

The Gospel Preceptor

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

Volume 3, Number 6

Published Monthly

June, 2020

“All”

Jerry C. Brewer

This may seem like an odd subject. How can one write an article on the little word **all**? In studying God's word, we often overlook the significance of this little word. With that in mind, we will look at some passages of Scripture in which this word occurs and learn some lessons from it.

All Have Sinned

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Every person who has ever lived, or lives today, has sinned and fallen short of God's mark. In fact, that is the definition of *sin*. According to Thayer, *sin* is “to miss the mark” like an arrow shot at a target, but failing to hit its intended mark. God has a standard by which He expects men to live, but all have missed its mark.

Not only have all sinned, but just three chapters later in the identical verse, Paul wrote, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). Death results from sin—that is its wages. Sin certainly brings carnal pleasure, but that pleasure never lasts. It is temporary and often leaves the sinner far worse than he was before engaging in it. It was said that,

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward (Heb. 11:24-26).

The pleasures of sin last but “for a season.” They are temporary with no lasting good and the ultimate wages sin pays is eternal death—torment forever and ever. But, thankfully, God has provided what man **could not**—and **cannot**—provide for himself, a way of escape from sins guilt and consequences. John wrote, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:17).

To “walk in the light” is to live in obedience to God's will. David said, “The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Psa. 119:130) and “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105). When one walks “in the light” he is living in obedience to God's word. To walk darkness is to live in sin.

John said “**all** (there's that little word again) unrighteousness is sin” (1 John 5:17) and unrighteousness is the opposite of God's commandments. “My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness” (Psa. 119:172). James further declared that one does not have to violate every precept of God to be guilty of His entire law: “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, yet offend in one point, he is guilty of **all**” (Jas. 2:10).

All Must Repent

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained;

whereof he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:30-31).

Who are commanded to repent? **All** men. Why? Because the Judgment Day is coming. God has appointed that day and **all** will be judged by Jesus Christ Whom God raised from the dead. Moreover, the standard of His judgment will be His very words (John 12:48).

The word **all** means no person is exempt from the command to repent. Repentance is perhaps the most difficult command for one to obey. It involves personal warfare within the individual. The spirit of man must overcome his fleshly desires. Repentance is a change of the will (Matt. 21:28-29) that is preceded by godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10) and followed by a change of life—the fruits of repentance (Matt. 3:8).

All Spiritual Blessings are in Christ

“Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). **All** spiritual blessings that are available to mankind can be found nowhere, except in Jesus Christ. Thayer says the word **all** expresses, “any and every of every kind” (p. 491). The “any and every kind” of which Paul writes in verse 3 are spiritual blessings, and that means that **no** spiritual blessing exists outside of the sphere of the Son of God. Among those spiritual blessings is the forgiveness of sins of which **all** are guilty. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph. 1:7).

Notice the **location** of **all** spiritual blessings—**in** Christ. Contrary to what multitudes of people believe, that means **in** the church of Christ. No one can be in Christ who is not in His church, for the church is His body:

And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23).

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence (Col. 1:18).

As God ordained **all** life for creatures with gills to be in water, so He ordained that **all** spiritual life for men to be in Jesus Christ and no one is in Him who has not been baptized. Baptism is the means of entrance into Christ and into His body. To be in Him is to be in His church: “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27). “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Rom. 6:3).

All are Invited to Salvation

“Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30).

The **all** of this passage includes every accountable human being on the face of the earth regardless of his color or race. Eternal salvation is available to **all** “For The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to **all** men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (Titus 2:11-12 [emph JB]). By God's grace **all** have the opportunity to be eternally saved, but **not all** will be saved. Only those of **all** who accept the Lord's invitation to “come unto me” by **obeying** His word will be saved. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).

All are responsible for their own salvation.

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezek. 18:20).

Every person who is lost eternally will be lost because he **chose** to spurn the Lord's invitation for **all** to come to Him.

All Scripture is Given to Guide Man

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Those who would be complete in Christ lack nothing. The Scripture provides everything we need. It teaches (doctrine), it reproves (shows man his sins), it corrects (guides from sins into right living), and instructs in right living (righteousness).

The Bible is the revelation of God's will to man for the good of man and nothing which will benefit man has been omitted from it:

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Pet. 1:3-4).

All Persons will be Judged

The day will come when **all** will be arraigned before the Judgment Seat of Christ and give account for the lives they lived on earth. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).

1. **All** must appear before the judgment seat of Christ.
2. **All** must give account to Him.
3. **All** will receive a reward.
4. **All** will spend eternity in heaven or hell (Matt. 25:31-46).

Where will you spend eternity? Your eternal destiny will **not** be decided by all. **You** are the only one who will decide that and **all** of that will be your decision.

Refuting the Roman Guards' Assertion Concerning Christ's Missing Body

Benjamin Franklin

Luke says of Jesus, that “ he showed himself alive after his passage, by many infallible proofs, being seen of the disciples forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). The Apostle Peter, in his first discourse to a Gentile audience, said: “Him God raised up the third day and showed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God. even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead” (Acts 10:40-41). Paul says “he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once,” of whom the greater part remained to the time of his writing (1 Cor. 15: 8).

The only testimony we have on the other side is the testimony of the watch—the same persons in our title, the Roman Guards. They afterwards changed and contradicted their first testimony. Their last testimony is that “the disciples came and stole him away while we slept.” This is all we know of on this side worth mentioning.

From this testimony we must make up our minds. The testimony of the watch is very objectionable, and, we think, can not be regarded by any persons who do not wish to be deceived. To their testimony we make the following objections:

1. They had previously given a contrary testimony, when they were unbiased, of their own choice, and when they had no motives to tell a falsehood. Their first account, given before they had any conversation with anybody, was more likely to be true than any after testimony. The first objection, then, to their second account is that it contradicts the first. Both their accounts can not be true, and it is more probable that the first is true than the second.

- 2.** The second objection to their last testimony is that they had been tampered with by the chief priests and Pharisees, who were known to be enemies, which precisely corresponds with their telling a different story from the first.
- 3.** Their testimony is objectionable because it precisely corresponds with the anticipations of the chief priests and Pharisees. They commanded the guard lest the disciples should steal the body and say, He is risen from the dead. It was natural that their minds should fall back upon the expedient they had previously thought of.
- 4.** Their testimony is objectionable because if they were asleep, as they say, they did not know what went with the body. They could not know whether it was stolen or had actually risen. Their own admission that they were asleep destroys their testimony, for men can not testify to what occurs when they are asleep.
- 5.** Their account is objectionable because the guard came under most rigorous laws, inflicting the severest punishments upon them for delinquency. They would have risked their lives to have been found asleep. It is not probable that they would have risked all this, to have all fallen asleep, if they had felt a little drowsy.
- 6.** They knew the time when he said he would rise. Of all other periods, they certainly would have been the most unlikely to have been asleep at this particular crisis.
- 7.** Each watch only had to be on duty six hours in twenty four. They could not have needed sleep.
- 8.** Their story is incredible, because they would have been brought to punishment, if they had been asleep. But not one word is said about punishment. The matter is all suffered to pass quietly, which shows that the rulers did not attach any blame to the guard.
- 9.** The story is incredible, because the disciples were timid, cowardly and discouraged, so that they were the last men on earth to have undertaken such a hazardous enterprise. It is believing against all reason and analogy to believe they would attempt such a thing.
- 10.** The story is incredible, for the rulers would have compelled the disciples to have brought the body back, if they had believed it to be in their possession. This they certainly had the power and disposition to do, and the fact that they did not do it is a clear evidence that they did not believe they had it.
- 11.** This story is incredible, because the disciples could have done nothing with the body if they had stolen it. They could not have raised it from the dead. To have kept it in their possession would only have opened the way for their own exposure. They had no inducement to steal it.
- 12.** They were too weak to have forced the guard and taken the body, They could not, therefore, have obtained it in that way.
- 13.** They could not have bribed the guard, for they were too poor; they had no money.
- 14.** They could not have persuaded the guard to give up the body, for they had no influence with them. In all these respects, the story of the guard, and the common report of the Jews for years, that the disciples stole the body while the guard slept, is not only objectionable but wholly incredible, and as such must be repudiated by men of sense and reason everywhere.

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False Notions Concerning the Church

Cled E. Wallace

Notions and opinions contrary to plain Bible teaching, or at best unsupported by the scriptures, multiply in the minds of the people. They are barriers to the reception of the truth which are very often difficult to remove. Objections to the truth are always based either on ignorance of the truth, or prejudice, which is the handmaiden of ignorance. It must be recognized that both ignorance and prejudice in religious matters may exist in a character well informed and culturally developed along other lines.

Some very capable people have rejected the law of God and made it void by their traditions. A querist, more informed about nearly everything else than New Testament teaching, makes some inquiries about the church:

“What positive proof have you that your church is the only one? Can you prove that this is the church that Christ founded? All Christian people are working toward the same goal. What possible difference can the church make when the heart is right? Do you think that your church can save you?”

It is not my manner of speech to speak of “my church” and “your church,” as is commonly done. I am not a party man and belong to nothing in religion that had a human origin. The New Testament contains “positive proof” that the Lord established “**one body**,” and that is “the **only one**” which He approves. “There is one body...” (Eph. 4:4). “...Many members, yet but one body” (1 Cor 12:20). “For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body...” (1 Cor. 12:13). This body is the church. “And he is the head of the body, the church...” (Col. 1:18). “...The church, which is his body...” (Eph. 1:22-23). All other bodies are unauthorized and condemned. They set up rival authority against the Head of the “one body.”

In New Testament times “all Christian” people were working toward the same goal in this one body. It included all the people of God. They simply became Christians in their obedience to the Lord, and He added them to the body, the church. It was not a human setup at all.

The querist is wrong in his very assumptions regarding the character of the New Testament church. The way for a man to know that he belongs to the true church is to do what the New Testament requires in becoming a Christian and leave it to the Lord to add him to the right body. The Lord has not added anyone to the wrong church yet. The surest way to know that you do not belong to the right church is to accept the doctrines and commandments of men and join something the New Testament says nothing about. Usually people who ask such questions as the above have made the mistake of doing just that.

Since the church is the body of Christ and includes all Christians because they are Christians, it makes a lot of “difference” whether a man is a member of the church or not. It would be as sensible to ask, what difference can it make whether a man is a Christian or not “when the heart is right?” The heart is not exactly right, to say the least of it, when it leads a man into unscriptural church relations.

It is a favorite saying with the sectarians that, “your church cannot save you.” Just a little New Testament information drives that fallacy out into the light where its absurdity is manifest. The church is the family, including all the children of God. “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). The church was established that both Jews and Gentiles might be reconciled in it. “Reconcile them both in one body...” (Eph. 2:13-16). Christ saves in the church, or adds them to the church when He saves them, which all amounts to the same thing. Surely parties do not save, and a man can be a Christian and keep all the commandments of God and stay out of all denominations, which is reason enough to do so.

If people generally would spend as much time and energy in seeking the will of God that they might do it, as they do in hatching up excuses to evade it, more of them would be on the Lord’s side of that line which separates those who love Him from those who don’t.

The Baptist Denomination

E.G. Creacy

The Baptist church (or churches) is a human denomination. The church revealed in the New Testament is not a denomination. The word *church* is used 110 times in the New Testament. Eighteen times it is used in the general or comprehensive sense—including all the saved, all Christians; 92 times it is used in the local sense—a congregation, Christians worshipping at a given place. A denomination does not include more than a local church or congregation. It is too big at one end of the line, and it is too little at the other end of the line! There is no place in the New Testament for a denomination. It is a plant the Father has not planted, and will be “rooted up” (Matt. 15:13).

Baptist Origin

The Baptist church is not mentioned in the New Testament, and we have to come 1,600 years this side of the Bible to find it even mentioned by men. Dr. George A. Lofton, one of the greatest Baptist scholars the denomination ever produced, declared it was not until the seventeenth century that the general denominational name “Baptist” was adopted (*Smith-Lofton Debate*, p. 10). Henry C. Vedder the great Baptist historian, said,

With the first decade of the seventeenth century, we reach solid ground in Baptist history. Before that we must proceed by conjecture from one isolated fact to another, and many of our conclusions are open to doubt; but after 1610 we have an unbroken succession of Baptist churches, established in indubitable documentary evidence.

In the introduction to his *Short History of the Baptists*, Vedder says, “The history of Baptist churches cannot be carried by the scientific method farther back than the year 1611.”

Baptist Succession

Some Baptists a few years ago made great claims for “Baptist church succession.” In the year 1885, the *Christian Review*, the leading Baptist quarterly, raised its voice in the following protest against such childish claims:

We know of no assumption more arrogant, and more destitute of proper historic support, than that which claims to be able to trace the distinct and unbroken existence of a church substantially Baptist from the time of the apostles down to our own.

In debates with various Baptist preachers, I have offered a liberal reward for any book written prior to the seventh century that says anything about a Baptist church. However, some Baptist preachers continue to argue for the idea of “succession,” and according to their theology, one must be baptized by an “ordained Baptist minister,” who administers the rite by the authority of an orthodox Baptist church, in order for the baptism to be scriptural. If this is necessary for valid baptism, it follows that none of the Baptists is scripturally baptized, for the first Baptist church in America was founded by Roger Williams who, in 1639, was immersed by Ezekiel Holliman. Thus Mr. Williams, the founder of American Baptists, was immersed by an alien—his “baptism” therefore was invalid, not being administered by an “ordained Baptist minister,” nor yet by the authority of a Baptist church! This fact alone destroys the idea of Baptist “succession.”

Foreign Baptists were derived from the Anabaptists, the first distinct church being formed in Holland about 1608. In 1611 this church issued a “declaration of faith.” No distinct Baptist church organization can be found prior to 1608. Baptist debaters have often been put to the test on this point, and embarrassment to them is the only result.

Finally, the impossible part of the task for Baptists in seeking to trace a “succession of Baptist churches” back to the apostles would be to find a Baptist church at the end of the line. No such thing as a Baptist church is mentioned in all the New Testament, and if all ecclesiastical history did exhibit an unbroken line of Baptist churches back to the death of John, the last apostle, it would lack one vital link of uniting such a church with the work of the Holy Spirit through the apostles, because all was completed before

John died. This is abundant proof that such a thing as a “Baptist church” is unscriptural.

