

# The Gospel Preceptor

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

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## What is a New Testament Pastor?

**Nathan Brewer**

This role may not be what you think it is.

In the King James Version of the New Testament, the word *pastor* only occurs one time—in Ephesians 4:11. And here, it’s in the plural form, *pastors*.

The New Testament was originally written in Greek. The Greek word from which *pastors* is translated is *poimen*. Joseph Henry Thayer, in his *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, defines it as “a herdsman, esp. a shepherd.”

*Poimen* occurs 18 times in the Greek text of the New Testament. Of these, it’s translated *pastors* once, while it’s translated *shepherd* the other 17 times.

This Greek word occasionally describes literal shepherds. Sometimes it’s used metaphorically of Jesus. In Ephesians 4:11, it refers to groups of men within congregations of the Lord’s church who oversee those congregations.

The verb form of that Greek word is *poimaino*, and it means “to feed, to tend a flock, keep sheep.” The Apostle Paul uses this verb when he exhorts the elders of the church at Ephesus to take care of that congregation (Acts 20:17, 28).

But in Acts 20:28, Paul also calls these men “overseers,” from the Greek *episkopos*, which is elsewhere translated “bishop(s).”

Paul uses three terms in the original language to describe the same group of men from the Ephesian church—elders, shepherds (which also means “pastors”), and overseers (or “bishops”).

Paul lists the requirements for elders/shepherds/bishops in First Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-11. According to these passages, this position requires males—never women—who are experienced, and who have proven, by taking care of their own families, that they can be trusted with the flock of God.

The role of elders/shepherds/bishops has become confused. Although they must be able to teach (1 Tim. 3:2), they are never designated specifically as preachers. And although two young preachers, Timothy and Titus, are often called “pastors” by people today, the Bible never calls them that. They’re simply evangelists—preachers of the Gospel.

Although the common practice today among denominations and community churches is to have one primary pastor who directs a congregation, the New Testament always speaks of the Lord’s church having more than one pastor/elder/bishop to tend and oversee the church (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17-28; Titus 1:5; Philp. 1:1).

Although a pastor (shepherd) can also preach, he does not necessarily do so. And the New Testament never speaks of a woman as being a pastor. Neither does the New Testament know anything about one person acting as **the** pastor/bishop/elder of a congregation.

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# Baptism: A Discussion From the Website

Jerry C. Brewer

**Editor's Note:** The following exchange on the subject of baptism was precipitated by a letter to *The Gospel Preceptor's* website. The letter we received is printed first, followed by our reply.

## Letter to the Website

I do believe Mark 16:16. But I still contend baptism is not essential to be saved. In that verse Jesus says that "he that believeth not shall be damned." If we have to be baptized why didn't Jesus say "he that doesn't believe or doesn't get baptized?"

Jesus says over and over again if we believe in him and the Father we will be saved or have everlasting life (John 5:24; 6:47; 6:40; Luke 8:12). His apostles say it also (Acts 16:30; Heb. 10:39).

In Acts 16 Paul and Silas told the jail keeper to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course they then instructed him to be baptized and would have gone on to disciple him.

Baptism is very important but it is not essential to salvation. If it is essential what becomes the focus? A physical act I must perform and not Christ's shedding of blood, death, and resurrection. Those are the essentials to salvation. It was what God did for us not if we get immersed in water.

Baptism is an outward sign of what happens spiritually. It is also a command of God so all those who believe in Jesus should then be baptized. If it was immensely important to be completely immersed I believe God would have made that as clear as the way to salvation is.

It is my opinion that sometimes people hold on to baptism, or baptism of the Holy Spirit, or a certain translation of the Bible, or the gift of tongues, or conservative dress, etc. to be able to say "I am more holy than you." In that, Christians lose the focus of our faith and squabble and argue over the details while we lose sight of Jesus' death and resurrection.

## A Biblical Reply:

Thanks for your reply. This is an informative exchange and I appreciate it very much.

**You wrote,** "I do believe Mark 16:16. But I still contend baptism is not essential to be saved. In that verse Jesus says that "he that believeth not shall be damned." If we have to be baptized why didn't Jesus say "he that doesn't believe or doesn't get baptized?"

**My reply:** The word "and" between "believeth" and "is baptized" is a coordinating conjunction which, like a coupling pin between railroad cars, moves both in the same direction. Jesus coupled belief with baptism. There was no need for Him to say, "He that is not baptized shall not be saved." One who does not believe will certainly not be baptized. A parallel statement is, "He that eateth and digesteth his food shall live, but he that eateth not shall die." One who does not eat will not digest any food. One who does not believe won't bother to be baptized. Jesus coupled belief and baptism in Mark 16:16, and what he has joined together, we dare not put asunder.

**You wrote,** "Jesus says over and over again if we believe in him and the Father we will be saved or have everlasting life (John 5:24; 6:47; 6:40; Luke 8:12)."

**My reply:** You are correct in citing what Jesus says, but proper hermeneutics (Biblical interpretation) requires that we take all of what the Bible says on a given subject. If belief alone (mental assent to Jesus' Deity as the Son of God) will save, then the devils are saved, for James says they also "believe and tremble." (Jas. 2:19). If mere belief that Jesus is who He claimed to be brings salvation, then the chief rulers were saved, although they refused to confess Him (John 12:42).

We do not discount faith in any way, but the Bible teaches that salvation by faith includes baptism for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38). When Paul wrote his epistle to the churches in Galatia, he made the following statement: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). Remember that he is writing to Christians and states that they had become children of God "by faith in Christ Jesus." Now, notice

the **very next verse** in which he reminds them of **how** they became the children of God by faith in Christ: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). One is not a child of God by faith until he is “in Christ” and one is not “in Christ” until he has been baptized. It is a **loving, active, obedient** faith that leads one to submit to Christ in baptism. No one can be saved without either faith or baptism, but either one without the other does not save.

**You wrote**, “In Acts 16 Paul and Silas told the jail keeper to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course they then instructed him to be baptized and would have gone on to disciple him.”

**My reply:** You are correct in the above statement. When the jailer at Philippi asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved,” they replied, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” (Acts 16:30-31). Remembering that **all** of the Bible on a given subject must be taken before we draw a conclusion, we ask, “Why did not Paul tell him the same thing Peter told the Jews on Pentecost (Acts 2:37-38)? Notice the following:

1. On Pentecost, Peter preached to several thousand Jews. They were convicted of sin and cried out, “men and brethren what shall we do?” Now, there is the same question the Jailer asked, and here is the answer Peter gave: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Acts 2:38) Why the difference? Both Peter and Paul are inspired apostles so why are the inspired answers not the same? We shall see soon.
2. Now shift the scene to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road. Let Paul tell his own story in Acts 22. He is on his way to arrest Christians in Damascus when Jesus stops him on that highway. A light shines about him and he falls to the earth. Hearing a voice saying, “Saul, Saul,” he asks, “Who art thou Lord?” Jesus replies, “I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest,” whereupon Saul asks, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” To this, Jesus replies, “Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do” (Acts 9:16; 22:10).

Saul arose and went into the city, a believing, penitent man, and for three days he was blind, fasting and praying, and waiting for one to come and tell him what to do. When Ananias came, he told him to “arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

Why the three different answers to the same question? It can be illustrated this way: If I ask someone in my home town how far it is to Oklahoma City, they will tell me it's 115 miles. If I travel 30 miles toward Oklahoma City and ask someone else, they will tell me it's 85 miles to Oklahoma City. If I travel another 40 miles and stop to inquire about the distance to Oklahoma City, I will be told it's 45 miles. Three different answers, but all correct. The answers to my question about the distance to Oklahoma City are based upon my location along the route when I asked.

That's the same reason for the three different answers to the question, “What must I do to be saved?” Those answers were given to sinners who were at different stages in understanding the way to salvation in Christ.

Those Jews on Pentecost believed in Jesus before they asked their question. Their belief came through Peter's preaching. That's what Paul later said in Romans 10:17: “Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.” They had already passed the point of belief on the road to salvation, and needed only to “repent and be baptized” (Acts 2:38).

When Ananias came to Saul of Tarsus in Damascus, Saul was already a believer in Christ and was a penitent man. That's obvious from his three days of fasting and praying. He didn't need to be told to believe or repent, as he had already done so. He only needed to complete his obedience by being baptized and that's what he was told to do (Acts 22:16).

When the Philippian jailer asked the same question of Paul and Silas, he hadn't even begun the journey. They could not tell him to repent or be baptized because he was a heathen who knew nothing of Jesus Christ. His journey to salvation had to begin with

the first step which was belief. That's why the next verse says, "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." Since "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17), the jailer could not very well believe until he had the gospel preached unto him. When they preached to him "the word of the Lord," he then indicated his repentance by washing their stripes and was baptized the same hour of the night.

So all these cases refer to the starting point in salvation, but the terminating point is the same—baptism. If this isn't the case, then the Bible contradicts itself and it certainly couldn't do that and be the Word of God.

Summing it up, the unbeliever was told to believe. The believer was told to repent. The penitent believer was told to be baptized. Therefore, before salvation is reached all of these must be done as we advance from the first condition until the point of salvation is reached.

Christ requires faith, repentance, and baptism. (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Mark 16:16). To ignore one of these items is to ignore them all. One who is baptized but has never believed or repented cannot be saved. One who believes but refuses to be baptized cannot be saved. One who believes and is baptized but never repents of his sin cannot be saved.

**You wrote**, "Baptism is very important but it is not essential to salvation. If it is essential what becomes the focus? A physical act I must perform and not Christ's shedding of blood, death, and resurrection. Those are the essentials to salvation."

**My reply:** If faith is essential to salvation, what becomes the focus. Isn't that a mental act one must perform and not "Christ's shedding of blood, death and resurrection?" What of repentance? Is that required for one to be saved? Isn't that something one performs?

Does Christ's blood cleanse those who are not in Christ? Paul says we have redemption through His blood, but that is only **in** Christ (Eph. 1:7). Baptism is the transitional act that puts one **into Christ** and into His death where His blood was shed for our sins (Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:3-5).

You are correct in saying the death, burial and resurrection of Christ are "essentials to salvation." No man could ever be saved had Christ not paid the price for our sins which God's justice demanded. That's the grace of God that reaches down to save us. But in order for that grace to be appropriated, man must reach up to God in faith. That's what Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-10.

We are saved by the grace of God through faith. God's grace means nothing to the person who will not believe in Christ and His atoning work, repent of his sins and be baptized into Christ to receive the benefit of that atonement. God's grace provides and man's faith appropriates the blessings of grace through obedience.

**You wrote**, Baptism is an outward sign of what happens spiritually. It is also a command of God so all those who believe in Jesus should then be baptized. If it was immensely important to be completely immersed I believe God would have made that as clear as the way to salvation is."

**My reply:** There is no scripture which says "baptism is an outward sign of what happens spiritually." You correctly note that baptism is "a command of God," but you said earlier "it is not essential to salvation." Can you name other commands of God that are not essential to salvation? What of repentance? What about faith? If I can ignore one command of God as "not essential," why can I not ignore all of God's commands and still be saved?

As for God making it clear that baptism is "immensely important," 1 Peter 3:21 does exactly that. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Peter says "baptism doth also now save us." Who am I to argue with the inspired word of an apostle of the Lord?

**You wrote**, “It is my opinion that sometimes people hold on to baptism, or baptism of the Holy spirit, or a certain translation of the Bible, or the gift of tongues, or conservative dress, etc. to be able to say 'I am more holy than you.'”

**My reply:** How right you are in that opinion! Many people have an arrogant attitude toward others and, like the Pharisees, want to make a public display of their religion. That's sad, but true. On the other hand, I find many people who have a genuine love for the Truth and are willing to discuss it and obey the Lord from a humble heart. You evidently have a love for what is right, or you would not have taken the time to discuss these things. I appreciate your demeanor and your frank discussion of spiritual matters.

Yours Sincerely,  
Jerry Brewer, Editor  
*The Gospel Preceptor*

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## Grace, Faith and Works (Ephesians 2:8-11)

Doug Post

The phrase, *este sesosmenoi* (Eph. 5, 8) is perfect passive (periphrastic construction), meaning: “By grace **have you been saved and are being saved** through “**the faith**” (or “faith”—either rendering does no injustice to the point being presented. However, our hearts are “purified by **the faith** (Acts 15:9; 1 Pet.1:22; Jas. 1:18, 21; cf. John 6:63).

Therefore, the grammatical construction locks together the **past action** (have been saved) with the **present continuing action** (are being saved), referred to as the periphrastic construction or aspect. We “got saved” by grace through faith and continue “getting saved” by grace through the faith. Salvation is not simply a one-time deal. Even John 3:16, often quoted by “faith only” folks, specifically says, “that **whosoever continues believing** in Him **might not perish but might have everlasting life.**” Having faith, therefore, is not just a one time saving experience, but an ongoing one. One’s eternal salvation depends on this ongoing faith, which is why the phrases “**might not perish**” and “**might have everlasting life**” are in the subjunctive mood—the “might” or “maybe” mood.

