

The Gospel Preceptor

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

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Strict And Loose Constructionists

Jerry C. Brewer

When the 13 American colonies won their independence from England, they were united under what was styled the "Articles of Confederation." But after a while, the founding fathers saw the need for a stronger central government, which led to the drafting of the U. S. Constitution in 1787.

In the debate over the new constitution, there were two opposing philosophies regarding the government's authority to act. Thomas Jefferson was a proponent of "Strict Constructionism," and Alexander Hamilton championed the cause of "Loose Constructionism." Jefferson believed that the federal government could act *only as the constitution authorized* it to do so. Hamilton took an opposing view, saying the federal government could do anything not *specifically forbidden by the constitution*.

More than 200 years later, that debate between loose and strict constructionists still rages in our country. That is also the way people view God's Word. Many believe anything is permitted in religion that is not forbidden in the Bible. They are loose constructionists. On the other hand, there are those who believe one's religious practice must be authorized by what the Bible says and whatever is not commanded must not be done. These folks are strict constructionists.

How, then, should the Bible be regarded? When it comes to what we preach and practice in religion, must we be strict or loose constructionists? Must we do only what is authorized in the Bible, or are we permitted to do anything the Bible doesn't specifically forbid?

It will probably come as no shock that most people are loose constructionists when it comes to religion. When a Bible passage is cited to show that God has authorized certain practices, the standard reply is, "Well, the Bible doesn't say we can't." But what all men need to realize is that the Author of the Bible is God. It was written by men inspired of God who were given the very words they wrote according to the apostle Paul in First Corinthians 2:9-13. The question, then, is, "Shall we live by what God *has* said, or shall we live by what He *hasn't* said?"

The Bible is God's revealed will to man. No one on earth can know what God wants us to preach and practice apart from the Bible, and He has always been very specific regarding His will for us. We are warned not to take away from, or add to, God's word. That warning was given in Deuteronomy 4:2: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it." It was repeated in Proverbs 30:5-6: "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar," and at the very end of the Bible it is again repeated in Revelation 22:18-19:

If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that 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 out of the book of life and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

So, according to God's revealed word, it is a serious and eternally fatal matter to be

loose with His word.

In order to serve God correctly, it is necessary that we know and understand what He wants us to do and the only way we can know that is to study the Bible. Jesus told Satan that "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). In that statement, Jesus placed a premium on God's word. Notice what He said? Man shall live by what? "By *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." That means we absolutely *cannot live* by what God *didn't say*. If we are to please God and go to heaven at last, our lives must be ordered by what God has said in His word — not by what He *didn't* say.

Paul wrote, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4). Those things "written aforetime" were the things of the Old Testament. Although we do not live under the Old Testament law today, there are great principles in it from which we can profit. God's law may have changed, but the way he deals with men has never changed, so it will be profitable to study how God expected men to treat His word in ages past.

One of the great examples, and one with which most people are familiar, is Noah. When God determined to destroy the world with a flood, He commanded Noah to build an ark and gave him the specifications for it (Gen. 6:14-16). Notice especially the very first statement of God to Noah: "Make thee an ark of gopher wood." That was God's word to Noah—God's command.

Now, let us ask this: "Was Noah a loose constructionist with God's word?" Did Noah think to himself, "I know the kind of wood God said to use, but, you know, He *didn't say not* to use pine?" If Noah had reasoned that way, he would have been right. God didn't say not to use pine, and by that reasoning Noah would have been a loose constructionist.

But Noah understood the principle given by Jesus in Matthew 4:4. Man is to live by what God says—not by what He *didn't* say. You see, Noah was a strict constructionist. That's why Moses could write, "Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 6:22). If Noah had been a loose constructionist, that verse would read this way: "Thus did Noah according to some, but not all that God commanded him because God didn't say not to use pine." But Noah was a man of great faith who was willing to take God at His word and do what God said. He heard God's word, believed it, and did as it instructed. That same principle applies to all of us today. If we are to please God, we must hear His word as revealed in the Bible, believe it and do as it instructs. Because Noah was a strict constructionist, he not only pleased God but saved his family from destruction in the flood.

But there's also an example in the Old Testament of a couple of people who were *loose constructionists* when it came to God's word and their *loose* construction of His word cost them their lives. They were Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, Israel's first high priest.

As Aaron's sons of the tribe of Levi, they were also priests and it was their task to burn incense in the tabernacle. In Leviticus 10:1-2, we find that these two men "took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord."

Notice the wording in the last part of verse one: they offered "*strange* fire before the Lord which he *commanded them not*." Did you get that? They offered something God "commanded them not." Nadab and Abihu thought they could do what God *didn't* command and still please him.

Again, these two may have reasoned that God *didn't* say not to take fire for their censers from just any source, and they would have been right. But God had commanded them to use fire from the altar of incense and they got theirs from another source—one which He *commanded them not*. They may have also reasoned that, "any fire will burn incense," and they would have been right. But by being loose constructionists with God's word, they lost their lives. God means what He says, and says what He means, and when it comes to the Bible, He expects us to be *Strict Constructionists*.

Must One Be A Member Of The Church Of Christ To Be Saved?

J. Roy Vaughan

I want to raise a question that is often asked by sincere hearts and answer it according to the scriptures. The question is, "What shall I tell a man when he says that he likes the church of Christ, but he cannot accept the idea that unless a man is a member of the church of Christ he cannot be saved?" This is a delicate question, but it should not be a difficult one to answer.

First of all, let it be understood that the members of the church of Christ do not consider themselves morally better than many people who are not members of the church of Christ. They do not condemn all other people and consign them to eternal destruction. We do not want to leave the impression that members of the church of Christ hate all other religious people, but we do want them to understand us and above all to understand the truth

When we say that a man must be a member of the church of Christ to be saved, we mean one thing and members of denominations mean something else. When my brethren use the words "church of Christ" they do not have in mind a denomination. They readily admit that a man does not have to be a member of any denomination to be saved. The church that Jesus built is not a denomination, nor is a denomination any part of the Lord's church. The church that Christ built is the kingdom of God, the family of God, the body of Christ, the temple of God.

God's will for mankind must be revealed, and we have that revelation in His inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3). Anything that attempts to add to, take from, or substitute for God's Word is simply a perversion of truth (Gal. 1:6-9) and a rebellion against God.

The Kingdom of God

The kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, is the church of Christ. That which puts a man into one, at the same moment puts him into the other (Matt. 18:3). Jesus said, "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). He was talking about the kingdom of heaven being like the sower who goes forth to sow seed. The only possible way to plant the kingdom of God on earth is by sowing the word of God in the hearts of men.

But when we sow the seed of the kingdom, which is the word of God, we reap the church. This is the only way to plant the church on earth, by sowing the seed of the kingdom. Therefore we must conclude that the church and the kingdom are one and the same thing.

No one will say that a man can be saved outside of the kingdom of heaven. Christ is king, and one must become submissive to his authority, become a citizen of his kingdom, if he expects to go to heaven. This is what my brethren mean when they say a man must be a member of the church of Christ to be saved. He must be a citizen of the kingdom of God to be saved. Christians have been translated out of the devil's kingdom into the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:12-13).

A Soldier of The Cross

If one is a citizen of the kingdom of God, he is also a soldier of the cross, Paul says, "No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier" (2 Tim. 2:4). Paul also wrote about the armor of God, saying, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11). He tells us what the armor is and exhorts us to fight the good fight of faith. He also speaks of Christ as "the Captain" of our salvation (Heb. 2:10 AV).

That is what my brethren mean when they say that a man must be a member of the church of Christ to be saved. He must be a soldier in the Lord's army. He must be on the Lord's side fighting against Satan and sin. On the one side are the forces of righteousness and on the other side the forces of wickedness. Every man is on one side or the other. There is no neutral ground. A man cannot serve in the devil's army all of his

life and go to heaven when he dies. He must enlist in the army of the Lord, which is the church that Jesus built.

The Body of Christ

The church of Christ is also called the body of Christ. "And he is the head of the body, the church" (Col. 1:18). "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many are one body; so also is Christ... But now they are many members, but one body" (1 Cor. 12:1-20). Paul used this figure to show the unity and organization of the church.

He teaches that when one is not a member of the body of Christ, the church, he is not in Christ. There is no salvation out of Christ In him "we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins" (Col. 1:14). Since the church is the body of Christ and one cannot be saved apart from Christ, one cannot be saved out of the church, which is the body of Christ. This is what my brethren mean when they say a man must be a member of the church of Christ to be saved.

The Family of God

Paul wrote to Timothy, "These things write I unto thee,...that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God" (1 Tim. 3:14-15). Here we learn that God's house is the church. We read that Noah built the ark to the saving of his house (Heb. 11:7). Noah's house was his family. God's house is God's family, and Paul says this is the church.

Jesus told Nicodemus one must be born again to enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5). When one is born again through obedience to the gospel, he becomes a child of God, a member of God's family, which Paul says is the church. This is what my brethren mean when they say one must be a member of the church to be saved. One must be a child of God—a member of God's family.

What Denomination?

Someone may ask, "What denomination does one join when he becomes a citizen of the kingdom, a member of the body of Christ, a soldier of the Lord, a child of God?" The answer is—none. The New Testament never speaks of a denomination. In the early days of the church, people obeyed the gospel of Christ and became Christians. They did not join denominations. I know that they did not join any denomination on earth today, because none of them were in existence at that time. They were simply members of the church that Christ built, which is the kingdom of God, the body of Christ, God's family, God's army. If people became simply Christians in those days, never joined a denomination, people today can be simply Christians—members of the church of Christ—and never join a denomination

One thing makes a man a Christian and something else puts him into a denomination. For example, in the big union meetings like Billy Graham held, people who came down the aisle were told they were saved, then and there, because of their faith only. Then they were advised to join a denomination of their choice. But when they joined a denomination they had to comply with the creed of the denomination and do what the creed required one to do to become a member of that denomination. Yet they were told they became Christians in the big meeting. So, according to their teaching and practice, one thing makes a man a Christian and something else puts him into a denomination.

Only one thing will make a man a Christian. He must obey the gospel of Christ (Acts 6:6; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2 Thess 1:8). If a man joins a denomination after obeying the gospel, he does more than God authorizes him to do, and in so doing he accepts the doctrines of men as taught by the denomination. If he obeys the gospel he becomes a Christian, and if he later joins a denomination he is in error. He should denounce the doctrines of men and declare himself simply a Christian.

This is all that God requires of any man. This is what my brethren mean when they say a man must be a member of the church of Christ to be saved.

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Saved Without Baptism? Not According To Jesus

Jerry C. Brewer

A local denominational preacher recently wrote, “While some believe water baptism is essential to salvation, the Bible shows how saints have been saved without having received water baptism (Acts 10:47).”

The problem with that statement is that Acts 10:47 does *not* indicate that Cornelius was saved before he was baptized. There is not a single case of conversion in the book of Acts that does not include baptism in order to salvation.

1. Those who were saved on Pentecost (Acts 2:38-42).
2. The Samaritans at Philip’s preaching (Acts 8:5-12).
3. The Ethiopian on the Gaza Road (Acts 8:35-39).
4. Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:3-19; cf. 22:6-15).
5. The conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10:47-48).
6. The conversion of Lydia (Acts 16:14-15).
7. The Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:25-33).
8. The Corinthians (Acts 18:8).
9. The Ephesians (Acts 19:1-5)

Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). There is no plainer statement in the Bible on the purpose of baptism than that.

The writer continued, “In addition, being baptized into Jesus’ death doesn’t take place in a baptistery. That took place during Jesus’ death on the cross, by the foreknowledge of God.” It would be interesting to hear him explain *how* an individual *was* baptized when Jesus died on the cross since, the New Testament describes baptism as a burial in water.

Whether in a baptistery, creek, pond, lake, bathtub, or swimming pool, baptism *does* put one into Jesus’ death—unless one wants to contradict the inspired Paul. He wrote, “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” (Rom. 6:3-4). Water baptism puts one *into Christ and into His death*, and all the denominational sophistry in the world cannot gainsay that.

To say water baptism has nothing to do with salvation, is to preach a *bloodless* salvation. It is the blood of Christ which cleanses from sin and that cleansing is only *in Christ*. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin...” (Eph. 1:7). All spiritual blessings are “in Christ” (Eph. 1:3), and Paul enumerates those in Ephesians 1:4-11. Included are being “chosen” of God (Eph. 1:4), becoming His adopted children (Eph. 1:5), being acceptable to Him (Eph. 1:6), redemption through His blood (Eph. 1:7), and an eternal inheritance (Eph. 1:11).

All of these blessings are “*in Christ*.” One who is not in Him has none of them, and baptism is the *only* way to get *into Christ*. “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27). Saved without baptism? Not according to Jesus.

Guessing What Jesus Would Say

Cled E. Wallace

Dr. Charles M. Sheldon, a pastor of a denominational church in Topeka, Kan., won national fame many decades ago by writing a book entitled, *In His Steps*. He later wrote a series of articles in “Liberty,” a magazine of nationwide circulation. These articles expressed Dr. Sheldon’s opinion of what Jesus would say and do should He come to Chicago, New York, etc. In one of his articles, he wrote of what Jesus would have said to President Franklin Roosevelt and a correspondent pleaded with him to tell what Jesus would say to Adolf Hitler.

The point that sticks out to me in all this is that so many preachers and others are so stirred up over what Jesus *would* say or *might* say under certain conditions, when they seem utterly uninterested in what He *has* actually *said* about certain vital matters. In these, they coldly ignore Him and follow the traditions of men or impudently exalt their own opinions.

Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). He did and it is a complete and perfect divine institution fully described in the New Testament. Its origin, nature, mission, terms of membership, organization, and worship are fully set forth. A rich nomenclature fully names and describes it.

In the face of all this, pious looking doctors, with tears in their eyes, pay eloquent lip tribute to Jesus as Lord, speculate endlessly over what Jesus *would* say, and *ignore* what He *has* said. They have built up and maintain a vast system of denominationalism whose universal success would nullify the prayer of Jesus for the unity of believers and mock the teaching of the apostles. This false system is mistaken for Christianity itself, and by reason of it the way of truth has been evil spoken of.

Denominationalism is not identical with the New Testament church in origin, organization, membership, doctrine, name, or worship. It is a religious crime, a spoliation of things divine. There need be no guessing about what Jesus *would* say about Dr. Sheldon's denominational business and that of his kind and other kinds, for *He has already said it*. "But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit" (Matt. 15:13-14 ASV). If this does not teach that human churches and man-made ordinances in religion are about as welcome to God as noisome weeds are to a thrifty farmer, then it does not teach anything.

The weeds must be rooted up that the wholesome plants may thrive. They are enemies to a good crop. No compromise should be made with them. The field of religion is overgrown with denominational thistles, so that over wide areas should a pilgrim ask for a New Testament church by name, no one could be found who would even know what he was talking about. And men in high places talk sweetly about what Jesus *would* say when they are guilty of committing criminal assault on what He *did* say.

And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream brake against that house, and could not shake it: because it had been well builded. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great (Luke 6:46-49 ASV).

If I were inclined to speculate about what Jesus *would* say were He here under present conditions, I would at least try to make it consistent with what He *did* do and say while He was here before. It is assumed that his supreme interest would become economic and political. Why, I cannot see. He possibly would not have paid any more attention to Roosevelt and Hitler than He did to Caesar. To imagine Him in the midst of a political fight does violence to the whole history of Him.

Pilate examined Him closely for evidence of treachery against Rome, honeycombed with corruption. All Pilate could get out of Him was, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). The one thing that sent Him into blazing eruption was the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who led the people after their traditions into rebellion against God.

He did not pay much attention to Caesar, but He called these Pharisees, "sons of hell," "a brood of vipers," "whited sepulchres," "fools and blind" (Matt. 23). If He were on earth now, it is more reasonable to think He would sting these "Doctors" who have played such havoc with His church than He would have told Mr. Roosevelt how to run his New Deal. If Jesus were to come and give foolproof directions to the world how to keep its stomach full, and people paid no more attention to Him than the divinity doctors do His prescription on how to be saved, the majority would starve to death any-

way.