John The Baptist

The usual Baptist arguments run about like this: John was a Baptist, and for that reason, all that he baptized were also Baptists. John baptized Christ, and that made Christ a Baptist. Christ, a Baptist, organized the church with the material (Baptists) prepared by John, and therefore the church was a Baptist church!! Such presumption in thus sectarianizing the work of John and Christ is typical Baptist doctrine. It must be an unscrupulous method by which such an unscriptural organization should be exhibited to seem to have a connection with Christ. The argument (?) assumes the thing to be proven. It is the same argument that would prove (?) that Peter was the first Pope! and it is the way denominations prove (?) that they are Christian institutions. To contend that Christ was a “Baptist” because John the Baptist baptized him is silly. One might as well say that because a blacksmith shoes your horse, the horse **becomes a blacksmith!**

John was **never** called **a** Baptist, but always “**the** Baptist,” and his disciples were never called “Baptists,” nor were the disciples of Christ ever so denominated. In the New Testament only one was ever called “the Baptist.” He was thus called because he baptized, and for no other reason. “Baptist” was his official title—it signified the office of a baptizer. The title “Baptist” cannot be scripturally applied to any one who does not baptize. Christ never baptized any one (John 4:2), and He was therefore not a Baptist. Since a Baptist is one who baptizes, by what rule of logic did Christ become a Baptist? And why are the “lay members” of the Baptist church called “Baptists” when they never baptize anyone?

The Baptist church is purely a sect of human origin, using the term *Baptist* in an unscriptural and sectarian sense. It has come to mean invariably one who has joined the Baptist denomination.

Baptist Doctrines

Not only are the Baptists unscriptural in name, but they are unscriptural in their doctrines. They claim to accept no creed but the Bible. The claim is untrue. In 1724 the Baptists adopted the *Philadelphia Confession of Faith*, which is the commonly accepted creed of most Southern Baptists; while in the north the *New Hampshire Confession of Faith* is generally adopted. The Baptist use of a creed differs somewhat from the use made of creeds by Methodists and Presbyterians. Baptists do not place a creed in the hands of their members, but they are disciplined strictly under the hidden rules and significance of Baptist doctrines as set forth in the above mentioned creeds.

The name, the tenets, and the practices peculiar to Baptists are unknown to the Bible. In debates with Baptist preachers, it is difficult to get them to come out and state clearly their peculiar doctrines, but here are the fundamental points accepted by most Baptists:

1. Hereditary total depravity.
2. Ante-Pentecost establishment of church.
3. Salvation before baptism.
4. Salvation by faith alone.
5. Impossibility of apostasy.
6. Voting on reception of members.
7. Baptist church succession.
8. Democratic form of church government.

The Baptist church is at variance with the Bible on all these points. There is not one peculiar Baptist doctrine that is truth. And there is not one good thing a person can receive in the Baptist church that he cannot have out of it. The Baptist church is exalted above heaven, according to their teaching, for one can be saved and go to heaven without baptism, but he cannot be a member of the Baptist church without it!

Is Justification by Faith Alone?

George P. Estes

It is a firm conviction of members of the Lutheran Church that Galatians 2:16 is a verse which proves Martin Luther's doctrine of "justification by faith alone." It is their contention that a sinner's sins are forgiven by God the very moment that sinner puts his trust in Jesus as his Savior. Therefore, baptism is looked upon by them merely as being a symbol of the salvation already possessed; hence, it is non-essential to salvation. But let us consider this verse:

The Greek word *dikaioutai* which is rendered *justified* in Galatians 2:16 is from a verb used in the ancient world in the secular, civil courts. When a person on trial was acquitted and set free by the decision and declaration of the court, he was said to be "justified."

The word has the same meaning in its New Testament usage. Forgiveness of the guilt of sins and becoming righteous in the sight of God is a declarative act of God. There is this difference, however, between the use of the word "justified" as related to a man being tried by a civil court and "justified" as related to a man before God: It is quite conceivable that the man before the civil court is indeed innocent and not guilty; but **all** who stand before the bar of God **are guilty**. This does not include infants and the mentally irresponsible, but does include every mortal who is capable of committing sin. All are guilty. Therefore, mercy enters into the act of God forgiving one's sins.

Galatians is a letter to churches, to Christians, not to sinners. The Judaizers had convinced the Christians of Galatia (some of them at least) that the way to Christ and salvation was through the Old Testament law. Those thus convinced felt obligated to be circumcised and to keep the Mosaic law. Paul in verse 16 of this second chapter has "faith in Christ" and "works of the law" in antithesis the one to the other. The context does not warrant the idea that the Galatians were trying to be saved by their own meritorious works and behavior. Lutherans misunderstand the passage here, and often say that the Galatians were hoping to be saved by their own good works, their charities and benevolences, and not through faith in Christ. But "works of the law" simply means the Mosaic law, nothing more. Furthermore, the apostle does not define "faith" in this passage.

True, acceptable faith includes at least these three distinctive and particular phases: (1) hearing God's word, (2) accepting it as authoritative, and (3) obeying it. All Paul is teaching in Galatians 2:16 is simply that one cannot find forgiveness of sins in the Mosaic law, but in Christ. Our Lutheran friends have confused "works of the law" in verse 16 with "obedience." The same may be said of our Baptist friends in their dealing with Ephesians 2:8. They have cited this passage to press their doctrine that man can do nothing at all toward his salvation, but that all of it is from God, and comes by "faith alone." The passage says no such thing, nor does it permit of such a construction.

Lutherans contend that the "righteousness of God" is imputed to the man (sinner) the very moment he has faith in Christ, according to Romans 1:17. The context of this verse neither demands nor permits such an interpretation. Verse 16 states that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. But the Gospel is something that man must "obey" (2 Thess. 1:8). The truth of the whole matter is that the sinner's salvation depends upon his obedience to the conditions of salvation.

It is a common error of those advocating the "salvation by faith only" doctrine to try to prove their contention by taking passages of scripture written to Christians and applying them to the conversion of the alien sinner. But the Book of Acts is the particular portion of scripture to which one may go to find most easily and clearly what the will of God is for the alien sinner. Here we find the apostles fulfilling the commission of preaching the gospel to every creature, and the cases of conversion show us a clear pattern of what it takes to bring justification to a man, what it takes to constitute one a child of God.

Sometimes in these examples there is no mention of faith, but in such cases, faith is clearly implied in the context. The same may be said of repentance. But in every case of

conversion in the Book of Acts, baptism is explicitly stated as a condition of salvation. It is perfectly evident, therefore, that God does not justify one and declare him free from his burden of sin until that one has been baptized (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38).

Our Lutheran friends declare that God made men free from sin in Old Testament times as well as in New Testament days. This is in direct conflict with Hebrews 10:3-4. Forgiveness of sins is to be found only in the blood of Jesus, and that forgiveness was not possible until His blood was shed. Lutherans do not recognize any difference between dispensations or ages. The truth is that God has dealt with people differently under each of the three dispensations. One may begin reading Genesis, chapter one, and not find forgiveness of sins at all in all the Old Testament. Forgiveness of sins is related to Christ, not to Moses.

The **only time** in all the Bible where “faith only” is mentioned is in James 2:24: “Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” It is probable that this one verse is the main reason why Martin Luther rejected the epistle of James from the New Testament. It conflicted head-on with his doctrine of “salvation by faith only.”

The Mission of the Holy Spirit

Jerry C. Brewer

Understanding the mission of the Holy Spirit is the key to understanding what the New Testament teaches about the Spirit's work in both, the miraculous age and today.

Because the subject of the Holy Spirit—the third Person of the Godhead—has been clothed with human mystique, there are those who believe every unexplainable feeling they have is the Holy Spirit “nudging” them or prompting them to do something. In years past, this was known as “better-felt-than-told religion.” That meant one couldn't really understand God's purpose for his life unless he had some kind of experience of good feeling, instead simply hearing and obeying God's word.

Most religious people today have the Holy Spirit running around on earth doing everything from zapping lost souls into salvation to finding parking places for Christians on busy streets. That kind of nonsense is easily dispelled by Bible teaching, but few want to hear the truth concerning the Holy Spirit's work. His part in man's salvation was revealing it through inspired men. Period! Our Saviour is Jesus Christ, **not** the Holy Spirit.

Jesus' Last Words To His Apostles

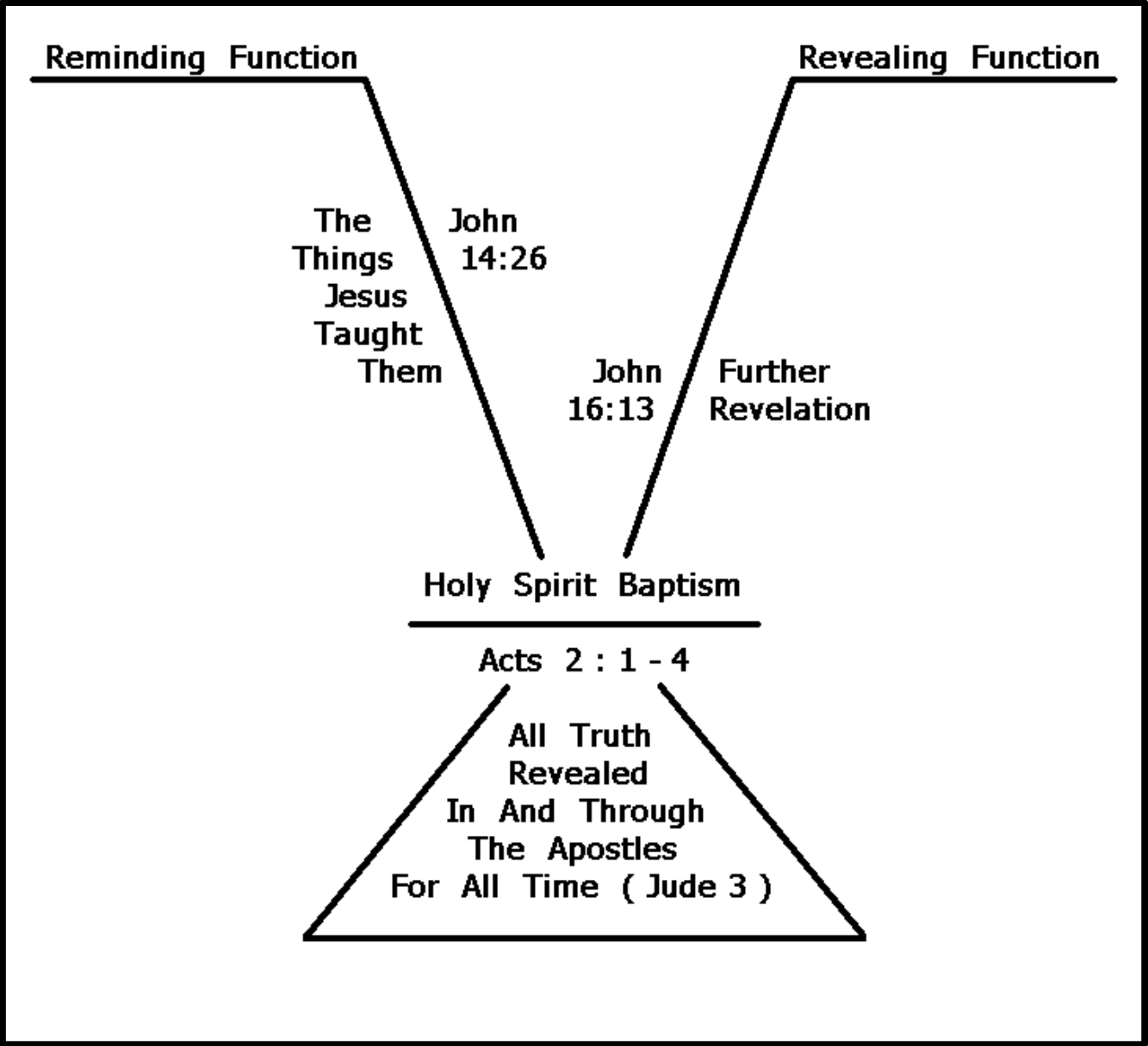
The 14th through the 16th chapters of John constitute Jesus' last discourse to his apostles on the night He was betrayed into the hands of the Jews. He fully understood what His apostles didn't. He knew that he would soon be taken and crucified. He also knew this would not be His end, but they did not understand what lay ahead. Thus, Jesus sought to tell them things that would strengthen them and give them hope for the dark ordeal looming on the horizon.

Culminating about three years of personally teaching them, He would soon be taken away. In view of this, He promised them “another Comforter” (John 14:16). In connection with this promise, He said, “I will not leave you comfortless” (John 14:18). The language in this passage is, literally, “I will not leave you orphans.” The word *orphanos* in the original means “bereaved” and in this context in English it indicates one bereft of parents. One so bereft has no guidance, protection, sustenance or aid for living and functioning. As Jesus had been with them for about three years, guiding them into a knowledge of God's will, protecting them from the doctrines of men, and supplying every spiritual need, so the Comforter—or the Holy Spirit—would come to them after Jesus' departure. In the absence of Christ, the Holy Spirit would do for the apostles what Christ had done for them—and **would have done** had He remained with them. The work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the apostles was simply an extension of Christ's work.

Jesus further stated the purpose of the Holy Spirit's coming in John 14:26: “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall

teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” The “all things” of this passage referred to the gospel scheme of redemption and Paul so used that phrase in First Corinthians 2:10. That plan of redemption had **begun** to be taught by Jesus while he was with them. “These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you” (John 14:25; cf. Acts 1:1). But that revelation would be **completed** when the Holy Spirit came to the apostles. “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost...he shall teach you all things” (John 14:26).

The mission of the Holy Spirit was the revelation of God's final message to man and He accomplished that in a two-fold function. His two-fold function of revelation in and through the apostles, of miraculously recalling to their minds what Jesus had taught and revealing further truth He had not taught, is illustrated by this chart:



“Reasonable Dissension and Disputation”

Lee Moses

Strife is a mark of worldliness, a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20). While strife remains in the world it brings nations to war and tears apart families. Still worse is when strife enters the Lord’s body, tearing apart churches, discouraging the faithful, and providing an object of ridicule for the heathen. While strife is generally to be avoided, there are certain types of strife in which Christians must engage. Acts 15 presents an occasion in which dissension and disputation was warranted:

And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When **therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them**, they determined that Paul and Barnabas,

and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question (verses 1-2, emphasis LM).

The term “therefore” indicates a conclusion that follows what precedes—as it has been put, “When you see a ‘therefore,’ see what it’s ‘there for.’” When the men from Judea were teaching the brethren falsely, it naturally followed that Paul and Barnabas would have a sizable dissension and disputation with them. Likewise, for the faithful child of God today, there comes a time when it naturally follows that he will dissent and dispute.

When the Peril of Sin is Allowed

Satan pretty well has his way with the world. He is called “the god of this world” because of the preeminent place he holds in its heart (2 Cor. 4:4). From Eve’s first taste of the fruit up to the present moment, sin has reigned. John contrasted the church with the world: “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19, New King James Version). Unfortunately, although “the world passeth away, and the lust thereof” (2:17), the world is content to continue in the destructive ways of sin. Even more unfortunate is that many brethren are apparently content to allow it, perhaps even to join it.

By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul castigated the Corinthian church for sitting idly by while fornication was being committed:

It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you (1 Cor. 5:2).

The Corinthians should have spoken up when this sin was taking place. Because they failed to speak up, Paul was compelled to take them to task. When sin is being condoned, Christians are compelled to speak up.