Just how did the Ephesians “get saved”? (See Acts 19:1-6). The Faith is needed for both “getting in” and “staying in.” Moreover, there are works, designed by God, for “getting in” and works, designed by God, for “staying in.” After we are “born again” “out of water and out of Spirit” (John 3:3-5), we have been changed to walk in a new way, or “newness of life” (Rom. 6:3-4), which Paul summarizes in Eph.2:10: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

We were created “**in Christ Jesus**” (“**got in**”) when we were baptized **into** Christ (Rom. 6:3-4, 17; Gal. 3:26-27) just as the Ephesians (Acts 19:1-6). However, God ordained (prearranged) certain other works to be united with faith for “**staying in,**” which serve as our sphere of moral action, or a pathway of righteousness in which we need to confine ourselves in order to “**stay in.**” Leaving this pathway gets us back into the world (Matt. 7:13; Eph. 2:1-2). The works of Eph.2:9, which relate specifically to the works of Eph. 2:11, are not the good works of Eph.2:10. These “good works” are not optional but obligatory, since leaving that pathway (of ordained good works) brings destruction. The periphrastic construction accounts for the nature of grace, faith, and works in **getting in** and **staying in.**

We must also note that these God ordained “good works” are necessary to produce. This is the point of since the Holy Spirit used the word *epi*, meaning “upon, on the basis of.” The phrase “**unto good works**” does not have the word *eis* (unto, toward, for) but the word *epi* (on the basis of). It’s on the basis of these God ordained good works that we should continue to walk in them. Not continuing in them means we are not continuing in Christ’s word (John 8:31). Not continuing them means we are not walking in the light (1 John 1:7). Not continuing in them means we are not continuing

in the faith, whereby we forfeit our standing in Christ and the blessings of His sacrifice—His blood (Col. 1:21-23).

As for the “works” of Eph. 2:9. As alluded to previously, these works are the works of the law of Moses. Paul is writing to the church at Ephesus, which was comprised of Jews and Gentiles. In Ephesians 1:1-12, the apostle Paul describes the salvation of the Jews alluding to them as those who “first trusted” (1:12)—and describes the salvation of the Gentiles saying, “In Him you also trusted” (1:13), meaning they “trusted” second (note the change in pronouns). Ephesians 2 then speaks to the existing divide between Jew and Gentile by virtue of the law of Moses (2:14-15) and circumcision (2:11-12).

The Jews were forcing circumcision upon the Gentiles, which wreaked havoc in the early church (Acts 15:1-5). However, it was the message of the Gospel preached, “For the Jew, first, and also for the Greek” (Rom. 1:16-17) that brought both groups together by the blood of Christ, being reconciled to God “in one body”—the church (Eph.2:16). This was the mystery revealed (Eph. 3:6), which serves as the background to Paul’s letter to the Ephesians.

Th apostle Paul often spoke the divide between Jew and Gentile, especially in Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians. Certain Jews (“Judaizers”) were perverting the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:6-9, 5:1-6), demanding the Gentiles be circumcised in order for them to be justified, and this what Paul is addressing within our context (Eph. 2:11). Without circumcision, the Jewish Christians felt the Gentile Christians were not justified. The Jews had always boasted in circumcision as a means of justification, and it was this act that caused the separation (Rom. 2:25-29). Please note Romans 3:27-31, with emphasis on verse 27 which says: “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.”

The Jews boasted in the law (of Moses) and in circumcision. What works were excluded? The works of the law of Moses (cf. Gal. 3:10). What law excluded them? The law of Moses, itself? No! It was the law of **the** faith, (3:30-31) or Gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). Therefore, under the gospel system there are no works of the law of Moses to do since we live under an entirely new system, the New Covenant law of Christ (Heb. 10:9; Rom. 7:1-6, 10:4; 2 Cor. 3:6ff; Gal. 3-4, etc.). However, God has provided works for those of us living under the New Covenant (Eph. 2:10, Rom. 2:6-11, 1 Cor. 7:19; 2 Cor. 5:10; Titus 2:14, 3:8; Jas. 2:14-26; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; Rev. 2:2, 19, 22:14-15). While these works are different than the works of the law of Moses, they are works we must do, nonetheless.

Quite simply, we must continue producing works of obedience for Christ as “He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9). The present tense suggests continued obedience. Of course, the opposite is just as valid: “He did **not** become the author of eternal salvation unto all them that do **not** continue obeying him.”

Within the context wherein we find Eph. 2:8-11, the troubling matter of division was at hand, which, again, was Jew vs. Gentile due to circumcision and the law (2:11-15), but it was through the Gospel that peace would come between the two (Eph. 2:17, 3:6). Therefore, within the context, itself, there is the tension between the Jewish Christians and the law of Moses, and the Gentiles who have obeyed the gospel. The context demonstrates, therefore, that the existence of the article before *faith* in Eph. 2:8 is sound and justified. Of course, grammatical rules, including those rules for the use of the definite article (*the*) are mostly determined by context. One writer said it this way:

If Paul was addressing the problem of Judaizing Christians, who insisted on coupling the Law of Moses to the Gospel of Christ, “faith” in this passage likely refers to the system of faith in Christ contrasted with the works of the Law of Moses.

When one considers the immediate context, as well as the contexts of Paul’s other letters, we find the repeated Jew/Gentile motif on display. We also see the Gospel or “the faith” being contrasted with the law of Moses. This is why that Majority Text

supplies the definite article making it “**the** faith.” After all it is the shield of “**the** faith” that quenches all the fiery darts of Satan (Eph. 6:16). This is the **one faith** (Eph. 4:5, 13), which we must contend for (Jude 3).

In Ephesians 2:8, Paul is referring to the objective standard, the Gospel/the faith. He is not referring to the subjective belief of the individual, especially since Paul destroys such a suggestion with the qualifying statement, “and that not of yourselves.” It cannot be one’s own subjective faith since it cannot be out of one’s self. Therefore, we are saved by grace through **the** faith or Gospel (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:21; Gal. 1:6-9, 23; 1 Pet. 1:22-25; Jas. 1:18, 21).

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## What is the Unpardonable Sin?

**Nana Yaw Aidoo**

After Jesus Christ exorcised a demon-possessed man, the multitudes who followed Him began to ask, “Is not this the son of David?” (Matt. 12:23). Out of envy and hatred for our Lord and not wanting this narrative to spread or to be held by the people, the Pharisees (Matt. 12:24) and the scribes (Mark 3:22) upon hearing this question said, “This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils” (Matt. 12:24). In response to this charge, Jesus Christ spoke among many other things, these words:

Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. (Matt. 12:31-32).

Some years ago, in a Bible class this writer took part in, one brother asked the teacher; “how do I know I have not committed the unpardonable sin?” The teacher responded, “our brother is scared.” Who wouldn’t be, knowing that it is possible to commit a sin which “...shall not be forgiven...neither in this world, neither in the world to come?” Or is it?

### **The Unpardonable Sin: What is it?**

This sin is made clearer when we look at Mark’s record of this incident.

Verily I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: **because** they said, He hath an unclean spirit. (Mark 3:28-30).

Notice the use of *because*. It supplies the reason why Christ said all the things He said in response to the charge of the Pharisees and the scribes. By saying Jesus Christ had an unclean spirit or Beelzebub (Mark 3:22), they had ascribed the miracle He worked, which was truly the work of God’s Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:28), to Satan. By so doing, they had blasphemed or spoken against the Holy Spirit, from whom came the power to work the miracle. Friends, that is all there is to it. The unpardonable sin is not some mysterious sin that cannot be known today but the ascribing of a genuine miracle to the power of Satan.

We call attention to the fact that the charge of the Pharisees and the scribes was directed specifically at the miracle of Christ and not to His teaching (cf. Matt.12:24; Mark 3:22). In context, it was the miracle that Christ worked that was on trial and nothing else. John Wesley wrote concerning Mark 3:30:

Is it not astonishing, that men who have ever read these words, should doubt, what is the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? Can any words declare more plainly, that it is “the ascribing those miracles to the power of the devil which Christ wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost?” (*John Wesley’s Notes on the Old and New Testaments*).

When a person ascribes a genuine miracle to the power of Satan, that person “...shall not be forgiven...neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

### **The Unpardonable Sin: Can it be Committed Today?**

Those who believe that God still works miracles would answer in the affirmative. However, if we'd accept the Bible's own testimony, the unpardonable sin cannot be committed today for the simple reason that miracles ceased two millennia ago. It is not a case of whether God can work miracles. Rather, it is a case of whether He is **still** working miracles. Miraculous ability was given to men for the purposes of revealing God's Word and confirming that which was revealed. (Mark 16:20; John 5:31-47; 1 Cor. 2:6-16; Heb. 2:2-4). It was given directly to the incarnate Christ (John 3:34-35) and the apostles (Acts 1:4; 2:1-4) and later to men on whom the apostles laid hands on (Acts 8:18). The means of passing on the gifts are no longer extant (Acts 1:20-22; 10:39-41) and the purposes having been accomplished, the miraculous has passed away. (1 Cor. 13:8-13; Jam.1:25; Eph. 4:7-13; Jude 3). Therefore, since the unpardonable sin had to do with genuine miracles, then with no genuine miracle being worked today, it is impossible to commit the unpardonable sin today.

### **Conclusion**

There is no sin that God will not pardon, if preceded by genuine repentance. We thus say with the apostle Paul, who years after Christ had made that statement wrote;

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from **all** iniquity (**every** lawless deed, NKJV), and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (Titus 2:13-14).

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## **A Modernist Cannot Partake**

### **Cled E. Wallace**

During the lifetime of the apostles and the years immediately following there were thousands of churches of Christ scattered throughout the Roman Empire, and these thousands assembled on the first day of the week to break bread or partake of the Lord's Supper. And, today, after the passage of many centuries, churches patterned after the ancient order, thousands of them, meet on the same day, the first day of the week, and go through the same observance.

What does all this mean? Is there any significance attached to the fact that on a stated day, and often a stated hour, hundreds of thousands of devout people throughout the world taste a bit of unleavened bread and sip some fruit of the vine? Believe as you will concerning its origin and significance, some rational explanation must be made of the fact that such is being done. Who started it, and why was it begun? Is it a vain hope and faith that they entertain who observe the institution? Are they merely dupes of a traditional hoax?

The observance of the Lord's Supper is so closely related to the facts of the gospel—namely that, “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3-4 ASV)—that no one can consistently partake of the elements of the Supper who does not believe these fundamental facts. Nor could anyone ever do so. It is a matter of fact that from Pentecost on, the thousands of believers who partook of “the cup of the Lord” and “the table of the Lord” (1 Cor. 10:21 ASV) looked on that partaking as “a communion of the blood of Christ” and “a communion of the body of Christ” (1 Cor. 10:16).

The apostles themselves entertained this faith. Saul of Tarsus, the chief persecutor of the church, accepted this faith. They all believed that the blood of Jesus which was shed on the cross was “poured out for many unto remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28 ASV), and that propitiation for sin must be “through faith in his blood” (Rom. 3:25); and they entered into this “communion” of the blood and body of the Lord on the first day of the week because they believed that on that day He really and literally arose from the dead. This was the faith of the Christians we read about in the New Testament.

Were they dishonest? Were they deceived? The very circumstances connected with their faith demand a negative answer to both of these questions. The very first Christians were terribly in earnest—so much so that they would surrender their lives to retain their faith. They could not have been the victims of a hoax. The Lord's Supper is a standing and imperishable monument, a guarantee that the facts of the gospel are substantial.

This all suggests an interesting deduction. A modernist cannot partake of the Lord's Supper. He does not believe as the early Christians did, and it is out of place for him to ever touch the bread and wine of the communion service. He does not believe that Jesus came from heaven as the gospel relates it, that there is atoning power in the blood, and that Jesus bodily arose from the dead. He is out of the faith, and should ignore the Lord's Supper. A construction must be put on the language of the New Testament never intended by the writers thereof to even consider him a Christian in any sense. The Lord's Supper is for them, all of them, and only them who entertain and hold dear the faith of the gospel.

### **The Time Of Its Origin**

The very nature of the Lord's Supper rather accurately points to the time of its origin. It is a memorial of the body and blood of the Lord, of His death on Calvary. "This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me...This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:24-25 ASV).

It points forward as well as backward. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26 ASV). It cannot, then look forward any greater distance than the coming of the Lord, and it cannot look back any farther than the cross of Calvary. Its observance must be confined to the period between the death of Christ and His coming to raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness.

If Jesus is to reign 1,000 years, as some contend, and do so in person after He comes again, the Lord's Supper will not be one of the observances of that reign. The character of the ordinance would have to be changed to fit such a reign, and it would then become a new and different institution. "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:29-30 ASV). This is what Jesus said to His disciples at the time of the institution of the Lord's Supper. Christians "partake of the table of the Lord" in the kingdom that now is, and apostolic authority is the recognized authority in the true Israel of God.

It was at the close of the last Jewish Passover Supper, before the law was nailed to the cross, that Jesus took the bread and the cup and gave thanks and invited the 12 to eat and drink, and explained to them the meaning of the new institution which was being born. Before this time no holy man, priest, rabbi, or prophet had ever thought of such a thing. Abraham and Moses were as ignorant of such a thing as they were the sprinkling of infants in the name of Jesus.

A memorial institution does not exist and proclaim its monumental meaning before the thing it memorializes takes place among the things of history. It was fitting that Jesus should introduce the disciples to its significance on the night of the betrayal, when the very next day Calvary was to witness the blood of atonement.

For centuries, men had been familiar with sacrifice, the shedding of animal blood, priesthood and ritual, circumcision and Passover and feast days, together with a multitude of "carnal ordinances imposed until the time of reformation." But before the cross we find no eating and drinking at the table of the Lord in His kingdom. This belonged to the "time of reformation," the substance of which the former things were only a shadow. The Lord's Supper is more than a "church ordinance," making use of a common term. It suggests that we cannot go behind the cross to find the Lord's church established. The church consists of all Christians, all of them, and they are all entitled to eat at the Lord's table. It is their birthright, for they were born into the kingdom of the

Lord. They remember the Lord, discern His body and His blood, and they eat at His table in His kingdom.