I found the question raised in my reading somewhere about what would happen were the apostle Paul to appear in a convention of delegates of all religions and inquire for the church he was a member of while he was on earth. Could any one delegate say, "I represent it?" Could all say, "We are all members of it?" Could he recognize it in one or all denominations? Here is what he said about it while he *was* here: "There is one body, and one spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all" (Eph. 4:4-6 ASV).

I am now going to indulge a little appetite I have for speculation. Should Dr. Sheldon, had he had the information and disposition to do so, have written a series of articles setting forth the fact that the church that Paul was a member of is older than all denominations, and that Christianity is older than all the creeds, and that the New Testament gives full information as to both, he could not have had it published in "Liberty" or any other magazine of like character.

As obvious as these truths are, the publication of such a series of articles would create a furor among religious leaders in this country that would be a cross between a tragedy and a comedy. You may have this bit of personal speculation for what it is worth without worrying over its relation to fellowship.

Jesus is Lord. His authority should be fully recognized. God, the Father, proclaimed Jesus as "my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and shouted from heaven, "Hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5). He *has spoken*. This message from heaven is "the faith which was *once for all* delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3 ASV). There is nothing to be added to what He has said. All this bother about what Jesus *would* say smacks a little bit, if not a whole lot, of lack of confidence in the all-sufficiency of what He has said. It suggests that revelation is not complete.

The authority of Jesus is recognized in faithful adherence to what He *has* said rather than to some imaginative program He *might* launch were He here on earth. He is not here and He is not coming "until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from old" (Acts 3:21 ASV). In the meantime, preachers should respect what Jesus has already said and teach the people to follow it. It is on record and fully confirmed (Heb. 2:1-4).

Preaching Christ to the lost and showing them how to be saved is a better and more profitable work for preachers than telling Mr. Roosevelt how to run the New Deal. He probably didn't pay much attention to them anyway. "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Tim. 4:1-2 ASV).

Are We Saved By Faith Alone?

Gary Grizzell

One of the most deceiving, damnable, doctrines in all of "Christendom" is the doctrine of salvation by Faith Only. Jesus warned in his sermon on the mount: "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). Paul exhorted Christians to be not tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine taught by men who in cunning craftiness lie in wait to deceive (cf. Eph. 4:14). Some say, "Oh, but you can prove anything by the Bible, therefore, everyone may have his own interpretation." It is any insult to any author (especially to God) to say that *any* theological or philosophical position may be taught from his book. All men *can* understand the will of God alike on things necessary to salvation. Paul taught by inspiration that we are not to remain unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5:17). A true student of the Bible is required by God to "prove all things" and hold fast to the truth (Thess. 5:21). We are to be set for a verbal defense of the gospel against all perversions of the same (Phil. 1:17). We are to "try the spirits" to see who is truly of God and who is of the Devil (1 John 4:1). We are to contend earnestly for the

faith which was once delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Dear reader, have you ever truly examined the popular doctrine of Faith Only in light of the New Testament of Christ?

Doctrine of Faith Only Violates Two Areas of New Testament Teaching

The Plan of Salvation is the first area adversely affected by the false doctrine of Faith Only. The Bible teaches that men are saved by sincerely obeying five steps:

1. Hear the gospel (Rom. 10:17),
2. Believe in Christ (John 8:24),
3. Repent of sins (Luke 13:3),
4. Confess Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9-10)
5. Be buried in baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Col. 2:12).

However, the proponents of salvation by Faith Only say a person is saved after having obeyed the first four steps and verses on water baptism are rejected as unnecessary to salvation. The disunity among those who believe in Faith Only is seen in that some believe one is saved after step two while others believe one is saved after step number four. Either way, their doctrine of Faith Only is a misnomer since all agree that one must at least "hear" in order to believe (Rom. 10:17). Man is not saved by *anything* alone and certainly not by belief alone. Basically, the doctrine of Faith Only believed by so many today says that one is saved at the point of intellectual assent in the deity of Christ.

A second area of the teaching of Christ which is violated by the doctrine of Faith Only is the teaching concerning the Christian Life. Whereas the Bible teaches the necessity of faithfulness to Christ, the doctrine Faith Only teaches that a Christian may obtain eternal life with a dead faith But the Christian must be willing to be faithful unto death if necessary (cf. Rev. 2:10).

The Doctrine of Faith Only Violates Plain Scriptural Teaching

One of the golden texts on the subject of Faith and Works is the second chapter of the epistle of James. He began by stating that God's blessing of the crown of life was upon those who endured temptation (Jas. 1:12). He pointed out the need to be doers of the Word and not hearers only (1:22-25). The faith-only "Christian" who boasted he was a true child of God was instructed to have an alive faith by practicing true religion (1:25-27). Then in chapter two, he showed the ugly result of the doctrine of faith only. He rebuked the Christians who were guilty of the respect of persons by their mistreating the poor in the assembly. They sought to flatter the rich who came into the worship assembly (2:1-6). The attitude of their dead faith also resulted in saying to the naked and hungry person, "Be ye warmed and filled," but they neglected to help that naked and hungry individual (2:15-16). His response was: "Faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone" (2:17). Friend, did you hear what the Bible says? You know enough right now to know that an obedient faith saves, as opposed to faith-only.

James 2:24 also proves conclusively that the doctrine of faith-only is a straight out of the chambers of Satan. Consider: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." This is the only time the expression "faith only" (in that word order) is found in the New Testament and it is condemned. "Works only" will not save. "Faith only" will not save. However, faith plus works equals an alive faith which God accepts. This is the proper response to the unmerited favor of God (His grace, Eph. 2:8-9). To be "justified" is to be counted righteous in the sight of God. James 2:26 reveals that in God's view there are two kinds of faith:

1. A live Faith, and
2. A Dead Faith.

A Christian with dead faith is compared by divine analogy to a corpse without its spirit. A dead faith, like that James addressed, is the kind of faith that Satan has. He believes Christ is God's only begotten Son and his chief enemy. A dead faith is the kind of faith the Demons have (Jas. 2:19). They even tremble in the presence of Christ because of their strong belief in his true identity (Mark 5:7). This is more than some today do when they consider the presence of Christ coming in judgment. However, as in the case

of Satan, the Demons refused to add works of obedience to their belief. There can be no doubt about it, the doctrine of Faith Only violates the plain scriptural teaching of the second chapter of James.

The Single Message of Hebrews Chapter 11 Should Be Appreciated

The single message of Hebrews chapter 11 is that the faith that saves is the faith that obeys. The great heroes of the faith are listed in this chapter and the nature of their great faith is seen. Each of these individuals received the blessings and promises of God because of his obedient faith. Abel not only believed God but he added works to his faith and offered a sacrifice as God had commanded (Heb. 11:4). Enoch not only believed God's words but he "walked" with God and therefore received the blessing of translation, i.e. he was taken into eternity without suffering natural physical death (Heb. 11:5; Gen. 5:22). Noah "moved with fear" (reverence) and built the ark. He not only believed God would save him (along with his seven member family) if he built the huge ship, but he added works to his faith by building it. Would not Noah have drowned along with the rest of the population if he had refused to do what God gave him 120 years to do (Heb. 11:7; Gen. 6:5-8:22)? Without this kind of faith "it is impossible to please him" because one must "diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6). Abraham believed God's Word to him and he performed what God commanded of him. The Bible says that "By faith Abraham... obeyed" (Heb. 11:8-10). He not only believed God would make of his seed a great nation (and that the Messiah would come into the world through his seed) but he packed up his tents, took his family, drove his herds and traveled to the land flowing with milk and honey as God had commanded (Gen. 12:1-3; Gal. 3:16). Can any rational thinker seriously suggest that Abraham received the promise by Faith Only?! Yet, this is the conclusion implied by the false doctrine of Faith Only. But the truth is that God never saved anyone in any age who possessed a dead faith.

The Doctrine of Faith Only Did Not Originate With Christ

Jesus' conclusion to his great sermon on the mount was concerning who is wise in the sight of God and who is foolish in the sight of God. The wise man is the man who builds his house on the rock and is therefore saved during the time of flooding. The spiritually wise man is the individual who builds his life on the Word of God! This is the opposite of the foolish man who builds his life on the sandy foundation of false philosophy (cf. Matt. 7:24-27; Col. 2:8). You'll note that the person Jesus will commend on the day of judgment is the one who not only believes in the need to build a life on God's Word but the one who actually does it. In this text it was not merely preferable to build one's house on the rock but it was absolutely necessary in order to avoid destruction. Jesus said that to simply call Him "Lord" was not enough. One must do something, i.e. "the will of my Father" (Matt. 7:21). For one's works to be works of obedience (which are acceptable to God) as opposed to works of merit (which are rejected by God), one must do the specified Will of The Father (the doctrine of Christ, 2 John 9-11). This is because we are under the New Testament today as the binding law of God (Gal. 6:2)

Many religious people are pictured before the judgment seat of Christ pleading for eternal life. These people seek to remind the Lord of all the wonderful works they supposedly did in his name. Yet, his response to them is: "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7:22-23). Jesus asks of those who have faith-only: "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Commandment-keeping proves love for Christ and one is a friend of Christ when he does whatever Christ commands (John 14:15; John 15:13-14).

The apostle Paul's words serve as an indictment of the doctrine of faith only Paul summed up the Christian life when he wrote it is "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). Faith is the substance of the Christian life. Works is the response of faith. Love is the motive for a working faith. In view of this above passage, who can rationally and honestly deny that God requires a faith which works as opposed to a faith which is alone? Paul spoke of "obedience to the faith" and the need to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Rom. 1:5; Phil. 2:12-13). Every Christian is to "prove

his own work" before God (Gal. 6:4-5). These statements are descriptive of a true Bible Faith and not that of the humanly devised doctrine of Faith Only.

Objections Answered

Objection Number One: "Baptism is a work and to say that one must be baptized to be saved is to try to earn one's salvation." Yes, baptism is a work but so is belief (John 6:28-29). There is a difference between works of obedience and works of merit. God accepts only the former.

Objection Number Two: "The thief on the cross was saved by faith only." No, he added works to his faith when he defended the Lord (Luke 23:40-41).

Any Doctrine Which Implies A False Doctrine Is False Within Itself

If the doctrine of Faith Only is true then Satan and his Demons are saved (Jas. 2:19). If the doctrine of Faith Only is true then the Chief Rulers who believed on Christ, but who would not confess him lest they be put out of the Synagogue, were saved (John 12:42-43). If the doctrine of Faith Only is true, then the doctrine of Universalism is true, i.e. all will be saved on the Day of Judgment. This is the case since the Bible declares that all will confess Jesus as Lord on the last day (Phil. 2:10-11; Rom. 14:11). If the doctrine of Faith Only is true then no one will be in Hell. If the doctrine of Faith Only is true then the wicked will be admitted into heaven since there will be no other place for them to exist in eternity (Rev. 20:14). So, if the doctrine of Faith Only is true then the righteous will be forced to spend eternity with the wicked. Who is willing to accept these clear implications of the doctrine of Faith Only?

What Will Your Choice Be?

Friend, will you be warned of wolves in sheep's clothing who devour modern man with false doctrine? Will you be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine by men who in cunning craftiness lie in wait to deceive? The doctrine of Faith Only is a sinfully convenient, false, watered-down gospel. Will you respectfully, courageously, and sincerely exercise an obedient faith so as to obtain the salvation in Christ? Then with anticipation we may look for that blessed God and our Savior Jesus Christ to return and carry us to heaven at the last day. May we prayerfully study and rightly divide God's Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15). "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (Jas. 2:20).

Ignoring The Main Point

Cled E. Wallace

The Baptist and Reflector is persistent in its efforts to establish as a fact that salvation is a gift of grace bestowed upon the sinner before and without obedience to the gospel. Since Baptists believe this, I have no quarrel with their persistence in teaching it. Nearly every issue of the *Baptist and Reflector* features it in one way or another. Since I do not believe it and think it a hurtful theory calculated to make void the grace of God, I owe nobody any apology for pitching into its advocates as often as I think the cause of truth demands it. The Book says "he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:9) I believe it. Such obedience is the "obedience of faith" and in no wise contradicts what the scriptures say about salvation by grace. It is said that "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7) This obedience was necessary to their salvation. Peter asks the question, "What shall the end be to them that obey not the gospel of God?" (I Pet. 4:17) Does the *Baptist and Reflector* seriously think that their end will be salvation? Paul says that when the Lord comes he will take vengeance on them "that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. 1:8) This does not look like salvation by faith before and without obedience to God. As "Rev. W. J. McDaniel" says on the front page of the *Baptist and Reflector*, "God is consistent and the Bible is consistent. There is no contradiction to be found in the Word of God." I believe that "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" and that the specified obedience that the Lord requires is consistent with this grace, faith and the gift that is involved. Here is an issue, *the* issue in fact.

Naturally, the fight is over whether or not baptism can have any thing to do with salvation. I believe it to be a divinely stated condition of the remission of sins. The *Baptist and Reflector* with its views of grace, considers such a position absurd and a reflection on the grace of God, if not something worse. One main point that we insist on is uniformly overlooked, or ignored, and it has often been called to the attention of the advocates of salvation by faith before and without baptism. We propose to keep on pressing that point as long as the need requires. I shall arrive at it shortly, but first a word from the *Baptist and Reflector*:

Baptism is a *figure* (symbol, illustration) of saving truth (Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Pet. 3:21). Therefore, it does not have any saving virtue. It is not a *sacrament*. Likewise, in the Lord's Supper 'ye do *show* the Lord's death' (1 Cor. 11:26). It, too, is only a picture. It is not a *sacrament*.

We do not use the term "sacrament" in connection with either baptism or the Lord's supper but accept exactly what the Bible teaches about each and both. Editor Taylor defines a "sacrament" as "an ordinance or observance interpreted as having a saving significance, as being conditional to or contributory to salvation. It is a Roman Catholic idea which has been accepted by many." He sidesteps the issue as far as we are concerned. We do not entertain the Catholic idea. Is the editor afraid to step *up* and meet the real issue? Baptism is a condition of remission of sins when 'properly submitted to, because the Lord has by divine fiat *made it so*. There is no "saving virtue" in water, or in any act that a man may perform, be he saint or sinner. There is no such virtue even in the faith that a man exercises. Believing is something that *a man does*. The virtue is in the blood of Christ and salvation is by the grace of God. God who saves has the right to propose the conditions to be performed by man in order to be the recipient of the proffered salvation. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" said the Lord. "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of your sins."

It is often urged, and that sometimes boisterously, that God can save a sinner without water and that a sinner does not have to take a dip into the tank to find Christ. Baptists have not always refrained from ridicule in discussing this question. Is that meeting the issue? I trow not! We are told that "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." (Heb. 11:30) Did the children of Israel have "virtue" in themselves to *believe* the walls down, or to *march* them down? God tore down those walls when the people "by faith" did what they were told to do. Does the *Baptist and Reflector* think there was any sacramental value in marching, shouting and blowing trumpets? Would those walls have fallen had the people not obeyed God? Was it a matter of "grace through faith?" Did they make void the grace of God when they obeyed God? Why?

Naaman, the leper, had the sentence of death written in his body. No human help could reach him. He sought divine aid and was told to dip himself seven times in the river Jordan and he would be healed. Was there any sacramental "virtue" in the water that flowed in the channel of the river Jordan? Naaman rebelled against the idea and thought it foolish and absurd. He remained a leper until he obeyed God. Did he make void the grace of God when he dipped? Who healed Naaman anyway and why?

