

# The Gospel Preceptor

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

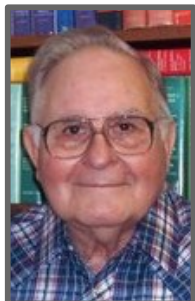
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## The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

William E. Wallace



God created the world and spontaneously adapted it to the very needs of the summit of His creation—Man. God placed man and his help-meet in an environment of complete or perfect bliss, efficiency, beauty and security. One restriction was given unto man—he must not partake of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As long as man was content to live in complete trust in the Almighty he lived in possession of mental, physical and spiritual security. **The Tree of Knowledge of Good and**

**Evil** was an emblem of the ideology that finite characters possess self-sufficiency in the quest of/for truth. The Devil assumed this idea. Members of the heavenly host acquired the error—they were cast out of heaven, Peter said, down to pits of darkness in preservation until the day of judgment. The Devil, more powerful than other fallen characters, not only rebelled against God, he set out to defeat God. His first aggressive act was his deception and corruption of the first woman and the first man. Using a serpent as his instrument or tool he approached the vestal Eve who fell to his attractive dares and then she in return led Adam to sin—they rebelled against God, they achieved knowledge of good and evil and were cast out of the garden, to toil the soil, to propagate the human race.

The knowledge of good and evil constitutes a dangerous thing to finite beings, for without infallible minds they can never of themselves arrive at the absolute truth. God the infallible with the knowledge of good and evil is supremely capable of using said knowledge in the ultimate of accuracy—the fallible finite being cannot. Man is limited in his ability to penetrate into the mysteries of life, but with the knowledge of good and evil he would and does try, and in his rebellion against God he is lost in the maze of uncertainty. That is why God restricted man from partaking of the fruit of the tree—and when man did so God set into motion a scheme that would eventually save man. The plan as it developed called for man to again put his complete trust in God, and its development over and through the centuries of time culminated in the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ and the establishment of his kingdom.

The old serpent received its punishment for being a party to the Devil's warfare, and Satan himself having his power destroyed through Jesus Christ will receive a due recompense of reward in the judgment.

In the meantime a great battle exists between the ideology of man resulting from his partaking of the fruit of the restricted tree, and the revelation of God. The battle began very early when Cain began to reason of himself in matters pertaining to acceptable sacrifice unto God. His thinking led him to substitute, to become jealous, to hate and to kill. He was cast out by God. As the human race increased into multitudes two great divisions developed—through Seth developed the “sons of God” and through Cain developed the “daughters of men.” When the two met in fraternization they united in marriage and the “sons of God” became sons of men, and eventually the resultant corruption led God to destroy the race with the Great Deluge. But afterwards through the offspring of the eight righteous survivors, this sin of living and thinking without God again emerged. The wisdom of man led them to the building of the tower of Babel, a symbol of the ideology of conquering the great questions concerning the quest of life of

themselves. They sought to bridge the chasm between earth with finite knowledge and heaven with its infallibility.

God called Abraham, a righteous man, out of his home environment to use him to develop a nation of people who would place their trust and confidence in Him until the time came to deliver man from sin. In centuries the posterity of Abraham grew into a great multitude but they too reasoned of themselves without God—they murmured against God and so God gave unto them a law “added because of their transgression.” He called for this nation of Jews to flee from the wisdom of men and cling to God through submission to the law of Moses.

As time progressed the Israelites began affiliating with those who lived without God. The more they fraternized with the world the more they submitted to their wisdom of men. They began to forsake God and thus suffered numerous afflictions and suppressions in result. The Old Testament history of the Jewish nation is a history of their being wooed by the heathen philosophies and their being called by prophets back to God. Through a remnant of Israel that did not rebel or deny the Almighty, God developed his eternal scheme of redemption.

When Christ the Saviour laid the foundation and delivered the principles of security in conformity to the will of God he gave to the world God's system through which man could regain purity and security. When Christ was crucified he took away the law of Moses corrupted by the philosophy of men through the vain tradition of the Pharisees and other parties. He made the supreme sacrifice for man and when he arose from the dead he was victorious over the Devil and thus made it possible for man to have redemption from the curse of sin. The apostles as the ambassadors of Christ delivered the message of God to the world, his scheme of redemption, the Gospel of Christ.

The primary feature of this Gospel was a call for man to put his trust in God through Jesus Christ by submitting to the will of God, the law of Christ, and become perfected in the security that is in Christ. This great new message was to experience a constant battle, for it must combat the wisdom of men from every corner of the earth. Thus it was that the apostles of Jesus Christ called for man, who is unable to solve the problems in the quest of life of himself, to submit to the infinite, the infallible, the omniscient God.

The warfare goes on—between this ideology that man can or has the right to solve the great questions of life without God and reliance upon God as the final authority.

To narrow it down, we have Christianity versus Philosophy. Christianity is the body of principles governing children of God. Philosophy literally means “the love of wisdom” and the word can be used in referring to studies not contrary to God's will. But generally it is man's attitude toward life and the universe, a group of theories or systems of thought. Philosophy asks such questions as: “What is truth?”; “What is the distinction between right and wrong?”; “What is life and why am I here?”; “Is there any possibility of surviving death?”; “Can we have any assurance that anything is true?” Philosophy attempts to answer these questions without God. It is the same old evil that has plagued the world since the Devil moved Eve to rebel against God and thus institute this damnable ideology into the world. The greatly respected philosophies of by-gone ages have left their marks upon the world—some good, some bad. Where the philosophies reasoned according to God they gave us expressions of truth but as they reasoned without God they left theories of error. Men such as Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Aristotle, Erasmus, Locke, Rousseau, and John Paine have gained more respect among some schools of thought than has Jesus our Saviour. Why? Because men fall prey to the love of men's wisdom and foolishly and adventurously set out to solve the problems of life without God. They think without God. What is more egotistical than the ideology that man can understand or survive without the infallible!

Paul a great ambassador of Christ warned the followers of Christ against the ideology: “Take heed lest there shall be anyone that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” Philosophy challenges the servants of God and the Devil dares the unqualified to undertake it—and thus many fall prey to the wisdom of men. Who knowing the

history of mistakes, the blunders, the whimsical and fickle characteristics of the human mind can put his confidence in the philosophy of man! Who? Thou fool!

Paul wrote:

For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the things of God none knoweth save the Spirit of God. But we (apostles, WEW) received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth, combining spiritual things with spiritual words (2 Cor. 2:11-13).

The things of man, his feeling, his tasting, his seeing, his hearing, and his smelling can be known by men of themselves. The things of God; “What is truth?”; “What is life?”; “If a man die, shall he live again?”; “What is the purpose of life”; et cetera, can be known **only through the revelation of God**. The revelation of God is that impartation of knowledge of things man could never know of himself. The spirit of man brings knowledge of things finite, fallible and human. Men using their finite abilities can operate upon the human body and cure the ailing; they can take the elements of the world that God has given them and make great inventions of mobility, efficiency and luxury. They can harness electricity and use it in the best interests of society. They can build great dams and conquer the forces of nature. They can instill into the minds of youth the facts of the world, giving them a knowledge of mathematics to develop their reasoning, literature to develop their imagination and language to develop memory. But when men get into the field of the things that belong to the Spirit of God they are guilty of partaking of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Only through the word of God can they answer the great questions concerning life, its origin, and its purposes. Science is a great field of knowledge but when turned to the origins it ceases to be science and becomes philosophy, the wisdom of men. There is no science of origins there is no science that answers the questions concerning the quest of life—but **the Bible**, the word of God. Men today make the same mistake Cain made, the same mistake Israel made, the same mistake Judas made—they reason without God.

Where philosophy speculates, God says: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: For this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl. 12:13). There is an ever growing conflict between the principles of the faith once delivered, and the rudiments or traditions of men. The chasm widens and the wisdom of God opposes modern scholarship.

Philosophy speaks of four sources of knowledge: Authoritarianism—knowledge that is guaranteed or validated by an accepted authority; Intuition—innate or instinctive knowledge or the accumulation of past experiences and thinking; Empiricism—knowledge coming unto the individual through sense perception; Rationalism, reasoning as opposed to superstition. It omits the most **important source of knowledge—Revelation**. Christ is truth in that it is through him that we truly solve the mysteries of life and live in expectation of a life on beyond the great divide that separates man and the world.

Philosophy is frail because it is not a science. It is no more infallible in its understanding than the mind of man. It offers no sure solid, steady foundation—no anchor to hold one fast in the stormy torrents of life.

Christianity on the other hand offers hope, life and security. It is a safe guide through life and is our only sure foundation, a firm anchor to latch to in a troubled age. Christianity succeeds in every angle where philosophy fails. Philosophy will cease when men die; Christianity will live on in the souls who inherit eternal life. These souls will be those who partook of the fruit of the tree of life, rather than of fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Let man learn that he cannot live without God and let him walk in remembrance of his dependence upon Divine revelation, providence and promise.

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## **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 Gospel Banner**

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## **The Lechner-Denham Discussion On the One Cup Issue, No. 1**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This discussion came from an email which brother Charles Lechner sent to me. Because of my stroke, my writing ability was greatly diminished, so I asked my friend and brother in Christ, Daniel Denham, to write to brother Lechner and reply for me. Their exchange became this discussion.

### **Email from Charles Lechner to Jerry Brewer Editor of *The Watchman* June 3, 2023**

Brother Brewer,

I have read your article titled; "When the Floodgate Was Opened." I wanted to let you know I thought it to be an excellent reminder to the church but then I thought, you are doing exactly what you are telling your readers not to do. You have added multiple cups to your service without authorization. Every multi-cup preacher I have spoken to has agreed that scripture only speaks of one literal cup, yet in your service you have many. I don't see the difference in what you are doing and those CoC's that have added musical instruments. Neither is authorized.

You wrote: "Those of us to whom the call of divine authority still means something know that Scriptural silence is not permissive and we can answer that question from God's word. Nadab and Abihu are prime examples in the Old Testament." Knowing the scripture speak only of one cup, knowing the early church historians speak of only one cup, and knowing multiple cups were not introduced into the CoC until sometime around 1926 and were borrowed from the denominational world, are you not saying one thing and doing something else? We know Nadab and Abihu used "strange fire," and you stated we don't know exactly what that was but none the less it wasn't what God had commanded. Is that any different than what we are told regarding the communion and the one cup in particular?

Your explanation of biblical authorization was spot on and very easy to understand. Where is the authorization for more than one cup?

I appreciate your efforts in producing these journals and I try and read each one. I would be interested in your thoughts if you have the time. God bless,

**Charles Lechner**

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### **First Email from Daniel Denham to Charles Lechner June 7, 2023**

Dear Brother Lechner

Brother Jerry Brewer contacted me requesting that I respond to your email of June 3rd regarding "the one cup" issue, due to problems currently in his health. While we are quite appreciative of your kind words relative to the paper, it is nonetheless disturbing that you fail to perceive the difference between the one cup issue, which is over a matter of indifference and thus human opinion, and that of the use of mechanical instrumental music in New Testament worship, which is over a matter of difference and thus

of faith. By difference I refer to that which makes a difference relative to our fellowship with Deity. Binding where God has not bound is a sin.

You argue in your letter that because the Biblical text speaks of “one cup” it must therefore be the case that we are thereby limited in authority to the use of one container for the fruit of the vine in the assembly. Do you really, fully stand by that view?