Abraham could not thus remember Him; nor could Moses and the prophets—major or minor. They were not Christians, nor could they be, nor did God expect or demand it of them. They were not members of the church of the Lord, for it had no existence in their day. Had it existed, they would have come into it by baptism and found the Lord's Supper waiting for their observance. There is no baptism, nor Lord's day, nor Lord's Supper in the Old Testament. Even a new word was coined to express the idea of the Lord's Supper. It was a brand new thing 400 years after the last line of the Old Testament was written. We have a new law and a new priesthood. The church and the Supper pertain to the new (Heb. 7:12).

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## There is No Other

Forrest D. Moyer

I suppose that the gospel way has received more criticism because of its exclusiveness than for any other distinctive feature. Some would have us believe that it is too narrow to teach that there is only one way into heaven. Aren't all religious people headed for the same destination? Does it really matter which road we travel to reach that destination? While such questions are asked almost every day, the gospel remains the same for every generation; and it teaches an exclusive way. May we observe some of these features that are exclusive?

### There is No Other God

When Moses was given the Ten Commandments, one of them was: "I am the Lord thy God...Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exod. 20:2-3). This teaching had been so indelibly impressed upon the Jewish people in Jesus' day that a scribe said unto Jesus, "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth; and there is none other but he" (Mark 12-32). By inspiration, Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one" (1 Cor. 8:4). He likewise said to the Ephesians: "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:6). These passages are positive in their teaching that there is only one God—there is no other!

Hence, it should be easy to recognize the sin in making an idol—a false god of wood, stone, or metal. "We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device" (Acts 17:29). Some, however, who would never be guilty of bowing down before idols do, nevertheless, worship a false god. Maybe it is a mental image—a god that has been manufactured in the imagination of some man's mind. Quite often this is true. People are heard to say, "The god whom I serve is too good to give punishment to any person." This is a false idea concerning God. It is in reality **another** god; but there is no other than the true God. Let us serve the one true God of the Bible in His own appointed way.

### There is No Other Christ

While Jesus was here, He warned that there would arise false Christ's: "For there shall arise false Christ's. and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before" (Matt. 24:24-25). Paul also warned against such: "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached..." (2 Cor. 11:4). Why? "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:5). Therefore, there is no other Christ than Jesus of Nazareth.

But some "preach another Jesus, whom we have not preached." Modernists tell us that Jesus was only a man—a good man, to be sure, in fact, the world's best man—but only a man. This is **another** Jesus, for the Jesus of the Bible claimed to be more than just a man; He claimed to be the Divine Son of the Living God. He told the formerly blind man in John 9:35-38 that He was the Son of God and accepted worship from him. He said to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). Now if Jesus

claimed to be the Divine Son of God and was not, He made a false claim with the intent to deceive. One who is a liar and a deceiver is not a good man; most certainly not the world's best man. That is **another** Jesus.

### **There is No Other Gospel**

Paul's purpose in writing to the churches of Galatia is expressed in Gal. 1:6-8:

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

When someone preaches something other than that which is revealed in the New Testament, he is preaching another gospel. But Paul informs us that there is **no other** gospel. There is only one gospel and that is the gospel which Paul preached. It did not originate with him or any other human being. "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:12). To preach the gospel is simply to preach what is revealed in the New Testament. How often is preaching politics, social ethics, etc., palmed off for genuine gospel preaching! Gospel preaching will draw the line sharply and clearly between truth and error. We need more gospel preaching. It is an **exclusive** gospel; there is not one for me and another for you. There is "one faith" (Eph. 4:5). Truly, there is **no other**.

### **There Is No Other Name**

Speaking to the high priest, the rulers, and scribes, Peter declared:

This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:11-12).

Do you say, "There is nothing in a name"? Then reread this passage. To say that there is nothing in a name would be to say that we could be saved in the name of Beelzebub as well as in the name of Jesus. We all know that such is not so. This eliminates my name. It eliminates Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Mary Baker Eddy, Joseph Smith, et al. Only through the name of Jesus—the name which is above every name—can we be saved. There is no other!

### **There Is No Other Foundation**

All people build their religious houses upon some sort of foundation. Some specifically state that their churches are founded on men such as Wesley! The Catholics claim to build upon Peter. But the true foundation is fixed with iron-clad certainty in 1 Cor. 3:11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Is there any other foundation? Paul says there is no other. Are you building upon Him, or upon the crumbling sand of humanism?

### **There Is No Other Church**

When we come to consider the church, most people say, "Well. I think that one church is just as good as another. After all, I think a person can be a member of the church of his own choice." To teach that there is only one church is considered so narrow-minded and bigoted that it is not even worth consideration. Only a sneer is often the answer to such an idea! But have you considered what Holy Writ says? The Bible teaches that the church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Language could not be plainer. Now, how many bodies does Jesus have? "There is one body" (Eph. 4:4). Here, friends, we have the unmistakable answer of inspiration. There is only one body and that one body is the church. Jesus built His church. Then as centuries advanced, men built churches. Now which is right? The one built by Jesus or those established by men? The only worthy answer we can give is that Jesus' church is right—there is no other!

### **There Is No Other Way Of Salvation**

Jesus positively declares, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). Is there any other way? No, there is none. Thus, un-

less I believe in Him, I shall die in my sins (John 8:24). Jesus, who is the truth, said: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). And His commanding authority requires us to "believe and be baptized" and we "shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Do you mean that I must be baptized to go to heaven? Consider this for a moment: Jesus is the way, the **only way**. To go to heaven, I must be in the way (which is Jesus). How do I get into Jesus (the way)? Paul answers: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Hence, I get into Christ (the way) by being baptized. Baptism is essential because of this. Are you in Christ? There is no other way!

### **There Is No Other Time To Obey The Gospel**

When should I become a Christian? The answer is, Now! We cannot do so yesterday, for yesterday is past and gone forever from our grasp. Nor can I safely postpone it until tomorrow. "Boast not thyself of the morrow." The morrow may bring death.

Go to now, ye that say. Today 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 which shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away (Jas. 4:13-14).

Tomorrow you may lose your desire to obey. Remember Felix's sad answer to Paul's message: "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25).

The great word of the Bible is **today**. "Today if ye will hear his voice..." (Heb. 3:7). "But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13). "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). Yesterday is gone forever; tomorrow may never come; today is all we have. There is no other time to obey the gospel. Will you not do it today?

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## **Cardinal Stritch and His Amputated Arm**

**Paul Foutz**

All the various wire services reported in our daily papers on April 28, 1958 that Cardinal Samuel Stritch, "recently archbishop of Chicago" who had just arrived in Rome to accept a high post in the Roman Catholic church, had undergone surgery for the amputation of his right arm. This drastic surgery was necessary due to a blood clot and gangrene in the affected member. What is so amazing about this story is that the Roman church ever allowed it to happen.

This operation was necessary because this condition in the cardinal's arm could not be corrected and yet he was in the "holy city," the capital of Catholicism, and the very shadow of the Vatican where Eugenio Pacelli (Pope Pius XII), supposedly the successor of the apostle Peter, said by them to be "prince of the Apostles" ruled millions of his people while claiming to exercise all the powers of the papal throne. No church in existence, down through the years and even today, has made more claims as to its miraculous powers to heal the diseased and afflicted. We hear constantly of the thousands of people who are "healed" at such places as Lourdes, France, and after their pilgrimages to such "sacred" spots they leave their crutches and canes. But, if there is such abundant evidence of miraculous cures in Lourdes, why not in Rome, and if such healing is available to the unimportant and unknown, why was such not possible for Cardinal Stritch? I am sure the Roman Catholic Church would not say it was because of a lack of faith on his part. All of this religious group would say he was one of their most devout and faithful Catholics. Then it must be due to a lack of healing power on the part of the Roman church—all of the ruling class in Rome, from Pius XII on down through all the hierarchy. This affliction of Mr. Stritch afforded the Roman church one of its greatest opportunities to demonstrate the power it claims to possess to miraculously heal the afflicted, and this was a good time to test the power and ability of those who claim they possess the power and ability of the apostles. We can easily see that they are liars (Rev. 2:2).

I am bold to affirm that all the ruling class in the Roman Church, including the pope, cannot miraculously heal a briar scratch on the most devout and faithful member they have, including Cardinal Stritch. If they can, then let them demonstrate. After all, the issue and question of miraculous healing comes, primarily, not within the realm of discussion but demonstration. If I said I could jump over a six foot fence people would not be impressed by my discussion what I had done in Tennessee or California or what I claimed I was able to do. I would only have to be taken to a six foot fence and told to jump. That would prove my claims as to my ability and power. Any claim to power that is not capable of demonstration is false and fraudulent and should be exposed. The Roman church, with its so-called successors to the apostles, claiming to possess their miraculous powers, failed to demonstrate the power they claim to possess on one of their most loyal and faithful servants. So all of their claims are as “sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.” They have been put to the test and found to be liars in their claims. Their loud boasting as to their power is simply “lying wonders” (2 Thess. 2:1-12) by which the gullible are deceived.

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## Christianity is the Religion of Reason

Jerry C. Brewer

The religion of Jesus Christ is the religion of reason. It is addressed to that part of man which is reasonable—the mind—and, consequently, one who professes that religion **must** be able to give a reason for so doing. The apostle Peter admonishes us to, “...sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15).

Every religion has a basis and Christ's religion is based upon the Bible. Without the Bible no man would know anything of the love of God, Jesus Christ, heaven, or hell. The New Testament is God's will for you and me as expressed through the Son of God. Jesus said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). God has given Him all power—or authority—in matters religious. That's why Paul said all we do in religion must be done in Christ's name, or by His authority. “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17).

To do a thing “in the name of the Lord Jesus” means that He has **authorized us to do that thing**. We cannot simply pick out a practice that suits us and say, “This is in the name of Christ.” No one can act “in the name of the State” without authority from the state. One might **say** he is acting in the name of the state, but unless the state has authorized that person to act, his action is vain and has no authority.

Even so, unless Christ has **authorized** what we preach and practice we are **not** acting in His name—even though we say we are. Jesus has **all authority** (Matt. 28:18) and the inspired writer of Hebrews begins with the assertion that God “has spoken unto us by his Son” (Heb. 1:1-2). God has spoken and His final revelation to man has been made through Jesus Christ. For one's religion to be right with God, his preaching and practice must be ordered by the word of Christ.

That's why the church of Christ seems peculiar to many people. Faithful churches of Christ preach and practice only those things revealed in Christ's will and that is our concern in this article. Why does the church of Christ preach and practice the things it does?

### What We Preach (“In Word”)

We preach the same message which Jesus commanded the apostles to preach. “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). The only way you and I can be saved is through the power of the gospel of Christ. That's what Jesus commanded us to preach and that's what Paul said God uses to save men. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).

The gospel of Christ is the message of the church of Christ. We have no creed book but the Bible. Creeds are written by men, but the Bible is from God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). In fact, **men's creed books contradict the Bible** and lead souls to hell. That's the way it was in the first century and Paul condemned men's creeds. "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8).

### **What We Practice ("In Deed")**

**Why do we use the term, "the church of Christ?"** Because Christ promised to build His church (Matt. 16:18), He died for it (Eph. 5:25), He is its foundation (1 Cor. 3:11), and He is the head of it (Eph. 1:22-23). If Christ promised to build it, died for it, is its foundation and head, what would you call it?

The church has no name. The term, *the church of Christ* is a designation of ownership, like the phrase, "the farm of John Brown." When we say, "the farm of John Brown," we aren't naming his farm, but simply stating who owns it. The same is true with the phrase, *the church of Christ*. That isn't its name, but a phrase indicating that Christ **owns** the church. You see, the church of the New Testament has no name. It never needed one to distinguish it from others in the New Testament because there were no others. Christ built only **one true** church—the one you find described in the New Testament. All modern denominations came into existence long after Christ built His church and they are neither the church He built, nor any part of it.

**What are individual members called?** They are called the same thing they were in the first century. Members of the church of Christ are simply **Christians**. The New Testament knows nothing of "hyphenated" Christians. The name *Christian* is the only name God gave His people (Acts 11:26), the only name found in the Bible for Christ's followers (Acts 26:28), and the only name in which God is glorified (1 Pet. 4:16).

**Why do members of the church of Christ worship as they do?** Because the worship in which we engage is **authorized** (Col. 3:17) by Christ in the New Testament. Our practice is guided by what Christ has authorized in the New Testament.

We pray in worship, with prayer led only by **men** because that's what we are authorized to do in the New Testament (1 Tim. 2:8).

We give of our money on the first day of the week to support the cause of Christ because the New Testament authorizes that (1 Cor. 16:2). We refuse to engage in fund-raising activities like bazaars, car washes, carnivals, games of chance, or other worldly means of raising money because they **aren't authorized** in the New Testament. To engage in such things is to go beyond God's word and that is sin (Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18-19). Neither do we beg for money from those who aren't members of the church of Christ. The support of Christ's cause is solely the responsibility of members of Christ's church.

**Men** preach in our worship assemblies to teach those who aren't Christians and to edify the church (Acts 20:7). Women are expressly forbidden to speak in the public worship and for them to preach is sin (1 Tim. 2:11-12).

We observe the Lord's Supper each first day of the week because that is the approved apostolic example we have in Acts 20:7. The disciples in the first century met to "break bread" in memory of Christ's death and suffering as he commanded (Matt. 26:26-29).

We sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to praise God and edify one another (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), and we do this without the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music. We do this because the kind of music God wants is specified in these verses—**singing**. To play a mechanical instrument of music in worship adds an element which is not authorized and is rebellion against God's authority.

**Why do we insist upon baptism for the remission of sins?** Because that's the plain teaching of Scripture: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

New Testament baptism is immersion in water for the remission of sins. If you had water poured or sprinkled on you, you were not baptized. Baptism requires a going “down into the water” and a coming “up out of the water” (Acts 8:38-39), and Paul says we are “**buried** with him by baptism” (Rom. 6:4).