It would be real refreshing to have the Editor of the *Baptist and Reflector* march up and make some sort of an attempt to meet the real issue. When he does, I promise to make it interesting for him. The cry of "baptismal regeneration" will not help him any as far as we are concerned. The fact that the baptism of a proper subject brings to him the promise of remission of sins, while the dipping of an improper one leaves him just wet, properly disposes of that false charge. Baptism is for the remission of sins, only to a penitent believer, and that only because God says so. It "is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

We are told that baptism "does not have any saving virtue" because it is a "*figure*," and First Peter 3 :21 is cited. This text states positively that baptism "doth now save you." The play that is made on the term "figure" is a glaring perversion of the teaching of the text. The apostle affirms of Noah and his family that "eight souls were saved through

water.” The fact that their salvation was “through water” does not argue that it was not by grace through faith. The grace of God in the whole proceeding is obvious. It is clearly stated that “By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.” (Heb. 11:7) The apostle makes the salvation of these “eight souls through water” a type of baptism. The *Baptist and Reflector* gets things “hind part back’ards” and gets his “figure” in the wrong place. A straight look at the text spoils the Baptist theory. “Eight souls were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism. . .” God saved Noah and his family by grace through faith, but not without water. It was “through water.” This water is a type. What is the anti-type? “Which also *after a true likeness* doth now save you, even *baptism*.” God saves today by grace through faith, but it is not without baptism but through baptism. Editor Taylor missed the main point in all this. All efforts to prove that baptism does *not* save, do not explain Peter’s statement but *contradict it*, and constitute a very vicious form of interpretation. Peter explains in the same connection that baptism is “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God. . .” It is not a carnal ordinance such as Jewish washings to cleanse from carnal impurities. The man who submits to baptism is, in all good conscience, reaching out toward God for the promised blessings. His is the obedience of faith. Of such Jesus says: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” All talk of “saving virtue” in the water or in the act is beside the point and designed to confuse. If God, who saves, proposes to do it “through water,” it is most unbecoming in men, especially editors and preachers, to set up a howl of protest about it.

It is inferred for some unaccountable reason, that if baptism is a “symbol, illustration” it can “therefore not have any saving virtue.” Romans 6:3-5 is cited and it proves to be an unfortunate citation for one who is almost frantically interested in eliminating baptism as a condition of remission of sins. Why should it be thought incongruous that “a picture” of the burial and resurrection of the Lord should be made a condition of remission of past sins to an alien sinner who had believed in the Lord and repented of those sins? Baptists are meriting a rather wide reputation for begging the question in this connection. “It is only a picture” exclaims Editor Taylor. Let Paul express himself. “Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?” Paul says that water baptism brings us “into his death” that we are “baptized into Christ Jesus.” Can a man be saved *out of Christ* or without coming *into his death*? A lot of loose talk about pictures and symbolism will not serve to obscure the *facts in the case*.

Are Grace and Law Mutually Exclusive?

Dub McClish
Introduction

The prevailing attitude in society concerning morals and behavior in our time is tolerance (except, of course, toward those who dare to expose the fallacy of their misplaced tolerance). This attitude is also widespread in religion, even among those who profess belief in the Christ and His Word. *Authority, law, obedience, commandments*, and like terms relating to religion represent to millions of folk negative and repugnant concepts, long since outmoded. There is a technical name for this attitude: *antinomianism* (from two Greek words that, when combined, mean “against law”). Because of this belief system, modern theologians (as well as popular writers on religious themes, such as Max Lucado) emphasize God’s grace almost to the exclusion of His wrath and judgment against sin and error.

Implications of the *No Law* Mantra in the Church

These attitudes have seriously infiltrated the church of the Lord by means of some vigorous liberal elements. Various congregations, schools, journals, and individuals seem dedicated to advancing these erroneous “no-law” notions as rapidly as possible. These views of God and His Word imply certain corollary concepts, which various erstwhile brethren have not been timid to iterate. The *all grace-no law* premise implies all of the following conclusions, as well as many others:

1. The New Testament is not to be viewed as a body of spiritual law, but merely a “love letter” from Heaven
2. God has no pattern for His church, the plan of salvation, or anything else
 1. Faithful children of God are scattered through all of the denominations
 2. We can have fellowship and be united with those who are in damnable doctrinal error
 3. We must adopt a new hermeneutic for understanding the Bible in this modern era
 4. The role of women in the church, our worship practices, and such like should reflect current cultural influence, just as the New Testament record of such things reflects the cultural influence of the first century
 5. We must make drastic changes in the church if we hope to appeal to people in the twenty-first century
 6. God does not really mean what He has said in the New Testament about the necessity of obeying His Word and the reward of wrathful judgment if we refuse to do so
 7. One may believe or practice almost whatever he desires, and God will be pleased as long as one is sincere and has a “loving attitude”
 8. Restoration of the New Testament church is unnecessary and undesirable—if not impossible

Those who would still condescend to try to furnish Scriptural justification for such anti-Biblical emphases seem especially drawn to Romans 6:14–15 (note how nimbly they run to Scripture when they perceive its agreement with their agenda, while otherwise having little use for it): “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid.” They allege that Paul is here teaching that grace and law are mutually exclusive and that, since we are under grace, we are not under law—any law—in the Christian Age. They aver that there are no restrictions upon us. Admittedly, at first glance—and removed from context (both immediate and remote)—this may appear to be what Paul was saying, but let us examine the passage more closely.

That Which Paul Cannot Be Teaching

We may begin by noticing that whatever Paul is teaching here about law and grace, he **cannot** be saying that we are not obligated to law or a system of law of any sort in the Christian Age. (*Law* in this passage should not be limited to the Law of Moses, but it surely includes it.) Paul had just warned them not to yield to sin (vv. 12–13), but this would be nonsense if they were under no law, simply because sin cannot occur in the absence of law (3:19; 4:15; 5:13; 1 John 3:4).

Further, the antinomian view would constitute a most glaring Pauline self-contradiction, even in the immediate context. In Romans 6:16–18 Paul commended the Roman saints because they had obeyed a “form [pattern, ASV fn] of teaching,” whereby they were made free from sin and became bondservants of righteousness. These statements imply a norm, a standard, commandments, a **law** system to which they were accountable. Not only would Paul contradict himself were he denying our accountability to law, but he would also contradict the Lord Himself, as well as every other New Testament writer in passages too numerous to cite.

Consider how consistently and frequently Paul states that we are under law: In Romans 3:27 he argued that we are justified by “a law of faith.” In Romans 8:2 He wrote of “the law of the Spirit of life” and said it was the means by which we have been made free from “the law of sin and death.” This is equivalent to his declaration in 1:16: “The gospel...is the power of God unto salvation.” It is also parallel to Jesus’ announcement in John 8:32: “The truth shall make you free.” Thus, we have the law, the Gospel, and the Truth used interchangeably. Since, therefore, one is subject to the Gospel or the Truth under Christ, he is subject to law, because *law* is but another term for *Gospel* and *Truth*.

But someone may say: “These things were true of them **before** they came under grace and were necessary to bring them under that grace. After coming under grace they were no longer under law.” This will not work, either. This same Paul wrote of himself (one who was under God’s saving grace) that he—as a Christian—was “under law to Christ” (2 Cor. 9:21). Further, he urged the Galatian saints to continue to “fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). James wrote of “the perfect law, the law of liberty” in which Christians must continue (1:25) and of “a law of liberty” by which we will be judged (2:12). We learn from these passages that Christ has a law and that Christians are obligated to keep it, as are all men. Again, his meaning in Romans 6:14–15 cannot be that Christians are not under law in any and every sense.

That Which Paul Is Teaching

What, then, is the meaning of Romans 6:14–15? In Romans 1 and 2 Paul demonstrated that Gentile and Jew alike had miserably failed to obey perfectly their respective systems of Divinely imposed law. He concluded in chapter 3 that both Jew and Gentile were under the condemnation of God because they had sinned (violated His law)(vv. 9, 23) and could not be justified by any system of mere law (v. 20). In that same chapter he began elaborating on the great principle of justification by faith, as opposed to justification by law (vv. 21–30), which he had set forth as the theme of his letter in chapter 1 (vv. 5, 16–17). He continued to build upon this great theme through chapters 4 and 5.

Since Paul had so strongly taught that law was insufficient for justification because none could perfectly keep it, he anticipated that some might erroneously conclude that law was worthless, which misunderstanding he answered in 3:31: “Do we then make the law of none effect through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish the law.” He could just as well have asked and answered this question about *grace* as about *faith*, for the point is equally valid in both cases. When he states in 6:14 that we are not under law, he immediately cautions us not to infer erroneously that we can therefore sin. He says “God forbid” (the strongest negation possible in the Greek language) to dispel any such false conclusion. The very fact that he warns us not to sin implies that he was not teaching that we are under no law.

In what sense then are we “not under law”? In the sense introduced in chapter 3—we are not under law in order to be justified from sin. In other words, we cannot be justified from sin by relying on a system of law; we must (and do) have a system of grace. However, this gives no one an excuse for, nor an encouragement to, discount the law and excuse the practice of sin. Since Paul says we (as Christians) can sin, it must follow that we are under law in some sense, for, as already seen, where there is no law there is no sin.

Paul’s seeming exclusion of law with God’s provision of grace (Tit. 2:11) is an expression that employs a literary device in which one element is de-emphasized in order to emphasize another. Such is not unique to Paul or to Romans 6:14. John employed the same device in 1 John 3:18: “My Little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth.” Surely, even the ripest liberal would not argue that John here excludes the use of the tongue in expressing love. Nor is he teaching that the only legitimate means of expressing love for one another is by our deeds. Even a novice in the Word of God can perceive that John is saying that we must not employ words and tongue alone, but we also use appropriate deeds to express our love one for another. Thus in Romans 6:14, Paul is de-emphasizing law (rather than totally excluding it) in order to emphasize the grace whereby we are justified.

Macknight, though not a member of the Lord’s church, gives the following paraphrase of Romans 6:14, which has merit:

Besides sin shall not lord it over you, for this reason, that ye are not under a dispensation of law, which gives no assistance against sin; but under grace, which affords all the aids necessary for subduing sin.¹

Paul is by no means teaching that this system of grace is free of law or commandment. I have found no better comment on Paul’s “law-grace” statement than that of the late R.L. Whiteside:

This verse [Rom. 6:14] does not mean that we are free from all law. Grace

predominates. Where law condemns, grace makes pardon possible. If we were under no law, we would be guilty of no sin, and there would be no need of grace to forgive our sin. This verse is a figure of speech in which the less is denied so as to emphasize the greater. We are not merely under law, but more especially under grace.²

Conclusion

Paul's point in this passage then is that, in the Christian Age, men are no longer solely under a system of law (which characterized the situation of all men, Jew and Gentile alike, before the cross). While there were many expressions of God's grace in the lives of the patriarchs and toward Israel under their respective systems of law, God still dealt with those ancients primarily through law. Law alone was—and is—insufficient to justify men from sin; it only condemns the sinners, which term describes us all (Rom. 3:23) before our redemption. The Son of God brought and empowered a system of grace and law in happy and perfect combination, wherein justification was fully supplied to “make up the difference” between God's perfect law and man's failure to keep it flawlessly. This fact is the very thing that makes the Gospel “good news.”

The Law of Christ includes a form/pattern of doctrine, which the Romans had obeyed in being justified from their sins and added to the church (Rom. 6:16–18). This pattern involved hearing and believing the Gospel (10:11–17), confessing one's belief in Jesus (vv. 9–10), dying to sin in repentance, and being baptized into Christ and into His death in order to be cleansed by His blood (6:3–4). The law of Christ also teaches us that, upon arising from baptism, we must live a new life that rejects the practice of sin (vv. 4, 12–13). He has made all of these wonderful commands of His law the keys to obtaining and maintaining His grace. Herein is illustrated the wondrous balance between Divine law and grace.

Endnotes

1. James Macknight, *Apostolical Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1949 reprint), p. 87.
2. Robertson L. Whiteside, *A New Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Saints at Rome* (Clifton, TX: Mrs. C.R. Nichol, 1948), p. 137.

Walking “By Faith”

Early Arceneaux

Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight); we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:6-8).

From the connection in which we find here the phrase, “by faith,” we learn that faith serves the same purpose in the spiritual world that sight does in the natural world. Faith is our spiritual eyesight. Things which are eternal, we see not (2 Cor. 4:18). Our hope waits for things not seen (Rom. 8:24-25). Hope is based on faith (Heb. 11:1). Our faith, looking through the telescope of divine promise, reveals to us our eternal home.

But eyes cannot see without light. Sight is the product of light. Without spiritual light, the eyes of our understanding would never be enlightened (Eph. 1:18). We would never believe. God's word is light and belief, or faith, is the product of divine testimony. Belief comes of hearing and hearing by the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17).

It necessarily follows that to walk by faith is to walk as the word of God directs, because faith could not exist without testimony. To do anything by faith is to do it because God requires it as He directs. An act of faith is imply an act of obedience. We cannot do what is not authorized by faith.

“By faith, Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house” (Heb. 11:7). He believed a flood would come. The warning caused his belief. But he prepared the ark by faith.

If the position I take is correct, we will find that he had instructions to build the ark. Turn to Genesis 6:13-22 and you will find the word producing faith. “And God said unto Noah (v. 13) make an ark of gopher wood,” etc. (vv. 14-16).

Detailed instructions were given for building the ark—dimensions, etc. Paul says he built by faith. But Moses says, “Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he” (Gen. 6:22). Here we have the definition of the phrase “by faith” as used by Paul. “By faith is the same thing as “according to all that God commanded him, so did he.” If God had not authorized the building of the ark, Noah could not have built it by faith, and his building it would not have pleased God or saved Noah.

“Without faith it is impossible to please him” (Heb. 11:6). Therefore, unauthorized service does not please God.

Baptist Doctrine Reverses Bible Teaching

Jerry C. Brewer

...She was saved at Falls Creek in about 1942 and rededicated her life and was baptized in 1993 at Calvary Chapel Inland, Jurupa Valley, California. Her faith was very important to her in her latter years. She passed as a proud member of Martha Road Baptist Church.

The above quote is from a recent obituary of a lady who passed away in our area. Baptist doctrine reverses itself by 180 degrees from the teaching of Jesus Christ. According to Baptist doctrine, this woman's salvation was separated from her baptism by 51 years. Their teaching of “salvation by faith only”—without and before baptism—is the devil's doctrine that has sent—and will continue to send—millions to eternal punishment.

Baptist theologians are masters at doublespeak. Our son grew up, graduated from high school, and played sports with a fine young man who became a Baptist preacher and a graduate of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas. In a discussion of the subject of baptism, that young man once told our son that, “Baptism is necessary, but not essential.” He had well learned Baptist doublespeak.

Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Baptist doctrine reverses the Lord's teaching, saying, “He that believeth is saved and should be baptized.”

Peter wrote, “The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:21). Baptist doctrine denies these words of the inspired apostle, saying, “Baptism doth *not* also save us.” One Baptist theologian wrote,

Baptists believe that no one is a scriptural subject for baptism till he is already saved. All well-informed people know that we teach this: then upon what ground can they say we believe baptism is essential to salvation? (J. G. Bow, *What Baptists Believe and Why They Believe It*, nd, Issued by The Sunday School Board, of The Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville, Tenn.)

One is led to wonder why *any* Baptist bothers with baptism—the very thing from which the Baptist Church derives its name. Peter told his hearers on Pentecost to, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). In plain, unmistakable, language that verse says baptism is *for* the remission of sins, but Baptist doctrine says they were “already saved” and had no sins to remit.

Then, there is the Baptist quibble that wrests the word *for* in Acts 2:38. Baptists say Peter told his hearers to, “Repent and be baptized...*for* (*because of*) the remission of sins. Baptists say the word *for* means “because of.” It does in *some* Bible passages, but not in Acts 2:38.

Paul prayed that he might go to Rome (Rom. 1:10), then added, “For I long to see you,

that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift..." (1:11). The word *for* in Rom. 1:11 is translated from *gar*, which means "because of." *Gar* always looks backward, never forward. In Acts 2:38 the word *for* is translated from a different Greek word, *eis*, which looks forward, never backward. Thayer says *eis* means, "into, unto, to, towards, for, among" (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament*, 2002, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., Peabody Mass., 183).

When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He used the identical wording that Peter used—in both Greek and English—in Acts 2:38. Of the cup, He said, "...this is my blood which is shed for many *for (eis) the remission of sins*. According to Baptist doctrine, Jesus shed His blood because sins had *already been remitted*. If their doctrine is right (which it is not) then Jesus shed His blood for no reason.

J. G. Bow obviously spoke for all Baptists when he said "Baptists believe no one is a fit subject for baptism till he is already saved." That may be good Baptist doctrine, but it is *not* what inspired men taught in the New Testament. Who will you believe? Jesus in Mark 16:16, or Baptist theologians who twist, wrest, pervert, and reverse plain Bible teaching? I believe the Lord.