First, are you not aware that the text is using a figure of speech known as metonymy of the container where the container stands for the contents and not for itself? It is a symbolic use of the terminology. It is the element of the fruit of the vine, the grape juice if you please, that is actually being stressed. A symbol does not stand for itself! Otherwise, it ceases to be a symbol. Surely, you grasp that! If you take the text then as a literal cup that is to be drunk, then I suggest you need to get a blow-torch or something in order to turn your literal cup (not a snuff glass by the way) into a molten liquid and drink it in order to be consistent. You may think that I am being rude and impertinent in my comment, but it is your doctrine that implies it. You need to liquify the cup in order to drink it, if the term refers to the literal container rather than its contents!

Second, the specific use of one physical container (assuming your assertion) actually constitutes a practical incidental to the act, not a necessary or conditional part of it, just as the fact that the supper was observed originally and coincidentally in a guest room, which was also an upper chamber (Mark 14:14-15), with seating upon divans whereon the observer “reclined” on another’s bosom to eat and drink (John 13:23). Do you use a guest room rather than the auditorium of your meeting house? Is it in an upper chamber or room? Are you all reclining on one another’s bosoms as you partake? The bottom line is the Lord could have used any number of containers had He wished or any other venue or seating arrangement. I suspect you sit upon pews as you partake, and do not recline upon divans, but where is authority relative to the former in partaking of the Lord’s Supper. One brother who held to the one cup view some years ago also insisted that the brethren where he preached do so in an upper room with many lights. Do you do the same?

Third, how many “pie plates” or dishes do you use for the unleavened bread? Why do you not bind that as well? Why are the Scriptures silent completely on the matter and not stress one plate or some such, if the containers are the essentials here?

Fourth, how many times did the brethren have to refill the snuff glass and the pie plate on Pentecost in Acts 2, given that there were well over 3000 members of the church assembled before the close of that day (Acts 2:41-42)? How many times with the men of about 5000 in number, not to mention the unnumbered women (Acts 4:4)? The Jerusalem church (singular, Acts 5:11; 8:1-3; 11:22) had probably over 10,000 members at that point and many more afterward. Did they all drink together from the one container?

Fifth, why do many of those espousing your view, including perhaps you as well, substitute a glass for the cup which you say is absolutely binding? From whom or from where did they borrow that practice? Many churches over the years used an old Mason jar, and the “one cup” brethren were never opposed to that! Why not? It was not a “cup” but a jar. If the nature of the container is bound as your dogma asserts, then generations have sinned repeatedly by this practice. In fact, some “one cup” congregations have used the “ceremonial” Mason jar right on down through the years. The limbs of the lame are certainly not equal, brother!

Sixth, as to the “church historians,” to whom do you have reference? Are they referring to the container or to its contents? As you give no examples in context, we are left to wonder: what does this have to do with the price of eggs in China? Surely you are not citing popish fellows inclined to turn the Lord’s Supper into a mystic sacrament in a man-made mass?

Brother, it is assuredly as much a sin to add to the Scriptures, as it is to take from them, is it not (Rev. 22:18-19)? It is as much a sin to bind where God has not bound, to make laws where God has not made laws, as it is to loose where God has not loosed and deny laws God has made. Straining at gnats often leads to swallowing rather large camels. Let us set aside the pettiness over matters of judgment, and work together

against the rising apostasy we both see and need to oppose.

Yours for the Cause of Christ,

**Daniel Denham**

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## **Second Email from Charles Lechner June 7, 2023**

Brother Denham,

Daniel,

Thank you for taking over for brother Brewer and thank you for responding to my question. I am so very sorry to hear Brother Brewer is having health issues. I will add him to my prayers.

Please, there is no need for your sarcasm, as subtle as it may be. If you are unable to state and defend your position without anger, then maybe someone else should respond to me. Remember, I am simply asking a question regarding an article written and published by Brother Brewer. I will ask again, which you failed to answer, if biblical silence is binding as the article stated, where is the authority to use multiple cups and wafers in light of the command by Jesus, “this do ye” 1 Cor 11:24 & 25? In other words, we agree there was only one container used in the establishment of the Lord’s communion. Where do you get the authorization to change what has been commanded by God? Simple question.

Although you listed 6 items which I will quickly respond to none of them answered my question.

#1 You said: “the text is using a figure of speech known as metonymy of the container where the container stands for the contents and not for itself.” You want me to believe that when Jesus was establishing this memorial, He used the word cup but really meant fruit of the vine (FOV)? Please tell me, **what was the FOV in?** I mean it had to be in something didn’t it? What was it in? Are you suggesting we could say, let us go to the vineyard and pick us a cup?

Since we know it is impossible to drink a literal cup, we know “cup” is figurative here. We need only to determine what type of figure is used in these instances. In both cases, metonymy of the container for the contained is employed. Bullinger explains that metonymy is “a figure of speech by which one name or noun is used instead of another, to which it stands in a certain relation.”<sup>21</sup> Metonymy does not make the originally named object (cup, in this instance) disappear. Instead, it demands the presence of the originally named object.” (Taken from *The Lord’s Supper Unity in One Loaf and One Cup* written by Brett Hickey).

#2 No we do not use an “upper room” why, because it wasn’t commanded. If it had been then we would. One cup is commanded, “this do ye.”

#3 We have a plate that the “one Loaf” sits on and it is passed from person to person, and each breaks a piece off and partakes. We commune together fulfilling the command to “this do.” Placing multiple wafers on a plate and saying this is a loaf simply does not make it so. Again, where is the authority?

#4 This is such a silly defense although always used. In your interpretation, where did they get 10,000 cups. Was each member told to bring their own to service? How did that happen? Why is there no instruction? What happens when some attends service yet forgot to bring their own cup? Did the 10,000 cups have to be the same? Where is your authority for each member to bring their own cup? Look, over and over the scriptures reveal the church met in folk’s homes. I know you know this.

#5 The point you are trying to make escapes me. I personally have cups that are glass, porcelain, metal, even wood. What is your point? Whatever material the cup was is not necessary for us to know other than there was only one. If God wanted us to know the type of material of the cup then He would have disclosed it to us. What he did want us to know though was that there was to be only one cup, each partaking of that one cup,



having communion with one another in unity.

#6 Again, your sarcasm makes it impossible for me to understand your real point. A simple internet search for early church historians will turn up many that mention only a cup being used in the communion. This info is easy to find, and I will leave that to you.

Brother, the issues you brought forward have little to do with the question I asked which was not answered. Even if I concede the word cup means **FOV (which I don't)** you still have not explained how and where your authority came from for the use of multiple FOV's, especially since:

regarding the cup, singularity is explicitly signaled 34 times in English (26 times in Greek). Plurality related to the Lord's Supper is not signaled once in English or Greek text. **Singular:** "cup" (10 times); "the" (4 times + 2 times i-Gk); "this" (4 times + 2 times i-Gk); "is" (4 times + 1 time i-Gk) **Plural:** "cups" (0); "these, those, them" (0); "are" (0); "were" (0); "two" or more (0)" (Taken from *The Lord's Supper Unity in One Loaf and One Cup* written by Brett Hickey).

In closing, brother Brewer wrote silence is binding (of which I agree) yet you have added to the scriptures changing the communion with individual wafers and cups, violating the command of "this do ye." Where did you get the authority to make this change from? This is the same question I would ask if we were discussing musical instruments. Chapter and verse would be appreciated.

In Him

**Charles Lechner**

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## **Second Email from Daniel Denham June 9, 2023**

Dear brother Lechner,

I appreciate your quick response and will respond to each of your points raised in your most recent email seriatim. As to sarcasm, you got back only what you gave. Maybe, you need to not practice what you claim so virulently to abhor! The Lord and the apostles used biting irony, satire, and sarcasm on several occasions in confronting error.

As to answering the question that you asserted I did not, the answer was easily discerned in my previous letter. In fact, you noted it somewhat later in responding to my fourth point. The same basis of authority that you and other one-cuppers use for a snuff glass or a Mason jar, when clearly no such items existed at the time of or are referenced in the texts regarding the Lord's Supper's observance is the exact same authority for multiple containers; the same authority for you to meet in a building built and owned by the brethren to eat the Lord's Supper, despite the fact that such was not the nature of the place used in the specific instance of the Supper's institution, is also the same authority for multiple containers; the same authority by which you sit—but don't recline—in pews to eat the Lord's Supper, despite the fact that they sat on seating (divans) wherein the participants reclined on another's "bosom" to eat and drink, is the same authority for multiple containers! 1) There is an obligation to eat the Supper, including drinking the fruit of the vine as well as eating the unleavened bread; 2) there is nothing specified as to the nature or number of the containers to be used in the observation; 3) it is therefore left to the human judgment of the participants as to what kind and how many containers may be used on the basis of expediency!!! Now, surely, you have "many lights" where you worship, but are not limited to candles, torches, or oil lamps, are you? You have authority for lighting, but it is a matter of judgment as to the nature and specific amount of lighting that you may expediently utilize! Amen or Oh, me? You, I seriously doubt, do not preach without the aid of a sound system, amplifier, microphone, and such like, even though such items did not exist until the 20th century AD—sometime later than the multiple cups communion set, I believe. You evidently have a jaundiced view of the subject of how the Bible authorizes when it comes to practices you have a personal hobby against. So, you were indeed answered, despite

your assertion that none of my six points answered your question. You just do not like the answer.

As to my first point, you in effect admitted that it is the content and, therefore, not the container that is being bound. When you admitted that the language is indeed a case of metonymy and thus “figurative,” you gave up your doctrine. I assume that Brett Hickey is one of your “one-cup” fellows. He misses the forest for the trees. The physical cup does not stand for itself! It is a symbol. It is the content that is stressed. Thanks for the admission! It is also disingenuous of him to place the material from E.W. Bullinger in such close relationship to his own assertion, as though Bullinger made or even implied it. I have Bullinger’s works, and he would not have been a “one-cupper.”

As to my second point, thanks again for yet another admission. You do not use an upper room because “it was not commanded!” Neither was the one container commanded. The one content—the fruit of the vine—was what was commanded.

As to the third point, the word **artos** also simply means “bread.” You are assuming your case here. You are again straining at gnats to swallow a two-humped camel. You also missed the point that often a “pie plate” or some other type of container is used, which did not exist at the time the Supper was instituted and observed by the early church. Where is **your** authority for such? The same process allows for multiple containers. Also, you admit to the use of pews, which are not enjoined in the Scriptures. You obviously recognize the principle of expediency. What you allow for yourself you deny to others based on your hobby.

As to the fourth point, I am glad that once more you admit implicitly the absurdity of your dogma. The point was made to show that one container would have been utterly insufficient for the thousands on Pentecost and thousands more thereafter. Furthermore, I was not contending that 1) each person had to bring his own physical cup, or 2) that 10,000 physical cups specifically were needed. You misrepresent the point, which is simply that multiple containers would easily be required for such a gathering. The number of containers most expediently enabling the brethren to meet the obligation is implicitly authorized by the fact of the obligation and the lack of specific requirement for one container. This is true of the condition of things then and now. By the way, there are also other factors that can be entailed in a given case, such as a medical emergency wherein communicable disease through saliva can be problematic as is the case with diseases such as tuberculosis, AIDS, Ebola, Covid-19, et al. Meanwhile, your problem concerning these brethren in the Jerusalem church really remains unanswered!

