

The Gospel Preceptor

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

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The Last Will And Testament

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

Our subject has to do with the New Testament—The Last Will And Testament Of Jesus Christ. We find our theme in numerous passages. Referring to the gospel as a will, Paul said: “He taketh away the first that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified” (Heb. 10:9-10). In the preceding chapter the apostle said:

And for this cause he (Christ) is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they that are called might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. For where a testament is there must of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth (Heb. 9:15-17).

It will not be difficult for anybody who understands the simple legal processes that go into the making of a will to apply this illustration of Paul’s to the gospel.

The Old And New Testaments

Not many people know the difference in the Testaments, called the first and the second, the old and the new. Many preachers talk of the identity of the covenants, or testaments, and give the same authority to the Old Testament scriptures in the present dispensation as they give to the New Testament. In reality, many practices in religion of about all the religious bodies are brought over from the old dispensation, thus ignoring altogether the distinction between the Testaments made in the New Testament itself. Paul said: “But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of the letter” (Rom. 7:6). Again he said: “Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament” (2 Cor. 3:6). And again, “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son” (Rom. 1:9). These passages, and many others like them show plainly that we do not serve God now in the precepts and ordinances of the Old Testament, but in the new and living way—the will or testament of Christ.

But the common run of people are very slow to learn this fundamental lesson; and when we try to teach them the difference between the testaments they usually say: “That cuts out half the Bible; we believe all of the Bible; we want all of the Bible.” Well, I believe all of the Bible, too, but I would not attempt to do all of it. I believe that God told Noah to build an ark, but I would not attempt to build one. I believe that God commanded Abraham to offer his son on an altar, but I shall not attempt to offer my son on an altar. I believe that it was absolutely necessary for the Jews to offer their animal sacrifices, burn their incense, circumcise their children the eighth day, keep the sabbath, observe the Passover and the day of Pentecost, none of which should be preached or practiced now. Yet people say that they want all of the Bible, when everybody knows that they would not have it all if it were preached to them, even by their own preachers, and the preachers, themselves, know it. There is only one basis upon which to determine the right division of the word of God, and that is in the distinction between the two dispensations and the two testaments. We cannot be under both: “He taketh away the first that he may establish the second.” The second (the new testament) could not even be established without taking away the first. That is the meaning of “that.” If a young couple obtains a marriage license “that” they may

be married—it means the license is necessary to the marrying. When Paul said that “we are buried with him by baptism” *that* we should “walk in newness of life”—it means the new life depends on burial in baptism. So when Paul said that Christ took away the first testament *that* He might establish the second, it simply means that no new testament was possible without the first one being taken away, and if it is taken away we are not under it, and not subject to it, and no part of it binding on us today. It seems to me, friends, that anybody who is “at home” should be able to see that.

Have you noticed that when people try to adopt practices in the Old Testament, it results in a sort of an offshoot? The Adventists, for instance, love their sabbath day, so they go back and bring it over. The Catholics likewise love their incense, and they go back and bring it over. The Methodists and Presbyterians love their babies (infant membership) and they go back and bring them over. The Mormons love their women (polygamy) and they go back and bring them over, that is, they tried it, but Uncle Sam put a stop to it. And there is another class of Judaizing off-shooters—the Christian Church—they love their music (David’s instruments), and they go back and bring them over. How much better are they than the rest of them? None; they are worse, for they teach the difference in the testaments, whereas the others do not, and they are therefore downright inconsistent. If the Christian Church preacher should argue with an Adventist on the sabbath question, or a Methodist on the infant question, or a Catholic on the incense question, or a Mormon on the polygamy question, that Christian Church preacher would know where to make them stay. Ah, he would keep them back in the Old Testament; he would not let them cross the line between the testaments. But when he wants his mechanical instrument in the church, what does he do? Why, he jumps clean over the cross backwards, and lands right in the middle of David’s old testament goat pen and digs out an old rusty Jewish harp and plays it in the church. He says David did it! Well, David had eight wives, and took more, the Bible says. Yes, their names and addresses are in Second Samuel 3, and concubines besides. God would not let David build the temple in the old Testament because of some things he did, but there are preachers today who think it is all right for him to order the worship for the church of Jesus Christ!

The fact is, friends, that instrumental music in worship is the relic of an abrogated age and there is no authority for its use in divine worship. In Hebrews 10 we are told that the first covenant also had ordinances of divine service, “which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.” The “time of reformation” is the new dispensation—the New Testament. The “carnal ordinances” of the Old Testament were only “until” the New Testament came. They were “imposed on them,” the people that were under it, but they are not to be brought over into the New Testament church. The man who brings them over does so without divine authority, and sins.

The Essentials Of A Will

Let us look into the gospel will a little further. We all know that certain things are essential to a will. There is first, the testator, the man who makes it; there is second, the gift, the thing bestowed; there is third, the conditions, the terms upon which its benefits are to be received; there is fourth, the death of the testator, and it is never in force while the testator lives; there is fifth, the probate of the will, the court must pass on it; there is sixth, the executors, those who administrate the will; the seventh, there are heirs, or the beneficiaries of the will. But we all know that during the life of the man who makes the will that the will does not bind him; he is free to do as he chooses in all things. The will is effective only upon the death of the testator.

Now, what is the applications to the gospel; as it is Paul’s illustration, not mine. First, Christ is the testator; second, salvation is the gift; third, the conditions are those gospel commands set forth in the Great Commission of Christ to the apostles; fourth, Jesus Christ must die, the will was not in force during His life and ministry on earth, for He lived under the law; fifth, after His death the will was probated in heaven, when He ascended to heaven and “appeared before the throne of God for us”; sixth, the apostles became the executors, qualified by the Holy Spirit on Pentecost to administer the terms of the new will (Acts 2); and seventh, all who obey the terms and the conditions of the gospel become the heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. If this seems

legalistic, friends, remember it is Paul's argument, not mine. Furthermore, a legal will does not eliminate grace. It is by grace that a man makes a will in favor of its beneficiaries, and by grace are his heirs. It is by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that, under the will, we are heirs by salvation. So do not think for one moment that we are legalizing the grace of God out of the plan of salvation. His grace has been legalized into the gospel, and not out of it.

Before And After The Cross

If you are following me, you will remember that during the life of the testator the will is not in force, and the testator acts independent of the will, and as though it had never been made. But when the testator dies, his only power henceforth is in the will and not in himself personally—he acts through the will. During the lifetime (the personal ministry) of Christ, the will was not in force. “For a testament is of force after men are dead.” Paul did not have to tell us that, for we know it, but that's his way of making you believe the gospel—it is just as true of Christ as of men, that His will was not in operation while he lived on this earth. There are many instances during the personal ministry of Christ where He blessed men, forgave sins, and saved sinners—but they are not cases for us to settle our own case by, for the simple reason that we are under the will and they were not. “By the which will we are sanctified (saved)”—and that's Paul telling you which side of the cross you are on. A palsied man was forgiven and healed in Mark 2; Zacchaeus, the publican, received salvation in Luke 19; the sinful woman, a harlot, was saved and made virtuous in Luke 7; but these do not represent gospel conversion for the simple fact that they were not under the gospel. In each instance, the circumstances and the conditions varied, the testator was on earth with “power on earth to forgive sins.” Thus before the cross there was a diversity of conditions upon which men received the dispensations of the living testator's blessings; but after the death of Christ, there is a uniformity of conditions upon which men are saved—the terms of the will, sealed by the blood of the testator.

What About The Thief On The Cross?

There is a book in the New Testament designed especially to show men how to be converted. It contains many cases of conversion, under the preaching of the apostles. It not only tells us how to be converted, but by actual example shows us how to do the things that we are told to do. Yet men,—even preachers—will ignore this book entirely, the express purpose of which is to execute the will of Christ, and try to make a model case of conversion out of the thief on the cross, when it was not in any sense a gospel conversion. Wherever we go, whenever we tell anybody what Jesus said in the Commission: “Go preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned,” people instantly say, preachers and all, “Well, what about the thief on the cross?” If by that, friend, you mean that you aim to put yourself in the place of the thief and be saved like the thief, I must say that you may be a thief, but if you are, you still cannot be saved like that thief. Granting that the words of Christ to the thief, “Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise,” mean that he was saved (though Paradise was not heaven) still his case is no model for us. A simple question or two should be all that is necessary to clear the matter up. When did the thief die, and get his blessing—before or after the death of the testator, before or after the will? Was the will in effect, in force, in the case of the thief? “For where a testament is there must of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while he that made it liveth.” Now, just apply that to the thief and anybody who can see through a ladder can see that the case of the thief is not a gospel conversion, not being under the will. But we are under the will. Jesus died, arose from the dead, delivered the will to His apostles, commissioned them to preach, but ordered them to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they received the Spirit to qualify them as executors; then He ascended to heaven, probated the will and sealed it with the authority of heaven's court, and sent it in the power of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2) to the twelve who waited for their qualifications, and upon that eventful occasion for the first time the terms and conditions of the new will were declared and executed. And “by the which will we are sanctified.”

The Great Commission

The Great Commission is the Lord's own statement of the terms of the new will. He

made it, died for it, and then delivered it to the twelve for execution, after the Spirit should come. His instructions to them were specific, and their execution of his orders were divinely ordered. The Commission exists in three specific records: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Matthew records the command to teach and baptize. Mark records the command to preach, believe and be baptized, with salvation following. Luke puts down repentance and remission of sins in his name. Taking the witnesses and their testimony in due order, it follows that wherever the gospel is preached, men must believe it, repent of their sins, and be baptized in order to become heirs to the blessings of salvation. After this commission was given and executed on Pentecost, there were no exceptions to it. On Pentecost Peter said: “Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins”—every one of them were commanded to do the same thing and for the same purpose. Through the book of Acts the story is uniform—the gospel believed and obeyed and the promise of the new will enjoyed. It does not make void the blood at all, my friend. We are saved by the blood, but Jesus said “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). We are cleansed by the blood, but Paul said that we are “cleansed with the washing of water by the word” (Eph. 5:25). We are sanctified by the blood, but Paul also said that Christ sanctifies us “by the washing of water with the word” (Eph. 5:25). We are washed in the blood, but we are commanded to “arise and be baptized and wash away sins” (Acts 22:16). We have remission of sins in His blood, but the inspired executor of Christ’s blood-sealed will, said on Pentecost, “Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.” So, friends, you cannot separate the blood from the will, nor the will from obedience. “By the which will we are sanctified.” Then, won’t you obey it? Truly, there is a fountain filled with blood and it’s drawn from Emanuel’s veins. It is opened for you, it is opened for all; yea, sinners plunged beneath its flood lose all their guilty stains.

The Steps Of Salvation

Jerry C. Brewer

Christianity is a teaching and a taught religion. That’s why Jesus commanded His apostles to, “Go ye therefore and teach all nations...” (Matt. 28:19). No man can come to Christ except he is drawn by God (John 6:44), but that drawing is by teaching. “Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (John 6:45). Salvation—being saved from our sins—is not a result of some direct, supernatural influence. It comes from man’s response to God’s teaching. Salvation begins in learning (John 6:15) and culminates in obedience to that teaching (Rom. 6:16-18). The steps God has revealed in the Bible in order for man to be saved are simple, but require our response.

Hear The Gospel

To “hear” means more than comprehending the sounds of the words. It means to *understand* what is taught. Jesus said, “This people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Matt. 13:15). To hear the gospel is to understand it, and this is where being saved begins. Understanding the gospel is absolutely necessary for salvation.

Believe The Gospel

Belief of the gospel (faith) is based on the word of God. That is the source of saving faith (Rom. 10:17). True faith comes in no other way, except by God’s word. One must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Matt. 16:18; John 8:24) and believe the gospel of Christ (Mark 16:16).

But faith alone is inadequate. Belief in Christ and His gospel demands a response from man. “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (Jas. 2:24). Most religions say that one is saved by “faith only” but the Word of God does not teach that. Faith “only” is a dead faith. “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” (Jas. 2:20).

Repent Of Sin

Having heard (understood) the gospel and believed it, one must then repent of his sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30). This is the most difficult of the steps of salvation because it requires a person to change his mind and determine to stop living in sin. In fact, repentance is just that—a change of mind.

Jesus illustrated that in the parable of the two sons. “But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented and went. Repentance is the difference between “will not” and “will.” The son simply changed his mind and that’s what repentance is.

Paul wrote that, “For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Cor. 7:10). Repentance is not sorrow for sins, but a change of mind prompted by godly sorrow, and resulting in a change of life—the “fruits” of repentance (Matt. 3:7-8). Among the fruits of repentance is restitution. If one has sinned by stealing, he must make restitution of what he has stolen.

Confess Christ As God's Son

The heart that believes in Christ and is willing to turn from sin in repentance, will freely confess that faith before others. Jesus made that a condition of salvation. “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32).