Reviewing Some Fundamental Principles

Dub McClish

Introduction

The church as God planned it and as Christ built it is revealed in only one place: the New Testament. It is a Divine institution. It was no mere man—not even an angel or an archangel—who said, "I will build my church" (Mat. 16:18), and then erected it on a bloody foundation. The Son of God built the church of Christ. In this fact rests the reason why men dare not tamper with it.

The New Testament is filled with exhortations both to adhere to it faithfully and warnings against departing from the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Behind every exhortation and warning is the implication that men can and do easily drift away from the Way. Even in the apostolic era one can see seeds of sectarianism and not a few cases of outright heresy. Uninspired church history is rife with records of apostasy upon apostasy.

If the church is to be faithful to its Founder in any age or clime, she (that is to say, those who constitute that sacred spiritual body of Christ) must hold certain principles inviolable. As surely as any of these principles are forgotten or abandoned, just that surely will the church drift again into apostasy.

Commitment to the Absolute Authority of Christ

He claimed all authority in Heaven and on earth (Mat. 28:18). His claim came after three and one-half years of powerful public life during which He demonstrated His irresistible sovereignty over every physical, psychic, and spiritual force. His mighty signs and wonders not only demonstrated God's approval of Him (Acts 2:22), but proved that He was The One He claimed to be—the authoritative Son of God (John 20:30–31). The authority of Jesus is continually emphasized in the New Testament by the many times He is called the "Lord." He is the "blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15). God placed the risen Christ at his right hand, far above all rule, authority, power, and dominion, subjected all things to Him, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:20–22).

This commitment to the authority of Christ includes the recognition that the church belongs to Him and that He alone has the right to determine every feature of it. His authority cannot be shared with any man, legislative body (religious or political), school, or any others who would seize it or aspire to it. Until all men who claim to follow Christ honor Him alone as their head, religious confusion must reign.

Commitment to the New Testament as the Only and Final Authority in Religion

The way in which Christ expresses and exercises His authority is through His "last will and testament"—the New Testament, made effective upon His sacrificial death (Heb.

9:16–17). This Gospel, the implanted Word, is so powerful it can save the soul (Rom. 1:16; Jam. 1:21). It is that rule by which we all are to live (Phi. 3:16) because it is the standard by which we all shall finally be judged (John 12:48). It is the living, active, sharp, and piercing message from God (Heb. 4:12), the “sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17).

Therefore, the New Testament contains warnings—plain, strong, and numerous—that men dare not change the message. The Gospel must be received as the Word of God, rather than as the word of men (1 The. 2:13). The “gospels” of men, or even of angels, must be received as damnable words, rather than as the Word of Christ (Gal. 1:6–9). In order to reject the authority of Christ we do not have to see Him personally and blaspheme Him: “He that rejecteth **me**, and **receiveth not my sayings**, hath one that judgeth him” (John 12:48a, emph. DM). When one rejects anything the New Testament teaches, he rejects the authority of Christ, and therefore, Christ Himself. For all of these reasons and more we dare not add anything to the Word, nor diminish ought therefrom (Rev. 22:18–19).

Men have never long been content to abide by New Testament authority. Church history from the second to the present century is strewn with the religious wreckage men have created in their selfish ambitions. Even the exciting plea for restoration in young America had not long been championed until some within its ranks could no longer abide New Testament authority. First came the missionary society, then the mechanical instruments of music—which opened the Pandora’s box that was never to be shut by the openers and their posterity.

If the authority of Christ cannot be shared by anyone, then neither can the instrument of His authority—the New Testament.

Commitment to the New Testament Plan of Salvation

There is one—and only one—plan of salvation, period. All others are sorry counterfeits, miserable imitations, and cruel hoaxes against which rest the anathema of Heaven (Gal. 1:8–9). Jesus’ plan is the only plan that ever was or ever will be empowered through the sufficient sin offering of His sinless blood on Calvary. It is that form (pattern) of teaching the inspired apostles and their first-century converts spread throughout their world (Rom. 6:17–18).

The plan, first proclaimed on Pentecost, involved the sinner’s hearing the Gospel (Acts 2:22–36), believing in and confessing the Christ (v. 37), repenting of sins (v. 38), and being baptized unto the remission of his sins (i.e., salvation) (v. 38). The inspired men preached this plan and none other from the beginning; its continued proclamation and results may be traced through the remainder of the New Testament. What began that day has continued “day by day” to the present (v. 47).

Commitment to the Identity of the New Testament Church

The Lord built the church according to His own wise plan. He has a pattern for it, which He revealed in the New Testament, just as surely as Jehovah had a pattern for the Old Testament tabernacle (Heb. 8:5–6). Would it not be passing strange were He less concerned about following His pattern for the superior antitype (the church) than He was for the inferior type (the tabernacle)? Indeed, reason and Scripture alike argue that He is even more concerned, if possible.

The New Testament specifies every characteristic of the church (i.e., its organization, its worship, its designations, its work, and the way men enter it). The church cannot be identified, recognized, or discovered apart from these traits. If the identity of the church is unimportant then why is anything about it important? How can one know when he enters it, if he is in it, near it, or far from it, if he cannot identify it? Faithful saints are totally committed to the Scriptural identity of the church.

Commitment to the Foremost Task of the Church

Jesus had one great work, concerning which all else that He did was supportive, but secondary: “For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). No lesser work could have compelled Him to assume mortality in the ultimate example of self-denial (Phi. 2:5–8). Yes, He had abundant compassion on people in every imaginable kind of suffering, and He miraculously relieved many of them. Howev-

er, He could have done all of those through His emissaries without ever leaving Heaven. The purpose of the signs and wonders was more basic than relief of physical suffering. These mighty deeds were the proof of His identity as the great Spiritual Doctor, their Savior (John 20:30–31).

He sent His apostles into the world, not with a “gospel” of physical good health and prosperity. He sent them to preach the Gospel, the power to save their souls from sin (Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15–16; Rom. 1:16). Incorporated in that commission was the charge to teach their converts to do the same work (Mat. 28:20; cf. 2 Tim. 2:2). Is not the work of the spiritual body of Christ implied by the work He did in His physical body? If the church gets sidetracked to lesser (or worse, unauthorized) causes and fails to preach the Gospel, no one else will do it.

Conclusion

It is bad enough that all of the denominational churches fail the above commitments (which is the reason they are what they are). It is somehow worse to see those who pretend to be faithful disciples abandoning these fundamental commitments on every hand. Many are leading (and some have already led) their congregations away from emphasis upon preaching the Truth to lost men. They have become wrapped up in social, entertainment, and recreation programs. These types preach such a watered-down message that sinners are left with little to help them find the way. They have lost their commitment to the principal work of the church.

The church is suffering greatly because many are ashamed of the church of Christ. Some silly preachers have issued public apologies for ever preaching on the identifying marks of the church, and have promised never to do it again. To be ashamed of the identity of the church is to be ashamed of the church. While ridiculing the distinctive characteristics of the Lord’s church, they often praise the unauthorized doctrines and practices of the denominations. Their agenda is to destroy the bride of Christ by corrupting it from within. These long ago lost their commitment to the identity and distinctiveness of the church.

The plan of salvation is under attack. Some are seen attacking the Biblical requirements of repentance. Some deny (by implication) the Scriptural purpose of baptism. At least one (Max Lucado) has taught that mere prayer can save sinners wholly apart from baptism. Apostate brethren increasingly echo the denominational declaration of salvation by grace alone. All such have given up whatever commitment they once had to the New Testament plan of salvation.

Why have a host of brethren so egregiously compromised in these and many other ways? At some point they stopped asking the fundamental question, “Is it authorized?” about every new idea and proposed practice. Had they done so they would have unhesitatingly rejected the gimmicks and contrivances they have foolishly embraced. These faulty practitioners simply do not honor the Lord’s exclusive religious authority.

The overriding commitment the Lord’s people must ever honor is an unflagging allegiance to the authority of the Son of God and to His Word. Once this commitment is sacrificed, there is no stopping place. The nineteenth-century innovators who introduced unauthorized organization and worship amply demonstrate this fact. The church is overflowing with liberals of an even worse stripe and with the same spiritual malady. They have no respect for the authority of Christ. They just do not care what the Bible says. Such are bereft of all hope unless and until they repent.

Indications Of Bible Inspiration: Its Messianic Prophecies Fulfilled

Jess Whitlock

It is one thing to make a prediction of what will happen; it is another to see the prophecy fulfilled detail by minute detail years or even centuries later. Isaiah challenged the idolaters of his time saying, “Let them bring forth and show us what will happen, let them show the former things, what they were, that we may consider them,

and know the latter end of them; or declare to us things to come” (Isa. 41:22). There are hundreds of prophecies concerning the coming of the “Messiah” or Savior. Jesus Christ proved to be the fulfillment of all the prophets of old, who wrote of His life hundreds of years in advance of His being born. Let us note just a few of them:

- The Messiah would be born of a virgin (Isa. 7:13-14; cf. Luke 1:26-35)
- The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; cf. Matt. 2:1-6)
- His flight into Egypt was foretold (Hos. 11:1; cf. Matt. 2:13-15)
- It was prophesied that He would do miracles (Isa. 29:18; 35:4-6; cf. Matt. 11:5; Mark 7:37; Luke 7:19-22; John 9:39; et al.)
- The Messiah would be rejected by His own (Isa. 8:14; Psa. 118:22-23; cf. Luke 20:17-18; Rom. 9:31-33)
- He would be betrayed by a friend (Psa. 41:9; 55:13; cf. Luke 22:47-53)
- He would be sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12; cf. Matt. 26:15)
- That money to be cast on the temple floor (Zech 11:13; cf. Matt. 27:3-7)
- His actions at mock trials are described (Isa. 53:7; cf. Luke 23:35-39)
- He would be crucified between 2 thieves (Isa. 53:12; cf. Mark 15:27-28)
- Soldiers were to gamble for His clothing (Psa. 22:18; cf. Luke 23:34)
- His hands, feet, and side to be pierced (Psa. 22:16; cf. John 19:34-37)
- He was to be buried with the rich (Isa. 53:9; cf. Luke 23:50-55)
- The Messiah would be raised from death (Psa. 16:10; cf. Luke 24:6-8)
- And, He would ascend into glory (Psa. 68:18; 110:1-3; cf. Luke 24:51)

These and hundreds of other prophecies concerning the coming Messiah were written hundreds and hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus Christ. Imagine archers at night shooting at a target placed 500 feet away, or 700 feet away, or over 1,000 feet away. They take aim and every archer hits the bull’s eye! The prophecies we have cited were written over 500 years, even 1,000 plus years before the birth of the Messiah. All of these things happened just as God’s prophets of old had recorded. No book but the Bible contains so much prophetic accuracy.

How can we account for such ability as these 40 men possessed? There is only one plausible explanation. Assuredly, “No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:20-21). Consider the words that Paul addressed to the brethren in Thessalonica, “And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe” (1 Thess. 2:13).

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Believing A Lie

J. W. McGarvey

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

It is quite a popular idea that it makes very little if any difference in religious matters, what a man believes, so he is sincere in regard to it, and faithfully lives according to his belief; but while men thus think in regard to religion, no man has the same thought in

regard to any other human interest.

For instance, a man believes in the soundness and good management of a bank, when it is about to break: does any one think that the sincerity of his belief, backed up by large deposits and the purchase of large blocks of the stock, will make safe his investment? Does not everybody know that the more sincerely a man believes in such a bank, the worse it is for him? The hand of a young lady is sought by a designing man in whom she has the most unlimited confidence: will the sincerity of her faith in him prevent the life-long misery which he is sure to inflict if she marries him? The more sincerely she believes in him, the worse it is for her.

The same is true of false beliefs in every department of human life and interest. The same is true in matters of State, of science, and of war. False theories of government work evil continually; false theories in science are clogs in the way of knowledge; and the belief of a lie has caused the defeat of many a brave army and the sinking of many a gallant ship.

Strange, then, if it is not so in matters pertaining to the soul. Strange if the belief of an error in religion is just as well as belief of the truth.

Paul was very far from entertaining this opinion. In the passage before us, he represents certain persons as perishing because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. He says, that "for his cause," that is, because they receive not the love of the truth, "God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie." He can not mean that God causes them to believe a lie by any direct exertion of His power; for He never interferes in that way for the injury of any human being; but that in the workings of His providence He allows those who do not love the truth to be worked upon by error, so that they shall believe a lie. And the result of this he declares to be, "that they all might be judged who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

There is an incident in Old Testament history, recorded in First Kings 13, which I think must have been brought about, so far as God directed it, for the very purpose of illustrating this great lesson to us, as well as for teaching it to the generation in which it occurred. It is the incident of the young prophet from Judah, who was sent to rebuke the image-worship set up at Bethel by Jeroboam. Having established himself as king of the ten tribes after their revolt against Rehoboam, son of Solomon, he soon concluded that if his subjects should continue going to Jerusalem to worship, as the law required, and especially if they continued to attend the annual festivals, where all the twelve tribes were accustomed to meet in religious fellowship, they would eventually grow discontented with their divided state, and would kill him and return to their old allegiance under the house of David. To avoid this disaster, he made two calves of gold, set one up at Bethel, and the other at Dan, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." He was the first king of whom we read who set up a religion of his own to support the throne; but he has had a multitude of followers; for this is the real purpose of every State religion down to the present day. He also appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in imitation of the Feast of Tabernacles, which was held in Jerusalem on the same day of the seventh month; and on the first day of that feast he went up to his new altar to burn incense for the first time.

God was of course beholding these proceedings, and He sent a prophet out of Judah, who arrived in Bethel just in time to witness this first burning of incense. He made his way through the great crowd, close up to the king, who stood before the altar, and cried out, "O altar, altar, thus saith Jehovah: Behold, a child shall be born in Judah, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he sacrifice the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall they burn upon thee." And he gave a sign that these words should be fulfilled, saying, "Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out." The altar was immediately rent asunder, and the ashes, including the incense, I suppose, was spilt upon the ground. The king in great wrath put forth his hand, and exclaimed to those about him, "Lay hold of him." But the moment he uttered the words he felt a stiffening of his arm, and realized that he could not draw it back to his body. The bystanders saw this, and not one of them dared to lay

hands on the prophet. The king's tune changes. He says to the man of God, "Intreat now the favor of the Lord thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored". The prophet did so, and the hand was restored as suddenly as it had been stiffened. The prophet is now a wonderful man in the eyes of the king. Wrath is turned into admiration, and he says, "Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward." But he answered, "If thou wilt give me half thy house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread or drink water in this place: for so was it charged me by the word of God."

Now here is a man to be admired. He was so courageous that in obedience to the command of God he defied the power of the king; he was so free from ambition as to resist the flattering invitation of the king; and he was so unselfish as not to be influenced by the king's money.

In this same city of Bethel, almost under the shadow of Jeroboam's golden calf, we are told that there dwelt another prophet, an old one. He, of course, was opposed to this false worship; but he had consulted expediency, and had kept his mouth shut. One of his own sons had been in the crowd which assembled to witness the inauguration of the new altar. The son ran home when the young prophet had disappeared, and told his father all that had been said and done. Though too cowardly to act such a part himself, the old man was instantly fired with admiration for his daring fellow-prophet, and he felt that he must have him in his house to break bread with him: so he ordered his son to saddle the ass, and he hurried off to bring the prophet back. He found him dismounted, and sitting under the shade of an oak. Hurrying up to him, he said, "Come home with me and eat bread." The young man answered him as he had answered the king about eating and drinking in the place. But the old man was so eager to have him come that he made up a lie, and said to him,

"I also am a prophet as thou art; and an angel spake to me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thy house, that he may eat bread and drink water." This lie prevailed. Notice, now, that it is not a bad man, but a brave and good man, who is thus overcome. Even such a man is not free from danger at this point. Many a man just as brave and true in many particulars, has been led to his own undoing by the belief of a lie.

No doubt the old man's table was spread with the best the house afforded, and the two were enjoying themselves to the utmost when the Spirit of God came upon the old prophet and forced from his lips this solemn sentence: "Thus saith Jehovah: Forasmuch as thou hast been disobedient to the mouth of Jehovah, and hast not kept the command which Jehovah thy God commanded thee, but had come back, and eaten and drunk in this place, thy carcass shall not come to the sepulchre of thy fathers."