As to the fifth point, you have admitted that the material of the container used is not bound. Yet, you stated that you have used glass and other materials, many of which were invented **later**! So, your quibbling on the time of the introduction of plastic cups is rendered moot. Thank you! Now, then, if you can move on from that quibble to simply resolving in your mind that neither did Jesus bind the number of containers but rather the nature and number of the contents, this exchange can close with us in agreement. But I am not holding my breath!

As to the sixth point, you simply dodge the point. I am not going to do your homework. You made the assertion. The context of each citation and its source are crucial relative to such appeals to uninspired, secular historians. The ultra- liberals use such tactics to promote their innovations. I demand from them the same kind of evidence that I demand of you. I am not obligated to accept assertions.

Again, you cite Brett Hickey, as though I am to be overawed by his assertions. He has already admitted in the previous material you cited that the use of the term “cup” is a figure of speech, and therefore not literal. It is then the content that is in view, not the physical container in the binding. Furthermore, one congregation split, I am aware, over whether the container for the fruit of the vine has a handle or not. One group of members withdrew from others who held that it makes no difference whether there is a handle or not. The first group demanded the second repent. The first insisted that by definition a handle was essential for it to be a “cup” So, brother, which are you—a pro-handle or no-handle-needed advocate?



You do not really seem to understand how the Bible authorizes by direct statement, implication, and example. You also limit expediency only to things you want to practice. You also obviously do not understand what brother Brewer has been teaching on “silence” and its relationship to these things. Please, give chapter and verse for a snuff glass, church building, pews, sound system, et al. You know that these things, as also do the multiple containers, entail more than a specific command! Or do you hold that only those things expressly commanded are authorized? Is **that** your view of Biblical “silence”?

Yours for the Cause of Christ,

**Daniel Denham**

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## The Resurrection Body

**Jerry C. Brewer**

A friend posed the following question:



“When the day of judgment comes and the Bible says those in the grave shall rise and meet the Lord in the air....how can our body come forth from the grave when it is nothing but flesh and bones. Or those cremated and scattered at sea, or those babies aborted and thrown in the trash? Doesn’t the “grave” here just mean those who have passed on? How can we literally come forth from the grave at the cemetery or wherever buried when it’s just our earthly body that has returned to dust?”

Paul answered that question in his first epistle to the Corinthians:

But some *man* will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? *Thou* fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other *grain*: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but *there is one kind of* flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, *and* another of birds. *There are* also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial is another. *There is* one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for *one* star differeth from *another* star in glory.

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit. Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such *are* they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption (1 Cor. 15:35-50).

Paul explains how we are raised in the passage above. The body that is in the grave is not the body that will be raised. In verses 50 and 53 is the answer to your question. Paul wrote,

Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal

*must* put on immortality.

All of the dead will be changed because flesh and blood cannot enter the eternal kingdom of God. Those who were cremated, aborted babies' bodies, people who were eaten by wild beasts or any other kind of a death of a human body, will be resurrected, and will be **changed**.

Think about this: The Almighty God who spoke the universe into existence, Who formed man from the dust, Who breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and made him a living soul, can surely reconstitute the elements that He created from man and can make man a new spiritual body. As Paul wrote, "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality."

## Editor's Traveling, Preaching, and Writing

I preached for the Yukon, Okla. church of Christ on Aug. 6 and Aug. 27.

Requests continue coming in for copies of my book, "*The Thing That Hath Been...*" *The Cycle of Apostasy*. The Fourth Printing of it was received in May and we have plenty of copies to fill your requests. The book and postage are **FREE**. Remember, you can order a digital copy of the book with searchable chapters and receive it immediately by email. Send me an email message to [jbbbbb Brewer@gmail.com](mailto:jbbbbb Brewer@gmail.com) for a digital copy or send your mailing address to request a hard copy of it.

### *The Gospel Preceptor*

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## Learning From Noah

Ray Stone

God "spared not the Old World, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the Flood upon the World of the ungodly..." (2 Pet. 2:5). Thus Peter honors the man Noah, one of the greatest characters of the Old Testament.



Most all the World, even children, know the story of Noah—how, some 1500 years or so after Creation, mankind generally had become completely evil: "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the Earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). This sad state of affairs had come about by, among other things, Godly people intermarrying with the ungodly: "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose" (Gen. 6:2). There's a preliminary lesson right there: Even today, marrying a non-believer is a risky proposition. It isn't a sin but the apostle Paul addresses such a case (1 Cor. 7:12-13) and shows at least God's acceptance of it, if not approval. But be warned by this early example: A worldly spouse can wield great influence on the believing partner. All too often, the tendency is for "evil to overcome good" rather than Paul's preference (Rom. 12:21).

In any case, things had deteriorated to the point that “it repented the Lord that He had made man on the Earth, and it grieved Him at His heart” (Gen. 6:6). But even in that extreme circumstance, there were the “faithful few”—eight, to be exact (1 Pet. 3:20)—Noah and his wife, plus their three sons and their wives, righteous women whom they had managed to find, or convert, from among the evil multitudes. As hard as it is to imagine, there were no others. Think about that for a moment: In all the world, only eight people faithful to their Maker. Next time you hear someone fretting about how evil our world has become, how far down society has sunk, remind them of Gen. 6. There are without doubt far more than eight righteous souls on earth today. Don't ever think society is as bad as it's ever been and can't get any worse—because it isn't, and it certainly could! In fact, it just might get as bad as Gen. 6 again someday. Jesus asked a rather chilling rhetorical question once: “When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the Earth?” (Luke 18:8). But meanwhile, here's a good exercise for you, to keep things in perspective. Don't dwell on all the evil in the World, but look at all the good!

Read Phil. 4:8 and measure all the good you see (people, events, acts, intents, attempts) against those eight lonely righteous people of pre-Flood days—you're bound to feel a little more upbeat about the world we live in today. God will protect His faithful few (see Gen. 19:16-17), so He commissioned Noah to build the now-famous Ark, a sort of barge designed—not to sail, but simply to float—large enough for him and his family, as well as representative survivors of all land life (Gen. 7:23) to preserve God's original creation. The Flood was world-wide, don't ever question that. It's what the Bible says (Gen. 6:17; 7:19; 2 Pet. 3:6).

And so Noah set about obeying God's directive. He was allotted 120 years for the task (Gen. 6:3). But ship-building wasn't all Noah did for that century-plus. Peter calls him a “preacher of righteousness” (2 Pet. 2:5). That shouldn't be a surprise; it is understandable that he would try to warn his friends, acquaintances, perhaps extended family, about the calamity to come. This may well be what that troublesome passage by Peter is actually referring to:

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water ( 1 Pet. 3:18-20).

If this means Jesus went into Hell during His three days in the tomb and preached (“brought good tidings”?) to the lost spirits there, it makes no sense at all—why would He do that; what purpose would it serve? Once you're dead, your fate is sealed (cf. Luke 16:19-31). It wouldn't do anyone any good, just totally wasted effort. But God, being a perfect Being, doesn't waste anything (an accepted attribute: His “parsimony”). Consider instead: 1 Pet. 3:18 says Jesus went “in the Spirit”—that indicates a figurative use of the term “went and preached.” The subjects of that preaching were “spirits in prison,” that's present tense; but they “aforetime (past tense) were disobedient...” (v. 20). That's when they needed preaching: when they were disobedient. And it even tells us when that disobedience was: “when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing...”—that 120-year period of time (Gen. 6:3). I suggest Peter was writing about spirits, souls, “now in prison”, in his time; who heard the preaching of Christ “in the Spirit” back in their days of disobedience on Earth—and it was done through the agency of Noah as he preached by the inspiration of that Spirit. God gave them every opportunity to learn the truth and repent; they had no excuse.

What, do you suppose, was the subject matter of Noah's preaching? Not a single sermon of his is recorded, of course—we're left to conjecture. Yet we can make some safe assumptions, since God's desire for mankind has never changed: Obedience to His will. For instance:

1. You just know he preached *repentance*. That was John the Baptist's first message to the Jews of his day (Matt. 3:1-2; Luke 3:3). And it was certain-

ly a constant theme of the prophets of God that would follow long after Noah (see Jer. 3:12-14; 8:6; Hosea 12:6; Jonah 3:8; Zeph. 3:7; Mal. 3:7 for a few examples). Jesus Himself emphasized it in unmistakable language: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

2. No doubt Noah preached remembrance, another common theme of Godly men: "Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions..." (Heb. 10:32) "Cast not away therefore your confidence..." (v. 35) "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen..." (Rev. 2:5). In Noah's case, it was a unique circumstance; they were not that far removed from the Garden of Eden! It was surely still in mankind's memory; it may well have still been in existence. Perhaps they could even look upon it from afar, maybe even see the Cherubim there guarding the entrance, keeping man out of it (Gen. 3:24). What a **visual aid** that would have been! "Remember what you once had."
3. Noah certainly preached a Judgment to come. His very life's work, building the ark, was a daily testimony to God's coming Judgment upon the World. He would surely have often repeated God's words, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the Earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air: for it repenteth Me that I have made them" (Gen. 6:7). He would give them the chance to hear, over and over again, God's intent because of their wickedness: "And behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the Earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life..." (v. 17)—"You've brought this on yourselves!"
4. But Noah, as every faithful preacher does, would hold out a ray of hope to them: God protects His faithful! As it would be at Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19), when ultimately only three persons proved faithful. As few as ten would have spared the whole cities (Gen. 18:32), but only three were found—God still spared those three, Lot and his two daughters, from that destruction. He had Noah build the ark to spare him and his family. Don't you know, if any others had responded to Noah's preaching and repented, God would have made similar provision to save them as well? Make room for them in the ark, or have them build another one, or something. But we don't read of such, because He didn't, because there weren't any, beyond Noah's eight. Yet the possibility was always there, and I'm sure Noah offered it, right up until Genesis 7:15, when Noah and the animals entered the ark, "and the Lord shut them in."

So: What do we learn from Noah?

1) One very strong, very encouraging lesson: This world, as bad as it may be, doesn't yet hold a candle to the World of Noah's day! Some today pessimistically consider our World to be as bad as it's ever been and couldn't get any worse—but they're wrong: it isn't, and it certainly could! Just a glance at Noah's World affirms that. That world held only eight souls righteous before God; the most rabid pessimist would have to concede there's multitudes more than that today! That's not to excuse anyone's sins, or deny the social evils we observe, but does show how much worse it could be. We should work to prevent or at least postpone such a sorry state as Noah endured. In that light, a good exercise might be to consider all the good in the world rather than all the evil—and that's just Phil. 4:8 in action: Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Noah couldn't, outside his own family—but we can. Be grateful for that reality, and dwell on it to boost your optimism.

2) Learn that God takes care of His own. He gives us encouragement when we're discouraged (Heb. 13:5-6); a way of escape when we're tempted to sin (1 Cor. 10:13); a promise that "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4) and the promise of ultimate happiness and contentment in Heaven, for eternity (Rev. 21:4).

Noah was a shipbuilder—and a "preacher of righteousness." Remember Noah's preaching, and realize every faithful Gospel preacher today dwells on these same truths—for they are the Bible: Repentance, Remembrance, and the Judgment to come.