Today, sodomy is called an “alternate lifestyle,” as though it were a viable choice (compare with Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10). Young heterosexual couples likewise live together in fornication, with no apparent thought that it might be wrong (compare with 1 Cor. 6:13-7:2). The current “sexy” fashion trend encourages young women to dress in such a way as to entice men into lust, and thereby into sin and death (Matt. 5:27-29; Jas. 1:14-15; compare with Matt. 18:6). False doctrines on marriage, divorce, and remarriage encourage unscripturally joined couples to remain together in adultery (Matt. 5:31-32; 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:10-11). Loose fellowship practices spread the leaven of sin throughout the church (1 Cor. 5:6-13).

When such is taking place, it naturally follows that the faithful Christian will speak up, and dissent and dispute if a defense is attempted. Satan might be getting his way, but Christians charge boldly into the fray (Eph. 6:10-18). It may require firm rebuke. It may require, as it did for the Corinthians, the touchy process of “put[ting] away from among yourselves that wicked person” (1 Cor. 5:3-5, 13). Some will not like it. But if one’s soul is threatened, it is not an enemy but a **friend** who will try to talk the imperiled one out of his predicament.

When the Pattern of God is Altered

God has given a pattern for those living in the Christian age regarding what they need to do to be saved: Hear the Gospel of Christ (Acts 11:14; Rom. 10:17), Believe (John 8:24; Heb. 11:6), Repent of sin (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30), Confess Christ (Rom. 10:10; 1 John 4:15), and be immersed in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). To remain saved then requires faithful Christian living (Matt. 10:22; 1 Cor. 15:58). When some were trying to bind circumcision upon Christians to the extent of saying, “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1); they were guilty of altering God’s pattern for salvation. Should we not dissent and dispute when teachers today assert that one can be saved by faith only? (against Jas. 2:24). Or when they replace God’s plan of salvation with a “sinner’s prayer”? (against 1 Pet. 3:12). Or when they require a priest’s mediation to pronounce someone saved? (against 1 Tim. 2:5). Salvation can only be found in Christ’s pattern, “Neither is there

salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

God’s pattern is not limited to His plan of salvation—indeed, adherence to His pattern in **all things** is essential to maintaining salvation (Heb. 2:1-3; 2 John 9). God has a pattern for the organization of the church—elders overseeing the flock and its work, with deacons serving various needs of the church under the elders’ oversight (Acts 20:28; Phlp. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-13). The church is instructed, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account” (Heb. 13:17). When some want to make the evangelist the pastor/overseer, or to subject a serving eldership to popular vote of the congregation, it naturally follows that faithful Christians will dissent and dispute. Such is also true when the Lord’s pattern for the worship and name of the church is altered.

The church is to stand at the ready to defend the purity of God’s pattern: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Elders, the overseers within a local church, must be able to refute error, and to refute it **forcefully**. An elder may be appointed only, if among other qualifications, he is one “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9). All members should likewise stand at the ready to give a defense of the Gospel pattern (Phlp. 1:7, 17; 1 Peter 3:15).

When the Precision of God’s Word is Attacked

Beginning particularly in the nineteenth century, certain forces sought to alter God’s authoritative pattern by devious means—by eliminating the possibility of there even **being** an authoritative pattern. Some of them began to question the authorship of various books of the Bible, and to assign them such late dates as to render their future prophecies a farce. Others have tried to find clashing doctrines between the different writers of the New Testament. There is little doubt that their motivation has largely been to undermine the accuracy of the Bible. One particularly noted destructive critic, Julius Wellhausen, admitted “almost before I heard his reasons” he was ready to accept a hypothesis that placed the writings of Moses as a late addition to the prophets. Others question whether an ancient book can be applied to a modern world.

Is God’s word precise? Is it authored by God, accurate in its statements, and applicable to modern man? It certainly claims to be (2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:12; 2 Pet. 1:3). And it will certainly stand up to testing (Matt. 24:35; John 10:35; 1 Pet. 1:23-25). The Bible contains historical statements that could have been made only by those contemporary with the events they described. Those of later generations questioned the historical accuracy of references to “Hittites” (Exod. 3:8; Num. 13:29; et al.) and a Roman proconsul governing in Cyprus (Acts 13:7, American Standard Version). Further archaeological discovery and historical research has shown several such statements accurate. One could look to Biblical prophecies clearly fulfilled centuries after they were made (Isa. 44:28; Dan. 2:36-45). One could look to the perfect unity of the Bible, despite the fact that approximately 40 different men wrote its 66 books.

The precise word of God has profoundly affected countless lives through the centuries, and will no doubt continue to do so.

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).

With the attacks the word of God is facing, and with the clear evidence on its side, should not those who have been begotten by it be standing at the ready to defend it?

Conclusion

As with Paul and Barnabas, there come times for the faithful child of God when it naturally follows that he will dissent and dispute. The current culture may be one of “live and let live” and “just agree to disagree,” but the voice of reason—the voice of Truth—must be heard. Whether it be confronting these issues in public debate,

speaking with others one on one, or whatever format it might take, the Lord expects Christians to engage in reasonable dissension and disputation.

Jesus Christ, Cana, and Wine

Nana Yaw Aidoo

No one who is at least acquainted with modern scientific revelations regarding alcoholic wine can deny that total abstinence is the way of wisdom. (cf. Prov. 20:1). A study of alcohol production across the ages reveals that the formula used in producing distilled spirits like whiskey, brandy and vodka is relatively modern.

Natural wines and brewed beverages were the only alcoholic drinks until a few centuries ago. In antiquity, as far back as 800 BC, they seem to have had crude methods of distilling alcohol from rice, millet and mare's milk. However, the process of distillation leading to modern methods was first developed and applied in Italy about AD 1000. Spain followed two centuries later and France in the next century. In the sixteenth century Scotland founded her trade in whisky by distillation of alcohol from barley (Edith A. Kerr; *Alcohol and the Scriptures*, p. 5).

As a result of this relatively modern formula, the alcohol content in alcoholic beverages today is higher than it was in its ancient counterparts. Not only is this so, but alcoholic beverages today "...have a large percent of sugar of lead, strychnine, strontian, potash, soda, carbonates, benzine, Brazil wood, logwood, etc., etc" (D.R. Dungan; *Rum and Ruin: The Remedy Found*, p. 53, 2012 electronic edition). These things are poisons and thus, to refer to alcohol as a stimulant is to make a very big mistake. At best, alcohol acts as an anesthetic on the brain and as a depressant of the central nervous system. "Even small amounts of alcohol may affect the whole nervous system; larger amounts taken over a period of time can cause permanent brain damage." (Kerr; *ibid.*, p. 5).

Professor D.R. Dungan again noted;

Now, it ought to be known that wine, at the worst, was only supposed to contain a percent of alcohol; but that it was entirely free from those poisons that now go to make up the staple of other liquors. Alcohol is now being condemned by the entire medical profession as a beverage, and very many of the most learned of the present time deny that it can ever be used as medicine without injury (*ibid.*, p. 53).

The voice of medical science is clear:

Alcohol, from the pharmacological view point, is an anaesthetic and a narcotic, potentially a habit-forming, craving-creating addiction drug (Andrew C. Ivy, M.D., Vice-President, University Illinois, U.S.A. as cited by Edith A. Kerr in *Alcohol and the Scriptures*, pg.5).

Then again, no sincere student of the Bible can deny that total abstinence from alcoholic wine is the **duty** of the child of God. A careful study of the Bible concerning wine leads to the conclusion, "...that when a word is used that indicates the presence of alcohol, the curse of the Almighty rests upon it." (Dungan, p. 60). Notwithstanding, there are many who still attempt to justify their social or moderate drinking by appealing to the Bible as their source of authority.

It is strange that any man who believes that God is the author of that book would use it to establish a habit which the science and medical skill of the age agree in condemning. To me it seems the last extremity for the rum-drinker or the rum-seller when he flies to the Bible for support. Before the courts of medicine, history and popular opinion, he has lost his cause; and now as a *dernier resort*, he betakes himself to the Bible, in the vain hope of finding something, under cover of which he may disappear from public condemnation (*ibid.*, p. 52).

One passage that continues to be wrested to support the sin of the moderate drinking

of alcohol is Jesus' turning of water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana. It is argued that since Jesus Christ turned water into wine, then a moderate drinking of alcohol is allowed, so long as one does not become drunk. I have always wondered at which point a person becomes drunk. Is it when he begins to vomit all over himself or is it when he is unable to walk properly? Inherent in this argument is the assumption that *wine*, as used in the Bible, always and without exception refers to alcoholic wine. The argument can be set forth in this syllogism.

Premise 1: Jesus Christ turned water into wine.

Premise 2: Wine is always and without exception a reference to alcohol in the Bible.

Conclusion: Therefore, drinking of alcohol is sanctioned by Jesus Christ.

It is a sad state of affairs that some would go as far as accusing the sinless Son of God, with sanctioning that which "bitteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." We unequivocally deny that Jesus Christ turned water into alcoholic wine and it will be our burden in this note to so prove. A cursory reading of the text (John 2:1-12) reveals that Jesus Christ and His disciples honored a wedding invitation in Cana of Galilee. When there was a shortage of wine at the wedding, Jesus' mother sought His help. Jesus Christ then had some servants to fill six water pots of stone with water.

And he saith unto them, draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now (John 2:8-10).

Wine

The word translated *wine* in the ninth and tenth verses is the Greek word *oinos*. I do not profess to be a Greek scholar but those who are, claim that this word is a generic term that can be used in reference to both alcoholic and non-alcoholic wine. We agree with this conclusion, for in Ephesians 5:18, which is undoubtedly a reference to alcohol, we have the word, *oinos*. Then again in Mathew 9:17, the word *oinos* is clearly a reference to non-alcoholic wine for *new wine* is wine that "had not yet gone through its state of fermentation." (Adam Clarke's Commentary). Concerning this Greek word, D.R. Dungan noted that.

...we have ten occurrences in which unfermented grape juice is intended, and six in which intoxicating wine is meant, and two in which alcoholic wine is probably referred to...Besides these, the word *oinos* occurs fifteen times, in which the meaning of the word is more or less in dispute...Hence when men tell us that *oinos* in the New Testament always means alcoholic wine, we know that they are not themselves informed in the matter, or are intentionally trying to deceive us (ibid., p. 59).

From the foregoing, we see that whether or not alcohol is in view, can only be determined by the context in which the word *oinos/wine* is found or with more information at our disposal. The word *oinos/wine* alone is insufficient in determining what Jesus Christ turned the water into. Thus, to conclude, just by considering the word *oinos/wine* alone, that Jesus Christ turned water into alcohol is nothing but a deceitful handling of God's Word. (2 Cor.4:2).

Good Wine

Notice carefully that in the tenth verse, the governor of the feast called Jesus' wine, "good wine." The word *good* translates a Greek word that includes the idea of moral goodness. This is enough to prove to us that Jesus Christ did not turn water into something that is seen even by alien sinners as immoral. What would you say about your preacher if you found him in a pub drinking alcohol? Would you be proud to tell someone you've been teaching the gospel to that the man behind the bar with a glass of alcohol in his hands is the preacher at your congregation? If no, then is this not an admission that the drinking of alcohol is immoral and unbecoming of a child of God?

And more, do not they charge Jesus Christ with immorality, who foolishly claim that He produced 180 gallons of alcohol (John 2:6) for people to drink?

That which Jesus Christ produced was “good wine” and thus it was wine that could not be deemed “immoral.” I submit that **only** non-alcoholic wine falls into this category. Lest the foregoing be construed as sophistry, I present this comment by Tayler Lewis, LL. D., in the first edition of the *Temperance Bible Commentary*.

As to what was esteemed ‘the good wine,’ there is ample evidence that the stronger (unmixed) wines were *not* preferred or drunk except by vicious or intemperate men, and that the *sweetest* and *lightest* wines, almost, if not altogether, incapable of intoxicating, were deemed the best by all sober persons. Indeed the governor’s language implies that ‘the good wine’ usually provided at feasts was of a kind that could be abundantly used without inebriation; and in one remarkable passage, Philo (who flourished during and after our Lord’s life upon earth) describes the votaries of wine proceeding from one kind to another, till they finished up with great draughts of the unmixed and strongest sorts (303).

D.R. Dungan also noted that,

According to Pliny, Plutarch, Horace, Theophrastus, and many others, they denominated the wine that would not intoxicate, “the best wine,” “the wholesome,” “the innocent,” “the moral wine,” etc. Pliny expressly says that “good wine was destitute of spirit.” Lib. iv. 13 (*ibid.* 62).

Therefore, since the context tells us that the wine Jesus Christ produced was “good,” then we can safely conclude of a surety that the wine He produced was non-alcoholic?

Conclusion

Jesus Christ was the only man to walk the face of this earth and not sin. (Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5). And since He was amenable to the law of Moses (Gal. 4:4-5), clearly He never acted contrary to that law. Many passages can be shown from the Old Testament that outlaw giving alcohol to others to drink. (cf. Amos 4:1; Hab. 2:15). Could our Lord have given others alcohol to drink and yet be sinless? The moderate or social drinking of alcohol is a sin and is incompatible with holiness. (Amos 4:1-2). In Ephesians 5:18, *methusko*, which is translated *drunk*, is an inceptive verb, which signifies the **process** of becoming intoxicated (Vine). That process begins when one takes the first drink and thus, what is being outlawed by the Holy Spirit in the letter to the Ephesians is the process of becoming intoxicated or as is popularly called, moderate or social drinking. Woe to anyone who charges the Christ—Who sent the Holy Spirit to the apostles—with hypocrisy.

Does God Authorize Women Preachers?

Jess Whitlock

When I began preaching in the 1970s, I was aware that the man-made denominations of our age had women preachers. As a boy preacher I do not recall a single instance of women preachers in the churches of Christ. But the decades of the 80s and 90s were different stories. University church in Abilene, Texas encouraged women in praying and prophesying in worship.

At Dayspring church in Edmond, Oklahoma, women served at the Lord's table and a woman publicly interviewed a prospective elder in the worship service. Highland church in Abilene, Texas had a funeral service preached entirely by women, University church in Murray, Kentucky, had a young lady to address the worship assembly, and at Brookline church in Brookline, Massachusetts women read Scripture, lead prayers and singing, serve the communion, teach adult classes and preach.

One church in Alabama issued a document to inform members that women would be reading Scripture, serving the communion, leading prayers, directing singing and, yes, **preaching**. They also said they would appoint deacons who “will be male and female.” The elders assured the brethren they would “initiate gradual change in the Sunday

morning worship assembly.”

When one reflects upon the subject of **apostasy** among the Lord's people, hasn't it always been accomplished in a gradual manner, slowly, a little bit at a time? Whenever a new **false doctrine** has been admitted into a congregation hasn't it been introduced little by little? Mark it down. When you enter a church building and find a woman in the pulpit, you are **not** in the church of my Lord. You are in a man-made denomination.