What confession is required by the Lord? Some people say we must confess that, “God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven me.” But that cannot be found anywhere in the Bible. Let’s go to God’s word and find what the confession that saves is. “When the Ethiopian eunuch asked to be baptized, “...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” (Acts 8:37). That is the confession that must be made.

Be Baptized

One who has believed, repented, and confessed is still not in Christ where His saving blood cleanses from sin (Eph. 1:7). Salvation is in Jesus Christ and the culminating act of obedience— baptism—is the only way one enters into Christ. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Rom. 6:3).

Baptism is an immersion in water, “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). That is baptism’s single design. Religious groups say baptism is, “an outward sign of an inward grace,” or, “to show the world you are saved,” or other such non-Biblical reasons. Those are false. No one is saved who has not been baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3).

Jesus coupled baptism with belief in order to salvation. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Peter told his hearers on Pentecost that baptism is coupled with repentance. “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38).

The Ethiopian eunuch understood that baptism is coupled with confession of Christ for salvation. “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” (Acts 8:36-38).

Dear friend, the gospel of Christ is simple. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for our sins, paying the price that no man could—His own sinless blood. It is that blood which takes away the guilt sin in our lives and justifies us in the sight of God. After He was crucified, He was buried, arose from the dead the third day (1 Cor. 15:1-4), ascended back to heaven (Acts 1:9-11), and sent the Holy Spirit to complete the full revelation of Truth to man (John 14:26; 16:12-13; Acts 2:1-4). We now have that Truth in the New Testament. Will you not learn it, understand it, and obey it that you may be saved?

Talking Back At God

Cled E. Wallace

In his brilliant speech that rushed him to his death, Stephen charged that the Jews had “received the law as it was ordained by angels and kept it not.” Paul charged that although they had “a zeal for God” it was “not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.” They formulated a theory speculative and complicated. They judged and changed the law by the demands of this theory. Jesus charged that they made the law of God void by their tradition. It caused them to reject Christ because his measurements were wrong, by their theory, and later when the gospel was preached to them their objections to it grew out of idolatrous homage to a theory. Paul rebuked them with this question: “Nay but, o man, who art thou that repliest against God?”

All objections to the gospel and its righteous demands grow out of an egotistic veneration for human theories. All such idle chatter is silly blather because it is a presumptuous talking back at God. Nebuchadnezzar felt mighty and important when he walked upon the broad walls of Babylon and swelled with pride as he surveyed the works of his hands. God pulled him from his throne, gave him the heart of a beast and after the haughty king walked on all-fours awhile, ate grass as an ox, bathed in dew, with hair grown like eagles’ feathers and nails as birds’ claws, he accumulated a vast respect for God.

And at the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever; for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his own will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Men who chide God today with theories subversive of his truth, should learn a lesson from this humbled monarch of the East. “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven; for all his works are truth, and his ways just; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.” There is no more debasing pride today than the pride of party and no tenacity more stubborn than that which clings to unscriptural notions in religion. False doctrine is sugar-coated with pious phrases, pays lip service to God, while “in fact and in act” it dethrones him and sets up human, traditional authority. The rank and file, following blind guides, stumble along traditional paths ready to mouth cut and dried objections to the gospel when it is preached to them.

A case in point is a question handed me by a college graduate which reveals an amazing lack of Bible information and a state of mind requiring a thorough overhauling that it may be subject to Christ. “Do you think that members of other churches are going to hell? (No matter if these people are good Christians). Do you think a God with good common sense will condemn a good Christian just because he doesn’t belong to the Church of Christ?” This querist, whom I know to be a fine and talented character in many respects, is more interested in what “you think” than in what the Bible teaches. It is a common ailment and a very disquieting symptom. It indicates a deep-seated trouble. It sets up a theory based on what somebody thinks and if it is found that God does not endorse it, then the victim of human thought is ready to suggest that God does not have “good common sense.” It is a refined form of blasphemy.

In the light of the scriptures, which right do men have to judge God by a standard of “good common sense?” Such judgment would have kept Abel from offering his sacrifice, would have kept Noah from building the ark, would have kept Abraham from offering up Isaac, would have kept Naaman from dipping in the Jordan, and would have kept the Israelites from marching around Jericho. An appeal, to common sense today is a pretext that keeps many from obeying the command of God to be baptized and keeps them out of the church.

This same “common sense” rule keeps in operation churches and systems in religion the New Testament knows nothing about at all. A rule that operates that way is wrong. “We walk by faith, not by sight.” Faith must be capable of obeying God, even if it apparently outrages all common sense. “O, Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” “Let no man deceive himself. If any man thinketh that he is wise among you in this world, let him become a fool, that he may become wise.” When a man becomes this kind of “a fool” for Christ’s sake, he will not be found canceling out the commands of God on the ground of “good common sense.”

My information about the church and who will be saved comes mainly from the New Testament. It says nothing at all about “members of other churches” who are “good Christians.” All “good Christians” in New Testament times were “members” of the body of Christ, the only church we read about in the New Testament. There were no Christians outside of it. In the light of the sacred volume it is absurd to talk about God condemning good Christians just because they do not belong to the church of Christ. It is tantamount to saying that God can condemn a good member of the church because he is *not* a member of the church. The church is the family of God and includes all the people of God. The sectarian idea of this “other churches” business made up of only a part of the people of God is all wrong or else even the apostles as well as God were lacking in this highly valued commodity “of good common sense.”

So-called fundamentalists first began to rule out part of the divine scheme on the ground of “good common sense” and the modernists are finishing the job for them. Between these schools of common sense doctors, faith and scripture do not stand much show. The commands of God have been so much doctored by common sense that multitudes worship common sense and pay very little attention to anything the Bible says. It is a terrible thing to think of anybody “going to hell.” A theory of common sense says that nobody will. How do we know that anybody will? The Bible says so. What does it say about it? Those who obey the gospel will be saved, those who reject it are in the way of “going to hell.” Man’s thinking cannot change what God says and talking about what “good Christians” people are who refuse to obey the gospel is plainly dodging the issue. God does not consider anybody a “good Christian” who prefers a sectarian setup to the church that Christ built.

The Church Of *Whose* Choice?

Gayle Oler

It was no less than God who gave Christ the preeminence in all matters religious. “He put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23).

It is ours to be obedient to this heavenly act and ascribe unto Christ the first place in everything. It is not accidental that God placed Him there. It is tragic today that some would deprive Him of that place.

“Would men do that?” you may ask.

We reply: “They are doing it all the time.”

Take the word of Christ, for instance. It is to be given first place, but so many today will not regard it so. A faithful pursuit of personal desire, and an emphasized regard for their own preferences is usually the order of religion today.

How often have you heard it said, “Go to the church of *your* choice,” or something like that? Do you ever hear anyone say much about *God's* choice in regard to churches? Why is not the choice of Jesus Christ ever considered? Is *His* choice first respected in your religion, or is His choice entirely disregarded?

But does Jesus have a choice in the matter of churches? Surely, He does, and His choice is more pronounced than that of any person you know. Listen: “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the

ditch” (Matt. 15:13-14).

Again, “Husbands love your wives as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:25). This plainly shows that Christ was very decided about that matter. He had as much choice about the church that He expects a man to have toward his wife.

A man does not have a right to the church of his own choice while he expects the Lord to save him. When Jesus was in the world, He did not consider His own choice or pleasure. “Christ pleased not Himself,” we read, “...he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29).

Men have the Divine order exactly reversed. They have made churches of their choice, not of God's desire. They have put names on those churches entirely foreign to any expressed choice of God. They heap unto themselves teachers after their own lusts—or choice—and practice an altered “mode” of baptism because they prefer it. They have broken away from the Lord's Day for observing the Lord's Supper—the first day of the week (Acts 20:7)—and now choose to eat it whenever the notion strikes them just right.

So, today religion has become largely a matter of choice with human individuals, with the Divine choice disregarded. And their choices differ so much that we have an unearthly multitude of churches, names, creeds, doctrines, and methods. It brings home a forceful question each should answer: “Are my religion, the church to which I belong, the life I live, the name I wear in religion, the way I worship, and the doctrine I believe all a matter of my own choice, or is it the expressed choice of God and specified in His word?” Where is it specified?

Can you say with Jesus, “I do always those things that please him,” or must you say it is a matter of your own choice?

You belong to the church of *whose* choice?

Roman Catholicism—Lest We Forget...

Dub McClish

Introduction

The news media gave wall-to-wall coverage to the illness and death on April 2, 2005 of John Paul II, the Roman Catholic Pontiff. I do not recall hearing anything, whether from local or national radio, television, or newspaper coverage, that did not praise him. Without controversy, he was an international figure and wielded great influence, among both Catholics and non-Catholics. Roman Catholicism reaped multiplied millions of dollars worth of free publicity from the spectacle of ritualistic, mystical, and superstitious pageantry related to his death and funeral mass. The fanfare concerning the selection and elevation of Benedict XVI soon replaced the coverage of events surrounding John Paul's illness and demise. Again, the news industry glorified all of the Catholic ritual, tradition, and ceremony, all but swooning over it.

Those who know and cherish the simplicity of New Testament Truth concerning the church know that the things we have been seeing and hearing in these spectacles bear not the slightest resemblance to that Truth. Unfortunately, history has not been a popular or well-taught subject for at least a couple of generations in our schools, and many, including some brethren, are grossly ignorant of its details relating to this religio-politico colossus. While this institution is in the forefront of our attention, we will do well to refresh our minds concerning a few pertinent particulars relating to it.

Lest We Forget...

Contrary to the oft-repeated references I have heard by media commentators, the Roman Catholic Church is not two thousand years old. They consistently equated it with “Christianity,” which it most certainly is not. The two are completely unrelated. Those who have thus confused them have fallen prey to Catholic propaganda. Catholics would have men believe that their church is the one of which we read in the New Testament—the “original” church. However, one cannot believe them in this respect and believe the New Testament. The origin of Roman Catholicism is generally dated

from the beginning of the Roman papacy in A.D. 606. At that time the Roman Bishop, Boniface III, claimed for himself the title of “Universal Bishop,” the pope, the “papa” of the apostate church—and got away with it.

The rise of a universal bishop came only after five centuries, first of digression, followed by outright apostasy. Many departures from the doctrine, organization, worship, and work of the church in the first century under the inspired direction of the apostles occurred in the second through the sixth centuries. By the beginning of the seventh century what passed for Christianity bore no resemblance to the church for which the Christ died and to which the three thousand were added on Pentecost. The claim of the Catholic Church to be the church of the New Testament is utterly absurd.

Lest We Forget...

The Roman Catholic claim of “papal succession” is as unhistorical as it is unscriptural, yet the reporters blithely repeated this claim numerous times. Neither John Paul II nor Benedict XVI was/is a successor to Peter. **First**, Peter was never a pope. While he was prominent among the apostles, he had no more or less authority than any of the other apostles. Jesus strictly warned them that they were not to seek ascendancy or authority over others as the “Gentiles” do in their political kingdoms (Mat. 20:25–28). **Second**, Peter was married (Mat. 8:14; 1 Cor. 9:5)—a poor model for a pope, who, as are all Roman Catholic clerics, is forbidden to marry.

Third, Peter sinned and Paul rebuked him publicly (Gal. 2:11), an unimaginable circumstance for any of Peter’s so-called “successors.” **Fourth**, the Lord made no provision for any of the apostles to have successors. Matthias, selected to take the place of Judas, Jesus’ betrayer, was a replacement for Judas, not his successor (Acts 1:23–26). **Fifth**, as noted above, there was no pope between Pentecost and A.D. 606, so Catholics can hardly rattle a papal chain back to Peter. They cannot even get close to doing so for their papal “chain” reaches no further back than A.D. 606.

Lest We Forget...

The pomp, pageantry, and ceremony that drew so many “oohs” and “ahs” from the sycophantic media did not come from the New Testament. It rather came from a combination of Old Testament trappings combined with holdovers from the pagan practices of old imperial Rome that fell to the barbarian hordes in A.D. 476. From these sources, rather than from the Lord’s pattern for His church they borrowed their “holy water,” their elaborate and opulent vestments and mitres, their candles, their incense burning, and a host of other details of their ritual. Such things are as far from the practice of true religion as the East is from the West.

Lest We Forget...

I heard at least one reporter who had bought the myth that the apostle Peter’s bones rest beneath “St. Peter’s Basilica.” This, of course, made that architectural monstrosity a sacred place beyond comparison and surely made credible in their minds the Catholic claims of both church and papal succession. There is no proof that Peter was ever in Rome, much less that he died there or that his bones were ever brought there. Had he, however, traveled to Rome, died there, and been buried on the plot averred by the Roman Church, the building built thereupon would be no more holy than any other burial plot.