## Baptism and Salvation

**Tim Smith**

Much has been written and said about the matter of baptism and salvation through the years, but it still remains the center of much controversy in the minds of many. There are those who contend that baptism plays no role in the salvation of the soul and has no place in modern times. Some contend that one may or may not choose to be baptized in the course of his salvation, that it is totally optional. Some contend that one is saved first and then baptized to make known his salvation. Some contend that one is saved and then later is baptized to join the church of his choice. This article will demonstrate that each of these contentions is false. We will demonstrate, with the "oracles of God," that baptism is the point at which salvation is imparted, the remission of sins granted, the washing away of sins takes place, and when the Lord adds us to His church.

In Matthew 28:18-20 we read:

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mark's account goes like this: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16).

Having announced that He received authority from His Father, He goes on to tell His apostles that they now must go into every part of the world and preach to everyone who will hear. Those who hear and believe are to be baptized. The result of this baptism is that they "shall be saved." Now the words we have cited are the words of Jesus. He claims "all authority." Who is there with more authority? Who is there who can negate the force of His words?

The command of Jesus to His apostles cited above was first obeyed on Pentecost of Acts 2 and may be summarized in brief as follows:

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost... Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls (2:37-38, 41).

This was the fulfillment of the Great Commission. It was here that the apostles first did what Jesus told them to do a few days before. People who heard the preaching of the apostles and believed it desired to be released from their sins. This release was granted upon their baptism. It would here be good to note that what they did in Acts 2 was exactly what they were told to do in Matthew 28. They baptized people here in keeping with the command of Matthew 28 and Mark 16. If there is a difference in baptizing as per Matthew 28 and as per Acts 2, then we must concede that the apostles violated what Jesus told them to do. Some teach that there is a difference in baptizing "in the name of Jesus Christ" and baptizing "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of



the Holy Ghost.” They say, “Where is the name in Matthew 28?” The words “in the name of ” were chosen and used by Jesus. He said that men are to be baptized “in the name” of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He approved what was done on Pentecost also. The question is, what does “in the name of mean”? Is it something that must be said? I contend that “in the name of ” here meant what it elsewhere meant, by the authority (power) of. We find it so used in Acts 4:7. It also makes much more sense; for, what are we doing when we act in the name of Jesus? Are we doing something and then pretending that Jesus did it? Or, are we doing something and then providing the authority for so acting? There is not a single passage in the New Testament that commands that the person immersing another into Christ say anything; there is not a single passage in the New Testament that contains an example of anyone saying anything as he immersed another. At best one might have a personal preference in this connection, more than that is sinful. What the person immersing another says is not a matter of Biblical concern, and it should not concern us either. It is wrong and sinful to refuse to extend fellowship to another because the wrong formula was uttered over him at the time of his immersion. To do such is to make a law God did not make.

That baptism is for the washing away of sins we learn in Acts 22:16, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” May one be saved who is still in his sins? Does not Revelation 21:27 tell us that those in sin cannot enter heaven? If one is still in his sins up to the point of baptism, can that one go to heaven should he die before baptism? Not according to the Bible.

That baptism puts us into contact with the death of Christ we learn in Romans 6:3-4:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

What happened at His death? His blood was shed. Hebrews 9:22 tells us that without the shedding of blood there is no remission. John tells us that His blood cleanses us from our sins in 1 John 1:7. Revelation 1:5 tells us that we are washed from our sins in His blood. If we contact the blood in baptism, can one be saved who has not been baptized? Not according to the Bible. That baptism puts one into the church we learn in 1 Corinthians 12:13: “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” The body is the church (Col. 1:18, Eph. 1:22-23). Therefore, to be in the body is to be in the church. Since it is the church that is sanctified and cleansed and shall be presented unto Christ at the last day holy and blameless (5:26-27), may one refuse baptism (and thereby church membership) and still be saved? Not according to the Bible.

That baptism puts one into Christ we learn in Galatians 3:27: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Since all spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3), and since salvation is in Christ (Acts 4:12), can one be saved who is not in Christ, having never been baptized into Him? Not according to the Bible.

Hear the words of Peter, the one whose sermon we have recorded on Pentecost of Acts 2, the one who taught that baptism was “for the remission of sins,” the one who could have responded to the question, “Men and brethren what shall we do” by saying “Faith only will save you” or “The grace of God will do all the work for you,” but did not. He chose rather to say, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” Hear this same man’s frame of mind many years after Pentecost as he writes by inspiration: “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us” (1 Pet. 3:21). If baptism saves us, can one be saved without it? Not according to the Bible.

Now we have demonstrated that baptism is necessary to salvation, the remission of sins, entrance into the body, entrance into Christ, etc. The Bible teaches these things. Men may disagree, men may mock those who teach the necessity of baptism, but remember the words of Jesus: “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). The Bible says that one must be baptized to be saved, have you?



# It is Settled

Marvin L. Weir



We live in a world that is filled with religious confusion. Many people boldly state that it is impossible for all to understand the Bible alike. This reasoning simply fuels the cry, “That’s **your** interpretation, and this is **my** interpretation.” The majority of the religious world has decided that God expects people to interpret His Word differently. Thus, man-made denominations “agree to disagree” and convince themselves that they have attained Biblical unity. Such could not be farther from the truth! This false conclusion is, however, what keeps denominations in business. They agree to disagree and then graciously proclaim, “Attend the church of **your** choice.” And, all the while, most of these folks vigorously profess to believe the Holy Scriptures!

What about attending the church of **God’s** choice? Is anyone listening? Who do we worship? Who are we to glorify? Who are we to please? Who are we to obey? Is the answer to these questions **man** or **God**? One thing is absolutely certain; “...God is not a God of confusion...” (1 Cor. 14:33). He was not during the time the Corinthians were assembling together and neither is He the author of religious confusion today!

There is not a single denomination that believes the Word of God is settled in Heaven! Man-made churches have their annual conventions so they can “add to” and “take from” their creed books in an effort to placate those who are not that happy with their present teaching. They vote on whether or not to support abortion. They vote on whether or not to accept same sex marriages. They vote on whether or not they should condemn homosexuality. They vote on whether or not women can serve the congregation as a preacher. They vote on whether or not to accept transgender people into their fellowship. Can these people who profess to believe the Bible not see the error of their way? Do they not see the fallacy of man-made churches?

The Word of God says, “For ever, O Jehovah, Thy word is settled in heaven” (Psa. 119:89). Is God’s Word decided or settled by a court of men? Absolutely not! Is God’s Word decided or settled by church leaders, boards, synods or conventions? Absolutely not! Is God’s Word decided or settled by what the majority of folks think? No, not at all! Listen again as the inspired Word speaks in stating, “For ever, O Jehovah, Thy word is settled in heaven.” The **what** and the **where** speak volumes to those who will listen and believe. **What** is settled? The Word of God! **Where** is it settled? In Heaven! God’s Word was settled long before man ever decided to vote on it. All of the votes in the world cannot change or alter a single one of God’s Holy Scriptures. The folly of ignoring the Word of God is seen in Adam and Eve sinning and being cast from the garden (Gen. 3:1-19). Noah was blessed and his life spared because: “Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he” (Gen. 6:22). Moses taught the Israelites,

Ye shall observe to do therefore as Jehovah your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. Ye shall walk in all the way which Jehovah your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess” (Deut. 5:32-33).

Jesus pleaded, “If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). One is never given the option of **changing** God’s commandments! The apostle John said, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3). The last book of the New Testament warns,

I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-19).

Friends, God’s Word is holy, just, pure and right! The Psalmist well said, “The sum of

thy word is truth; and every one of thy righteous ordinances endureth for ever” (Psa. 119:160). One **cannot** by the process of voting change God’s truths! Even though man votes to change God’s truth, such does not occur. The apostle Paul sums it up quite well by saying, “God forbid: yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar...” (Rom. 3:4).

Can we all understand that  $2+2=4$ ? Can all agree on more complicated mathematical formulas? Yes! Can we all understand the Bible alike? Absolutely! The apostle Paul pleads, “Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17). The Word of God states that all who love Him “must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). Such is a simple task if the **authority** of Christ is honored (Matt. 28:18) and the truth accepted that God’s Word “is settled in heaven” (Psa. 119:89). The only choice man has is to respect the Word of God and follow it or to show disdain for it and change it!

Christ built His church as He desired it to be built (Matt. 16:18). The Lord only built **one** body [church] (Eph. 4:4) of which He is its head (Eph. 1:22-23). The Lord purchased His church with His blood (Acts 20:28). The Scriptures are clear in saying, “For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11).

Man needs to remember that God’s Word is settled in Heaven and that all the whims and wishes of men will never change a single one of God’s glorious truths!

## Mulling Over Modesty

Jess Whitlock



“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in **modest** apparel, with **shamefastness** and **sobriety**, not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but which becometh women professing godliness with good works” (1 Tim. 2:9-10, emph. JW). The church is not to conform to the world in the areas of speech, drinking, dancing, cursing, worldly actions, et al. (Rom. 12:1-2). So why would anyone think that it would be appropriate for the church to conform to the world in dress! The word “modesty” comes from a Greek word, *kosmios*. This word is defined: “Orderly, well arranged, decent, modest” (*Vine’s*). “Respectable, honorable” (*Arndt & Gingrich*). “Well arranged, seemly, modest” (*Thayer*). Even the English defines it: “propriety in dress, speech or conduct” (Webster’s 9th New Collegiate Dictionary).

Since *modesty* means “propriety in dress” the opposite then, would be *nakedness*. Adam and Eve sinned in the garden as they partook of the fruit of the forbidden tree. The text says, “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were **naked**; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves **aprons**” (Gen. 3:7 [the NKJV has “coverings”]). Earlier they had been naked (2:25) and were not ashamed! When the Lord God called for Adam, they hid from God (Gen. 3:8-10). Why? They were afraid because they were **naked**...so Jehovah made for them “coats of skin” (Gen. 3:21 [the NKJV has “tunics of skin”]). The *aprons* in Hebrew are *chagora*, similar to Tarzan’s loin cloth. God was not pleased, and the *coats or tunics* comes from the Hebrew *kuttoneth*, i.e., a long covering from the shoulders to the knees. Then, God considered them to be **clothed** and not **naked**.

Consider God’s pattern for the clothing worn by His priests. Aaron and his sons were instructed to prepare “tunics of fine linen” (Exo. 28:39-43). In order to “cover their nakedness; they shall reach from the waist to the thighs...” (Exo. 28:42). The similar standard was given to the women. The daughters of Babylon were to flee the land and cross the rivers in exile. “...Thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate...remove thy veil, strip off the train, uncover the leg, pass through the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen...” The foot and lower leg were commonly visible, just as today, but in lifting up the dress to pass over the waters the upper thigh would be exposed. God considered that as “**nakedness** and a **shame**.”

In John chapter 21 Jesus enables the apostles who had been fishing all night without catching a fish, to cast their net on the other side of the boat. They did so and caught 153 fish! When the disciples realized it was Jesus giving the commands, Peter "...girt his coat about him (for he was naked), and cast himself into the sea." (John 21:7) The ASV has a footnote that reads "he had on his undergarments only"! Now, compare the material found in most swimsuits today with the material found in undergarments! Recently I was waiting in the Wal-Mart parking lot. I saw three women get out of their cars in short shorts and each one immediately started tugging on the hemline! Why? If they had wanted more material, they should have paid for it when they went shopping the first time!