1 Timothy 2:8-14

First Timothy 2 has to do with a regular worship assembly and First Corinthians 14 has to do with a special worship assembly. If you do not agree with that conclusion, that's all right, you can be wrong if you want to be. For our study at this time we want to look at the context of 1 Timothy 2.

Timothy was a young evangelist, in poor health, and suffered many hardships. He was working with a difficult congregation in Ephesus. Paul writes to encourage Timothy to set the church in order. Paul tells him how to establish elders and deacons in the congregation. There was a problem with materialism and a problem within the assemblies at Ephesus. Paul wanted to help Timothy know how to treat elders and false teachers. Timothy was instructed in how to treat older men and women, younger men and women, and older and younger widows. In First Timothy 2, we have a chapter dealing with the public worship assembly. In First Timothy 2:1-7 we learn that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving are to be offered for all men. The Greek word for “all men” is *anthropos*, which means “all mankind.” The study of *anthropology*, is a study concerning the development of mankind.

“I desire therefore, that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing” (1 Tim. 2:8 ASV). The word *therefore* refers to the fact that Paul is an apostle (cf. v. 7). Therefore, the Holy Spirit is the author of these words. The Greek word for “men” is *andras*, the plural of *aner* (man), and is not the generic word for “mankind” which would include the woman, but directly refers to **males** (cf. “men” in verse 1). Therefore, men—not women—are to lead prayers in the public assemblies. This would also include private settings, such as Bible classes, camps, devotionals, etc., where men and women are together. The men must pray without anger or disputing. The word *aner* is found 215 times in the Greek New Testament. It is rendered *man* 156 times, *husband* 50 times, *sir* six times, *fellow* one time, and twice it is not translated. However, there is **not one single time** where it is rendered *woman* or as *men and women*. If it had been Paul's intention for men and women to lead in prayer he would have used the Greek word *anthropos*. Paul knew all about that word as we have previously noted in verse 2.

“In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls, or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works” (1 Tim. 2:9-10 ASV). Women are to dress modestly in the public assembly. Some have perverted the phrase, *in like manner*, to mean that women *likewise* can pray. This is not at all Paul's instruction. Paul is simply stating by apostolic authority, that men are to pray and women are to “adorn themselves in modest apparel.”

Remember that Paul is dealing with problems in the church at Ephesus that needed to be “set in order.” “Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness” (1 Tim. 2:11-12 ASV). The King James Version (KJV) renders the word as “silence.” It comes from the Greek word *hesuchia*, and Thayer defines this word as, “quietness: descriptive of the life of one who stays at home doing his own work, and does not officiously meddle with the affairs of others.” This is the same word in the Greek that Paul used in verse 2. This does not forbid a woman from making any sound in the worship assembly. It does not mean she cannot ask a question or make a comment in a Bible class, as some brethren contend. If it meant she could not utter a sound, then a woman could not sing a hymn, or make the good confession in order to be baptized into Christ (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Matt. 10:32-33).

In verse 11 Paul sets the stage for what he then commands in verse 12. The KJV reads, “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” Paul with all apostolic authority writes, “I permit **not**...” (ASV); or “I do **not** allow...” (NASB and Living Oracles); and “I do **not** permit...” (NKJV). Isn't it somewhat ironic that elderships, preachers, and many churches are **allowing** women to do today, the very thing that Paul—an inspired apostle of Jesus Christ—would **not allow** them to do? Just as verse 8 will not allow the woman to lead a prayer in the public assembly, verse 12 now informs us that she is not to teach/preach in that assembly. Why not? Paul tells us, that the woman is not to usurp authority over the man. The word *teach* is from the Greek root word, *didasko*, defined as, “to teach, instruct, to provide information in a manner intended to produce understanding...” Paul is not forbidding a woman from any and all teaching, as some brethren contend today.

We know that God commands women to teach in certain situations (Titus 2:3-4). Women teach in the public assembly when they obey God's command to sing (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; 1 Cor. 14:15). Timothy's mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois, taught and trained him as a child, and both were praised for their good efforts (2 Tim. 1:5, 3:15). Aquila and Priscilla taught Apollos “the way of God more perfectly” (Acts 18:26). Here was a husband and wife (male and female) demonstrating an instance of women **teaching**. Yet, Paul says in clarion tones that he does not allow the woman to teach. But note his qualification: “...nor to have dominion over a man...” or “...nor to usurp authority over the man...” The **kind** of teaching that the woman is **not** allowed by apostolic authority is any kind of teaching in the assembly of worship where she would be exercising authority or dominion over the man.

“Usurp authority” comes from the Greek term, *authentev*, which means “to exercise authority or dominion over another, or to govern one.” Women can rightfully teach the younger women; they can direct a ladies' Bible class; they can most assuredly teach children; and they can teach a man privately as in the case of Priscilla teaching Apollos. But she is **not** to exercise dominion or authority over the man. **That** is the thing that is opposed by apostolic authority in this context. Paul's supportive arguments for this apostolic restriction are then stated in verses 13-15. Please notice that the two reasons listed have nothing to do with culture, custom, or the celibacy of Paul. It most assuredly has nothing to do with the old wives' fable that women are inferior to men, for they are not.

Reason Number One

Adam was first formed, then Eve. God is the One Who created Adam and Eve and He determined who would be created first. Being the firstborn meant something in terms of authority under the Old Testament economy. (Exod. 22:29-31; 34:19; Deut. 21:15-17; Gen. 25:23; Exod. 4:22; cf. Jer. 31:9). In three New Testament passages Jesus Christ is referred to as the Firstborn among many brethren, (Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:6). These references to Jesus Christ can be traced back to Psalm 89:27, where the Hebrew nation is alluded to as the firstborn of Jehovah God. The woman was made from the man to be a perfect helpmeet to him. This implies the male lead in spiritual leadership in the home—the first divine institution—and in the church—the last divine institution. (1 Cor. 11:8-ff).

Reason Number Two

The woman was deceived, while the man was not deceived. The words *was deceived* come from a Greek verb form which means that Eve was beguiled completely. Remember the punishment given to Eve, “...thy desire shall be to thy husband, and **he shall rule over thee**” (Gen. 3:16). Yet, Paul emphatically declares in Romans 5:12 ASV, “Therefore, as through **one man** sin entered into the world and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned.”

The woman being beguiled fell into *transgression*. The Greek word is *parabasei*, and Thayer says, “absolutely the breach of a definite, promulgated, ratified law.” It was a high-handed total disregard for God's authority. She was deceived into believing that God's law did not really mean what it said. Notice her own words in the garden: “...**God hath said**, Ye shall **not** eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die” (Gen.

3:3). Eve knew precisely what the Word of the Lord was, for she had actually reiterated His very command! She disobeyed direct orders from the Lord God.

Mark it down, every time a woman steps into a pulpit to **preach the word**, her presence there—where she does not belong—indicates she has a copy of God's Word. We have just seen some of what God's Word has to say on the subject of women preaching. God's authoritative Word condemns such just as clearly as it forbade Adam and Eve from partaking of the forbidden fruit! Whenever a **man or woman** today determines he knows what the **Word of the Lord** is, and does what **he** wants to do, regardless of the teaching of God's Word, it is a high-handed sin, as surely as it was in the Garden of Eden.

Gospel and Doctrine

Lester Kamp

For some, the Gospel of the New Testament is completely different from the doctrine of the New Testament. Because of this supposed difference some have concluded such things as: Fellowship is to be based on Gospel but not doctrine; the Gospel is for non-Christians and doctrine is for Christians; preachers are to preach the Gospel, and therefore a preacher cannot be hired by a congregation of the church for him to preach in that place regularly; a preacher is to preach the Gospel and “leave everyone else alone” by staying away from doctrines upon which men differ; withdrawing fellowship should not be done because of doctrinal differences, etc. We have all seen these ideas advocated and practiced. Because of the importance of understanding these terms, I want to briefly consider the legitimacy of this distinction.

Gospel

First, the facts and foundation of the Gospel are the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-2). These facts must be believed in order for a person to be saved. Without believing that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day, man will remain lost because he will die in his sins (John 8:24). But the Gospel is not just those facts. In describing the second coming of Christ (when He comes to judge all humanity), Paul indicated that those who “obey not the gospel” will be lost (2 Thess. 1:9). The Gospel facts cannot be obeyed, but the **commands** of the Gospel **must** be obeyed. The commands to be obeyed in the Gospel are revealed in Romans 6:3-6:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life...Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

The process of a believer repenting of sins (Acts 17:30) and being baptized for the forgiveness of sins portrays the death and burial of Christ. When that person rises from the watery grave of baptism, the resurrection of Christ is portrayed in symbol. Rising to walk in newness of life indicates continued faithful obedience. The Gospel includes facts, but the Gospel is also something which must be obeyed by man in order to be saved!

Doctrine

Second, doctrine simply means teaching and is sometimes so translated. We read of the early Christians continuing steadfastly in the “apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42). The apostles’ doctrine would be a reference to what the apostles taught. The apostles were given their message by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 16:13).

During the first century that message (the apostles’ doctrine) was spoken orally; now the New Testament is that same message (the apostles’ doctrine) in written form (Eph. 3:3-5). Christians today must continue in the apostles’ doctrine. We must teach what they taught. What they taught had to do with the obligations of Christians and non-Christians. The apostles’ doctrine is not just about the responsibilities of Christians in

remaining faithful, but also about non-Christians and their obligations in order to be saved. The apostles' doctrine is the entirety of the New Testament. The New Testament speaks of "sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). Sound (healthy) doctrine is the New Testament without alterations of any kind.

Gospel and Doctrine

Third, in the New Testament the Gospel is not only directed toward non-Christians and in the New Testament Doctrine is not exclusively for Christians. The Gospel is preached to Christians according to Romans 1:15-16; the Gospel in Mark 16:15-16 is to be taught to non-Christians. The Christian must obey the Gospel or be lost (2 Thess. 1:8-9); so must non-Christians. In the New Testament Doctrine is directed toward Christians (Titus 1:9) and Doctrine is directed toward non-Christians (Acts 5:25; 13:12). The non-Christian will be lost without obeying the Doctrine (Rom. 6:16-17); the Christian who rejects the Doctrine will also be lost (2 John 9-11; Titus 1:9-11). Christians will be saved by the Doctrine (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Clearly there is no difference in the New Testament between the Gospel of Christ and the Doctrine of Christ! No legitimate distinction can be made. Both terms refer to the same body of teaching. This same body of information is also called the Faith, the Truth, the Way, the Law of Christ, the Word.

It Does Matter

There is only one Gospel that saves (Gal. 1:6-9; Rom. 1:16); it is the same as the Doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11). Deviations from that Doctrine (the Gospel) break our fellowship with God. We must not fellowship those who are not in fellowship with God. It does matter what we teach and practice on doctrinal matters! The message of Jesus, the apostles' doctrine, must be taught to others in its purity (2 Tim. 2:2). We will all ultimately give an account to God of our lives based on the standard of the Gospel, the Word (John 12:48). The doctrine that we believe and practice must be the Doctrine of Christ, the Gospel of Christ!

Free Will

Daniel Denham

One of the areas often hotly disputed in religion and philosophy is the question of human free will. Are human beings free moral agents? Do they have the inherent ability to choose to do certain things or not do those things? Do they have the power to obey or disobey God on their own volition? Many philosophies are deterministic in nature. By deterministic we refer to the idea that human beings have no real free will and that their actions are completely predetermined by forces outside of their control. Even in many religions, determinism is a central part of the belief system.

However, the doctrine of determinism is counter-intuitive, meaning that from the outset it runs contrary to what common sense itself would seem to dictate. If every action by a human being is completely predetermined by outside forces acting independently from one's own will, then no one could rightly be held accountable for any action. No one would be responsible for what he does. The very concept of justice runs counter to this conclusion. It is clearly false that people are not at all responsible for their actions. They most certainly are responsible and are held so by our own legal systems, which operate on the premise of personal responsibility to abide by the legal norms and statutes of society for the sake of stability, peace, and safety. This is fundamental to any orderly society. To hold people responsible is implicit in any legal system. This presupposes the ability of people to comply of their own free will with the laws of that society.

Also, the idea of determinism is self-defeating in that it implies that one cannot change one's mind of his own accord. This contradicts the practice of teaching deterministic systems in religion or philosophy. Teaching implies the capacity for the one taught to learn, which implies some measure of control of will on his or her part. It is patently absurd to maintain that people ought to come to believe in the specific deterministic system while maintaining that it is impossible for them to do so of their own accord.

When one holds to determinism, he implicitly admits the falsity of his position when he seeks to rationally convince others of its truth. If the system were true, then people would have to believe in it anyway. They would be compelled to do so by the predetermining power outside themselves to do so. So why spend time arguing for its truth? Why try to convince someone that he really cannot be convinced of anything of himself? That would be an exercise in futility, if the system were really true.

The Bible teaches that man is a free moral agent. We have the innate ability to choose to obey God. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve," proclaimed Joshua to the Hebrews in his farewell address (Josh. 24:15). Christianity is premised on the ability of "whosoever will" to come and drink of the waters of life (Rev. 22:17). The invitation of Christ is open to all (Matt. 11:28-30).

A Question of Origins

J. Early Arceneaux

Go back to the beginning of the church. Would men who knew that what they confessed was not true declare that they believed it was true, and then die in defense of their declaration? Would they do this when they didn't believe at all that the things they said were true? You know the answer the infidel would make. He would say, "Oh, they believed it all right. They were good, honest fellows." Some infidels add "pious"—"they were good, honest, pious, liars!" For that is exactly what they were if they testified falsely. That is Paul's description of them; that is what he said, "if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we witnessed of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised" (1 Cor. 15:14-15).

How Account For These?

Here are some things often overlooked in the discussion of Christian Evidences. And these things are all right on the surface; they are there in the Bible for all men to ponder. Consider the matter of the resurrection of Christ. When we come to talk about His resurrection, there are certain things that must be accounted for. There are certain facts (not theories, but facts) for which both the believer and the infidel must offer some explanation. Men must account for (1) an empty grave; they must account for (2) the course of the friends of Jesus after the hour when they said he arose; they must account for (3) the actions of the enemies of Christ following that hour; some explanation must be offered to account for (4) the existence of the New Testament. Why was it written at all? There must be some explanation given for (5) the existence of the church. How did the church chance to come into being? Why should it arise at all if there were no resurrection? To believe that such could be is to disbelieve completely in the integrity of men, and to repudiate all possibility of proving anything by human testimony.

Honest Witnesses

The apostles were witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. And they sealed their testimony with their blood. That proves one thing, I think, beyond all possibility of Doubt—that is the honesty of the witnesses. They might be mistaken, yes; but they were honest. They might think a thing was so, and it be false; they might even die in defense of a falsehood—but no man would die in defense of that which he believed to be false. The apostles were not bearing witness of a theory; they were testifying to a fact. What did they need to qualify then as witnesses? Good eyesight, good hearing, and just a little common sense. As far as I know infidels have never denied that they had these qualifications. They have never undertaken seriously to impeach the honesty of these witnesses.

