative and negative connotations regarding this specific term.

It does not erase the fact that sin has been committed. It does not undo the fact that the attributes of God's righteousness, justice, and holiness have been violated. It does not blot from our minds the reality the memory of sin (Psa. 51:1-3; 1 Tim. 1:15-16).

New Testament forgiveness is a release from the enormous debt incurred by sin, it is a renewal of a broken fellowship and a reconciliation between the offended and the offender. Under the New Testament of Christ forgiveness is both complete and perfect (Heb. 8:1-13). Contrast New Testament forgiveness with forgiveness under the covenant of Moses. While one could both live and die in good standing with God under the Old Testament such was accomplished only upon an incomplete pass over basis. It took the atoning death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in order that forgiveness be granted with completeness and perfection (Heb. 8:19-27; Rom. 3:20-25).

The Need for Forgiveness

The case being that the death of Christ was universal in scope for all accountable individuals, all accountable individuals who live in an unforgiven condition live in a state of condemnation outside the realm of Salvation (Isa. 53:1-6; 59:1-2; Rom. 3:23; 6:23).

All unforgiven individuals are not guilty of the same sins, however all unforgiven individuals are guilty of sin. Sins of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21; sins of negligence (Jas. 4:17), religious sins (Col. 3:17; 2 John 9-11; Matt. 7:21-23; sins of misplaced emphasis (Luke 9:59-62). Accountable humanity stands before God condemned in sin if not found in a saved state (Rom. 5:1-9).

The Difficulty of Forgiveness

Some individuals have a very low estimate of forgiveness. They view such as very in-

significant and no greater than an individual placing an order for a material object. While God desires to forgive one must remember that God's forgiveness comes at a great cost (Heb. 9:22; Luke 24:46-47).

In order to receive God's forgiveness one must have an attitude of submission. One must be willing to accept the need for such (Rom. 6:23). One must be willing to believe Christ (John 1:12), repent of sins (Acts 17:30), confess our faith in Christ (Rom. 10:10) and be baptized unto the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38). There is also the matter regarding walking in the light (1 John 1:6-10) and maintaining a willingness to forgive others (Matt. 6:14-15; Luke 17:1-3).

God has a justified holy hatred for sin (Prov. 6:16; Heb. 1:9). To view forgiveness as insignificant is to encourage sin. Because of God's love for humanity he was willing to pay the price that Salvation could be offered.

The Completeness of New Testament Forgiveness

When individuals meet the conditions of Divine forgiveness God cancels the debt and remembers the sin no more (Matt. 18:27). When sins are forgiven God no longer holds them against us. When we receive God's forgiveness God will never remind us of them again (Luke 15; Psa. 103:12; Isa. 38:17).

The Old Testament was given as a schoolmaster to educate humanity regarding the horribleness of sin. While God, under the Old Covenant, made provision for sin by means of animal sacrifice; the completeness of God's forgiveness was not fully realized until the New Covenant became operative (Heb. 10).

The Blessedness of the State of Forgiveness

When one receives God's forgiveness the barrier brought about by sin is removed. When one receives forgiveness of God it relieves the burden of dread and fear (1 John 4:17-18). When one is forgiven by God it should create within the forgiven a disposition and desire to forgive others when they repent (Eph. 4:31-32; 1 John 4:11). When one is forgiven by God it causes the human soul to rejoice (Acts 8:39; Rom. 4:6-8).

The Faithful Christian Must Learn to Live With Forgiveness

Even though individuals have either obeyed the gospel of Christ, or have, as fallen children of God, repented of sins and have been restored to the fellowship of Christ; some sincerely question if God has really forgiven them. While sin is a horrible concept. The blood of Christ is powerful to remove all sins stains if it is applied to our lives (1 Tim. 1:12-20; Luke 17:1-4).

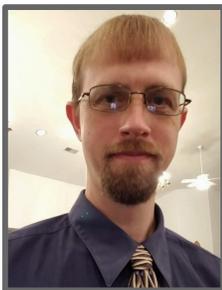
Repentance is a change of mind. It is accomplished by our decision to forsake sin. This does not mean that when a Christian sins he no longer forgives; it means that we still have the promise of forgiveness just as long as we do not move beyond the scope of repentance (Heb. 10:16-17).

Once we meet the conditions of God for forgiveness we have done all that we can do. Let us move forward trusting Christ with determination to live for him.