The joyful feast ended in gloom. The young man departed with a sense of guilt weighing him down; and he wondered, no doubt, what mysterious fate was involved in the words which had come from the Lord. He was not long in finding out; for he had gone but a short distance toward home when he saw a lion rushing upon him.

The same day there came into the city from that road some men who said that they saw the strange sight of a lion standing by the side of a dead man, whom he had slain but had not eaten, and the man's ass standing by unharmed. The old prophet knew what it meant. He ordered out his ass once more, hastened down the road, found it as the men had said, brought the carcass home with him, and buried it in his own sepulchre.

You can now see very plainly that this incident happened for a type, as Paul said of many other Old Testament incidents, and that it was written for our admonition. It was written to warn us against the belief of a lie. The fate of the young prophet cries out like the blast of a trumpet to startle us from our fancied security, and makes us look around to see if we, too, are in any such peril.

Perhaps you are ready to say that the sin of the old prophet in this case was greater than that of the young one; and you think it strange that the less guilty was the one who perished. Well, there was an abundance of texts and incidents to show the sin of lying, and the evil consequences which must follow it; and nobody, either then or now, needed any particular instruction about the sin of the old prophet; but the world need-

ed a lesson on the subject of believing a lie; so the young prophet was slain to teach this lesson, while the old man was left to God's ordinary method of dealing with liars. No doubt he got his deserts sooner or later. I think you will all agree with me that this very singular piece of inspired history confirms most strikingly, and illustrates most aptly the teaching of Paul and of Jesus on the subject of believing a lie — of being guided by blind guides.

In view of the solemn lesson now before us, taught both in the Old Testament and in the New, it becomes a question of transcendent importance, How shall we be sure that we are not believing lies; that we are not being led by blind guides? How can I determine who among all those proposing to guide me in religious matters are the men who can see—who are not blind men? I answer, there is one set of men, and only one, whom we can trust implicitly. We know that they are not blind: I mean the Lord Jesus and his apostles. We have their written instructions on the way of life, and they are not so voluminous or so obscure as to be unintelligible in regard to what is sinful. We may be in doubt, as we study them, over many questions of history and of exegesis, but rarely can we be in the least suspense, if we have a willing heart, as to what is sinful. Having found this, we ought to be able, and we shall be, to prevent any man from leading us into such error as shall cause us to commit sin — sin of omission or sin of commission.

All sorts of doctrines are being taught by all sorts of men and women; and it becomes a man who wishes ever to please God, to keep his head level, and his eye fixed on the plain teachings of the Lord and the apostles, if he would not believe a lie and be condemned.

The belief of any lie leading men to neglect baptism, is the more likely to be fatal from this fact that the forgiveness of all our past sins is connected with it. Who is willing to risk his soul on an uncertainty like that? I beg of you to cast aside the fatal delusion that there is time enough for you to surrender to the authority of your Lord, and any delusion which may have been palmed off upon you in regard to the importance of prompt obedience in baptism. Let not a day pass over your heads till, with a penitent soul, you are buried with Christ in baptism, and shall have risen to walk with him in a new life (Rom. 6:3-5).

We Are All Barabbas

Jerry C. Brewer

Paul said Christ Jesus died for sinners, (Rom. 5:6-8) but perhaps the most notable of those sinners is Barabbas, who represents all for whom Jesus died. The name “Barabbas” is a compound word. The prefix *Bar* means “son of” and the word *abba* is the Aramaic word for “father.” His name, then, is a generic term and literally means “Son of Father.” As Jesus died in the place of this man, so He died for all who are the sons of fathers.

Pontius Pilate was a moral coward who knew Jesus had done nothing worthy of death (Luke 23:4) but had not the courage to release Him. Like many people today, Pilate did not want to displease the people by deciding in favor of Jesus. As a result, he looked for ways to avoid doing what he knew he should do. He tried to get Herod to make the decision (Luke 23:6-12) but that failed and the fate of Jesus was placed back in Pilate's lap, who again told the Jews, “I, having examined him before you, found no fault in this man...” (Luke 23:14).

Then Pilate remembered that at this time of the year, during the Passover week, it was his custom to release one prisoner, whomsoever the people desired. He also remembered that a man named Barabbas was being held on a charge of sedition and murder and offered to crucify him and release Jesus (Matt. 27:21) but the mob insisted that the murderer Barabbas be released and the innocent Jesus be crucified.

There is nothing good recorded about Barabbas. His life was distinguished by sin. Matthew 27:16 calls him a “notable prisoner” and Mark records that he had made insurrection against Rome and committed murder. John also records that he was a rob-

ber. You'll not find a man more worthy of death than the felon Barabbas. He was imprisoned and marked for execution for his crimes, but he was also eternally lost because of his sinful life (Rom. 6:23).

This lost man stood only a few feet from Christ. He was so near the Lord, yet still lost. That's the condition of many today who may know what the Bible teaches concerning salvation in Christ, yet never come to Him in obedience. One may be inches, seconds, or thoughts away from Jesus and still be lost. The tragedy of that condition is like the Greek soldier who helped in the pillage of Persopolis and, finding a leather bag of jewels, tossed them away and kept the bag for a bread sack.

Barabbas was unloved by mankind. He was a violent criminal, an outcast, a rebel, and troublemaker who was under the sentence of death. You know, even the world has little affection for its own. The world is selfish and quickly drops a man whose value to them is gone. Millions of people today are in the shoes of Barabbas—unloved and unappreciated by the world, but loved by God. That's right, God loved Barabbas. Jesus said, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Yes, God loved Barabbas, as He loves all mankind.

John also wrote, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). When Jesus died that day in the place of Barabbas, He died for all of us whom Barabbas represented and though Barabbas was unloved by men, God loved him.

It's possible that Barabbas had heard the philosophers of his day who said, "Live right," "Be sincere in what you believe" or "Do the best you can." But he had not lived up to God's perfect standard and neither do you or I. He couldn't live up to the standard of philosophers, much less God's standard. That's why Paul explained to saved men that, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

Two sides of salvation are presented in this passage. Our salvation is a matter of grace on the part of God and of faith on the part of man. God's grace has been extended to all (Titus 2:11-12) and now it is up to man to reach up by obedient faith and grasp the grace that is in Christ. Barabbas wasted his lifetime on unimportant things, as many do today in pursuit of worldly goods and ambition.

Of all the people in Jerusalem on that day, Barabbas had the best opportunity to understand Christ's atoning sacrifice. When Barabbas was released, he was not only saved from physical death, but he represented all men who are saved from the guilt and consequences of sin when they believe in the Lord (John 8:24), repent of their sins (Luke 13:3) and are baptized into Him (Acts 2:38). Barabbas could have accompanied John and the women to the cross, but the door of history slams shut without further mention of this poor wretch's name.

Pilate nods, the guards unlock Barabbas' chains, they clang to the pavement and he dashes into the milling crowd. The condemned is free, Christ is beaten, and the rough cross is thrust upon Him. Friends, you are Barabbas. What will you do? Flee with your guilt, or obey Him who died in your place? Only you can decide. We are all Barabbas and without Christ, we will all die.

Practical Religious Atheism

Nathan Brewer

A few years ago, professional hockey player Sean Avery, NBA member Steve Nash, and pro basketball broadcaster Charles Barkley all voiced support for homosexual marriage. That would have been career suicide a few decades ago, but now it barely creates a ripple.

That's because America is becoming increasingly secular. Instead of being guided by a biblical code of conduct and morality, utilitarianism — doing whatever "works" — is the prevailing ethos.

For years now, we have been weaned away from biblical teaching on both doctrinal and moral issues. Religion is relegated to something people do, if they do it at all, on the occasional Sunday. But come Monday, it's back to working and making money and having fun, with little regard for spiritual matters.

In many areas of the country, we are still very "religious," yet we're following the same trend. Most claim to belong to some church, but fewer are attending. For those who do make an effort, few seem to allow the Bible to impact their lives on a daily basis.

People give lip service to God, but so many live as though God does not exist. Culture has played a part in this trend, but so has religion. There has been a shift away from teaching the Bible, with the focus now on "building relationships" and offering social outlets for people. As culture shifts, churches are keeping pace by changing too.

Now, it's difficult to get religious people, even preachers, to discuss the Bible. Having a real discussion about biblical topics and passages is next to impossible, because there might be disagreement, and that just doesn't go over well in society's current mindset: accept everything, disagree over nothing, just "love" each other, and don't ever tell people they're wrong.

That is entirely *unbiblical*. There *is* such a thing as right and wrong. God *does* make demands of us behaviorally and in serving Him. He expects us to live for Him and become more like His Son, not just an hour a week or month, but every hour of every day.

Today, even religious people accept immorality, because they either don't think it's wrong, or they think it's wrong to tell people it's wrong. We don't fear God nearly as much as we fear being labeled "judgmental."

Believers are walking around with little thought of spiritual matters or spiritual consequences, as though God does not exist. Satan must be enjoying this.

God loves you and wants you to love Him in return. He wants, and demands, the top spot in your life. Let His word guide your every thought, word and action. Believe the gospel (**John 8:24**), repent of your sins (**Luke 13:3**), confess Christ (**Matthew 10:32; Acts 8:37**), and be baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins (**Acts 2:38**).

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“Calling On the Name of the Lord”

Roelf L. Ruffner

“The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:20-21).

These words were uttered by the apostle Peter almost 2,000 years ago to people who had been responsible for the crucifixion of the Son of God. Peter quoted from Joel 2, but may also have referred to the prophet Isaiah who, more than 700 years before, had proclaimed,

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:
Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and
let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our
God, for he will abundantly pardon (Isa. 55:6-7).

Peter goes on in his sermon to show his audience from the Bible that Jesus was the prophesied Christ, the Son of God. Ironically, the Christ was the innocent they had helped murder just fifty days before. He was to now save them from the wrath of the Father. Overwhelmed with grief and Godly sorrow they cry to Peter and the other apostles, “...Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). In other words, “What must we do to obtain pardon for this horrible crime we have committed? How will God

forgive us of this deed against His Son? How may we ‘call on the name of the Lord?’”
Dear reader, how would you answer these folks, from the Bible?

Many go to Romans 10:13, where the apostle Paul repeats the statement of Peter in Acts 2:21, to try to back up their false teaching of “faith-only” salvation. In other words, according to them, there is *nothing* one can do to be saved from their sins except believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. They may also add, “Just say this sinner’s prayer along with me....”—a prayer which is not found in the New Testament, from Matthew to Revelation. They also fail to read the next verse: “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom. 10:14). Salvation from one’s sins involves more than just believing in Jesus Christ (cf. Jas. 2:19-20, 24).

Peter answered their urgent question in Acts Chapter 2 with a command. “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” (Acts 2:38). These sinners (those continuing in a pattern of sin) were told explicitly by Peter and the Holy Spirit what *to do* to gain forgiveness or remission of their sins: (1) “repent” or turn from their sins, and; (2) “be baptized” or be buried (not sprinkled!) in the watery grave with Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12). Not only were they forgiven, they were “born again” (John 3:3, 5) into the kingdom of Christ, the church of Christ (Acts 2:41, 47). But some may wonder if this is truly “calling on the name of the Lord.” The Bible gives another example of the application of Acts 2:22.

In Acts Chapter 22, we see the poor penitent sinner Saul of Tarsus. Some say he was saved “on the road to Damascus.” If so, neither Jesus nor he knew it. On that road this *believing* sinner was told by Jesus to go into Damascus, “and it shall be told thee what thou must do” (Acts 9:6). For three days and nights he fasted and prayed to God. (Not exactly the picture of a “saved” person!) God sent him a preacher—Ananias (cf. Rom.10:14). He found a sinner who had truly repented of his sins but who lacked something to be “calling upon the name of the Lord.” Referring to him as “brother Saul” (a fellow Jew—Acts 2:27; 23:1), Ananias commanded him, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). Saul was washed clean of his many sins by coming contact with Christ’s blood and spiritually united with Him (Gal. 3:26-27).

Dear reader, have you Biblically “called on the name of the Lord?” If you have not obeyed God’s Plan of Salvation you are not a Christian but still in your sins. Have you believed Jesus that He is the Son of God (John 8:24)? Have you repented of your sins (Acts 17:30)? Have you confessed Him as the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10)? Have you been baptized for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38)? If not, “Why tarriest thou?”

Gospel Lectureship April 28 – May 1

Coalgate, Oklahoma

Speakers – Jerry C. Brewer, Jess Whitlock, Jesse Stephens, Steve Harbison

The Uniqueness Of Jesus In Salvation

Ron Cosby

"And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12 ASV).

Jesus is called Savior. "And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." (1 John 4:14 ASV; Eph. 5:23). Jesus did not die to save men from the slums of Chicago or Cairo, but the sins of their souls. He did not die to save mankind from worry or war, poverty or politicians, hatred or heartache, or illness and pain. Heaven announced that Jesus saves from sin, "And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21 ASV).

Salvation is only in Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Muhammad Ali, who was a Muslim, wrote concerning his mother, "My mother was a Baptist. She believed Jesus was the Son of God, and I don't believe that. But even though my mother had a religion different from me, I believe that on Judgment Day my mother will be in heaven." Jesus responds by letting all know that *He* is the door to heaven (John 10:7-9). Paul adds that Jesus is the *only mediator* (1 Tim. 2:5-6). To say that salvation may be obtained outside of Christ is to conclude that the crucifixion of Jesus is unnecessary (Gal. 2:21). The belief that there is one God and only one way to God stands at the center of the Christian gospel.

Jesus' way of salvation shows He is unique. It is not by money or by great and precious gifts, nor is it through conquering the world. During the Crusades, Catholics assured those who might be injured or killed a reward in heaven. Not to be outdone, Muslims in the Middle East encourage men and children to blow themselves up, promising them a heavenly reward of martyrdom for suicide. Muslim martyrs are assured of 70 virgins in a heavenly harem—more generous than the Catholic offer.

The truth is, we must give self (Matt. 16:24-25). It starts with faith (John 8:24) and immersion in water unto the remission of sins (Luke 7:29-30). Faith and obedience are necessary (2 Thess. 1:9-10). Jesus is the fountain of forgiveness.

*There's a fountain free, 'tis for you and me:
Let us haste, O haste to its brink;
'Tis the fount of love from the Source above,
And He bids us all freely drink.*

It may be politically incorrect to claim Jesus as the unique Savior of the world, but it is *Biblically* correct. Jesus is unique because salvation is only in Him. Certainly, His salvation is unique, but we are saying He is unique *because* of His salvation (John 8:24; 6:67-68; 14:6).

Quoting It, But Not Living It

David Ray

People love to quote the Bible, especially when they think it supports their particular views, or when they're trying to make people *think* it supports their views. So often, when we see or hear a quote, we'll see evidence that the one doing the quoting has no idea what the passage really means. And even if they do know, it's likely that they have no intention of actually obeying it.

We see this on Facebook and other social media. It's usually not hard to find quotes of or references to scriptures that are either taken out of context (e.g., using God's Old Testament promises to Israel and applying them to a personal problem) or that seem to contradict the person's blatantly sinful lifestyle (as displayed in his posts and pictures).

Anyone can quote a scripture; even Satan did (Matt. 4:6). This doesn't mean that he is right with God. And how does God feel about this? How does He feel when people misuse His Word for their own selfish benefit or simply reference it when it's convenient, never having any intention of obeying it? Is He pleased simply because someone quotes a passage while feigning obedience? The answer to this is seen in several Scriptures.

In Ezekiel 14, during the Babylonian captivity, the elders of Israel came to the prophet Ezekiel to enquire of God (v. 3). At first this sounds like a good thing (similar to hearing people quote the Bible today). However, God's reaction shows that He knew they weren't interested in fully obeying Him. He told Ezekiel (v. 4), "these men set up their idols in their heart and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face. Should I be enquired of at all by them?"

Regardless of their feigned desire to hear God's word, their idols were in their hearts (i.e., they had priorities higher than God). There are a lot of things that can qualify as "idols in their hearts" today for people who claim to follow God and His word.