Infidelity's Witnesses

Now look at the witnesses the infidels produce. They are the soldiers who stood guard at the tomb of Jesus. And what is their testimony? Why, they say that while they slept the friends of Jesus came and took his body away! Look at that. Their testimony was that a certain thing happened while they slept. How do they know what happened

while they were asleep? How can they bear witness concerning anything that happened during that period?

And these are infidelity's witnesses! If the infidel doesn't accept their testimony, then he has no witnesses; he has no explanation at all for the empty tomb. The only competent witnesses for his side at all are men who declare they were sound asleep when the events about which they testify took place.

Christ's Summary of the Prophets

Following his resurrection, Christ appeared to His disciples and summarized for them the whole point and import of the prophets' teaching concerning Himself. He said,

These are my words which I spake unto you; while I was yet with you, that all things that must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem (Luke 24:44-47).

Christ's summary of the prophets declared that the prophets of old had told of His death, His resurrection, and the preaching of salvation. He did not mention as any part of the prophets' teaching anything concerning a second coming of Christ to establish a political kingdom on earth.

Thus from the teachings of Christ, from the writings of the Old Testament prophets, and from the lives and writings of the apostles, the Christian has a reasonable, logical, and thoroughly credible explanation for the problems we have mentioned. The empty tomb, the psychological change in the attitude and conduct of his friends, the action of his enemies, the existence of the New Testament, the existence of the church, the observance of the Lord's Supper—all of these things have a clear-cut, rational explanation. The human mind can understand how and why concerning them.

Now let the infidel offer an explanation. The New Testament was written; it exists; the church started; the gospel was preached throughout all the Roman Empire—indeed, it was preached in all those regions even before the New Testament was completed. Now let the unbeliever offer an adequate explanation. If the Biblical account is not the true one, then we call upon the infidel to establish for us the true origin of these things.

For 2,000 years he has been trying to give the answer. He is no nearer to it today than he was when those first infidel witnesses testified concerning what happened while they slept.

The Conversion of the Samaritans

George G. Hamilton

From Pentecost onward, the church in Jerusalem made rapid progress, even to the conversion of a great company of the priests (Acts 6:7). But with the stoning of Stephen, the first martyr of the cross, there began a great persecution of the church in Jerusalem, driving the disciples from the city and scattering them throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1) and even to distant parts (Acts 11:19). "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

Persecution has never hindered or even retarded the progress of the gospel. Opposition to the preaching of the pure gospel of Christ by the sectarian world is a healthy sign. "Let the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing."

Philip Goes to Samaria

Philip journeyed to Samaria and "preached Christ unto them" (Acts 8:5). The early disciples could not remain in idleness while the world about them lay in ignorance and wickedness. While waiting in Athens for the coming of Silas and Timothy, Paul busied himself preaching the gospel there (Acts 17:16-34). So Philip in Samaria waited not for the cessation of persecution in Jerusalem that he might return there in peace, but began a gospel meeting at once.

We know the Samaritans as a mongrel race of Jewish and Gentile blood, despised by the Jewish ruling class as an inferior people. Their religion was a corrupted form of Judaism. They accepted only the Pentateuch, and that differed much from the Hebrew text. To such a people, Christ Himself had preached (John 4:4-42), and to such a people Philip, the Jew, preached Christ.

Character of the Preaching

We know exactly what Philip preached, as he “preached Christ unto them.” He preached “the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12). He preached the gospel, the saving gospel, the only preaching that can save (Rom. 1:16). He proclaimed in substance what Peter proclaimed at Pentecost, and years later to the household of Cornelius (Acts 10). This was the same gospel that was afterward preached by Paul from Damascus, Jerusalem, and Antioch to every part of the ancient world.

The preaching of this gospel will always produce the same gracious and blessed results wherever it is proclaimed, believed, and obeyed. Of the Samaritans, it is said, “And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did” (Acts 8:6). “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12).

To the rule stated above, there are no exceptions. Whenever and wherever the pure gospel of Christ is preached, those who hear it and give heed to it by believing, repenting and being baptized “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38) are saved. Such was true at Pentecost, and such was true in Samaria. Such was also true in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, Saul of Tarsus, Cornelius, Lydia and her house, the Philippian jailer and his house, and of all others in apostolic days. And such remains true in our day.

God's plan for the salvation of men has not changed. Those who proclaim otherwise than what is plainly set forth in the Scriptures are perverters of the word of God and come under the condemnation stated in 2 Cor. 11:4; Gal. 1:6-8, and Rev. 22:18-19. These are hard words, but they are the words of the unchangeable and eternal God, coming to us through men who “spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

Philip told the whole story of the Christ—of His pure and matchless life, His vicarious death on the cross to atone for the sins of men who will believe and obey Him, of His triumphant resurrection from the dead, and His glorious ascension to the Father, the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and the establishment of the kingdom on that glorious day.

The Case of Simon

Into the story of the conversion of the Samaritans enters the case of Simon Magus (the magician). The proponents of the doctrine, “Once in grace, always in grace,” contend that Simon was not truly converted. If he was not, then no others were, for there is nothing said of the Samaritans generally that is not also said of Simon: 1) The Samaritans believed. So did Simon. 2) The Samaritans were baptized. So was Simon. 3) And something was said of Simon that is said of no other: “...he continued with Philip...” (Acts 8:13).

But when Peter and John came down from Jerusalem to perform a work that Philip, not being an apostle could not do, Simon wanted the power which belonged only to an apostle. He knew from experience the power of money, and sought to buy this power to confer the gift of the Spirit upon others. For this, Peter condemned him (Acts 8:20), saying, “Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter...” (Acts 8:21). What matter? The matter which had called Peter and John to Samaria—that the Samaritans should receive the Holy Spirit. The matter of conferring miraculous gifts belonged only to the apostles.

Peter continued in Acts 8:20-21, saying Simon's heart was “not right in the sight of God” because he thought to obtain this special gift of God with money. He then called on Simon to repent and pray for forgiveness. That Simon was penitent is evident from his words to Peter: “Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me” (Acts 8:24). Simon was commanded to do just what every oth-

er Christian is commanded to do when he sins and comes again under the righteous condemnation of God—to repent and pray for forgiveness. The advocates of the unconditional, final perseverance of the saints can draw no comfort from the case of Simon Magus of Samaria.

Some Conclusions

1. Any man who is a true disciple of Jesus Christ has divine authority to preach the gospel, as did Stephen, Philip, and others.
2. The gospel produced the same gracious results in Samaria as in Jerusalem. It is the same everywhere — in all the world through all ages — since Pentecost.
3. Superstition, wonder working, and false teaching cannot abide the light of God's truth.
4. But the one supreme thought derived from the lesson is that opposition and persecution never have halted, and never can halt, the onward march of the hosts of righteousness who march to victory under the banner of Christ, “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

“What Saith The Scriptures?”

Harrell Davidson

Our question this month is given in quotes below.

“Is it authorized for a local congregation to take money from its treasury and give to government to run a social policy or program like free education”?

We are thankful for all questions and especially those that are based upon the authority of God’s Word. Many years ago, when questioning a congregation about building their multi-purpose building (gymnasium), this author asked, “where is the authority for it?” and was told by the preacher then, “No one asks that old question anymore”. This points to a very sad state of affairs in our land. No human being has the authority to override God’s authority in any matter be it elder, preacher or whomsoever it may be. Therefore, we must continually ask for authority for the things we practice and do or say. The Scriptures admonish us: “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).

Christians recognize the place of government in the affairs of our lives and we also understand that government, both local and national, is authorized by God and was created by God. Civil government seems to have been set in motion (order) at the dividing of the nations in Genesis 11. Paul also wrote in Rom 13 these inspired words, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God” (V. 1).

He further shows that for conscience we should obey the laws of the land and in verse 6 Paul shows that we pay “tribute” (taxes) to support those who make laws as well as those who enforce the laws. However, in making laws, man sometimes makes laws that are not Scriptural thus not ordained by God or not in keeping with His divine will such as abortion and many others. In any case any law/laws that violates God’s law must not be kept by the citizens.

This is only a primer regarding these matters but is meant to establish that government is ordered by God but not all government regulations are ordained by God. His Word must be the authority that we use in all matters of this kind. If man’s law conflicts with God’s law we must refuse to obey that particular law.

God has three divine institutions in this order, the home, government and the church. Some duties and responsibilities belong to each of these. There are things that the home can do that the government or the church cannot do. For instance, it is not the

government's responsibility to demand how parents are to rear their children nor can the government instruct the church on how it is to function. Citizens (members) of the church and citizens of the country are dual citizens. These are fundamental to the question this month and the proper answer.

Neither the government or the church is responsible for recreation. This is a function of the home and it is not shared by either of the other institutions. If it was the government's responsibility then it would demand the kind of recreation we engage in making the rules and regulations regarding such. This is obviously not the government's responsibility. It is sad that many churches have entered in the entertainment business for which there is no authority in God's Word. They are lacking in scriptural authority.

Education is also a product, and responsibility, of the home. No where in God's Holy Word is the church admonished either by direct command or approved example to sponsor secular education of any kind. If the government demanded education it will instruct us to the type and kind and perhaps an entrance into socialism.

There are many things that the home can do that are not authorized for the church or government to participate in.

There are equally many things that the church is authorized to do that no other institution is authorized to do.

There are likewise things that the government is authorized to do that neither the church or the home does. Church members are authorized to participate in law making if they so desire and are authorized by command to keep civil law as long as it does not interfere with God's laws.

Always ask for authority for what the church practices preaches or teaches. Search the Scriptures (John 5:39; Acts 17:11). In doing so there is no authority for the church to take one cent of the Lord's money to support government education. This is clearly part of the responsibility of the home.

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

“What Must I Do to be Saved?”

Gale L. Reeder

This is not a new question, neither is the answer to this question of recent origin. This question, or its equivalent, was asked in each of the following cases referred to. Notice that the question asked was not “What must I see? What must I feel? What must I experience? What must be done for me?”; but rather, “What must I **do** to be saved?”

The Pentecostians

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received the word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:37-47).

Notice, it is first necessary to hear God's word before one can know what to do. Peter, speaking by divine inspiration, had a specific answer to their question. They all heard the same instructions; they all understood the instruction alike; they all obeyed the instruction alike; the same promise was made to all who would obey. Those called were

called by and through the preaching of the gospel, even as we are called today. "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:14). All those who "gladly received the word" were baptized, and "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (teaching) and fellowship (the contribution) and in breaking of bread (communion service) and in prayers." After they had asked the question, "What must we do?", after they had been told what to do, after they had obeyed these commandments, **then** the Lord added those being saved to the church. None were saved before baptism; none were baptized after being saved; none but the saved were added to the church. The church to which they were added is the one Christ said He would build. "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). Those who still obey the same gospel, in the same way, are added today to the same church.

Saul of Tarsus

And Saul "trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise; and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). (Read verses 9 through 18). When the disciple, Ananias, who was to tell Saul what he must do, found Saul, the latter was in prayer. Ananias did not tell him to pray on. Although Saul had "seen a great light," and although he had been praying probably for three days, he was not yet saved. For Ananias told him, "And now why tarriest thou (what are you waiting for?), arise, and be baptized (what for?) and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Notice that, as the Pentecostians, Saul had to hear God's word before he could know what to do. Ananias, speaking by divine inspiration, had definite, specific instructions for Saul. After Saul was told what to do, after he had obeyed the instructions, after he had been baptized, **then** (and not before) were his sins "washed away."

The Philippian Jailor

Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas. And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house (Acts 16:30-34).

Notice, the jailor was told if he would "believe" he would be saved. However as he did not yet know what to believe, "they spake unto him the word of the Lord." After the jailor and his household had received definite instructions (there were no infants since all there were old enough to believe and to be baptized), after he had been baptized, after he and his household had manifested their belief by their obedience, **then** it was, as in the previous cases, that he could rejoice in salvation.

The commands issued in these three cases (which commands are either expressed or implied in each case of conversion in the book of Acts) were all given "in the name of Jesus Christ," that is, by His authority. This was in accordance with the great commission he had given as recorded by Matthew:

And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world (Matt. 28:19-20).

Mark records the same instructions as, "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).

God has not, and man cannot, repeal these commandments. Neither should man attempt to add to, take from, or in any way change them. For John declares,

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the

plagues that are written in this book; And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-19).

It is not enough to say, Lord, Lord, and not **do** what he commands, for Jesus said, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46.) We must do God's will, for Christ also declared, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).

To be eternally saved, man must continue faithfully carrying out all of the Lord's commands as recorded in the New Testament, unto the end. “For we are made partakers of Christ, **if** we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end” (Heb. 3:14 [emph added], cf. 2 Pet. 1:1-11).

Pardon From Sin

Gordon Wilson

Pardon from sins carries with it the idea of offense. If one has never offended another he cannot receive pardon; indeed he has no need for pardon. Since pardon is held out in the Bible as a precious gift from God to man, it follows that man has sinned against God. Otherwise he could not receive pardon from sins.

Adam sinned against God by eating of the forbidden fruit, and he suffered the consequence of his sin. As the Lord has decreed, Adam died in the day in which he sinned by being separated from the source of life. Adam stands as the representative of the human race, not in the sense that we inherit the guilt of his sin, but in the sense that all have sinned and become separated from God as the consequence of our sins.

“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:2). In this language the prophet assures Israel that they were separated from God, not because he had lost his power to save (v. 1), but because they, themselves, had sinned. Throughout the next 15 verses he lists the evil deeds of which they were guilty.

However, the Lord has provided that all who turn from sin may be pardoned: “And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord” (Isa. 59:20). This prophesies that Christ, as a Redeemer, should purchase forgiveness for all who turn from transgression. “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (1 Pet. 3:18). So it is through Christ that we have pardon from sins, as He reconciles us to God in himself (2 Cor. 5:19, Eph. 2:13).

Now let us consider for a moment the conditions of pardon. That there are conditions to be met that no one could seriously doubt if acquainted with the teachings of the Bible. Faith in Christ is an indispensable requirement of pardon. Through faith we grasp the fact of Jesus' Sonship and learn to love Him because He first loved us. Love leads to repentance, wherein we determine to serve Him, putting sin out of our lives. By Baptism we make a formal application of the benefits of His shed blood. The conditions of pardon then are faith, (John. 14:1, Rom. 5:1); repentance, (Luke 13:3, Acts 17:30); and baptism, (Acts 2:38, 1 Pet. 3:21). One who confesses faith in Christ without putting Him on in baptism, simply confesses a dead faith. On the other hand, one who is baptized without confessing his faith in Christ receives nothing more than a useless immersion, since baptism is to be performed upon a confession, (Acts 8:37, Rom. 10:9-10).