Neither do we baptize babies because no such practice is authorized in the New Testament. Baptism is “for the remission of sins,” but babies have no sins to remit (Ezek. 18:20-22).

Will you not come and take your stand with us upon the Word of God? The Bible only makes Christians only, and the only Christians.

We are living in a world of death, dissolution, and decay. This old earth is a veritable charnel house. “Change and decay in all around I see.” Man is no exception. “It is appointed unto men once to die” (Heb. 9:27). “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. 4:14). “Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble” (Job 14:1). “The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away” (Psa. 90:10). We are here today, but gone tomorrow. “But truly as the Lord liveth...there is but a step between me and death” (1 Sam. 20:3).

But thanks be to God that in the midst of all this death and decay there is something that is not dead, nor will it ever die.

For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

But the word of the Lord endureth forever (1 Pet. 1:25).

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away (Matt. 24:35).

The word of God is living, active and powerful! In Second Kings 5, we have an account of a man who learned this great lesson. Naaman was captain of the host of the king of Syria. He was a great and honourable man, but the record says he was a leper. He had an incurable disease. The Syrians had gone out to the land of Israel and brought back captives. Among them was a little maid who waited on Naaman's wife. This little girl said unto her mistress, “Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.”

Finally, the king of Syria fitted Naaman out with fine horses, a chariot, ten talents of silver, 6,000 pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment, and sent him to the land of Israel. The king of Syria wrote a letter to the king of Israel. He wrote to the wrong fellow! How many today go to the wrong source for their spiritual light? The little maid had not directed him to the king of Israel, but to the prophet of God. When Naaman presented himself to the king, the king was wroth. He thought the king of Syria was seeking a quarrel against him.

But Naaman did at last contact Elisha, the man of God, and this old prophet told him how to get rid of his leprosy. The cure was simple. In fact, it was **too** simple for the “great” man from Syria. It filled him with wrath. He was told to go to the Jordan River and dip himself seven times and he would be clean. He was indeed mad at this, but his servants eventually persuaded him to obey. He dipped seven times and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. Where did the virtue lie? Was it in the waters of Jordan? We all know that it was not. The virtue was in his obedience to the word of God. “The word of God is quick and powerful.”

When the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness, he learned the lesson of the power of the written word. At every turn Jesus met the devil's temptations with the simple statement, “It is written.” So ought we to meet the temptations that confront us along life's pathway. In fact, in no other way can we successfully overcome the devil.

In John 9 we have an account of Jesus opening the eyes of a blind man. How did he do it? Here is what the divine, inspired record says:

He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

What opened his eyes? Was the virtue in the spittle? Was it in the clay? Was it in the waters of Siloam? We all know it inhered in the word of God. The virtue was in obedience to this word. Again, we must say, “The word of God is quick and powerful.”

In the latter part of the 4th chapter of Mark we have a description of an awful storm on old Galilee. Jesus was with the disciples in a ship. He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow, when the storm broke. The disciples awakened Him and said unto Him, “Master, carest thou not that we perish?” The record further says, “And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.” What stilled the wind and the sea? Where was the power? Of course, it was in the word of the Lord. It is no wonder the disciples, “feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” Again, we say, “The word of God is quick and powerful.”

In John 11, we have the account of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Jesus was not there when he died, but He came after Lazarus had been dead four days. He and the sisters of Lazarus, and others, went out to the grave. The grave was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus had this stone rolled away. After this, He had his little prayer to the Father. Then He cried with a loud voice, saying, “Lazarus, come forth.” Lazarus came forth. Wherein was the power? We all agree it was in the word of God. You have stood by the side of your dead and talked to them, but there was no response in any way. But when **God** talks to the dead, there **is** a response.

The same power that called Lazarus from the grave will raise the teeming millions at the last day. We hear Jesus saying this in John 5:28-29:

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Before leaving this world, Jesus gave a plan for making Christians. It is simple and plain. Of necessity it must be this way to suit all classes of the human family. It is too plain to be misunderstood. Let us read it: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). The Gospel preachers of those early days had no trouble in understanding this. They went out and preached that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. People heard and believed the gospel. On the birthday of the church (Acts 2) the Gospel was preached, folks heard it and believed it, and in answer to the question, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” they were told to “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Acts 2:37-38). The record goes on to say, “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized.” It made them Christians. Nothing else under God's sun will do it. “The word of God is quick and powerful.”

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## Blood and the Remission of Sins

C.G. Caldwell, Sr.

It is generally accepted by all who believe in Christ that His blood is essential in some way or other to the remission of sins. Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins, and all efficacy as a procuring power is in the blood (Heb. 9:22; 1 Pet. 1:19). The denominational world has for many years misrepresented the church on this subject, calling us “water salvationists.” Such misrepresentation obviously comes from those who deny that baptism is one of the steps that brings one into contact with the blood of Christ.

The church has never taught, nor do Christians believe that water literally saves from sin, and that power is in the water. Water is simply the means by which one is brought

to where pardon is had through the blood (1 Pet. 3:21). The difficulty here lies not so much in a difference of belief, but a **lack** of belief on the part of some who through prejudice reject the plain teaching of God's word.

### **Saved By Blood**

The Bible clearly teaches that, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:6,-7). "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:2). These, when conformed to English idioms, mean that no man is, or can be, cleansed from sin, save as he is cleansed by the blood of Christ. Jesus, when instituting the memorial Supper said, "For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). Again, "feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). The statements that He poured out his blood for us, redeemed us by His blood, and purchased us with His blood are doubtless equivalent to "He laid down his life for us." The first sin offering ever made was a blood offering, made by Abel (Gen. 4:4). The Jews were forbidden to eat blood, because in eating blood they would eat life and all life came from God (Deut. 12:23). The shedding of Christ's blood is the giving up of His life. He gave his life for our lives. "Whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" (Rom. 3:5). In setting forth Jesus as a propitiation, He was set forth to make satisfaction, expiation or reconciliation through His blood. Jesus, by His blood, became the propitiator or expiator for sins.

### **Redeemed in Christ**

There is no room for one to cavil as to where justification and redemption are to be had. It is plainly stated by Paul that both are in Christ. In Christ is where the efficacy of the blood is to be found. (2 Tim. 2:10; Eph. 1:3; Col 1:13-14) All those who expect to be rescued by the blood of Christ and cleansed from all their sins, must walk in the truth, the light of God. The truth of God leads to the light where pardon and full fellowship may be had (John 3:21; 1 Jno. 1:3-6; 1:17; 2:1-2).

"How may the sinner approach the cleansing blood of Christ?" is a question of great moment. The blood of Christ is not brought to man and applied as a doctor would apply ointment to a burn or sore. Neither is the literal blood of Christ applied to man's heart. Satisfaction was made with the Father by the Son; the purchase price was paid for all the guilty of Adam's race, and the requirement laid down in the word of God for man to meet in order to enjoy the benefits of the purchased redemption.

Lost man must come to the appointed place to enjoy the purchase. The blood will not be brought to man, neither man to the blood in answer to all the prayers that might be prayed. The **benefits of the blood** are to be had **in Christ**. One cannot be prayed into Christ. To get into Christ one must be born again, one must obey the gospel.

### **How Get Into Christ?**

The consummating act of the new birth and obedience to the gospel is being baptized into Christ. This truth is clearly set forth in God's word. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth, having been begotten ("born KJV) again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Pet. 1:22, 23).

Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom. 6:3-5).

In completing the act of baptism one enters Christ, reaches the merits of the blood and is rescued, redeemed, saved, pardoned, and united with Christ. "For ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26, 27). Again, "Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you the remission of sins" (Acts 13:38). "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13). It was by the guidance or instruction of the Holy Spirit that these Corinthians had been baptized into Christ. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

Paul was a minister of the Spirit, that is, he preached and baptized by the authority of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 3:3-6; 1 Pet. 1:12; 2 Pet 1:19-22). Jesus shed His blood in His death; salvation is in the blood. Therefore to reach the salvation, one must come to the blood; one must come to where the blood was shed; one must enter into the death of Christ. To get into the death, one must be baptized into it. For that is precisely what Paul says, “Or are ye ignorant that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death” (Rom. 6:3).

That which puts one into the name of Christ puts him into Christ or under his authority (Acts 10:48; Col. 3:17). Water baptism is in the name of Christ. Therefore it is water baptism into the name of Christ that brings one to the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38; 10:43-48; 19:1-6) Christ is the Savior of the body, the church; and the church is sanctified and cleansed by the washing (baptism) of water by the word (Eph. 5:24-28). The church is Christ's body; and there is but one body (Eph. 5:24-28; Col. 1:18; Eph. 4:4). We are baptized into that one body (1 Cor. 12:13). Without baptism, therefore, we are without the body, apart from Christ's death, and away from His blood. Without baptism we are lost.

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## Salvation by Faith and Honest Searchers of Scripture

Lester Kamp

We should all be searchers of the Scriptures helping each other come to an understanding of the truth, which is the Word of God (John 17:17). I believe that there is much for me to learn from God's Word, but I also believe that I can know the truth and can know that I am saved (1 John 5:13). I also know that there are many false teachers in the world and sometimes in the church (2 Pet. 2:1-2; Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29-30). There are some who wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction (2 Pet. 5:16). We are warned, therefore, to try the spirits whether they are of God (1 John 4:1). The majority is not necessarily the right standard (see Matt. 7:13-14); following the traditions of men—including the majority—is what Isaiah and Jesus had in mind when they described people's reception (or lack of it) of God's Word: “For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have 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; see Isa. 6:10). The right standard, the standard by which we will all be judged, is the inspired Word (John 12:48).

I believe that we are “justified by faith” (Rom. 5:1)—that is what the text says. But what kind of faith saves? Paul begins and ends this letter to the Romans by defining the faith that saves (justifies). In Romans 1:5 he refers to the “obedience to the faith” and in Romans 16:26 he concludes with “the obedience to the faith.” The kind of faith that justifies is the kind of faith that obeys. Abraham's faith, since he is the “father of the faithful,” is a prime illustration of this (see James 2:21-24). By the way, the only verse in the entire New Testament that says anything about faith alone as it relates to salvation is in James 2. It reads: “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (verse 24). Even the demons believe (Jas. 2:19), but surely they are not saved. Notice please that Romans 5:1 does **not** say that one is justified by “faith **only**,” I believe that would be adding to the Scriptures, don't you?

Consider Acts 11:12-18. Look at verse 14. Cornelius was told to send for Peter, a preacher, “who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and thy house shall be saved.” Some of those words Peter told them “whereby thou and thy house shall be saved” included that which is here referenced: “And he (Peter) commanded them (Cornelius and his household) to be baptized” (Acts 10:48). This is water baptism (see also Acts 8:36); Holy Spirit baptism is nowhere commanded in the Scriptures. While we are here, let me emphasize that the book of Acts records cases of conversion in the first century. Look at these records carefully. Baptism is the only act of obedience that is **specifically mentioned in every single case of conversion** recorded, not hearing the

Gospel, not faith, not repentance, not confessing faith. The rest are surely implied in each case, but baptism is **specifically mentioned** and yet it is the one that many object to. If baptism is a work, it is a work of God (not a meritorious human work) for He authorized it, and so is faith (John 6:29). God's plan for the salvation of man involves the preaching and teaching of the Gospel, God's Word, and not some direct operation on the human heart. If the later were the case God would be a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

Consider Mark 16:16 (some question the authenticity of this verse, but I have considered the evidence and believe it to be part of the inspired text). The text reads: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Jesus did not say "He that believeth shall be saved and be baptized if he decides he wants to or to demonstrate that he is saved." The conjunction *and* ties the two things together. You cannot meet just half of the requirements and meet them all. **Both** are necessary. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Then consider the last part: "he that believeth not shall be damned." Some suggest that nothing is said about the one not baptized. Such is not necessary. This statement of Jesus is parallel to this sentence: "He that eateth and digesteth his food shall live; but he that eateth not shall die." In this case it should be obvious that if one refuses to eat then digestion would not occur and therefore the person would die. The same is true in the statement of Jesus which is parallel.

But also consider: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Man is lost because of his sins. Unless and until those sins are forgiven, he will remain lost. To receive the remission of sins (this phrase "unto the remission of sins" is exactly parallel to "unto the remission of sins" in Matthew 26:28 if you need help in determining the meaning here) one must "repent and be baptized." Note the conjunction *and* again. Both repentance **and** baptism are required—not just one, but both. In Acts 22:16, Saul is told to be baptized to "wash away" his sins. Not here or anywhere else in the Scriptures is it taught that baptism is an outward act signifying sins already remitted, or forgiven.

Hence, completely in agreement with all of these Scriptures (and more which could be cited); "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:21).

"Study to show thyself approved unto God..." (2 Tim. 2:15). Be like the Bereans and search the Scriptures to see whether these things are true (Acts 17:11).

"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4:16). I pray that the Lord will open your heart through His Word.

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## Catholic Authority And "Infallibility"

**Luther Blackmon**

If you should have an opportunity to discuss religion with a Catholic, do not make the mistake of supposing that you will influence him with quotations and arguments from the Bible. That is, if he is a "good" Catholic. If he was born in the Catholic Church, and most of them were, he has been taught from childhood that the Bible is a meaningless mystery except in the hands of a Catholic Priest or some other clergyman of that church. With Catholics the Church is supreme authority. The pronouncements of the clergy must be obeyed without question. He must not study the Bible for himself. It will only confuse him, and he sins in so doing. But we shall let Catholic authority speak for itself.