As a teenager, Dad taught us that when we worship God on the Lord's Day, we are attending a memorial service. Therefore, when we dress, we needed to think what would we wear to a memorial service for him? Should we do less for the Lord?

Since the time of Adam and Eve, it has been God's will that men and women put on clothes in public appearances. In our text the word "shamefastness" comes from the Greek *aidos*, i.e., "a sense of shame, modesty" (*Vines & Thayer*). "a sense of shame and reverence" (*Robertson*).

## How to Become a Christian

**Thomas Allen Robertson**

### **Christianity A Matter Of Certainty**

It is quite common today to hear people say: "I hope I am a Christian." In every other relationship of life man is able to have a degree of certainty and so it is with the man who is a Christian. The married man knows he is married; he has complied with the terms necessary to get him into that relationship. So the man who is a Christian may have certainty with reference to his relationship to Christ if so be that he has complied with the terms by which he becomes married unto Christ (Rom. 7:4). One is not left to wonder or hope that he is a Christian, because in very simple words and definite commandments God has told the sinner exactly what he must do to be saved from his sins and thus become a Christian.

### **Hearing**

The man who is willing to hear what God says, and do it, need have no doubt or uncertainty at all concerning his forgiveness. If he refuses to hear the Gospel of Christ, of course he cannot be saved. For God saves through preaching. "For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). And again,

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets. And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me (John 6:44-45).

And Paul said, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). It is not strange in view of such truths that we find a preacher present in every case of conversion recorded in the New Testament.

### **Faith**

Having heard the Gospel of Christ one is then in a position to have faith in Christ. Faith is one of the prime requisites of salvation. It is not the only essential, as some falsely claim; but certainly no man can be saved without it. "For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Since faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, in the New Testament we have a sufficient ground for our faith, an abundance of evidence on which belief is to be based. "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 may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life in his name" (John 20:30-31). There are three things very evident from these passages; (1) Faith comes by hearing the Gospel; (2) that faith is not a belief

in creeds, disciplines, and church manuals, but it is faith in Jesus Christ as God's Son; (3) such faith does not in itself make us children of God, but it gives us "power to become" sons of God (John 1:12).

### **Repentance**

When one has come to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God he then is ready to repent of his past sins. Repentance is an act of the will by which a man makes a decision to cease from sin and turn to God. If a man is to be saved, it is necessary that he repent and turn from all sins. "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). Peter said, "Repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19) and Paul declared, "The times of this ignorance God winked at: but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). Peter also states that it is God's will that all men should come to repentance. (2 Pet. 3:9.) And it was Jesus himself who stated, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

Many are confused over just what constitutes repentance. The story of that two sons as told by Christ according to Matthew 21:28-31 gives a very fine illustration of the meaning of repentance. A certain man asked his two sons to go and work in the vineyard. One of them said, "I will not" but afterward "he repented and went" This son did two things (1) he "repented" and (2) he "went." The repenting was simply a change of mind, a change of will. Repentance precedes reformation of life and it precedes the remission of sins. For without repentance there will be no reformation and neither will there be any forgiveness.

### **Confession**

Having heard the Gospel of Christ, having allowed it to produce faith in Christ as the Son of God, this faith in Christ having brought one to the point of repentance of sins, one is then ready to confess faith in Christ before men. In stating the necessity of confession of faith in Christ with the mouth the apostle Paul said,

If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. 10:9-10).

This clear and simple statement of the necessity of confession of faith in Christ with the mouth is in complete harmony with the words of the Lord himself. For Christ said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32). Now notice: this confession (1) is before men; (2) is with the mouth; (3) is unto salvation; (4) precedes baptism (Acts 8:36-38); and (5) if we do not make it, we will not be confessed before God. This confession is something that is essential and cannot be ignored.

### **Baptism**

The person who has heard the Gospel, believed in Christ, repented of his past sins, and confessed the name of Christ is no longer a fit subject for the devil's kingdom. He is now ready to be baptized into Christ. We do not wish to over-emphasize baptism; it is not **the** one saving command. The command to be baptized for the remission of sins is no more important than any of the other commands, but it is just as important as they are. Take away any one of the commands of God, and the others are useless so far as procuring a man's eternal salvation. A man may believe, confess Christ, and be baptized, but if he has no faith, these other commands will not save him. He may believe and repent; but these two things without baptism are not enough.

Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Paul said, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death" (Rom. 6:4). Peter said, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). It was the same apostle who at the house of Cornelius "commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus" (Acts 10:48).

From these passages it is clear that (1) baptism is a burial; (2) it is for the remission of sins; (3) it is commanded of God and is necessary to salvation; (4) it puts one into



Christ, into his body, into the church, thus it is the act by which one becomes a new creature in Christ, a Christian.

Baptism is not an act that is to be submitted to by one who is a Christian, but is a command that must be obeyed in becoming a Christian, in being born into the family of God. All of the various activities of the Christian are to be performed over and over, but baptism is something to be done only once.

We are not teaching, nor do we believe the Bible teaches “water salvation” but that salvation is secured through faith and obedience, and baptism is a command of God, and must be obeyed in order that one might become a citizen in the kingdom of heaven, a member of the church, a Christian. Faith working obedience is God's plan for the salvation of man, he has no other.

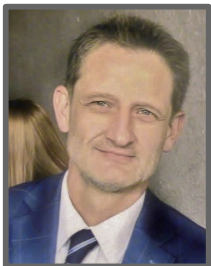
So, throughout the New Testament we find God holding out the promise of salvation from past sins and eternal life to all who will obey his simple plan and live faithful here upon this earth. This is **God's plan**, not man's. The one who accepts it is obeying God, not man. The one who rejects it is rejecting God. Every man must decide for himself. And in the final judgment every man shall account to God for the decision he has made. Will you not carefully study the matter, and make your decision to do that which God has commanded that you might become a Christian?

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## **You Do Not Have to Go to Heaven**

**Nathan Brewer**



No one can **make** you go to heaven. You will not be dragged into heaven against your will, kicking and screaming. No matter how hard people try to get you to go, God will not let it happen if you do not want to.

Many of you would rather sleep an extra hour or two on Sunday morning than worship God. You are an adult. No one can make you acknowledge God's existence against your will. So, if you would rather not get involved in spiritual matters—if you would rather not worship your Creator—God will not make you. If you would rather ignore the sacrifice that Jesus made for you when He died for your sins, you can. No one is stopping you.

If you are one of those who likes to drink alcohol, or have sexual relations outside of marriage, God is not going to force you to stop. He will let you behave the way you want to while you are alive on earth. Maybe you had to live by your parents' strict rules when you were younger, but not now. No one can make you stop living a sinful life.

That is the thing about serving God—it is completely up to us. It is a choice we are allowed to make. We do not have to do it. God does not force anyone to serve Him. In fact, God does not force anyone to do **anything**. He gave humans free will. He allows us to choose what to do with our lives. So, if you like cussing, God will let you do it. If you like telling dirty jokes and ripping out vulgar words, God will not stop you from doing it, even though He hates filthy speech.

Your mother may have tried to teach you the Bible when you were young, but you do not have to listen to her any more. Maybe a preacher has talked to you about your soul, but now that you are grown, you can ignore him. Besides, you probably think it is none of his business what you do with your life. Maybe your spouse has begged you to attend Bible study and worship, or to give up sinful activities. But, hey, you are your own person now. No one can tell **you** what to do.

Now, I know what you might be thinking. You think, “Well, maybe I do some of those things, but I'll make it to heaven.” First of all, if you do not want to worship God, if you do not care much for Bible study, and if you like dabbling in sin, why would you **want**

to go to heaven? Heaven is a spiritual place with spiritual activities. Those who go to heaven will spend time praising God, and that sounds a lot like worship. There certainly will not be any alcohol, womanizing, or carousing in heaven. No filthy language will be allowed. That does not sound like your kind of place.

Second, you cannot have your cake and eat it too. God lets you choose the way you want to live in this life, and He lets you choose to spend eternity in hell. How you live while you are on earth determines your soul's destiny. God demands total devotion to Him in this life if we want to spend the next life **with** Him. In Luke 9:23, Jesus says anyone who follows Him must deny himself every day. That means we have to suppress fleshly desires that keep us from doing what He says. It means we have to follow Him completely—not when it is convenient, or when we feel like it. It means we cannot pick and choose which parts of His Word to obey. It means total devotion.

In Luke 9:24, Jesus sums it up. He says that if we follow our own desires, we will lose our soul; but if we live completely for Him in this life, we will gain eternal life. The choice is up to you. The way of salvation has been revealed. Now we have to decide whether we will live for Him in this life, or if we will live for ourselves. No one can make you serve God, and no one can make you go to heaven. However, on Judgment Day, will those who tried to get you to live right enter into eternal rest and joy while you descend into everlasting torment and sorrow? Do not let that happen. Choose to serve God now.

## They Have a Zeal of God But Not According to Knowledge, No. 6

Don Smith

### Introduction



In such a sin-stricken world, we find that Satan's greatest devices reside in the realm of deception. Many people deceive themselves through willful starvation of the knowledge of God (Hos. 4:6). In this final portion of Mrs. Julie Jackson's response to the manuscript "Have Miracles Ceased?", she makes direct reference to the paper by page and paragraph. Due to the format of this publication (*TGP*), the references are modified from the original and placed in brackets so the reader can easily go back to that issue and section of *TGP* to compare the reference. All references will come from the March 2023 issue. The reader is also reminded that all typos and grammatical errors are left in the response as they are in Mrs. Jackson's original. We left off with paragraph (13) in last month's issue, so we will now pick up with paragraph (14).

### (14)

<sup>1</sup>I assume you kept a copy of your paper "Have Miracles Ceased". <sup>2</sup>I wasn't initially going to refer to it in specifics but as I write, I see that I cannot differentiate where we part in beliefs without doing so. <sup>3</sup>I would be interested to know what DES stands for at the end of some of your scripture quotes. <sup>4</sup>On [pg.27, *TGP*, March 2023, par. 3] I agree that God always couples natural means as much as possible with His miracles. <sup>5</sup>He would have to since he is nature and created all that is living. <sup>6</sup>In the [5<sup>th</sup>] paragraph though where you state "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". <sup>7</sup>I believe in miracles, healings, deliverance for the oppressed and I don't think there is a man on earth that can "know" the motive of God. <sup>8</sup>He ALWAYS has a bigger picture than our finite minds can fathom. <sup>9</sup>I don't believe God's Love is totally comprehensible to man. <sup>10</sup>God's destiny for everyone involved in one miracle can be played out in exponential numbers.