Further, if Peter were able to see all of the sinful and shameful things that have been and are being done in his name from his Hadean resting place, he would surely be shaking his head in utter disgust. His alleged successor reigns in regal splendor from an earthly throne set in a one thousand-room palace. I visited “St. Peter’s” and the Sistine Chapel in 1979 and was impressed with their splendor. These two buildings are just two of the many elaborate and palatial structures inside the walls of the Vatican, a 110-acre self-contained “nation” within the city of Rome, which maintains its own police force, bank, and post office. I seem to recall the Lord telling Pontius Pilate: “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence” (John 18:36).

I was not only impressed by the magnificence of these buildings and the earthly treasures they contained, but I was all but nauseated at the very thought of the one billion people who identify such crass material riches with the beautiful bride of Christ

predicted in the prophets and depicted in the Gospel. How unlike all of this gaudy affluence and materialism of the popes was the life of Peter, who had to tell the man at the Beautiful Gate, “Silver and gold have I none” (Acts 3:2–10).

Additionally, the American press is apparently totally oblivious to the fact—or does not care—that “St. Peter’s” was built largely from money collected through the heresy of selling indulgences (so much forgiveness or release from purgatory granted in exchange for so much money). The poor and ignorant, barely eking out a living and virtual slaves to the pope and his underling bishops, were the principal victims. The sale of indulgences by Johann Tetzel was the “last straw” for Martin Luther, upon which he wrote and nailed to the door of the Wittenberg Cathedral his notorious “Ninety-five Theses” of complaints against Romanism on October 31, 1517.

Lest We Forget...

The pope is not the “Holy Father,” as numerous reporters have called him recurrently. The only thing that exceeds the arrogance of claiming the name of Deity for oneself is that displayed by those who dare call another human being by this title that belongs to the Almighty. Such is as astounding as it is damning. Jesus taught His disciples to pray to “Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” (Mat. 6:10). We have no spiritual “father” upon the earth, and for this reason the Lord warned: “And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, even he who is in heaven” (Mat. 23:9). I never ceased to be amazed at how nonchalantly some unthinking brethren address or refer to a Romish priest as “Father.”

The pope is not the “Vicar of Christ,” another anti-Biblical and blasphemous title he has assumed for himself and by which many thoughtlessly address him. *Vicar* is related to *vicarious*—a substitute. Thus, in this title the pope claims to be the substitute or replacement for Christ upon the earth. It is rank heresy of the most presumptuous and vain glorious stripe for anyone to claim to be such, but the Roman Catholic Church shamelessly does so for its ruler. This claim includes the averment that the pope speaks for Christ and that his declarations are infallible when he speaks *ex cathedra* (i.e., “from the chair”). This *vicar of Christ* doctrine did not become official until 1870. I suppose “the chair” was not inspired before that date. How unlike the New Testament doctrine of inspiration (which gave its recipients genuine doctrinal infallibility in the first century) is this preposterous *ex cathedra* allegation (Mat. 18:18; John 14:26; 16:13; 1 Cor. 14:47; 2 Pet. 1:20–21). Joseph Smith had his hat; the pope has his chair. Inspiration never resided in a piece of furniture, but in the men to whom the Lord entrusted it.

Lest We Forget...

The reporters conveniently forgot to tell the public of the atrocities of which the Roman Catholic Church has been guilty through the centuries. It has not been reluctant to raise armies and engage in carnal warfare with its enemies. It sponsored the military campaigns involved in the bloody Crusades of the eleventh–thirteenth centuries. The infamous Spanish Inquisition of the fifteenth century is a part of its sordid history, by which means Catholic officials implemented unimaginable and unspeakably cruel forms of torture both to wring confessions—whether true or false—from suspected heretics and to punish those who thus “confessed.” Roman Catholicism has been extremely oppressive in the nations in which it is ascendant (e.g., Spain, Portugal, Mexico, South and Central America, et al.).

Observations on the Media and Benedict XVI

The media fell all over themselves praising John Paul II for the courageous way he upheld Catholic doctrine, even when one knew the liberal commentators sharply disagreed with the pope’s uncompromising stand on various issues. He stood for many of the things liberals hate and against many of the things liberals love. He refused to budge any on such things as abortion, artificial birth control, relaxing the church’s condemnation of homosexuality, ordaining women as priests, and allowing the clergy to marry.

During the “election” process by the College of Cardinals, there was much hopeful speculation by liberal media and liberal Catholics that the august council would choose a man who would be more open-minded. They could not imagine the election of one who would not bow to their pressures and inclinations. Ironically, since a man of the

same doctrinal mold as John Paul was chosen, all one heard from the liberal media is disbelief and caterwauling at such a poor choice. The same courage of convictions they praised in the former they are now pummeling in the latter. Why, to hear them tell it, this new pope is completely out of step with contemporary man—an outright disaster—since he will not bow to their humanistic agenda.

I agree with one of the new pope's early comments upon entering the office in which he decries the damnable and destructive nature of moral and doctrinal relativism. Liberals, whether theological or political, just never "get it" when objective authority is involved, and if Roman Catholicism is anything, it is authoritarian. The fundamental problem with the Roman system is that its authority is vested in men alone—one man in particular—rather than in Christ through His New Testament.

Conclusion

The extraordinary publicity given the Roman Catholic Church has served to place its egregious errors in sharp contrast with the simplicity of New Testament Christianity—the only Christianity there is in reality. Let us seek opportunities to discuss these errors (of which the foregoing are but a few of many, many more) with those who are ignorant of them.

Happy New Year (An Acrostic)

Jess Whitlock

At this time of the year people extend greeting and best wishes to another—"Happy New Year"—in cards, text messages, and greetings. John often does the same in his inspired writing: "The elder unto the well beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 1-2). Two wishes are high as he wishes for Gaius "that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

Let us do likewise. As we stand on the threshold of a new year, we wish for each of you a healthy and prosperous new year. So, Happy New Year to you in this acrostic!

H—old Fast

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not" (Heb. 10:23). Paul wrote, "We are saved by hope" (Rom. 8:24). Without faith there is no hope. To "hold fast" is to be faithful to the end.

"Christ as a Son over His house; whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6). Christ was a Son over His house (the church); we rejoice in this hope—the hope of that eternal home as we continue faithful unto the end of life.

A—semble

"Not forsaking our own assembling together as the custom (manner)... (Heb. 10:25). The Greek word for "forsaking" is *egkatalaipo*, defined by Thayer as, "To abandon, to desert, to leave in straits, to leave helpless." This is not of one who is irregular in attendance or even one who attends occasionally, but one who can no longer be considered a member!

As to the "day drawing nigh" it is my studied conviction that the writer has in mind the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. Since that event is now history, we can understand that day as the second coming of Christ, or the time of our own death. We are one day closer to such each 24 hours (Rom. 13:11).

P—ray Every Day

"Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another..." (Jas. 5:16). Faults that are known only to God are to be made to Him only; faults against a brother are to be made to him alone (Matt. 18:15-ff).

We are to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17) and "to pray in every place" (1 Tim. 2:8). The prayers of a righteous man avail much. (Acts 2:42; Jas. 5:16).

P—repare Your Heart

"Therefore, thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee,

prepare to meet thy God, O Israel” (Amos 4:12). A terrible judgment was coming to Israel because of their sins. God had pleaded with His people to return to Him. Five times in Amos 4 we read: “yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith Jehovah” (4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11). Verse 13 identifies Jehovah as the “God of hosts” which means “God of Battles.”

About 30 years afterwards, Assyria carried the children of Israel into captivity. God had warned earlier, “The Lord Jehovah hath sworn by His holiness, that lo, the days shall come upon you, that they shall take you away with hooks, and your residue with fish-hooks” (Amos 4:2). We sing a song on occasion based upon this text—“Prepare To Meet Thy God.”

Y—ield Not

“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41). Christ spoke to His disciples the night before His crucifixion. One would betray Him, and the others would abandon Him. They would need prayer as they undergo the spiritual testing ahead. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is wrung out emotionally.

There is the inner man and the outer man. The first is inclined to the better way and the other is inclined to the lust of the flesh (1 John 2:15-ff). Paul wrote, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thess. 5:21-22), or, “the very appearance of evil.”

N—eglect Not

“So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which” (Gal. 6:10). The Christian is do good works toward all men, let us give preference to a brother/sister in Christ. “To him therefore that knoweth to do good...” Jas. 4:17).

Paul wrote to young Timothy, “Neglect not the gift that is in thee...” (1 Tim. 4:14) speaking of the miraculous gift to enable him in his ministry. Since miracles have ceased (1 Cor. 13), we cannot receive such gifts as Timothy did by the laying on of Paul’s hands (2 Tim. 3:6). Any talent that we may have (to teach, to lead singing, to visit the sick, etc.) are talents of a secondary nature...

E—xercise Yourself

“...And exercise thyself unto godliness” (1 Tim. 4:7). Timothy was to exercise to godliness as Paul admonished him to “be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill thy ministry” (2 Tim. 4:5). Godliness simply means God likeness.

As children of God we need to spend time in exercise unto godliness, just as an athlete must spend planned and purposeful exercise for the body. We must do the same in spiritual training and time in study (2 Tim. 2:15). There are lots of “flabby” Christians today, and I am not speaking of the physical body.

W—ork Diligently

“Put them in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready unto every good work” (Titus 3:1). The “good works” are understood in relation to obeying civil government, and in general, good speech, behavior, and thinking as the context shows.

God’s Word prepares us for all “good works.” “Every Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is...furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, “Wherefore my beloved brethren, by ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding...” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Y—ield Unto Righteousness

“Neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:13). The child of God’s must yield his body unto righteousness, which means a deliberate and willful surrender.

“Righteousness” from the Greek *dikaioisune*, means “integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness...” That word is found 99 times in NT and 71 times in Paul’s writing. In Romans 6: 13, 16, 18, 19, 20. “Know ye not that to whom ye present your yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are...” (Rom. 6:16).

E—xamine Yourself

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor. 13:5). Paul speaks of introspection. The Corinthians had, in the words of Christ to the Pharisees, “left undone the weightier matters of the law” (Matt. 23:23).

In observing the supper of the Lord, Paul admonished, “But let a man examine himself...” (1 Cor. 11:28). Let us spend less time examining others, and more time in looking at self. Let us pray as did David, “Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart” (Psa. 26:2).

A—im At Perfection

“Wherefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on unto perfection; not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God” (Heb. 6:1). The Hebrew Christians were inclined to revert to the Old Law, or at least straddle the fence, trying simultaneously to be Jews and Christians.

The author admonished them to leave (fully) the Jewish system and press on (fully) to the law of Christ. The writer goes on to list 6 items (vv. 1-2) that are not fundamentals of Christianity; but primarily of Judaism. All 6 are found in the Old Testament system. Let us in the new year that lies ahead of us to aim (press on) to perfection.

R—edeem The Time

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:16). “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time” (Col. 4:5). Man’s time is of the utmost importance. We must make the most of our time, all of the time. “Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Pro. 27:1). Eternity is our goal, so let us take advantage of every opportunity to increase our faith.

Consider some familiar words: “Time is filled with swift transition,” “Take time to be holy,” “Swiftly we’re turning life’s daily pages.”

It was Benjamin Franklin who wrote, “Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of.” Tomorrow may be too late to begin living the kind of life that God would have us to live. “Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away (Jas. 4:13-14). (NOTE: This acrostic was willed to me as a chart by the late brother Dub Mowery).

Make The “Call”

David Ray

On the Day of Pentecost when Christianity began, Peter told the thousands of Jews gathered there that day that “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21). Many people today incorrectly teach that this means to pray to Jesus and accept Him into your heart (i.e., the so-called “sinner’s prayer”). But this is shown to be a false understanding, not only by the context but even by the very words that Peter used. The word “call” means “to invoke” or “appeal to”; and “name” refers to one’s “authority.”

Paul used this same word (“call”) in Acts 25:11 when he exercised his right as a Roman citizen to “*appeal* unto Caesar.” Had he *not* been a Roman citizen, he would not have had this right to “call upon the name of Caesar.” So we can see that, in order to be saved, one must appeal to the authority of the Lord, not pray to Him, or call out His name, or just claim to “accept” Him.

The Lord said His word will judge us (John 12:48). So, imagine standing before a judge and appealing to his authority regarding whatever crime you may have committed. If you’re going to appeal to his authority, you must have done or be willing to do what he says. If he previously told you to do, for example, fifty hours of community service in order to have the charges dropped, yet you refused to do it (or you only did *part* of it), how can you then appeal to his authority? The charges will not be dropped!

Peter, by inspiration, said that we must call on the name of the Lord. However, afterward—after his listeners had expressed their desire to be saved—he told them *how* to make this “call” (this appeal to the Lord’s authority). He told them to “repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (v. 38). This makes it clear that baptism is for the purpose of having one’s sins forgiven and is the way that a penitent sinner “calls on the name of the Lord.” If it needs to be made even clearer, Acts 22:16 says expressly that Saul called on the name of the Lord by being baptized; he could appeal to the authority of the Lord in order to have his sins forgiven because he was obeying the Lord’s command, given for this very purpose.