The following quotations are from Reharbe's *Complete Catechism of the Catholic Religion*. Have no fears about its not being authentic Catholic belief. It has the Imprimatur of the church on the flyleaf.

Page 77: “Where are the truths revealed of God contained?” Answer: “...in the Holy Scriptures and tradition.”

Page 79: “From whom alone can we know the true sense of Holy Scripture?” Answer: “From the Church alone; because the Church alone cannot err in interpreting it.”

Page 82: “From whom are we to learn the true meaning of tradition?” Answer: “From the Church alone, because she alone has received from God the authority and the guidance necessary to interpret infallibly all the doctrine that He has revealed, whether in the Holy Scriptures or in tradition.”

Page 76: “What, therefore, must the Catholic believe?” Answer: “He must believe all that God has revealed and the Catholic Church proposes to his belief, whether it be contained in the Holy Scripture or not.”

Page 79: “May no one, then, presume to explain the scripture contrary to the interpretation of the Catholic Church?” Answer: “No; for this would be as if he understood the scripture better than the Holy Ghost, who inspires the church with the true meaning of it.”

Page 80: “What has the Church decreed with regard to the reading of the Bible in the vulgar tongue?” Answer. “1. That we should have the learning and piety requisite for it; and 2. That the translation should be accompanied with explanations and that both should be approved of by the Church.”

So you see, Not just anyone can read the Bible. He must have the learning and piety for it. That means he must be well enough seasoned in Catholicism that he will pay no attention to anything that is contrary to the decrees of the Church. And even those who are allowed to read it must have a translation that has been doctored by the Church; “accompanied with explanations” is the way they put it. The council of Trent issued this “infallible” decree: That the Bishops might

permit the reading of the Bible, translated into the vulgar tongue by Catholic authors to those persons whose faith and piety they apprehend will be augmented by it; and this permission they must have in writing. But if anyone shall have the presumption to read or possess it without such written permission, he shall not receive absolution until he has first delivered up such Bible to the ordinary.

So even the learned and pious must have written permission—must read a doctored translation—sins if he reads or possesses one otherwise—and will not be forgiven until he gives up his Bible. If I were a Catholic I would be suspicious of a doctrine that has to be protected by such means. Some of them are, and that is the reason we are converting many of them to the truth, but if you hope to convert a Catholic you must first make him realize that he is being held in mental slavery by that fantastic and impious dogma of “Church infallibility.”

What does the “Mother Church” offer as proof of her infallibility? Let the catechism answer. Page 143: “Who assures us that the Church cannot err?” Answer: “Christ himself who has promised, (1) That he will be with her all days, even to the consummation of the world. Matt. 28:20. (2) That the Spirit of Truth shall abide with her forever. (John 15:16-17) (3) That the gates of hell shall not prevail against her (Matt. 16:18).”

And this proves that the Catholic Church is infallible! His passages are not apropos, but that is not my point here. Two questions: (1.) Why quote the scriptures to prove that the Church is infallible when it takes the “infallible” Church to give the meaning to the scriptures? (2.) To whom is the Bible a revelation? Not to the laity. They can't understand it. Not to the clergy. They are inspired. They could write another one just like it. “The Bishops of the Catholic Church are successors of the apostles” (Catechism, p. 136, answer to question 20). Surely the Bible doesn't reveal anything to **them!**

Here is something for the Catholic to think about. Catholics believe with the rest of us that the men who wrote the Bible were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Yet they are made to believe that they cannot understand what these inspired men wrote. They must have **other** “inspired” men (the Catholic clergy) tell them what these New Testament writers meant. Question: If I cannot understand what an inspired man wrote, how can I be

sure that I understand what **another** inspired man says? Are my ears better than my eyes? If I cannot understand an apostle, how do I know that I understand his successor? Think it over. And when a Catholic gets the right answer to these questions he will not be a Catholic any longer.

But one more thing about these “successors of the apostles.” “Infallibility is not granted to each one individually, but to the Teachers (Bishops) collectively, when united with the Pope.” (Catechism, p. 144, answer to question 50.) The Bishops are not “**individually** infallible.” Were the apostles “individually infallible?” Paul said, (and I quote from the Catholic Bible—their doctored version) “...the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man, for neither did I receive it of man, neither did I learn it; but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:11-12). Now look at verse 13. “But when it pleased Him who separated me from my Mother's womb...to reveal His Son in me...I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to the apostles who were before me: but I went into Arabia and again I returned to Damascus.” The next verse says, “after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter...” It was three years after Paul's conversion before he saw another apostle, even Peter (who Catholics falsely claim was the Pope). Was he preaching heresy all this time, or was he “individually” infallible and inspired?

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## **Marriage as God Would Have It**

**P.D. Wilmeth**

The Bible is literally honeycombed with instructions concerning marriage. This is only what one might expect from such a book regarding a matter which universally, keenly and deeply affects the whole human race and touches on the most powerful springs of human life and action.

Indeed, any book which professed to give an account of the origin, purpose, regulation and destiny of mankind would not be complete if it did not make known the will of God on this subject. Let us now move back to that first wedding and get a look at the scene.

### **A Look At The Scene**

God made them different. Man is first of all different from the brute—the animal kingdom. He is different in his power of intelligent comprehension. He is different in his sensibility and appropriate intellectual feelings. He is different in that he possesses a moral sense of what is right and wrong. He is different in his power of intelligent choice. In dominion, he has control over all the animal kingdom. This is his “colonist's charter.” Moreover he possesses a spiritual nature. But there are essential differences in the sexes.

This does not mean that woman is inferior to man. Man may have, on the whole, greater physical strength and endurance; but she has a finer grain of character. The viewpoints of both sexes are often dissimilar. God made them different and the differences are complementary to each other. The wisdom of the Creator is seen in the design of these different creatures, man and woman. The Scriptures bear evidence of these differences and take them into account.

“Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the grace

of life; to the end that your prayers not be hindered” (1 Pet. 3:7). In the next place we learn...

God made them for each other. Jehovah created man alone. Man was left in the lonely condition for some period of time—which is not clearly defined as to length—and Jehovah said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him” (Gen. 2:18).

It is not necessary here to suppose that God changed His plans, or discovered by experiment, as human beings do, that His original design was not perfect. The whole process of creation was progressive. It was especially a system of development from one stage to another.

Woman was created and given to man. Upon receiving her, man said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man” (Gen. 2:23). In presenting her to man, and ordaining the marriage relation, Jehovah said, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24).

Let us remember that woman was made from man's side; not from his head to rule over him, nor from his feet to be his slave, but from his side, nearest his heart, to be his companion, his helper, and his inspiration. Paul said, “let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:2).

He made them a model for all humanity. When He created woman and gave her to man, Jehovah said, “they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). This was said in ordaining marriage. This is marriage. The two became one—a new one. Neither were the old “ones” but a “new one,” formed by the union of body, mind, and spirit—a blending of two personalities into one.

Jesus taught that, according to God's original plan of marriage, the husband and wife are joined together for life and should not be put asunder by man. This is still the Biblical model, the ideal, and the correct one for all time. Jesus did not say much about marriage, but what He said was very much to the point. He pointed out that in heaven, people neither marry nor are given in marriage (Matt. 22:23-30)—that marriage is a relationship of this earth only.

The only other things the Saviour said about marriage is his quotation of this original ceremony in the Garden of Eden, with one significant addition that is now a part of many ceremonies—“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” There was no provision in that plan for dissolution of the marriage except by death. Jesus did not change that.

There is absolutely no place in God's plan for polygamy, trial marriage, or any kind of sexual relationship outside of marriage. Such practices are abominable in the sight of God. They degrade and have a tendency to completely destroy the holy relationship of marriage.

There are only two words in the vocabulary of “love.” They are “you” and “always.” “You” because love is unique, and “always” because love is timeless. No one ever said, “I will love you for two years and six months.”

### **The Purpose Of Marriage**

It is for companionship. Jehovah said, “It is not good for man to be alone; I will make him a help meet for him” (Gen. 2:18). It takes a marriage partner to round out one's life and make it complete. This is the social aspect of life.

Mark's gospel reads, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh; so that they are no more two, but one flesh” (Mark 10:7-8).

Writing to the church at Ephesus, Paul said, “Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Eph. 5:25-26). In verse 28, we read, “So ought husbands to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.”

What a marvelous truth! This is the cement, the mortar, that holds two people together in the most joyous relationship in all of life.

Marriage is for the perpetuation of the race. This is the biological aspect of marriage. This is the order in which God created the race of man: “Male and female created he them. And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it” (Gen. 1:27-28).

It is the positive and emphatic assertion of the Bible that the union of the sexes in marriage, with the command to be fruitful and multiply, is Gods own ordinance, and one which was given to them as a good thing, a needful thing, and a blessed thing. It should be further observed that these statements are clear, universal, and permanent. They express fundamental principles which are of vital interest and importance to all mankind. They belong to the race of man. On this injunction, the race has been perpetuated.

It is a trite—but true—statement that the home is the basic unit of society. The history of mankind bears unmistakable evidence that the home and family determine the character of any civilization and the power of any nation. The sanctity of home life has ever been the safeguard of the family. We must ever keep this relationship intact and for the purposes God intended.

The privilege of bringing children into the world is denied the unmarried. To them, the very act necessary to accomplish this is sin. To the married it is a high privilege and a duty—where it is not impossible or altogether inexpedient. And a home is never as happy and secure without children as with them.

To prevent immorality. Paul said, “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:1-2). We learn that whoremongers and adulterers are condemned to the lake of fire. “But the fearful and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

But in marriage, we escape the horrible sin of immorality. The Hebrews writer said, “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4).

### **Conclusion**

The whole teaching and commandment of Jehovah in the matter of marriage is that it's a lifetime contract with all its attendant blessings, joys, and responsibilities which are mutual in their enforcement. When one chooses a husband or wife, according to Gods law, it is a choice for life, until the hand of death severs the relationship.

Husband and wife are joined in marriage for life, and neither can put this asunder except at the peril of his own soul. Therefore, any second union while both parties are alive is adultery and not “true marriage,” if the exception Jesus gave in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 does not prevail. It is clear that in the mind of God marriage cannot be dissolved except for fornication, and the state cannot put asunder that which God has joined.

The state, or human laws, cannot grant the liberty of divorce with the right to remarry for any cause without running counter to the will of God. No one can follow human laws of divorce and enter into a marriage union without defying God and rebelling against the basic principle in the marriage relationship. Let us invoke the blessings of God upon every union where Christ can be honored, and where husband and wife may loyally obey Him as their Lord and Master.

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I have heard many big fish yarns, but the evolutionists ask us to believe the biggest one yet. Somewhere in the remote past, they say a fish flapped out on dry land and his fins turned into legs. After that, the story of Jonah and the whale seems easy. —**R.L. Whiteside**—

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# Seven Sobering Certainties

Charles A. Holt

In this age of change and changing things there seems to be nothing that is definite and certain. People are going to and fro feeling that there is nothing upon which they can depend. All seems so lacking in dependence. As a result people are forgetting the things that really count. They are laying aside those things that are of eternal value and turning to things earthly in search of happiness. We need today to find some certainties upon which we can depend—certainties that will awaken and sober us to things that are real and valuable. These things will give one a sure footing in this fleeting world.

**There is the certainty of exposure**—one's sins will find him out (Num. 32:23). While this may not be done in this life, be assured there is a time coming when it will—in the judgment. “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Eccl. 12:13). We may succeed in fooling our friends and relatives, but we cannot fool God. He knows our lives and hearts—“all things are open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13). We can depend on this. The certainty of exposure is **as** certain as God. (See also, Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:10; 14:12).

**There is the certainty of leaving our earthly possessions.** One thing that experience should teach us is that “we can't take it with us.” We say this jokingly many times but it is also as certain as God Himself. Regardless of how much of this world's goods we accumulate we will leave it all here. One man asked another as they looked on the remains of a rich man, “How much did he leave?” The solemn reply was, “He left it all.” Well does Paul say, “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out” (1 Tim. 6:7). Job knew this and said, “Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither...” (Job 1:21). What we possess is given us of God to use faithfully while here for His glory and the benefit of men. By faithfully using this we can expect to enjoy the results in the world to come—“Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” This is a certainty that should sober us all.

**Then there is the certainty of harvest time.** “Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 5:7). Not only shall we reap (harvest) as we sow, but the reaping is inevitable and certain. “He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.” This is God's law in both the natural and spiritual realms. It is unchanging and certain. We can depend upon it. It should sober us and make us more careful of the sowing we do, that it is done so we will be glad to reap accordingly.

**The certainty of death is** too certain to be even questioned. Experience teaches us this to say nothing of God's word. We know this is true and yet it seems to fail to have the sobering effect on us that it should. We must all die. “There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death...” (Eccl. 8:8). “...it is appointed unto men once to die...” (Heb. 9:27). Knowing that we shall die and not knowing when, it should cause us to give more concern to being prepared for it. How foolish indeed is he who, knowing of such certainty, fails to prepare for it.

**As certain as death is the certainty of the judgment.** “Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness...” (Acts 17:31). “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). This day is set—it is appointed. It is coming to you and it is coming to me—that day is coming to all. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the deeds done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). We can depend on this certainty. We **shall be judged**, and this judgment will be according to what we have done in the body—in this life. A sobering certainty indeed. Are you ready for that day to come?

**Then there is the certainty of the separation of the wicked from the righteous.** This will be finally done at the judgment:

When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from the other, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left (Matt. 25:31-33).

This is sure and certain. In which group will I be is a question of paramount importance. We determine this now in this life. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life...” (John 10:27-28). His sheep hear His voice and they follow Him. They follow Him all the way.