(15)

<sup>1</sup>You talk about “speaking in tongues” as if it’s not for toady along with the other gifts. <sup>2</sup>I am here to tell you that I had an encounter with a Nazarene Pastor one time that challenged (my then young) walk of faith about tongues. <sup>3</sup>The Holy Spirit led me in a debate with him and he ended up telling me I was of the devil. <sup>4</sup>You know, I think we would both agree that the “truth” of the Word of God is vital. <sup>5</sup>I think you phrased it as “spiritual life and spiritual death”. <sup>6</sup>I agree. <sup>7</sup>My experiences tell me that there is life and life more abundantly. <sup>8</sup>This is exactly what Christ wants—Life. <sup>9</sup>He is a living God. <sup>10</sup>On [pg.30, *TGP*, March 2023] you list only 2 purposes for the baptism of the Holy Ghost. <sup>11</sup>I agree with those but there is many many more reasons. <sup>12</sup>To live a life of freedom and victory is the main reason for the gifts. 1 Corinthians 12:1

(16)

<sup>1</sup>Let’s just suffice it to say that if I even entertained the beliefs that miracles, giftings of the Holy Spirit and deliverance is not for today, my 30 years of walking with the Lord would be a HUGE “made up in my mind” adventure. <sup>2</sup>You see, I have witnessed many healings, deliverances, salvations and the power of the Holy Ghost. <sup>3</sup>My husband is delivered from alcohol, healed of Chrons Disease and his life was spared 7 times. <sup>4</sup>Why? <sup>5</sup>We don’t know the entire reason. <sup>6</sup>One reason could be that God had a better life for him than to be a gutter alcoholic and God wanted to use the gifts He gave Marc to further the gospel of the Lord.

Mrs. Jackson begins this section with a direct statement that we “part in beliefs” in regards to the clear teaching of the New Testament that was brought out in the manuscript. In essence, she stated that no one can know the motive of God on anything, much less His motive behind the miraculous. She then gives an account of her experience as “proof” that a person can speak in tongues today. Pentecostals will continually point to experiences in an effort to trump God’s written Word. The rhetorical question can be asked, “Who should we believe, God or man?” Mrs. Jackson also attempts to use the number of years she has been in her current belief system as support she is right.

(17)

<sup>1</sup>My/our lives would be a lie if we didn’t believe in the Power of Jesus Christ to set people free. <sup>2</sup>That is all we live for, helping, pointing hurting people to the Lord Jesus Christ and His saving grace through redemption of sin in such a fallen, hurting world. <sup>3</sup>I gave up 16 years of my life to home educate our two children so they could see the hand of God in each and every aspect of life, from Science to History to the magnificent workings of our body-Health, even Math. <sup>4</sup>Now if that isn’t Belief in the things of God, I don’t know what is.

(18)

<sup>1</sup>You both are free to believe what you want. <sup>2</sup>I know you neither one need me to tell you that. <sup>3</sup>Now you know what we believe, like Micah didn’t know already. <sup>4</sup>I do believe you both sent the manuscript because you wanted to share your beliefs. <sup>5</sup>That is fine and we are honored & blessed that you cared to do so. <sup>6</sup>Thank you for reading my response. <sup>7</sup>Marc read it and agrees with my writing also.

May God Bless you!

Best Regards,

Julie

Mrs. Jackson, again, refers to the time she had spent up to that point in her religious beliefs—her life. She also makes an emotional argument that pointing people to her religious views and having given her “life” home schooling her children in the same is proof she believes in “the things of God.” She states all this after opposing what God says in His plenary and verbally inspired Word. Why was she making such an

argument? It seems to be clear she knew she was opposing what the Bible teaches without any substantial grounds, and she needed to show affirmation she believes “the things of God” and display the reassurance of her husband in that.

### **Conclusion**

Clearly, Mrs. Jackson is in total error in what she teaches, practices, and believes in regards to religious matters. Her entire response to the manuscript is testimony of that. In the next segment of this series, this writer’s reply to Mrs. Jackson’s response will begin. Most of her major points will be pulled together and soundly refuted with the scriptures. It is a refutation which only the most stubborn of denominationalists could or would deny.

## **Legalism, Law, and Love**

**Dub McClish**

### **Introduction**

Is obedience to Christ optional or unnecessary? Are belief in and love toward Christ the only things required of sinners to be saved? Some (the we-are-not-under-law-but-under-grace crowd) would have it so and thus teach. To them the New Testament is but a collection of “love letters” from God that are bereft of any authoritative or “legal” content. Who would even consider denying that the New Testament, with its incomparable glad tidings of salvation for sinners, is the revelation of the incomparable (and all but incomprehensible) love of God and His son for fallen man? Having said this, it is nonetheless utter folly to deny that this New Testament “love story” is also God’s law for all men, for all time, since Calvary.



Paul recognized the existence of “the law of Christ” and even identified one of its precepts (Gal. 6:1-2). He knew that he was “under law to Christ” (1 Cor. 9:21), which he elsewhere described as “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:2). James twice referred to the New Testament as the “law of liberty” (Jam. 1:25; 2:12). Besides these explicit statements, there are numerous implicit statements and principles that demand the conclusion that (1) the New Testament of Christ is God’s law for the Christian Age and (2) that all men are amenable to it.

### **Are We “Legalists”?**

The liberals, who do not want to be bound by Divine law (i.e., the New Testament), often hurl *legalist* into the teeth of those of us who emphasize obedience to New Testament commands. We will do well to examine this term and the accusation made concerning it. Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary defines legalism as “a strict, literal, or excessive conformity to the law or to a religious or moral code.” Webster notwithstanding, I question the possibility of “excessive conformity” to Divine law (the expression has almost a pejorative connotation). “Strict, literal...conformity” to His will is exactly what the Lord requires of those who would be saved (Mat. 7:21-23; Heb. 5:9; et al.).

Men who specialize in taking liberties with God’s Word (i.e., liberals) actually pay us a compliment when they call us, by at least part of Webster’s definition, “legalists.” First, to be a legalist implies belief in the existence of law. I freely confess my conviction that the New Testament is the Divine law under which we live and which will be the final standard of our judgment (John 12:48). Second, I am quite willing to “plead guilty” to insisting upon a strict adherence to that law.

Perhaps what the accusers hope to do by calling us “legalists” is to class us with the first century scribes and Pharisees. Most certainly, the Master scathingly rebuked them on more than one occasion, but did He ever rebuke them for “strict conformity” to God’s law? No—not once! Rather, He chided them for elevating human opinion, precept, and tradition to the level of Divine law, thus making their own religious law (Mat. 15:3, 6-9). Further, He condemned them for overemphasizing parts of God’s law while utterly rejecting and/or neglecting other parts of it (23:23), which also had the effect of creating their own laws. Liberals who refuse to be bound by God’s law (or even deny its

existence) fits the behavior of those first-century enemies of the Lord much better. Thus the modern counterparts of the ancient scribes and Pharisees are not those who insist upon strict adherence to Divine law (i.e., “legalists”). Today’s liberals match up with them very well in their contempt for God’s law. As did the Christ, so should we condemn and expose them.

### **“Legalism” and Obedience**

Does calling for strict adherence/obedience to Divine law constitute “legalism,” per the charge of liberals? There is no clearer principle in the entire Bible than this: Man's paramount duty is to obey God. In much of his life, Solomon miserably failed to honor the pivotal conclusion he finally reached, but it remains nonetheless true: “This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecc. 12:13). King Saul “learned the hard way” that an outward show of religion in offerings and sacrifices is no substitute for obedience. Samuel sharply reproved him with words that ring true right down to our time: “Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Sam. 15:22).

On the other hand, from the beginning, disobedience of God's law has been synonymous with sin—and it still is. The disobedience of Eve, and then Adam, was the very vehicle upon which sin entered the world (Rom. 5:12, 19). The penalty of physical death came upon mankind because of sin (v. 12). Even worse, the perfect holiness of God demanded (and demands) the sentence of eternal spiritual death—separation from God in Hell—for sinful men: “For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (6:23). Sin and disobedience are synonyms, hence it should—and does—make perfect sense to substitute disobedience for sin in the foregoing passage: “The wages of disobedience is death.” The fact that disobedience results in damnation further emphasizes the necessity of obedience.

### **Ever-Present Divine Law or Universalism?**

There has never been a time when man was not accountable to a law system from God. The concepts of sin and law are inseparably bound up together (no law, no sin [Rom. 4:15]; no sin, no law [5:13]). “All have sinned” from the very beginning (3:23a; cf. 5:13–14), therefore all have been under some system of Divine law from the beginning. Moreover, all continue to “fall short” (3:23b). [Note: *have sinned* is an aorist tense form, referring to past completed action, while *fall short* is a present tense form, indicating present and continuing action.] Only if mankind has always been (and ever will be) under law from God can it be said that men have always been (and ever will be) sinners. It is impossible to conceive of sin in the absence of law. As unspiritual as King Saul was, he recognized this constant principle in his statement to Samuel: “I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of Jehovah” (1 Sam. 15:24). John succinctly expressed this principle that has no exceptions: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4, KJV; cf. 5:17). If, as some now allege, men are no longer under law to God, what shall we conclude about sin? What a heinous chain of heresy such antinomian thinking begets, including the following links:

- The only ones whom the death of Christ benefited were those who lived before Calvary.
- God simply abrogated the law systems He had formerly enacted and did not replace them with another.
- It is therefore impossible for anyone living in the Christian Age to sin.
- Hence, the death of Christ was unnecessary and inapplicable with respect to those who have lived since that event.

In the absence of sin there is no condemnation. Thus those who argue that grace in the Christian Age frees us from Divine law imply that, since the cross, the egregious doctrine of unconditional universalism has been in effect. Liberals must face the fact that it is impossible to disobey nonexistent law.

Rather than being free from condemnation by the **absence** of law (per the liberals), we are actually freed from it by the **power** of law. That which Paul said was true concerning himself is true of all: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2). We correctly identify this law with “the truth” which makes us free (John 8:32; cf. 17:17) and the “perfect law of liberty” (Jam. 1:25; cf. 2:12). It is sad, but true, that the Lord will render His vengeance to those who know not God, and to those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might (2 The. 1:7-9).

### What About Love?

If *love* (see opening paragraph) is Scripturally defined, then, indeed love of Christ is all that is required of sinners for salvation. Alas, liberals do not seem to comprehend its Scriptural meaning. Where is the liberal who knows (or who will acknowledge) the inseparable connection between loving and obeying the Christ? To the liberal, *love of Christ* appears to have more to do with shadow and symbol than with substance. It often involves such things as getting emotionally worked up, shouting “praise the Lord,” fluttering raised hands, or maybe singing loudly some “contemporary Christian song” about loving God or His Son. (Lest I be misunderstood, I am not saying we should not be emotionally involved in our worship, that it is wrong to utter the phrase, *praise the Lord*, or that the singing of newer songs (assuming they are Scriptural) is somehow inherently unscriptural.) Yet the Bible is explicit and clear in its declaration of this love-obedience union.

The Bible goes far beyond mere symbols, emotions, and words—all of which can be very fickle and deceitful—as indicators of love for the Lord. Love for Christ brings us right back to the Bible emphasis on obedience to Divine law. According to Christ Himself, our obedience to Christ is the expression and proof of genuine love for Him:

If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.... He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him.... He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.... If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love (John 14:15, 21, 24; 15:10).

John states that the same standard of proof applies to one's love for the Father: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3). If love of one another requires more than mere verbal expression, how much more does the love of God and His Son (3:18). In light of the passages above, one must conclude that there is no way to demonstrate genuine love for the Son of God except by obedience to Him.