Basically, whatever keeps a person from fully committing to Him is an idol in the heart. And God's response today is no different than it was to these elders. He refused them because they refused Him by their inconsistency (attempting to worship Him *and* their idols).

His response continued in verse eight: "I will set my face against that man...." It's amazing that people think they can fool God with feigned sincerity the same way they fool people (or at least the way they think they fool people)!

In Ezekiel 20:1-3 it happened again. "Certain of the elders of Israel came to enquire of the Lord and sat before me." And again God refused them: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you." Pretty strong words!

But this doesn't mean that He always refused to be enquired of by hypocrites. Sometimes He gave them the chance to be genuine before exposing their duplicity.

In Jeremiah 42, after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, some of the Israelites came to Jeremiah to enquire of God about going to Egypt to escape further Babylonian oppression. They asked Jeremiah to enquire of God (v.1-3) and Jeremiah agreed (v. 4). Then they even solemnly swore that they would do whatever God said, regardless of what it was (v. 5-6)! This sounded pretty good; they seemed very sincere. But God's response wasn't what they wanted to hear (v.10-12) and God knew it. He exposed and rebuked their hypocrisy, showing very clearly what He thinks of the insincerity of *claiming* to follow Him while actually only following one's own desires (v. 13-22)!

Today, people will ask biblical questions only wanting you to say what they want to hear. For example, many times I've been asked by those who drink socially and have no intention of stopping, "What does the Bible say about drinking?" It always reminds me of Ahab asking the prophet Micaiah, "shall we go against Ramoth-Gilead to battle or should we forbear?" (1 Kings 22:15). He had no intention of suspending his military campaign, regardless of what God said! These people today aren't any more interested in what God's word says about drinking than Ahab was about going to battle. They aren't going to change; they just want authorization to do what they've already decided to do. Their "idols" are set up in their hearts and they want to worship those idols (e.g., alcohol) with God's approval!

Jesus dealt with this attitude quite often. Many times the Pharisees, Sadducees, etc. asked Jesus questions with disingenuous motives. "Master, we would see a sign from thee," they asked after He'd already shown them several (Matt. 12:38). "Master, we know that thou art true and teachest the way of God in truth... Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar?" (Matt. 22:16-17). "Master, Moses said, If a man die having no children..." (Matt. 22:23-28).

In John 8:5 they brought to Him a woman caught in adultery and said "Moses commanded... (as if they cared what Moses said); but what sayest thou" (as if they cared what Jesus said)! They cared about as much as people today who *quote* it but refuse to obey it (cf. Titus 1:16).

What did Jesus say about these people? In Matthew 15:8 He quoted Isaiah 29:13: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." The mouth claims it, but the heart doesn't. No wonder he called them *hypocrites* (v. 7).

Jesus' quote of Isaiah 29:13 shows that God not only knows when someone is sincere or not, but He even *foreknew* and *foretold* of their hypocrisy. Yet countless numbers of people today still pretend to be religious, as if God doesn't know or care. Be assured, He *does* know and He *does* care. He makes it clear in Revelation 3:16 that He despises this "lukewarmth" ("*I will spew thee out of my mouth*")!

God loves you. He sent His only begotten Son to die on the cross so that you could be saved and He provided the Bible to tell you all about it. But He expects you to read it, study it, and obey it wholeheartedly (2 Tim. 2:15). He knows when someone is faking Christianity. And He knows those who truly love Him (cf. John 14:15; 1 John 5:3).

The Gospel In Conversion

E. R. Harper

It was the purpose of the Lord from the beginning that the world should be converted by the gospel (Eph. 3:5-11). That is why He commissioned the apostles to, "go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to *every* creature." (Mark. 16:15). "It pleased God," Paul declares, "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. 1:21). Paul further said, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand: by which also ye are *saved*, if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

The Lord said, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." (John. 6:45). By this we see that conversion is not brought about under circumstances like those provided by modern evangelists. I once heard Gypsy Smith say that he was saved in a gypsy tent, where the Bible was unknown—saved by the direct power of God. Men have said that they "got it" at the mourners' bench, and out in the fields, away from the word of God, as if conversion were something mysterious and apart from the gospel.

But ours is a "taught" religion, and conversion is not a hysterical, emotional outburst of feelings. It is *not* a "better-felt-than-told," but a "told" religion. The teaching is in the gospel. Without the gospel no man will be saved. It is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16). If it is the power of God to save, then away with the teaching that saves a man before he learns the gospel! If Paul's statement is true, there is no salvation without the gospel. This strikes hard at our friends who claim that men are "totally depraved" and "cannot" please God until they received "another power to save"—namely, the direct operation of the Spirit. Men must obey the gospel.

Peter says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." (1 Pet. 1:23). And in verse 25 he declares that this word is the gospel! James says, "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." (Jas. 1:21). "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17). "Without faith it is impossible to please him." (Heb. 11:6). The climax to these scriptures is found in Paul's statement that Christ will come "taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that *obey not the gospel*." (2 Thess. 1:8). The gospel of the Lord *must* be respected and obeyed if we expect to be saved, born again, please God, and dwell with Him in heaven.

The Lord has decreed that by the gospel man should believe and be saved, and that the church should send this gospel to the world (2 Cor. 4:1-7), with the "woe" of heaven upon us if we do not (1 Cor. 9:16). Salvation, then, is an intelligent process based upon the revelation given through inspired men, which can be taught and understood. It is not like the emotional, hysterical type preached and practiced today. We are able to "know" from whence our faith cometh, why our rejoicing, and we are able to "stand" with a hope that reaches within the city of God, to that inheritance that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us who are "kept" by the power of God, "through faith" unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last day. The gospel is our hope and stay.

There has not been a conversion since the day of Pentecost where the gospel was not preached, and man's hopes based upon the things taught in it. In Acts 2, Peter declared that the Old Testament prophecies were being fulfilled; that Christ had come and had returned and was seated on the throne of David. He admonished the Jews to, "know assuredly" that God had made Him both "Lord and Christ." Many of them believed this; and being cut to their hearts, as all truly converted people must be, they cried out, "What shall we do?" Guided by the Spirit, Peter replied, "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." (Acts 2:38).

"But," says one, "I cannot understand that *complicated* question and answer." I shall give you a simple one to help you: "Repent and be baptized for \$100,000." You would *not* misunderstand *when* you were to "receive" your \$100,000. If we were just as hon-

est in "religion" as we are in "finances," we could learn the truth and save our souls. Why not do it, friend? Not only is *your* soul to be considered, but that of your *child* also.

But what is this which Peter preached? Was it the gospel of Christ? Yes, it is the gospel by which the world is to be saved. How do I know? The Lord told Peter in Mark 16:15 to preach the gospel, and Peter is doing just the thing commanded him by the Lord. How do I know that I must obey this gospel or be lost? Paul said that if you do not "obey" the gospel you "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power." (2 Thess. 1:8-9). What shall become of me if I fail to preach this same gospel? The curse of heaven will rest upon me (Gal. 1:8-9).

The apostles preached that men must believe, repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins. They were then converted to Christ—saved. The last verse of Acts 2 says, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." When you obey the gospel you are saved, born again, a child of God, a member of the church the Lord built (Matt. 16:18), and an heir of heaven.

The beauty of it all is that every man who was preaching the gospel—preaching Christ, preaching the kingdom of heaven—was preaching the same thing. If all today were preaching the gospel of Christ, all would be preaching the same thing; the results would be the same, and there would be no divisions among those claiming to be the saints of God.

Let us follow Philip to Samaria. Acts 8:5 says that he "preached Christ unto them." In verse 12, the record says that he preached, "the things concerning the kingdom of God." What did the Samaritans do who heard him? They "believed" and were "baptized," just like those on the day of Pentecost. Philip was "filled with the Spirit," and went from the church at Jerusalem. He carried the same gospel to them that Peter preached in Jerusalem on Pentecost. In verse 35 we read that he "opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." What did the eunuch do when "Jesus" was preached unto him? What does it mean to "preach Jesus?" Verses 37-39 show that he believed, confessed Christ, was baptized, and went on his way rejoicing.

Why this rejoicing? He had obeyed the gospel; he had believed and been baptized, just as the Lord commanded in the commission (Mk. 16:15-16). It is evident that to "preach Jesus" is to preach the gospel, obedience to which involves faith and baptism and a penitent heart that will melt the stubborn will and bring it into subjection to God.

The book of Acts records the conversion of Saul (Acts 9, 22). The same gospel was preached and obeyed in the same manner. Peter preached to the Gentiles (Acts 10, 11). This was a repetition of Pentecost. The same sermon in principle was preached, the same obedience required. The church at Corinth was begun in the same way (Acts 18:8). The church in Macedonia (Acts 16:30-35), the conversions in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-10), and all others recorded in this book conform to the same pattern. All began with the gospel being taught, and men believing, repenting, and being baptized.

So it is today. Conversion begins in hearing the gospel, is carried on by believing the gospel, and is consummated by *obeying the gospel!*

"What Saith The Scriptures?"

Harrell Davidson

From a reader of *The Gospel Preceptor* comes this question as written:

"In the congregation I used to be a member of, they have this structure whereby when marriage and home issues are being discussed, be it on the Lord's day or during the midweek classes, men and women teach the combined class in the form of a 'panel discussion.'

"For example, a man and his wife would be made to take the class, teaching and

answering questions about marriage and the home. I understand the case of Aquila and his wife teaching Apollos but that was outside of the assembly wasn't it?

In view of what the Bible says about women teachers (1 Tim.2:12) is this a scriptural practice?"

Thanks for your concerns and the question that you sent. We will not use the names of the person/persons you reference in other remarks you made. All questions are appreciated and will be answered in the order in which they are received.

The short answer to your question is no. There is **no** authority for "team teaching" as it is generally called where there is a mixed audience of men and women. You indicate in your note to me that you understand Aquila and Priscilla of Acts 18:18-36 where "they" third person pronoun, took Apollos aside and taught him more correctly the way of the Lord. This is precisely what the Bible says regarding that matter.

There are those who are no more than extremists—false teachers—some from whom we have withdrawn our fellowship as the Scriptures instruct us to do in Romans 16:17 where Paul wrote, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

What position did/do these take? They basically teach that a woman cannot teach a man anywhere, anytime, under any set of circumstances. In this doctrine a former neighbor had converted her husband out of Methodism and one of these false teachers came and told this Christian lady that she should "repent" for teaching her husband the truth! These false teachers began to lecture on such things as the "Priscilla and Aquila Syndrome" where they take the position that there is no proof that she taught Apollos anything whatsoever while Acts 18 teaches the very opposite of that doctrine.

Let us examine this a little further. What do they base most of their teaching on? They use the broader context of First Timothy 2:9-14 and argue that since this teaching on the role of women is based upon the basic principles of God's marriage law that she is not permitted to teach but be in silence. Now, that is the general principle they stick to while their argument differs little from the main.

It is obviously clear that verse 12 of First Timothy 2 is talking about a public assembly due to the word teach which is more in line with public teaching or proclamation where the woman would be teaching over a man. On this we are in total agreement. Never should Christian women be put in a position of leadership in the Lord's church, such as teaching a mixed class of men and women, waiting on the Lord's table, leading a prayer or leading the song service. All these adult classes or worship assemblies must be led by men as the passage under consideration indicates.

But the false teachers take this further than what the apostle Paul did by asserting that the woman cannot teach a man anytime under any circumstance. Is that what the passage is teaching? Let us examine other Scriptures to learn what they tell us.

John 4 is an interesting chapter in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Would each reader of these lines read John 4:4-30 for the full context that we will reference? Here is a sinful Samaritan woman who meets Jesus at Jacob's well. Jesus asks her give Him some water to drink. She wonders why He—Christ—being a Jew would ask her for some water. Thus, the conversation is begun. Jesus asks her questions and she goes back to the city she is from and what does she do?

Verse 28 states specifically that when she went back to her city, she told the "men" what had happened to her. So much so that *they*, antecedent of the *men*, came out to see/hear Jesus. She was a woman was she not? Did she teach? It cannot be argued otherwise. She orally imparted knowledge to these men that produced faith to the extent they left the city to go and see Jesus.

The false doctrine held onto by some is justly defeated in John chapter 4. But they say she was a sinner! We reply, was she a woman? Was she first formed and then Adam? No! Therefore, their doctrine must be understood to be false to the extent that a woman cannot teach a man or men anytime, anywhere, under any circumstances. We know there are limitations placed on women as many passages teach.

Let's look even further. I would like to ask this plain unequivocal question: May a

woman orally teach a man or men spiritual things in order to produce faith? I point the reader to the gospel records of the Lord's resurrection where there were women first at the grave. An angel told them to go and tell the eleven disciples that Jesus was raised from the dead. Those women, some of whom are named in the texts, did as commanded. How do we know this? "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen" (Mark 16:14).

Notice then, if it was a sin for these women to tell the disciples that Jesus was risen then we have our Saviour being a party to—endorsing—sin as well as the angels that spoke to those women. The angels were not false angels for what they said was verified by the Lord Himself. The only ones in this narrative that Jesus reprimanded were the eleven disciples who failed to believe the evidence that was presented.

Some will turn and read Paul's first epistle to the saints in Corinth when he wrote, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (1 Cor. 14:34). Observe the context in which this is written. First Corinthians 12 lists the spiritual gifts that the church in its infancy had which were received through the laying of hands that only an apostle could impart. Chapter 13 shows that these spiritual gifts would cease, they were thus temporary. Chapter 14 contains the regulations of those gifts.

The word "silence" used above is the Greek word *lalein* which means that she must not say one word. In other words, she was to keep her mouth shut! That had to do with the spiritual gifts. Obviously, women as well as men are commanded to sing and make melody in their hearts (Eph. 5:19). Somehow, the church at Corinth was lax in their teaching on such things and they allowed women to participate by speaking—taking the lead—in the assembly which she is not permitted to do anytime anywhere.

Women may teach other women as well as children's classes. She may teach privately any man that needs instruction if she does this like Priscilla did. She may teach her children. She cannot team teach with an audience of men and women.

In closing these thoughts at this time would you imagine the scenario below. A religious man or men are going through town doing door knocking and asking religious questions. They come to the door when only the lady of the house is home. They ask, lady do you have any hope? What should she say? "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). Can you imagine her saying "yes, I have hope but I cannot tell you about it?" In doing that she violates this passage. By the false doctrine of false teachers, she really could not say anything. Thanks for your considerations.

Brother Davidson answers readers' questions in this column each month. If you have Bible questions, you may email them to him at harrelld@charter.net.

The First Gospel Sermon

G. K. Wallace

This sermon is an old one. It is not original with me. I have taken it from a master sermon builder. His name is Peter and the sermon is found in Acts, chapter 2. It should be carefully repeated to every generation and brethren who know it should be refreshed with it occasionally. This chapter logically divides itself into five parts—the day, audience, speaker, sermon, and the results. In the study of this chapter we find the beginning of the execution of the great commission. The new birth is fully explained. Verse 38 is the greatest commentary ever written on John 3:5.

The Day

The day upon which these events occurred was the first day of the week. Pentecost always came on that day. (Lev. 23:14-15) In this passage we are told that Pentecost was to be the morrow after the Sabbath. The morrow after the Sabbath could only be the first day of the week. Most all days that are observed by men are so kept by virtue of

what occurred upon them. Many days are held sacred because they represent some great event. The Sabbath day was kept by Israel because they had been delivered from Egyptian servitude (Deut. 5:15). Some of the things that cause us to revere the first day of the week are as follows:

1. After the death of Christ, He repeatedly met with his disciples, on the first day of the week (John 20:1, 19, 26).
2. The Holy Spirit was given on this day (Acts 2:1-4).
3. The first converts under the New Covenant were made on this day (Acts 2:37-47).
4. Christ arose from the dead on the first day of the week (Mk. 16:1-9; Luke 24: 1-6).

There is, I am told, an international effort being put forth by Sabbatarians to prove that Jesus Christ did not arise from the dead on the first day of the week. They say he arose on the Sabbath. We are reminded that Luke says, "They came into the tomb...and they entered in and found not the body of Jesus" Therefore they conclude that Christ arose on Saturday. However, in this chapter (Luke 24) this heresy is completely annihilated. Note these facts as they appear in order in this chapter:

1. "But upon the first day of the Week" v. 1.
2. "Two of them were going that very day." v. 13.
3. "It is now the third day" v. 21.
4. "Christ should suffer and rise again the third day" v. 46.