**This brings us to the certainty of final reward.** What our reward will be depends upon how we have lived here. For His sheep Jesus says their reward will be, “Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34). These—the righteous—shall go into “life eternal.” On the other hand, just as sure and certain is the fate of those on His left hand: “Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41). “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment...” (Matt. 25:46). The “everlasting fire” is “everlasting punishment” that shall last as long as the righteous enjoy “life eternal.” What a sobering certainty! An endless suffering—all because one failed to obey the Lord's will, spurned His mercy and grace, and lived a life of lust and pleasure and enjoyed “the pleasures of sin for a season.” How foolish!

## The Editor's Travels

We preached morning and evening on the Lord's Day at Yukon, Okla. on March 1. Sunday morning, March 8, we preached for the Eastside church in Lexington, Okla. On Sunday, March 15, we preached at Willow, Okla. that morning and at Yukon, Okla. that evening. Coronavirus measures kept us from preaching at Chillicothe, Texas on Sunday morning, March 22, but we hope to return there soon.

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## “What Saith The Scriptures?”

Harrell Davidson

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**I need your view on this idea that is being taught by a very influential brother in Ghana.**

According to the brother, all the churches in one country or city or town were under just one eldership. (Titus 1:5). His argument is that, the churches in the apostolic age were persecuted churches, which met in homes. And so when Paul wrote to for example, the church in Ephesus, he wrote to just one eldership which oversaw all the house churches in the city and it was all these house churches combined which are called “the church of Ephesus” (Rev.2:1) and not just one local church like is always taught.

Thanks for your question. The teaching you allude to is false to the core. Elders were/are appointed over the local congregation and in no case in New Testament times was an eldership ordained over two or more congregations. Look at this verse, “And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed” (Acts 14:23).

Does the phrase “every church” not mean **every**? If it means exactly what it says then a congregation that met in a house or home had its own elders. We know that there were those churches that met in houses. “Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer, And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house” (Philm 1:1,2). Also speaking of Priscilla and Aquila Paul wrote, “Likewise greet the church that is in their house....” (Rom. 16:5). And there were perhaps others also that met in houses.

This does not suggest that all congregations met in the home of some members. The fact is that we do not know where some met, we know that they met and where the

church met there were elders over that local congregation and not over a conglomerate of congregations as is evidently being taught by the false teacher there in Ghana.

Moreover, when Paul called from Miletus for the elders at Ephesus to come to meet him (cf. Acts 20:17) did he expect all the elders from Asia Minor to meet there or only the elders from the church at Ephesus? The point is that the elders at Ephesus had no authority over those who met in the house Philemon or of Priscilla and Aquila or any other congregation etc.

The congregation where we work was supporting a preacher in a certain location and they meet under a shade tree. The last account that we had of them there were about 25 members. That congregation was not under nor over another other congregation regardless of the meeting place. That being the case why would Paul instruct Titus to: “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee” (Titus 1:5). He did that because the Holy Spirit Inspired him to appoint elders in **every church** (Acts 14:23). How many cities did Paul include? **Every city!**

Paul and Barnabus met with the elders of the church in Jerusalem with the other apostles, not Jerusalem and the surrounding area congregations over which the elders at Jerusalem were overseers (cf. Acts 15:1-5) Finally, for the most part, the epistles were written to various congregations because each one for the most part had different problems that needed addressing. There is no Inspired record of one eldership being over more than one congregation. Again, we need to apply Colossians 3:17, “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” Authority is totally lacking in this matter.

**Brother Davidson answers readers' questions in this column each month. If you have Bible questions, you may email them to him at [harrelld@charter.net](mailto:harrelld@charter.net)**

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## The Holy Spirit in Conversion

**J. Early Arceneaux**

The question is not, “**Does** the Holy Spirit operate in converting the sinner,” but, “**How** does He operate?” No one who professes to believe the Bible denies that the Holy Spirit exerts His power in the conviction and conversion of sinners. We have often been accused of making such a denial. Those who make this charge misrepresent us. Jesus said, “He [the Spirit]...will convict the world in respect of sin...” (John 16:8 ASV). We believe what He said. He also said, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall **believe on me through their word**” (John 17:20, Emph. JEA). John says, “...but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31). We affirm and teach that the Holy Spirit works through and by means of the word of God, and nobody denies what we affirm; what we teach is not called in question.

Others teach that the Holy Spirit operates immediately—without means or instrument—upon the heart of the sinner. Or, as some say, He performs an operation in addition to the influence exerted through the word of God. This we deny. It is their position that is questioned, not ours.

The Spirit convicts men of sin. Now faith is conviction (Heb. 11:1 ASV). The same word is used here as a noun, the verb form of which is translated “convict” in John 16:8. But faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). The Holy Spirit convicts or produces faith through the word. He cannot convict a man without the word unless He convicts him twice. The same man cannot be convicted through the word and without

the word at the same time. Both cannot be true. We affirm that what the Bible says on the very point at issue is true.

In John 14 through 16, Jesus said many things about the Spirit. He would “send” the Spirit to the apostles. They would receive Him. He would “come” to them, “testify,” remind them of all Jesus had said, teach them all things, and guide them into all truth. In these chapters, there is just one thing that the Spirit would do to sinners—He would convict them.

Jesus later commissioned the apostles to “preach the gospel” (Mark 16:15), to “teach” (Matt. 28:19); but not to begin until they received power from on high (Luke 24:49) and this power was received by them in Jerusalem on Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to them (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4). They spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. Their words were the words of the Holy Spirit. The ideas conveyed to enlighten the hearers were the ideas of the Holy Spirit. The motives which moved the hearers to act were brought to their hearts in the words of the Holy Spirit.

Peter preached on that occasion. He quoted scripture, stated facts, made arguments and drew a logical conclusion. His hearers were convinced that Jesus was the Christ, and that they had murdered the Son of God. Do you not think that they were convicted of sin?

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? (Acts 2:36-37).

Peter preached. They heard, and were convicted **when** they heard by **what** they heard. But what did the Spirit have to do with it? Everything. Peter had preached the gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven (1 Pet. 1:12). Men believed through his words, as Jesus had said they would (John 17:20). Faith had come by hearing. But faith is conviction. They were convicted. But the Spirit was to convict. When the word of God produces faith, the Holy Spirit convicts a sinner, and He works now in exactly the same way, and by the same means that He did on Pentecost.

Jesus promised to send the Spirit to the apostles to guide them into all truth and to convict and convert sinners. He commissioned the apostles to teach and to baptize, and to teach the baptized to observe all things which He required of them (Matt. 28:19-20). How did the Spirit do the work? What did He do? You can see the answer in concrete form. Look at your New Testament. That is what the Spirit did. It is the truth into which He guided the apostles. It is “their words” through which men believe and are led to repent of their sins, to confess their faith in Him and to be baptized into Him. It also contains what they taught the baptized to observe. It is the commission carried out. But they carried out the commission under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit did what Jesus said He would do through—by means of—the words of inspired men. Those words were first spoken. When sinners heard the word, they believed. That word was put in writing that we may believe (John 20:31). The gospel was preached. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16-17). Paul, in writing, says, “I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you...” (1 Cor. 15:1).

Let us suppose now that the Holy Spirit decides to convert a sinner and make a Christian of him without using “the written word of God,” and that He does so convert a man. Will that newly-made Christian believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? Certainly. How did he become a believer? Was the thought put into his mind without words? How? Suppose the man had been in a heathen land, and that he had not been under the influence of the “written word.” He was converted without it. After conversion, how could he say, “I believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,” if he had never heard those words? No one since Pentecost has ever said those words who had not heard or been taught them. We all know such a convert cannot be found. If you say, “The Holy Spirit **spoke the words** to the man, I reply, “That would not be a direct operation of the Spirit. That would be using **words** as means of conversion.” That is the way the Holy Spirit always converts men, and was the way men were converted on Pentecost **before** the New Testament was written down.

“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day” (John 6:44). This is a favorite proof text of the doctrine of direct spiritual influence upon the sinner. But look at the next verse: “It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.” No man can come except God draw him. But all shall be taught. Everyone who **hears** and **learns** comes. God draws men by teaching them. He does not draw them without teaching. This passage says so. Not one single person is drawn by the Father or comes to Christ who has not been taught, who has not heard and learned. This is Christ's denial of direct operation. That ought to settle the matter.

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## Thank You to Our Website Visitors!

**www.thegospelpreceptor.com** continues to set daily user records. The single day's record of 526 that was set Dec. 26, 2019 was surpassed Feb. 5 with 530. That was surpassed Feb. 17 with 557, and a **NEW DAILY RECORD OF 708** was set on March 3. Thank you to all use this resource for Bible articles, videos and downloadable books.

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## Letter to the Editor, March 18, 2020

Jess Whitlock

As of today's date over 100 Americans have died because of the Coronavirus. In 2009 over 1,000 Americans died as a result of the Swine Flu. Both times the government became very excited and interested in what to do to control the death toll. And, rightfully so. We sorrow with all who have lost loved ones in this time of national crisis.

According to the “National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse” we find this statement: “An estimated 88,005 people (approximately 62,000 men and 26,000 women) die from alcohol-related causes annually, making alcohol the third leading preventable cause of death in the United States.” This has been going on for multiplied years in our country. The government has done absolutely **nothing** in an effort to control the number of lost lives each year due to alcoholism. Why not? The truth be known, because most leaders in our nation are addicted to alcohol. We are warned that “wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging” (Prov. 20:1). Alcohol continues to mock Americans and take American lives by the thousands every year. Yet, the majority of politicians in our land couldn't care less. What a shame.

Since the Roe vs. Wade decision of the Supreme Court in 1973, we have killed almost 62,000,000 innocent babies in our nation. The Bible reveals that life begins at the moment of conception in the mother's womb (Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:41; 2:21). One politician stated that it “would be un-Christian to attempt to put an end to abortion on demand.” This woman has no idea what Christianity is. Willful murder in the sight of a holy God has **never** been right, nor had His approval. Most politicians in our land today are “pro-death” when it comes to innocent babes. When a woman enters an abortion clinic today the mother's **womb** becomes the baby's **tomb**. May God forgive us for our stupidity as a nation.

You may make the sin of alcoholism legal in our nation, which we have most assuredly done, but you can never, ever make it right! You may make the murder of little babes in our land legal, which we have most assuredly done, but you can never, ever make it right!

Where is the political leader who will take a stand against alcoholism? Where is the politician who will defend the right of innocent babes to have a chance for life? May God raise up such men and women while there is still time.

**Editor's Note: This was written and submitted to brother Whitlock's local newspaper.**

# A Divine Creed is Given to Man

**C.D. Plum**

One day, not many moons ago, a friend and I were talking about religion in general, and finally the conversation drifted to religious creeds in particular. It was agreed that in the world today there are **divine creeds** and **human creeds** with the human creeds being in the majority. Each of us understood that a creed is simply a, “statement of belief” and when one accepts the word of God as it is, he is governed by the **divine** creed. But when one accepts a human creed as it is, he is governed by a **human** creed.

## **A Divine Creed**

But my friend's difficulty was the fact that he did not see clearly why the whole Bible was not intended for the whole world, thus providing just one divine creed for all time. This led us into a discussion of the three dispensations of the Bible—the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Gospel. The Patriarchal dispensation dated from Adam to Moses' reception of the law at Mount Sinai. The Mosaic dispensation dated from the giving of the law at Sinai to the cross of Christ, and the Gospel dispensation is dated from the cross of Christ until the end of time.

In each of these dispensations, God issued His commandments that men were to obey. Thus, there was a divine creed in each distinct age. My friend was led to see that he could not be judged by commandments that applied to an age in which he did not live. Neither he nor I could be under God's creed that applied during the Patriarchal age or the Mosaic age because we did not live during those periods of time.

## **New Testament Creed**

A pure creed is unmixed with the doctrines and commandments of men. Such was the kind of creeds God had in the Patriarchal age and the Mosaic age. My friend was led to see that God did not have two different creeds for particular men in effect in any single age. Therefore, before the Gospel creed could be binding on all men, those preceding creeds had to be abolished.

By a careful study of Hebrews 10:9 we learned that by Christ's death on the cross the first, or Mosaic creed, was taken away that the second, the New Testament creed, might be established. This truth was further confirmed by a study of Col. 2:14-16; 2 Cor. 3:7-16; Heb. 8:6-13 and 9:15-17.

It does not take an intellectual giant to see that, after Christ's death on the cross and the establishment of His church, or kingdom, on Pentecost (Acts 2), that Christ is our High Priest, Prophet, and King, and the members of His church are His subjects.

Christ's Gospel, or the New Testament, is then the pure creed which men must accept today. Jesus plainly says, “The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

When alien sinners believe (Rom. 10:10; Heb. 11:6), repent of their sins (Acts 17:30), confess Christ as God's Son (Matt. 10:32; Acts 8:37), and are buried with their Lord in baptism for the remission of sins (Col. 2:12; Acts 2:38; 22:16), they have obeyed the New Testament creed concerning how to enter into Christ. When people have done this, they do not have to worry about “joining a church,” for in this obedience the Lord has already added them to the right church—His church (Acts 2:41, 47; Matt. 16:18).

As these truths were studied by my friend and me, and as the light of the truthfulness and simplicity of the Gospel unfolded in his confused denominational mind, his countenance glowed as if a great burden had been lifted from his soul. We studied the importance of giving strict heed to the pure New Testament creed in worship, work, and Christian living, just as much so as in faith, repentance, confession, and baptism, emphasizing the fact that there is no need to become saved unless one stays saved.

## **Charges Against Human Creeds**

When my friend saw clearly that Christians are “complete” in Christ (Col. 2:10), and that through Christ God has revealed to us in the New Testament, “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17), he began to wonder why

men ever wrote human creeds to regulate man's religious life. Some very damaging charges were then made against human creeds.