It is a sad fact that so many today have “accepted Jesus as their personal Savior”, but refuse to obey Him in such a simple act of obedience. It’s not that they refuse baptism altogether; they just do it for a reason other than what the Scripture says. They believe they were saved *prior to* baptism, and that baptism is to be performed *because they are already saved*. Do not be deceived; nobody was saved in this way in the Bible and one cannot be saved in this way today. We *must* “appeal to His authority” in complete (and continued) obedience.

You may claim to have “accepted Jesus”; but the real question is “has He accepted you?”

The Conversion Of Saul Of Tarsus

Jerry C. Brewer

One of the most devoutly religious men in the New Testament was a man called Saul of Tarsus. This is the man who later became Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ. But before he became an apostle, Saul persecuted the church of Christ, placing men and women in prison and putting many of them to death for their faith. One of those who died with his approval was Stephen (Acts 7:57-8:1). Of this act and others in which he tried to eradicate Christianity, Paul later said, “I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 26:9). Paul’s conscience did not condemn him for these acts because he *thought* he was doing God’s will and told the Jews that, “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1).

Many people today believe that the correct guide in religion is the conscience. But if that is true, then Saul did not need to be converted. His conscience was clear, even while he was putting Christians to death. God’s word—not man’s conscience—is the guide for man in all religious matters. Soon after Stephen’s death, Saul obtained letters from the high priest in Jerusalem giving him authority to arrest Christians in other cities. With this authority in hand, he departed for Damascus with a company of men to arrest Christians in that city and bring them to Jerusalem for punishment. On his way to Damascus, as he drew near to the city, “suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven; and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest” (Acts 9:3-5). Saul could have truthfully said, “Why charge me with persecuting you? I never saw you before in my life.” But he must have understood that the relation between Christ and His followers was so close that to persecute Christians was to inflict the same on Christ.

The next question Saul asked was, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6). But Jesus didn’t tell him what to do. Instead, He told him where he could find a man who would tell him what he must do. You know, a lot of people in times past thought they were saved if they saw a light in a dark place. But Saul had seen a light from heaven and was still told to arise and go into the city where it would be told him what to do. Why didn’t Jesus tell Saul he was saved and this light was proof of his salvation? Because neither Jesus nor His apostles ever taught that salvation comes through seeing a light. Why then did Jesus appear to him? Jesus answered that question Himself: “I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee” (Acts 26:16). He appeared to Saul of Tarsus not to save him, but to make him an apostle.

Although Saul had seen a light and Jesus had talked with him, he was still told to arise and go into the city and there it would be told him what he must do. The light had blinded Saul, so he had to be led by the hand into the city. There, he stopped at a house where Ananias was later told he would find him. Ananias was also told that Saul was praying (Acts 9:10-11). Saul of Tarsus had seen the Lord and was now praying, yet there was something necessary for him to do. But what did Ananias tell him to do? He did not say, “Pray on, Saul, God will save you in answer to your prayer.” Instead, he said, “And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). “But,” someone says, “He that calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” That’s true and Saul called upon the name (the authority) of the Lord by obeying His command to be baptized. Notice that the Lord said Saul would be told what he *must do*, yet the only thing Ananias told him was to “arise and be baptized.” If one *must do that*, I would hate to tell others they do not have to be baptized to be saved.

Here’s another interesting question: Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16), so why didn’t Ananias tell Saul to believe? The reason is that Saul was already a believer in Christ, and had been for three days before Ananias came to him. Neither did Ananias tell Saul to repent as Peter did his hearers in Acts 2:38. Why not? Saul had already repented. That’s obvious from his three days of prayer and fasting during his blindness in that house in Damascus. So, there was but one thing left for Saul to do, and that was to be baptized so his sins would be forgiven through the blood of Christ.

The Closed Open Mind

Charles Pogue

There is a sad condition characterizing a vast majority of those who are outside of Christ, but who believe He has saved them anyway. They say they were saved by—as they word it—“extending a personal invitation to Christ” to come into their hearts and lives, forgiving them of their sins and saving them. That is a non-prayerful way to disseminate the Biblically unheard of, and ineffectual, sinner’s prayer. The sad situation is that these folks are open to the ideas of man, but their minds are closed to what the Bible says. The Scripture says one must be baptized for the forgiveness of sins, thereby coming into Christ and being added to His church (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:47; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4). Because they accept the teachings of men in answer to the question, “What must I do to be saved”?, they also take offense at one who sets before them what the New Testament says one must do to have salvation and then to maintain it. The tactic of false religion is that if you can’t disprove the message, attack the messenger.

Men say one is saved by faith only, by God’s grace only. Why people cannot see the self-contradiction in that statement is amazing. The reason they do not see it is because they would rather pursue the path of human answers to the question of “What must I do to be saved”? instead of following what the Bible says. The fallacy of that reasoning was set forth when Solomon wrote the ways that seem right to a man end in death (Prov. 14:12; 16:25). The prophet Jeremiah penned the absolute truth that man cannot direct his own steps (Jer. 10:23).

If a man says once you are saved you are always saved, many of those who believe that falsehood, do not recognize that they contradict the erroneous doctrine themselves when they say, “Yes, but if I am a true Christian I will try to live a good life.” They ignore the truth that one can fall from grace (Gal. 5:4). They further ignore that James wrote that if “one of you” errs from the truth, pray for him. If he confesses his sin and leaves it, his soul has been rescued from death; not physical death, spiritual death. That passage refers to Christians. We know that, because in it James is addressing “Brethren” (Jam. 5:16-20).

The minds of the religiously lost are open to man’s claim that if any talent or ability one has is sincerely offered in praise to God, it constitutes an acceptable act of worship. Then let the un-captured thief give praise to God for his ability to remain free, to steal, and thereby worshipping God! While their minds are open to the, “anything goes in

worship” doctrine of man, their minds are closed to the truth that Jesus instructs one to not only worship God in spirit, but also in truth. Worship must be according to the acts worship set forth on the pages of the New Testament (John 4:24; Acts 2:42; 20:7 Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19). What God seeks in worship is not what *man* says is worship, but what God reveals. Why is that true? Because God is the audience. That goes completely against what some call worship via acts that entertain themselves, doesn’t it?

We can hear it now. Some will attack the use of all the aforementioned scriptures. “You Bible thumper,” they say. Our reply is, “You man thumper!” What a sad fact that the minds of people are open to their own ideas or those of other men, but are closed to the mind of God! When the scripture is set forth to them, they respond with an attack against the messenger. Why? Because they cannot answer the arguments. Why won’t people at least say, “I’ll check it out?” They must be satisfied with what they are. But the question, “Is God satisfied?” never crosses their mind. Nor, do they search the scriptures as the Bereans did (Acts 17:11) to see if what they believe is so.

We carry no ill will toward those who follow the doctrines of men. We sorrow for them. We hope they will obey the Gospel plan of salvation. If you are like me, you have some friends who are basically good people. Sadly, though they are good *lost* people. “Goodness” does not satisfy the conditions for receiving God’s grace for salvation. Just ask Cornelius (Acts 10:1-6; 11:14).

Whoever you are who reads this, please, please have an open mind and search the scriptures to see if these things are so. See if it is not the case that your open-mindedness to man has caused you to be closed minded to God.

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Yes, I Am Narrow Minded

Michael Hatcher

Often in an attempt to insult someone, the accusation is hurled that he is narrow-minded. This charge is a ruse because that usually means that you will not give in to me. Let us look at the charge anyway. Is it wrong to be narrow-minded?

If we look at Jesus, we will see someone whom many would classify as narrow-minded. Listen to Him: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). Notice the definite article. He claims to be the one and only way, truth, and life. Jesus asserts to be the only way to the Father. This is rather narrow-minded.

The teachings of Christ are also narrow-minded. The world says there are many churches, and that we are all just going different directions to the same place. Notice the teachings of the Bible. Jesus says, “I will build my church” (Mat. 16:18). Notice there is only one. “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling” (Eph. 4:4). Then Jesus is only going to save that one body (the church —1:22-23). “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body” (5:23). Again this type of teaching is very narrow-minded.

It is my desire to be narrow-minded because of what Jesus said about the way to heaven. “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt. 7:13-14).

It should be everyone’s desire to be narrow-minded, because that way is narrow. We should be as narrow as the Father, Christ, and the Spirit are. Being accused of being narrow-minded is not an insult, rather it is a compliment.

Defending An Evil Religion

Jerry C. Brewer

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is an email message I received from the website of *The Gospel Preceptor* in 2004. It was written in reply to an article we published about our correspondence with the U. S. Postal Service concerning its "Eid" stamp. The message is here printed in its entirety, without grammatical correction. Paragraphs are numbered for reference in our reply which follows.

The Message

Dear Editor:

1 - I read Jerry Brewer's commentary *Islam and the U. S. Postal Service* and almost vomited all over myself in disgust. I was entirely appalled. His request that the Post Office discontinue their line of Eid stamps seems to me both erroneous and, for lack of an altogether more appropriate word, idiotic. The Islamic celebration of Eid follows a month of fasting and, like Islam itself, is no way representative of the attacks on the World Trade Centers.

2-Ramadan, the holy month during which Muslims abstain from food, water, smoking, and sexual relations from dawn until sundown, is a time for spiritual renewal and a test of willpower for Muslims worldwide. The strength of the Islamic devotion to the One True God is most manifest during this month; the 'brawn' of Islam lays in the faith of its believers, not in the few misguided individuals who, as the Post Office reply explained, 'hide behind an incorrect interpretation of the Muslim religion'.

3-Unfortunately, the terrorists who attacked our country on the 11th of September are not the only individuals who harbor this 'incorrect interpretation'. Mr. Brewer is also guilty of an offense ultimately more dangerous than the threat of terrorism, and that is ignorance. His discussion of the Qu'ran demonstrated clearly an inability to analyze. Yes, the Qu'ran does appropriate punishment to the 'infidels' or non-Muslims. Christianity does the same because it preaches that those who do not trust in Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) as God's son and mankind's savior will be damned to hell.

4-It is our own ability to search out the truth and adhere to it that separates the 'infidels' from the 'believers' in any and every religion. The 'punishment' discussed in the Qu'ran is surely hell, not war waged against innocent non-Muslims.

5-Muslims are taught to respect the faith of others, and in a Muslim society that follows the word of the Qu'ran, all non-Muslims are guaranteed every basic civil, legal and human right guaranteed to Muslims, including the right to respect their respective religion.

6-Mr. Brewer also, and I assume inadvertently, revealed the simplest truth about Islamic warfare: 'And fight for the cause of God against those who fight against you: but commit not the injustice of attacking them first: God loveth not such injustice'. In the Qu'ran, God guarantees his followers the right to protest himself or herself against physical attack, or religious persecution, but does not condone a Muslim to instigate any such violence. One can 'fight for the cause of God' against those and only those 'who fight against you'.

7 -A Muslim understands, as does a Christian, that this life on earth is merely a bridge into the hereafter. Therefore, if a Muslim is denied the right to worship God through Islam, he or she is allowed to defend themselves not only against bodily attack—warfare—but also against any oppressors that deny them their ability to fulfill their purpose on earth: to worship God and live for Him alone.

8-The United States is a country founded on the ideal of freedom, and one of those freedoms guaranteed to all of its citizens is that of religion. Not only is Islam a peaceful religion, demonstrated throughout the Qu'ran and by the

life of the Prophet (peace be upon him), a man who only fought in defense of his religion or to protect those being persecuted for their beliefs, but the word 'Islam' itself is derived from the Arabic word 'salam' or 'peace'.

9-It seems that Mr. Brewer's hatred for this religion, a hatred culminated in an infantile request to abolish a series of stamps, stems from his own insecurity about that which he preaches. Why else would he feel the need to falsely deride a religion that teaches humility, a submission to God, peace, and the brotherhood of man? Perhaps because Islam is also a religion that is the fastest growing faith not only in America, but also on Earth."

Signed: Lora AlKhawam, Elmhurst, IL

Our Reply

Paragraph 1-Despite her near-vomiting experience, "disgust" and characterization of the editor as "idiotic", one cannot really believe that Lora AlKhawam is a Muslim. She writes, "...Islam...is in no way representative of the attacks on the World Trade Center," yet every thug who participated in the hijacking of those planes and the commission of mass murder on Sept. 11, 2001 was a Muslim seeking the martyrdom which is taught in the Qu'ran.

Islam was born of the violence and profligacy of Muhammed and propagated at the point of a sword. The Qu'ran demands death for those who refuse to embrace it.