They Have a Zeal of God But Not According to Knowledge, No. 1

Donald E. Smith

Introduction



As most probably know, the title of this series of articles comes from Romans 10:2. Here it is being used in reference to those of the denominational world. This particular series covers a lengthy correspondence that occurred when this writer was serving his term of incarceration. Though it does not conclude with the desired outcome, the response was still not expected, as it is generally expected that denominationalists will not respond at all. Let's get a little bit of the background of what brought this about.

In 2013, after attending a Bible study I was holding on the duration and cessation of

miracles, a fellow inmate, Micah, came to me and requested that I write the lesson out so he could send it to his father, Marc, whom was a Pentecostal “pastor.” I agreed, however, I knew the importance of depth and clarity such a paper needed, as this was going into the hands of someone who was already leading people. Therefore, I contacted a faithful brother who had the faculties and wherewithal to proofread, edit, and type this lesson into manuscript form, Dub McClish, and asked if he might do so. He agreed, and I set out handwriting this lesson, which turned out to be 21 pages of typed material in its final form. The manuscript was prefaced with a personal letter from both Micah and myself, along with an article by William Davis (a Christian who had converted after being in the Pentecostal faith over 50 years), an article by Dub McClish, and one by Daniel Denham, as well as a couple of tracts. Marc certainly had enough material to understand his error. However, it was Micah’s mother, Julie, who responded. Therefore, without further delay, let us begin with the manuscript and see where this exchange went.

Have Miracles Ceased?

Introduction

In the true sense and definition of a miracle, have Biblical miracles ceased? In order to know the answer to this question we will target several points of observation that the Bible reveals to us. These will include:

1. A brief definition of *miracle* as used in the Bible
2. A brief explanation of the chronology of miracles and the way these gifts were given
3. A description of each of the nine miraculous gifts of the Spirit and the purposes of them
4. The duration of miracles

So let us begin this search of the Scriptures for the answer to the question, “Have miracles ceased?” Let us be determined to be unbiased as we begin this search, follow it through, and end it, having an “honest and good heart” (Luke 8:15).¹

A Brief Definition of *Miracle* as Used in the Bible

The following things **do not** constitute miracles, as the Bible records and defines them:

1. Merely spectacular or extraordinary occurrences (e.g., an “amazing” catch of a football by a receiver or an “incredible” circus act).
2. Merely events that one cannot explain (e.g., the work of an illusionist or how one house is destroyed after a tornado when those on either side remained intact).

Miracle in the New Testament is translated from two different Greek words:²

1. The primary word, *dunamis* (from which we get our English word, *dynamite*), connotes “power or inherent ability..., works of a supernatural origin and character, such as could not be produced by natural agents and means” (e.g., Acts 2:22; 8:13; 19:11; 1 Cor. 12:10, 28-29; Gal. 3:5).
2. The other word, *semeion*, (sometimes translated *sign*) means “a sign, mark, token” in reference to “miracles and wonders as signs of Divine authority” (e.g., Luke 23:8; Acts 4:16, 22).

From these two words it is apparent that *miracles*, as defined by the Bible, were events, acts, occurrences that are so far beyond the ability of natural and physical laws as to leave no doubt that they were produced by supernatural power.

A Brief Explanation of the Chronology of Miracles and the Way These Gifts Were Given

This chronology begins with God,³ Who created all things, wherein He has used His omnipotent nature to perform miracles and signs in executing His will. It is evident that He never used miraculous measures unless it was absolutely necessary, and even then, He always worked through nature when possible to produce the miracles (obviously, He did not do so **before** He created “nature” in the physical universe). Beginning with God, we will work our way to the Christ, the apostles, and others, showing

the fact of the miracles from the beginning and the way the gifts were later given.

God (Elohyim)

God **spoke** everything into existence (Gen. 1). God miraculously created everything in six literal 24-hour days. God could have created everything—all of it—in one split second, or He could have evolved everything over millions of years, beginning with a “big bang,”⁴ but that is not the way God chose to do it.

Setting aside the laws of nature, God also spoke directly to various men to relay His will. This communication was miraculous. Let us look at some of the examples and the respective reasons why God used miracles under certain circumstances:

1. **Noah**, relaying the specifications of the ark to the saving of his household (Gen. 6:11-22). **Reason:** To preserve humanity
2. **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**, prophesying that the Christ should come through their lineage (Gen. 12:1-3; 26:1-4; 28:10-14; Gal. 3:6), among other prophecies that involved promises to them. **Reason:** To give assurance through adverse circumstances of their lives (since God was using them for a special and extraordinary purpose).
3. **Moses**, giving of the Ten Commandments (Exo. 24:12), and the various other parts of His law to the Israelites. **Reason:** To preserve the nation through whom the Christ would come.