1. Human creeds were not given by God, nor written by divinely-inspired men.
2. Human creeds do not meet the needs of the world, whereas the pure gospel creed was commanded to be taken to every creature in all the world (Mark 16:15-16).
3. Human creeds are imperfect, but Christ's gospel—New Testament teaching—is spoken of as, “the perfect law of liberty” (Jas. 1:25).
4. Being imperfect, human creeds are revised every few years. The gospel of Christ is perfect, and woe unto that man or group of men who would change it! We read the penalty on such as would pervert the gospel (Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:18-19).
5. Human creeds teach differently from the word of God, and with many people such creeds set aside the word of God.
6. Human creeds keep people divided over religious matters, a striking proof of which is seen in the Catholic and Protestant worlds.

Since we have the New Testament as a perfect, pure creed, it was plain to my friend that human creeds are both useless and insufficient. When men begin to write creeds, they begin to depart from God's teaching. In writing their human religious creeds, they plainly declare that they think God has failed in giving us a safe “rule” by which to be measured.

But they tell us that their human creeds do not set aside the Bible. They claim their creeds are just like the Bible. If the creed is just like the Bible, they do not need the creed. If the human creed contains more than the pure, New Testament creed, it contains too much. If the human creed contains less than God's creed, it contains too little.

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## The Remission of Sins

**Daniel J. Ottinger**

The expression, “the remission of sins” means the sending away of sins. It means sending away sins into the realm of utter forgetfulness, to be remembered no more against us by our Father in heaven. One whose sins are remitted will never be brought into judgment for any transgression committed previous to receiving “the remission of sins” (John 5:24). Surely, the sending away of a mortal's sins by the Immortal God is the sweetest theme ever contemplated by a human being.

The remission of sins is exclusively a New Testament subject. We will examine each of those passages where this phrase is found and note in each instance that to which remission of sins is attributed. It will also be attempted to agree with everyone, as far as possible, who professes reverence for the Bible as God's Word. If, then, at the last a disagreement must come, this question will be pressed: “Is there Scriptural ground for this difference in viewpoint?” Should not the one differing with God's Word change his views?

“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28). There is no disagreement on the first part of this passage. It is believed that no one professing orthodoxy will deny that Jesus died on the rugged cross for our sins—He died there that all may be forgiven. Blessed thought, and there is unity here.

“John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). Most students will admit that the Jews had to submit to John's baptism in order to be forgiven. The design of John's baptism is quite plain to all.

Now let us hear the prophecy of Zacharias. “Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of

their sins, through the tender mercy of our God” (Luke 1:76-78). Here, the remission of sins is attributed to the mercy of God. None of us is worthy of being saved, hence “tender mercy.” Surely, there is agreement here.

“It is written...that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46-47). It is seen from these words that repentance is a condition of the remission of sins. There is no dispute that moral repentance on a large scale is greatly needed. In another place, Jesus taught that, “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5).

“Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained” (John 20:23). This is delicate language. It is often quoted by Catholic priests to “prove” that they and Peter, within themselves, forgive sins. Well, in the sense intended by this passage, the apostles **did** forgive sins, but only to the extent that their hearers believed and obeyed their message. The same is true today when a Christian teaches the gospel to sinners. Those who accept the gospel plan of salvation are forgiven, and those who reject it remain in a lost condition.

When the human heart rejects the message of remission of sins it becomes more and more like stone. When it accepts the gospel, it is melted to tears. I believe there is agreement of all the “orthodox” on this.

“To him [Christ] give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43). To believe in Christ is to rely upon Him—to trust Him. It is to accept the testimony concerning Him as true, and to act obediently in light of that testimony. There is no disagreement here. All agree that everyone must believe or remain lost (John 8:24).

“Whom (the Saviour) God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Rom. 3:25). The Psalmist declared that all God's commandments are righteousness (Psa. 119:172). It follows, then, that God's commandments are for the remission of sins.

“Now where remission of these [sins] is, there is no more offering for sin” (Heb. 10:18). The idea is that since we have a perfect Saviour in Christ, there is no longer a need for more sacrifice. There can be no disagreement here.

“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22). The truth is clearly borne to us that other Saviour than Christ there is none. No apparent disagreement here.

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). Surely we will not spoil our interview now by disagreeing. The only obvious meaning of this passage is that **both** repentance **and** baptism are necessary for the remission of sins.

Do you insist that “**for**” in Acts 2:38 has the meaning of “**because of**”? Do you mean to say they were commanded to be baptized **because of** salvation and not **in order to it**? If that is true, then Jesus died on Calvary because we were already saved. Why? Because the phrase, “for the remission of sins” is identical in Matthew 26:28 and in Acts 2:38, in **both** English and Greek. The two passages stand or fall together. If the blood of Christ which He shed on Calvary is in order to the remission of sins, then repentance and baptism are also.

We conclude, therefore, that the remission of our sins is contingent upon the precious blood of Jesus, and that God's tender mercy and His righteousness, preachers, teachers, faith, repentance, and baptism are all means of bringing us to the remission of sins.

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When a man can see danger in speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where it is silent, he is so intoxicated on fermented ego that he is liable to see anything. —**R.L. Whiteside**—

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# Someday I'll Be Sunday Morning: Reactions

David Ray

In my recent article about worship entitled “Someday I'll Be Sunday Morning,” a reference to an old song that spoke of Saturday night as the pinnacle of a person's week. The point was that, for a Christian, why wouldn't **Sunday morning** be our high point?

The article addressed the appropriate actions and attitudes in worship, identifying the Scripture as our authority for such matters. In this follow-up article we will look at some typical reactions and disagreements to the biblical assertions made.

One statement made in the first article regarding worship was “every man-made invention is either explicitly forbidden, implicitly forbidden, or missing entirely from the Word (i.e., God is silent on it).” There are a few responses people will give that demonstrate a misunderstanding of the very nature of worship.

## Worship Defined

For example, some will reference Romans 12:1 with a questionable translation of the last word: “...present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” This verse has often been improperly used to teach the false idea that all of life is worship. Those who hold to this belief don't mean it figuratively; they mean that every single moment of your life is worship, no exceptions. Common sense teaches us the absurdity of this view. Just think about the mundane, menial actions and routines of life and ask yourself if God is worshipped by these things! Most logically thinking people can recognize a clear difference between singing songs of praise to God in a worship assembly and doing laundry or brushing one's teeth.

It is very clear throughout Scripture that worship had a beginning and an ending. For example, in Gen. 22:5 Abraham said he and Isaac “will go yonder and worship, and come again to you...” After the death of his son in 2 Sam. 12:20, David “arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house...” (see also Acts 8:27; 24:11). In these examples the men were not first worshipping, then went to worship, then stopped worshipping. Not all of life is worship.

So, let's look at the Greek word *latreia* translated “worship” in Romans 12:1 by some versions. Strong's defines this as “ministration of God, that is, worship: (divine) service”; Thayer: “any service or ministration: the service of God.” Also, if we look at the verb form of this word, *latreuō*, the definition is “to minister (to God), that is, render religious homage: -serve, do the service, worship (-per).”

Notice the distinction between **service** and **worship**. There is a difference. In Genesis 22, Abraham said he and Isaac were about to worship, meaning they were not worshipping at that moment. But leading up to that moment, when Abraham was in the process of obediently taking Isaac to offer him as a sacrifice, this could certainly have been considered service to God, since God commanded it. It was service, but not worship. Jesus even expressed this distinction to Satan in Matt. 4:10 when He said, “Thou shalt **worship** the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou **serve**.” He used *latreuō* for “serve”, and for worship He used *proskuneo*.

The Greek word *proskuneo* is used more often (approximately 60 times, compared to 26 uses of *latreia* and *latreuō*). According to Strong's and Thayer's, *proskuneo* means “kissing the hand toward, in token of reverence; kneeling, prostrating oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore): - worship.” *Proskuneo* is the word that's used in reference to Christian worship in 1 Cor. 14:25, while *latreia* or *latreuō* usually refer to the priestly service done under the Mosaic system or other old covenant references (e.g., Luke 2:37; Acts 26:7; Rom. 9:4; Heb. 8:5; 9:9; 13:10), or general references to serving God (cf. Acts 27:23; Rom. 1:9). It is never used in reference to a Christian worship assembly. *Proskuneo* is the word Jesus used in John 4:20-24 when He taught “they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” This is probably the reason the KJV, ASV, and NKJV chose to properly translate *latreia* as “service” in

Romans 12:1 instead of “worship.” So, once again, we see that the claim “all of life is worship” is false (and ludicrous).

### Implication Defined

The next issue that needs to be addressed is implication. Implication in Scripture exists when an explicit Bible statement guarantees the truth of a non-explicit Bible statement. For example, “God loves John Smith”—a true statement—is found nowhere in Scripture. So, how do we know that it's true? The explicit statement in John 3:16 (“God so loved the world”) implies the truth that “God loves John Smith” because it is impossible for it to be false while John 3:16 is true. This is so because of the logical connection between “John Smith” and “the world” (i.e., John Smith is part of the world).

This truth may seem pretty obvious, but logic always seems to be discarded when it comes to religion. There are always going to be those who are unaware of (or simply ignore) the Bible’s use of implication. They’ll claim that the Bible is silent on church buildings, artificial lights, song books, microphones, using an airplane to do evangelism, etc., and yet we use these things, clearly showing that we believe, at least by our practice, that these things are authorized (i.e., that silence is **not** prohibitive).

These folks do not understand (or acknowledge) the Bible’s implication. For example, when one is commanded to go into all the world (Mark 16:15), this **implies** a means by which to get there. Therefore, taking an airplane, car, boat, etc. are all implicitly authorized in this command (i.e., the Bible is **not** silent on these modes of transportation). When we are commanded to assemble for worship, this implies a location. **Any** location not explicitly or implicitly forbidden by Scripture would be implicitly authorized by the command to assemble for worship, based on the logical requirement of a location at which to assemble (i.e., the Bible is **not** silent on church buildings). Additionally, sometimes assemblies happen during later hours when there is no sunlight. Implication then shows we have authority for lighting, whether candles or light bulbs (cf. Acts 20:8). And, microphones simply allow a larger audience in a larger building to hear the speaker, something that is clearly a necessity in order to fulfill our duties in worship (i.e., the Bible is **not** silent on microphones).

Things like microphones, song books, and pitch pipes are merely expedients to help accomplish the command to sing. Unlike mechanical instruments of music, they are **not** the music being offered to God.

Consider my statement regarding 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

2 Tim. 3:16-17 makes it abundantly clear that the Bible's silence on an action forbids that action: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” The Bible will thoroughly equip the Christian on how to worship. So, if there is an action we can perform in worship on which the Bible is silent, that action is, by definition, unauthorized; the Scripture doesn't “furnish us unto it” and it cannot be considered a good work.

Some might claim that, if this is true, it would make life impossible to live. But again, this is only true if one ignores the Bible’s implication (as discussed above) or if one assumes that the truth of 2 Tim. 3:16-17 means that authority is needed for basic actions that are required in order to live. For example, Jesus ate a meal that was prepared for Him. Where was the authority for the cook to make the meal and for Jesus to eat it? (Yes, I’ve heard such responses!) Certainly we should recognize that Divine authority is given to humans to eat and drink as part of life, otherwise we would die. God doesn’t need to command us to do things that are required in order to live life!

2 Tim. 3:16-17 clearly states that the Bible will thoroughly furnish us “unto all good works.” Why do those who disagree with this never correct our misunderstanding of this obvious statement? If it doesn’t mean what it says, then what does it mean? Friends, I have studied this passage with hundreds of people over the years because of the foundational truth it presents. Most have understood and accepted it; many haven't. Those who reject it usually do so because of its inherent restrictions and their

desire to do their own will more than God's. But none have ever been able to answer the above question about it. If it does not mean that God's word will thoroughly furnish/equip us for **every** good work, what does it mean?

Of all the good works God requires of His people, how many does Scripture address? "All good works!" That's 100 percent. Is there an action God requires of us on which He was silent? And if so, how would one go about proving this? And if so, how could we perform that action? If an action is to be considered a "good work", it will be addressed for us in Scripture; we will be "thoroughly furnished" for it. On the topic of the Lord's church using mechanical instruments of music in worship, which verse thoroughly furnishes us unto it? Which verse speaks of any congregation ever using them? Where are they ever even mentioned? Nowhere.

### **The Instrument to be Played in Worship**

Some will disagree with this, using the old argument from the word *psalmos* (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). They reference definitions from Strong's, Vine's, or Thayer's, such as "a sacred song, sung to musical accompaniment; a sacred ode accompanied with the voice, harp, or other instrument." They then conclude that mechanical instruments of music are actually authorized in worship (they'll also accuse members of the Lord's church of hating such instruments). This is a false and very surface-level conclusion.

First of all, I know of nobody in the churches of Christ who hates instruments of music. We don't hate pizza and Coke either, but this doesn't mean we're going to go against God's word and use them in the Lord's Supper! This is just a childish and unchristian attack. Folks that come to these conclusions always miss the fact that worship isn't about what **we** want, it's about what God wants and what He has commanded.

Second, these definitions do not say that a *psalmos* definitely includes mechanical instruments of music. It's a song "sung to musical accompaniment." So, what **type** of musical accompaniment? This may come as a shock to some folks, but "music" includes singing—i.e., "musical accompaniment" isn't limited to mechanical instruments. Another definition was more specific: "voice, harp, or other instrument." Note the "other instrument" because momentarily we'll let the apostle Paul identify what this other instrument is. Thayer's says: "a striking, twanging: 1a) of...a musical instrument, 1b) of a pious song, a psalm." So, these definitions do indeed leave this word open to being a song sung with the accompaniment of a mechanical instrument of music. But we note that they also identify it as a song sung **without a mechanical** instrument. In other words, it could be sung with the accompaniment of voice (i.e., multiple voices) **or** "other instruments".