The view of modern Islamic activists, that 'Islam must rule the world and until Islam does rule the world we will sacrifice our lives,' (Al-Badr spokesman Mustaq Aksari, CNN, Sept. 19, 2001) is neither extreme nor even remarkable from the standpoint of traditional Islam. It has been divinely sanctioned from the moment Muhammed had established a safe power base in Medina: 'O Prophet, Rouse the believers to the fight,' the Qu'ran orders (8:65), and promises that 20 Muslims, 'patient and persevering,' would vanquish 200 unbelievers; if a hundred they will vanquish a thousand. Allah further orders the faithful to fight the unbelievers and be firm with them (9:123) (Serge Trifkovic, *The Sword of The Prophet*, Regina Orthodox Press Inc., Boston, 2002, p. 87).

On Sept. 11, 2001 there were only 18 Muslims who were 'patient and persevering' who murdered thousands of innocent men, women and children. AlKhawam surely cannot be a Muslim if she denies this fundamental teaching of Muhammed's book.

Paragraph 2-Now the U. S. Postal Service is an authority on Islam! AlKhawam needs to read her own "holy book" instead of parroting the misguided, politically correct, and ignorant, theological meanderings of a lower level postal bureaucrat. See the reply in paragraph 1.

Paragraph 3-The charge is made that my discussion demonstrates "an inability to analyze". I can read the Qu'ran. What "analysis" is necessary? When Muslims are commanded to kill us "infidels," what analysis is needed? That's pretty plain language for anyone—even a Muslim—who can see through a ladder.

Perhaps AlKhawam will "analyze" this from the Qu'ran: "O, Prophet, exhort the believers to fight. If there be of you twenty steadfast, they will overcome two hundred and if there be of you a hundred, they shall overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve, because they (the disbelievers) are a folk without intelligence" (Sura 8:65).

Not only does the 'All forgiving Allah' command his followers to kill anyone who is not a Muslim, but he is also says that all non-Muslims are so stupid that they will be unable to defend themselves and therefore deserve death (Rick Popejoy, "Religious Toleration of Muslims In Islamic States," *Islam—From God or Man?*, Spring Bible Institute Lectureship, Spring, Texas, 2003, Ed. David P. Brown, p. 433).

AlKhawam then says that Christianity also teaches punishment of unbelievers. But there is one major difference in punishment of unbelievers in the two religions. In Christianity, *God* will take vengeance on unbelievers at the last day (2 Thess. 1:6-10). That's a far cry from Muhammed's bloody religion which authorizes its followers to act as judge, jury and executioner of innocent "unbelievers". You see, in Christianity, final

vengeance is God's, not man's. But Islam looses its hordes upon the “*kafir*” (infidels according to them) in “holy” pogroms in *this* life.

Paragraph 4-Some of the punishment discussed in the Qu'ran is hell. But AlKhawam ignores the obvious references in that evil book which not only authorize, but *demand*, Muslims to murder unbelievers.

Paragraph 5-This one borders on what AlKhawam calls, “idiotic”. Here it is in its entirety that readers may have it before them: “Muslims are taught to respect the faith of others, and in a Muslim society that follows the word of the Qu'ran, all non-Muslims are guaranteed every basic civil, legal and human right guaranteed to Muslims, including the right to respect their respective religion.”

I suggest that AlKhawam go to Saudi Arabia and hand out Bibles or some of A. G. Hobbs' tracts on the streets of Mecca or Riyadh. Saudi Arabia is the cradle of Islam and a “Muslim society”. But distribution of Bibles or tracts which teach New Testament Christianity will be punished by death in that land, and any Muslim who converts to Christianity in that society will meet the same fate. Let AlKhawam do those things in Saudi Arabia and demonstrate to us how “*tolerant*” Islam is. Note the following:

Although the Qu'ran states that ‘there is no compulsion in religion,’ Islamic states often interpret (“analyze?”, JCB) that to mean that, ‘there is no competition within religion’ within their borders. Iraq, Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Pakistan, Indonesia, Kuwait and Egypt are among the countries blasted by the State Department's year 2000 Report on International Religious Freedom. In hard core Muslim countries, any Muslim who violates *tawhid* by becoming a Christian may forfeit his life, family, or property. In several ‘moderate’ Muslim countries are stowed behind walls within which Bibles and church bulletins must remain (Jack Evans, *The Cross or The Crescent?*, Wichita Falls, TX: Western Christian Foundation, 1977, p. 9).

Paragraph 6-The Qu'ran demands death for all “*kafir*” (infidels) who do not embrace Islam. If AlKhawam were a true Muslim, she would know that from Sura 8:65.

Paragraph 7-Here is an “inadvertent” statement from AlKhawam. Christianity demands all Christians to submit to the governing powers (Rom. 13), but to obey God if those powers' laws conflict with His (Acts 5:29). The Bible does *not* authorize Christians to inflict bodily harm on those who persecute them (Matt. 5:11-12, 43-45). But AlKhawam admits that the Qu'ran authorizes a Muslim to fight and kill their persecutors. The Christian is enjoined to pray for his enemies, while Islam says to lop off their enemies' heads. A “peaceful religion?” You decide.

Paragraph 8-“The life of the prophet” demonstrates that Islam is a religion of “peace?” This statement again shows that AlKhawam is not a true Muslim. The life of Muhammed was one of treachery, murder, fearful vengeance, robbery, and hatred of all who disagreed with his profligacy. After his flight to Medina, which had a sizeable Jewish population, Muhammed began plotting vengeance against the merchants of Mecca with a small gang of criminals.

This was the beginning of Muhammed's trail of violence, hatred and bloodshed that would soon destroy the once flourishing culture of Arabia. The story has been documented in detail by his biographers: surprise raids on trade caravans and tribal settlements, the use of plunder to recruit an ever growing army of greedy desperadoes, assassinations of opponents, blackmail, expulsion and massacre of Jews of Medina, attack and enslavement of the Jews in Khayber, rape of women and children, sale of these victims after rape, trickery, treachery and bribery employed to their fullest extent to grow the numbers of his religion, Islam, which, ironically, was supposed to mean ‘Peace’” (Popejoy, 429, 430).

Does *true* Islam, demonstrated by ISIS, come to mind?

Paragraph 9-AlKhawam's *argumentum ad hominem* is the last refuge of scoundrels who have no defense for their evil doctrines. Saying, “Mr. Brewer's hatred for this religion, a hatred culminated in an infantile request to abolish a series of stamps,

stems from his own insecurity about that which he preaches”, she attacks the messenger instead of addressing the issues. But that’s Islam for you. Kill the “unbelievers”. “Mr. Brewer’s...insecurity?” “...I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim. 1:12). Yes, I hate Islam. “Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way” (Psalms 119:104), but I do not hate Muslims. Jesus Christ tasted “death for every man” (Heb. 1:9) and that includes every Muslim—one of which AlKhawam is.

Moreover, AlKhawam’s statement that Islam is, “the fastest growing faith not only in America but also on Earth,” neither proves her case nor negates the facts of Islam’s bloody beginning and perpetuation through the centuries. I’m sure those wicked people who surrounded Noah could have said, “Noah, we are the largest group in the world, so that proves you are a first class nut for building this silly ark.” Numbers do not constitute truth (Ex. 23:2; Matt. 7:13-14) and there is absolutely *no truth* from God in Islam.

What Will Become Of The Wicked?

Bobby Key

I have before me a letter from a very angry young man. His last two sentences read, “How can you put your faith in a man named Jesus, an out-and-out homosexual, to save you? Right now I wish I believed in hell, so I could tell you where to go.”

A well known editor wrote,

Hell has gone out of style. Not many preachers preach about it any more and not many people really believe in it. This writer is included. The idea of an all-knowing God deliberately creating faulty human beings so that He might roast them forever in lakes of fire seems very strange. There isn't any road to hell.

Our liberal editor is speaking for the majority of people today. Preachers are not doing much to help a bad situation. Some go out of their way to get everybody to like them, and say, “...peace, peace; when there is no peace” (Jer.6:14). The fear of punishment has been largely removed from our preaching. Because of this, people continue in sin (Eccl. 8:11) and there is no fear of God before their eyes.

If hell does not exist, the devil certainly is a fool! The Lord was also mistaken, for He talked a great deal about a place called “hell” and advised everybody to stay out of it. He asked, “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Matt. 23:33).

The following passages tell the fate of the wicked:

1. “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (Psa. 9:17).
2. “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matt. 25:46).
3. “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41).
4. “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28).
5. “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

Every person on earth who walks in his own willful and stubborn way, refusing to obey God, will suffer eternal punishment—will be eternally banished from the presence of God, having forfeited eternal life. The state of the wicked will be eternal. God help us to stay out of such a place.

Mistakes Of Jehovah's Witnesses

G. K. Wallace

These words are not penned to injure the followers of Judge Rutherford and Charles T. Russell. They are written that they may be helped. They have been lead astray by the teachings of a man who says that he desires to help them.

In regard to such teachers Christ says, "Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit." (Matt. 15:14). Russell was a blind guide. Rutherford follows Russell. Jehovah's Witnesses follow Rutherford and they are all thus being lead by the blind. A statement as severe as the one just made should be substantiated by proof. How may one determine whether or not Russell and Rutherford are blind guides? "And if thou say in thine heart, how shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken." (Deut. 18: 21-22) Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:15) There are a lot of things I do not know about trees. However, I can tell an apple tree if it has apples on it. Most any one can identify an orange tree, if it is loaded with ripe oranges. So one is able to tell a false prophet by his fruits. The fruit borne by these men indicates they were not of God. Note some of the fruit taken from this "Watch Tower" tree. This ripe fruit indicates the kind of tree it is. Some of this fruit is a little over ripe-it is putrefied. "By this time it stinketh." Now if you will hold your hand over the downward projection from between your eyes the extra ripe fruit will be brought forth. Russell said:

1. The kingdoms of this world would end in 1914. (Written before 1914).
2. Present governments to be overthrown in 1914.
3. That Christendom would be overthrown in 1914.

If these things do not come to pass Mr. Russell says that he has been proven wrong. If this does not happen, he says, "would that not prove our chronology wrong, yes surely." These things did not happen and Mr. Russell being the judge he was a false prophet. "Yes surely," says he, that would prove me and my teachings wrong. And that it has done. "A faithful witness will not lie." (Prov. 14:1) Facts show that Russell lied. Therefore, he is not a faithful witness. How dare, then, do they call themselves Jehovah's Witnesses?

If this odoriferous fruit has not already moved you to nausea we will note some of the wild guesses of Judge Rutherford.

Rutherford is reluctant to admit his connection with Russell. He likes to appear independent. He desires people to think that he is moved by the power of God instead of stealing all his thunder from Russell. The Prefatory to the book entitled, *Millions Now Living Will Never Die* is a letter addressed to the Judge from Mr. G. C. Driscoll that clearly shows his connection with Russell. Mr. Driscoll is the man who syndicated Pastor Russell. Mr. Driscoll is the man who syndicated Pastor Russell's sermon in thousands of newspapers in many lands. In order to build up Rutherford before the followers of Russell, Mr. Driscoll taught that Rutherford was inspired. "It will not be necessary for anyone to consider your statements as a guess," says Mr. Driscoll. The right hand man of Russell has now laid his hands on Rutherford and for him claimed inspiration. On page eight Judge lays claim to inspiration. "It was impossible for a human mind to look down through the corridors of the ages and foretell what the future and what will happen in 1925." He says a human mind cannot do that. Yet he tells what will happen. Therefore, Judge leads his followers to believe that his mind is divine. Note some of his prophecies:

1. The jubilee cycle is to begin in 1925 and the earthly phase of the kingdom shall be recognized. (Remember this was written in 1920)
2. In 1925 Abraham will return to the earth in human perfection.
3. Isaac and Jacob will also be resurrected in 1925.
4. Millions living in 1920 will never die.

5. In 1925 people who are very old and ready for the tomb will return to the days of their youth, and live forever on the earth.

This fruit is taken from the book entitled, *Millions Now Living Will Never Die* (pp. 89, 97, and 98).

Rutherford has lived long enough to demonstrate to the world that he is a false prophet. He says, "Those who accept the ransomer shall return to the days of their youth." Judge has not returned to the days of his youth he is getting older every day. But those, says he, who accept Christ will return to the days of their youth. He has not returned to the days of his youth, therefore, according to his own statement he has not accepted Christ.

Mr. Driscoll said, "His words were not guesses." Rutherford said "only God could tell what is in the future." Since the prophecies of Rutherford did not come to pass we know that God did not have anything to do with it and therefore Judge is proven a false teacher. "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." (Deut. 18:22) Thus all can see that what Rutherford says is **the thing which the Lord hath not spoken**.

Should Rutherford Be Put To Death?

For the sake of the health of Judge Rutherford it is good that he is not living under the law of Moses. Had the Law been in vogue he would have been put to death in 1925. God said, "But the prophet that shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak even that prophet shall die." God would not permit such men to live under the old law. The grace of God has spared their lives under the new law. Even though God permits them to live we are warned to not listen to them. "Many false prophets have gone out into the world" and Judge Rutherford is one of them. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Their Doctrine Contradicts The Bible

Not only is Rutherford proven to be a false teacher by the failure of his prophecies but every distinctive principle he holds contradicts the Bible.