As can be seen, all of these miraculous events were absolutely necessary, and God employed natural resources as much as possible in fulfilling them. He could have just spoken and destroyed all the wicked instantly in Noah’s day, but instead, He used 120 years of Noah’s labor to build an ark and then caused the flood. God could have “snapped His fingers” and instantly ushered Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through their difficulties, but instead, He gave them assurance through prophecy. Further, with just a “blink of the eye,” God could have “thought” the laws of Moses into the people’s hearts instantly, but instead, He used the two tables of stone and other writings to relay His law to the people, and they were required to learn that law. Again, God always coupled natural means as much as possible with His miracles.

God always has a specific purpose for using miraculous means to bring about His will. Consider now some of these purposes and what might have happened if God had not intervened. If He had not sent the flood to cleanse the wicked world (Gen. 6:5-7, 11-13, 17), how wicked would the world be today? If God had not confounded language at the tower of Babel (11:1-9), how far would the wicked schemes and activities of men have gone? If God had not destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (19:24-25), how far would their evil deeds have spread on this earth (they have spread alarmingly, even with His judgment upon them)?

Although relief from oppression, infirmities, and other unfavorable circumstances were sometimes a benefit of God’s miracles, these factors were not the ultimate motives behind them. As we move on to consider the miracles of Christ and others in the New Testament, we will find this truth also revealed concerning them.

The Christ

God the Son (Jesus Christ) was with the Father in the beginning as the Word: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:1-3).

As a part of the Divine plan, the Word became flesh (i.e., the “incarnation”) and dwelt on the earth as a man among men (1:14; Phi. 2:5-8) for a brief period of time for the purpose of reconciling mankind to God. His plan of reconciliation required Jesus the Christ’s proving that He was Who He claimed to be—the Son of God, Deity Himself.

The importance of Jesus’ proving that He was Deity was of the first magnitude. After all, He claimed to be receiving the will of God for mankind directly from God: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). Christ’s disciples needed to believe this, but not blindly without some sort of evidence. The miracles and

signs He performed provided the evidence even His enemies could not deny: “Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we do? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him...” (John 11:47-48; cf. Luke 7:20-23). Further these signs are recorded in the Bible so that we today can also believe on the basis of evidence and not blindly: “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:30-31).

Proof of His Deity was thus the overriding purpose for Christ’s miracles. Although relief from pain (i.e., healing of many) and supplying needs (feeding of thousands) were benefits, these were clearly not the ultimate purpose of His miracles. Please observe:

And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land, But unto **none** of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto **a** woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and **none** of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian (Luke 4:23-27; emph. DES).

Christ indicates here that many people could have been relieved of the pain and ailments of this life, but only these two were relieved. Why? Because relief has never been the primary purpose of miracles. Of all the widows, God sent Elijah (Elias) only to one, and of all the lepers, God cleansed only Naaman (a stubborn man who did not really want to obey God). No matter how much modern so called “miracle workers” want to claim and try to persuade people that they really perform miracles and that they are for the purpose of relief, Christ forever settles it—it is just not true.

The Apostles

The apostles were a special group of men Jesus chose to relay His last Will and Testament to the world for all time:

And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor (Luke 6:13-16).

Immediately before His arrest, trials, and crucifixion, Jesus prayed for these men:

I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word... Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through **their** word (John 17:6, 20; emph. DES).

Christ promised the apostles that they would receive the Holy Ghost (referred to as the “Holy Spirit in most Bible versions) Who would guide them into all of God’s Truth to be revealed to mankind:

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you... Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will 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 14:26; 16:13).

At the beginning of the book of Acts, Luke wrote of the occasion on which these promises of the Christ were fulfilled:

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the **apostles**

whom he had chosen... And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. But **ye** shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:1-2, 4, 8; emph. DES).

Jesus stated the reason they were to be baptized with/in the Holy Ghost (Spirit)—so that He could guide them into all of God’s Truth and they could relay it to mankind. This promised baptism occurred on the Pentecost day as recorded in Acts 2:1-4:

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The baptism in the Holy Ghost (Spirit) was both heard and seen. Observers heard the sound as of a rushing mighty wind, and they saw cloven (i.e., split) tongues like as of fire (Acts 2:3). This was undeniably a miraculous event that even onlookers could not dismiss.