The verb form of *psalmos* (*psallo*) is also in Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16: "singing and making melody in your heart..." "Making melody," which is translated from *psallo*, means "to pluck" and can be used of plucking the strings of an instrument, plucking the hairs of one's beard, plucking a plumb line, etc. The question that should be asked is, what is to be plucked?

Paul answers this in the next three words. He said "speaking to yourselves in psalms...singing and making melody **in your heart** to the Lord" (also in Col. 3:16). In other words, Paul said to sing psalms (instrument-songs) by **1)** singing (with the voice) and **2)** plucking/twanging **the heart!** The voice is the literal instrument with which to sing; the heart is the figurative instrument to be plucked (i.e., we must pay attention to the words we sing; they should be biblically accurate and we should mean what we sing). Not in these or any other New Testament passages is another instrument ever identified. This is strange considering that 2 Tim. 3:16-17 says that the Scripture will thoroughly furnish us unto all good works, one of which is music in worship. Yet it leaves us high and dry on this topic of **mechanical** instruments. If we incorrectly assume that they are included in *psalmos* and *psallo*, then why is there no passage referencing any church ever using them? No passage tells us what instruments to play, how many instruments are to be played, or how many members are to play?

Also, are we all to play, or only some of us? Consider that these passages (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) teach that **all** members are to sing, "one to another" (reciprocal action), teaching and admonishing one another (something done by the **words** of a song, not

in any way accomplished by a mechanical instrument). If this command includes mechanical instruments of music (as is claimed), and if it includes **all members** (as it does), then it would logically mean that all members should play a mechanical instrument as well. This is the logical conclusion of this false understanding of the words *psalmos* and *psallo*; yet we know of no religious group that practices this.

In the Old Testament God never initially commanded mechanical musical instruments to be used; David would introduce them later. God then authorized these to be used in worship. Christ nailed this old covenant (“handwriting of ordinances”) to His cross (Col. 2:14). Now we worship God according to New Testament instructions. We must worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24), meaning according to His Word (John 17:17). God used language in the Old Testament to command the use of mechanical instruments in worship, language that is undeniably clear (Psa. 33:2). No such language exists in the New Testament for Christian worship. No command, no example. If God had desired Christians to worship him in such a way, He could have and would have made this known to us. It is therefore abundantly clear that He did not desire these instruments. Why offer Him what He did not ask for? Why add to His word, something He clearly does not like (cf. Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6; Gal. 1:8; Rev. 22:18)? He does desire to hear His children sing with their voices and their hearts. And this is what we do.

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## The Goodness and Severity of God

**Dub McClish**

The apostle Paul urged: “Behold then the goodness and severity of God” (Rom. 11:22a). In context, Paul recounted that God was severe toward His chosen people, the Jews, because they “fell” in unbelief. In His goodness, however, He accepted the Gentiles because of their faith, but warned them that He would also reject them if they failed in their faith.

This historical account demonstrates a fundamental aspect of God’s nature: The balance of mercy and wrath. Men tend to view God in extremes. Some depict Him only as a mean, wrath-filled ogre Who makes arbitrary judgments and delights in our suffering. Others view Him only as a cosmic Santa Claus who is utterly indulgent toward us, never calling anyone to account for his sins or errors. Both extremes are equally flawed. The Bible provides ample illustrations of both goodness and severity in the Divine Nature.

### **The Goodness of God**

- He created mankind in his own image, sinless, capable of responding to His will, and with immortal souls that can live with Him eternally (Gen. 1:26–27).
- When Eve and Adam sinned, God announced His plan to provide a Savior (Gen. 3:15).
- He providentially and historically worked through various persons to create the right time and conditions to send that virgin-born Savior (Gal. 4:4).
- He revealed the Bible through inspired men (2 Tim. 3:16–17) and placed in the Gospel the power to save (Rom. 1:16).
- He offers salvation to all, greatly desiring that all be saved from sin and Hell (Mat. 11:28–30; 2 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9) through faith and obedience (Mat. 7:21; Mark 16:16; Heb. 5:9; et al.).
- The death of His Son on the cross for our salvation is the ultimate proof of His goodness (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).

### **The Severity of God**

- He drove Adam and Eve from Eden and placed a curse upon them because of their sins (Gen. 3:16–24)
- He destroyed the world by a flood because of its exceeding wickedness (Gen. 6:5; 7:4).

- He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of their wickedness—sodomy (Gen. 19:24–25).
- He caused Nebuchadnezzar to take the Jews, His chosen people of old, into captivity because of their idolatry and apostasy (Eze. 7:8–9).
- He will pour out His wrath against all sin at the Judgment (Mat. 7:22–23; 25:41, 46; Rom. 1:18; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 The. 1:7–9; et al.).

God will be “good” or “severe” to each one, depending on the response of each one to His revealed Word (John 12:48).

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## Three Requirements for Making a Christian

### Lee Moses

In His Parable of the Sower (Matt. 13:3-8; Mark 4:3-8; Luke 8:5-8), Jesus gave an illustration portraying a man who sowed upon four different types of soil, but only yielded crop upon one soil. Upon clarifying this parable to His disciples (Matt. 13:18-23; Mark 4:14-20; Luke 8:11-15), Jesus explained that He was teaching that it would be a certain type of person who would, upon hearing the Gospel, obey it and remain a faithful Christian. Jesus named three necessary requirements for making a Christian:

#### A Sower

This emphasizes the need for evangelism. Just as there is a need for a planter if there is to be a crop, there is a need for an evangelist if there is to be a Christian: “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (Rom. 10:14). True, Jesus said that in the Parable of the Tares, “He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man” (Matt. 13:37), referring to Himself. But how does He do this? He told His apostles, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). This obligation is passed to the current generation of Christians, for it was commanded, “And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2).

If one is a Christian, he is to be a sower; and Jesus said of His parable's sower, he “**went forth** to sow” (Matt. 13:2, emph. LM). If there is to be a crop of Christians, there must be sowers actively seeking to plant seed.

#### Seed

This emphasizes the need for pure doctrine. Jesus said, “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). This word will never lose its effectiveness, for one who has obeyed the Gospel has been “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Peter 1:23). While man's ingenuity has been able to devise new ways to make seed and plants stronger and more resistant, to tamper with God's word is folly. If one plants seed that is not exactly corn seed, it will not be exactly corn that is produced. If one preaches or teaches a message that is not exactly the word of God, it will not be exactly a Christian that is produced.

#### Good Soil

This emphasizes the need for goodness and honesty in a hearer. Any other type of soil would not bring forth good fruit, but Jesus said, “He that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Matt. 13:23). What is necessary to understanding the word? “But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Luke 8:15). Many have little or no desire to know the truth; and unless that changes, they cannot be saved (cf. 2 Thess. 2:10).

Christians do not accidentally spring up in various places. There are requirements prerequisite to creating Christians. But God has given mankind the means necessary. It is up to Christians to be sowers, taking forth the pure seed of the word of God. And it is up to hearers to be good soil, honest and receptive to the truth. And it is up to each group to see that they come in contact with the other.

# The Worship of the Church

Ron Cosby

In John 4:24, Jesus reminds us of the three components that comprise “true worship.” The denominational world agrees with Jesus on two of the three. First, they acknowledge that God seeks those who will worship the one true God instead of idols or false deities. They also agree that true worshipers must worship from the heart. However, they ignore or minimize the third essential aspect of true worship which Jesus has commanded in this text.

Instead of worshiping as God directs, they teach that God has no concern for the items or avenues of worship. The do-as-you-please worship practices of today directly contradict the words of the Master.

We ought to heed the warnings of the past. “Will-worship” or self-chosen worship, as Paul describes it, is sin (Col. 2:23). As an example to others, God sent fire from heaven upon the two sons of Aaron because they substituted their own fire for that which God authorized in worship (Lev. 10:1-2). Notice the words, “...which he commanded them not.” God had not commanded the fire which they offered. They chose to follow their own will in the matter and were destroyed for it.

Though God no longer strikes worshipers dead for worshiping contrary to His will, He has illustrated that He is highly displeased with such high-mindedness.

Since God no longer shows His displeasure in the same manner, having made it clear what He wants, some will mistakenly conclude, “Oh, that was the way it was long ago. God does not care how we worship as long as we are sincere.”

To these Jesus declared,

But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men. Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men. And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition (Mark 7:7-9).

Make no mistake. God is not so starved for attention that He will accept anything we offer Him.

Here are the directions that God has commanded for those that worship in truth: We are to pray (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14:15). Preaching or teaching God's message is another avenue of worship that we have from God (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14; Acts 20:7). We are also to give as God has prospered us (1 Cor. 16:1-2). This does not mean we are to be taking up a “love offering” every time the doors are open. The specific instruction is to give “upon the first day of the week.”

Though the denominational world will take up a collection every Sunday, they partake of the Lord's Supper when it pleases them instead of on the first day of the week. Which has God instructed? First of the week, or when we it pleases the worshiper?

Following the Bible, we have at least two examples of when the apostolic church observed the Lord's Supper. Those at Troas broke bread (ate the Lord's Supper) upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). In fact, because the apostle Paul arrived a little later than he planned, had to wait a week to worship with those brethren. Now if God allowed men to partake of the communion at any time, then he could have broken bread on Tuesday or Thursday and then continued his journey to Jerusalem. Remember, he was hastening to attend a feast, but waited in Troas until the first day of the week to worship with them and observe the Lord's Supper.

The inspired custom of the church at Corinth is a second example of when we are to partake of the this important item of worship. Following inspired instructions, they ate the Lord's Supper when they assembled themselves together and the first day of the week was when they did this (1 Cor. 16:1-2). That's why he rebuked them for their corruption of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. “When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's supper” (1 Cor. 11:20).

Denominational preachers will push their members to give every Sunday but allow

them to communion in the Supper when they feel like it. One wonders why they don't advocate partaking of this most solemn Supper every week and allow their members to take up a collection every quarter or semiannually! As faithful followers of the New Testament, the first day of the week will find us breaking bread and giving.

We call your attention to one last God-given item of worship—singing. This is the only music God has authorized in the New Testament. Ask yourself, “What kind of music did the Christians present to God in the days of the apostles?” History shows they only sang, but we don't prove our thesis by history. Founders and leaders of denominational groups—John Wesley (Methodist), John Calvin (Presbyterian), and Charles Spurgeon (Baptist), argued in favor of singing, but we do not prove our thesis by what they argued. We only ask for you to read the New Testament, see what Christians did in the first century and then follow their example (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; 1 Cor. 14:15). What they did pleased God. Adding to what they did will certainly displease God.

The only instrument in Christian worship that pleases God is the heart of man. The passage that teaches we must worship with grace in your hearts also teaches the kind of instrument God commands—the heart (Col. 3:16). You have to add to the Scriptures to include mechanical instruments of music in Christian worship. Jesus warned,

But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men. Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men. And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition (Mark 7:7-9).

Let us not offer unto God unauthorized music (Lev. 10:1-2).

#### **Conclusion**

A corruption of the worship authorized in the Scriptures means the destruction of the identity of the worshiper as one who worships in truth. It makes one a false worshiper. Martin Luther was wrong when he said, “Now every one can note and tell for himself when he does what is good or what is not good; for if he finds his heart confident that it pleases God, the work is good, even if it were so small a thing as picking up a straw...” (*A Treatise on Good Works*, p. 22). You will be wrong to practice what Luther taught. God is not so starved for attention that He will accept anything you offer Him. The church of the New Testament offers only the worship God authorizes.

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## **Bible Study Resources**

**The Scripture Cache**

**Precept Upon Precept You Tube**

**Spiritual Perspectives – Gary Summers**

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**False Doctrines of Man**

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# Third Printing Arrives Soon

## *“The Thing That Hath Been...”*

### *The Cycle of Apostasy*

By Jerry C. Brewer

With Foreword By Daniel Denham

“**The Thing That Hath Been...**” will surprise a lot readers and infuriate far more, but its truth cannot be successfully denied. In it, we clearly and unashamedly identify examples of “mainstream churches of Christ” as an emerging denomination. They are “churches of Christ” in name only and have repeated 19th century apostasy, as history proves. This book—which would normally sell for \$20.00—is **free of charge** in lots of 5-20 to churches in the United States who request it and agree to pay postage and handling. Request your copies by sending your mailing address to Jerry C. Brewer at **txjch@att.net**. Single copy postage and handling is \$3.00. Multiple copies will be sent by priority mail which will cost \$15.00 or more.

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## Coming in May

Jerry C. Brewer

The May issue of *The Gospel Preceptor* will be devoted to a study of God's eternal, immutable Word, themed “Thy Word is Forever Settled...” (Psa. 118:189). Staff writers are working on the following titles:

***God's Word is Forever Settled*** by Dub McClish.

***An Overview of the Bible*** by Harrell Davidson

***The Bible is Inspired of God*** by Lee Moses

***The Bible's Historic Accuracy*** by Doug Post

***The Bible's Scientific Accuracy*** by David Ray

***The Bible's Prophetic Accuracy*** by Jess Whitlock

***The Bible, Christ, and the Church*** by Nana Yaw Aidoo

***The Bible Reveals God's Eternal Purpose*** by Ron Cosby

These articles point out that man does not settle the Word of God. It has already been settled in heaven and committed to man to observe. It is the rule by which our lives must be ordered and all will be judged by it (John 12:48).

The May issue will be a valuable resource in Bible study, whether individually or in Bible classes.

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