Finally, what is the evidence of pardon from sins? Does God give a sign by which we can know we are saved? No, but He has given a promise. He has promised that if we meet the conditions outlined in his word, then He will pardon us from sins. Thus we know that when we obey His commandments we are saved. Pardon takes place in the mind of God. He has told us **when** He will pardon us, and we should believe His promises. It is a mistake to interpret unusual occurrences, or inward emotions, as

signs from God to the effect that we are saved. We may be mistaken in such things, and the matter of salvation is too grave to take a chance. Rather, let us obey his commandments, trust his promises, and rest in the “full assurance of faith.”

Politics and Religion: Liberals Will be Liberals

Dub McClish

Railroad tracks run parallel to each other, as do numerous other things (e.g., lines on a music staff, window blinds, prison bars, et al.). Such items are not only aligned; they go in the same direction and generally have the same terminus. Parallels exist not only in the area of physical phenomena, but in the realm of ideas as well.

The “no holds barred” intensity of the 2004 (and subsequent) presidential campaigns served to accentuate the deep political rift in our nation. Numerous seasoned presidential campaign observers agree that this was one of the most bitterly fought races ever. This highly-charged atmosphere has provoked a few thoughts concerning some ideological parallels. Generally, the national political division breaks along “conservative” and “liberal” lines, often identified as the “right” and the “left,” respectively.

Some General Parallels

Some general parallels are obvious between the political and religious landscapes. Professed believers in God, the Bible, and the Christ are also divided along the lines of the “right” and “left” dichotomy that is observable in politics. This conservative-liberal division is quite apparent in both the Roman Catholic Church and in Protestant Denominationalism (with pronounced liberal dominance in the latter). So we see these parallel “rails” of politics and religion: both are very much divided along conservative and liberal lines.

Even closer to home, it is no secret that the church of Christ is also deeply divided along conservative and liberal lines. (I do not employ the term liberal to be unkind or unfair, but to be accurate. Liberal accurately describes those who take liberties with God’s Word.) What began in a seemingly small way about half a century ago has steadily developed into a cleavage with no foreseeable prospect of repair. The church is moving inexorably toward a repeat—in the not-too-distant-future, I fear—of the tragic complete sundering of the body of Christ that occurred a century ago (some seem never to learn or care about the lessons of history). Not a few believe said division has already occurred. As sad as it is to contemplate, the conservative-liberal tension has already produced internal schism in hundreds of congregations. The number of entire congregations that have moved or are moving leftward is surely in the hundreds—if not more. It is only a matter of time now until the reality of this division is undeniable—even by the most dedicated religious “ostriches.”

Those who have read any of my writings or who have heard me preach for any length of time are aware of my unashamed conservative perspective. Liberals fail who seek to slander me by throwing this label my way. To me, conservative is neither pejorative nor demeaning; it is complimentary. For my part, the true meaning of this term has only positive connotations. I do not claim to speak for them, but I believe there are still many faithful saints whose only interest in religion is mine—to simply conserve or preserve that “once-for-all-delivered” faith (Jude 3) for which the Lord died. Conservatives are the real restorers. We seek no more and no less than the unadulterated doctrine and practice of the New Testament.

The proclivity of liberals to categorize all who object to their schemes as “antis” stems from the misconception that conservatives like to “make laws.” Notwithstanding this frequent accusation, I am not the least bit interested in making any new laws for God (If I have ever done so, it was not because of, but in spite of, any such intent). This charge accurately describes genuine “anti-ism,” not genuine conservatism. (By genuine anti-ism I refer to the practice of making personal scruples about such things as church support of children’s homes, church co-operation, eating in the church building, the time of meeting, or even the color of the carpet, grounds of fellowship. All other things

being equal, such scruples [whether held by congregations or by individuals] are of no consequence to a genuine conservative—as long as they remain just that—personal scruples.)

When one objectively considers the correct definition of conservative, he will realize that personal-scruple-enforcing “anti” brethren are no more conservative than liberals and that liberals are as much in the law-making business as are extreme “antis.” Liberals just make their laws broader, whereas said “antis” make theirs narrower, than God’s law—but both are law-makers. The implication of the foregoing remarks is clear: Liberalism and anti-ism are both extremes; conservatism occupies the happy middle ground of Truth. If I did not believe this, I would seek other ground.

Liberal innovators drove the wedge that eventually split the church a century ago. They began it all by introducing the missionary society and the instrument of music a half-century earlier. Until then, the church was marching as a solid, united phalanx and making great gains for the Truth on every hand. Ironically, those conservative brethren (whose only aim was the restoration of primitive Christianity) who resisted the innovators and their innovations were shown the door and blamed for the division.

Like their earlier counterparts, today’s liberals, with their host of innovations—all symptomatic of their rejection of the authority of Scripture—are completely culpable for the division now occurring in the church. The list of strange practices and doctrines they have imposed—and are imposing—on the Lord’s people is as long as my arm (and I have long arms). The only sense in which those who endeavor to preserve the ancient landmarks are guilty of the current division is that we have dared expose and oppose the nefarious machinations of the liberals. Many of us plan to continue doing so.

Some Specific Parallels

With the foregoing as background, let us now consider a more specific set of parallels—the one that exists between liberals/leftists in politics (including the major news media) and their liberal/leftist counterparts in the church (including the “news media” operated by brethren). These two groups of liberals run on parallel “rails”—they just circulate in different spheres of activity. Liberals in the church mirror the nature, attitudes, and tactics demonstrated by politicians and media principals on the left (especially in the recent and current) presidential campaigns. Consider the following:

Liberals do not like to be called “liberals”

A politician may spend twenty years amassing the most liberal voting record in the US Senate. Yet, when his opponent emphasizes this, correctly labeling him a “liberal,” the liberal (and the “establishment” media) will shame the exposé for daring to call him what he is. In politics, liberals know that they rarely win unless they can somehow disguise their liberalism, so they try to hide under such terms as moderate, progressive, or centrist.

Liberals in the church object to this term also, and for the same reason. Preachers, professors, and editors who no longer love the Truth and who seek to turn the church into a denomination (which they already believe it to be), do not like to be identified for what they are—liberals. They know that faithful brethren will not tolerate their shenanigans if convinced of their liberalism. They thus prefer *moderate*, *progressive*, and *centrist*, just as politicians do.

Liberals are elitists

Liberal politicians are generally arrogant and puffed up with their own importance. They believe they are better, smarter, and wiser than “ordinary” people. They exhibit a “nose-in-the-air” condescension toward their constituents that smacks of an ancient landlord’s attitude toward his serfs. The “common people” would hardly know how to tie their shoes or chew gum without their patronizing advice and oversight.

Liberals in the church are eaten up with arrogance and elitism. This is especially so if they have earned a PhD, and even more so if they occupy a professorship in one of the universities founded by brethren. Many of them have been off to Harvard, Princeton, or some other school full of infidel theologians, and have come back enlightened. They have escaped the shackles of simple faith in the Bible as God’s verbally and plenary

inspired Word. Reminiscent of the Gnostics of old, they know it all—even more than God has revealed. Job’s mordant response to Zophar nails them: “No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you” (Job 12:2).

We pitiful souls who have only been studying and preaching the simple Truth for forty, fifty, sixty, or more years are just ignoramuses. We are not linguists or theologians, and they are. My, my, such Neanderthals as we still believe that faithful churches of Christ today are the one church of the New Testament in our time, that one must be in it to be saved, and that the only way one can enter it is by obeying Jesus’ plan of salvation, culminating in baptism unto remission of sins (Acts 2:37–47).

Liberals profess themselves to be supremely tolerant

In their campaign speeches, liberal candidates typically boast of their tolerance for all viewpoints, lifestyles, behaviors, and attitudes. Their practice, however, reveals that their “tolerance” definitely has limits. It comes to an abrupt halt when one dares question and/or expose the fallacies and/or evils of such things as abortion and homosexual behavior. Verily, liberals are among the most intolerant people on earth—just resist one of them or his policies if in doubt.

So it is with liberals in the church. They are so sweet and profoundly tolerant that they would not dare offend anyone by preaching on the errors of denominationalism, the sin of using instrumental music in worship, or the necessity of baptism for remission of sins. They would not think of saying or doing anything that might cause some sinner to get the idea he is lost. They see no problem with “social drinking,” near-nakedness in public, adulterous marriages, or buying a lottery ticket—they are so tolerant, you see.

Or are they? Actually, they are only tolerant of almost everything and anyone, except sound doctrine and those who preach and defend it. They have an extremely low tolerance threshold for any teaching that counters their agenda. For decades such places as Pepperdine U, ACU, LCU, DLU, and the defunct Tulsa Workshop and Nashville Jubilee organizers have not tendered invitations to conservative speakers. Liberal churches years ago closed their pulpits to any but liberal preachers. I suppose it is because liberals are so exceedingly tolerant that they do not extend these invitations. “But conservative congregations do not invite liberals into their pulpits, either,” someone observes. The difference is that we do not pretend or profess to be super-tolerant of all views. We make it known plainly that we are consciously intolerant of and will not provide a platform for false teachers, as the Scriptures obligate us to be and do (Rom. 16:17–18; 2 Tim. 4:2–4; 2 John 10–11; et al.).

Liberals are experts at applying a double standard

Liberal politicians demonstrate this practice in various ways (including their professed tolerance, discussed above):

First, political liberals project themselves as great champions of the First Amendment of our Constitution, part of which guarantees free speech. They are all for free speech as long as they and their media sycophants are viciously lying about their conservative opponents. However, they suddenly care not so much for free speech when opponents come forward with the truth about their dangerous policies, major character flaws, and inconsistencies. By threat and intimidation they seek to silence conservative voices in the media. By long serving as the unpaid voice of liberals the “major” news media have outrageously abused the very free speech right under which they operate. Amazingly, they do such in the name of “objectivity,” while denying their glaring bias. They are pleased to mitigate, slant, and/or even withhold significant conservative facts and voices from the public.

Liberals in the church are not interested in freedom of expression. The closing of most of the university lectureships and liberal big church pulpits to all but their kind (all the while professing tolerance) is a case in point. The Christian Chronicle bills itself as “An international newspaper for members of churches of Christ.” It boasts of its “balance” and “objectivity,” yet its pages are filled with promotion—paid and unpaid—of the most liberal institutions, projects, and men among us. Its editors misname “liberals” as “progressives” and refer to those seeking to conserve New Testament teaching and practice as “traditionalists” (Oct. 2004:30). Where were “balance” and “objectivity”

when its editor described conservatives as those who exclude all but those who “worship as the church did in the early decades of the last century” (July 2004:30)? Contrariwise, we charge them with rejecting the plan of salvation and the pattern for the church of the first century.

Second, as mentioned earlier, political liberals object to those who correctly label them *liberals*. “Labeling,” they say, “is unfair and prejudicial.” Yet, in another application of the double standard, they are the biggest labelers around. They refer to political conservatives as “the radical right,” “the vast right-wing conspiracy,” “the religious right,” and similar terms with a curled lip and an un-batted eye.

So it is with liberals in the church. As mentioned above, they do not want to be called what they are—liberals. They self-righteously and indignantly decry the awful practice of “labeling.” I have even heard some conservative brethren mistakenly join the voices of liberals in this respect, declaring, “The New Testament does not contain the words, conservative or liberal, so we should not use them.” No, not explicitly, but it does so implicitly in every passage that warns of apostasy and enjoins faithful adherence to the Gospel, which passages permeate the inspired volume (as even neophyte Bible students should know). Nonetheless, liberals have proved themselves very prolific, adept, and imaginative in labeling their opponents (e.g., “legalists,” “five-steppers,” “brotherhood watchdogs,” “witch-hunters,” “keepers of orthodoxy,” “Pharisees,” “traditionalists,” “commandment-keepers,” “new antis,” et al.) It is not that liberals do not like labeling; they just do not like to be on the receiving end of labels that truly characterize them.

Conclusion

The truth of the matter is that liberals will be liberals, wherever one finds them. If political liberals should someday gain control of all branches of our government and if they watered-down our constitution and the God-given rights and freedoms it guarantees, we could still live as God’s people and be saved at last. Of course, we would likely be under severe opposition and duress (political liberals have generally demonstrated that they think believing in God is a joke, the Bible is a fairy tale, and alley cats and barnyard animals are proper role models for “morals”—with my apologies to the animals in some cases).

However, liberals in the church will cause souls to be lost. They have no more respect for the inspired constitution of the kingdom of Heaven than political liberals have for the US constitution. They have an amazing ability to ignore Paul’s mandate: “And whatever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col. 3:17). They preach a diluted message that is destroying the church everywhere men implement it. Their message robs men of the plan of salvation from sin, and ultimately, therefore, of Heaven itself. Liberalism is simply another word for apostasy and heresy. Paul described those who thus walk as “holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof,” and enjoined: “from these also turn away” (2 Tim. 3:5).

The Septuagint

Doug Post

The enemies of God have always tried to prove Him wrong. It is believed that if God can be proved wrong, then His credibility will be diminished, which in turn will strip Him of any perceived authority over mankind. In proving Him wrong, the enemies of God believe they can prove He does not actually exist.

One such enemy has decided to attack God by trying to diminish or destroy the veracity of manuscript evidence—the Scriptures. He recently wrote: “There are more differences among our manuscripts than there are words in our New Testament” (Ehrman, 7, 90) Therefore, the reliability and credibility of the manuscript evidence we have is at stake.

If one can undermine the reliability of the manuscript evidence, then one can establish doubt as to the preservation of Scripture. The rational is as follows; if there are

manuscript errors, then the Scriptures are unreliable; and if the Scriptures are unreliable, then God is not omnipotent, being unable to preserve His Word, which buttresses the claim that an omnipotent God – the God of the Bible – does not exist. However, the God of the Bible declared that His Word be preserved, establishing the following proposition:

... having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because, All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, **But the word of the Lord endures forever ...**” (1 Pet. 1:23-25, emphasis DP).

Historical Background of the Septuagint

God, indeed, preserved His word. While God revealed His Will through the agency of man (Supernaturally inspiring men to both speak and record His Will), He also preserved His Will through the agency of man, using the human abilities of reading, writing, copying, and interpreting. However, if there is one word, which captures the entire idea of God preserving His Word or Will, it is the word “Greek.” Seemingly, God preserved His Word in both Hebrew and Greek. A large number of Jews, scattered around the Mediterranean, had lost touch with the Hebrew language over the years while living among a more Greek speaking populace. Therefore, in order to know what the Hebrew Scriptures, and to know their history, the Hebrew Scriptures began to be translated into Koine Greek, which was becoming the “common language.”

During the first century, and at the time of Christ, the Greek language happened to be the predominant language around the Mediterranean. It was the very language used by the apostles and inspired writers for recording New Testament Scripture. Much like the way English is the universal language today, Greek was the “common” or “universal” language of the day around the Mediterranean region.

Historically, there is one person responsible for this – Alexander the Great. This begins what Historians call the “Hellenistic period.” The word “Hellenistic” comes from the word *Hellazein*, which means “to speak Greek or identify with the Greeks.” It lasted from the death of Alexander in 323 B.C. until 31 B.C., when Rome took control over the last territories in possession of Greece. (History.com). The concept of Hellenization began when Alexander the Great forced Greek language and culture upon all the peoples and lands he would conquer.