1. **They teach that man is wholly mortal.** The proof-texts they use are the ones that refer to the body. In Romans 8:11 God says our bodies are mortal. Now where is the text that says that spirit of man is mortal? The statements dealing with the spirit of man they ignore. They are concerned only with the ones dealing with the body. The Bible says the body without the spirit is dead. It does not say the spirit without the body is dead. They are soul sleepers and such passages as 2 Cor. 5:6; Phil. 1:21-24; 2 Pet. 1:13-14; and Matt. 17:1-8 form no part of their doctrine.
2. **They deny the Bible doctrine about hell.** They say there is no hell and yet do more preaching about it than anybody. Where there is no penalty there is no law. They are determined to disregard the law of God and, like Robert Ingersoll, try to ease their conscience by preaching that there is no place of ever lasting torment. However all their preaching and writing cannot destroy the force of one single passage of the Word of God. "And these shall go away into eternal punishment . . ." The Lord says the wicked will be punished eternally. Paul says this punishment will consist of tribulation and anguish. (Rom. 2 :9) Jehovah's Witnesses say this is not so. However, I had rather believe Jehovah.
3. **They deny the existence of the kingdom of God.** This has ever been a stock argument of the devil. If he can persuade men to regard the kingdom as something future, certainly they will not emphasize its law of induction. When men wake up to the fact that the only kingdom God will ever have on this earth is here now, they will spend more time trying to get men into it that they might be saved, and less time arguing about a Utopia some where in the future. That the kingdom exists on earth today and was in existence in the days of Paul is too plain to be denied. Paul says the brethren at Colosse were in the kingdom. (Col. 1:13) How could they get into the kingdom if it did not exist? They were in the kingdom, says Paul. Therefore the kingdom was in existence. It is claimed by some, however, that John, in the book of Revelation teaches the kingdom to be

future. There are many things about the book of Revelation that I do not know. But this one thing I do know—it does not teach the kingdom to be future. John writes only eight verses, and stops, as it were to forestall any such future kingdom idea, and tells us plainly that he was already in the kingdom. “I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus.” What does this passage in Revelation mean? I may not know what it means but I know what it does *not* mean. It does not mean a future kingdom, for John says he is already in the kingdom. As for me, I shall take what Paul and John have to say and regard Rutherford and all his satellites as false teachers.

We therefore exhort these people to forsake Judge Rutherford and accept Jesus Christ. Throw away his books and take the Bible. No man can take both.

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A Journey Between Curtains

E. H. Ijams

“I am the resurrection and the life...” (John. 11:25). “I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore...” (Rev. 1:18 ASV).

It has been said that we live this life between two curtains. Behind us is one curtain—the past. It shuts out all possibility of first-hand knowledge of things before we came upon this scene of action. Before us is another curtain—the veil of the future. It cuts off all possibility of actually knowing what is to come.

In the “Russia that used to be” it is said that the children of the Czar, going from the palace where they were immured with their mother and aunts, to the great cathedral in Moscow, walked between curtains held on either side by serfs, that the people might not see them and that they might not see the people.

Again, someone has said it is like that with all of us. On this earth, during our few short days we walk with a curtain on either side, one hiding the past, the other hiding the future. We cannot see backward or ahead. We know only that we must die—go on.

A Human Question And Divine Answer

In the far-off days of Job, one of the oldest, most serious questions of the world was asked. “If a man die, shall he live again?” (Job 14:14). In the nearer days of Jesus Christ that question was answered by an actual demonstration. The disciples of the Teacher who said, “I am the resurrection, and the life,” followed Him to the cross, and then afterwards lifted the lifeless body from the suspending nails and buried it in a rock-hewn tomb. Three days later these disciples found the tomb tenanted by nothing but the grave clothes in which they had wrapped a dead body. But in another place that day they saw Him whom they had buried—alive again. For 40 days they saw Him repeatedly, manifest in the body that had been pierced by the Roman spear and buried in Joseph’s tomb. Saw Him! Heard Him! Handled Him!

These men, whose testimony we have summarized, were not speculative philosophers. They were rather witnesses telling what they had seen and heard. And their testimony answers the question of whether it is possible to have life after death, for, as we know, their witness is that, though they saw Jesus die, they also saw Him alive again after burial in a sealed tomb. Their claim is, We know Jesus died and lived again, because He “shewed himself alive” to us “after his passion by many infallible proofs...” (Acts 1:3). They heard Him say, “I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore.”

Now, this evidence of competent witnesses that the resurrection of Jesus was an actual fact confirms what the masses of mankind have always believed, and still believe—that there is life beyond this life. Though human hearts in all ages and in all countries have struggled with the question of whether there is life beyond death, the majority of men are ready to believe God’s affirmative answer in the gospel of His Son—the grave is not the end.

Some Say There Is No Resurrection

In our day there seems to be an increasing number of men who are glad to deny the hope of immortality. Some of these are ostentatious and sensational in parading their doubts. Among these was the noted criminal lawyer, Clarence Darrow who was taken with beguiling himself with the great questions that stir the human mind. When he was three years past “the allotted span,”—three score and ten years—and the long morrow which was soon to come, he believed it would be one lost in complete forgetfulness.

Darrow said, “The evidence against the persistence of personal consciousness is as strong as the evidence of gravitation, and much more obvious. It is as convincing and unassailable as the proof of the destruction of wood or coal by fire.” He, of course, never knew anyone to go on the long journey and return with the desired information. The beginning of life, he said, yields no evidence of the beginning of a soul, and fading memory of past events in personal experience convinced him that consciousness, too, is dulled with the weight of time and will slip away with death.

Darrow also said,

The thing we call ‘life’ is nothing more than a state of equilibrium which endures for a short span of years between two opposing tendencies of nature — the one that builds up and the one that tears down. In old age, the tearing-down process has already gained the ascendancy, and when death intervenes, the equilibrium is finally upset by the complete stoppage of the building-up process, so that nothing remains but complete disintegration. The energy thus released may be converted into grass or trees or animal life, or it may lie dormant until caught up again in the crucible of nature’s laboratory. But whatever happens, the man— you and I—like the lump of coal that has been burned, is gone—irrevocably dispersed. All the King’s horses and all the King’s men cannot restore it to its former unity.

And that was Darrow’s authority on immortality. But remember, there is nothing in science or philosophy inconsistent with a belief in immortality, and there is no possibility of proving that immortality does not exist, for no one is justified in making that statement until he has explored the entire universe and the spirit world and found that they contain no immortal souls.

It has been shown that our sense organs are not sufficiently acute to discern all qualities of matter (radio waves, for instance). Why then should they be expected to discern a spirit? And the soul’s capacity for “endless improvement, service, and worship,” argues Clarence T. Wilson, “points to a future which will make possible further developments than we achieve here.” For, “If immortality be but an iridescent dream, the most illustrious lives that earth has known may well be represented by broken pillars and unfinished shafts.”

Justice also demands the existence of life beyond the brief span of an earthly walk “between the curtains of time.” Life here is all too brief to exemplify the full scope of divine justice. But the partial view of justice which we now see does not in any sense forbid the hope that, in the continuum of life, a man like Paul may reap the full reward he so richly deserves. Nor does it appear unreasonable to expect that monsters like Nero may somehow, sometime, be made to answer to that Justice which in this life they managed to evade.

Death Is Another Life

It has been said that, “Death is another life.” In just this form these words are perhaps more suggestive than literal. It is more accurate to say of death that it is “the *threshold* of another life.” “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment...” (Heb. 9:27). “...it doth not yet appear what we shall be but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (1 John 3:2). Another life! A life—not known now as to all its scope and meaning—but life! It is a precious, appealing, world-wide hope. And even the most pessimistic doubter must admit that it is no more difficult to think of an awakening from death to another life than it is to think of life ending forever in death. Indeed, one of the hardest things to think of is why the life of a loved one should vanish into eternal nothingness.

The brother of Robert Ingersoll illustrated that difficulty as he stood beside his brother's grave: "From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word. But in the night of death, Hope sees a star and listening Love can hear the rustling of a wing." To be sure! And let us rejoice that it is so.

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"...After The Order Of Melchizedek"

Jerry C. Brewer

The book of Hebrews, in which is found the phrase, "the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:17), was written to Jewish Christians who were in danger of forsaking Christ and returning to Moses' law because of persecution. The thesis of Hebrews is that the covenant of Christ is superior to the covenant God made with Israel, which was the Law of Moses, and to forsake Christ for Moses' law would leave them without hope. The following points are among those set forth in the book to prove that thesis:

1. Christ is a superior law giver to Moses (Heb. 1:1-3:6).
2. Jesus Christ's priesthood is superior to Aaron's. (Heb. 4-7).
3. A new and better covenant was prophesied (Heb. 8:8; cf Jer. 31-31-34).
4. The blood of Christ is superior to the blood of animals under the Law (Heb. 9).
5. The Law of Moses was a shadow of the new covenant and was never intended to be permanent (Heb. 10).

Our concern in this lesson is the meaning of the phrase, "the order of Melchizedek." The first mention of Melchizedek is upon Abraham's return from rescuing Lot from captivity (Gen. 14:14-20).

And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all (Gen. 14:17-20).

Melchizedek is next mentioned in Hebrews 5:6, where the writer quotes Psalms 110:4 in a reference to Christ's priesthood in the new covenant: "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." The same phrase is found in Hebrews 5:10 and 6:20. In Hebrews 7, the writer presents a contrast between the priesthood of Melchizedek and the Levitical priesthood of the Law of Moses and, in a series of logical arguments, proves that Christ's priesthood is superior to Aaron's. He argues that with a change of the priesthood, comes also a change of the law which established it. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. 7:12). The phrase, "the order of Melchizedek," is one of the proofs offered that Christ is God's High Priest instead of Aaron.

Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of the most high God (Gen. 14:18). Under the Law of Moses, no man served in that dual capacity. The priests under the law were from the tribe of Levi (Exodus 8) and, with the exception of Saul, the kings of Israel were all from the tribe of Judah. As king of Salem and priest of God, Melchizedek was a type of Jesus Christ who is, today, both Priest and King on His throne. As king of Salem, Melchizedek ruled a kingdom whose name meant "peace." He is a further type of Christ in that Christ's kingdom brought peace between God and man (Luke 2:14; Rom. 5:1).

Melchizedek is *not* a mysterious character, though men have thought him to be so

because of what is said of him in Hebrews 7:3: "...without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually." That nothing is known of his parentage or offspring, is true. But the same could be said for the king of Sodom. "Without father, without mother, without descent" was not said of Melchizedek as a *person*. Certainly he had parents. And, though we are not told, he may have had children. "...having neither beginning of days, nor end of life" could not possibly have been said of any person but God (Psa. 90:1-2). This man, Melchizedek, who met Abraham, brought forth bread and wine, blessed him, and took tithes of him was a *man* like all others.

What was said of Melchizedek in Hebrews 7:3, is descriptive of the priesthood of Christ. Melchizedek had no predecessor in his priestly office ("without father, without mother"). Nor did he have a successor ("without descent") and the phrase, "...having neither beginning of days, nor end of life," is a Hebraism. That is a term describing the practice in Hebrew literature—specifically the Old Testament—that states something in two different ways. An example of that is found in the prophecy of the gospel's beginning at Jerusalem in Isaiah 2:3: "...for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." "The law" that would "go forth out of Zion" and "the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" mean the same thing. "...having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually" is a Hebraism. Like Christ, no one preceded or succeeded Melchizedek in his priesthood and he, like Christ, "abideth a priest continually." There was none like Melchizedek before him, or after him. Therefore, he is, "made like unto the Son of God." He was a *type* of Christ in the unique office of high priest. Remember that the Hebrews writer is making arguments about Melchizedek's priesthood, *not* his fleshly genealogy.

It is further argued that Christ's priesthood, typified by Melchizedek's, was superior to Aaron's in two ways: 1) Abraham's payment of tithes to Melchizedek and, 2) Melchizedek's blessing of Abraham.

Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are the sons of Levi who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: but he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him (Heb. 7:4-10).

The writer concludes that perfection was not meant to come by the Levitical priesthood. That being the case, he says a change of law was made and, therefore, that law's priesthood was changed (Heb. 7:11-12). Furthermore, these things could not have been said of Christ under the Law of Moses. "For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:13-14). Then, in logical progression, he argues that,

And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:15-17).

The entire argument concerning Melchizedek as a type of Christ is not about a "mysterious" Old Testament figure who had no parents, but as one who had neither predecessor, nor successor in the office of priest. The word, "similitude," means "resemblance" but in this case the resemblance is from the inferior physical to the greater spiritual—from Melchizedek's priesthood to Christ's. That is the point made concerning the priesthood of Christ. His priesthood is superior to the priesthood of Aaron because Aaron was made a priest by the Law of Moses, later died, and had successors in that office. Christ was made our Priest by His endless life and the oath of

God. "For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity, but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated forevermore" (Heb. 7:28).