### Conclusion

Those who insist that we are under no system of Divine law since the cross or that it is somehow “unspiritual” to emphasize “commandment-keeping” and obedience under Christ are not lovers of Christ—by His own definition. Plainly put, careful obedience to Christ **does not** constitute “legalism” as defined by liberals, equating it with the behavior of the scribes and Pharisees. On the other hand, careful obedience to Christ does constitute “legalism” as defined by the dictionary: “strict, literal conformity to the law.” Therefore, by dictionary definition, **“legalism” is a valid synonym for Biblical love.**

The old Priscilla Owens hymn, “Give Me the Bible,” has had it just right all along: “Precept and promise, law and love combining.” There is the beautiful Scriptural balance of law, love, and obedience. May we never allow ourselves to be intimidated by the liberals’ charge of “legalism” just because we insist that men must obey the commandments—the law—of Christ.





# What is Self-Righteousness?

Lee Moses



On one occasion, Jesus told a parable to address “certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others” (Luke 18:9). Self-righteousness is clearly a sin. And just as self-righteousness was a problem in Jesus’ time, it remains a problem today. However, the term has acquired a much broader sense as people use it as a favorite pejorative to levy against any with whom they disagree religiously. Atheists use it to refer to all who believe the Bible is a Divine standard. “Progressives” (cf. 2 John 9) and other sinners use it to refer to those who try to call people out of sin.

In debate, it is necessary that the opponents define their terms. Otherwise, they will often end up in a “verbal dispute,” where the opponents are not actually debating the facts, but simply reflecting their different understandings of terms being used. This is why those who use the term “self-righteousness” should confine their usage of the term to a precise definition. Or, to put it another way, “If you’re going to insult me, please do it correctly.”

“Righteousness” simply means that one’s conduct is upright according to a standard. The righteousness God commends demands that one’s conduct is upright according to **His** standard, which from the day of Pentecost has been the Gospel, the New Testament of Jesus Christ (John 12:48; Rom. 2:16). So what is self-righteousness? Let us consider whether various usages of the term use it correctly.

**Is self-righteousness the belief that one way is better than another?** In today’s politically correct climate, it is common to hear such sentiments as “We’ll just agree to disagree,” or, “What’s right for you may not be right for me.” Public schools indoctrinate children from a young age with the doctrines of pluralism and multiculturalism, which effectively say, “No one way is better than another.”

As such, it is not altogether surprising the tumult that arises when a dissenting voice speaks out, saying, “No this is wrong, and here is what’s right.” Instead of examining whether their beliefs and practices could be improved, they assault the dissenter as “self-righteous.” Because he believes he has a way better than the way they are currently following, they demonize him.

But one way **is** better than any other. The Lord has always made clear that He only provides one singular way (Gen. 18:19; Jud. 2:22; 2 Kings 21:22). If the Lord provides a way, is it not **better** than any other way that man could fathom? “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is **the good way**, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein” (Jer. 6:16; emphasis LM).

Contrary to the good way of the Lord are the varying ways of man: “The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity” (Prov. 10:29; compare with 14:12). “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). There is only one narrow way to acceptability to God and eternal life in heaven (Matt. 7:13-14; John 14:6). Surely it is not self-righteousness to observe that God’s way is better than any man’s way.

**Is self-righteousness the understanding that one must live a certain way to have the hope of heaven?** Even many religious people claim that anyone who believes this is self-righteous—“What, do you think you are going to **earn** your way to heaven, you self-righteous works salvationist?!?” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE)* defines self righteousness as “A term that has come to designate moral living as a way of salvation; or as a ground for neglecting the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.” The two possible definitions in this sentence are very different from one another, and the second will be discussed later. As to the first, designating any way as “**a** way of salvation” is erroneously to deny that there is only **one** Divine way (see previous point). And it is certainly incorrect to affirm that moral living **in and of itself**

can produce salvation. However, moral living is a necessary **component** of salvation. This might be a good time further to emphasize that there is a distinct difference between righteousness and self righteousness. The most basic definition of righteousness pertains to right-**doing**. The Greek word commonly translated righteousness, has as a definition “the quality or characteristic of upright behavior.” When Paul (and the psalmist) noted, “There is none righteous, no, not one,” it was because of the wickedness that people **did** (Rom. 3:10ff; Psa. 14). Moses exhorted the Israelites to **do** what God instructed, that they might be righteous: “And it shall be **our righteousness**, if we observe **to do** all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us” (Deut. 6:25; emphasis LM). That was not only true under the Old Testament; it remains true under the New: “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that **doeth** righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous” (1 John 3:7; emph. LM). Friend, that is not **self** righteousness, that is simply righteousness. And while **self** righteousness may be condemned, God commands and commends **righteousness** in the strongest terms. No, the understanding that one must live a certain way to have the hope of heaven is not self-righteousness.

**Is self-righteousness a concern about the prominence of sin?** Non-Christians are generally not all that opposed to Christianity when professed Christians remain in their church buildings, singing happy songs and praying happy prayers. However, when nonChristians perceive that Christians are speaking out against sin, they become hotly indignant (compare with 1 Kings 22:8; Amos 5:10). They may even misuse a verse or two of Scripture to scold the self-righteousness they perceive in Christians: “Let him that is without sin cast the first stone!” “Judge not, you self-righteous prude!” Of course, they ignore the reality of their own judging and stone-casting; but just the same, they assault those concerned with sin as self-righteous.

Our world is growing increasingly immoral (compare with 2 Tim. 3:13). Numerous television programs glorify sexual intercourse outside of marriage. Shows such as *Cougar Town* and *Two and a Half Men* take it to a whole new level of repulsiveness. Girls are being sexualized at a young age. A video has recently been widely circulated across the internet of **seven-year-old** girls performing a dance routine clad in very skimpy outfits, such as one might expect in the Victoria’s Secret fashion show, and simulating sex moves onstage in their routine. There is a “dating service” advertising on television whose sole function is to hook up married persons (from different marriages) for an adulterous affair. Should not Christians be deeply concerned about such immorality and tolerance for immorality in their midst? As the psalmist lamented, Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law....Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law....I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word (Psa. 119:53, 136, 158).

We likewise ought to be gripped with horror, having rivers of waters pouring from our eyes at the wickedness around us. Is that self-righteous, or righteous? The Holy Spirit inspired the following description of Lot in Sodom: “[God] delivered **just** Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For **that righteous man** dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)” (2 Pet. 2:7-8; emph. LM). God says it is righteous, not self-righteous, to be vexed with the filthy conduct of the wicked.

Christians are not only to be inwardly concerned with wickedness, they are to speak out against it. As Christians are commanded to “walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8), the Scripture expounds, “But all things that are reprov’d are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light” (verse 13). To be light, one must reprove sin, making it manifest. Christians are to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (verse 11). Although one may have committed sins in the past, this does not preclude him from calling others to repentance once he has repented himself (Matt. 7:5; Acts 3:19). Others will not like it when Christians shine as lights, making manifest the wicked deeds of the wicked world (John 3:20; 7:7). However, the world’s contempt for Christian care and concern makes it neither unrighteous nor self-righteous.



## Is self-righteousness a rejection of God's provisions for righteousness?

Scripture clearly defines self-righteousness when it speaks of Jesus rebuking those individuals who “trusted in themselves that they were righteous” (Luke 18:9). Paul would later say of his Israelite counterparts,

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:1-3).

God has provided the **pattern** of righteousness, the Gospel (1:16-17; 6:17). God has provided the **propitiation** of righteousness, the willing death of Jesus Christ His Son (3:25-26; 5:9; 1 John 2:2). God has provided the **pronouncement** of righteousness, His own Divine decree that a formerly sinful man or woman is “justified” (Rom. 8:33; 1 John 1:9).

Whenever one refuses to submit to God's provisions for righteousness, he “trusts in himself that he is righteous.” Again revisiting the *ISBE*'s definition of self-righteousness: “A term that has come to designate moral living as a way of salvation; **or as a ground for neglecting the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.**” Anything which a person considers sufficient of himself, to the neglect of God's pattern, propitiation, or pronouncement of righteousness, is self-righteousness. To delude oneself that he has no need of God is self-righteous. To ignore and refuse to address one's sins is self-righteousness. To seek forgiveness by a pattern other than the Gospel (which demands hearing, faith, repentance, confession of Christ's Deity, immersion in water, and subsequent holy living) is self-righteousness.

Sadly, this true self-righteousness abounds, yet those guilty of it persist in accusing others of it while refusing to see it in themselves. “There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness” (Prov. 30:12). Such people who so readily hurl the wrongful accusation against others need not only to correct their inaccurate use of the word—they especially need to purge themselves of their self-righteousness by submitting themselves to the righteousness of God.

## God Blesses Only the Obedient

W.O. Davis

God has always blessed those who obey Him and pronounced a curse on those who disobey Him. Humble, unquestioning, absolute and implicit obedience rendered to God by His creatures has been, and always will be, pleasing to the Heavenly Father. Since it is through strict conformity to God's thought and purpose as revealed through His word that He gives spiritual blessings to men, it is therefore of the greatest importance that we learn His will and render absolute obedience in all things that pertain to our eternal salvation.

The laws of life must be obeyed if we would enjoy health. The laws of justice must be obeyed if we would enjoy the blessings of civilization, and the laws of the natural world must be obeyed if we would use its mighty forces for the general welfare of all. Is it any wonder, then, that God has set certain spiritual laws for man to obey and that He blesses man when man renders humble obedience to them?

If men will not obey and serve God, they are the servants of the devil, sin, lusts, riches, cares, and pleasures of this world. In either case, the act of obedience is exercised. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Rom. 6:16). Not all of life is worship, but all of life is service, and man is a creature of choice. “Choose you this day whom ye will serve” was the farewell charge of the veteran Joshua to the tribes of Israel who gathered at Shechem (Josh. 24:15). The Israelites were at a solemn crisis, and their destiny hinged upon the choice they made. Man today is responsible for the choice he makes in life, just as Adam and Eve were responsible for the choice they made in the garden of Eden. Sin came into the world by disobedience

because man chose the opposite of obedience.

The life of Christ is our perfect example of obedience to God. He came to do the will of the Father. Jesus lived, without deviation or exception, by the words proceeding out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). He conquered by obedience. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9). Yes, He bore the penalty of disobedience of the race, enabling men thereby to become partakers of the divine nature. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phlp. 2:8). This all-embracing sacrifice should challenge all that is in man and cause him to gladly render humble obedience to Christ in all things. The Saviour left us an example in His suffering that we should follow in His steps (1 Pet. 2:21).

Our Lord said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Paul expresses it thus: "Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). Love makes obedience natural and inevitable, but to the loveless heart the commands of God are irksome. Obedience is the test of sincerity and whenever man serves and worships God acceptably, love and obedience go hand in hand. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (John 14:21). The proof of love is obedience. Men need to love God more.

God does not, cannot, and will not bless those who are living in disobedience. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). When men refuse to be baptized for the remission of sins, they deliberately disobey a plain command of God and, therefore, cannot expect the spiritual blessings promised the obedient.

There are four ways one may disobey God:

1. By adding to the word of the Lord,
2. by taking from His word,
3. by substitution for something God commanded, and
4. by deliberate disobedience by a refusal to hear His word.

These different ways of disobeying God are practiced today throughout the religious world. If man would adhere strictly to the teachings of the Bible, we would not hear of so many 'isms" and there would be much less confusion in the minds of people who are seeking after truth.

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## "What Saith The Scriptures?"