Following the death of his father, Philip of Macedon (336 B.C.E), Alexander the Great came to power at the age of twenty. His conquests over Persian strongholds led him eastward, capturing Asia Minor. Progressing further east, Alexander defeated Darius III around 333 B.C.E. The defeat of Syria also gave Alexander the land of the Jews–Israel.

Wegner summarizes “Alexander’s impact: The Greeks, led by Alexander the Great, conquered vast areas to their and commanded an empire larger than any up to that time. They immediately set to work to unify each part of the empire by imposing upon it the Greek language and culture.” (Wegner, 51-52) He proceeded south toward Egypt, which brought him through Palestine.

Josephus states that Jaddua, the High Priest, led a procession from Jerusalem to meet him, which greatly impressed Alexander (Dean, 244). The New Analytical Bible reports: “His favorable treatment of the Jews has been accounted for on the supposition that his attention was called to the predictions of Daniel that two hundred years before set forth his brilliant conquests” (NAB, 1079).

In 331, while in Egypt, he founded the city of Alexandria. Alexander would eventually die in 323 B.C.E. at the former palace of Nebuchadnezzar II in Babylon.

Hellenization, as begun by Alexander the Great, imposed a rather refined culture of a common language, great literature and philosophy, and wonderful advancements in math and science. This impacted the world greatly, especially the Mediterranean world. In the final analysis, Alexander has been called “the apostle of Hellenism.” McClish well summarizes the period of Hellenization as begun by Alexander:

As Alexander swept across the areas of his conquest an impact greater than the sword alone can produce was eventually to obtain. This potent force was "...a body of ideas" that was in fact a culture unparalleled in history. This refined Grecian culture, best known as Hellenism, came to be the chief contribution of Alexander's meteoric career. Its impress upon the world through language, literature, philosophy, science, and art has practically determined the course of subsequent history, especially in the West, but to a degree even in the East. The Jews were not immune (McClish, 2).

After Alexander died (323 B.C.E.) no provisions for a successor had been made. This created an environment for a power struggle for control of the empire. According to Hester, the "twenty-five years after Alexander's death Jerusalem changed hands seven times" (Hester, 321). However, two successor emerged, Ptolemy I controlled Egypt and southern Syria, while Seleucus, controlled Babylon and northern Syria. The Jews in Palestine found themselves sandwiched between the two.

The Ptolemy's and the Seleucids (respective dynasties) were frequently at odds with each other. Each side desired the land of the Jews, Palestine. The Ptolemy's, however, maintained control, and the Jews paid tribute to Egypt. Ptolemy I sent thousands of Jews from Palestine to Egypt. Many became part of the Egyptian military while the rest were used accordingly for Egypt's purposes. Most of these Jews would settle in the city of Alexandria.

The city of Alexandria became home to many scholars and a city known for its education and philosophy. Alexandria rivaled Rome in many respects, but it was not quite as wealthy. Alexandria maintained the largest Jewish population outside of Palestine. It was during this period that the Jews of Alexandria (and other locations around the Mediterranean) gradually lost connection with their Hebrew tongue as they had become a predominantly Greek speaking people. McClish astutely notes:

This circumstance led to the famous and valuable translation of the Old Testament into the Greek language—the Septuagint (LXX, the Roman numeral 70, for the traditional number of translators)—during the reign of Ptolemy II, who ruled from 285–246 B.C. (Bellview, 231).

Hester then summarizes the significance of this translation:

This was a most significant event, since with this translation available every person who spoke Greek could read the scriptures. It made the Old Testament with all its predictions of a Messiah available to hundreds of thousands of people who otherwise might never have had the opportunity of reading the Jewish scriptures (Hester, 320).

The Greek Translation of the Hebrew Bible—The Septuagint

The Septuagint (LXX) has been referred to as the first translation of any part of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament Scriptures. As stated previously, this Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures was made for the purpose of serving the Greek speaking Jews in the city of Alexandria, which became like a *little Jerusalem* due to its large Jewish population. According to Jensen:

The Pentateuch was translated around 280 B.C. Before the coming of Christ, the entire Testament was translated, and it became the Scriptures of many people throughout the Mediterranean world. Such timing was according to the divine schedule. Greek was the universal language at that time, and because the New Testament was soon to be written in Greek, God was using this Greek Old Testament version to prepare the way for the New Testament. It must have been a very dependable translation, for out of thirty-seven Old Testament quotations credited to Jesus in the gospels, thirty-three are from this Septuagint version (Jensen, 25).

However, when speaking of the LXX it must be considered as whether it was one translation done at one time, or did it involve various attempts over a period of time?

... the LXX is not a uniform translation that can be judged by modern criteria but the result of much trial and error...Rather than a single translation, in the

LXX one should speak of a collection of translations depending on the book; even within a single book, different literary units reflect different translation techniques. ...we find reflected in the LXX a whole gamut of translation techniques which run from literal translation (including transliteration) to paraphrase, especially in the later writings (Marcos, 22-23).

The evidence seems to suggest the latter, that it was not one production done at one time, but involved various translations at different times. For instance, it seems that the first portion of the Hebrew Bible to be translated into Greek was the Pentateuch or Torah. Perhaps this occurred between 280 B.C.E. – 250 B.C.E. One scholar discusses this very idea concerning the development of the LXX:

The Chester Beatty and other papyri show textual divergences, as indeed do all the manuscripts of the Septuagint; throughout its history free transmission was always one of its characteristic features, and, despite attempts to fix a standard form, there appears to have been no recension for which the claim was made that it was an authoritative text. In other words, if there was at any time a recognized Septuagint text-form it was at the beginning, and the divergences were introduced during the transmission over the centuries (Lampe, 18).

In his paper, *What Scholars Should Know About the Septuagint*, Claude Cox puts forth the same thought—the LXX ought to be seen as a collection of Greek Translations of the Hebrew Scriptures over a period of time. He writes:

The translation of the “Pentateuch”—a Greek word—in the early third century B.C.E. was followed by that of the Prophets and Writings. There seems to have been no hurry to translate the books outside the Torah, and the last books to be rendered into Greek, such as *Job*, may have had to wait until the end of the second century B.C.E., more than one hundred fifty years later. During that period of time, many other Jewish religious writings were either translated into Greek, such as Sirach, or composed in Greek, such as Judith and the Wisdom of Solomon. Some translated works, such as Esther and Daniel, found their Greek translations fleshed out with prayers, in the case of Esther, and more stories, such as Susannah and Bel and the Dragon in the case of Daniel (Cox. 4).

Cox continues discussing the need to see the LXX as being a body of literature or translations that reflects more of a work in progress rather than a “received text”:

The general term “the Old Greek (translation)” can be used for the collection of translations that stand in the corpus that includes what is more precisely “the Septuagint,” that is, the Pentateuch. We can, therefore, speak of “Old Greek Job.” It is not part of the Septuagint in the narrower sense. However, traditionally the term “Septuagint” is extended to those translations and writings that are part of the Greek corpus that began with the translation of the Torah and is attached to the (Greek) NT in mss such as Vaticanus (4th cent.), Sinaiticus (4th cent.), and Alexandrinus (5th cent.).¹⁰ In that case “the Old Greek” and “Septuagint” are used co-terminously (6).

Cox then summarizes our point: “When we use the LXX corpus, it is necessary to ask, ‘What translation or revision am I working with here?’ Examples of the failure to make the proper distinctions are not difficult to find ... (7).

What we tend to see is that there was a more literal attempt when dealing with the translation of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible (Torah/Pentateuch), but more flexibility was given when it came to the Prophets and the Writings, which are termed “divergences.” Perhaps this involved a shift of thought over a period of time whereby there was a trend among the Hellenists to have more “Dynamic Equivalent” or “thought for thought” approach to the Hebrew text after the translation completion of the Torah? Marcos tells us that within this body of Greek writings, referred to as the Septuagint, there were “translation techniques which run from literal translation (including transliteration) to paraphrase, especially in the later writings” (22-23).

Bruce agrees that there seems to have been a more exacting focus with regards to translating the Pentateuch than with the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures. He goes on to make the following point; "As a translation it is very unequal; the Pentateuch has been done much more carefully than the rest of the Old Testament. The translation of some parts of the Old Testament shows very indifferent workmanship indeed" (Bruce, 147). Historian, Emil Schürer, makes the following observation:

The basis of all Jewish-Hellenistic culture is the old, anonymous Greek Bible translation known as the Septuagint or LXX (*septuaginta interpretes*) and preserved for us mainly by Christian tradition. Without it the religion of the Greek-speaking Jews was as unthinkable as the Church of England without the Authorized Version [KJV]. The uniform name should not lead to the idea that this is the work of a single hand. What was brought together under this name at a later time is not only the work of different translators, it also came about at different times. The oldest part is the translation of the Pentateuch (Schürer, 474).

Whatever the reason or reasons, the translation fundamentals changed, and it seemed to have done so over a period of time. The LXX, therefore, ought to be viewed as body of literature comprised of by a collection of translations of various parts of the Hebrew Scriptures over a period of time. It contains various translational differences and/or styles, from literal to free.

Additionally, it seems reasonable to conclude that Greek translations of the Hebrew text were probably being made all around the Mediterranean at this time, not just in Alexandria. Perhaps among the more educated and wealthy circles of Greek speaking Jews this would have been the case. However, to summarize the above thoughts, Brenton writes:

The Septuagint (from the Latin *septuaginta*, meaning 'seventy', and frequently referred to by the roman numerals LXX) is the Greek translation of the Old Testament. The name derives from the tradition that it was made by seventy (or seventy-two) Jewish scholars at Alexandria, Egypt during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.). Although it is not completely understood either when or why the translation was originally done, it is clear that it in large measure reflects the common language of the period and became the 'Bible' of Greek-speaking Jews and then later of the Christians. It is worth noting that the Septuagint differs from the Hebrew Old Testament in certain ways: 1) the Greek text varies at many points from the corresponding Hebrew text; 2) the order of the Biblical Books is not the same--the threefold division of the Hebrew canon into the Law, Prophets, and Writings is not followed in the LXX; and 3) several books not found in the Hebrew are included in the LXX--these books are known as the Apocrypha in the English Bible. While the majority of the Old Testament quotations rendered by the New Testament authors are borrowed directly from the Septuagint, a number of times they provide their own translation which follows the Hebrew text against the Septuagint (Brenton, Preface).

The Influence of Greek and the Septuagint

It has been said that the LXX has been called the "step child" to the Hebrew Bible. In other words, it has been viewed less than the Hebrew manuscripts, considered less reliable. However, with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) in 1947, we learned that there was more than one copy of the Old Testament, more so than just the Hebrew text. Upon the discovery of the DSS, one of the first realizations was that there were many manuscripts which happened to be different than the Hebrew Scriptures (Hebrew Bible), yet in many places they agreed with the LXX passages, previously deemed "divergent." Seemingly, there were other manuscripts which not only the LXX translators used, but it appears that there were other Hebrew texts which, perhaps, the Jewish copyists relied upon, and that is why there were differences? The discovery of the DSS was certainly significant to say the least, as Law points out:

It is apparent how revolutionary the discovery of the of the Dead Sea Scrolls

and the new appreciation for the Septuagint has been for scholars and students of the Hebrew Bible, or the Old Testament, but even the study of the New Testament and early Christian theology (Law, 3).

This great discovery demonstrates the influence of the Greek language, even among the Jews. The focus is then put back on the LXX because of its use in the development of Jewish thought at that time, particularly Hellenists. The significance of the LXX, therefore, sheds valuable light upon the development of New Testament Scripture.

The LXX is not the ugly “step child” it was once thought of. It seems a bit odd that the body Greek writings we refer to as the LXX would be relegated to second class status, especially when we find that both the Jesus and the apostles quoted from it. Again Marcos points out this unique fact:

The LXX comprises the main source for quotations from the Old Testament in the New Testament writings.

Each part of the New Testament gives sufficient proof of knowing the LXX. These quotations diverge from the Masoretic text in 212 cases, whereas they differ from the Septuagintal text in only 185 cases. It can therefore be concluded that the LXX is the main source for quotations by the New Testament writers.

As for why a number of OT quotes in NT match neither the MT nor LXX, The many explanations such as resorting to free quotations or quotation from memory, adaptation to fulfillment of prophecy, conflation of texts through collections of testimonia, or the influence of parallel passages, may explain some cases. Some could also be attributed to “textual pluralism”—more than one Greek or Hebrew version.

Paul cites the Old Testament 93 times: the Pentateuch 33 times, Isaiah 25, and the Psalms 19. Of these quotations, 51 agree completely or virtually with the LXX, 22 even against the Masoretic text; 4 follow the Hebrew text against the LXX, and 38 differ from both the Hebrew text and the LXX (Marcos, 323-329).

We see that the New Testament attests to the credibility of the Septuagint using it often. For instance, when Matthew writes about the virgin birth of Christ, the Incarnation, he was quoting from the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew Bible. In his book on grace and faith, the book of Romans, we find Paul quoting from Isaiah, as translated in the Septuagint, not the Hebrew Bible.

There is overwhelming evidence of the New Testament’s use of the Septuagint. In fact, we can say that God used the Septuagint, since it was the Holy Spirit who inspired the New Testament writers, and who used the Septuagint. Whatever scholars may say about the Septuagint, God used it! Moreover, what we can glean from the New Testament’s use of the Septuagint is that God is not afraid of inaccurate or imprecise translations. After all, man, is the one responsible for making the copies using the language he speaks, which is all part of God’s plan in preserving the inspired text. While the entire copied document, may not get every word just so, the writers still capture the thought of the inspired words, and when is accomplished, God’s word has been preserved. This is the essence of the Septuagint.

Citations

1 Bart Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus—The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*, first paperback edition (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2007), 7, 90.

2 <http://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/hellenistic-greece>.

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Who Is Going To Heaven?

C.L. Wilson

Who is going to heaven? To ask an answer to this question of a dozen different people in the religious world today would bring nearly a dozen different answers. Although erroneous answers would be given by most, the importance of the question can be seen by the fact that nearly all are willing to offer their ideas regarding an answer. Since most are interested in going to heaven with the Lord there should be a great manifestation of interest in the answer to this question.

Only Those in the Right Place

A more simple answer could not be given, yet there could not be a more appropriate answer. Of course, the right place is in the Church. Not only for the blessing of heaven eternally, but also for the enjoyment of all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3). It is absolutely impossible for a person to be saved from past sins and inherit the glories of God without being a member of the church. For, just as surely as a person has his sins washed away (Acts 22:16), the Lord will add him to the church (Acts 2:47). And it won't be just any church—it will be the one the Lord said he would build and then purchased with his own blood (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28). It will be the divine institution that wears the name of the Lord (Rom. 16:16), that abides in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9), that acceptably worships God (John 4:23-24), and that is serving the Master in a pleasing manner (Matt. 7:22-23).