Upon their baptism in the Spirit the apostles began to reveal the will of God to the gathering of people from many different nations in their native tongues (i.e., languages) (vv. 4-11). Truly, the purpose of the Lord’s providing this baptism began to be carried out immediately. The New Testament was being revealed and proclaimed (as the Lord had earlier commanded them to do [Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47]).

Accompanying this baptism in the Holy Ghost, the apostles received miraculous gifts, which included one or more of the nine spiritual gifts Paul listed: 1) The word of wisdom, 2) the word of knowledge, 3) faith, 4) gifts of healing, 5) the working of miracles, 6) prophesy, 7) discerning of Spirits, 8) divers kinds of tongues, 9) the interpretation of tongues (1 Cor. 12:8-10). These will be discussed in more detail later.

Cornelius’ Household (Acts 10-11)

Throughout the New Testament it is clear that the Jews who became Christians (especially for a few years following Pentecost) did not understand that the Gentiles were also to be a part of God’s covenant. They could not understand the Gentiles’ ever being called God’s “chosen people,” although their own sacred Scriptures prophesied that the Gentiles would see that light and be a part of that life (Mat. 4:13-16, citing Isa. 9:1-2; 62:2). Even the apostles did not initially comprehend this, as indicated by Peter’s understanding prior to God directly telling him not to call any man common or unclean: “And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean” (Acts 10:28).

Something powerful was going to have to occur as sufficient proof to all the faithful converted Jews that the Gentiles were also to be a part of God’s chosen people. That powerful “something” was the baptism in the Holy Ghost:

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word... And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost (v. 44; 11:15-16).

Peter, in stating that “...the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning,” implies that all present, too, heard the sound as of a rushing mighty wind, and saw the cloven tongues like as of fire—because that is how it happened “at the beginning” (i.e., on Pentecost). An undeniable miraculous event had taken place, proving that the Gentiles

were an acceptable people to God (15:7-9)!

Of note here, we should point out, is the fact that in the only two recorded instances of baptism in the Holy Ghost the exact same events occurred. Yet today people who claim they have been baptized in the Holy Ghost base their claims on a “feeling” or an “experience” they had. Others believe they were baptized in the Holy Ghost when they were baptized in water. But no one close to them, present at these supposed occurrences, heard the sound as of a rushing mighty wind, or saw cloven tongues like as of fire falling on them. Why? Because their claims are completely irrational and without Scriptural backing. Some may want to be baptized in the Holy Ghost after hearing false teaching on the subject, but it is just not a part of God’s will for all men, and it does not pertain to our salvation. His will for the baptism in the Holy Ghost served two purposes:

1. To enable the apostles to receive and declare His complete New Testament without error
2. To prove that the Gentiles were equal recipients of salvation with the Jews

With these truths in mind, let us now consider others who were also able to perform miracles.

Others

Christ certainly promised that there would be others who would have the ability to perform miracles:

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:17-18).

The inspired prophesy of Joel affirmed this as well (Acts 2:16-18, quoting Joel 2:28-29). The question, however, is, “How did they get these abilities?”

After Pentecost, the first record of any person, other than an apostle, who performed miracles was that of Stephen (Acts 6:8). What was special about Stephen that enabled him to do this? If we back up just a few verses, Luke, the inspired historian, tells us that Stephen was one of the seven “Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them” (v. 6). It is significant to note that the apostles had laid their hands on Stephen, and **then** he performed miracles (v. 8). Philip, also one of the seven, began performing miracles as well at Samaria (8:5-7, 13). Now let us take a close look at the example in this latter context.

Philip, a man who was able to heal many people (Acts 8:7), would have been the most likely source to give this ability to someone, if it were possible for anyone (besides an apostle) to do so. However, as the words of Inspiration imply, this was an impossibility for Philip. We know this because the apostles, Peter and John, had to travel from Jerusalem to Samaria in order to lay hands on the newly baptized Samaritans so that they could receive the miraculous measure of the Holy Ghost (vv. 14-17). If they could have received this miraculous power in any other way, why did the apostles have to travel to Samaria and lay their hands on them? It was **impossible** to receive the power of the Holy Ghost to perform miracles in any other way. Simon, the former sorcerer, even confirmed this (although unaware he was doing so) when he tried to buy the ability to empower people to work miracles. From whom did he try to buy the gift? Although he had continued with Philip for some significant period of time before the apostles arrived, he certainly did not try to buy the gift from him. The Scriptures state: “And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money” (v. 18).