The conclusion drawn by the Hebrews writer is that the Law of Moses was fulfilled, taken away and, thus, succeeded by one far superior—proving this by his argument concerning the typical nature of Melchizedek's priesthood to that of Christ's.

Why Are You Not a Christian?

Fred E. Dennis

This would be a good question for all of us to ask all of our friends and loved ones. If you are not a Christian, it would be a good question to ask yourself. I heard of an old gospel preacher once who always asked those with whom he came in contact if they were Christians. If he learned they were not, he would then ask them why they were not.

Some are not Christians because they are afraid of ridicule. The church is unpopular, and real Christians will be ridiculed by some. Yes, even by some from whom we have a right to expect better things! But we must not be ashamed of ridicule and persecution. Listen to Jesus: "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:26). It will be an awful thing for Jesus to be ashamed of us. It is an awful thing for us to be ashamed of him and his words. Do you refuse to be a Christian because you are ashamed of him?

Some are not Christians because, as they say, they are waiting for a "special call." This comes from a misunderstanding of the Scriptures. God makes no "special calls" to men and women today. We are called by the gospel: "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:14). These brethren had been called by the gospel. God is still calling folks by the gospel. We must not wait for a further call. In one of the parables Jesus said: "And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready" (Luke 14:17). Jesus would have us to learn that all things are now ready. It is up to us to answer the call. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). This is the way God's good Book ends. It is heaven's invitation to all to come. The Holy Spirit invites. The church invites. Jesus gave the great invitation in these words: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30). Let us not sin by saying this is not enough, and that we are waiting for a "special call." The Lord is not running any "specials." It is "whosoever will," not "whosoever will not."

Some say they are not Christians because there are so many hypocrites in the church. Sometimes I am almost tempted to say there is always room for one more! This excuse is founded in hypocrisy. There are some hypocrites in the church, but there are more out of the church. The time is coming when the Lord will weed out all of the hypocrites. And where will they be put? They will be cast into hell with all those who will not obey the gospel of God. It is better to put up with a few hypocrites in the church for a little while than to be with all the hypocrites for eternity. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). You will not have to answer for the hypocrites, but you will have to answer for yourself. What will your answer be?

Others say they are not good enough to be a Christian. Becoming a Christian is what makes us "good." The betrayers and murderers of Christ were not very "good," but about fifty days after they had killed the Prince of Peace the gospel was preached to them. They learned from this preaching that they were lost and undone. They learned that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. They believed the gospel. They asked what they must do (Acts 2:37), and they were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). If you are ever saved, this is what you will have to do. "For all have

sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

You may be a great sinner, but you are not such a great sinner that the blood of Christ cannot save you. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18). And if you are a member of the church and have fallen, there is a way back. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:7-10). Yes, God wants all men to be saved. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:3-4)

Some hesitate to become Christians because they are fearful they cannot hold out faithful. You start out to drive your car on a dark night, but you cannot see all the way home. But you start. You do not expect to see every curve and dangerous place from the beginning, but you will pass over them as you come to them. Thus it is in living the Christian life. We are able to surmount the difficulties as we come to them. The Lord gives strength and help. "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). When we say that we cannot hold out faithful, and that the temptations that confront us are too heavy to bear, that is distrusting God, and dangerously near to calling him a liar. God says he will not allow the Christian to be tempted above that he is able to bear. Christians are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (1 Pet. 1:5). "For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee" (Isa. 41:13).

Some say they are not ready to be Christians. That may be true, but it would not take you long to get ready if you wanted to. If you are not ready, you had better get ready and stay ready. "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44). Christ is not coming in an hour when you think, but when "ye think not." Do not let these date setters fool you.

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:16-21).

"Go to now, ye that say, To day or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin (Jas. 4:13-17).

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 6:23).

Attitudes Toward Truth

Roy J. Hearn

Attitude is defined as, "position assumed as a result of a particular mood or state of

mind.” What is our attitude toward truth? Do we look upon another whose conduct may not be in harmony with truth and use that as an excuse to brush it aside? Suppose the whole world rejects the truth and is lost, is that any reason *you* should do so? What is your disposition of mind toward God's word? Is it one of reverence and respect? Or do you treat it lightly, feel it is not worthy of serious consideration and unnecessary to obey?

The Source Of Truth

Pilate asked Jesus, “What is truth?” God's word is truth (John 17:17), and “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). The Word is called the law of the Spirit (Rom. 8:2), which was given by God to Christ, Who, in turn, delegated authority to the Holy Spirit, Who revealed the truth through the apostles and other inspired men of their day (John 16:12-15; 17:8).

Jesus said, “heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt. 24:45). First Peter 1:23 shows the word to be incorruptible, not subject to decay. These statements should impress us with the fact that though one may oppose the truth, he cannot remove or destroy it. Regardless of all the opposition to it, and the perverting of it by the sectarian world, truth remains and all must stand or fall by it (2 Cor. 13:8).

What is your attitude toward the truth? Our reception of any truth depends on our attitude toward it. If we are seeking to please ourselves, then only such truth as suits us will be accepted. When the people in the Lord's day on earth rejected Him, was it because of who spoke? Did not the Lord speak the truth? When truth is spoken, we should accept it, regardless of who teaches. Improper attitudes, and refusal to accept and abide by truth will hinder and even prevent salvation.

The Value And Importance Of Truth

Be impressed with the fact that God's truth revealed in the Bible is indestructible. The New Testament is Christ's will, the terms of which must be kept to be saved (Heb. 9:15-17). It is the law of the Spirit which must be obeyed (Rom. 8:2), and is just as binding and unchangeable as the laws of nature. Acts 3:22-23 shows that we must hear Christ in all things, or otherwise be lost. Through John, the Spirit states that anyone who does not stay within the bounds of the teaching of Christ is without God and Christ, hence, is under condemnation (2 John 9-10). Such passages as these ought to sober us, make us stop and think.

Jesus said, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Since truth makes us free, error does not. Any form of doctrine not found in the New testament is not truth, thus cannot make us free. Truth mixed with any part of error equals error and cannot save. Jesus plainly pointed out that the doctrines of men make void the word of God (Mark 7:7-13). Names in religion, doctrines, and institutions of men are not truth. Hence, to follow them does not make free from sin, but adds to sin. They constitute no less than rebellion against God. Read First Samuel 15:22-23 and see God's attitude toward such.

The New Testament is our complete and infallible guide (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It furnishes everything that we need, or can have, that pertains to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). Therefore, for their souls' sake, we plead with our readers to test all doctrines by God's word, to see whether they are of God, “for many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Those who pervert the gospel by adding the doctrines of men—even at one point—are under the most serious judgment of God (Gal. 1:6-9).

We Should Never Be Offended At Truth

God's word is His representative on earth today. This word was given through inspired men (John 16:12-15; Matt. 18:18). To accept the word without variation is to accept God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 10:40). To despise the words revealed through the apostles is to despise and reject the Godhead (Luke 10:16).

Our Lord was hated, not merely because He taught the truth, but because truth condemned the sins and false doctrines of His day (John 8:32-44). Paul asked thee Galatians, “Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” (Gal. 4:16). One can preach some truth and never condemn error, but he cannot preach the *whole* truth and fail to do so. This writer likes to have the respect and love of all, but he

is *not* in a popularity contest. I am bound to teach the whole truth. When one presents the truth from God's word exactly as He gave it, and is hated for it, the one who hates does not hate the teacher, but Christ.

Salvation In Christ

W. Curtis Porter

The heading of this topic sounds familiar to people who have been accustomed to hearing the gospel preached in its purity. But it is unusual to find this idea coming from the source from which the following quotation is taken. But here is what a preacher tells us in his own words: “To be in Christ is to be saved; to be out of Christ is to be lost. There is no middle ground” (Paul Goodwin in *Orthodox Baptist Searchlight*).

This statement has the real gospel ring. It sounds like preaching done by preachers who adhere strictly to New Testament teaching. This statement of Paul Goodwin reminds me of some statement made by another Paul—the apostle to the Gentiles. He said: “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature” (2 Cor. 5:17). Also he declared: “Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim. 2:10). Thus the apostle Paul tells us that men do not become new creatures out of Christ; they must “be in Christ” in order to be “new creatures.” Likewise men do not obtain salvation out of Christ, for it was his desire that men may “obtain the salvation which is in Christ.” This all means, of course, that if a man is out of Christ, he is lost. To be saved he must be “in Christ.” Certainly there is “no middle ground.” He is either “in” or “out” of Christ, saved or lost. I am always glad to believe what Baptist preachers tell us if they agree with what inspired men have said, and Mr. Goodwin surely did it this time.

But I wonder if he didn’t think about what his statement did to Baptist doctrine. Remember now that a man cannot be saved out of Christ. Both of these Pauls agree on that point. “To be out of Christ is to be lost.” So, “to be saved” one must “be in Christ.” A man, however, cannot “be in Christ” unless he “gets into him.” And that leads me to ask: How does a man get *into* Christ? Whatever it takes to put a man ‘into Christ’ is necessary to his salvation, for he is “out of Christ” till he gets “into him.” Do you know what the New Testament says about it? It mentions just one thing that puts a man “into Christ.” Notice the language of the apostle Paul: “For as many of you as have been *baptized into Christ* have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). I wonder if Paul Goodwin will agree with the apostle Paul here. What does he say? “Baptized into Christ.” No preacher can find anything else in the New Testament that is said to put a man into Christ, and since a man cannot be saved out of Christ, he cannot be saved without baptism. If he can be saved without baptism, he can be saved out of Christ, for he cannot get into Christ without baptism. That principle will stand the test. No preacher has ever been able to overthrow it. So this Baptist preacher will have to give up his doctrine of “salvation by faith only.” Faith only does not put a man into Christ; that which puts a man into Christ comes after faith. So this Baptist preacher will have to admit that baptism is essential to salvation or go back on what he tells us.

Then it knocks him out of his “non-essential church” idea. His brethren have always claimed you do not have to belong to the church to be saved—that you are saved out of it. But that idea is blasted now by Mr. Goodwin’s statement, for he says a man must “be in Christ” in order to be saved. But how can a man be in Christ? Certainly by being in his body. We cannot be in the literal, personal body of Christ, but we *can* “be in his spiritual body.” Paul tells us that his body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23). So to “be in Christ” is to “be in his body.” But to “be in his body” is to “be in the church.” And since to “be out of Christ is to be lost,” then to “be out of his body, the church, is to be lost.” That puts salvation in the church, right where the New Testament puts it. Read Ephesians 5:23: “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: And he is the savior of the body.” It is an evident fact that if all men who are saved are saved out of the church (the body), then Christ could not be the Savior *of the body*. Hence, the statement of Paul puts salvation *in the church*, and Mr. Goodwin’s statement agrees. In this matter he has surely told us the truth, even though

he may later tell us something that conflicts with it.

“What Saith The Scriptures?”

Harrell Davidson

“Will knowledge save?”

In chapter four of Hosea, God condemns Israel for her refusal to obey His Word. In verse 1 we note, “Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.” What a desolate condition!

This was a time when there is no truth. A time where the mercy of God is not accepted nor is the knowledge of His goodness respected. God says that the people have separated themselves by “swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery...” (cf. Hosea.4:2). In verse 6 the ancient prophet penned words of destruction due to the malady of the time. Hear him: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.”

It is the case that the people of Hosea’s day had refused to acquire and live by knowledge of the Word of God. They never thought of the penalty for their neglect in all likelihood. They were going along to get along and practicing the same sins as the people about them while God had commanded them to be separate or different from those nations around them, but this seems to have never entered their thought process. They wanted to be like the nations about them when they desired a king. God granted them their wish, but their desire led to great suffering and turmoil.

As Hosea writes, God is rejecting His priests and His people. He even forgets their children. A calamity exists in the land that does not respect and know God. We are taught in the Scriptures that eternal life is to “know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). It is rather obvious that there is trouble in our land this day in the year of our Lord, 2018. Unless we come to a knowledge of God, man will be lost. We remember a classic passage in Judges 2:10 that address situations like this. “And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.” The first generation out of Egyptian bondage perished in the wilderness.

The second generation is the one that Judges is addressing who were faithful. The third generation was lost because they did not know the Lord. They served Balaam while forsaking the Lord. Are we talking about an antiquated condition? *No!* A thousand times *No!* We are describing present day America. We are talking about a time when God is respected less and less. There is lying, swearing, killing, stealing, adultery and the list goes on and on. Filth and turmoil fill our news programs while the Bible is closed on the shelf and most of all closed to our hearts. Jesus said, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39).

Knowledge alone will not save. It must be applied to the heart of man. The condition of our time is such that we had better *wake up open up* and *read up* if we want to *go up* to heaven someday. All one has to do is read the front page of the newspaper and we see Hosea all over again.