It isn't enough, though, just to be a member of the Lord's church. One must also be in the right place **in** the church. Properly qualified and appointed officers of the church must fulfill the capacities in which they are serving in order to go to heaven in the great after awhile. It's a grave and serious charge indeed if one does not fulfill his responsibility before the Lord. This is true of other male members and women, too. All must be in the place for which they are properly suited for doing the will of the Lord.

We must be in the right place in the church and we must stay in the places for which we are qualified. For instance, a woman's place is not in the eldership! She would be out of place if she tried to take the oversight of a congregation. Likewise, one who is a preacher would be out of place trying to rule the church. So, one must not only be in the right place but must also stay in his own place. But, to find a little more complete answer we ask again, "Who is going to heaven"?

Only Those in Church at Right Time

Again, it isn't enough to be members of the Lord's church, but we must be in the body at the end of our lives here on the earth—whether it be at death or at the judgment. Most recognize the fact that we are not going to live in our present state forever. We all must be practical enough to recognize the nearness of death and the fact that though

we were once members of the Lord's church doesn't automatically insure for us an eternal abode with the Lord. But we must be upstanding members of his kingdom at the time when the body is separated from the spirit. Or, if we should be among the number that Paul mentioned who would be alive and remain until the coming of the Lord (1 Thess. 4:17) we must be faithful members at that time.

Certainly, one knows neither the time of his death nor the time of the coming of the Son of God. The only things we know about them are that they are certain (John 14:1-3) and that it is ever drawing nearer (Jas. 5:8). Hence, the only way to be sure that we're in the right place at the right time is to stay in the church and be acceptable at **all** times. One other stipulation we would add in completing our answer would be...

In the Right Place, at the Right Time, for the Right Purpose

One can be a member of the church when he dies, but if he has not been maintaining true work and worship for the right purpose he has forfeited his claim to eternity with the Lord. One cannot be an acceptable member of the Kingdom of the Lord if he maintains membership for social or recreational reasons. It is not the purpose of the church to be a social or recreational institution. Neither is it the purpose of the church to be a political machine nor a law or marriage counseling agency. If you are a member of the Lord's church for any of the foregoing purposes you have lost your perspective in life and are not satisfying the demands of God regarding church membership.

The only acceptable purpose that we can have for church membership is that by our love for God and His ways we might save ourselves and others. This we cannot do by living an ungodly or worldly life here upon this earth. Neither can we be unmindful of our obligations to the Lord, to the church, or to the world and be acceptable. If you're not in the right place for the right purpose **now**, you need to make your preparation immediately. Though written several centuries ago, the words Paul sent to the Corinthians were never more true than they are today—"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is, the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

The Organization of the church of Christ

Ron Cosby

The Lord established His church in the first century. In so doing, He gave mankind "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3-4) and instituted a religious organization in which men from all walks of life could function as a unit. The divine organization of the church of Christ can be found only in the New Testament.

Over the centuries, men became dissatisfied with the organization of the Lord's church and introduced drastic changes in it. In so doing, they sinned and corrupted Christ's religion. But today, that same church, with the same organization that God ordained, can be found in many communities. The church of Christ does Bible things in Bible ways and has restored the organization of the New Testament church.

The Word "Church" in the New Testament

The Bible speaks of the church in a universal, comprehensive sense (Matt. 16:18; 1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 1:22-23). This includes all the saved of the earth since the first century, and all are subject to Christ as the head of the church (Eph. 5:23-25).

But when New Testament writers referred to the body of Christ as "the church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts 8:1) or "the church...at Antioch" (Acts 13:1) they did not have the universal sense in mind. They spoke of the church of Christ in a **local** sense and that is the **only** sense in which there is an organization of the church. This terminology includes all of God's people in one community. When Luke said Paul ordained elders "in every church" (Acts 14:23), he referred to the local congregations of the Lord's people.

The phrase to, "set in order the things that are lacking" (Titus 1:5) clearly indicates a need on the part of each faithful congregation to set in place the heavenly designed organization. This makes each local church a self-governing unit with the control of its own affairs.

A thorough search of the New Testament reveals no other organizational structure existed that was higher than the local church. There is no other sense in which Bible writers used the term *church*. Neither the term *denomination* nor *denominationalism* occurs in sacred writing.

Obviously then, Paul did not belong to one denomination while Peter belonged to another. Such terms and organizational concepts are foreign to the wishes of heaven. I know this to be true because of heaven's guide book—the Bible.

Each Local Church had its Own Members

The Bible teaches that when a sinner is converted, he becomes a member of the body of Christ (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13, 27). One becomes a member of the body of Christ in the same way that he is converted. He trusts Jesus as the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16; 11:24). He repents of his sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38). He confesses what he believes in his heart—that Jesus is the resurrected Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10)—and he is baptized into Christ unto the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4). He then identifies and assembles with a local church of Christ as was practiced in the New Testament.

Biblically, members are called “Christians” (Acts 11:26). They are also referred to as “brethren” (Rom. 10:1), “saints” (1 Cor. 1:2) and “servants” along with others Christ has designated. But the only **name** they wear is **Christian**.

Members of the body of Christ do **not** wear **human** names such as *Methodist*, *Baptist* or *Jehovah's Witnesses*. God knew what He wanted to call His people. Why wear any other name? Furthermore, the Bible says the Father named His family in heaven and on earth (Eph. 3:15).

The Local Church Appointed its Own Teachers

Teachers of the word of God are at the very foundation of the church. The church needs teachers to teach disciples the way of the Lord more perfectly (Heb. 5:12-14).

Though all members are expected to privately teach their neighbors, friends, and family members (1 Pet. 3:15; Matt. 28:18-19), not all members are commanded to be public teachers (Jas. 3:1). Though all members are expected to teach and admonish one another in “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (Col. 3:16), all need not think that they must teach a Bible class.

The Local Church Appointed its Own Preacher

In the first century, a Gospel preacher was one who proclaimed the good news of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 4:2). He was also referred to as an *evangelist* (2 Tim. 4:5). Though the foolish sought to venture into new teaching, the faithful messenger never went beyond “the doctrine of Christ” (2 John 9-11). Even then, those who wanted to please men avoided various difficult themes and subjects that their hearers hated, but the man of God always preached the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). He preached the word (2 Tim. 4:2).

Today, the preacher is expected to do many things that are unheard of as God-given duties of an evangelist. He is expected to know how to perform a great wedding ceremony or preach funerals. According to the standard of most religious people, he must be proficient in visiting hospitals and the bereaved. No doubt, these are good works for every Christian—and that includes the preacher—but a close study of the letters to two first century evangelists, Titus and Timothy, helps us to see the work of a preacher in the light of heaven's lamp. He is to preach, edify, train, defend the truth, and study the Word.

The Local Church Appointed its Own Qualified Elders

New Testament guidance teaches us to appoint qualified elders in “every city” (Titus 1:5) and to appoint them “in every church” (Acts 14:23). All references to this body of men show that God wanted a plurality of elders to lead each congregation. One-man rule is not heaven's way, but man's.

To be godly elders, men had to meet the heaven-given qualifications (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1). They were to be shepherds of the flock and overseers of God's people (Acts 20:28).

Like the preacher, they too had duties to perform. Bible writers referred to them as “elders” (Acts 20:17), “bishops” or “overseers (Acts 20:28). “pastors” or “shepherds” (Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 6:4). These names describe their work.

When you think of a “shepherd,” you think of one leading, feeding and caring for the sheep. An “overseer” is one who makes sure that all things being done are done properly and the word “elder” indicates an older person who is a wise counselor.

The Local Church Appointed its Own Qualified Deacons

Churches in the first century also had deacons. Paul wrote to “all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” (Phlp. (1:1). As it was with the elders, so it is with the deacons. The Bible speaks of a plurality of deacons. These men helped the elders carry out their duties. No, they were not “junior elders” with any oversight authority in the church. They were—and are—simply special servants working under the oversight of the elders and who, like the elders, had to meet certain God-given qualifications before serving as deacons (1 Tim. 3).

Conclusion

By following this pattern, as set forth in the New Testament, we allow Christ to be our head. To deviate from this pattern and set up organizations such as Missionary Societies, and offices such as Cardinals, Popes, Priests, and Reverends is to depart from what heaven wants. As we look around at the religious world, we see many who have substituted what they want for what heaven has commanded. But the church of Christ is organized according to the New Testament Pattern with elders, deacons, evangelists, and members.

The Gospel Preceptor

Published Monthly at Elk City, Oklahoma

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Gospel Meeting
July 5 - 8

Northpoint church of Christ
Meeting at 4224 N. I-35 in Denton, Texas
Preaching - Jerry C. Brewer

Sunday, July 5
9:30 a.m.
10:30 a.m.
1:00 p.m.

Monday, July 6 - Wednesday, July 8
7:00 p.m.

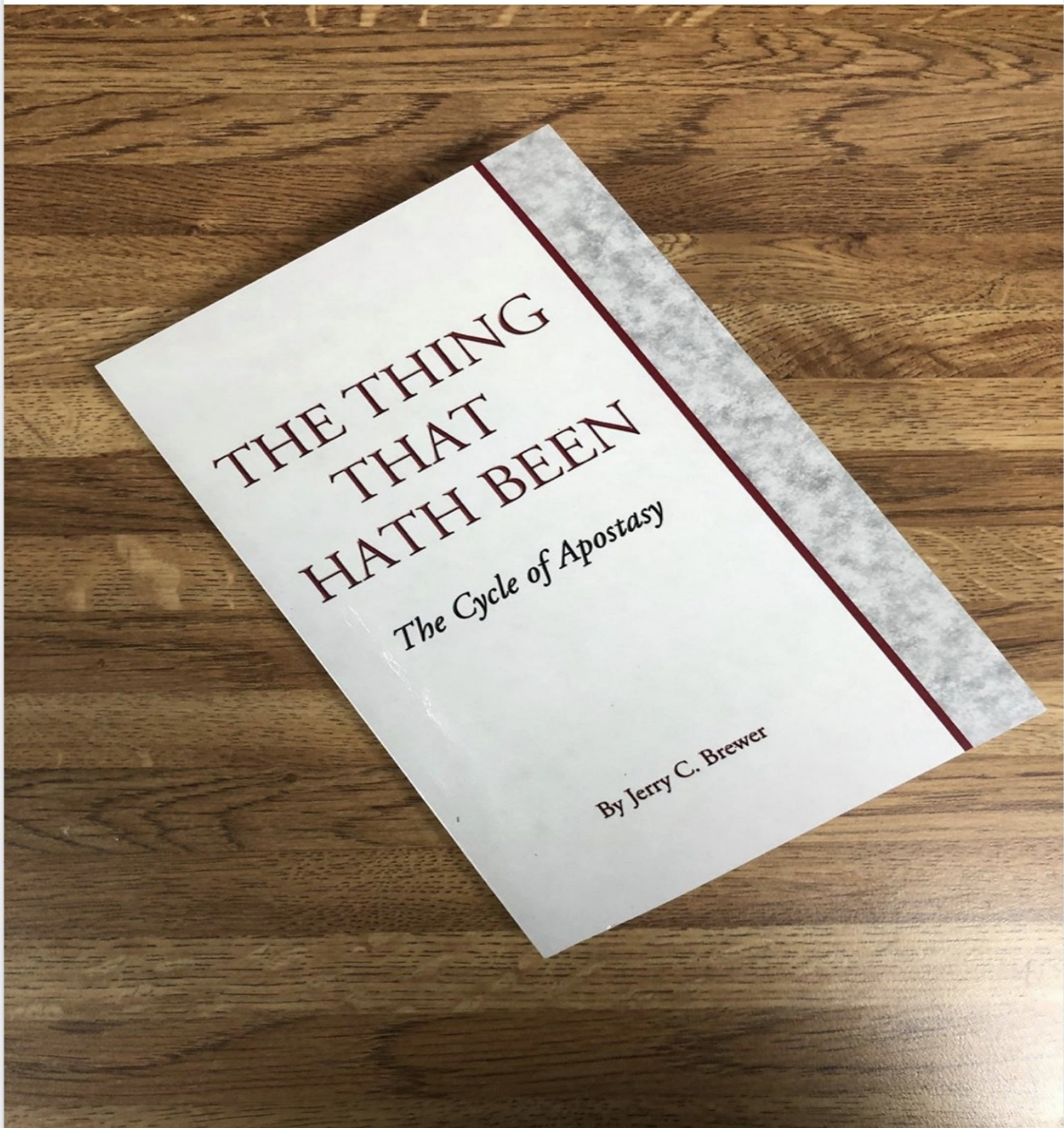
“The Thing That Hath Been...”: The Cycle of Apostasy



Dub McClish

April 18 at 1:24 PM

The Thing That Hath Been is the latest book from the pen of our brother, Jerry Brewer. Subtitled, *The Cycle of Apostasy*, it is a blockbuster of 216 pages that every member of the Lord's church needs to read. In it our brother traces and documents the historical parallels between the digression/apostasy of the last half of the 19th century with the same sad drifts/departures the church has suffered in the latest 4 or 5 generations. You will find it hard to put it down once you have begun reading. Published in February, the book is already in its third printing. It is offered **free of cost** (\$3.00 p/h requested). When you receive/read yours, I think you'll want to order to give to others. Order it from Brewer Publications, 308 S. Oklahoma Ave., Elk City, OK 73644, or by email at txjch@att.net.



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Preaching the Truth in Love

R.L. Whiteside

Much is said about preaching the truth in love, and so it should be preached. But in love of what? The preacher should so love the truth that he will not sacrifice any of it nor pervert it, and he should so love people that he will not withhold from them even an unpleasant truth. He that does either of these things loves neither the church nor the people.

We frequently fool ourselves, thinking we do thus and so to spare the feelings of others when it is our own feelings that prompt us.

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (2 Tim. 4:2-4).

Receiving the Word and the Spirit

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

A dodge hardly worth the notice has been attempted by connecting Acts 2:38 with the following verse 41, which reads, “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized”—and we are told that if receiving the word is receiving the Spirit, then they received the Spirit before they were baptized! Only a tyro could emit such sophistry. The word in verse 41 where they gladly **received** the word, is *apodechomi* which means to **welcome**, but in verse 38 “shall receive the gift” is *lambano* which means **to take**.

Another example of the first word and its meaning is in Luke 8:40, where the people **gladly received** Jesus—they welcomed Him—the same word as in Acts 2:41. But another example of the second word is in Galatians 3:2, where the Galatians **received** the Spirit through the hearing of faith—and that is the same word as in Acts 2:38. Of course the word is not the Spirit, but it is the medium through which the Spirit operates upon and dwells within us, therefore the medium of reception.

After all that has been said on Acts 2:38 from any worthy pen—McGarvey's or any other—that the gift of the Spirit means the Holy Spirit “as a gift,” the quotations still fall short of proving the assertion that it is received or dwells within us **apart from the word**.