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**Harrell Davidson**



This month, we have a guest to answer a question—brother Guy N. Woods.

**Our question is, "Shall We Know Each Other in Heaven?"**

This is truly a question of more than merely curious interest. Every thoughtful person who has suffered the poignant pain of parting from those near and dear and has tenderly laid their physical forms to rest in the tomb is vitally and absorbingly interested in the implications which this question raises. He knows that he shall see them no more in the land of the living; they have passed beyond the door of death to return to this world no more. If there is no future recognition, the moment of parting at the grave, however forbidding the thought may be, becomes the hour of final separation. Soon we, too, shall divest ourselves of the mortal robe with which we are clothed here, and go to join the teeming millions of our race who have lived and loved and at last gone to take their places in the silent halls of death.

On the morning of the resurrection day we shall rise to stand in judgment and to hear the pronouncement of our eternal destiny. If there is to be no recognition, we shall be

among total strangers; every memory we now possess will have been obliterated and every bond here severed, and as strangers we shall enter heaven and so live there forever and ever.

If a careful study of the sacred writings should lead us to such a conclusion, it will, it must be acknowledged, greatly alter our conceptions of heaven and the abode of the sainted dead. Whether fully aware of all the implications which attach to the matter or not, our hope of heaven and our expectation of future bliss have been conditioned on the understanding that some wonderful day we shall be privileged to gather up the sundered threads of this existence so rudely severed in death, and in the company of dear loved ones and valued friends gone on before enjoy the ineffable bliss of paradise forever and ever and ever. Are we prepared for such a conclusion?

Our whole being instinctively and unhesitatingly shrinks away from such a supposition. We are, in the first place, unwilling to accept the conclusion that heaven will be peopled with those who are utter strangers to them here, that every vestige of memory will have been obliterated there, and that we shall never again be privileged to see and know those we have loved a while and lost here. And, secondly, we find ourselves unable to visualize a place of perfect happiness as heaven is alleged to be thus stripped of what is surely one of its sweetest joys and most fondly anticipated delights.

The view is opposed to reason, (a) because it ignores one of the most deep-seated and well-recognized desires of the heart: a glad reunion with the precious loved ones on the golden shores of the heavenly city. (b) The wisest and greatest and best of all ages have confidently looked beyond the sombre curtains of death and thought that there is such a place as the Scriptures reveal heaven to be. Whose soul is it which does not go wild at the prospect of seeing and knowing illustrious prophets, priests, and kings; of being associated with the great and wise and good of all ages; of sitting at the feet of Peter and Paul and the Lord? And when to this we add the wonderful prospect of seeing our dear loved ones in their immortal state, no longer weary and sad and worn and sick, no longer clothed in bodies weak with pain and ravaged by disease, but arrayed in the imperishable splendor which shall ever characterize the good, the pure and the blest, who can avoid the conclusion of the peerless apostle that it is “very far better” there? No. The hope of a glad and happy reunion “just over there” is not a cruel delusion, a vain and empty fantasy. Those who silently weep in loneliness may take comfort in the fact that they sorrow not in vain, or as others who have no hope.

### Anvil Sparks

Jeremiah has been unjustly called the “weeping prophet,” as if he were a sort of weakling; whereas there was never a more heroic soul. Nothing turned him aside from his duty. If he wept, it was because he loved his nation, and his heart was torn with the knowledge of what was coming to his people. He would have been cold-blooded had he not wept.

There are only two things that a person can do with a command—he can obey it or disobey it. One whose heart is right toward God will do whatever God commands him to do. —**R.L. Whiteside**—

## Why Do We Sin?

### L.O. Sanderson

A careful study of the Scriptures relative to sin will reveal that it is any thought or desire, word or action, digression or transgression, by commission or omission, that is contrary to the will of God. We cannot determine the degree of guilt, nor which sin may be greater, for God does not judge in harmony with the attitudes and standards of men. We may state confidently, however, that the little sins, so called, will undoubtedly be our greater barriers to eternal salvation, since so many are guilty of them. Still, our problem is not to prove that all men “have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” nor that the “wages of sin is death,” for these are indisputable truths; rather, Why do we sin? If, as in medical science, we may determine the cause, we may not only control it, but also remove it far from us.

May we first examine what does **not** cause sin?



**God does not cause us to sin.** The very character of God, his opposition to sin, and his merciful efforts to blot it from remembrance, make it unreasonable to charge him with cause. Even in the days of Mosaic principles, when Israel had committed divers sins, petty and otherwise, God made known through Jeremiah that they could not even think that Jehovah delivered them unto such (Jer. 7:9,10). It may be urged that God tests his children, and that such trials were made of Abraham and others, but there is a vast difference between trial and temptation—God may try, but he never tempts to sin. “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man” (Jas. 1:13). In fact, every evil appeal is traceable to the world itself and not to God. “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world” (1 John 2:15-16).

**Temptation is not the direct cause of sin.** Jesus Christ demonstrated this fact. He was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). Our temptations are common, and the extent of their influence is not permitted beyond our ability to withstand.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

These bounds, of course, are not the will of the evil one—in fact, Satan chaffed under the restrictions respecting job. God is the creator of the “hedge”; while he wills that we shall be free moral agents, serving whom we choose, he leads us beside still waters and suffers no temptation beyond our powers to bear.

**It is Satan who tempts to sin.** Satan is altogether evil, and desires that all shall walk in darkness. To make men fall from the grace of God is his delight. Why should not sin be attributed to him? This evil one “stood up against Israel” (cf. 1 Chron. 21:1). It was he who “desired to have” Peter that he might “sift” him as wheat (Luke 22:31). He appears “as an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14), as a “wolf in sheep’s clothing” (cf. Matt. 7:15), as a subtle “serpent” (2 Cor. 11:3), or as a “roaring lion” seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). In every case he is the promoter of the influence that leads men away from God. It is he that plans the temptation and directs its effects. He is the source of evil. He tempts to sin.

**However, Satan is not wholly responsible.** While Satan tempts to sin, he cannot force the response. Christ was tempted in all points even as we, and yet without sin—a positive proof of Satanic bounds. Our temptations are common—the unusual is lacking; an escape is always possible. If we “resist the devil, he will flee” from us. If we meet him with the word of God, as did Christ, ours shall be victory over him. Satan may hinder, but a crown awaits the faithful.

**We are responsible for our sins.** We may love “the praise of men more than the praise of God,” and we are chargeable for that false love. We may love darkness because our deeds are evil, but we are not forced to evil deeds. Every persuasion is against them. We “eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence” because we prefer such. God leads away from sin; Satan can only go so far in temptation; and the only reason that we sin is that we respond to it while we are still able to bear! And who is to blame for our response? “Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas. 1:14-15).

Thus the real responsibility is not with the tempter, it is with us! The cause is not in Satan; it is in us! We are “drawn away” and “enticed”—not so much by the cunning subtlety and skill of the evil one, but because of our own unregulated, intemperate desire, the ambition of our own wisdom, the vanity of our own pride, the lusts of our own ill-controlled hearts, and the blindness of our own souls to the inevitable results. The power or temptation to promote response lies more particularly in some weakness on our part of which the prince of this world takes advantage. It is but the case of history repeating itself—a sensual spark, quickened by some apparent external advantage or



trifling pleasure, is flamed into a blaze of longing after that which is forbidden, and which, though forbidden, we stretch forth to acquire. The desire for power, for position, for gold, for fleshly joys, will, when encouraged or even permitted, often translate us into hypocritical politicians, social egotists, selfish ingrates and carnal reprobates.

Do not be lured as a bird to a trap. Human impulses, though weak at first, grow stronger even with toleration; and, if created or courted, will result in acts of ungodliness; and “the wages of sin is death”! The very fact that wages are paid for sin is indicative of personal responsibility. Human laws reckon man accountable for his transgressions, and mete out discipline in harmony with estimated guilt. Nature inflicts suffering on those who violate the laws of health. God holds man responsible for his sins, else punishment for sin is unjust.

Let us feel keenly the responsibility that we be not overtaken in a fault, and that we resist the tempter always, for he cannot tempt us beyond our own power to resist. By this we shall control the cause of sin, and therefore remove its bitterness from us. Through the blood of Christ and our own response, at least all else will be forgiven.

## A Great Question

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.



The question of all questions is, “What think ye of the Christ?” (Matt. 22:42). What one thinks of Christ determines his thoughts and actions on every question. The correctness of faith depends on the correct answer to the superlative question: “What think ye of Christ?” The question of how and when one is saved by faith through Christ is answered when the first question is resolved. The value of faith in salvation is determined by the use of that is made of faith. How faith is to be used must be decided by what the Gospel of Christ says: for apart from the testimony of the divine records, no one can settle any question as to salvation through Christ.

Before all men today there are two plans of salvation offered. One is of human origin, and contradicts the teaching of Christ and His apostles. The other is Christ’s own plan, and it was revealed through the apostles.

Since the time of Martin Luther, the doctrine of justification by faith alone has been taught as a leading theological tenet. It is taught in opposition to the teaching of Christ through His apostles. We should and do emphasize justification by faith, as the apostles of the Lord taught, but we refuse to add the word “**alone**” and because we refuse to do that, we are charged with teaching **justification by works and water salvation!** Paul and all the apostles taught justification by faith, but never did they say by **faith alone**. Why? There is a reason...quite a sufficient reason. First, they would have contradicted the commission of Mark 16:15-16, which gave them authority to preach. Second, they knew that faith is a continuing state of mind. Faith was to be ever present, hence a life of faith. Hence, Paul said: “Christ liveth in me.” Do you ask how? “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God” (Gal. 2:20). Thus, Paul teaches that faith is ever present, all through life, and is directed all the way by “the faith” of Christ. All students of language know that we may employ transposition of clauses in a sentence without changing its meaning, but rather making the meaning clearer. “To everyone that believeth it (the Gospel) is the power of God unto salvation.” So here is the order: (1) There is a believer; (2) the believer is in possession of the “power” that is “unto” salvation; (3) when that “power” is used, the believer becomes saved. Power is necessary to accomplish anything, physical or spiritual. The power must be used before there can be a result.

The power **unto salvation** is the Gospel. That power and the use of it stands between the believer and salvation. Is the believer saved before and without the use of the power which is “unto”—in order to—his salvation? Thus, it is that this passage, and every other passage quoted as a **faith alone** text, condemns the doctrine of salvation at the moment one believes.

What one thinks of Christ is determined by what he thinks of the Gospel of Christ.

# Evangelistic Authority

Bill Jackson

We'd not heard that expression, in the way many are using it, until these last several years. We have seen the expression catch on, and cannot help but notice that it has caught on at the time when many are challenging the Bible truth concerning elders' authority! Could there be a connection? We think so.

Elders have authority resident in their work, their office. They are charged with the watch-care of souls (Heb. 13:17), with feeding the flock, guarding, protecting, etc. When it comes to the preacher, or evangelist, we do not read of his office, position in a congregation, etc. We do read of "authority" in connection with his work, but notice that the emphasis is on "what he speaks." "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with **all authority**" (Tit. 2:15). The authority is, for the preacher, **in the message!**

Every preacher worthy of the designation "preacher of the Gospel" recognizes, appreciates and values this, and wants it **no other way**. Every faithful preacher also recognizes, appreciates and teaches the **authority of elders!**

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***"The Thing That Hath Been...."***

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