It cannot be denied that the "third day" of verse 46 is the "third day" of verse 21 and the "day" of verse 21 is the same "day" of verse 13 and the "day" of verse 13 is the "day" of verse 1, the first day of the week—the day Christ arose.

The Audience

The audience was composed of "Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven." There are many devout men who need converting. If some brethren, whom I know, had been present on Pentecost and heard Peter as he said to these devout souls, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, ...Ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay" (vv. 22-23), they no doubt would have said, "Now Peter, you are too hard. These men are such devout souls. You should not call them lawless—that is not the spirit of Christ." However, they *were* lawless even though they were devout.

The Speaker

The speaker was none other than the apostle Peter. And such little tact did he use. Perhaps he had never studied the proper manner of approach! He told his audience that they were lawless, and had crucified the Son of God. Surely, he should have waited until he had preached six or eight days before mentioning baptism. I heard recently of one of our modern preachers preaching 20 years without mentioning it. But Peter did not know any better. He should have had this brother as his instructor. We need more men who will follow the example of this inspired preacher, instead of studying later methods of approach. Some are always talking about the proper manner of approach but never approach. A straightforward and earnest statement of gospel facts is what the world needs today.

The Sermon

The sermon hinged around the following points:

1. The fulfillment of prophecy.
2. Jesus of Nazareth approved of God.
3. The Crucifixion of Christ.
4. The resurrection of Christ.
5. The exaltation of Christ.

The masterful discourse which was built around these points cut these people to the heart. "Now when they heard this they were pricked in the heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37-38).

The Results

Three thousand were baptized. It is no trouble to tell exactly how many people will be baptized in a meeting. "They that received his word were baptized." Every person who receives the word of God will be baptized. "And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:29-30). When people will not be baptized they are rejecting the word of God. "And the Lord added to the church daily those that were saved" (Acts 2:47).

"Under Authority"

Jerry C. Brewer

The Bible often speaks of one doing something when, in fact, others did that thing under his authority. When Jesus was asked to heal a centurion's servant, he approached the man's house, but

...the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof: wherefore neither thought myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it (Luke 7:6-8).

The centurion's meaning was that Jesus could heal his servant by His authority without actually being present in his house. The same kind of language was used of Jesus baptizing His followers.

After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized...Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all me come unto him (John 3:22, 25-26).

But John later records that, "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) he left Judea and departed again into Galilee" (John 4:1-3).

The centurion in the first instance above was said to do something when his servants carried out his order, acting under his authority, and Jesus was said to baptize more disciples than John, although Jesus did not do the actual baptizing. His disciples did the baptizing *under His authority*.

Now, consider the Great Commission. In recent years it has been claimed that this commission was not given to all Christians—either in the first century or today—but to the apostles only. The fact is that it was spoken to the apostles (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). But does this mean that the church today is under no obligation to obey this command? The New Testament was *not* written *to* us, but its precepts are still binding on us today. It was written *for* us.

For instance, Paul's command to "withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us," (2 Thess. 3:6), was written to the church at Thessalonica. Does that mean it is not applicable to churches today? Of course not! It was written to Thessalonica for the church in all ages from an apostle whom Jesus styled a "judge" of "the twelve tribes of Israel" in Matthew 19:28. Apostolic authority is *Christ's* authority and when we obey apostolic authority, we obey Christ.

Before He ascended to the Father, Jesus said to His apostles, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to be witnesses for Jesus—

His only witnesses, there are none today—and their authority as His witnesses would extend to the end of time. When they spoke by inspiration as they were empowered, it was as though Jesus Himself spoke (2 Cor. 5:20). Thus, the apostles were "under authority" from Christ and their teaching was Christ's teaching.

After the establishment of the church in Jerusalem on Pentecost (Acts 2) there was a great growth of its numbers, attended by a great persecution against it by the Jews. That first persecution culminated in the stoning of Stephen, the first martyr to the Cause of the Lord (Acts 7:54-60). Prior to this, the Cause of the Lord had been restricted to Jerusalem, but this event and the persecution that followed caused members of the church to flee the city. One of the most significant passages relating to our topic is found in these words: "...and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, *except the apostles* (emphasis JCB) ...Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:1, 4). That the Holy Spirit had Luke to add, "except the apostles" is significant. When faithful Christians went everywhere in Judea and Samaria—where Jesus said the apostles would be witnesses—the apostles were still in Jerusalem. Yet, it can be said that the apostles preached "throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria" just as "Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus baptized not, but his disciples)." The apostles were, indeed, witnesses to Jesus in Judea and Samaria without ever going there themselves. Where did those scattered brethren get the message they preached? From the apostles. What they preached was the "apostles doctrine" (Acts 2:42), which was "under authority" of the apostles, and confirmed the apostles' testimony by miracles (Acts 8:6-7, 12).

Although they never left Jerusalem, the apostles were also witnesses "unto the uttermost part of the earth" when those who were scattered abroad,

...traveled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of the men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus (Acts 11:19-20).

When tidings of this came to the apostles' ears in Jerusalem, they did not go to Antioch themselves. Instead, they sent Barnabas "under their authority."

To insist that the Great Commission is not for us today is to repudiate the authority of Christ expressed through His apostles. He sent them "under authority" and they, in His name, sent others "under authority" and we are as much under the authority of Christ and His inspired apostles today as was the church of the first century.

Do You Believe God or Just Believe *In* God?

Leland Reed

For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness (Rom. 4:3). Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness (Gal. 3:6). And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God (Jas. 2:23).

We are all familiar with the account of God telling Abraham to offer his son, Isaac, for a burnt offering. Abraham believed God's promise that he would bless the world through his seed, Isaac (Gen. 22). Thus, Abraham *knew* that God, Who cannot lie (Titus 1:2), would fulfill His promise.

By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure (Heb. 11:17-19).

On the other hand, Eve believed *in* God, but did not *believe God*. Because she did not believe God, but believed the serpent, she could see no harm in eating of the fruit from

the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. "But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (Gen. 3:3). Eve failed to believe God by letting the serpent persuade her that what God had said was not true (Gen. 3:1-6).

The children of Israel believed *in* God because He had led them out of Egypt. He had sent plagues upon the Egyptians, then led Israel across the Red Sea on dry land and drowned the pursuing Egyptians (Exo. 7-14). But they did not *believe God* and the promises He gave them.

They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt (Exo. 32:8).

Nadab and Abihu believed *in* God, but they did not *believe God*. "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not" (Leviticus 10:1).

God had told them what fire to use, but they did not believe it was important to follow God's instructions. They did not *believe God* and they paid the price for their unbelief. "And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (Lev. 10:2).

After the kingdom was divided upon the death of Solomon, the northern king, Jeroboam erected an altar in violation of God's law and a young prophet was sent from God to cry against the altar (1 Kings 13). God told the young prophet not to eat or drink while he was there, nor to return by the way he went. But an old prophet lied to the young prophet and he believed the lie. Consequently, he lost his life. Did the young prophet believe *in* God? Indeed! But, sadly, he did not *believe God*, choosing rather to believe the lie of the old prophet. James tells us that the demons believe *in* God (Jas. 2:19). But they do not *believe God*.

Most folks in denominations will tell you they believe *in* God, but when it comes to teaching the truth, it is obvious that they do not *believe God*. The Lord said one must be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16), but denominational folks say that isn't so. Neither do they believe God in His prescribed manner of worship. For instance, God commands us to *sing* in worship to Him (Eph. 5:19), but denominations just don't believe God and add mechanical instruments of music which God has not commanded.

Doing things our own way instead of God's is no different than what Nadab and Abihu did in offering strange fire before the Lord. They "did their own thing." They believed *in* God, but did not *believe God*. When we are commanded to *sing* and then add mechanical instruments, do you really think we *believe God*?

Friends, you may believe *in* God—that He exists and gave His Son to die for us—but if you are not willing to do as He has commanded in the New Testament you do *not believe God*.

The Silence Of The Scriptures

Bill Jackson

Surely one of the most effective and most scriptural, arguments the saints have made down through the years is that of the authority of the silence of the Scriptures. In hundreds of debates with proponents of every kind of error, audiences were shown that when God legislates in a certain area, making clear His requirements, then man has no authority to go beyond that, adding similar or like things to what God has specified. We have correctly used the gopher wood, the pitch, the dimensions of the ark, in the case of Noah (Gen. 6), and we have used the fruit of the vine and the bread on the Lord's table (Mat. 26:26-28) on the same point.

Of late, men are stating that there can be no argument based on "the silence of the Scriptures." As one put it, "Man is free to do any and everything that God has not

specifically forbidden." And one other man, in the kingdom, said that "Any matter falling within the silence of the Scriptures should be treated as options, based on the rule of Romans 14." In correspondence with one in another state, when the matter of dancing in worship was brought up, and our having no specific condemnation in the New Testament of such, his answer was that if the congregation's elders gave approval and if they then could see some benefit to be gained, it would be proper! Thus, the end to which one will be taken if he feels there can be no legitimate argument based on the *Silence of the Scriptures*!

We know the argument we now are supporting is a legitimate one, for we find it used in the Word! In Hebrews 7, as the writer speaks of the priesthood of Christ under the New Testament, he states that there has been a change of the law, thus necessitating a change in the priesthood (v. 12). He speaks of our Lord coming from the tribe of Judah (v. 14), and in making then the point that the Lord could not be a priest if the law of Moses were still in effect, the writer states, "...of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."

Thus, the argument is made that Jesus could not be a priest under the Old Testament law, because the Scriptures said nothing about one of Judah being a priest! Let us, as we continue to stress Biblical authority, and the right handling of the Word (2 Tim. 2:15), also continually stress the *silence of the Scriptures*!

The Bible: A Divine Book

Chester Estes

The Bible is either a divine book or it is not. It can have only one of four sources. It came from God, good men, bad men, or the devil. Bad men and the devil are condemned throughout the Bible. It is not reasonable to suppose that the devil or bad men would write a book condemning himself or themselves at every turn. The purpose of the Bible is to thwart the schemes of the devil and bad men. Good men do not falsify. They claim not to have written the Bible, but attribute its authorship to God. Hence, even the devil, good men and bad men testify to the fact that God is the Author of the Bible.

The greatest need in the world, as it has been in every age, is a greater faith in the Bible as the word of God. Such faith would solve difficult problems and cure the human ills. If men believed the Bible to be the word of God, they would act very differently and deal more fairly with their fellow men. They would allow it to regulate them in their dealings with each other. The Bible—admitted even by those who do not believe it to be the word of God—is the best code of morals the world has ever known.

The reason that some do not believe the Bible, or that they are weak in faith, is not lack of evidence to produce faith, but because they are densely ignorant of the teachings of the Bible. No one who is capable of weighing and accepting evidence can say the evidence as to the divinity of the Bible is lacking. John said, "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (John 20:31). No one can study the evidence concerning the Son of God and conclude that He is no more than a man, but, being true to his own ability to reason, must conclude, as Nicodemus, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2 ASV). No one can believe that Jesus is divine, or that He came from God, without believing His words. Anyone who believes His words must, of necessity, believe that He came from God. Hence, there is no such thing as separating belief in Christ from belief in His words.

Then, if one believes His words, he must believe in the inspiration of the Bible, for He not only endorsed the Old Testament, but gave us the New Testament. Hear Him:

How can ye believe, who receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not? Think not that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope. For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me (John 5:44-46 ASV).

To believe Moses meant also to believe in Christ, for Moses wrote of Christ, and they could not believe Moses when they did not believe his words. Then He adds, "But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:47). Since to believe Moses was to believe his writings, so to believe in Christ means to take Him at His word. Hence, to believe in Christ means to accept both the Old and New Testaments as of divine origin.

Only One Divine Book

"Of making many books there is no end," but there is only *one* divine book—the Bible. Every man made book that contains a spark of divinity gets it from the One Book. The fact that there is only one Bible is significant. If it is a human book, why have others of like character not been produced?

Too, it is significant that the Bible is the oldest book in the world. Others like it have not been produced, not for a lack of time, but the Bible is the oldest book giving ample time to man, if able, to produce another. The fact that man has not produced another is positive proof that he cannot.

The Bible has not only survived every effort on the part of man to destroy it because he did not like it, but has also survived every effort of man to imitate it. God has allowed the greatest forces to operate against it, and the mightiest minds of men to try to produce another, so that, after all, it might come to us as more precious than gold, separated from all the dross of men, as having been purified in a furnace of fire. How do you account for the Bible surviving all of this? The answer: It is gold; God is with it; it is divine. "Notwithstanding it has been exploded, demolished and made ready for the grave countless numbers of times, it goes on its triumphant way, giving light, hope, and salvation to unnumbered millions in many lands and in many tongues. It is translated into more languages than any other book." Such can be said of only one book—the Bible. There is only one divine book.

More than a thousand books have been written against the Bible. Has any other book had so many enemies? Why has the Bible so many enemies? Answer: Because it condemns the devil and the sinful practices of men. Men want to put it out of their lives by destroying it. As long as it is in existence, knowing what they know about it, they know the Bible will not just be put in the background. Could any book, except a divine book, have withstood so much destructive criticism? The answer is, "No!" Since only one book has withstood such a flood of destructive efforts, there is only one divine book. Men are still writing books against the Bible, but they will go to the grave like all the rest.

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

C.D. Plum

This question is nearly 2,000 years old—so old, in fact, that I wonder just how many will pause long enough to read what I have to say here. But someone may say the question is worn out with age and use. Maybe so, but there are still many millions of lost souls and, at the expense of being ridiculous in the eyes of some, I am going to answer this question right now with the Lord's answer.

An Alien Sinner

In showing what an alien sinner must do to be saved, I am going to study three examples—the Gentile jailer, the Jews on Pentecost, and the Ethiopian eunuch. We shall study each case separately, then combine our findings to get the complete story.

The Gentile Jailer

After the earthquake at Philippi, the jailer was scared to the point of taking his own life when he thought the prisoners had fled. "But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their

stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house" (Acts 16:28-34).

A summary of the case stands like this: The Philippian jailer heard the word before he believed, for "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). The jailer believed before he was baptized, for "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16).

Hence, it is specifically stated that this alien sinner believed and was baptized in order to be saved. This jailer was not baptized in the jail house, because he "brought them out" of the jail house and "took them" where there was sufficient water and was baptized. After this baptizing, the jailer brought the preachers into his house and they ate meat with gladness. The fact that repentance and confession are not specifically named in this record does not mean the jailer did not have to do these two things.

The Jews On Pentecost

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 (Acts 2:37-41).

Now, to summarize this case: It is specifically stated that this group of alien sinners must repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. That about three thousand of them did this is also stated. Let it be observed also that these Jews heard preaching before they obeyed Christ. The fact that believing and confessing are not formally and specifically mentioned in this case does not mean they did not have to do these things.

The Eunuch

Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:35-39).

A summary of what this alien sinner did to be saved stands like this: He believed, confessed Jesus to be the Son of God, and was baptized. Note also that the eunuch heard the truth preached before he believed.

The eunuch was not baptized in a jug, nor with water that came out of a jug. The record says, they "came to a certain water," not "carried it along with them in the chariot." When the eunuch was baptized, as in all other cases of New Testament conversion, the preacher went down into the water with the one to be baptized. Neither the preacher nor the candidate was on dry ground. New Testament baptism is a burial (Col. 2:12).

If one is saved before he is buried in baptism, then a spiritually alive person would be buried. The eunuch and the jailer both rejoiced after they were baptized, not before. The reason is that in being baptized they received remission of sins.

It will be noted that the jailer heard, believed, and was baptized. The Pentecostians heard, repented, and were baptized. The eunuch heard, believed, confessed Christ, and was baptized. In summary, all of this simply means that in every conversion of an alien sinner, such a sinner heard the truth preached, believed it, repented of sins, confessed Christ, and was buried in baptism for the remission of sins. Since God shows no partiality, He saves every alien sinner in the same way (Rom. 2:11).