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

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Christ's Second Coming: When?

Jess Whitlock

“But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matt 24:36). The Lord and His word clearly shows that no person living can know the exact time of Christ’s final return. The Bible’s teaching is that we must be prepared for that time when the time does come (John 14:1-3; Rev. 1:7; James 5:7; Phil. 3:20; 1 Pet. 1:13; Acts 17:30-31; Jude 7; John 5:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 1:7-10).

Matthew 24 is a chapter that is abused by so-called “fundamentalists” and the A.D. 70 heretics of our day. The pin-pointers of prophecy in this chapter are directed to the coming destruction of the city of Jerusalem which occurred in A.D. 70. In Matthew 24:1-35 Christ gave clear-cut signs that men may know when the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem was at hand. There is only one question to which—at that time—the Lord Jesus did not know the answer: “When will You come back, Lord?” In Matthew 24:36 we have His answer: No man knows The angels of heaven do not know, and the Son of God did not know. *Only* the Father in heaven knows when the Son will return the final time.

The *only* thing that Christ clearly taught about His return was that it would be *like* the days of Noah (Matt. 24:37-39). There will be no warnings, no pin-pointers, no clues. Life and living will be going along as always. He also compared His final return to the coming of a thief in the night (Matt. 24:43). The thief comes at a time you do not expect him. Christ warns: “Watch therefore ...therefore be ye also ready...” (Matt. 24:42, 44, cf. 25:13).

In spite of this clear teaching, there have always been false prophets trying to guess the time of Christ’s return. There are in excess of more than 200 false predictions by the time-guessers of history, from A.D. 44 until the present time. There are only a couple of centuries where we do not have recorded data of the “false prophets.” One cult (Jehovah’s Witnesses) predicted the final coming more than 70 times during the 20th century, every date proved to be false. In an effort to get the “egg off their face” they came up with a new “twist” that Christ came in 1914 in an invisible coming. The Bible teaches that He will come visibly (Rev. 1:7). He will come audibly (John 5:28). He will come in flaming fire (2 Thess. 1:7ff). He will come with His holy angels (Matt. 25:31). He will come with a shout (1 Thess. 4:16). Oh, by the way, the earth and all elements will be burned up (2 Pet. 3:10). Somehow all these things escaped the notice of all news reports and recorded historical happenings in the year 1914.

A young Billy Graham taught the imminent return of Christ. Andrea Neal, chief editor of *The Indianapolis Star*, reported, “In 1950, for example, Graham predicted the world would end in two years” (*Graham’s Role In An Awakening*, page A-18). Let’s do some simple math. In 1950 Billy Graham taught that the world would be no more by the end of 1952. Today makes him a false prophet for well over a half century! How can we know that Graham is a false prophet? Deuteronomy 18:22 says, “When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.” There are only two kinds of prophets: (1) true prophets—the things they predict come to pass, and (2) false prophets—the things they predict fail to come to pass. Concerning the second coming of Christ, we have noted that *when* he comes again, His coming will be visible, audible, in flaming fire, with His holy angels, and that the world and everything in the world will be burned up. Now, which of these things came to pass in 1914 or 1952? Christ taught that *no man* (Billy Graham or anyone else) knows the time of His return (Matt. 24:36). He taught that His coming would be the end of the earth (2 Pet. 3:10). So we know that Jehovah’s Witnesses, like hundreds and hundreds of others, are false prophets.

The only thing that remains is to ask the question of the old hymn: “Are You Ready For that Day to Come?”

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A Designed Defense

Roelf L. Ruffner

“He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: Also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end” (Ecc.3:11).

God made an *incredible* creature when he created the Japanese Giant Hornet (*Vespa mandarinia japonica*). These predators—more than two inches long—can decimate domesticated European honeybee hives, killing thousands of workers in order to obtain the bee larvae/pupae to feed to its own offspring. But this is not the case with a native wild honey bee hive. Notice the following:

When a hornet scout locates and approaches a Japanese honey bee hive it will emit specific pheromonal hunting signals. When the honey bees detect these pheromones, a hundred or so will gather near the entrance of the nest and set up a trap, keeping it open apparently to draw the hornet further into the hive or allow it to enter on its own. As the hornet enters the nest, a large mob of about five hundred honey bees surrounds it, completely covering it and preventing it from moving, and begin quickly vibrating their flight muscles. This has the effect of raising the temperature of the honey bee mass to 47°C (117°F). The honey bees can tolerate this temperature, but the hornet cannot survive more than 46°C (115°F), so it dies. Often several bees perish along with the intruder, but the death of the hornet scout prevents it from summoning reinforcements which would wipe out the colony. More recent research indicates, however, that while the raised temperature of the bee ball contributes to the death of the hornet, it alone is not sufficient to kill the hornet. The bee balls also produce a much higher level of carbon dioxide which contributes to the hornet's death, although whether this is because it reduces the hornet's tolerance for high temperatures or actually suffocates it, is not known.*

Evolutionists would have us believe that this response to the giant hornets by the Japanese honey bee is a product of millions of years of trial and error by this insect. Perhaps an *imaginary* conversation went this way:

Queen: “Sisters have you come up with a plan to defeat our enemy, the giant hornet?”

Worker spokesperson: “Yes, your majesty. After one million years we have *designed* a plan for our defense. Knowing the physiology of the hornet and our physiology we calculate it will take 500 of us to defeat one of them. We are glad that this plan was created from data recorded at Honey Bee University and field tested over the last ten thousand years.”

Queen: “Thank you for your work. Be sure and write your plan down since most of you will end your lifecycle in a few weeks. I plan to incorporate it into my genes to pass on to my offspring soon.”

This is how intellectually silly the theory of evolution is! Do they honestly believe that by chance the honey bee could have come up with a *plan of defense* that takes into account both insects' tolerance to heat? But this is the arrogance of this false philosophy. How puny faulty human reasoning is compared to the creative power of God!

When Job encountered the Eternal Mind he repented of his false reasoning,

Then Job answered the LORD, and said, know that thou canst do every *thing*, and *that* no thought can be withholden from thee. Who *is* he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not (Eccl. 42:1-3).

*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_giant_hornet

Is It Logical To Believe In God?

Lee Moses

Is it logical to believe in God? There are extremely intelligent people in prominent positions who doubt that there is a God. Skeptics, atheists, and agnostics cry alike that there is no way to prove clearly that God exists. True, one cannot put God in a test tube to prove that He exists. This is because a *spiritual* being such as God cannot be tested for *physical* properties. God points to the folly of thinking of Him in a physical way: “Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself” (Psalm 50:21). God is not like us and cannot be perceived in the physical manner in which we perceive ourselves. We cannot physically see, hear, smell, taste, or touch God. But in light of the abundant evidence we can examine, there is no logical alternative to the fact that God exists.

David penned, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork” (Psalm 19:1). David saw clear evidence of God and His greatness from the creation, and we can do likewise. Scientists agree that there are only two possibilities for the existence of the universe as we see it today, either (1) evolution or (2) creation. Of course, creation requires a Creator, so those desiring to contain all within the realm of the physical choose to believe evolution. But is evolution the more logical of the two choices? Evolution is sometimes referred to as a “theory,” but it is not. Before a hypothesis (educated guess) can advance to being a theory, it must be tested and observed. However, no one has ever observed evolution occur. Not only this, but the concept of evolution violates the very laws of science and common sense.

It is common knowledge that for every effect there must be adequate cause. If you have a book in your hand, you know that someone wrote it, someone printed it, and someone bound it. If someone were to tell you that book happened by accident when two rocks fell against each other, you would think that person was not playing with a full deck. Is someone playing with a full deck who asserts in front of renowned scientists that a large number of rocks falling against each other led to the formation of the universe, intelligent life included? But this is exactly what evolutionists assert. They are unconcerned that their philosophy violates the Law (positively proven by science) of Biogenesis, which states that “only life can produce life.” Yet evolutionists would have life, and intelligent life at that, being produced by rocks. Science proves that only life could have produced life, and therefore there must have been prior life existing to create the life that exists now. Not only does evolution violate the Law of Biogenesis, but also the First and Second Laws of Thermodynamics, among other scientific principles. In his article “The Necessity of Darwinism” in the April 15, 1982 issue of *New Scientist*, evolutionist Richard Dawkins admitted, “The more statistically improbable a thing is, the less we can believe that it just happened by blind chance. Superficially the obvious alternative to chance is an intelligent Designer.” However, he gives evolution far more credibility than it deserves when he calls it “chance.” Chance assumes possibility, and there is no possibility for a scientific *theory* (so called) to be true if it violates the *laws* of science.

“For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God” (Heb. 3:4). There was no house ever built without a builder, how much less the universe and the life contained therein with all of its intricate workings? Who could give all intelligence to life except for One infinitely intelligent? Many insults have been hurled at those who believe in the Bible account of creation. However, there are increasing amounts of scientists who are seeing the folly of the alternative of evolution. Not only is there insufficient evidence to prove evolution, it is an absolute impossibility. For every cause there must be an effect, and for every design there must be a designer. The only possible cause and designer of the universe is God. This is logical.

Friends and brethren, God exists.

Do We Have The Right To Be Wrong in Religion?

Jerry C. Brewer

Most people have no idea that the religion of Jesus Christ is one of absolute Truth. They therefore believe that man has a *right* to be wrong in religious matters. They

consider it of no consequence if the Bible proves they are members of religious organizations unknown in the Bible, or if they follow the wrong plan of salvation, or worship in the wrong way. Believing they have the right to be wrong in religion and still please God, they are satisfied with their error and never consult the Bible for the right way. “Do we have the right to be wrong in religion?” The answer to that question is “Yes and No.”

The U.S. Constitution guarantees us the freedom of religion. No one—not even the government—has the right to force us to believe something we do not want to believe. Neither does God force His Truth on anyone. Jesus invites all to come to Him of their own free wills. He says, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28-29). Neither do Christians force anyone to accept Christ’s truth. We only preach and persuade as Jesus commanded when He said, “Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). So, “yes,” in one sense, we do have the right to be wrong in religion. But the real question is this: “Do we have the right to be wrong about religion and still be eternally saved?”

That is the central issue and the Bible answer is, “No.” We understand this principle from the physical realm in which we live. I have the right to drink whatever I want, but if I drink rat poison, honestly believing it is beneficial, I will die anyway. That is true in the spiritual realm as well. Christians do not, and cannot, jail people for not accepting the Gospel, but all must do God’s will if we are to be saved eternally. Adam and Eve did not have the right to be wrong about eating the forbidden fruit and still have fellowship with God (Gen. 2:17). Nadab and Abihu did not have the right to offer fire which God had not commanded and still please Him (Lev. 10:1-2).

So it is with us today. We interpret our *civil* right to be wrong in religion to mean that we can do whatever we want and still be acceptable to God. That interpretation is eternally fatal. God demands a right way for us to do His will and all the sincerity in the world will not save one who disregards His right way.

There are two more questions we need to ask in religion: (1) “Is there nothing in religion about which a man must be right?” (2) “Do we have to be right in points of doctrine?” We do not have the right to be wrong about faith in God (Heb. 11:6) or in Christ (John 8:24). Neither does man have the right to be wrong about believing the Gospel (Mark 16:15-16). We do not have the right to be wrong about repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3), or baptism for the remission of sins (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). To be saved, one must learn that error isn’t as good as God’s Truth. Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Error damns men’s souls (2 Thess. 2:8-12). No, man does *not* have the right to be wrong in religion and still be saved in heaven. Study your Bible, learn it, understand it, and obey it.

Tests Of Faith

R. L. Whiteside

By faith, Noah built the ark. Faith only—that is, faith without works—is dead (Jas. 2:26). Such faith never would have built the ark. Neither does it ever accomplish anything or bring blessings. Faith prompted and guided Noah in building the ark, and so it is said that he built the ark by faith (Heb. 11:7)—a faith tested and made perfect by works.

God has always tested man's willingness to do His will. To be a real test, the thing commanded must be such that the person can see no connection between the thing commanded and the result to be obtained. Some examples are, the brazen serpent (Num. 21:4-9), Naaman's dipping in the Jordan (2 Kings 5:1-19). Baptism is such a test.

**Judgment Day Is Certain
Heaven And Hell Are Eternal
Which Choice Are You Making?**

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Letters From Our Readers

Editor:

It certainly is a joy to read all the great articles you include in the GP. The mix of 'old' and new is spiritually uplifting for me and helps me concentrate on the crux of the Word.

Thank you for all you do to spread the Word and edify the saints...may God continue to bless you as you walk in His light.

Barry N. Clay

Editor:

Missed announcement. Can you put me on the list? Thank you and other writers for the sound stand and writings.

Dave Dugan

Reward Offered

We will pay \$100.00 to any person who can produce a New Testament passage telling one to "Pray The Sinner's Prayer," in answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

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
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

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