So the Bible provides convincing evidence to prove that the miraculous measure of the Holy Ghost was only given by the laying on of the apostles’ hands. This fact is evidenced by Steven, by Philip, and by the Samaritans. Let us, however, take this a step further and we will see that the Biblical evidence is overwhelming. The twelve Ephesians described in Acts 19 did not receive the Holy Ghost, enabling them to speak in tongues and prophesy, until Paul laid his hands on them: “And when Paul had laid his

hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied” (v. 6).

Remember that Paul had this ability because he was an apostle in every sense of the office (2 Cor. 12:11). This fact is relevant to our study as well. Acts 18 tells of Paul’s preaching the Gospel in Corinth and establishing the church there. When we read that those brethren possessed miraculous gifts (1 Cor. 12-14), we can only conclude that they received these gifts at the hands of Paul while he labored among them. Further, Paul stated concerning himself: “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds” (2 Cor. 12:12).

What then is the difference between the Corinthians’ miraculous abilities and those of an apostle? It is certainly the fact that an apostle could impart the gifts to others, whereas no other person could do so. How else could the Ephesian church try “them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars” (Rev. 2:2)?

Although at this point Truth seekers should need no further evidence to know that only an apostle could give the miraculous measure of the Holy Ghost—through the laying on of his hands—we will add one more instance to the others. In 2 Timothy 1:6, Paul reminded Timothy of the way he received his spiritual gift. The account states: “Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.”

So it is emphatically plain to see that only an apostle could relay the miraculous abilities to others. Let us note also that the office of apostleship was limited to a certain number of disciples (12). Specific qualifications had to be met. One had to have: 1) been Jesus’ disciple from the time John began his work of baptizing, 2) continued with the disciples to the day of Christ’s ascension, and 3) been a witness with the other apostles of Jesus’ resurrection (Acts 1:20-22). Notice also that there were two men who were qualified to take Judas’ place as an apostle, but only one was chosen for the position (vv. 23-26). Why not both? This circumstance demonstrates that the number of apostles was limited until their purpose was complete. The apostle Paul was an exception, as he specifically states that he was an “apostle born out of due time” (1 Cor. 15:8-10). These were the only apostles, as no man living since the first century could/can meet these qualifications. There have been no apostles since the first century, there are no apostles today, and there will be no apostles in the future.

This concludes the first segment of the exchange with the Pentecostal denominationalist. The next segment (which will be in the May issue of *TGP*) will cover the nine miraculous gifts of the spirit as listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, and their purposes, as is written in the original manuscript that was replied to by Mrs. Julie Jackson. It is encouraged to study and briefly review this segment before moving on to the next in order to keep the continuity of thought throughout this exchange. Thank you so much for your interest, and we hope this builds upon your faith through challenge, edification, and learning.

Endnotes

- 1 All scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.
- 2 Vine, *W.E. Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Pub., 1996), pp. 412-413.
- 3 *God* in the creation account translates the Hebrew word, *elohyim* (the plural form of *el*), thus embracing all three persons of the Godhead as active in creating all things. Strong, James, *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Pub., 1979), p. 430 (Hebrew Dictionary section).
- 4 Evolution is a false theory proposed by the 19th century English naturalist, Charles Darwin. This man and his theory are 1,700 years removed from the completion of the Bible and about perhaps 8,000 years (probably closer to 6,000, DES, 2/2023) removed from the first human being. Would it really have taken that long to figure out where we came from?

Free!!

“The Thing That Hath Been...” The Cycle of Apostasy

The Book and Postage are FREE
Send an Email
With Your Mailing Address To:
jbbbbbrewer@gmail.com

Announcement

***“The Thing That Hath Been...”*
is Now in Digital Format**

“The Thing That Hath Been...” is now available in a digital format, thanks to Michael Hatcher and the Bellview church of Christ in Pensacola, Florida. They converted the book to a PDF file with searchable chapters. This allows people to request the book in digital format and receive it immediately by email.

For people who do not have email, we will continue mailing hard copies through the United States Postal Service. The book and the postage will still be FREE!!