“It's Alive, It's Alive!”

Jerry C. Brewer

Harnessing the power of a violent thunderstorm, the mad Dr. Frankenstein used electrical shock to animate his monster, played by Boris Karloff, in the old movie. When the monster stirred, the doctor exulted, "It's alive! It's alive!"

Since the Age of Enlightenment, the Roman Catholic Church's bloody dominion in secular, as well as religious, affairs has been held in abeyance in most countries. This has led many to conclude that the Catholic monster is dead, or at least benign. But, "it's alive!"

Revelations in recent years of predatory, sodomite priests have again stirred to life the Catholic monster's age-old claim that it's above secular law—a claim that targets the very jugular of American liberty.

As they crafted a sex abuse policy for disciplining errant priests, U. S. Roman Catholic bishops may have been hampered by an unseen handicap: They were too American.

...the Vatican's response begged some broader questions. Namely, whether American democracy and legal traditions are in conflict with the Vatican's insistence on the authority of its bishops and its laws for the worldwide church—what some see as a clash of cultures.

...The Rev. Thomas Reese, editor of the Jesuit magazine, 'America' and an expert on the workings of the Vatican, said that how the two societies view law and legislating is an area where the culture clash is particularly pronounced.

'Rome prefers laws be permanent and unchanging, while in the U. S., we change laws all the time,' Reese said.

...The Rev. Paul Robichaud, pastor of Santa Susanna, the American church in Rome, said the issue of civil authority is sensitive to the Vatican because of basic differences with America over how legal systems are viewed.

While Americans put great faith in theirs, Robichaud said, the Vatican is 'deeply suspicious' of secular legal systems' based on the experience of dictatorial societies in the Third World, former communist countries in Europe and continued controversy over justice in Italy itself.

... 'in the church, what Americans consider legitimate questions in Rome are seen as challenges to the authority of the teaching office (magisterium) of the hierarchy,' he said." (Carla Hinton, Religion Editor, "Cultural Divide Shows Up In Sex Abuse Policy Debate," *The Daily Oklahoman*, Oct. 26, 2002, p. 1D).

The observations of Reese and Robichaud reveal a sinister aspect of Catholicism that Americans have ignored since the election of Catholic John Kennedy to the presidency in 1960. Namely, that Catholicism has never relinquished its claim to power over secular governments, nor will it ever do so. That was a fact of life in the Dark Ages when the pope made and removed kings and emperors at will, claiming his “divine right” as the “Vicar of Christ” and his claim has never changed.

Sixtus V, who reigned as pope from 1585 to 1590 and built the Lateran Palace, issued the following bull aimed at two political rulers—Henry of Navarre and the Prince of Conde:

The authority given to St. Peter and his successors, by the immense power of the Eternal King, excels all the power of earthly kings, and princes. It passes uncontrollable sentence upon all. And if it find any of them resisting God's ordinance, it takes more severe vengeance of them, casting them down from their thrones, though never so puissant, [*"powerful" or "mighty" JCB*] and tumbling them down to the lowest parts of the earth as ministers of aspiring Lucifer. We deprive them and their posterity forever, of their dominions and kingdoms, absolveth their subjects from their oaths of allegiance, and

forbiddeth them to pay any obedience to them. By the authority of these presents we do absolve and set free all persons, as well jointly and severally, from any such oath, and from all duty whatsoever in regard of dominion, fealty and obedience, and do charge and forbid all and every one of them, that they do not dare to obey them, or any of their admonitions, laws and commands.

Sixtus' Papal Bull is what Rome considers the "permanent and unchanging" law of Catholicism that the Jesuit editor cited in the *Oklahoman*. This Bull sets forth Roman Catholic law for America in the 21st century. Catholicism claims that no body of men on earth can change its laws except a general council, and no general council has ever set aside this law declared by Sixtus V.

While Americans may believe the Roman Catholic Church sympathizes with our form of government that forbids an established religion, they delude themselves. Anyone who can see through a ladder knows those papal tentacles would strangle our freedom if given half a chance. The Catholic Church has never departed from the doctrine that all earthly kings, princes, governors, presidents and rulers of every rank are subject to the papal edicts and power of Rome.

Robichaud's explanation that the Vatican's "deep suspicion" of secular legal systems is based upon the experience of dictatorial regimes of the Third World and communist governments is laughable. Pope Pius had no problem with Hitler in the 1930s, or with General Franco in Spain where non-Catholics were persecuted. The Vatican's "deep suspicion" of secular legal systems derives from its own lust for power. History bears this out. Catholicism held absolute sway over governments in Europe during the Dark Ages and was the official religion in countries such as France, England, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Wales, Spain, and Scotland.

But Catholic secular power was not exclusively exerted during the Dark Ages. It has since been asserted at every opportunity, and one of those was in Spain in the 1940s. The plight of non-Catholics there under the Franco regime was the subject of the following letter in 1944.

...A number of pastors and evangelists have been executed, also a far larger number of church members; and no protestant religious meetings, public or private, are allowed in the greater part of Spain.

Except for the Roman Catholic version, with notes, the Bible is not allowed to be printed or circulated—in fact, a large number have been destroyed. The stock of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Madrid, amounting to 110,000 copies of Bibles, Testaments, etc., has been confiscated. Foreign missionaries have been obliged to leave the country, while about two-thirds of the Spanish pastors, evangelists, and colporteurs have been exiled, imprisoned or executed as indicated above, while a number have died in prison.

Children of protestant parents are compelled to learn the Roman Catholic catechism and worship images of the virgin Mary. In many places attendance at mass is compulsory in order to secure employment." (Letter from *World Evangelical Alliance* to British Parliament, Dec. 1944).

An evil, bloody, predatory, monstrosity, Roman Catholicism has never changed its purpose to control the governments of men. The reluctance of the Vatican to have its sodomite priests prosecuted by American courts for raping children was a predictable response. The Vatican recognizes no power—religious or secular—greater than its own, and no "Third World dictator" or "communist regime" can match Catholic atrocities when it gains either power. Those who forget the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them.

That could happen here if we forget the multitudes who were impaled, burned at the stake, beheaded, and stretched on torture racks by priestly executioners in bloody ages past.

Pre-Publication Offer On A New Commentary

“...To The Saints Which Are At Ephesus” A Commentary on Paul's Epistle To The Ephesians By Jerry C. Brewer

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Coming In May

Jerry C. Brewer

And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? (Matt. 21:23-25).

The May edition of *The Gospel Preceptor* will be a special issue focusing on the last words of Jesus' question to the chief priests and elders—*From Heaven, or of Men?* Our staff writers will ask and answer that question from the Bible about the denominations that dot the landscape and create religious confusion. Did they come from heaven, or are they of men?

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Rightly Dividing The Word Of Truth

Frank J. Dunn

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15 KJV).

In order to understand God's will concerning us and our duty toward Him, we must diligently study and rightly divide the word of truth. The two principal divisions of the word are the law and the gospel.

The law enfolds the entire Jewish economy which began with the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses at Mt. Sinai (B.C. 1492) and continued until Christ died upon the cross. Before His death, Jesus taught His disciples to observe all the commandments of the law, saying, “Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished” (Matt. 5:17-18).

“All things” were accomplished when in His crucifixion Jesus fulfilled His mission upon the earth. Thus, we read of the law that Jesus, “blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross” (Col. 2:14).

The gospel is the system of faith of the New Testament. Most of the principles of the gospel were announced by Christ while He lived on the earth in the flesh but, actually, His law did not go into effect till after His death on the cross. This is evident from

Hebrews 9: 16-17: “For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth” The law of Christ is contained in the gospel of Christ, or the New Testament.

In view of these facts, we conclude that any precept or example not enjoined by the law of Christ, after He died on the cross and after His law went into effect, is not then enjoined on any person today. On the other hand, whatever we find enjoined by the law of Christ, after it went into effect, is required of all of His followers today.

While Jesus lived upon the earth, He might forgive sins on any conditions, or on no conditions, if He so willed. But after His death, and after His law went into effect, forgiveness could not be obtained without compliance with His expressed will.

If we wish to know what is required of one in order to obtain forgiveness of sins today, we should read the book of Acts, where all the different cases of conversion are recorded. A careful reading of these will show that the following conditions are enjoined:

1. Faith in Christ (Acts 2:36; 16:31).
2. Repentance of sins (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30).
3. A confession of Christ (Acts 8:17).
4. Baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 10:48; 22:16).

If we want to know how to worship God today, we must go to the law of Christ. The specific items enjoined upon Christians in their public assemblies for worship are singing, teaching, partaking of the Lord's Supper, contributing, and praying to God (Acts 2:43; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:8). These are the only items enjoined upon Christians by the law of Christ when they meet together upon the first day of the week for worship.

A number of items were practiced by the Jews under the law of Moses which have no place in the law of Christ. For example, the Jews observed the Sabbath, offered animal sacrifices, used mechanical instruments in worship, gave tithes, had infant members, and burned incense.

Finally, let us not make the mistake of confusing the law of Christ with the law of Moses in any sense. There is no overlapping between them. There is no hint that a *part* of the law of Moses was abolished while a part remains. It was all done away when Christ died on the cross.

On the first Pentecost thereafter, the law of Christ was announced for the first time by the apostle Peter (Acts 2). On this day, the Great Commission which Jesus gave to His apostles after His resurrection went into effect. On this day, the church was born. On this day, Christ's Mediatorship and High Priesthood began—in short, the whole Christian system was ushered in and began to function in full force.

If we start at the right time and the right place to learn *how* to become a Christian, and *how* to live the Christian life, we shall have no trouble. If we start at the wrong place, we can never understand either the Old or the New Testament.

Note: All Scripture quotations, except 2 Timothy 2:15, are from the American Standard version.

The Sin-Sick World

Benard Ooko Kagaga

The world is sick and is in a total state of confusion by the devil, the “author of confusion” (1 Cor. 14:33), and needs attention of the Great physician “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases” (Psa. 103:3). A trumpet is being blown (2 Thess. 2:14) for a mass exodus “from the power of darkness into the kingdom of his (God's) dear Son” (Col. 1:13), for admission (Acts 2:47), for further treatment (1 Jn. 1:7), before discharge to an “eternal” home (2 Cor. 5:1-2), to be “with the Lord” (Phil. 1:21-23).

This world we inhabit needs strong and radical men who are willing to stand upon the truth before people “whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear” (Ezek. 2:5a) for that is a “Thus saith the Lord GOD.” (v. 4b). How do you rate John the Baptist? When he told Herod, “It is not lawful for thee to have her.” (Matt. 14:4), he referred to Herod's unlawful marriage to a woman who was “his brother Philip's wife.” (v. 3). Radical? The world *needs* strong men in faith like John to stand tall and blow the trumpet, not confuse people like those of Judah who doubted the power of God to save (Jer. 32:27) but those who *know* God's power. “Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee” (v. 17).

A sin-sick soul must be made aware of “what...[he]...must do” (Acts 16:30) to be healed, “Repent, and be baptized...in the name (by the authority) of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38), and he must know the hospital he is to be admitted to, for the Lord adds “to the church daily such as should be saved (healed)” (Acts 2:47). He must know the church of Christ, for it is God's hospital here on earth where our souls are being built up with “the gospel of Christ...the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16), before we are given a discharge to go home where we are to have “the leaves of the tree...for the healing of the nations” (Rev. 22:2), and “there shall be no more death.” (Rev. 21:4).

As you know the Great Physician has warned us of the quacks of old and of today: “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Pet. 2:1). These are quacks who will try to stand between you and the Great Healer Jesus Christ but are “all physicians of no value.” (Job 13:4b) who make “nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,” (Mk. 5:26).

It is only the prescription of the Great Physician with His authority that will heal a sin-sick soul for “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12). Therefore through His authority you must realize that you are sin-sick for “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” (Matt. 9:12) seek treatment “from this untoward generation.” (Acts 2:40) as you work out your salvation “with fear and trembling.” (Phil. 2:12). God has healing power and will “heal them” (Matt. 13:15) who believe (Jn. 3:16), repent (Rom. 10:9-10), confess Christ (Matt. 10:32) and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

Have you been admitted into God's hospital (Acts 2:47), waiting for the discharge to go home (1 Cor. 15:24a)? Then “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph. 4:1). If you have not, then, “why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16).

Continue To The End

Harold Gardner

It is not only necessary to commence a religious course, but to continue in well doing unto the end (Rev. 2:10) "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee: O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? For your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it passeth away" (Hosea 6:4). Israel and Judah had revolted from God and they had done so repeatedly. After presenting a promising aspect of piety, they turned aside like a deceitful rain cloud. God had been disappointed in their lack of genuine fruits of righteousness which, as their God, He had a right to expect.

It often seems that Hosea was writing to people in our century. For, how often today do we learn of those who started out as faithful members of the body of Christ, then turned back to the beggarly elements of the world? (Gal. 4:9).

It is sad that many today want tickled ears (2 Tim. 4:1-4) from the tinkling of a mechanical musical instrument more than simply lifting up their voices in unison and praise to our Great God. "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Cor. 6:17).

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Welcome Our Newest Staff Writer

Gene Hill



Gene was born in New Richmond Ohio and raised in the Dayton area. He graduated from high school in 1969, and served in the US Navy from 1970 to 1974. After mustering out of the service, he met and married the former Jerry Booker. After moving to Ft Lauderdale, FL, they both obeyed the gospel at the old Andrews Ave church of Christ in early 1975. Gene enrolled in the Florida School of Preaching in September, 1976 graduating in May of 1978 under the directorship of the late B.C. Carr. He has preached in Florida (twice), Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Louisiana and currently in Mississippi. Gene and Jerry have one son, Justin, one lovely daughter in law, Shannon, and five beautiful grandchildren.

Where The Faithful Meet

FLORIDA

Pensacola

Bellview church of Christ
4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, Florida 32526
Phone: (850) 455-7595
Email: bellviewcoc@gmail.com
Website: www.bellviewcoc.com
Elders: Paul Brantley, Bill Busch, Michael Hatcher
Preacher: Michael Hatcher

OKLAHOMA

Willow

Willow church of Christ 111 South Mayer
PO Box 236, Willow, Oklahoma 73673-0236
Phone: (580) 287-3257
Preacher: Jim Foster

Yukon

Yukon church of Christ
702 S. Ranchwood Blvd. Yukon, Oklahoma 73099
Phone: (405) 354-0238
Email: yukoncofc@hotmail.com
Website: www.yukoncofc.org
Preacher: David Ray

Lexington

Eastside church of Christ
205 NE 4th St, Lexington, OK 73051
Phone (405) 527-3131
Preacher: Pat Craig

TENNESSEE

Hornbeak

Hornbeak church of Christ
P. O. Box 97, Hornbeak, Tenn. 38232
Phone: (731) 504-1141
Email: harrelld@charter.net
Preacher: Harrell Davidson

Rives

Berea church of Christ
621 S Central High Rd., Rives, Tenn. 38253
E-mail: truth@bereacoc.org
Website: www.bereacoc.org
Preacher: Lee Moses (731) 599-5037

TEXAS

Denison

Morton Street church of Christ
2223 W. Morton Street, Denison, Texas 75020
Phone: (903) 465-4127
Email: cofc@cableone.net
Preacher: Jess Whitlock (903) 647-0736

Denton

Northpoint church of Christ
4224 North I-35, Denton, Texas 76207
Phone: (940) 220-9931
Email: northpointcoc@hotmail.com
Website: www.northpointcoc.com
Preacher: Philip Smith

Huntsville

Fish Hatchery Rd. church of Christ
1380 Fish Hatchery Rd., Huntsville, Texas 77320
Phone: (936) 438-8202
Email: bruces_1@netzero.net
Elders: Weldon Blake, Lavelle Henry, Bruce Stulting
Preacher: Bruce Stulting

Spring

Spring church of Christ
1327 Spring Cypress Road, Spring, TX 77373
P. O. Box 39, Spring, TX 77383
Phone: 281-353-2707
Email: springcoc@gmail.com
Website: www.churchesofchrist.com/
Elders: David Brown, Kenneth Cohn, Buddy Roth, John West
Preachers: David P. Brown, Geoff Litke